

1. Introduction

St Mary's has a long history of providing education for the disadvantaged having been founded in 1850 to train teachers for poor Catholic families by the Catholic Poor Schools Committee. Widening access is framed within the University College's mission:

St Mary's prepares its students for flourishing lives, successful careers and social commitment through excellent, research-enriched teaching in a strong community of mutual respect based on our Catholic ethos and identity.

The University College continues to fully support widening access and since 2001 has successfully embedded widening participation in its structures and practices. It is also delivered through our Strategic Plan 2011-16 in which the University College outlines its aims to:

To facilitate the entry into St Mary's of students whose background usually makes progress to Higher Education less likely. (Strategic Objective 1E)

To ensure that the student learning experience takes into account diversity and the needs and contributions of the individual. (Strategic Objective 2B)

St. Mary's regards this Agreement as another means of demonstrating its commitment to the original principles upon which the University College was founded.

The University College is also committed to equality and diversity and aims to 'foster an environment in which all staff and students can realise their full potential through the development of their skills and abilities, regardless of their background' (Equality and Diversity Policy Statement 2012).

This Access Agreement 2013/2014 sets out the fees that the University College intends to charge. It also sets out the context for its fair access activities, including contextual data together with the current and additional interventions to widen participation and improve retention. There are four strands to the St Mary's University College's fair access activities. The University College has set these out according to the student journey:

1. Outreach;
2. Pre-Entry support;
3. Supporting Students during programme of study;
4. Employment preparation.

Outreach activities will build on and be continued through working collaboratively with appropriate partners. The opportunity will also be taken to extend the activities on retention. This Access Agreement includes outcomes and targets for both outreach and retention.

2. Context

Commensurate with its foundation and mission, the University College has a well established and successful programme of widening access activities, which has been developed with partners in local education authorities and in a variety of schools and FE Colleges.

The Vice-Principal (Students and External Affairs) oversees the policy and programmes for widening access. The Widening Participation Officer runs the outreach programmes and we are actively involved with the AccessHE and the new Aimhigher London South. The University College's Admissions Policy, administered centrally through the Registry, is reviewed annually to ensure the promotion of wider access to higher education. St Mary's seeks to give an offer or interview to all those who have the potential to meet the entrance requirements. We are also developing progression agreements to ensure that widening participation activities to raise aspirations are linked to routes into higher education.

Linking widening access policies and activity to the University College's Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy is regarded as a key activity. This will ensure that we provide an appropriate learning experience for those with 'non-traditional' qualifications and support for those with no previous background in higher education. These links help to ensure support for students in their academic work, both through programme specific initiatives and a centrally co-ordinated system of other support (including learning and skills support tutors, skills workshops and advice sessions). Cross-University College involvement in this is ensured through the Teaching and Learning Committee, which has representatives from all academic schools and associated professional service departments. The Teaching and Learning Committee reports directly to the Academic Board which is the overarching academic decision making body of the University College.

3. Contextual Data Analysis

3.1 Widening Access

We have included the historical contextual data from a study carried out in 2011, which demonstrates the performance of the University College in widening access. This was included in the Access Agreement 2012-13 updated where applicable, and shows a good record on widening access as measured by the parental background of students, social class and family income. Our 2012/13 Access Agreement includes provision for a Student Experience Data Officer which will enable this data to be tracked and updated.

Figure 1 below demonstrates the number of full time undergraduate students whose parents have no background in higher education (HE). Figure 2 shows the same data excluding those that did not know or did not give information. This shows that half of all undergraduate students fall into this category. This means that the majority of students are first generation into HE.

Figure 1 Actual number (left) and percentages over data known for full-time 1st year entrants and their parental education (Number with known data $N= 2,642$). Key: YPHE = Students with parental background in HE; NPHE = Students with no parental background in HE



Figure 2 Actual number (left) and percentages over data known for full-time 1st year entrants and their parental education (Number with known data excluding “don’t know” & “information refused” N= 2,197).

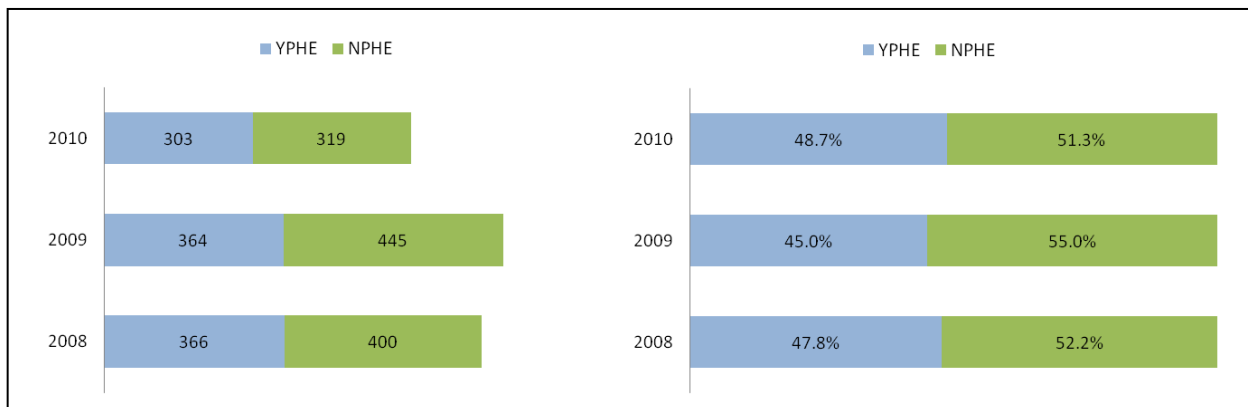
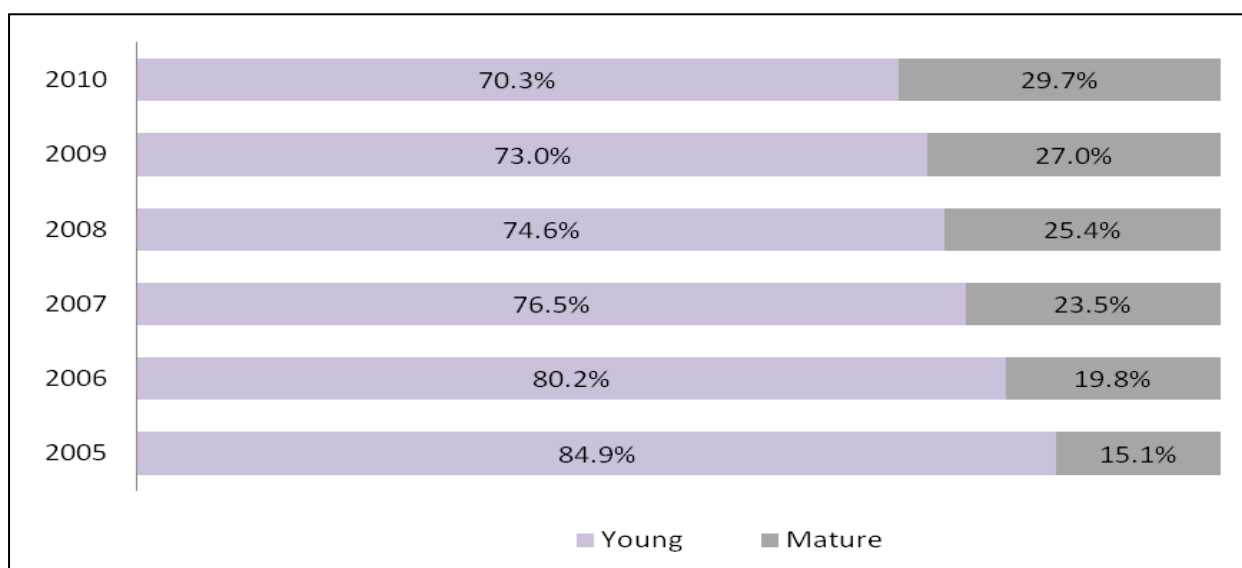


Figure 3, below, demonstrates that the University College is also successfully diversifying the age profile of its student body as set out below.

Figure 3 Age profile of student body.



The University College has diversified the qualification base of its young students as can be seen from Figures 4 and 4.1 below, accepting more BTEC qualifications than in 2006. For mature students, the University College has always accepted a wide range of qualifications, allowing students to prove their ability for higher education through several non-traditional routes.

Figure 4 Figure Percentages over the data known for the qualifications on entry for young full-time entrants.

