

# LIPA

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS

## **Access Agreement for 2015-16**

### **Section One: Fees, student numbers, fee income and fee rises in subsequent years**

We will charge all UK/EU entrants in to Level 1 (the first year) of our full-time undergraduate degree programmes in 2015-16 a tuition fee of £9,000.

We will also charge all returning UK/EU entrants in to Level 2 and Level 3 of our full-time undergraduate degree programmes in 2015-16 a tuition fee of £9,000.

This is necessary because our public funding has been significantly reduced. Increasing fee income enables us to maintain course delivery. We want to continue to offer excellent learning for students from a wide range of backgrounds. Delivering practical vocational disciplines is achieved by doing, with restricted lecture-based learning. This is resource intensive. This learning involves concentrated staff input, high quality facilities and industry-standard equipment.

The estimated number of UK/EU entrants in to Level 1 (i.e. the first year) of our undergraduate programmes in 2015-16 is 201. The estimated number of UK/EU returning students in to Level 2 of our undergraduate programmes in 2015-16 is 185. The estimated number of UK/EU returning students in to Level 3 of our undergraduate programmes is 177.

Our predicted numbers of UK/EU students in Academic Years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 are shown in the Resource Plan, table 1. In the Resource Plan, we have not added inflation. It is our intention to apply annual increases (in line with the amount set by the Government) to the tuition fees. Fee income is shown in the Resource Plan, table 3. In 2015-16, the estimated fee income above the basic fee is £1,688,085.

### **Section Two: Expenditure on additional access and retention measures**

#### **Our assessment of our access record**

As we recruit students to our undergraduate programmes both nationally and internationally, we have chosen to measure our relative performance with reference to national statistical data and sector average benchmarks (i.e. not location adjusted).

## 2.1 Recruitment of students from under-represented groups - absolute performance

Measurement of our performance is based on the following (HESA) data;  
 % of young entrants from state schools or colleges  
 % of young entrants from SEC 4-7  
 % of young students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 2 Q1)  
 % of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 2 Q1)  
 % of student population in receipt of DSA

Assessment is based on the six years of data between 2007 and 2012, as this allows an assessment of both absolute performance and performance relative to HESA PIs. In all cases, figures quoted are percentages of those student records where the data is known for the area of interest.

Year	% young entrants from state schools or colleges	% of young entrants from SEC 4-7	% of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	% of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods	% of student population in receipt of DSA
2007-8	94.3	24.8	7.9	0	3.7
2008-9	90.0	24.8	9.0	0	1.8
2009-10	90.7	28.3	11.2	12.5	16.2
2010-11	95.8	19.3	7.1	9.1	23.9
2011-12	88.3	24.5	10.2	13	24.2
2012-13	87.4	26.10	14.50	10*	24.5
<i>6 year average</i>	<i>91.08</i>	<i>24.63</i>	<i>9.98</i>	<i>7.43</i>	<i>15.71</i>

All percentages have increased, apart from our state schools or colleges and the percentage of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods. In the case of state schools or colleges, we believe the decrease for 2011-12 and 2012-13 is due to the increase of students enrolling here from our own Foundation Certificate courses, which are Level 3 non-credit bearing courses. We have clarified with HESA how to input the data for these students who have confirmed that we can input their previous school/college data prior to their study with us into their school code in their entry profile. In 2011-12 and 2012-13 LIPA was inputted as their school/college and it is this which appears to have skewed the data.

\*As far as mature students are concerned, in the official HESA Performance Indicators our percentage of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods is not registering because populations which contain fewer than 22.5 individuals are suppressed and represented as ‘.’ Our records show that we have 20 mature students, of these 2 were from low participation neighbourhoods, therefore the percentage is 10.

## Our assessment of our access record

### 2.2 Recruitment of students from under-represented groups - relative performance

Comparing the data in 1.1 with both UK-wide statistics and sector-adjusted benchmarks shows the following:

	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Target in access agreement
% young entrants from state schools or colleges	94.3 ↑	90.0 ↓	90.7 ↓	95.8 ↑	88.3 ↓	87.4 ↓	91
Sector adjusted benchmark	91.4	92.0	93.9	94.3	92.3	94.2	
UK Total	88.0	88.5	88.8	88.7	88.9	89.3	
% of young entrants from SEC 4-7	24.8 ↓	24.8 ↓	28.3 ↓	19.3 ↓	24.5 ↑	26.8 ↓	29
Sector adjusted benchmark	30.9	34.0	31.5	30.6	30.6	33.9	
UK Total	29.5	32.3	30.0	30.6	30.7	32.3	
% of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2)	7.9 ↓	9.0 ↓	11.2 ↓	7.1 ↓	10.2 ↓	14.5 ↑	12
Sector adjusted benchmark	10.0	10.3	12.5	13.2	10.5	12.8	
UK Total	9.7	10.1	10.3	10.5	10.6	11.5	
% of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 2)	0	0	12.5 ↓	9.1 ↓	13 ↑	10	12
Sector adjusted benchmark	-	-	16.5	12.3	9.2	-	
UK Total	-	-	11.9	11.7	11.6	12.3	
% of student population in receipt of DSA	3.7	1.8	16.2 ↑	23.9 ↑	24.2 ↑	24.5 ↑	na
Sector adjusted benchmark	7.0	6.9	7.4	7.9	9.4	10.8	
UK Total	4.5	4.7	4.9	5.3	5.9	6.5	

