Queen Mary University of London

Access Agreement 2017-18

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   This is the 2017-18 Access Agreement for Queen Mary University of London (QMUL). It demonstrates the university's commitment to maintaining its strong tradition and good track record in supporting widening participation and fair access in the face of higher tuition fees and the new arrangements for funding higher education introduced in September 2012. It builds on the 2016-17 Access Agreement submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), sets out QMUL's tuition fee charges for new entrants from September 2017, and describes the programme of additional access measures that will be put in place to ensure that we continue to recruit and support talented students from all backgrounds.

1.2   *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education* was published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in April 2014. The three overarching themes of a whole student lifecycle approach, the need for evidence-based practice, and the importance of effective collaboration and partnership are reflected throughout this access agreement, and addressed specifically in sections 4 and 6.

SECTION 2: TUITION FEE CHARGES FROM SEPTEMBER 2017

2.1   Background

2.1.1   QMUL's five-year Strategic Plan makes it clear that widening participation is at the heart of the university's vision and ambitions. It sets out our plans to achieve the highest international standards in education and research, while continuing to serve our local communities through public engagement and the promotion of opportunity to individuals less favoured by financial or social background. These objectives reflect QMUL's ethos, as summarised below:

"QMUL has a proud record of providing a university education of the highest quality to a diverse population of students, including many from backgrounds lacking financial or social privileges. We celebrate the resulting diversity of our student body and aspire to be recognised as a prime destination for high-achieving students from lower participation backgrounds."[1]

2.1.2   According to 2014-15 HESA undergraduate student data, 57% of QMUL's students from known ethnicities are from black and minority ethnic groups, and 11% of undergraduate students have declared themselves as disabled. Women make up 53% of the undergraduate student cohort. In addition, we have an excellent record in attracting talented students from a wide range of social backgrounds. We are proud of the diversity of our students and of our reputation in promoting widening participation and the social mobility that this supports.

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[1] 'Queen Mary University of London, Strategy 2014 – the next five years', strategic aim 1 page 6

2.2   Charges for tuition fees for new entrants in 2017-18

2.2.1   QMUL's proposed tuition fees for new entrants from September 2017 are set out in Table 1 of the 2017-18 Resource Plan. These are for full-time students only, as QMUL does not currently offer part-time undergraduate courses.

2.2.2   We have an excellent track record in outreach and widening participation and a strong commitment to supporting students throughout the course of their studies. The cost of maintaining and enhancing performance in these areas is included in this methodology.

2.2.3   For 2017 entrants the university is proposing to charge £9,250 for all full-time courses.

2.2.4   Students on year-in-industry placements will be charged £1,850 for this year for all courses.

2.2.5   Year-abroad students will be charged £1,385 for the year that they study abroad.

2.3   Real-terms inflationary increases from 2018-19

2.3.1   Tuition fees for new entrants for all courses will be £9,250 from September 2017. Subsequently, QMUL will apply annual increases to fees each year in accordance with the inflationary increases allowed by Government regulations.

SECTION 3: EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES

3.1   Assessment of QMUL's access and retention record

3.1.1   QMUL has a strong record in recruiting students from under-represented groups, and we work hard to support student retention, success and progression. As in the 2016-17 Access Agreement, we have assessed our proportion of under-represented students as slightly above average, and our record on retention as in need of further improvement. Evidence for this assessment is found in the table below, which uses HESA data for the two-year period from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

	QMUL actual performance	HESA benchmark for QMUL	HESA location-adjusted benchmark for QMUL
2014-15 entrants			
young full-time first-degree entrants from state schools	**87.9%**	84.5%	81.4%
young full-time first-degree entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3)	**4.2%**[2]	8.3%	4.6%

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[2] See section 7.1.3 regarding POLAR3 and specific challenges for London HEIs

	QMUL actual performance	HESA benchmark for QMUL	HESA location-adjusted benchmark for QMUL
young full-time first-degree entrants from National Statistics Socio-economic Classification groups (NS-SEC) 4-7	**37%**	25.9%	27.9%
2013-14 young full-time first degree entrants not in higher education in 2014-15	**5.5%**	3.9%	
2013-14 entrants			
young full-time first-degree entrants from state schools	**86.6%**	83.9%	81.2%
young full-time first-degree entrants from low-participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3)	**4.6%**	7.9%	4.6%
young full-time first-degree entrants from National Statistics Socio-economic Classification groups (NS-SEC) 4-7	**34.7%**	25.3%	26.8%
2012-13 young full-time first-degree entrants not in higher education in 2013-14	**5.7%**	3.7%	

3.2   Estimate of expenditure on additional access and retention measures

3.2.1   In 2017-18 we will commit 30% of the additional fee income raised from tuition fees above the basic fee level to support additional outreach and retention measures. Details of how this significant level of additional investment will be spent are set out in Tables 4 and 5 of the 2017-18 Resource Plan. The total countable expenditure for the 2017-18 Access Agreement is £9.592 million.

SECTION 4: PROGRAMME OF ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

4.1   Demonstrating a strategic approach in the light of changes to the fair access landscape

4.1.1   Research has indicated that widening participation activities have the greatest impact if they are delivered in a sustained way, as part of a long-term partnership with target schools. The importance of this is also highlighted in the *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education*. In 2017-18 QMUL will deliver an extensive outreach programme that will focus on raising student aspiration and achievement and on providing appropriate information, advice and guidance to support students in making the right choices for successful progression to higher education. This will combine projects involving a wide range of schools and colleges with the development of long-term structured interventions with a smaller number of partner institutions.

