

## **ACCESS AGREEMENT 2014/15**

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University of Westminster was founded in 1838 as the Polytechnic Institution in London's Regent Street, where its headquarters building is still used as a base for full-time and part-time students today. The University's modern history began in 1882 when Quintin Hogg re-founded the Polytechnic to establish a new model for public education, building on the pattern of his Free Schools, by helping to establish 12 polytechnics in London by 1903. His aim was to provide educational, sporting and social facilities for working adults. The commitment to Quintin Hogg's aim of providing access to learning for those who could benefit, irrespective of social class or income, is a core principle honoured today by staff and Governors of the University.

1.2 The University's Access and Outreach measures encompass recruitment, including the design of pathway programmes into HE, and activities which support student retention and development of students. Monitoring reports illustrate that Westminster's approach is being sustained and enhanced despite significant changes in the operating environment. The participation of young first degree entrants from under-represented groups, including those from state schools and colleges, is over 95% of the new entrant cohort each year (against a benchmark of 93%), of whom some 42% are drawn from socio-economic classes 4,5, 6 and 7 (against a benchmark of 36%).

1.3 The planned activities set out below accord with the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment submitted to HEFCE in June 2009, and the Interim Widening Participation Strategic Statement for 2012, re-confirmed in 2013. They also provide direct continuity with the current Access Agreement and the annual monitoring reports by which progress towards its achievement is tracked.

1.4 The standard fee for full-time first degree new entrants in 2014 remains at £9k per annum. Course Fee Waivers for the first cohort of new regime students have been allocated by subject and some 77% of new entrants in 2012 are beneficiaries, of whom 52.5% receive full state support funding for their studies.

1.5 The 2014/15 Access Agreement continues to reflect Westminster's founding mission and long-term commitment to access and learning opportunities across diverse communities in London and beyond - in the UK, other EU states, and internationally. Social cohesion within the University community is an important aim: applicants from the widest possible range of backgrounds will continue to be recruited and selected across all subjects.

1.6 Overall the University remains committed to investing approximately 20% of its additional fee income in access, outreach and student success measures for the cohort of students to be recruited for 2014/15 and studying at Westminster until 2017/18.

1.7 Westminster re-affirms its commitment to provide clear and information on fees and funding to prospective students, their families, sponsors and advisers, on its website from Summer 2013 for potential applicants for admission in 2014.

1.8 Guidance has been sought from current students, including the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), on the design of the student support package. This includes the criteria for selection of Westminster Scholars, and the levels of information advice and guidance needed on the new loan arrangements and the aggregate cost of tuition and costs while studying.

1.9 The National Scholarships Programme will be supported for FT and PT students, in parallel with an extensive range of targeted initiatives to support the selection and development of new students. The criteria for selection for beneficiaries of the NSP scheme correspond to those for Westminster's own Scholarship scheme but a broader range of students is supported through the University's scheme and the awards provide for students throughout the whole period of their registration. The criteria for selection are that the student should accept Westminster as their first choice, and be able to demonstrate their potential to make a valuable contribution to the wider Westminster community (for example through volunteering in local schools and colleges), and their profile should indicate high academic and/or creative achievement or potential. Awards will be targeted for students from less advantaged backgrounds.

1.10 The University remains committed to match funding National Scholarships (222 entrants in 2012, 424 entrants in 2013 and 421 entrants in 2014) through its retention and development model by allocating funded support in the Scholars' second and final years of study. Students will be offered a choice of funded support, one element of which would be the option of an additional fee waiver. The other options include credits for a University provided service such as Hall of Residence fees, a study support package including credits with the campus-based Marylebone Books, a travel award, and a Graduate Development award in partnership with the Students' Union through the Westminster Enterprise Challenge scheme. New entrants in 2014/15 can choose to receive their whole award as cash in phased payments through each successive year of study.