Arrows denote whether we are above or below the sector adjusted benchmark.

We have continued to perform well in terms of the percentage of the student population in receipt of the DSA, surpassing the sector adjusted benchmark and the UK totals by a significant margin. We have also performed well in terms of the percentage of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods. For the first time, we have surpassed the sector benchmark and UK total.

Although our percentage of young entrants from SEC 4-7 has increased since 2011/12, we are still under our access agreement target and the sector benchmarks and UK total. We now believe that we set our initial milestone target at an unrealistically high level and that it would be more realistic to aim for a 0.5% increase from the baseline data collected in 2008-09 each year. This would mean

that if 24.8% is classed as the baseline data – then in 2015-16 the target will be 25.8%.

In comparison with both the sector adjusted benchmarks and national totals, we have performed less well in entrants from state school or colleges and mature entrants, which was highlighted in 1.1. For % of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods, given that on two occasions our numbers have been too low to register as a percentage, we will aim to return to the level of 12.5% for 2015/16.

In assessing our performance, we always take account of the significance of these differences, as outlined in the HESA technical notes. Given our relatively small student population, coupled with a narrow focus of provision (in terms of JACS classifications), the significance of these differences could be argued to be small. HESA data suggests that the standard deviation [standard error] in every case is high. By the HESA performance measure (+/-3% from benchmark and +/- 3 x the standard error), we have not been flagged as significantly underperforming (or indeed over performing) in any area.

Whilst we appreciate the importance of continuing to work towards benchmarks, rather than the UK national statistics (and this has informed our own target setting), we will continue to adopt the methodology above in assessing our performance against targets.

**n.b.**

As explained on the HESA website in the Performance Indicator section, in 2011/12, the method used to produce the low participation indicator has changed from using POLAR2 to the more up to date POLAR3 method. The POLAR3 method has been run back to 2009/10 and the POLAR2 method has been run for 2011/12 to allow some comparisons.

We are therefore showing our data for POLAR 3 for 2009/10 , 2010/11 and 2011/12 and 2012/13

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Four year average
% of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	11.7	7.1	8.3	10.3	9.35
Sector adjusted benchmark	11.9	11.1	10.5	12.7	11.55
UK Total	9.6	10.0	10.2	10.9	10.17
% of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods	12.5	-	12.5	-	12.5
Sector adjusted benchmark	14.7	-	9.5	-	
UK total	10.6	-	10.9	12.6	

As we now have four years' worth of data it is easier to identify a clearer trend relating to POLAR3 to enable us to set a target for 2015/16. We will take the four year average as the baseline and will seek to increase the % of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods by 0.5 % in 2013/14, a further 0.5% in 2014/15 and a further 0.5 % in 2015/16. Therefore, in 2015/16 our target for the % of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods will be 10.75

### 2.3 Retention of students from under-represented groups

Our retention of students as a whole is good, exceeding all benchmarks. Retention of students from under-represented groups is good – 100% in some areas and consistently exceeding our already good institutional performance.

Year	% Young entrants studying at same HEI	% Young entrants no longer in HE	Benchmark	% POLAR 2 studying at same HEI	% POLAR 2 no longer in HE	UK Wide*	% Mature entrants with no prior HE studying at same HEI	% Mature entrants with no prior HE no longer in HE	UK Wide/Benchmark*
2006/7	89.4	6.4	8.1	100	0	9.8	100	0	15.1
2007/8	92	6.8	8.6	100	0	9.6	100	0	14.6
2008/9	95.6	3.8	7.7	100	0	8.7	90	5	13.4
2009/10	90.9	7.1	10.6	100 <sup>†</sup>	0 <sup>†</sup>	9.9	88.9	7.4	13.4
2010/11	97.5	1.3	8.4	100 <sup>†</sup>	0 <sup>†</sup>	8.9	91.7	8.3	11.7
2011/12	96.4	3.0	6.2	100 <sup>†</sup>	0 <sup>†</sup>	8.0	100	0	11.1

\*No sector-adjusted benchmark for 2007-10 available due to small population size.