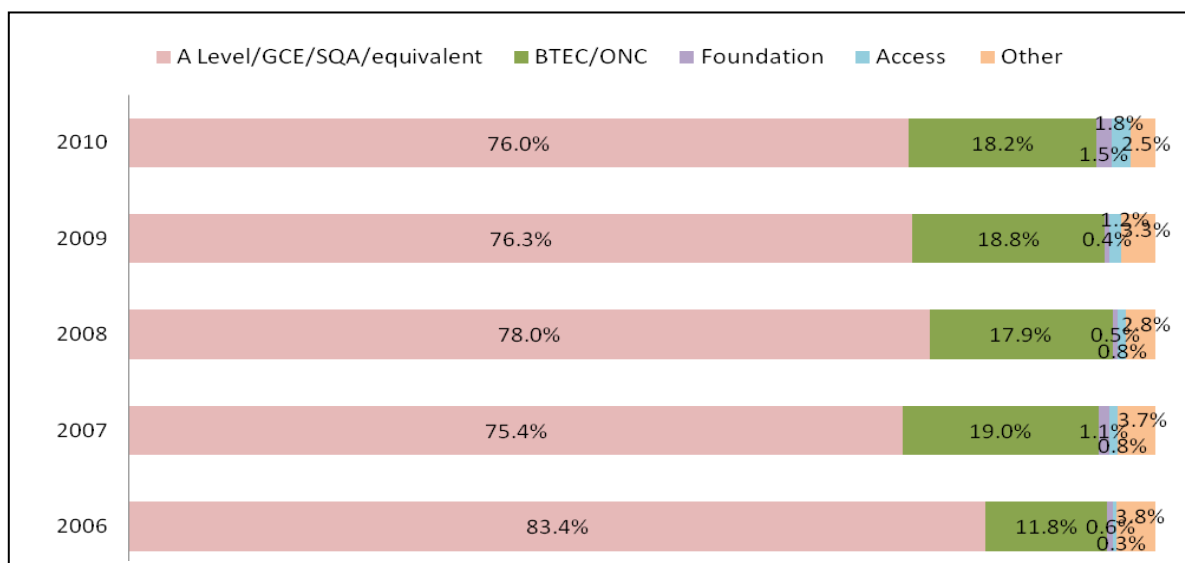
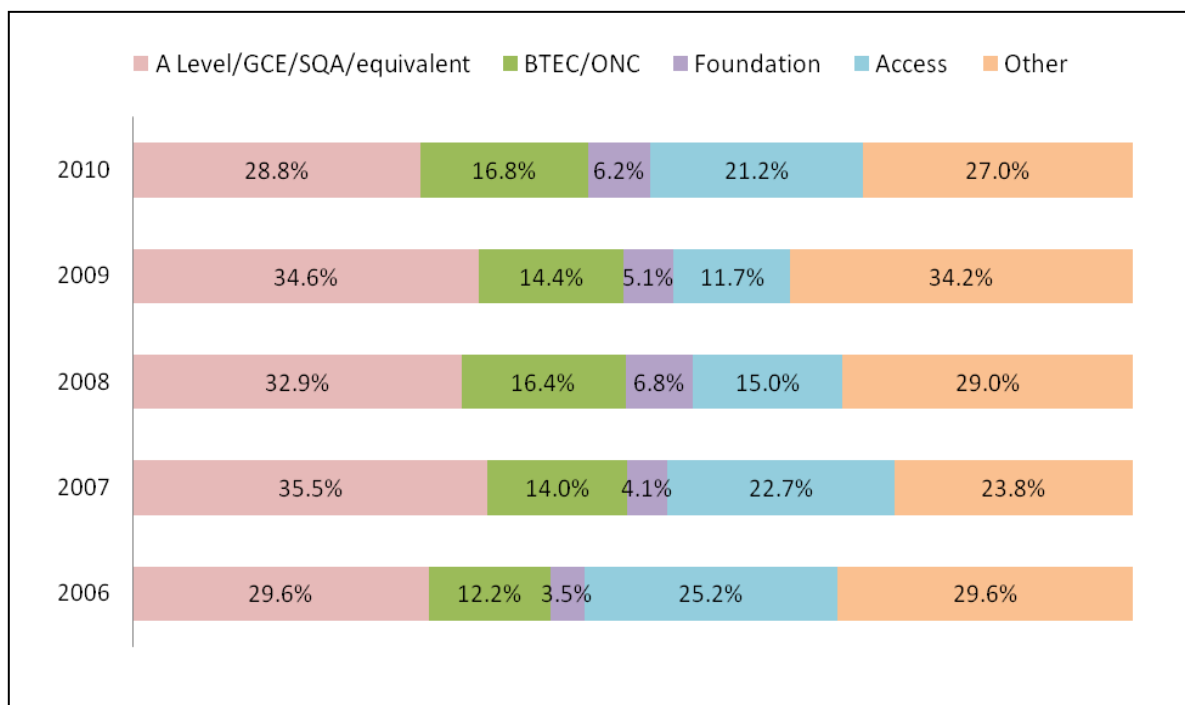


Figure 4.1 Percentages over the data known for the qualifications on entry for mature full-time entrants.



In terms of socio-economic backgrounds (SEC), the University College recruits just under 40% from those groups who have traditionally not participated in higher education. For mature entrants this is around 50% (See Figures 5 and 6 below).

Figure 5 Actual numbers (left) and percentages over data known for young full-time 1st year entrants (Number with known data excluding missing values and information “not classified” N= 2,601).

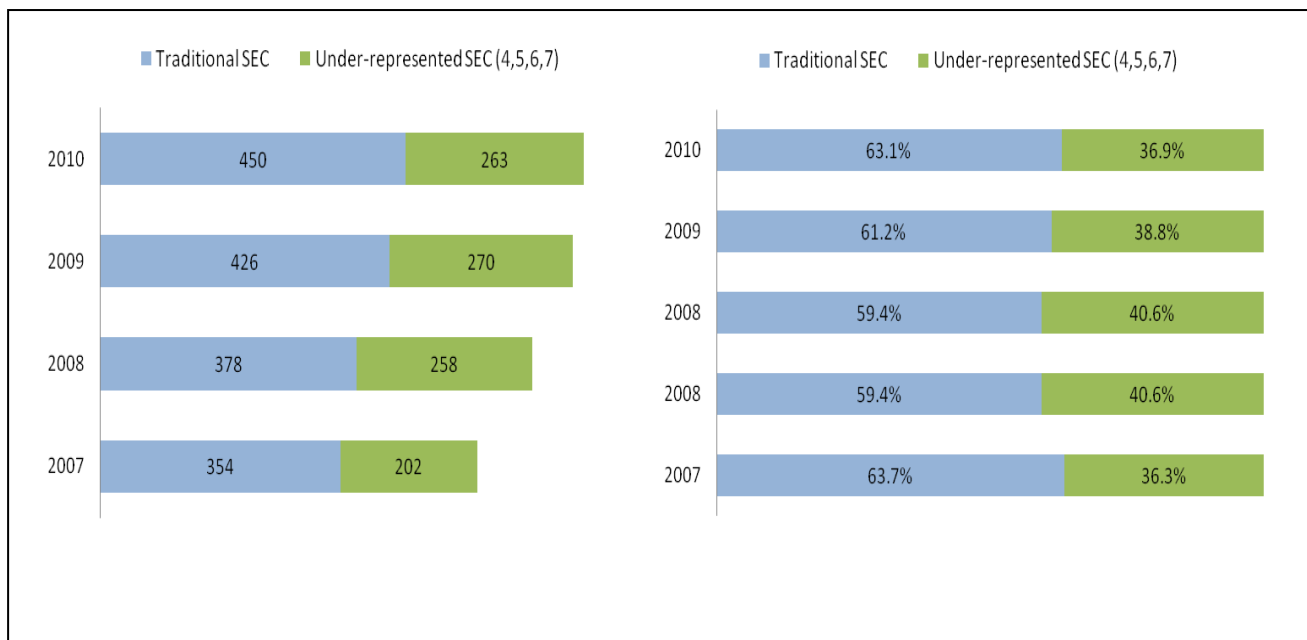
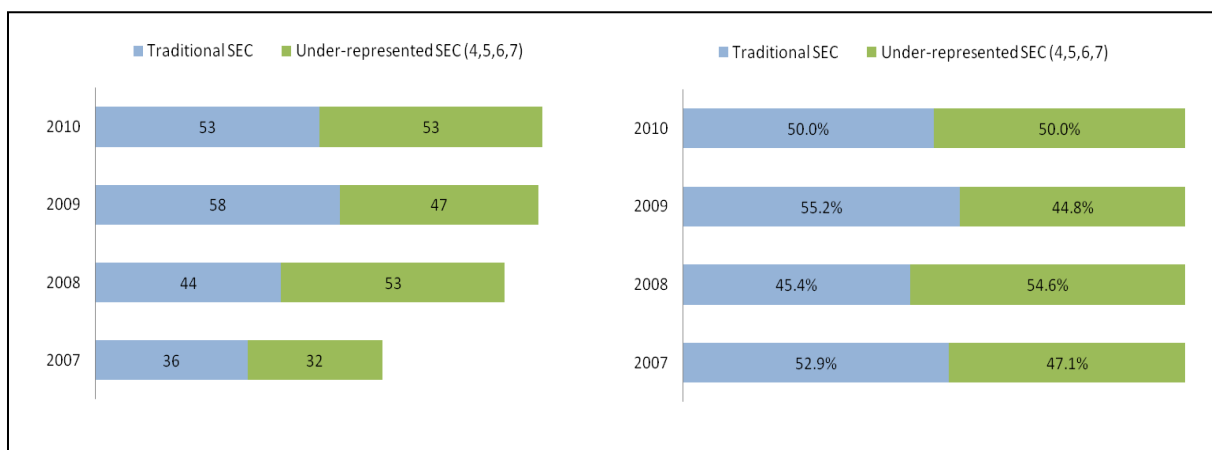


Figure 6 Actual numbers (left) and percentages over data known for mature full-time 1st year entrants (Number with known data excluding missing values and information “not classified” N= 376).