1.11 The National Scholarships Programme (NSP) will be extended in 2014/15 by the allocation of 421 full-time equivalent scholarships with a total award value of £6k part-funded by HEFCE at £2k equivalent. This will be match funded with £4k funding per capita by the University. The University re-affirms its retention and development policy for new entrants in 2014/15 and will maintain the NSP options provided to new entrants in 2012 and 2013. As the national guidelines for the NSP now allow an unlimited cash payment this will be introduced as an additional option, payable throughout all three years of a student's programme of study. As 2014/15 is the last year of the NSP scheme and the number of awards has been reduced the University will target the beneficiaries by taking into account their socio-economic characteristics. A nomination process will be used rather than an open application process. Demonstration of the achievement and potential for excellence in their studies will remain one of the core criteria for the award to ensure parity with previous recipients. Potential nominees will be identified through contextual data provided through the UCAS system pending verification of household income after the candidates have applied to the Student Loans Company for a tuition fee loan.

1.12 New students with NSP awards in 2012/13 have been offered a range of options to ensure that the support provided corresponds to their needs and circumstances. As the 2012 cohort students are starting their University lives in transitional period NSP scholars have been offered £3000 fee awards in their first year of study to help reduce their fee loans. Students' choices in 2012/13 have reflected an equal interest in University Accommodation awards (£3000), a combined package of Book Allowances (£200) and fee awards (£2800), and fee awards (£3000). The maximum cash award was £1000 and the majority of students have chosen an option which provides this support in their final (Level 6) year of study. As the Westminster approach is based on retention and development the NSP awards are provided in phased payment, from their first to their final year of study. For the 2014/15 cohort the University will invest £1,908,000 in NSP awards for 421 new entrant beneficiaries.

1.13 Students from lower income households, as defined in the period 2006 -2011, remain entitled to a Bursary of either £329pa or £400pa and will continue to be supported with annual payments until they have completed their studies at the University.

1.14 Westminster's Course Fee Waiver scheme was designed to retain the aspiration of students from the University's London communities in particular to take up a place despite higher fee levels in 2012/13. A total of 2616 students are eligible for a reduced fee each year between 2012 and 2015, representing some 52.5% of the total undergraduate cohort. This is not a means tested benefit, and if a student is eligible by inclusion in one of the subject groups they can remain eligible for both a National Scholarship Programme (NSP) award and a Westminster Scholarship. For Electronic Engineering and Life Sciences courses the waiver is £500, for Built Environment, Business and Law courses it is £1000, and for Computer Science, and Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages courses it is £1500. The annual investment in this scheme is £2,920.5k.

1.15 Students from families whose income has been recorded as £42.6k and £50k per annum (where they are entitled to any part of the maintenance grant) continue to receive bursaries in recognition of the higher living and salary costs in the capital. Care Leavers, Disabled students, and students progressing from Access to HE courses have also been prioritised in the allocation of financial support.

1.16 In 2014/15 it is forecast that £1,070,000 will be invested in bursaries and scholarships for new and continuing FT and PT students, with a further £1,520,000 on student success initiatives and £192,000 to support PT students from lower household incomes (on full state support), totalling £2,782,000.

1.17 Student views have been canvassed through focus groups with Student Ambassadors, Student Associates assisting in schools and colleges, and students reaching out to London's migrant communities as well as through the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU). The emerging consensus is that students would benefit more from extension of infrastructure support for extra-curricular activities such as internships and work shadowing, short study abroad programmes, and extension of volunteering opportunities. Development of employability and community engagement attributes are valued more highly by students than reduced fee levels. Westminster's partnership with UWSU embodies a shared commitment to find new and more effective ways of explaining the new fee regime and the University's policies which underpin its approach to access and outreach, and student retention and development.

1.18 Going beyond Outreach in its established sense some students have initiated their own activities to make a contribution working in partnership with different groups in London's international communities. The emphasis on partnership is significant. These are not research projects for which the students draw on communities as their subject. Rather they are jointly designed activities initiated by Westminster students reaching out to young people and their families in new and longer established migrant communities.