† Due to data rounding and small sample size, these figures are extrapolated from HESA PIs

### 2.4 Applications from under-represented groups

Much of our WP strategy and outreach work in the period 2007-10 had concentrated on raising aspirations and encouraging applications from under-represented groups, particularly those from POLAR2 Q1 postcode areas and SEC 4-7 backgrounds. This has resulted in a small, but steady increase in applications from these areas, especially when viewed in the context of approximately 25% of applications having unknown data for SEC.

In 2013/14 we have seen a decrease in our applications from POLAR2 Q1 but at the same time we had a small increase in applications from SEC 4-7.

After piloting various fair access initiatives in 2011-12, 2012-13 was the first year in which our widening access strategies changed to include more focus on entrants.

Year	% Applicants POLAR2 Q1	% Applications POLAR2 Q2	% Applications SEC 4-7*
2007/8	12.7	15.6	25.3
2008/9	13.7	15.7	26.4
2009/10	13.6	16.8	24.0
2010/11	12.8%	16.8	23.8
2011/12	13.2	16.2	24.7
2012/13	14.3	16.6	25
2013/14	11.8	13.4	25.8

\*Approximately 25% of applications year on year are missing any SEC data

Year	% Accepts POLAR2 Q1	% Accepts POLAR2 Q2	% Accepts SEC 4-7*
2007/8	6.9	16.8	16
2008/9	10.1	14.9	18
2009/10	9.8	10.9	20
2010/11	6.7	12.5	14.4
2011/12	7	13.3	17.9
2012/13	14.2	12.3	18.3
2013/14	9.39	13.62	23.27

Our conversion of applications to acceptances experiences fluctuations. However, in comparison with 2012/13, in 2013/14 our conversion from applications to acceptances for SEC 4-7 has dramatically improved.

**nb.** the above statistics are supplied to us via UCAS, which continues to use POLAR2 data rather than POLAR 3 data.

## 2.5 Summary

Assessment of our access performance as detailed above can be summarised as follows:

Area	Performance	Notes
% of young entrants from state schools or colleges	Currently slightly below average	Although this is under our access agreement target in 2012 we believe this is due to the increase of entrants from our own FC course and the way that these have been inputted into our entry profile. We would expect to see a change in this area for 2013 entry
% of young entrants from SEC 4-7	Below average	

% of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	Above average (previously assessed as below average or average)	
% of mature entrants with no prior HE from low participation neighbourhoods	Below average	
% of student population in receipt of DSA	Very good	
Retention of students from under-represented groups	Good, particularly in comparison with sector and UK benchmark	
Applications from under-represented groups	Good	
Acceptances from under-represented groups	Average for Polar 2 Q1 in 2012/13 (previously assessed as good) Average for SEC 4-7 previously assessed as below average)	

As a result, and in accordance with OFFA guidance, we would assess our performance overall as average and therefore we need to spend 22.5% of the fee above £6,000 during 2015-16.

At present we are aiming to spend 23% of the fee income above £6,000 during 2015-16. This amounts to £381,025.

### **The balance between widening participation, fair access and retention expenditure**

The overall institutional spend in 2015-16 as a proportion of fee income above the basic fee for 2015-16 is predicted to be 23%. The proportion being spent on financial support is 5%, the proportion being spent on outreach and fair access activities is 14%, the proportion being spent on student success is 3% and the proportion being spent on progression is 1%.

We reserve the right to alter the balance of expenditure and therefore to change any related targets and milestones, should our Student Opportunity funding be reduced during 2015-16. We may also need to revisit the balance of expenditure and may need to alter our activities in light of proposed changes to the DSA.

### **How the expenditure on outreach and student success is broken down in 2015-16**

#### **OUTREACH**

**Staffing and administration costs = £89,336**

This includes the salary of the Widening Participation Manager and Widening Participation Coordinator, administration costs, collaborative project costs, costs for

purchasing data from UCAS, more emphasis on marketing activities (including the subscription to an education database and continuing with the production of marketing collateral), providing DBS checks for our widening participation casual staff, plus staff time for managing and administering contextual data and audition fee waivers and travel grants.

We have also included the cost of providing staff training for our students and graduates who we employ to deliver widening participation outreach activities.

### **Outreach activities:**

Primary school work aimed at helping children to make the transition into the LIPA  
Primary school reception £2,691.85

Activities aimed at pre 16, Yrs 7 – 11 = £46,137.41

Activities aimed at encouraging students from under-represented groups to attend the new LIPA sixth form = £2,525

Activities aimed at post 16, Yr 12 – 13 and mature learners = £10,868.67

Bursaries for participants in LIPA 4:19 16+ academy and summer schools = £2,590

Foundation Certificate fee waivers and cost of living bursaries = £71,700

Audition fee waivers and travel grants = £15,000

### **STUDENT SUCCESS**

We are committed to providing appropriate support systems and services to identify and help those experiencing difficulties with study, so that all students achieve and reach their potential.