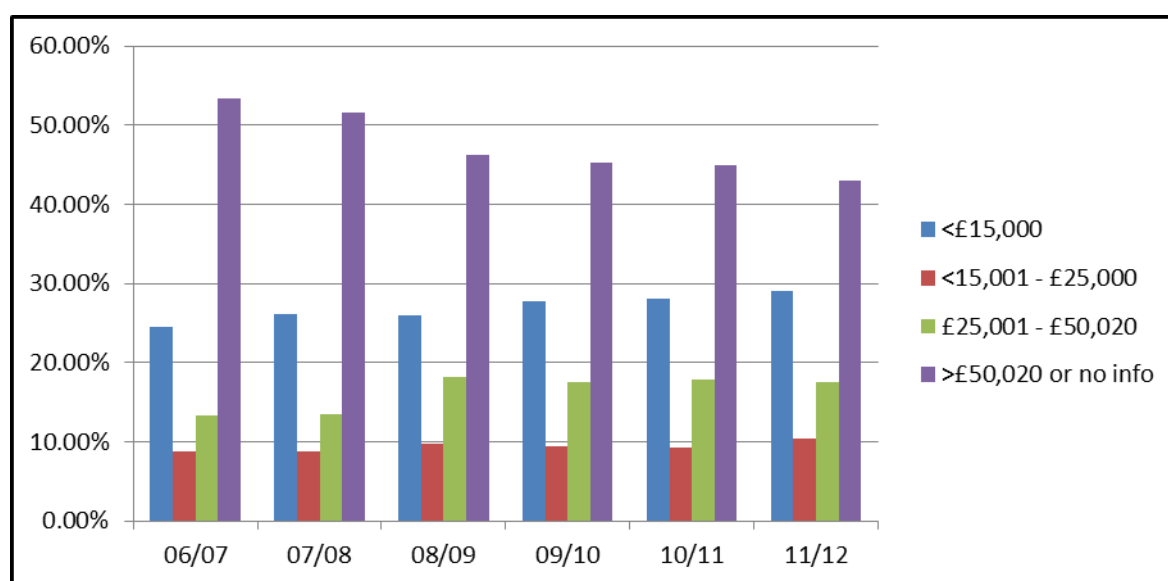
This data should also be seen in the context of students' household income set out below.

Figure 7 Number Bursary applications by household income.

Household Income	No of Bursary Applications					Est. 11/12
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	
< £15,000	288	501	740	890	971	1090
£15,001 - £25,000	104	167	276	304	318	390
£25,001 - £50,000	157	259	517	564	619	660
>£50,020 or no info*	630	988	1316	1450	1555	1610
Total Applications	1179	1915	2849	3208	3463	3750

*Approx 45% of parents have income above the £50,020 threshold or, either withhold their consent to share their information, or do not give their details of their household income to the SLC

Figure 8 Percentage of bursary applications by household income



From the percentages shown, it is anticipated that in 11/12 approximately 40% of students will have been in the £0-£25,000 household income bracket and will have been in receipt of the full loan and full maintenance grant. Of these, 29% are from families that have an income of £15,000 or less. This percentage has increased slightly year on year (24% in 2006).

3.2 Widening Participation: Performance Against Benchmarks

The performance of the University College against its HEFCE benchmarks is set out below. The University College performs well in terms of recruiting those from lower

socio-economic groups and from state schools. It has not always met its benchmark for recruitment from low participation neighbourhoods for the cohort as a whole or for mature students. However, the University College is in a very affluent part of London and also the South East. Although the students it recruits may not live in areas of non participation, we are certainly recruiting students from very disadvantaged backgrounds when considering that 37% of our students are in receipt of a full maintenance grant. In addition, we have always exceeded our benchmark for recruiting disabled students in receipt of the disabled students allowance (DSA).

Figure 9 St Mary's Widening Participation performance against benchmarks

Year	St Mary's	Benchmark (location adj.)	Difference
Participation from state schools or colleges			
2010/11	95.4%	94.6%	+0.8%
2009/10	93.4%	93.7%	-0.3%
2008/09	95.3%	93.5%	+1.8%
2007/08	94.2%	92.9%	+1.3%
Participation from under-represented socioeconomic groups (4,5,6,7)			
2010/11	34.7%	36%	-1.3%
2009/10	38.7%	35.4%	+3.3%
2008/09	39.6%	38.4%	+1.2%
2007/08	36.1%	35.3%	+0.8%
Participation from low participation neighbourhoods			
2010/11	6.3%	8.9%	-2.6%
2009/10	7.1%	8.1%	-1.0%
2008/09	8.7%	8.0%	+0.7%
2007/08	6.3%	7.3%	-1.0%
Participation of mature students from low participation neighbourhoods whose highest qualification is not HE			
2010/11	4.75%	8%	-3.3%
2009/10	2.8%	9.6%	-6.8%
2008/09	5.4%	12.2%	-6.8%
2007/08	2.1%	8.5%	-6.4%
Percentage of full time first degree students in receipt of Disabled students allowance			
2010/2011	6.0%	5.5%	+0.5%
2009/10	6.3%	5.2%	+1.1%
2008/09	5.1%	5%	+0.1%
2007/08	5.2%	4.8%	+0.4%

The University College has exceeded its target for admitting students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Figure 10 Ethnic minority students as a proportion of all undergraduates

Ethnic minority students as a proportion of all undergraduates					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
ALL UGS	2,830	2,909	3,143	3,518	3,850
TOTAL BME	550	633	673	759	817
TOTAL WHITE	2,280	2,276	2,470	2,759	3,033
% BME	19.4%	21.8%	21.4%	21.6%	21.2%
% WHITE	80.6%	78.2%	78.6%	78.4%	78.8%

3.3 Retention

The University College has been investigating issues relating to retention as it is not achieving as well as it considers it should in this regard. The situation has improved, as the estimated completion rate has increased from 81% to 84% (as demonstrated in the tables below), and the University College is working hard to sustain this improvement. A research study conducted during 2011 investigated the student experience and how this can be improved to enhance retention. This project looked at the performance of widening participation students relative to those from 'traditional' backgrounds or whose parents have a higher education background. Apart from qualification on entry, there were no significant differences found.

The University on the whole is good at retaining young students from low participation neighbourhoods. The picture for mature students is not as good but has been steadily improving.

Figure 11 St Mary's non-continuation performance against benchmarks

Year	St Mary's	Benchmark	Difference
Young entrants Non-continuation from low participation neighbourhoods			
2009/10	6.5%	10.2%	+3.7%
2008/09	4.2%	9.8%	+5.6%
2007/08	11.1%	10.1%	-1.0%
2006/07	4.7%	10.8%	+6.1%
Non-continuation from low participation neighbourhoods for mature students whose highest qualification on entry is not HE			
2009/10	Awaiting data		
2008/09	19.3%	16.2%	-2.9%
2007/08	20%	15.9%	-4.1%
2006/07	19.8%	14.7%	-5.1%

The historical information relating to withdrawals for different socio-economic groups and also for parental background is limited, since the data is only robust for the period covered. However, from the analysis of the students who withdrew in their first year of study, the differences between the numbers of students from the two socio-economic groups are not significant as shown in figures 12 and 13. From these findings St Mary's argues that students from under-represented socio-economic groups have the same probability of withdrawing from their studies as traditional students. The socio-economic background, therefore, does not seem to be related to the likelihood of withdrawal.

Figure 12 Actual numbers of withdrawn students (2008-2010) from each socioeconomic group