4.1.2   We have taken effective steps to identify schools with the largest proportion of students from groups that are under-represented in HE, which we believe will give us the best chance of reaching those who could most benefit from our activities. Previously, we utilised standalone metrics in helping us to determine which schools to target and we had some concerns that this method could be overly simplistic. Now, our approach makes use of a number of metrics in combination, from which we calculate a point-score for every state school in our target boroughs. This score is then used to help us determine which schools to prioritise. This new methodology was introduced in the 2015-16 academic year, and we will review its fitness for purpose once it has been in place for a full year.

4.1.3   We have also revisited our decision-making process for initiatives that involve students applying to us directly (for example, our summer schools). We understand that young people are affected by multiple dimensions of disadvantage, and our approach attempts to recognise this. As with our schools-targeting rationale, we take into account a range of widening participation indicators to calculate a point-score for each application. This method enables us to prioritise students impacted by the largest number of factors that may negatively influence higher education progression. It also allows us to, where beneficial, factor in project-specific aims, for example allocating points for female students in a STEM activity or male students in a literacy scheme.

4.1.4   In 2017-18 QMUL will remain a high-level strategic partner with two schools: the Drapers' Academy in Havering and St Paul's Way Trust School in Tower Hamlets. As the lead education partner in St Paul's Way, now an all-through school from primary to sixth form, senior members of staff from the university chair the Trust Board and the Governing Body, and we support the school through a balanced programme of short- and long-term initiatives. The next development is for St Paul's Way, now graded outstanding by Ofsted, to become an academy, and lead in the development of a multi-academy trust. QMUL has agreed to support this ambitious development as lead sponsor, and we will extend our support to other schools in the multi-academy trust. We will also continue to work with the Drapers' Company as co-sponsor of the Drapers' Academy in Havering. This is already part of a multi-academy trust, incorporating two primary schools. Our support includes the provision of three governors, the involvement of academic staff and continued support for the development of the Drapers' Academy sixth form.

4.1.5   The two schools have very different student cohorts. St Paul's Way has a high percentage of pupils of Bangladeshi heritage and the Drapers' Academy, which is situated in an area of considerable social and economic deprivation, has a high percentage of white British pupils. Both schools continue to improve, and now have students enrolling at a range of universities following the introduction of A-level programmes. QMUL remains committed to supporting their ongoing improvement and success through these strategic partnerships.

4.1.6   We continue to work collaboratively, developing partnerships with a range of external organisations, universities and charities with similar widening-participation aspirations (detailed in section 4.4). In addition, we are exploring the development of a new strategic partnership with the Sutton Trust. This will

involve the delivery of long-term, targeted outreach programmes with the potential to contribute to existing Sutton Trust programmes and to develop new ones. As part of this partnership we are collaborating on a new two-year Pathways to Coding initiative, supporting students interested in coding throughout Year 12 and 13. The programme will constitute a mix of sessions with both an academic and a careers focus, incorporating taster sessions, a residential hackathon, e-mentoring with current students and talks from interesting industry figures and academics.

4.1.7   We have a five-year Widening Participation and Enhancing Opportunities (WPEO) Strategy, which sets out our institutional approach up to 2020. Details can be found at http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/docs/policyzone/150851.pdf. The strategic priorities of the WPEO Strategy, supported by the work undertaken within the Access Agreement are:

- Maintaining a whole-institution approach to widening participation throughout the student lifecycle and working collaboratively to achieve this
- Developing longer-term and more intensive interventions, ensuring these are embedded and sustainable
- Reviewing the targeting of all areas of work to ensure that it is focused on those who would benefit most. This will be done by:
  - ➢ redefining the targeting methodology for outreach work, using school-based and individual indicators
  - ➢ refining the targeting for student retention and support work
  - ➢ using data about the progression of graduates to support the development and delivery of work focused on graduate outcomes
- Grounding work in available research and data and growing the evidence base through better evaluation and monitoring of widening participation work throughout all areas of the student lifecycle.

4.2   Widening participation and outreach programme

4.2.1   The 2017-18 outreach programme will address the strategic priorities described in section 4.1. Examples of our longer term targeted work are:

(i)   We will continue to work closely with St Paul's Way Trust School and the Drapers' Academy, offering an intensive programme of outreach support to students studying secondary and post-16 education in both schools. We will also continue to support teachers at both schools.

(ii)   We have developed a programme of intensive support for primary-age children. This currently includes the delivery of a Primary Coding Club and Reading Challenge. We have prioritised our primary school work to benefit our long-term partner schools. The formation of the Drapers' Multi-Academy Trust (which includes primary schools) and the development of St Paul's Way into an all-through-school from Reception to Year 13 has allowed us to do this more effectively.

(iii)   We have developed, and continue to deliver, long-term projects such as *Bridge the Gap,* an access to medicine and dentistry programme. This work is focused on targeted secondary schools and colleges and their feeder primary schools, and aims to raise aspirations and awareness of medicine and dentistry as career pathways among students from groups that are significantly under-represented within the profession. It offers age-appropriate interventions at three stages – stage 1: Year 6, stage 2: Year 8-9, and stage 3: Years 10-13. The programme works with experienced external partners such as the Brightside Trust, who provide support for the e-mentoring strand of the programme. In addition, support is offered to parents and carers and teachers through online resources and an insight event held at the university. This events provide parents and carers with information on how they can support their children in pursuing medicine or dentistry, and give them an opportunity to take part in some medicine and dentistry taster activities. All students who have completed the *Bridge the Gap* programme, and who meet QMUL's minimum entry requirements, will be guaranteed an interview for a place on the undergraduate dentistry or medicine course.

4.2.2   Care leavers are significantly under-represented in higher education. QMUL will continue to enhance its work to support the progression of young people in care and care leavers. We originally worked with Buttle UK to design and implement a new programme of support measures, including improved data collection on care leavers. We now have a defined package of support for prospective students embedded within the university. Our strategy includes proactively contacting students who declare via the UCAS tick box to advise them of the provision available. We have also set up our own monitoring of students at pre-enrolment stage to capture additional information as required.