Student support = £5,365.46

We provide an in house open-referral student support service. This is led by a dedicated Student Support Manager who offers advice and information about a wide range of issues related to student support needs, health and welfare, plus referrals to members of the student support team. This figure represent a proportion of the estimated expenditure on some of the specialist tutors, counselling and mentoring which would not be covered by Disabled Students Allowance. The proportion is based on the forecast percentage of HEFCE students that will be in receipt of the full maintenance grant.

Student Support for disabled students = £6157.91

We pay for dyslexia testing for our students and provide specialist tutors to support some of our music students, which are not funded by the DSA. This figure represents a proportion of the estimated expenditure on these areas. The proportion is based on the forecast percentage of HEFCE students that will be in receipt of the full maintenance grant.

Welfare Services from Liverpool John Moores University = £8,094.45



We buy in specialist counselling services from Liverpool John Moores University that are aimed at supporting and retaining students. This figure represents a proportion of the estimated expenditure on this area. The proportion is based on the forecast percentage of HEFCE students that will be in receipt of the full maintenance grant.

All of the above were previously accounted for in our WP Strategic Assessment, although there are some new costs in the Supporting Graduate Enterprise

Cost of attendance monitoring = £7,368.27

We monitor student attendance closely. If a student's attendance falls below a certain level, this can be a warning flag that a student may not achieve student success. If we have cases of low attendance, relevant staff contact the individual student to encourage them to improve attendance and to identify any steps that we can take to further support the student so that they can progress with their course and achieve success. This figure represents a proportion of the estimated expenditure on this area. The proportion is based on the forecast percentage of HEFCE students that will be in receipt of the full maintenance grant.

Cost of administering bursary scheme = £2,596.48

This is the estimated cost of the staff time involved in administering the new LIPA bursary and the Care Leaver bursary.

Cost of works to the Central Core = £20,352

The figure of £20,352 is equivalent to the annual depreciation charge of the estimated cost of the work to make our new building No. 68 Hope Street accessible to all students.

#### STUDENT PROGRESSION

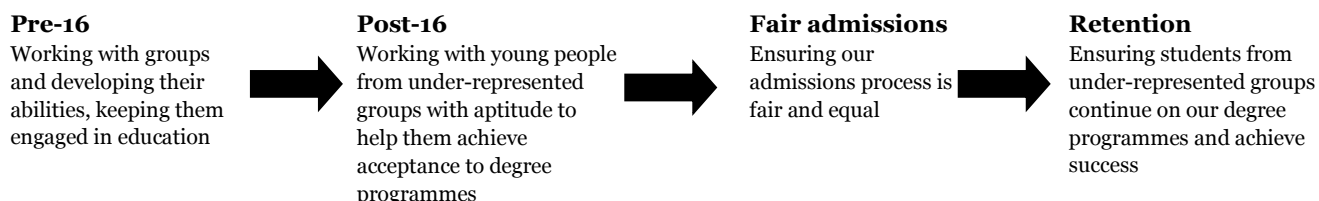
Supporting Graduate Enterprise = £12,308.60

LIPA has a range of funds available to support graduate enterprise. This figure represents a proportion of the estimated expenditure on this area. The proportion is based on the forecast percentage of HEFCE students that will be in receipt of the full maintenance grant.

### **Section Three: Additional access measures**

In 2012/13 we carried out a detailed analysis of the work we conduct for outreach, student success, fair access and financial support. We decided that whilst our financial support package, student success and fair access measures were suitable and should remain, the outreach part of widening participation required some re-invention. We therefore refocused our plans to make a stronger emphasis on working with eligible young people from under-represented groups on outreach projects. This required us to review the schools we were working with and what we were delivering in these schools. We also now seek to ensure that our post 16 outreach work is focused on young people from under-represented groups who appear to be demonstrating a strong aptitude for performing arts or making performance possible subjects so have more likelihood of being able to successfully apply to our degree programmes.

In creating our access agreement for 2012-13, we restructured our outreach plans to follow the model of the student life cycle below.



In this model, we build on outreach activities with partner schools that focus on raising aspirations amongst students up to the age of 16.

We then work with smaller groups of students with an aptitude for the performing arts at the post 16 stage. We also provide a range of activities related to fair access for students at the post 16 stage and continue with our activities that provide support to students once they have enrolled here to ensure they are retained and achieve success.

We will continue to follow this model in 2015-16.