1.19 University of Westminster staff contribute significantly to collaborative outreach activities. This includes policy development and research led by Linking London, data analysis on achievement, progression and contextual data led by AccessHE, and the ongoing National Scholarships Programme (NSP) review.

1.20 The University of Westminster's policy commitments and planned access and outreach activities directly support the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 using positive action as part of its retention and development model. The University has identified more ambitious milestones to evaluate its collaborative activities supporting access and outreach, through strategic planning within the Westminster Group, and designing in progression through links at course level, as well as supporting potentially vulnerable groups such as disabled students and care leavers.

1.21 Systematic communications with primary and secondary schools are being planned through the design and production of online materials and engagement activity. These materials will link learning projects with employability initiatives through content authored by experts within the University and the Westminster Group of Associate Colleges. The materials will be refreshed and regularly updated so that the University hosts a professional network for teaching staff in London schools. Building on its Network for Languages scheme there will be extended programmes for teachers scheduled as 'twilight' professional development activities.

1.22 The Westminster Group of Further and Higher Education Colleges deliver courses for learners from 14 years of age and the University's leadership of the group delivers a long term strategic focus for young and mature learners in London. Data analysis commissioned by Linking London demonstrates that in the period 2005 -2009 progression to the University of Westminster by learners from FE Colleges formed 7% of the total across London. Of these students 9.6% had completed Access to HE courses and 23.6% had completed BTEC National Diploma qualifications. The University remains committed to increasing the proportions of these HE learners from vocational routes to ensure opportunities remain open for students from the broadest range of backgrounds. FE Colleges are recognised for providing a supportive learning environment for people with protected characteristics. Particular support is being focused on progression from Access to HE programmes to help manage and sustain an increase from the target of 6% in 2012/13 and 8% in 2013/14 to 10% in 2014/15. This aspect of planning is informed by formal Westminster Group meeting discussions.

1.23 Integrated data handling will yield insight reports for longer term strategic planning in addition to the analytical reports used for monitoring purposes. This will inform collaborative target-setting not only between schools and the UTC but also between the University and the Westminster Group of Colleges. Although dependence on Lower Participation Neighbourhood (LPN) data has been perceived as a complex issue in the capital cross-

mapping of different data sources can yield a reliable interpretation of local changes when outreach plans are reviewed and adjusted. The increasing targets for LPN rates in 2014/15 in an environment characterised by lower overall participation by learners from lower socio-economic groups is therefore realistic.

1.24 Through the extension of targeted outreach to primary schools and more secondary schools and through the University's sponsoring role for the UTC in Westminster, it is envisaged that in steady state by 2017/18 some 5% of the University's additional fee income will be invested in more broadly focused outreach activities. This will be targeted to reach younger learners and communities with little or no experience of advanced vocational and academic higher education and disadvantaged through less security of employment. In the local catchment areas for the University 68% of young learners speak English as an additional language, and 79% are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British. Some 65% of the local wards in the borough of Westminster have deprivation levels higher than the national average. The increased demographic growth forecast of 15% of 16-19 year olds by 2020 focuses the initiatives on close partnership links across local communities and educational providers at all levels to meet education and employability needs of young Londoners. The University's track record of raising aspiration and attainment through the Aimhigher programmes provides a sound base from which to plan and monitor these newer initiatives.

1.25 This Access Agreement and the plans for expenditure to support its implementation in 2014/15 focus on students deemed to be countable for Access Agreement purposes.

## **2. NEWER INITIATIVES PLANNED FOR 2013/14 and 2014/15**

### **Westminster Saturday University**

2.1 The foundation of the Royal Polytechnic Institution in 1838, and its re-foundation by the philanthropist Quintin Hogg, was based on the principle of providing access to education for all who could benefit regardless of family position or financial security. This has been taken into account again in the adjustment of the outreach programme for 2013/14, to reflect Westminster's links with the Smithsonian Institute in the USA, in the University's 175th anniversary year. The Nobel Laureate series of outreach lectures introduced in 2009 has been adapted to form part of the Westminster Saturday University programme. Its purpose is to attract and motivate young people in inner city schools and colleges to aspire to study at University. The programme plan will include presentations by leading academics and practitioners across the full range of subjects offered by Westminster. This programme will be delivered initially in partnership with colleagues from the Westminster Group of Associate Colleges, and broadened subsequently to schools, VI Form Colleges, and mature applicants from East and South London as well as Central and West London.