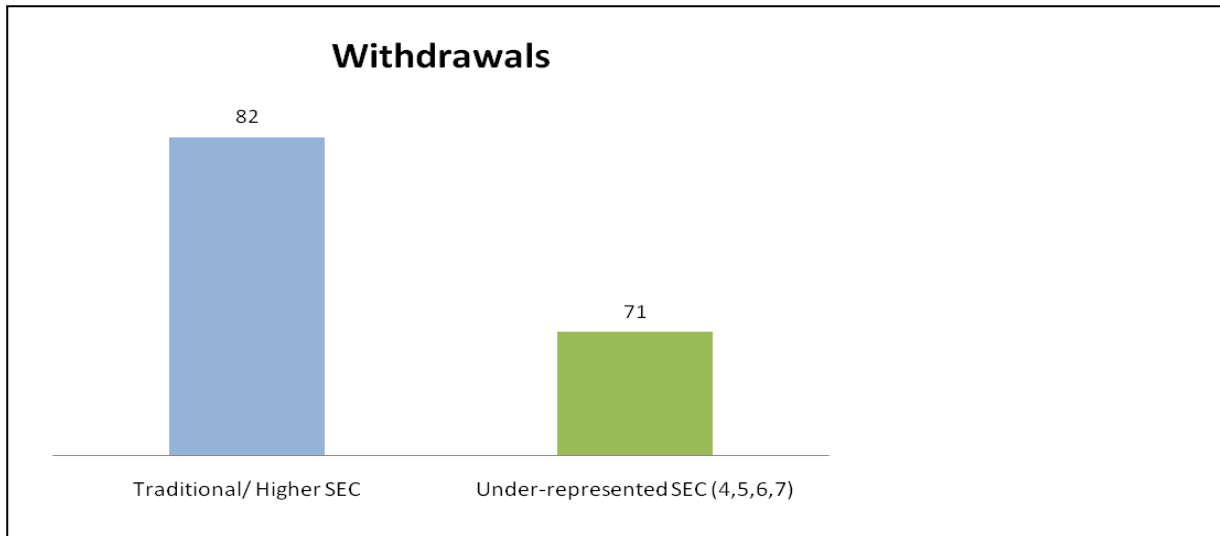
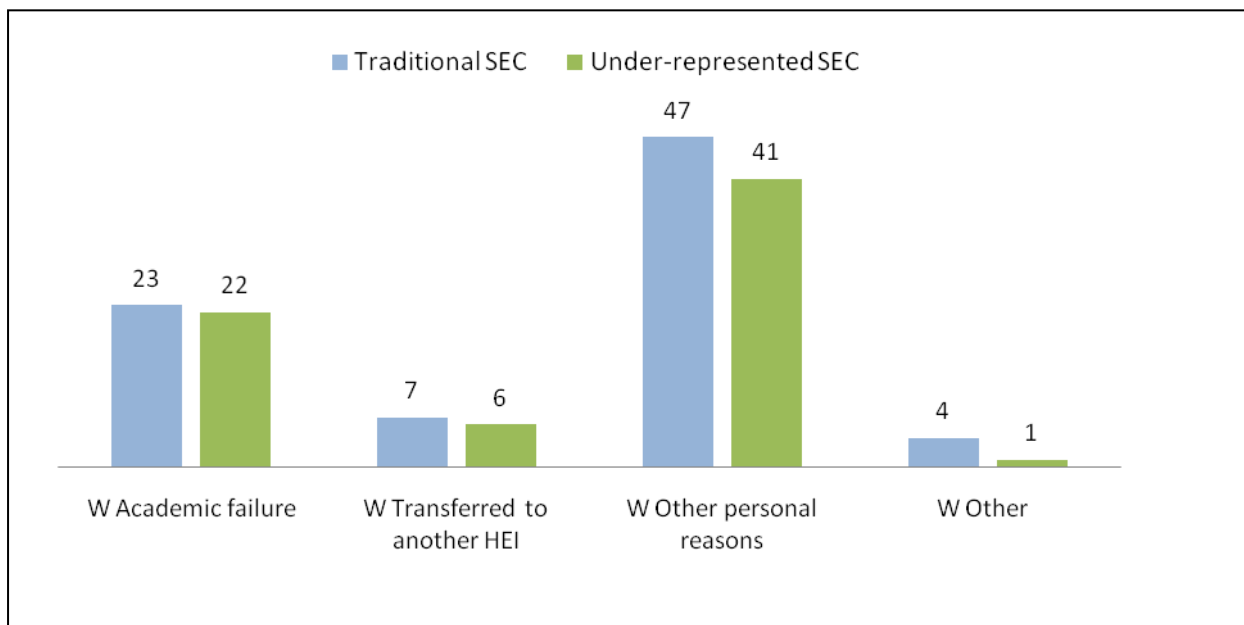
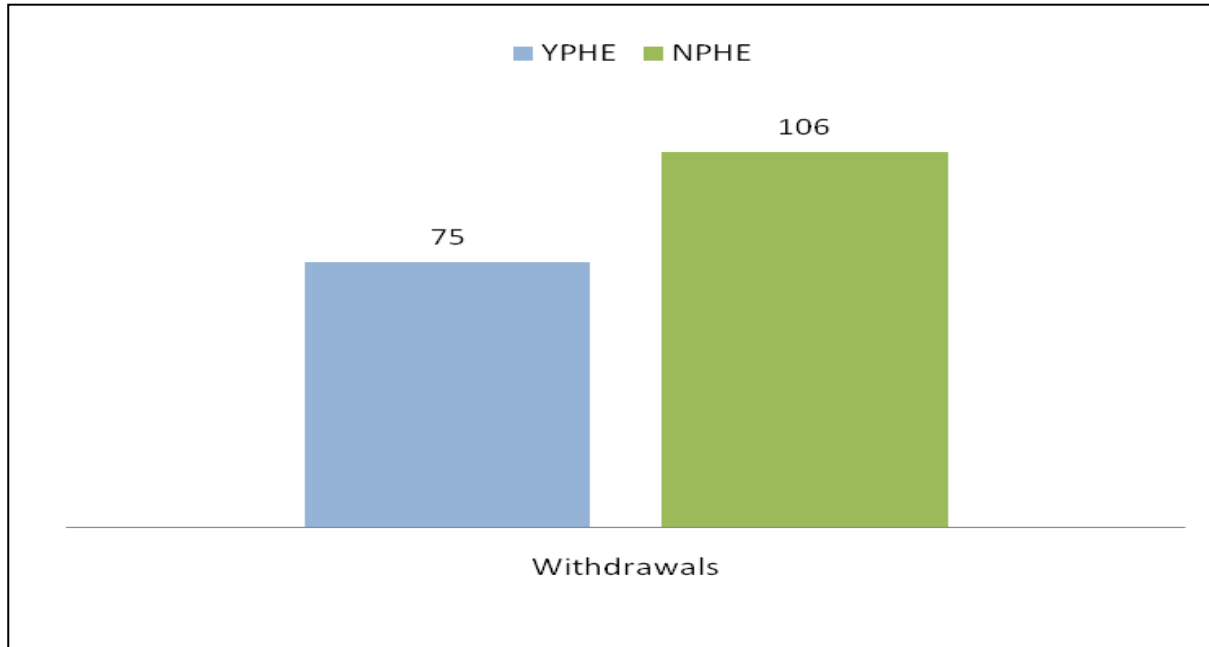


Figure 13 The number of students who withdrew in their first year by socio-economic background and by reason for withdrawal.



The same pattern emerges when associating parental education with students' reason for leaving; although the number of withdrawals from those who had no parental background were greater, there was no significant association. Statistically, however it is important to note that the analysis used a very small sample size.

Figure 14 Actual numbers of students who withdrew (2008-2010) and their parental education (Number with known data N= 181)



The most significant factor emerging from this internal study is that students who live in their parental home are more likely to withdraw than those living in halls of residence. The reason that this is significant is that those from 'traditional' socio economic backgrounds are more likely to live in institutional accommodation. See Figures 15 and 16.

Figure 15 Actual numbers of young full-time 1st year students (2007-2010); association between SEC and accommodation.

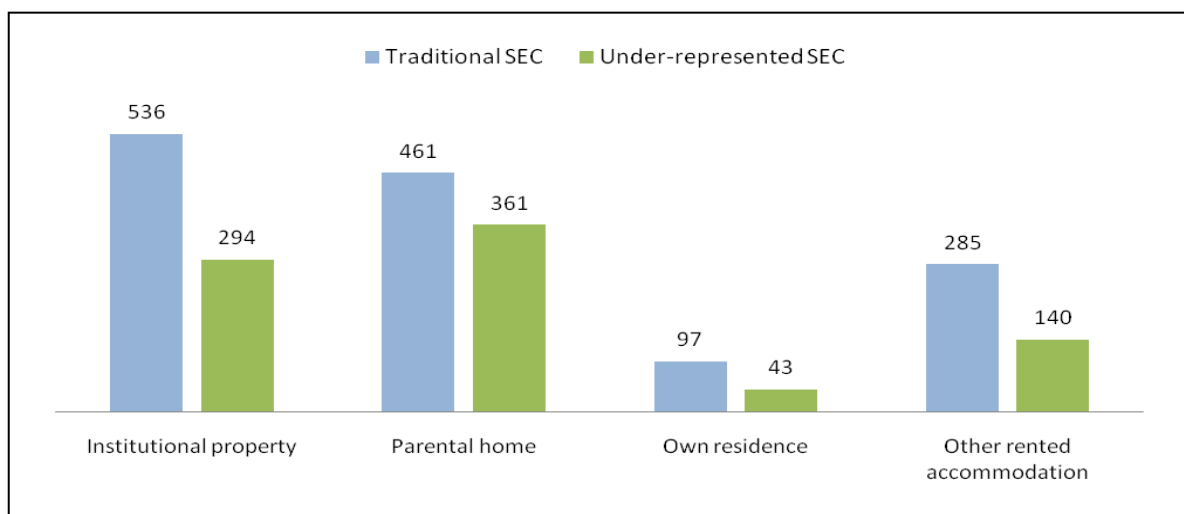


Figure 16 Number (left) and percentage of students who lived in institutional residences.