4.2.3.   We have been developing a growing number of outreach events for young people in care, care leavers, their carers and local authority staff. Collaboration has been central to this and we now have established links with local authorities and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to continue this work. Students in Year 12 now benefit from intensive one-to-one support via the Undergraduate Shadowing Scheme. Additionally, we have played an active role in supporting the development of the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL). We remain committed to supporting the network as it develops, and the associated National Network for Collaborative Outreach.

4.2.4   QMUL works in partnership with the UNITE Foundation to offer the UNITE Foundation scholarship scheme to five students each academic year. This scheme is targeted at young independent students who have previously been in Local Authority care, or residing in a Foyer or similar residential provision for young homeless adults. It offers the provision of free accommodation and a cash sum of £4,000 per year to each student for the duration of their academic course.

4.2.5   In addition to the intensive work with partner schools detailed above, we will deliver a broader outreach programme targeted at students from lower socio-economic groups, students from low-participation neighbourhoods and students who are the first in their family to consider university. This programme includes

the innovative work of the Centre of the Cell (a bioscience education centre at the heart our medical school). It is supported by an ongoing review of our schools-targeting methodology to ensure we are working where we can add most value. In 2017-18 we will continue to develop this full range of activities, including work from primary school upwards:

- Primary
  - An enhanced primary campus-visit programme for schools.
- Secondary
  - An enhanced secondary school campus-visit programme specifically to support Year 8 and Year 9 students making GCSE choices
  - Developing subject-specific support, including a range of summer schools, to feed into that offered for post-16 students.
- Post-16
  - Continuing to provide enhanced subject-specific support through intensive and multiple interventions, for example a summer school programme with pre- and post-event follow-up activities, and the *Bridge the Gap* programme.
- Transition
  - Offering a programme of transition activity to students in Years 12 and 13 in key target schools and colleges. This programme of work will continue to add value and support other areas of the outreach programme, for example by including care leavers in this activity.
- Work with parents and carers
  - QMUL has always recognised the importance of parents' and carers' influence on young people's aspirations and future education. We have incorporated parents and carers into our general information, advice and guidance work where feasible. In 2017-18 we will run a programme of specific work for parents and carers, delivering talks and activities at parents' evenings.

4.2.6   We use online applications for our intensive outreach programmes. This enables us more easily to gather detailed information about the applicant's socio-economic background and whether the student has any close family members who have been to university. Additionally, through our engagement in the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) we can now undertake further postcode profiling of potential outreach participants. Students are selected if there is good evidence that they are in one or more of the key target widening participation groups. Whole-group activities are targeted at schools and colleges that have a high percentage of students from low-participation neighbourhoods, or who are entitled to free school meals. The ongoing refinement of our schools and college targeting ensures we are working with appropriate cohorts.

4.2.7   In 2017-18 QMUL has allocated £205,000 for the outreach programme delivered through the central widening participation team. This will allow for the continuation and expansion of work with parents and carers and development of further in-depth programmes. Measurable outcome-based targets have been set for these activities and these are set out in Table 7b of the Resource Plan.

4.3   Student retention, success and progression programme

4.3.1   We are committed to supporting student success and progression, and we will deliver a programme of activities to enhance this. Using the student lifecycle as a framework for the evaluation and targeting of initiatives, and building on quantitative analysis of institutional data, the programme will work with QMUL's academic schools and professional services departments to support delivery of a range of interventions to address student engagement, retention and success. These will include a focus on areas such as the monitoring of student engagement, measuring and closing any attainment gap for black and minority ethnic (BME) students, development of staff in academic advising roles and seeking to enhance the first year experience to improve the transition to higher education. All projects funded to support this will have a detailed project plan with specific targets and milestones. QMUL has established a dedicated team to drive forward this work, and it is monitored and evaluated though the QMUL Engagement, Retention and Success Steering Group.

4.3.2   The programme will be underpinned by an evidenced-based approach. This is demonstrated in our plans to undertake research to identify any gaps in the performance of BME students. In 2016-17 we will complete an analysis of all students at QMUL to confirm any gaps in attainment compared with entry qualifications. This will include widening participation and BME cohorts. The admission of BME students will also be reviewed to compare the proportion of applications with offers and enrolments, controlling for entry qualifications and degree subject. Findings will enable us to consider the need for a programme of work to support BME students through the student lifecycle, closing any attainment gaps.

4.3.3   QEngage is a system of monitoring individual students' engagement in their programme of study. It flags recent engagement such as attendance at lectures using institute-specific markers via a high-level dashboard, identifying students at risk of disengaging in a timely manner and enabling a consistent approach to QMUL-wide student engagement monitoring. We will continue to consolidate and improve our systems for monitoring and managing student engagement.

4.3.4   A specific area of focus for progression work is to target students in receipt of a QMUL bursary for additional support. An analysis of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey showed that, when compared against degree outcome, bursary holders were less likely to progress into a graduate-level job than those who did not receive a bursary. As a result QMUL's Careers & Enterprise Centre has piloted a number of projects to address this issue whilst continuing to monitor progression outcomes for bursary holders.

4.3.5   QConsult is supported by J.P. Morgan and places bursary holders into mini-consultancy projects in East London businesses. Local organisations are able to solve a business problem whilst building the employability of students who, although high-achieving, may lack the social capital to compete for graduate jobs. Whilst conducting their projects the students receive advice from relevant industry professionals and training and support on project management, presentation and professional skills from QMUL's Careers & Enterprise team. The impact of this

project in supporting students from lower-income families was recognised in the 2016 Guardian University Awards, where QConsult was the winning entry in the Employability category. JP Morgan also won the 2016 Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) award for Careers Service Engagement for its work on QConsult, after being nominated for this award by QMUL. The project was described by the judges as "a wonderfully affirmative example of employer and university working together to support students from low-income backgrounds achieve their full potential".