### **Westminster Group progression pathways**

2.2 The Westminster was established in the mid-1990s and expanded and revised in 2010/11. Westminster Group Associate Colleges are located close to the University of Westminster's campuses in Central and North West London. The eight Further and Higher Colleges in the Westminster Group are:

- City of Westminster College

- College of North West London
- Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College
- Hackney Community College
- Harrow College
- Kensington and Chelsea College
- Uxbridge College

2.3 The development of new strategic partnerships between the University and the individual colleges reflects the particular strengths of each college. Progression pathways to Higher Education are being consolidated within the Westminster Group for new entrants in 2014 by adapting courses for joint delivery. Higher Apprenticeship pathways are also being explored for inclusion within HNDs and Foundation Degrees across several Westminster Group colleges. Customised final Bachelors Honours year programmes are being designed for all students progressing from HNDs and Foundation Degrees on the basis that the students will not be counted as new entrants (as they are already studying at HE level). These are strategic long term partnerships underpinned by a shared commitment to vocational and academic education. The Teacher Education programmes are also being expanded.

#### **Westminster's Great Start**

2.4 Personalised support for new students has been introduced through a special partnership with the Students' Union (UWSU) in a scheme called "The Great Start". This forms a key element of Westminster's retention and development model, building on the Higher Education Academy (HEA) funded "Sense of Belonging" project delivered with Queen Mary London and London Metropolitan University in 2011. Individual student ambassadors will be recruited, selected and trained as FANS - Friends of Arriving New Students - to help them settle in and make the most of their time at the University.

#### **Westminster's Student Ambassadors**

2.5 By 2014 there will be a total of 1265 National Scholarship Programme (NSP) student ambassadors contributing to the delivery of the University's access and outreach programmes as trained Student Ambassadors. These students will be trained alongside the current groups of Student Ambassadors to contribute to access and outreach activities across the full programme of events. It is envisaged that increasing opportunities for students to be trained as part of a regional programme of Ambassador events will become available after 2012 and the University of Westminster is committed to supporting this approach.

#### **University of Westminster Associates in Schools**

2.6 Student Associates are recruited and selected to work as classroom assistants in schools and colleges, particularly in local areas with high indications of disadvantaged communities. This supports the need to increase selection of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs); currently 5.9% of Westminster's students come from

this group (against a benchmark of 6.7%). This scheme, formerly funded through Aimhigher and by the Training and Development Agency (TDA), has been revised to operate as a scheme solely for University of Westminster students and it is wholly resourced by the University. It has been extended to additional colleges in 2012 and it is envisaged that it will continue to grow in 2014. This scheme complements local student initiatives in the University's faculties some of which are sponsored by external organisations such as the Royal Society.

### **Volunteering, internships, work shadowing, study abroad**

2.7 Volunteering connects students with their own community as well as other local groups and provides opportunities for learning and development. It creates platforms for community engagement and gives students and the University, the opportunity to raise aspirations and widen participation in the wider community. This year, Westminster students continued to give their own time to take part in a broad range of volunteering activities. In response to student feedback additional support will be focused on providing opportunities for students to identify and take up internships and work shadowing opportunities. Short periods of study abroad pre-semester and post-semester will also be facilitated, through international summer schools and joint projects with UWSU.

### **Westminster's Scholarships programme**

2.8 The University's Scholarships scheme was introduced in 2006 to safeguard the interests of academically able students by providing yearly support through a competitive scholarship. This award winning scheme has been adjusted during the last five years to accord with the retention and development model. Scholarships will continue to be allocated to applicants from specific partner schools and colleges such as Quintin Kynaston School (with which the University shares its founder), and the Westminster Group of Associate Colleges. Progression awards and scholarships for part-time students will also be extended in 2014.