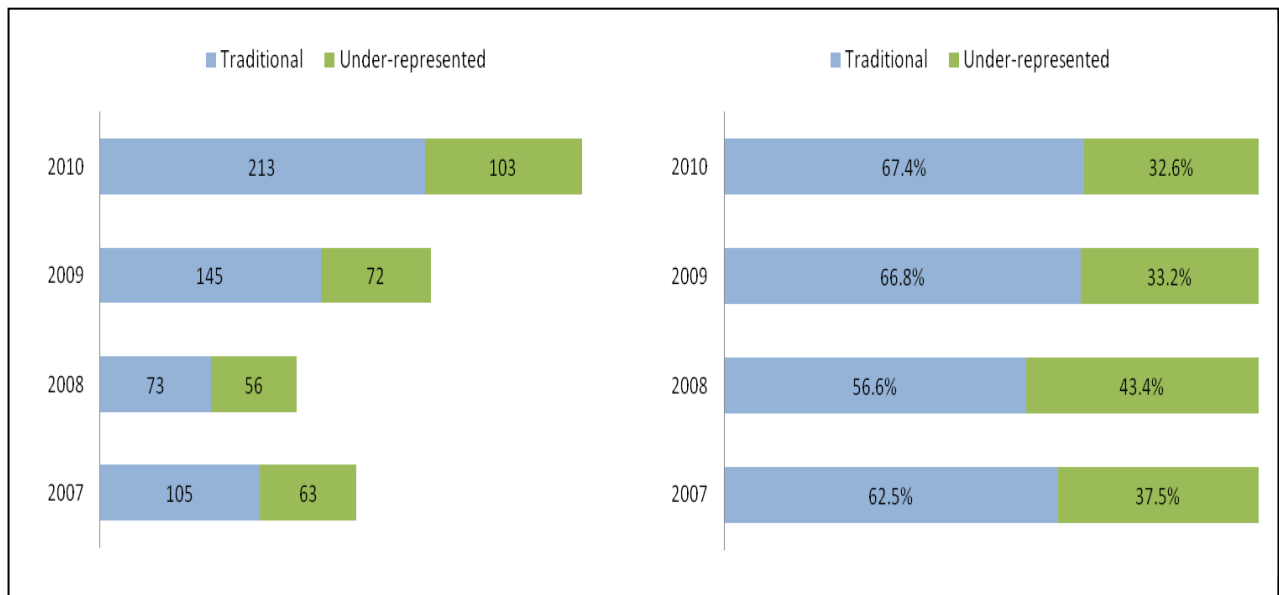
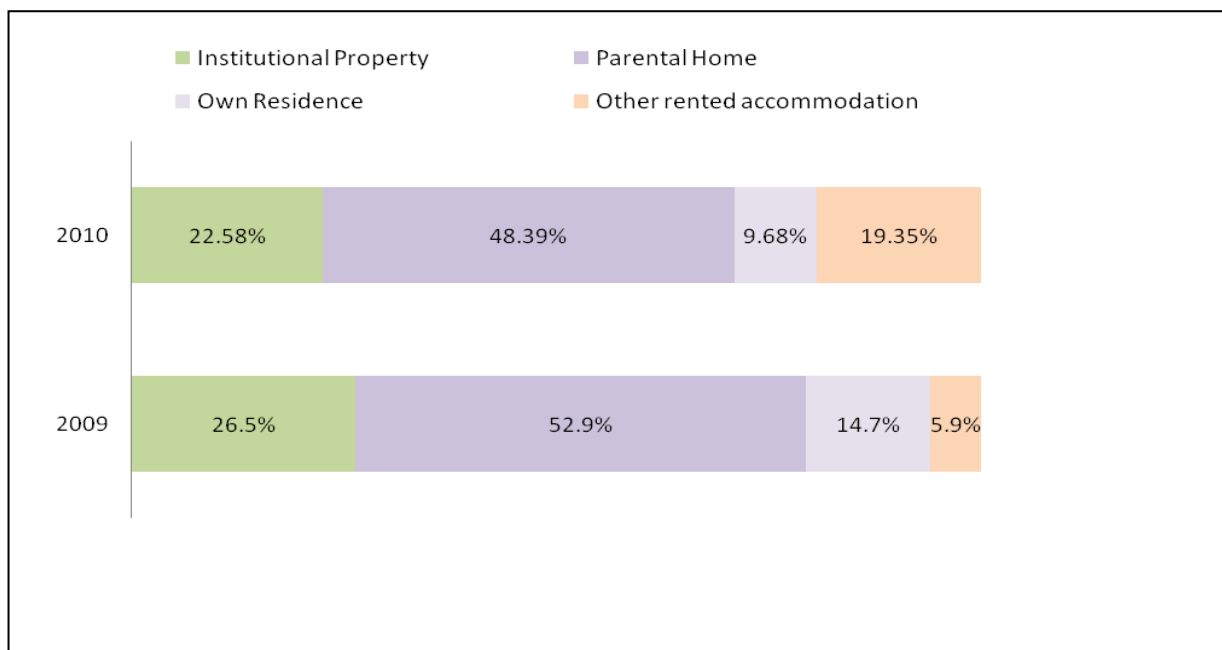


Figure 17 Percentage of type of accommodation for 1st year full-time students who withdrew in 2009 & 2010 due to academic failure (total with known data $N= 65$).



The study on retention did find that students who had undertaken Access courses or BTECs were more likely to withdraw than those who had undertaken A-levels. As well as the study on retention, a project is also underway to investigate how the performance of ethnic minority students might be improved. The study has found

that Black students are proportionately more likely to have undertaken BTEC qualifications.

The analysis exploring the association between qualification on entry and completion for full-time undergraduates (2008-2010) revealed that there is a significant association (Pearson chi-square, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the risk-estimate analysis shows that, if a student had A Levels as qualification on entry (qoe), the odds of their completing were 11.328 times higher than if they had BTEC as entry qualification (figure 18.1). Likewise, if a student had A Levels as entry qualification, the odds of their completing were 4.224 times higher than if they had Access Course as entry qualification (figure 18.2).

Figure 18 Entrance qualifications by ethnicity

	White	Black	Asian
A-Levels	79.7%	63.7%	75.4%
1 st Degree HE or Other Credit from HE	5.3%	3.2%	5.8%
BTEC	6.9%	19.0%	5.1%
Other	8.1%	14.1%	13.7%

Figure 18.1 Risk-estimate analysis and odds ratio for students having entry qualifications A Levels vs. BTEC, to complete or withdraw their studies (Number with known data $N= 889$)

Risk-Estimate			
		95% Confidence	
	Value	Upper	Lower
Odds Ratio for qoe (A Levels/BTEC)	11.328	6.778	18.932
For cohort status = Successful Completion	2.906	2.052	4.118
For cohort status = Withdrawal	0.256	0.210	0.313
N of Valid Cases	889		

Figure 18.2 Risk-estimate analysis and odds ratio for students having entry qualifications A Levels vs. Access course, to complete or withdraw their studies (Number with known data $N= 852$)

Risk-Estimate			
		95% Confidence	
	Value	Upper	Lower
Odds Ratio for qoe (A Levels/Access)	4.224	2.293	7.782
For cohort status = Completion	1.595	1.197	2.127
For cohort status = Withdrawal	0.378	0.271	0.526
N of Valid Cases	852		

Figure 19 Retention Rates by ethnicity 2003-2005 Withdrawals

2003-2005 Withdrawals		
	Ethnicity	Retention
Whites	11.07%	74-80%
Blacks	24.93%	61-76%
Asian	8.83%	67-87%
Other	21.38%	54-65%

The issues outlined above will be taken into account in the additional work being undertaken on retention as part of the Access Agreement.

Figure 20 shows the progression and qualification rates for students at St Mary's University College who have been returned to HESA as receiving Disabled Students Allowance. As can be seen, St Mary's record for retaining students with DSA is very encouraging.

Figure 20 Progression and qualification rates for students at St Mary's University College receiving Disabled Student Allowance.

	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Total Progressed	69.4%	67%	67%
Total Qualified	24.6%	29.3%	27.7%
Total Not Retained	6%	3.7%	5.2%

3.3. Performance for ITT programmes

In terms of our performance with respect to widening access to ITT programmes specifically, at present we are the top institution for attracting Asian (33%) and Black (21%) students onto the programmes within London. We also appear in the top ten in each category nationally.

Although we have increased the number of males on the Primary PGCE course to 21% and we will work to improve this, we recognise that more work is needed to increase the numbers on the undergraduate programme. In terms of other indicators of our performance in widening access for undergraduate ITT programmes, the figures compare well to the undergraduate population as a whole as set out below.

Figure 21 Performance Indicator 2010/11

Performance indicator 2010/11	ITT Programme	All students
% from state schools	94.4%	95.4%
% from NS SEC 4,5,6,7	32.2%	34.7%
% from POLAR2	13.2%	7.1%
% in receipt of DSA	8.4%	6.0%

4. Fee levels

The University College charged a single, undifferentiated fee of £8,000 to all full time undergraduates on the currently HEFCE funded programmes for 2012 entry. Full time foundation degree fees were set at £4,000 for 2012 entry (with 2 exceptions set at £2,000). Fees for the BA (Honours) in Primary ITT and PGCE courses were also £8,000 for 2012 entry.

The University College proposes to increase the level of these fees each year in line with inflation. Our tuition fee for the 2013/14 year is £8,200. In accordance with the OFFA guidance of 13 August 2012, we will charge the inflation adjusted fee of £8,200 for the 2013/14 academic year to 2012 entry students. This increase of £200 is a 2.5% rise (compared to the PRI-X rate of 3.22% maximum increase); the adjusted fee of £8,200 is (well) within the fee cap; and the information provided to 2012 entry students advised of the likelihood for an inflationary increase to subsequent years fees. The fee level for subsequent years will be reviewed in due course.

Part Time students who are undertaking full time programmes at a lower intensity will be charged pro rata fees. The highest rate that could be charged in cases such as this for 2013 would be £5360. In most cases, student would be charged £4000 per year.