4.3.6   QMentoring connects current students with QMUL alumni, or a UK-based professional, who act as mentors by providing first-hand insights into their industry. Targeted at students from lower-income families, the scheme runs for six months, helping students to set and achieve career goals and making a significant impact on students' confidence, knowledge and awareness of wider career opportunities. The evaluation and monitoring of QConsult and QMentoring will determine the specific support delivered to bursary holders in future years.

4.3.7   In addition to delivering specific, targeted projects QMUL is developing an innovative initiative to broaden the undergraduate educational experience for all students through a personalised module involving active learning and co-creation. The aim is to create an integrated and credit-bearing programme that supports the development of social and cultural capital, and enhances the student experience and the contribution that students and graduates are able to make to society. The proposed initiative will support graduates' employability, but will also focus on maximising their future opportunities in the broadest sense and will ensure that our students achieve outcomes commensurate with their talents. It is hoped that the new undergraduate module will be introduced in September 2017.

4.3.8   QMUL's Disability and Dyslexia Service will support students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, from the point of application through to graduation. The Disability and Dyslexia Service includes a full-time Mental Health Co-ordinator who leads on support for students with mental health issues. The service will assist applicants to the university and contact each successful applicant who declares a disability to begin the process of identifying the support that the student will need to engage successfully with their academic programme. Once the student has enrolled, the Disability and Dyslexia Service will work with them to ensure that they have access to the reasonable adjustments to which they are entitled and to support them in realising their academic potential. The service takes QMUL's strategic objectives as they relate to employability very seriously, and works with students to ensure that they graduate with independent learning skills.

4.3.9   QMUL has responded to the various changes that have been made to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) from the start of 2015-16, and has provided funding for disabled students required to contribute £200 towards the cost of their DSA-funded computer on a means-tested basis through the university's hardship funds. In terms of the changes that will take effect from Academic Year 2016-17 (i.e. the removal of non-specialist human support such as note-taking and library assistance), we have ring-fenced £50,000 to ensure that disabled students will not be disadvantaged by this development. The Disability and Dyslexia Service will

assess students who require this form of support, and will provide it where appropriate. In addition, we are undertaking a project to gauge how inclusive and accessible our curricula are and this will help inform the response to Government announcements about developing inclusive learning practices.

4.3.10 QMUL's Students' Union runs multiple schemes every year which contribute to the transition of school leavers into university as well as enhancing retention and success. One example is the annual peer-mentoring scheme which pairs first-year students with students in the later years in the same academic school to provide support. The scheme trains current students to provide pastoral support to new students, helping them develop confidence and make a smooth transition into university life. The Students' Union also runs the Halls Representatives Scheme alongside Residential Support, which aims to increase opportunities to meet people in residences and create additional support networks for students.

4.3.11 The Students' Union runs a scheme aimed at enhancing student employment. Working with QMUL's Student Services department, the Students' Union has developed and piloted the QM Skills Award. This provides additional training opportunities for students engaged in areas such as societies, volunteering, club sport, and student representation as well as allowing them to log their activity and then reflect on the skills they have developed in the context of their future employment or progression to further study.

4.3.12 Other examples of the Students' Union contribution to this work include:

- development of a club sport hardship fund so that students in financial hardship can participate in sport
- training for course representatives to ensure that everyone feels able to stand for this if they wish
- subsidising the costs of running for the Students' Union elections so that financial costs are not a barrier
- providing short-term welfare loans of up to £100 to combat the possibility of needing to use payday loan companies.

4.3.13 Data has shown that QMUL undergraduate students identified as meeting widening participation indicators – such as coming from a low-participation neighbourhood or low-income family – have progressed to postgraduate study at an equal or higher rate compared to students not meeting these indicators. However, evidence suggests that students within these categories are not necessarily making informed choices about their postgraduate studies. The Careers and Enterprise Centre provide impartial information, advice and guidance to all undergraduate students through one-to-one appointments, workshops and online resources to support students in making informed choices about their future career direction.

4.3.14 QMUL will provide targeted support for students from widening participation backgrounds with an interest in postgraduate studies. An example of this is QResearchers, a project that employs undergraduate students as research assistants on projects in a variety of disciplinary fields. This enables students to undertake a

dedicated piece of research and to liaise with academic staff to build skills and networks that will support future postgraduate study.

4.4   Collaborative working between institutions

4.4.1   QMUL understands the impact of well-targeted collaborative work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other external partners. We are a partner in Advancing Access, a national collaboration of 24 selective universities. Through this collaboration we work with schools and colleges to develop and deliver continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and advisors that supports student progression to selective universities and courses. Advancing Access has a particular focus on schools with low levels of progression to such universities. We deliver the majority of CPD events and resources online to allow easy access for all schools, regardless of their location. Advancing Access complements the work already carried out at QMUL and other partner institutions by engaging those areas that have historically been hard to reach and may be in geographic 'cold spots'. It is a cost-effective approach to equipping teachers and advisors with the information they need to advise students with confidence. Initially funded through HEFCE's collaborative outreach network scheme, further funding options are currently being explored.

4.4.2   The University of Warwick and QMUL entered into a collaborative agreement in 2012, and a substantial branch of this partnership is widening participation. Both institutions' outreach teams are continuing to share good practice and draw on experience of working to widen participation in two quite different geographical areas to enhance and strengthen existing initiatives and approaches. Following successful evaluation of our collaborative summer school we have continued to deliver a five-day residential summer school split across both institutions' campuses. Maintaining a focus on medicine and health pathways, this collaborative event allows participants to understand better different subject and career options as well as exposing these participants, who will be likely to consider only local universities, to a different region and the idea of geographical mobility. QMUL and the University of Warwick will continue jointly to evaluate all collaborative activities to ensure that plans for activity in 2017-18 are evidence-based.