Our intention was (and remains) to target schools and colleges, which could give us access to students, who are from lower socio-economic backgrounds or from neighbourhoods where HE participation is low. During 2012-13, we assessed information available about the local schools that we work with that was available in the public domain. This includes indices of school GCSE and A-level results and the percentage of students in receipt of free school meals. This suggested that some of the schools we were working with during 2011-12 and 2012-13, no longer had such high percentages of students from under-represented groups, so in 2013-14 we have withdrawn from some previous partner schools and are concentrating our efforts on 8 local schools which appear to have high proportions of students from under-represented groups.

Our experiences of operating our outreach activities with schools during 2011-14, have taught us that it is much harder to get partner schools to take up our outreach services, since the AimHigher funding for schools was removed.

This means that we are working with fewer students within the schools. It is also harder for us to recruit students from under-represented groups to attend our activities here from year 10 onwards from these schools alone.

We have therefore been spending more time and budget on profile raising within the partner schools. We have also been committing more time and budget to marketing campaigns aimed at a wider pool of local schools and colleges to encourage their students who match the HESA WP PIs to join our programme of wp activities based here aimed at Yr10 and upwards.

During 2013-14, we have introduced a new registration process for all applicants who are in Yr10 and above who we want to engage in our activities here. The registration process enables us to ensure that all the people who we are inviting on to these projects match Widening Participation Performance Indicator criteria of either being from a low participation neighbourhood or, from a family background where the main earner is in an occupation classed as NS-SEC 4 – 7. Applicants who are in receipt of Free School Meals and applicants who are care leavers are also eligible.

We have two new educational ventures which may have a significant impact on our future widening access work.

The first of these is the opening of our new LIPA Primary School. Given our location, we expect that some of the children attending will be from under-represented groups. To ensure we have a good proportion of applicants from these groups, each year we will be working in partnership with local children's centres and state funded nurseries in the local area to attract parents from under-represented groups. The primary school provides us with an excellent opportunity to encourage the students to consider going onto study at a Higher Education institution such as ours when they are 18. However, the first cohort of students, who join the primary school in 2014, will not be eligible to enroll into HE until 2028, so this initiative is very long term.

The second of these is our bid to open a sixth form college. If successful, this could start in September 2015.

We expect that the opening of the sixth form college will affect how we engage with secondary schools with sixth forms and local FE colleges, who will now view us as a competitor.

During 2014-15 therefore, we believe we will need to change some of our partner schools yet again. We will focus on working with partner schools without sixth forms who have high proportions of students from under-represented groups.

During 2015-16, we will introduce recruitment activities to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply to the LIPA sixth form college.

We will also ensure that we publicize all widening participation activities aimed at post 16 students to the students in the LIPA sixth form college, who are from under-represented groups, so that they feel encouraged to apply to LIPA degrees.

### **Pre-16 Outreach**

#### **Primary school work, School Reception – 6**

Research continues to support the truism that the earlier you start the better – if you want to affect life opportunities. In September 2015, 52 children should be moving in to Year 1 and 52 children will be starting in the two reception classes of the LIPA Primary School. During 2014-15, the widening participation emphasis will be on trying to encourage people from under-represented groups to enroll in reception. As the children eventually move into Yr5 and Yr6, the widening participation team will undertake activities designed to raise the aspirations of any of the children in the

primary school, who are from under-represented groups to study a performing arts or making performance possible subject at higher education, when they leave Yr 13. This will not come into effect until our 2019-20 access agreement. We may also undertake some recruitment activities aimed at encouraging more people from under-represented groups to apply to join the reception classes for the primary school in September 2016. We are also interested in becoming a provider of free early education for disadvantaged two year olds. If we are given the go ahead to provide this, it should automatically increase the proportion of people from under-represented groups attending the primary school.

### **Secondary school outreach**

In 2015-16, we intend to work with 8 partner schools without sixth forms in the Merseyside area. These will be selected on the basis of contextual data to ensure good targeting principles are being applied. We intend to work with four schools that we currently have partnerships with but we will need to identify a further 4 schools to work with (to replace the current 4 schools that are partners who all have sixth forms)

### **School Yrs 8 – 9**

#### **Outreach work within the schools**

During 2013-14, we have identified the need to be more flexible in the way that we deliver outreach in our partner schools, because not all schools wish us to run our workshop activities after-school. Some wish us to run activities in curriculum-time. We will allocate the same budget for outreach activities to each school, but will determine with each school on an individual basis the best way to deliver our outreach activities to meet our mutual objectives. In each school, we will continue to focus on engaging students in Yrs. 8 and 9 in workshop activities to raise their awareness of performing arts and making performance possible courses. In the course of running these activities, it is anticipated that we will identify enthusiastic and hard-working young people from under-represented groups, who we will seek to interest in progressing onto our next set of activities (called the progression framework) that works with smaller groups of students in Yrs 10 and 11, 12 and 13.