Part time Foundation courses will be charged at a rate of between £2000 and £4000.

In 2013, students undertaking top up degrees would be counted as continuing students so would stay on the 'old' fee regime.

5. Expenditure on additional access measures

Please see Annex B for full details of St. Mary's proposed spending in the areas of outreach and improving retention.

The total spend on these areas will be £256,000 and £586,000 respectively. This comprises new initiatives commenced in 2012/13 and new activity introduced for 2013/14.

The main areas of expenditure are as follows: Two new posts, one to increase the capacity of our Outreach department and one to provide ongoing support and statistical analysis for our new initiatives, at a cost of £44,594.

In addition to this £90,000 is spent on employing learning and skills support tutors in order to support students while they are studying. £40,000 will be spent on pre-registration events and £35,000 will be spent on supporting students in their work placements. Please see the sections below for more details of other initiatives and costings for retention.

6. Outreach

6.1 Introduction

St Mary's has been involved in a wide range of activities to encourage under-represented groups to enter higher education. In addition to work aimed at raising aspirations generally, the University College has established activities for students on vocational courses, work with mature students, and initiatives to widen access through its strong reputation for sport. St Mary's considers outreach activity as working with under-represented students. The University College is undertaking long-term interventions aimed at boosting attainment and aspirations, together with developing measures to admit increasing numbers of widening participation students. This work is supported by the use of contextual data and uses the information arising out of the data to inform its focused outreach activity. The majority of school and college work takes place with years 10 to 12 but we also undertake some activity with years 6 to 9. For 2012/13 an additional member of staff will be appointed to enable activity to increase.

Annex B outlines St Mary's proposed investment in outreach and student retention and success. This section gives the narrative supporting the investment and demonstrates where the University College is continuing to increase its efforts in these areas.

6.2 Collaborative Outreach Activity

St Mary's is working collaboratively with AccessHE and Aimhigher London South Ltd, together with the other universities, schools and FE Colleges.

AccessHE aims to support the progression of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter HE and is a division of London Higher, the umbrella organisation for HEIs in London. We have been involved with it since its inception and take part in a range of targeted activities for different groups of young people.

We attend action forums, working in collaboration with other universities to develop new ways of working and good practice. We use their service to assist in targeting and evaluating our activities. We will continue to be an active part of the organisation and we would particularly like to continue working with looked after children, the mentoring programme, conferences for young people and for staff from schools and colleges, and training programmes for student ambassadors.

Aimhigher London South Ltd was established in September 2011 continuing the links Amhigher made between schools and universities in the South London area.

We will continue to contribute to the Aimhigher London South programme of collaborative activities designed to raise awareness and aspirations from year 9 to year 13. These opportunities allow us to come together with several other universities to offer Higher Education information, advice and events. The events combine schools and college learners from varying areas of London and the South East and a variety of cultural groups. Aimhigher London South also assists us in the collation and the evaluation process to ensure both the quality of the activities and their effectiveness. We attend Aimhigher London South termly meetings for all members in the network (Schools, FECs and HEIs) and termly meetings for HE deliverers (HEIs and FECs). This facilitates sharing good practice and developing mutual ways of working.

Both organisations also enable us to promote our own events and activities to a wide audience of schools and colleges.

Developments during 2012/13 will determine our precise involvement in 2013/14 but we are committed to collaborative working and the benefits it provides.

6.3 Targeted School and College Progression Partnerships

We will increase the number of collaborative partnerships with Catholic Schools in low participation neighbourhoods. Enhanced information and advice about applying to higher education before application, visits to schools and campus visits, support during the application process, and pre-entry events will be available to students from this additional widening participation cohort. These students will be supported throughout their studies via a package of retention measures outlined elsewhere in this document.

In the previous Access Agreement we stated our intention to extend formal partnerships to schools that specialise in Sport and Performing Arts. Although we will continue to work with these schools, our plans are developing with AccessHE and

London Aimhigher South Ltd. As new contacts and activities increase, formal partnerships in these specific areas are less of a priority.

6.4 Other School and College Activity

Other outreach activity with schools and colleges initiated by us or in response to a request from schools and colleges will continue where progression rates are low or where there are under-represented groups. Contextual data is used to target institutions but we also respond to requests for involvement if we assess the request to be appropriate. This includes a variety of taster days and campus visits including subject specific master classes and tasters offered by Academic Schools for year 10 and 12 students. We will continue to develop our well established programme, Widening Access through Sport.

6.5 Looked After Children

St Mary's has an outreach programme of events and a policy to support Care Leavers and Looked after Children. Outreach activity is organised with other universities through our collaborative partners Aimhigher London South and AccessHE and the University College's policy is to give an offer to any care leavers who have the potential to meet the general entrance requirement (rather than the offer level) and give full consideration to their grades at confirmation. The University College intends to extend this provision and by 2013/14 to have achieved and maintained the Buttle UK Quality Mark.

6.6 Access Students/Mature Students

The University College currently conducts HE preparation sessions for students on access courses in local FE Colleges and runs an Open Evening with a focus on mature students. Having identified a need to address retention issues with this group, we will continue to increase and develop this activity to ensure that course choices are fully informed.

6.7 Improving Information, Advice and Guidance

St Mary's will improve information available to under-represented groups before and during the application process. In addition to the KIS (Key Information Set) initiative, we will produce web pages focussing on detailed advice and information for applicants. These will include not only information about our facilities and students life, but also information on funding, real costs, money management and all aspects of support. They will focus on the needs of specific groups e.g. disabled students,

mature students, students from low socio economic groups and ethnic minority students. There will be the facility to ask questions online to ensure easy access to support.

6.8 Access to Courses Leading to Professional Careers

In 2012 we will be offering an LLB Law programme for the first time. Should our intake for this degree be less representative than our intake generally, we will focus outreach activity to improve access to this programme to assist in increasing access to the law profession. In 2013 we will also be starting a prestigious BSc in Applied Physics in collaboration with the National Physical Laboratory and we will again address issues of access and increase targeted outreach work if needed.

6.9 Specific Outreach for ITT Programmes

The University College has a dedicated team in the School of Education which is responsible for recruitment and whose target is to recruit trainees into teacher training from diverse backgrounds with particular focus on BME, Men into Primary, mature applicants and any other groups which are underrepresented in our teaching cohorts.

The team have worked on improving our BME intake over the years by targeted taster courses, open evenings/mornings, talks in universities and schools who have a diverse student body and recruitment events in Central London which attract a wide range of applicants from very different backgrounds. We also use ambassadors at these events from our BME trainees and those who are now teachers and who come from the diverse groups which we want to attract into teaching. We are continuing these outreach activities to maintain our position and extend our outreach in order to increase the number of BME candidates applying to primary teaching courses and men to undergraduate primary teaching programmes.

6.10 Evaluating Outreach

We will have a Student Experience Data Officer in place by September 2012. The post holder will use contextual data and compile accurate information data to enable the University College to monitor, evaluate and develop its commitments in the Access Agreement and Widening Participation Strategy, encompassing all aspects of the widening participation agenda across the student lifecycle including, outreach to students at schools and colleges, pre enrolment activities with those about to join us, on course support throughout their studies with us and progression data.

7. Pre Entry

Currently support arrangements begin before students apply through the advice and guidance activities in schools, 6th Form Colleges and FE Colleges as outlined above. Pre-application open days and visit days for offer holders enable prospective students to understand more about their programmes of study, financial support available, the choice of living accommodation available on site, and the extent of central support available, particularly for disabled students. Members of Student Services and the Recruitment Office, together with Registry and Academic Affairs staff, are available on these occasions to offer advice and guidance to students and their families. An enquiry service is provided by the Recruitment team via telephone and email and students are also able to access the Recruitment Office and Registry for support throughout their application. Information on how to apply and on the University College's programmes and support services is available online through the external website with information provided by the relevant departments.

This provision is augmented by a pre-entry programme for students from under-represented backgrounds at St. Mary's which is aimed at providing information, guidance and support for students prior to the commencement of their programmes of study. This programme is intended to improve the student experience as part of a range of measures, but is specifically aimed at promoting inclusion, and enhancing retention and success, particularly in year 1. The interventions aim to develop the attributes gained by students from learning carried out prior to entering HE, into skills required to manage their HE experience with confidence and success.

The pre-entry support consists of two main components: an on-line programme and a two day, residential face-to-face programme. The on-line programme provides a range of general information regarding the University College, as well as specific information to familiarise students with the social, academic, and practical context of their experience, including the support available to them. It also provides a range of interactive tools to engage students in their new environment, such as information pathways in areas of interest and quizzes. The residential programme provides opportunities for students to receive an early induction into University life. This includes the following areas: transition into university life; knowledge and information about practical support available such as financial, academic and emotional support; communication skills; organisation and planning; opportunities for social networking; balancing study, work and social life; introduction to teaching and assessment methods; and using IT in learning. The programme is delivered via a range of activities including workshops, team and individual activities, presentations from role models such as current staff and students, and successful alumni.

The interventions are fully evaluated following the programme via questionnaires, and their effect on key performance outcomes of retention and success in this group of students is assessed. This evaluation will feed into subsequent action plans.

The pre – entry support will be targeted at students who come from low participation neighbourhoods and the budget for this will be £40,000 and this has been entered into annex B under retention spend.