4.4.3   We will continue to commit resources to collaborative work with charities and other external organisations involved in widening participation and access. This includes partnerships with organisations such as the Sutton Trust, and work with groups such as Into University, a well established programme that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to higher education. We will continue to work in partnership with the Brilliant Club, which recruits, trains and places PhD students in non-selective state schools and sixth-form colleges serving low-participation communities. We will also support the Barts Cancer Institute and their collaboration with the Access Work Placements Project, to embed their week-long summer school programme, giving Year 12 students first-hand experience of medical research.

4.4.4   QMUL has previously held the Buttle UK Quality Mark for supporting the progression to higher education of young people who have been in care and care

leavers. Having played an active role in local and national networks since 2013, we will continue to work in collaboration with national bodies such as the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers, and across London with Local Authorities, HEIs and other relevant organisations.

4.4.5   We are part of the Russell Group Widening Participation Association, which has provided a forum for collaborative work across these highly selective institutions for many years. As well as providing peer support for senior widening participation staff, the group plans and delivers collaborative activity including the biennial Teachers' Conference and practitioner networks.

4.4.6   Widening Participation leads from the colleges of the University of London meet once a term to share best practice and focus on common issues. In 2016, the group agreed to share project-outcome data to enable colleagues to benchmark the performance of their suite of activities. This recognises the importance not just of evaluating activity internally, but also of benchmarking across the sector. Initial data-sharing will begin in the summer of 2016, looking at outcomes for summer schools and multi-intervention projects. The results will inform QMUL's future strategic planning.

4.5   Financial support for 2017-18 entrants

4.5.1   QMUL will provide targeted financial support for students from low-income backgrounds through the QMUL Bursary Scheme.

4.5.2   The QMUL Bursary Scheme will offer a £1,571 cash bursary per year of study to 2017-18 undergraduate entrants who come from households with a residual income of £25,000 or less and who qualify for income-assessed UK government financial support for living costs for higher education students.

4.5.3   We believe that students from slightly better-off backgrounds also need financial support to help with the costs of study. The Queen Mary Bursary Scheme for 2017-18 undergraduate entrants will therefore offer a cash bursary of £1,256 per year of study to students who come from households with residual incomes of between £25,001 and £42,600 and who qualify for income-assessed UK government financial support for living costs for higher education students.

4.5.4   The QMUL bursary schemes described above will apply to full-time undergraduate students who start a course at QMUL in the academic year 2017-18. Students who started a course before the 2017-18 academic year, and who are already in receipt of a bursary, will continue to receive their bursaries based on the current schemes described in the relevant Access Agreement.

4.5.5   In addition to the main bursary schemes, we have allocated £50,000 to support undergraduate students who are asylum seekers, children of asylum seekers or those holding Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK. Two students per academic year will be awarded a tuition-fee waiver plus maintenance support. This will consist of a non-repayable grant worth the equivalent of a Student Finance Maintenance Loan and a QMUL Bursary. In addition, all asylum seekers or children of asylum seekers who meet the academic programme requirements

will be eligible to pay the 'home rate' of tuition fee while their asylum application is under consideration by the Home Office. In 2016-17 QMUL will commit funding for two further bursaries for asylum seekers, in addition to those funded through the Access Agreement.

4.5.6   We will provide a Hardship Fund of £250,000 to provide assistance for students who may need extra financial support to access and remain in higher education. The fund will be used to assist students who need extra financial help to meet specific costs that are not already met from statutory or other sources, to help students in financial hardship by providing emergency payments for unexpected financial crises, and to intervene in cases where a student may be considering giving up their course because of financial problems. As described in section 4.3.9, provision has also been made within this allocation to address issues arising from changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance from September 2015.

4.5.7   From the 2016-17 academic year students studying undergraduate programmes at the University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) will be registered through QMUL. They will, for the purposes of this access agreement, be considered the same as QMUL students. They will therefore be eligible for all the above outlined support, subject to meeting the same eligibility criteria as other QMUL students.

4.5.8   We recognise that we commit a high level of financial resources to student support, and a comprehensive review of this is taking place in 2016. Full details are found in section 6.2.2. We will use the evidence from this review to restructure the balance of spending between financial support, outreach and student success and progression for the 2018-19 Access Agreement.

4.6   Use of contextual data in admissions

4.6.1   We are committed to attracting the most able students from a range of backgrounds, and to ensuring that our admissions processes are able to identify students of outstanding achievement and potential. The focus of our work in 2016-17 is on developing policy and procedures for a contextualised admissions policy that will be data-driven and will use a range of weighted contextualised admissions factors to flag high-potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These contextualised admissions factors may then be taken into account at one or more stages of the admissions process, including invitation to interview, offer-making and confirmation.

4.6.2   The development of a contextualised admissions policy is being overseen by the Marketing Recruitment and Admissions Group (MRAG) chaired by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) to ensure responsibility and accountability for this development. Final responsibility for approval of the policy rests with the Senate. The introduction of a contextualised admission policy requires reliable access to information sources and robust systems to support automatic flagging of relevant applicants, and developing these can be a lengthy process. At present it is planned that a comprehensive QMUL contextualised admission policy will be introduced in the 2018 year of entry (for admission in September 2018). In the meantime, a specific pilot scheme is under

development that focuses on specific groups of students, such as care leavers and refugees. We plan to implement this in the 2017 year of entry.

4.7   Level of investment as compared to arrangements for previous years

4.7.1   QMUL will in 2017-18 once again commit 30% of the additional fee income raised from tuition fees above £6,000 to support additional access and retention measures, and the detail of how this will be spent is found in Tables 4 and 5 of the 2017-18 Resource Plan. The total countable expenditure for the 2017-8 Access Agreement is 9.592 million.