### **Yrs 10 and 11**

#### **Progression framework**

Students identified as enthusiastic and hard-working in Yr9 in the schools will be invited to join us at audition/interview events in the partner schools or here in Yr10. Other students from non-partner schools will also be given the chance to take part in audition/interview events here. We will only select students who match the Widening Participation Performance Indicator criteria (of either being from a low participation neighbourhood or from a family background where the main earner is in an occupation classed as NS-SEC 4 – 7. Although, applicants in receipt of Free School Meals and care leavers are also eligible) to join the progression framework. This is made up of the following activities:

#### **Yr 10 initiatives**

- A welcome event held here in January to explain the programme and introduce the students to us (also attended by new Yr 11 students)

- An intensive skills project for Yr10 students held here in April (3-day LIPA XTRA)
- Free tickets to attend shows here (if there is a suitable production)
- Non-residential intensive five day summer school including a performance at the end of Yr 10 (August 2016)

### **Yr 11 initiatives**

- A welcome event for new Year 11 students who join at this stage held in January
- Careers focus day (February)
- Free tickets to attend shows here (if there is a suitable production)
- Opportunity to attend an Audition/interview preparation event for joining the LIPA sixth form (held between March and May)
- Non-residential summer school including one day workshop to evaluate their progress and to help them plan their futures (July)

### **Yrs 10 and 11 Making Performance Possible Profile Raising**

Previously, we have been able to gain high levels of interest from students, interested in progressing to Acting, Dance or Music/Singing courses, but have had less interest from students wishing to study one of our making performance possible subjects. This reflects a general trend in applications to these programmes. We therefore provide one day experiences in making performance possible activities for students, who have an aptitude in art, business studies, science, and technology to ignite their interest in Sound Technology, Theatre Design and Theatre Technology. These activities require intensive marketing to attract appropriate numbers of students from widening participation target groups.

### **Post 16 outreach**

At this stage, it is important to be working with the most enthusiastic and hard-working students from under-represented groups and to support them in their progression to HE courses or professional training. We will therefore continue to work with the young people from under-represented groups, who have come through our progression framework.

### **Yr 12/1<sup>st</sup> year of college**

- an intensive residential project for Yr 12 here (3-day LIPA Get Set) which includes workshops on audition and interview preparation: June /July

### **Yr 13/2<sup>nd</sup> year of college**

- Audition and interview workshops to prepare students for the process of studying performing arts and related subjects at Higher Education level
- Music theory workshops to help demystify this for students from underrepresented groups

### **Mature students workshops**

These are aimed at students who will be aged over 21 or over on entry to LIPA in 2016, who are studying a performing arts subject or a subject relevant to making performance possible or an access course in local colleges. The intention is to make them aware of relevant courses here and to help raise awareness of the benefits of progressing to HE as a mature student.

### **Miscellaneous work with schools and colleges**

Each year, we receive requests from schools and colleges to either arrange one-off visits to explore here or for us to be represented at their own careers fairs. In cases where the schools and colleges appear to have quite high proportions of under-represented students we endeavor to accommodate these requests. We have a target of attending 20 external fairs and hosting 10 school visits.

### **LIPA 4:19 summer school bursaries**

Nearly 500 young people attend our Saturday and Sunday performing arts academy for four to 19 year olds. This is open to people from all abilities and provides weekly classes in acting, dance and singing. Every year we provide fee remission to two committed participants in the first year and second year of the 16+ academy, who are interested in progressing to HE and are from a neighborhood where participation in higher education is low.

We also provide fee remission for up to two students aged 13 and over on each of the LIPA 4:19 week-long summer school activities for young people, who come from neighbourhoods where participation in Higher Education is low.

### **Collaborative working between institutions**

Working with local schools and colleges to develop partnerships for progression and to identify talent is a central theme in our outreach work. In the past, Aimhigher was instrumental in coordinating outreach activity with schools, colleges and communities. We will therefore continue to explore ways to work closely with the other HEIs locally to develop partnerships, which support the progression of young people and to ensure there is parity in delivery and that students get the best possible local provision. This includes working on a joint venture targeting a particular student group each year. Our WP Manager is part of the NORTHCLASS group, a collection of Northern England Universities which work together to support learners from the care system. We are also members of the local Merseyside Care Leavers Association. We will continue to build on partnerships with local theatres, which can engage young people on a different level and demonstrate the progression from Higher Education into the professional world. We will also explore the scope for working collaboratively with other specialist Performing Arts institutions.