### **Westminster's Connected Communities**

2.9 The perceptions of potential applicants are canvassed through a broad programme of Outreach activities in the community and through events hosted by the University such as Open Days, Applicants Days, and Taster Days for different disciplines. Discussions with current students at the University are also an important source of ideas and influence. Typically these take the form of focus groups and team meetings.

2.10 Students have also developed their own initiatives for supporting young people in London. These include the International Community Project activities of International Development students in community and youth centres for recent migrant communities. Others involve activities in schools delivered by Sociology students inspired by the Connected Communities research of their academic tutors. These are just two examples of the contribution made by students to the London community. They emphasise the significant role of universities in contributing to social cohesion, not just social mobility.

### **Routes into Languages**

2.11 Westminster's long-standing commitment to Modern and Applied Language study is recognised by applicants and their families despite the national decrease in those studying languages at A level and in HE. Progression to HE has been sustained in part by the Routes into Languages scheme funded by HEFCE and co-directed by the University of Westminster with SOAS. Outreach events funded and co-funded by the University of Westminster to complement the London regional activities (such as Employability Activity Days, Film and Cultural Study Days, Careers in Languages Days) have included film screenings, poster events, and exhibitions well as Language Immersion Saturdays for GCSE, Four Day Easter Language Revision Workshops for A-level. Typically 2 -5 participants of a total of c125 -150 in the Easter Language Revision Workshops at AS and A2 level in French, Spanish and German progress to HE study at Westminster each year. The potential for joint targets to be agreed for future years has been raised as a possibility.

### **Sharing best practice**

2.12 Through active membership of sector organisations Westminster has both contributed to and benefitted from debates and research on best practice in Access and Student Success at HE level.

2.13 Within Linking London events University of Westminster colleagues have been key contributors to Initial Advice and Guidance (IAG) practitioner meetings. Specific additional initiatives include Maths GCSE drop-in session, and completion of Student Finance application forms, both of which involve Student Ambassadors; and, collaboration on best practice in admission of Access to HE adult learners aged 24 +. Collaborative research on data on progression from FE to HE, and Apprenticeship progression has also been facilitated by Linking London as a longitudinal study.

2.14 Although Westminster has contributed previously to the development of monitoring processes through its Aimhigher projects further exploration of how the toolkits for evaluation of access work can be used in the new fee regime environment has been undertaken through the facilitation of the National Educational Opportunity Network (NEON) and AccessHE. The University is a subscriber with Board membership of these leading organisations, both of which will continue to be supported in 2014/15.

2.15 Care Leavers will continue to be given dedicated support and advice in 2014, including scholarship funding. The University is committed to subscribing to the Frank Buttle Trust, which conferred its award for Care Leaver support at Westminster in 2006 and 2010.

2.16 Westminster's Teacher Education programme in the Further Education and Higher Education sectors has been extended in the London region through the inclusion of two additional FE colleges in the consortium formerly known as the Certificate in Education (CertEd) Consortium. As part of this expansion two new online Masters courses have been developed in Teacher education and Lifelong Learning for delivery from 2013. This forms part of Westminster's long term strategy to support the delivery of higher education within further and higher education colleges, helping to bridge learning in colleges and universities. Westminster's Teacher Education Consortium will also contribute regionally to collaborative outreach through sustaining the network established through its partnership with Oxford Brookes in the Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) formerly funded by HEFCE.



## **The UTC in Westminster**

2.17 The University Technical College in Westminster represents a major investment in the University's outreach activities. The ethos of the UTC will draw its inspiration from Sir Simon Milton, the highly esteemed and influential former leader of Westminster City Council, who sought to re-motivate young people to take responsibility for their own development and contribute to the social cohesion of disadvantaged communities. The University's activities in sponsoring the Sir Simon Milton University Technical College will also provide a significant hub for learners and their families and companies in the Westminster Employer Alliance.