4.7.2   QMUL commits substantial resources to support outreach work in addition to the funding allocated through the 2017-18 Access Agreement. This is set out in Table 4 of the 2017-18 Resource Plan.

4.8.3   Examples of this additional spending are the resources committed to areas of work such as the links with St Paul's Way Trust School and the Drapers' Academy and additional outreach work that takes place with local post-16 institutions. We also allocate substantial financial support to the award-winning Centre of the Cell biomedical outreach centre based in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Academic schools offer taster days and lectures, summer schools, targeted workshops and activities organised around events such as National Science and Engineering Week. Other activities include cs4fn (computer science for fun), an innovative widening-participation campaign that uses the web, printed magazines and a programme of school outreach activities to inspire young people about computer science and its interaction with other disciplines such as mathematics, physics, biology, philosophy and psychology.

4.8.4   QMUL's Centre for Public Engagement has a major focus on outreach work. It builds upon the extensive tradition of the university in public engagement that can be traced back to the foundation of the People's Palace in the 19th century, and continues to the present day with established activities that include the Centre of the Cell, cs4fn, People's Palace Projects and the Mile End Institute. It further reinforces our commitment to engaging with individuals and groups outside the university including schools, government agencies and politicians. The Centre for Public Engagement pulls together existing components of excellence in outreach and engagement activities throughout the university and enhances their profile. It supports student retention, widening participation and social mobility at all levels. Further details are found at http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/

SECTION 5: PROVISION OF CLEAR INFORMATION TO EXISTING AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

5.1   Provision of clear information to existing and prospective students

5.1.1   We are committed to the clearest possible communication of information to all our students. Information on new tuition-fee levels and financial support arrangements from September 2017 will be available on the QMUL website from July 2016, together with information about fee levels and financial support for existing students. All information will make it clear that no student will be required to pay

back loans until after graduation and until they reach specified minimum thresholds of earnings.

5.1.2 We will provide clear information to applicants and students about our courses and entry requirements so they are able to understand exactly what they will be studying. This will be provided as web-based information and through our printed prospectus. To support this there is work ongoing to ensure a clear and coherent content strategy for all QMUL communications.

5.1.3 Provision of clear and accurate information to teachers and to parents and carers is important, as they are in a position to advise and influence students about the financial as well as academic aspects of their future studies. This can play a crucial determining role in deciding whether or not to progress to higher education. This work is undertaken across the university, for example by colleagues in the Advice and Counselling Service who provide information to offer holders and current students, and the UK Student Recruitment Team who provide information, advice and guidance for schools and sixth-form colleges through regular publications such as a parents' and carers' guide and communications targeted at teachers and career advisers. Academic Schools also provide information to prospective students, parents and carers, and teachers who wish to find out more about their courses and studying at QMUL.

5.1.4 Sessions on student finance are incorporated into outreach activities and included in information, advice and guidance work with schools and colleges.

5.1.5 We will ensure that clear and timely information on our tuition-fee levels and financial support for students is provided for UCAS and the Student Loans Company to enable them to populate their applicant-facing web services.

5.1.6 In addition to providing clear information to existing and prospective students, we also communicate with colleagues across the institution to share best practice on widening participation. An internal e-network for colleagues working with schools and colleges has been developed enabling users to share knowledge, post queries and receive answers relating to work with young people. Annual seminars on key widening participation initiatives will be delivered alongside a series of workshops focused on the effective evaluation of outreach activities to support and update staff working across QMUL

SECTION 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Current monitoring and evaluation strategy

6.1.1 QMUL currently monitors the measures set out in its access agreement by:

(i) using annual HESA statistics and data provided through our Student Information System as clearly measurable evidence of progress towards meeting targets and milestones set out in Annex B;

(ii) rigorous evaluation of individual outreach and retention projects, with full evaluation reports produced for each project to inform future planning and to ensure effective targeting.

6.1.2   In addition, QMUL is a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). Being part of HEAT provides us a central database for recording data on outreach activities, including at individual participant level. In the short term, this is allowing us to make efficiencies in how we record and report on our projects and, in the long term, it will enable us to track participants in our outreach initiatives through their education journey. This will provide us with a significant new insight, as previously we have only been able to monitor the trajectory of participants if they enrolled in study at QMUL. Over the long term, we believe that this information will further improve our understanding of the impact of different initiatives and feed back into future project planning. Due to the long-term nature of progression tracking, we will be able to start utilising this insight from 2017 onwards.

6.1.3   The senior strategic group responsible for monitoring the access agreement is the OFFA Access Monitoring Group, which is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning).

6.2   Developing an evidence-based framework for widening participation

6.2.1   The approach described in section 6.1 has provided QMUL with a sound basis to evaluate the effectiveness of individual widening participation activities, develop and improve them when necessary, and assess them for value for money. We have a dedicated post within our widening participation team to drive this work forwards, and we have developed a five-year Widening Participation Evaluation and Monitoring Strategy which will run alongside our 2015-20 Widening Participation and Enhancing Opportunities Strategy. This document sets out our vision for building on our existing foundation of evaluation and monitoring processes in a way that adds value to the institution as well as the wider sector. Our long-term goals include working with QMUL academics to develop more sophisticated evaluation methods, establishing a youth consultation scheme to enable more meaningful feedback opportunities, and exploring HEAT's potential in tracking groups of non-participants in order to provide a comparator group to those who participated in an outreach initiative.

6.2.2   Our strategy also includes a commitment to evaluating the impact of our financial assistance measures. As acknowledged elsewhere in this document, QMUL commits a high level of resource to bursaries and as such considers assessing the impact of this kind of support to be of high importance. In March 2016 we started work on a mixed-methods research project which includes analysis of progression and bursary datasets and a large-scale student survey. When this is completed in late 2016, we will share findings with the sector in order to add to the evidence-base about bursary impact.