### **Fair Access**

#### **Use of contextual data in admissions**

We currently invite a high proportion of applicants to audition/interview. We make admissions tutors aware of contextual data during the auditioning/interview process

to enable admissions tutors to add context to their decision-making process on an individual basis. In terms of performance at audition/interview, the data may also help us recognise that an applicant may have had fewer opportunities to gain experience in the subject they wish to study here, so will add the context of informing the applicant's potential to benefit from the course. This data may therefore be used to inform borderline decisions and may lead in some cases to offers being made that request a lower level of UCAS tariff points at Level 3 qualifications. It is anticipated that there will be some extra time required in training staff and administering this process. Therefore, this cost is included in this access agreement.

### **Audition fee waivers and travel grants**

We hold between 50 and 60 audition/interview events per year on our own premises. For the last three years we have offered audition fee waivers and travel grants to applicants invited to audition /interview, who we identify as being from POLAR2 Q1 (this was based on postcode data on the applicants' UCAS form). Subject to evaluation of the scheme at the end of 2015, we intend to continue to offer the audition fee waivers and travel grants during 2015-16, for 2016 entry. The cost of the staff time for managing and administering this process has been included in this access agreement.

### **Foundation Certificate Fee Waivers**

For 2016 entry, we envisage that we will be offering three private Foundation Certificate courses in Acting and Musical Theatre; Commercial Dance; and Popular Music and Sound Technology. Given the high level of competition for places on performing arts degrees, these intensive year-long courses are designed to help talented and hard-working students develop their potential and skills further. This means they may, therefore, be more likely to be able to progress on to degree level study at a performing arts institution, which receives many more applications than places. The tuition fee is in the region of £9,000 for each Foundation Certificate. Students need to self-fund this and their living costs. In 2015-16 we intend to offer six free places combined with a bursary of £3,000 as a contribution towards living costs. Selection will be based on evidence of their financial situation, whether they are from a Low Participation neighbourhood and/or from a qualifying socio-economic background (NS-SEC 4-7) and on their aptitude and potential to benefit from the course.

### **Student success**

In our 2012-13 access agreement, we did not include spending on student support. Yet to ensure that we continue to retain under-represented students and help them to achieve success here we believe we do need to invest in this area and so have included some of the student support costs in this access agreement. Other costs are currently covered by the Student Opportunity Fund.

### **Student Progression**

Supporting Graduate Enterprise which was previously accounted for under Student Support has now been included under Student Progression.

## **Financial support for students**

### **LIPA bursaries**

We intend to offer a LIPA bursary of £500 to all of our students from England, Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland who can demonstrate to us that they in receipt of the full Maintenance Grant/Special Support Grant. Anyone who can demonstrate this, will receive a bursary of £500 in February of each year of their studies, provided they are still in attendance.

### **Other financial support**

We also offer a £1,000 Care Leaver bursary to students who are under 25 and who can demonstrate that they have been in care prior to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday for a period of six months or more. This bursary is offered in recognition that care leavers may need assistance towards their accommodation costs for vacation periods. Bursaries are awarded to qualifying full-time UK undergraduates who meet the terms of their offer, irrespective of year of entry.

## **Section Four: Targets and milestones**

Our Access Agreement includes stretching targets, identified in the Resource plan, table 7a and table 7b.

Table 7a includes targets for HESA Widening Participation Performance Indicators. These include aspirations to improve our percentage of young entrants from SEC 4 -7 and from Low Participation Neighbourhoods. As flagged in our last access agreement, the targets for young entrants from SEC 4-7 looked overly ambitious. We have revisited the targets and have chosen a different baseline dataset.

Table 5b includes targets for outreach work and fair access initiatives (which have been described in detail in section three). Some of these have been altered in light of the setting up of our new primary school and our bid to open a sixth form college.

## **Section Five: Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

The Founding Principal/Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the Access Agreement. It will be monitored and evaluated by the Teaching and Learning Board which is a sub-committee of Council, which is the governing body here. Council receives minutes and reports from the Teaching and Learning (T and L) Board. The Widening Participation Manager produces an annual report on monitoring and evaluation reporting on milestones and targets (tables 7a and 7b to T and L. In the light of national new requirements for evaluation, in 2012/13 we produced a new plan for both monitoring and evaluation.

During 2013/14, our ITC department have constructed a new WP participant database which should be operational by end August 2014. The participant data will



now be stored to show a record of each individual with whom we work so that we will be able to record attendance records and it should be easier to evaluate outcomes.

We have also redesigned our processes for registering on our programmes and are collecting baseline information about each person at the point that they first register. All of our questionnaires used to evaluate each wp activity have also been redesigned so we now include a focus on assessing long-term impact, as well as evaluating the activities to assess how we might improve them in the future.