2.18 An unrivalled Employer Alliance supports this development through contributions to curriculum design in the specialisms of transport engineering and construction engineering and management. Opportunities for internships and mentoring are being planned alongside technical challenges to integrate academic and vocational learning with Network Rail as the lead employer, together with Transport for London, BT Fleet, Land Securities and MACE. Students will be better prepared for the job market and will be able to keep open opportunities for further study at FE and HE levels throughout their five years at the UTC.

2.19 The new UTC will be an influential professional and education community, and the only UTC in the heart of London's West End, specialising in transport engineering and construction management. Current and former University students will be invited to contribute to the new UTC learning environment through the Graduate Mentoring Scheme from 2015/16. Partnership development between the UTC and local Academies, Free Schools and Studio Schools will also be fostered by the team of University staff involved in the UTC.

2.20 The City of Westminster College, a founding member of the Westminster Group in the 1990s, is the lead college partner and a revised curriculum offer in Engineering is being planned for delivery by the College for 2014/15 to meet the needs of students from low participation neighbourhoods in the Borough of Westminster in addition to the UTC

2.21 The current portfolio review of teacher education programmes designed by the University of Westminster will address the need to expand the range of qualifications to capture the technical expertise of staff employed in the transport engineering and construction management industries so that retiring Employer Alliance staff can teach in the UTC.

2.22 The UTC will draw students from wards across the three London boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea, whose education provision is administered through the tri-borough partnership. Travel to study time will form part of the modelling of recruitment data undertaken with Westminster City Council to ensure that travel bursaries are effectively targeted.

### **3. Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements**

3.1 Progression, Achievement and Employability are monitored routinely in relation to the KPIs identified at University level. The strategic objectives set at School and subject level are monitored annually as part of the planning cycle. The performance of the academic portfolio is monitored in parallel with the performance of students. Internal statistics are

benchmarked with Unistats data at course level. Outreach activities are informed by analysis of applicant and student data by feeder institution and borough.

3.2 The Director of Higher Education Policy is the senior postholder with responsibility for the University's policy on Access and Widening Participation, reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor.

3.3 The Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee is the lead body on behalf of the University's Academic Council with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the Access Agreements and the Widening Participation Strategic Statements. The annual Student Equality and Diversity reports are based on multivariate analysis of student characteristics and these reports inform University policy and strategy on Access and Widening Participation. Annual monitoring reports are considered by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) which reports directly to Academic Council. Papers are also prepared for the University Executive Board (UEB) both for discussion and debate, and for information on the resource allocations which support this core area of the University's activities.

3.4 Monitoring data is rigorously analysed and interpreted through the processes described. Yet the difficulty of demonstrating causality can hamper demonstration of the success of specific interventions. Changes in applicant and student behaviour during transitional periods between funding regimes inevitably pose greater challenges in terms of forecasting. The incompleteness of some data sets arising from students electing not to declare certain types of personal information, and the limitations of data on wards in metropolitan areas can also limit the applicability of some reports. For these reasons the University is working closely with peer institutions, both individually and within sectors groups such as AccessHE , Linking London and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) to share findings and case studies, and to set collaborative milestones and targets which can be contextualised by reference to broader studies of admissions, retention, achievement and graduate destinations.

3.5 Students are represented on the Learning, Teaching and Student Support Committee. Regular collaborative meetings are also held between the University's Director of Higher Education Policy and the President of the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) to take forward initiatives to support the recruitment, selection and development of students from a diverse range of backgrounds, particularly those from less advantaged communities.

### **Milestones and targets**

3.6 Longitudinal monitoring of academic progression by First Degree cohorts provides evidence of continuous achievement year-on-year. This analysis measures progression by gender, age, ethnicity, and protected characteristics for Westminster's annual Diversity report. It is notable that in the period 2009-12 academic progression of 83 -85% has been achieved by young (>21 years) female students and 78 -81% by young male students from lower socio-economic categories (SEC 4-7). This relates directly to more demanding admissions criteria which help ensure academic success.