6.2.3   Another example of our commitment to contributing to the evidence-base through undertaking research projects is the access to medicine and dentistry programme *Bridge the Gap*, which started in September 2012. A PhD student registered at QMUL is undertaking a four-year study of the programme as the basis for her research. The study follows *Bridge the Gap* between 2013 and 2016. It will involve the collation of documents and resources developed for the project, and

interviews with selected stakeholders (including the children and young people involved in the scheme) over the four-year period. The study will provide a longitudinal evaluation of the scheme, and help inform subsequent thinking about widening participation interventions.

6.2.4   In these ways we will ensure that evidence-based evaluation is embedded into new projects as well as long-term partnership work. Our strategy has directed the development of a common framework for the evaluation of established projects such as our summer-school programme, transition activities, information, advice and guidance work and school-visit programme. This features greater emphasis on an approach that sees evaluation as an integral part of project planning, built in from the earliest stages and sustained past the project end, encompassing robust data-collection processes, varied data collection methods including surveys and focus groups, and tracking participants to assess long-term impact. Our approach also includes mechanisms for ensuring that the evaluation 'feedback loop' is complete, with findings from individual project evaluations feeding into wider programme design as well as the next iteration of the project.

SECTION 7: TARGETS AND MILESTONES

7.1   Setting targets and milestones

7.1.1   QMUL reviewed its targets for the 2016-17 Access Agreement, and agreed a challenging new set. We have chosen to maintain most of these, and extend them to 2020-21. We have set four new targets: one to reflect a new collaborative project with the Sutton Trust, one that is based on offers made to participants in our summer-school programmes, and two to reflect our programme to work to support student progression. The targets and milestones are set out in Tables 7a and 7b of the 2017-18 Resource Plan.

7.1.2   We have a strong record in attracting students from groups currently identified as under-represented in higher education, including state-school students, students from NS-SEC classes 4-7, and disabled students. We understand the challenge of sustaining this in the light of the substantial increase in tuition fees from September 2012 and our institutional objective of enhancing the quality of undergraduate intake through higher entry requirements for competitive courses. It is because we recognise the challenge of maintaining our above-sector benchmarks performance in widening participation that we have chosen to allocate a high percentage (30%) of the additional fees to access measures.

7.1.3   The targets and milestones are set out in Table 7a of the Resource Plan. We believe that these are challenging in the context of the current higher education environment and QMUL's position as a leading research institution. They include achieving a yearly percentage increase in the proportion of students from low-participation neighbourhoods using the POLAR3 categorisation. This is particularly challenging as the re-categorisation of low-participation neighbourhoods based on the implementation of POLAR3 data has had a significant impact on HEIs that target outreach activities at students based in London, where there are now fewer postcodes in Quintile 1.

7.1.4 The proportion of first-year full-time first-degree students at QMUL in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) has increased over the three-year period from 2011-13 to 2014-15. We aim to ensure that this progress is maintained in light of uncertainty over the DSA and any further changes to tuition fee charges. We have set a target to ensure that this increase is maintained over the next five years. Recognising that DSA is the current HESA Performance Indicator for Disabled Students, we will retain this as our institutional measure. This will be reviewed should there be any further confirmed changes to DSA in the future.

7.1.5 QMUL has committed significant resources to supporting and improving student retention, success and progression. This is reflected in a target to improve the successful completion rate for our students over a five-year period. For this target we will use baseline and reporting data from our own Student Information System rather than HESA data, as this will allow us greater flexibility to generate and analyse detailed reports.

7.1.6 The 2016-17 Access Agreement has a five-year target based on the recruitment of students from National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) classes 4-7. QMUL has performed very well against this metric, and the most recent HESA data demonstrated that our performance improved once again in 2014-15. However, this target has been removed from the 2017-18 Access Agreement as HESA will not publish NS-SEC data after 2016, and it has been discontinued as a national widening participation performance indicator. It is noted that the development of new UK performance indicators for widening participation is being explored, and that "experimental statistics" will be published in 2016. QMUL will develop a new target to replace the one based on the NS-SEC performance indicator when the datasets for the new widening participation indicators become available.

SECTION 8: CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

8.1 Involving students in drawing up the Access Agreement and organising outreach activities

8.1.1 We value the contribution made by our students to both the planning and delivery of our widening participation programme. Submission of the 2017-8 Access Agreement was managed by an OFFA Access Monitoring Group that was chaired by the Vice-Principal (Student Experience, Teaching and Learning) and reported directly to the QMUL Senior Executive. The group comprised appropriate senior managers from the university and four representatives from QMUL's Students' Union: the President, Vice President for Welfare, Vice President for Education and Vice President, Barts and the London.

8.1.2 We aim to develop our capacity to facilitate more student involvement in widening participation activities and build on our partnership with the Students' Union by collaborating more closely on some of the Students' Union initiatives aimed at enhancing retention, success and progression detailed in section 4.3.

SECTION 9: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

9.1 Compliance with responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

9.1.1 The purpose of the 2017-18 Access Agreement is to support and encourage progression to higher education from groups currently under-represented. Target groups identified as under-represented in higher education include state-school students, students from low-participation neighbourhoods, and disabled students. The access agreement also supports a fair-access policy that seeks to ensure that all applicants are assessed fairly to identify whether they are appropriately qualified to succeed in the relevant academic programme. No aspect of this access agreement is likely to have an adverse eeffect on any member of the nine key groups defined as having protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

9.1.2 QMUL is an international and diverse community, and promoting equality is essential to make it a world-class institution. We are committed to providing an environment for students and staff where respect is shown to all and where everyone is enabled to achieve their full potential. The university has a comprehensive action plan to ensure that it fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010, and this supports the objectives of the 2016-17 Access Agreement in a number of key areas. There are detailed actions plans to:

- enhance gender equality for staff and students
- reduce the attainment gap by ethnicity and investigate the withdrawal of black and minority ethnic students
- enhance access to QMUL's buildings and virtual environment
- ensure that disabled students and staff feel supported at work and study, and that disability awareness is raised among students and staff
- promote a culture in the university where staff and students can be themselves
- ensure adequate facilities and policies are in place to allow the practice of religion and promote good interfaith relations
- ensure students of different ages have access to support and facilities required.