### **Evaluation of milestones and targets as identified in table 7a**

In November each year, we produce a report from our own student records system on our enrolments for that year of entry, which gives us a good picture of our WP progress against targets. We also purchase UCAS data at the end of each admission cycle (so for 2015 entry, we expect this data will be available in January 2016). This data enables us to gain early soundings on actual performance against the milestones in table 7a.

### **Evaluation of outreach milestones and targets identified in table 7b**

When we first engage with a new WP participant (excluding large-scale one off interventions or careers fairs and ad hoc school and college visits), we aim to collect the following information from them (with parental consent as necessary):

age, gender, whether they come from a low participation neighbourhood disability, ethnicity, family background of HE, care leaver status, which school/college is attended. We will also attempt to collect information on the chief wage earner but sometimes it may be difficult to collect this comprehensively and it may not be possible for us to undertake assessment of this data to assign NS-SEC status.

Please note: in some of our outreach work delivered off-site in schools and colleges, it is not always possible to collect the above data.

Once we have an individualised record for each person, in our newly configured participant database, we should be able to record and show the number of interventions engaged in.

With the possibilities afforded by the database redesign, we are also currently working through a plan to identify which students we can track over time in a manageable and proportionate manner.

With some time for familiarisation, review and development of evaluation, it is our intention to try to garner and use data from partnerships with schools which attempts to link data on

attainment and progress at school/college and  
changes in perception – measured longitudinally

For most activities, it is most appropriate for evaluation to take place at the completion of a specific event of intervention, but, with the opportunity for longitudinal measures of evaluation, we will also endeavour to capture and record

attitudes to HE at the point of registration with WP here which could be compared in the longer term to later attitudes and or outcomes.

All year 13 students, with whom we have worked during 2014/15, will be surveyed in October 2015 to identify whether or not they entered HE, here or elsewhere.

## **Section Six: Provision of information to prospective students**

We will publish our Access Agreement on our website.

We will also publish information for applicants and students on the fees that we charge and financial support that we offer on our website.

A detailed fact sheet is likely to be prepared in March 2016, which will be sent to all students who have accepted places on our degree programmes. Information on fees and financial support will also be provided when we send out enrolment information to new entrants in August each year (after A-level results).

For returning students, information on fee and financial support arrangements will be publicised on our intranet and will be sent out in March/April 2016 and in August before students are due to re-enrol.

We will provide such information to UCAS and SLC as they reasonably require to populate their applicant-facing web-services.

## **Section Seven: Consulting with students**

We do not have a student union. We have an Independent Student Board (ISB) that puts on student led shows and events. Therefore we have chosen to consult with our ISB about this access agreement. This consultation exercise was undertaken by the CEO, who invited three ISB members to review our access agreement proposals. They understood and welcomed our proposals.

Students and graduates deliver our outreach activities. We anticipate 25 students and graduates will be similarly engaged in 2015-16.

## **Section Eight: Equality and Diversity**

In January 2012, the Directorate (our senior management team) undertook a detailed review of our arrangements for meeting our obligations in relation to the Equality Act 2010. We decided on a way forward that was proportionate given the relatively small size of the institution.

We reaffirmed our commitment to equality of opportunity for all and to ensuring that all our policies are developed with an awareness of their consequences for different groups of people.

We therefore take steps to ensure that we understand the effect our policies have, or potentially have, on different groups. This is to ensure that our policies are not

discriminatory (either directly or indirectly) and to help us understand how they can advance equality and foster good relations between the various groups.

We also conducted an EIA on our previous 2013-14 Access Agreement, which led us to conclude that it would have a positive impact on at least two groups who share a protected characteristic. This is because BME and disabled people are, statistically, over-represented in target groups involving people from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where HE participation is low and people from low income backgrounds. These groups are known to be under-represented in HE.

We undertake regular monitoring of applications, enrolments and retention to assess the impact of the policy including progress against targets. This will inform future activity.

The results of this monitoring will be reported to the Directorate, the Equality and Diversity Committee and, in summary form, Council.

It is envisaged that the monitoring of the Access Agreement will ultimately be aligned with the monitoring arrangements already established by the Equality and Diversity Committee. However, we find it difficult to identify appropriate external comparators for some of our student and staff equality data so there are therefore limitations to the conclusions we can draw from the data available to us.

We have an active Student Support Team which each year provides sessions on various aspects of inclusive teaching and making reasonable adjustments. The team has developed a range of materials to support learners.

We have re-established staff and student diversity support groups in order to help us identify any adverse consequences resulting from any of our policies.

In the last year we have also reviewed the terms of reference and membership of our Equality and Diversity Committee with a view to achieving a more action-oriented approach to equality issues.