£3000 has been allocated in order to develop pre – entry information for mature and access students and in order to support our current initiatives, such as the open evening which is aimed at mature students.

This spend has been entered into the retention section of annex B, as pre – entry information is considered to be a key area of our retention strategy.

8. Supporting Students during Programme of study

Current provision to support retention has centred around interventions such as a Skills Shop which provides guidance on academic writing and time management etc, Careers advice, a Personal Tutor System and a Personal Development Planning (PDP) provision. Augmenting the normative academic support that students receive from tutors during their programme of study alongside additional initiatives (focusing on non-residential students and those who have taken Access or BTEC qualifications), will now include: dedicated learning and skills support tutors linked to each academic school; a peer mentoring scheme; a new campus single point of information scheme called *SIMMS-i* and enhanced disability support. The learning and skills support tutors will monitor students' learning in accordance with the institution's monitoring policy. They will also co-ordinate a peer mentoring scheme in areas such 'academic writing advice' and general well-being. In addition, the Skills Shop will continue to provide one-to-one tutoring in academic protocols. Student Services will strengthen its provision in offering information, advice and guidance in areas such 'money management'. The development of *SIMMS-i*, a single enquiry point for students on information relating to academic, financial, and personal support, is ongoing and will be designed to enhance the student experience.

Disability support will continue be offered in a personalised and professional service.

As part of its strategic development, St. Mary's Students' Union (SMSU) will also begin improving accessibility to academic support and advice, including a commitment to greater publicity of the services available through the available media channels as well as greater use of the Programme Representative system to share information and gather feedback.

Allied to this, SMSU will be working on a greater variety of social events to create a more inclusive and diverse events programme to ensure that students feel at home at the University College and aimed at promoting retention for those groups who do not live on campus. This will include a networking event specifically aimed at non residential students during Induction Week, as well as supporting the work of academic programme teams in establishing programme societies that enable non typical students to engage with University College life on a more consistent and regular basis. A large part of the Students' Union was refurbished in 2011/12 to facilitate such activities.

In addition to the activity outlined above and as referred to in the contextual data section, the University College is currently undertaking a research study which it intends will lead to further targeted activity for students from widening participation backgrounds. The study is investigating student attainment and the intention is that the findings from this study will form the basis for specific interventions at institutional level to enhance attainment in students from these backgrounds.

Expenditure in this area that has been entered into the retention column in annex B, in order to cover the following areas and developments:

£90,000 has been allocated in order to employ learning and skills support tutors. This role will involve supporting students with both pastoral and academic help. The post holders will be responsible for specific cohorts of students, which will allow them to form stronger relationships. Within the cohorts, students from specific groups whom research has shown to be vulnerable to non – progression issues will be targeted for help and advice. This will particularly concentrate on mature students, students from non – traditional entry backgrounds and students from low participation neighbourhoods.

The Careers Department has been given an additional £180,000 in funding in order to boost the employment prospects of all of our students. It has been calculated that the use of this service and the Skills Shop by OFFA countable students, as a proportion of all users, is 35%. Therefore £63,000 of this has been allocated to the retention category in the annex. This has been counted towards retention as the Careers department is multi-functional and plays an important part in the services that are on offer throughout the duration of a student's stay with us.

The Skills Shop, the role of which has been explained above, will be expanded, in order to cope with increasing demand. The spend on this, which can be allocated to OFFA countable students is £15,000.

St Mary's University College has appointed a new staff member. This role will involve administering the Scholarships schemes that are referred to later in this document. This post holder will also play a key role in liaising with the Student Loans Company in sorting out funding difficulties and delays. Because the post holder will be dedicated to securing funding for students, it was felt that this additional expenditure should be placed in the retention section. Because of the nature of this role, the vast majority of the post holder's time will be spent in dealing with OFFA countable students. £30,000 has been allocated towards the retention column in the annex.

St Mary's University College has an excellent record in recruiting and retaining students with disabilities. In order to support this activity, St Mary's University College spends in excess of £60,000 on staffing costs. In order to further improve and expand our range of services, a further £12,250 has been allocated to this area of activity.

Excluding the additional posts that have been set out elsewhere in this document, St Mary's University College has conservatively calculated the proportion of their working time that key staff members spend on supporting and improving retention for OFFA countable students. The list of staff members involved in such activities includes colleagues from the following areas:

Student Services

Finance

Registry

Student Union (Only staff directly employed by SMUC)

Vice Principal's Office

As a result of this calculation £238,000 has been added to the retention column in the annex.

9. Employment Preparation

Through this Access Agreement, the University College will increase the preparedness of students from widening participation backgrounds for graduate level employment. This is achieved through the work of the Centre for Workplace Learning and the Careers Service.

The initiatives will target those students from non-traditional HE backgrounds who may have poor social capital, and disabled students who may face particular issues in acquiring work experience and preparing themselves for the workplace. This will be achieved through one-to-one sessions with Careers Consultants, Graduate Labour Market information services, Careers Coaching, employer engagement, employability skills development, accredited work placement opportunities and GradClub, which provides careers advice and information for two years after graduation. These initiatives are designed to help both with retention of these students and to enhance their outcomes in terms of achievement at university and successful transition into graduate careers.

In response to the changing economic climate and the widening participation agenda, the University College has employed a Graduate Careers Coach to provide assistance to those students with exceptional talent or those who may face particular difficulties accessing graduate level work. This service will focus on raising aspirations of students and targeting those from under-represented groups with the goal of encouraging a diverse range of students to enter different job sectors at graduate level.

Students will be encouraged to undertake accredited work placement modules offered by the Centre for Workplace Learning as part of their degrees and will be supported in doing this by individual tutors from the University College and by appropriately qualified workplace supervisors who will promote student learning in the workplace. The placement modules will give students the opportunity to build confidence and a sense of responsibility, gain specific skills relating to chosen career paths, understand what they have to offer to employers, explore career options and boost their CV's. They will also improve their academic outcomes by experiencing theory in practice. In conjunction with the Careers Service, which provides one to one sessions with Careers Consultants, they will have the opportunity to explore and discuss their career aspirations, understand the range of experiences that are open to them, develop employability skills, build social and professional networks and understand the value of these. They will work on their own skills and understanding in areas such as organisation and planning, team building, negotiation, problem solving, and ethics to ensure that they are able to make a positive contribution to the workplace and succeed in their placement, as well as building effective graduate level CVs and networks. Students will be offered workplace experiences which are

tailored to their individual requirements, aptitudes and experience, and relevant to their career aspirations.

Throughout their time at university, through placements and Careers Service initiatives, students will be given access to employers and alumni from whose experience they can learn and who can help them to see the path to success. They will have the opportunity to build a portfolio of experience which can be taken with them beyond higher education.

The success of these initiatives will be measured and evaluated in terms of retention, success for this group of students at university, and in gaining graduate employment.

Ongoing research (quantitative and qualitative data) will be undertaken to measure the usefulness and value of the activities for students and graduates in terms of preparation for future employment or further studies, investigating such aspects as: preparedness for employment; establishing networks; gaining skills and attributes favoured by employers; and establishing career choices.

In annex B, £35,000 has been allocated under retention, in order to improve work placements for OFFA countable students. St Mary's University College offers work placement opportunities to all undergraduate students, helping to develop employability skills and prepare graduates for graduate-level positions. These funds will be used to provide additional individual support to those in under-represented groups, providing access to a wider variety of contacts and networks; working individually with students to ensure that they are prepared for the workplace; working with relevant external bodies to ensure that we are offering appropriate and targeted support; providing these students with opportunities to reflect on their learning, to share their experience and to use these experiences to build contacts, prepare CVs and plan their future careers. Investment will also be made to target students most in need of these opportunities, helping them to understand the processes as well as the benefits of the placements.

10. Financial Support for students

St. Mary's University College offers financial support, awarded as fee waivers to our students, through the National Scholarship Programme and St Mary's Scholarship Scheme. These scholarships are open to full time and part time students on all Foundation and Undergraduate courses, subject to the criteria that are listed with each separate scholarship.

10.1 National Scholarship Programme Awards

The National Scholarship Programme is a government backed scheme to provide help for students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the cost of attending university.

St Mary's will be offering at least 100 scholarships of up to £7,000 paid over 3 years (or 4 years to students on a 4 year degree course) to students from families with a household income of under £25,000, and who can meet the additional criteria.

Successful applicants will be awarded the following:

- Year 1: £2,000 Tuition or Accommodation Fee Waiver plus £1,000 Cash
- Year 2: £2,000 tuition fee waiver
- Year 3: £1,000 tuition fee waiver
- Year 4: £1,000 tuition fee waiver

Successful applicants studying on a part-time course will receive a tuition fee waiver pro-rata to the full fee liability of £8,200 e.g. students studying 50% of an undergraduate degree with a tuition fee liability of £4,100 would be eligible for a tuition fee waiver of £1,500 at Level 1, £1,000 tuition fee waiver at Level 2 and £500 at Levels 3 & 4.