9.1.3 Full details of work in each of these areas can be found at http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/equalityobjectives/index.html. These are in the process of being updated and will be considered by the QMUL Equality and Diversity Steering Group at their meeting in May 2016.

9.1.4 All the activities in the widening participation programme described in the Access Agreement are open to everyone in the target cohorts of under-represented groups. Selection is based on this alone, and applicants are judged against clear criteria that are discussed and agreed with participating schools and delivery partners. All activities are advertised widely to targeted schools and colleges to ensure maximum take-up.

9.1.5 Activities described in the strategy have been designed to ensure that they will appeal to everyone in the relevant target groups. For example, science and engineering summer schools are designed to cover a wide range of engineering

subjects to try to encourage higher take-up from girls, who often do not apply for these activities in the same numbers as boys. Section 6 of the Access Agreement describes how all outreach projects will be evaluated rigorously, and patterns of take-up will be monitored as part of this process.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: Queen Mary University of London

Institution UKPRN: 10007775

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16a_01	Access	**HESA T1a** - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase the percentage of full-time first degree students from low participation neighbourhoods to 6.3% by 2019-20	No	2013-14	4.6%	5.1%	5.3%	5.7%	6.1%	6.3%	
T16a_03	Access	**HESA T7** - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase the percentage of full-time first-degree students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance to 8.8% by 2019-20	No	2013-14	7.5%	7.8%	8.0%	8.5%	8.5%	8.8%	
T16a_04	Student success	**Other statistic** - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Increase the successful completion rate for full-time first-degree entrants still in attendance at 31 July on year of entry to 93 % by 2019-20	No	2013-14	89%. See commentary for explanation	90.5%	91%	91.5%	92%	93%	Up to date appropriate Baseline data is from Queen Mary's Student Information System. For 2013/14 this is the percentage of full-time first-degree entrants with home fee status who were still in attendance on 31 July in the year of entry, and who successfully completed a 3, 4 or 5 year course by 2013/14.
T16a_05	Access	**Other statistic** - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase the percentage of participants attending intensive outreach activities belonging to key target WP groups to 99% by 2018-19	No	2014-15	85%	85%	95%	98%	98%	99%	Becoming members of HEAT will allow us to more efficiently target and monitor participants in our most intensive activities (e.g. Summer Schools and Science Practical Schools).

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16b_01	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver intensive, multi-intervention primary school activity with four primary schools by 2019-20	Yes	2014-15	1 primary school	3 primary schools	4 primary schools	4 primary schools	4 primary schools		
T16b_02	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver primary school visit programme up to ten schools, 300 participants, by 2019-20, (having revised the Primary School visit programme to ensure maximum impact).	No	2012-13	100 participants	210 participants	270 participants	300 participants	300 participants		Baseline set at 2012-13, as programme was unable to run in 2013-14.
T16b_03	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To deliver a school visit programme for targeted secondary schools in east and north London	No	2013-14	350 participants	450 participants	450 participants	470 participants	500 participants		
T16b_04	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To deliver a programme of Information, Advice and Guidance sessions, working with students, their parents or carers, and staff.	No	2013-14	667 participants	19 sessions involving a total of 760 participants	21 sessions involving a total of 820 participants	23 sessions involving a total of 920 participants	25 sessions involving a total of 1000 participants		
T16b_05	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Deliver a collaborative event with the University of Warwick, targeted at students from both London and the Coventry and Warwickshire area.	Yes	2013-14	30 participants	30 participants	30 participants	30 participants	30 participants		Number of participants kept at a steady state as will be increasing the level of intervention with each cohort.
T16b_06	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver a series of intensive subject specific activities for year 8 - year 12 students in targeted schools. This will include activities such as Summer Schools.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A New target	180 participants	200 participants	200 participants	200 participants		New target

						Baseline						
T16b_07	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To deliver a programme of transition-support activities for students studying in Years 12 and 13 in collaboration with key target schools and colleges.	Yes	2013-14	56 participants	60 participants	60 participants	60 participants	60 participants		Number of participants kept at a steady state to ensure depth of support.
T16b_08	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To deliver a mininum of three new activities targeted at young people in care, care leavers and/or their carers	Yes	2013-14	27 participants	30 participants	35 participants	35 participants	40 participants		
T16b_09	Access	Other (please give details in the next column)	After a pilot programme in 2015, we will deliver a series of new activities specifically designed to engage with parents and carers supporting young people into higher education. We will deliver an additional five activities by 2019-20.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A New target	2 activities	3 activities	4 activities	5 activities		
T16b_10	Access	Operational targets	To partner with the Sutton Trust on a new Pathways to Coding programme, supporting 40 students throughout Year 12 and 13 via at least five different activities.	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A New target	40 participants	40 participants	40 participants	40 participants	40 participants	New target
T16b_11	Progression	Student support services	To deliver targeted support to lower-income and first in family students through the QConsult project	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A New target	40 participants	40 participants	50 participants	60 participants	65 participants	
T16b_12	Progression	Student support services	To deliver targeted support to lower-income and first in family students through the QMentoring project	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	N/A New target	35 participants	40 participants	50 participants	50 participants	55 participants	