3.7 It is significant however that these achievements have not compromised diversity across the student body. Some 42% of students are drawn from SEC4-7 groups against a

benchmark of 36%, and over 95% of students join Westminster from a state institution against a sector benchmark of 93%.

3.8 Diversity of the student body is also reflected in the broad range of qualifications on entry. Typically the UCAS tariff of new entrants comprises A level scores only for some 52% of the cohort, and the average tariff score across the University in 2012 was 300+ points, although this average masks much higher tariffs in individual subjects. Other entrants hold a combination of vocational and academic qualifications, and some mature learners hold no previous formal qualifications. From 2014/15 the range of qualifications on entry will be included as a target to be monitored through the Access Agreement so that this diversity within the student community at Westminster can be captured formally.

### **Retention and development**

3.9 The introduction of the Friends of Arriving New Students scheme forms part of the University's continuing efforts to ensure that students make a successful transition from their earlier learning environment to reduce the risk of them withdrawing in their first year. Analysis of student's educational attainment and family background indicates that students from families whose household income is higher than £25k per annum as equally vulnerable as those whom lower income groups, often as they are expected to assume greater family responsibilities when their timetable is more flexible at university level. Detailed analysis of student non-completion by subject has yielded insights specific to particular communities. Therefore the FANS programme has been funded for all student beneficiaries not solely for those on full state support.

### **Collaborative targets**

3.10 The University was the lead advocate with the Westminster Group of Associate Colleges in discussions with HEFCE for HND and Foundation Degree (FD) students progressing to Level 6 top-up to honours programmes to be excluded from the quota system. In 2012 HEFCE confirmed that direct entrants from these studies would not be included in Student Number Control (SNC) targets. This ensures parity with new fee regime entrants with high grades by ensuring parallel opportunity for study places with Level 4 entrants who have achieved AAB or ABB equivalence. This has facilitated collaborative planning for HND and FD within the Westminster Group, for 5 -10 students per annum to be offered guaranteed places on STEM courses subject to specified levels of achievement on entry to Level 4, and exit from Level 5. The progression agreement template initiated by Linking London provides the formal agreement by which these extended pathways will be administered and monitored. As HEFCE research has shown some 22% of young progressors to HE within FE Colleges were from low participation neighbourhoods in 2009-10. Westminster is committed to providing longer term admissions opportunities for future students who may not have been able to secure a place at University at Level 4 as a result of the reduced places available within the new fundable places regime.

## **4. Equality and Diversity**

4.1 Westminster's framework of policies which safeguard and develop diversity within the University community address the principles which underpin equality in terms of gender, race, religion and belief and disability. Sexual orientation is also encompassed in the

diversity policies and the University's commitment is recognised by the title Stonewall Diversity Champion.

4.4 The University is also a partner in **Westminster Enterprise Challenge**, which is the initiative of the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) President. This scheme will provide support and development for students who design their own challenge involving either two weeks or four weeks either abroad or with international communities in London. It is being piloted in 2012/13 and the selection panel is drawn from across the University and also includes external advisers. Students may apply individually or in teams for study placements, internships or volunteering projects. Where eligible some candidates are being nominated for a National Scholarship Programme (NSP) award to enable them to take up the opportunity. This scheme is being piloted in 2012/13 prior to its extension in 2013/14 and 2014/15. Students who are from protected characteristic groups and who are not in a position to travel outside London for work or education abroad experience will be supported through customised options designed collaboratively with the Students' Union. The aim of these additional options will be to provide a directly comparable set of experiences and outcomes. Additional activities planned for 2014/15 will include:

- Connected Communities projects - student volunteers working with migrant families
- Digital Exchanges - going beyond the classroom, not bound by semesters or timetables, as part of the Westminster's **Learning Futures** project.

4.5 Customised support packages for students are being designed with the Students' Union to extend the opportunities amongst the whole student body for experience of the transformative effect of study abroad, internships and short work experience periods. The Westminster Scholarships scheme will be extended to help students take up these opportunities.

**Evelyne Rugg**  
**Director of Higher Education Policy**  
**University of Westminster**

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