10.1.1 Criteria

To be eligible to apply for a scholarship students must:

- have an assessed annual household income below £25,000, and
- have been offered a place on a full-time or part-time (minimum intensity of 25% of full-time degree) undergraduate degree course or foundation degree course, and
- be resident in England or the EU (with the exception of students who are ordinarily resident in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland), and
- have completed an Application for Student Support through Student Finance England or the Student Finance European Team (EU students) and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University College, and
- not be in receipt of full or part payment of fees through a sponsorship arrangement, and

- be entrants new to higher education in 2013, and
- make/have made St Mary's University College a firm choice, and
- register on an undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University College in September 2013

In addition, student applicants must fulfil one or more of the following criteria:

- be a student who has completed an Access course in 2012/13
- be a student with a disability in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance
- be a looked-after child/care leaver, or be a student receiving support from the Foyer Federation, and be 25 or under at the start of the academic year 2012/13
- hold Refugee status
- be the first generation* in the family to study in higher education
- be studying in 2012/13 in a school/college in one of the London Boroughs

* i.e. neither parent studied at university or holds a higher education qualification

If the number of applications exceeds the number of scholarships to be awarded, priority will be given to students who:

- fulfil the highest number of additional criteria
- have the lowest assessed household income

10.2 St Mary's University College Scholarships

10.2.1 Academic Excellence Scholarships

Up to 30 Scholarships will be given as tuition fee waivers to UK students who achieve at least AAB at 'A' level or equivalent and:

- have an assessed annual household income of less than £42,611, and
- have completed a means-tested assessment through the appropriate awarding authority (Student Finance England/Student Finance Wales/Student Finance NI/Student Awards Agency for Scotland) and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University College, and
- make/have made St Mary's University College a firm choice, and
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University College in September 2013.

Successful applicants will receive tuition fee waivers of:

- £4,000 in Year 1
- £2,000 in Year 2

- £1,000 in Year 3
- £1,000 in Year 4

A student will need to achieve grades of at least 60% when progressing from one year to another to remain eligible.

If the number of applications exceeds 30, these scholarships will be awarded to students who have the lowest assessed household income at the time of allocating the Scholarships.

10.2.2 Care Leavers' Scholarships

Up to 30 scholarships of £1,000 will be given as cash awards at each level of their study to Care Leavers who:

- have been made an offer of a place to study on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University College, and
- are 'looked after' by a Local Authority, or receiving support from the Foyer Federation, and
- are 25 years of age or under at the start of the academic year 2013/14, and
- make/have made St Mary's University College a firm choice
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University College in September 2013

10.2.3 Catholic Schools' Scholarships

Up to 60 Scholarships of £1,000 will be given as cash awards to students who are studying at a Catholic School or College in the UK in the 2012/13 academic year and who:

- have an annual assessed household income of less than £42,611, and
- have completed a means-tested assessment through the appropriate awarding authority (Student Finance England/Student Finance Wales/Student Finance NI/Scottish Awards Agency for Scotland) and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University College, and
- make/have made St Mary's University College a firm choice
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University College in September 2013

and

- are the first generation* in the family to study in higher education * i.e. neither parent studied at university or holds a higher education qualification,

This scholarship is paid in the first year of study only.

If the number of eligible students exceeds 60, these scholarships will be awarded to students who have the lowest assessed household income at the time of allocating the Scholarships.

10.2.4 Elite Sports Scholarships

At least 20 scholarships of up to £1,000 in cash will be given to full-time elite sports students in the first year of study only.

To be eligible students must:

- have been made an offer of a place to study on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University College, and
- have reached junior international level or the equivalent at their chosen sport prior to joining St Mary's, and
- make/have made St Mary's University College a firm choice, and
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University College in September 2013

10.3 Additional Support

St Mary's University College has also committed the sum of £10,000 to be awarded as cash bursaries to Care Leavers and other students from target groups who are in financial hardship.

10.4 Article 26 Students

Although not strictly covered under the Access Agreement, it is worth recording that St Mary's works closely with the Helena Kennedy sponsored organisation Article 26 and currently supports seven Article 26 students who have applied for asylum status. They receive full fee waivers and financial support up to £200 towards their academic expenses (e.g. books, stationery, photocopying, etc.)

11. Targets and Milestones

The University College is setting itself challenging targets in terms of improving its widening participation and retention. It has also developed appropriate milestones for these targets. The milestones and targets are set out in Annex B Table 6.

11.1 Men into Primary

In addition to the measures outlined in the main Access Agreement, the University College has a dedicated team in the School of Education which is responsible for recruitment and whose target is to recruit trainees into teacher training from diverse backgrounds with particular focus on BME, Men into Primary, mature applicants and any other groups which are underrepresented in our teaching cohorts.

The team have worked on improving our intake of men into primary teaching by offering targeted taster courses. We used current male students and newly qualified male teachers to teach on the course and to discuss the issues involved in being a male in the primary classroom. We also use these male students as ambassadors at recruitment fairs.

We need to continue these outreach activities to maintain our position and extend our outreach in order to increase the number of male candidates applying to primary teaching courses.

11.2 BME

The School of Education recruitment team have worked on improving BME intake over the years by targeted taster courses, open evenings/mornings, talks in universities and schools who have a diverse student body and recruitment events in Central London which attract a wide range of applicants from very different backgrounds. Ambassadors from our BME trainees and those who are now teachers and who come from the diverse groups which we want to attract into teaching, are used at these events. We need to continue these outreach activities to maintain our position and extend our outreach in order to increase the number of BME candidates applying to primary teaching courses.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Access Agreement will be approved by the Academic Board, following approval by the Board of Governors on the fee charging regime.

The progress with the Access Agreement targets and milestones will be monitored by a strategic Access Group which meets quarterly to oversee the development of the Agreement and monitor progress with targets. It will also review expenditure. This group is comprised of the Vice Principal (Students and External Relations), the Marketing Manager (Recruitment), the Director of Student Services, the Deputy Registrar, the Director of Academic Affairs, the Director of Centre for Workplaced Learning, the Director of Finance and representation from the Students Union.

The University College will evaluate its progress through the statistical data which it has outlined above. It will also seek to improve the quality and analysis of this data and to widen it to include a focus on employability and student success as well as retention. To this end we are employing a new member of staff, a Student Experience Data Officer to undertake the statistical work necessary to underpin the University College's ability to review and understand its progress and to pinpoint where it needs to focus its activities.

We use a variety of data to target schools and learners in order to focus work in areas indicating social deprivation and low participation in HE. AccessHE data on schools and colleges London wide has been particularly valuable and will develop further.

All outreach activity is evaluated through standardised student questionnaires and from feedback by teachers resulting in adaptations and changes to programmes. Collaborative partners collect student data for tracking and evaluation purposes and directly from the schools.

Aimhigher London South use contacts to develop a range of data sharing protocols with several Local authorities and South London Connexions Service to map the progression and destinations of students who participate in activities. AccessHE are developing methods of tracking destinations across London for those who have taken part in collaborative activities.

13. Provision of information to prospective students

St. Mary's ensures that it provides clear and user friendly information about its fees and the financial support to existing and potential students, outlining what is available in each year of study.

This information is disseminated through the University College brochures and prospectus, the University College website, HE Fairs, pre- and post-application Open and Visit Days.

The University College will inform existing students and potential applicants via leaflets and our website and by providing timely information to UCAS and Student Finance England and the Student Loans Company. Accessible information to existing students is provided through Student Services on the student portal, the University College website (publications) and through one-to-one appointments with the Student Funding Officer.

The Access Agreements are published on the University College external website under publications with a link to the OFFA website. The student portal SIMMSpace and the staff portal StaffNet also publish the Access Agreements.

In addition to the aforementioned measures and in order to make our information for new students as full, clear and transparent as possible, we are also working to complete the requirements for the Key Information Set. Progress thus far has been smooth and it is anticipated that this will considerably strengthen our course related information for new students entering in 2013 and beyond.

As well as information to applicants which is provided at the application stage and throughout the admissions process, we have worked very hard on the information that we provide to students as preparation for the registration and induction process. Much work has gone into this, as well as the induction process itself and feedback has been very positive. This process is ongoing and feedback is taken into account year on year and improvements are made.

14. Consultation with Students

The Students' Union President is a member of the strategic Access Agreement Group. The Students' Union President will consult with the members of the union

through their channels of communication on the Access Agreement offer (e.g. Student Council, executive team meetings, the Students' Union website and the student newspaper).

The Access Agreement Group may commission the Students Union to consult more widely with the student body about its implications through the Students' Union President and the Vice-President responsible for communications. In addition, St. Mary's University College is reviewing the use of its enrolment/student experience annual survey to include questions on the impact of the new tuition fee regulations and the national and institution scholarships on their choice of university.

The clarity of the information will be tested by consulting the Students' Union and from feedback on Open Days and Post-Application Visit Days. In addition, at registration from September 2012, first year students complete the Student Experience Survey which includes questions about the quality of the information provided including course information and student support. This is fed back to the relevant departments in order to improve the University College's "You said We did" campaign.

15. Equality and Diversity

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the University College has published its Equality Scheme Objectives to include a review of its data collection and monitoring to ensure that we are encompassing all protected characteristics.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the Access Agreement in line with University College procedures. The Equality and Diversity Sub-committee receives the Access Agreement annually to consider its implications and advise the Access Agreement Group accordingly. Statistical data will be gathered to inform the Access Agreement Group of its impact and will be used for evaluation purposes in relation to inclusivity.

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