

## Access Agreement 2018/19 for St Mary's University, Twickenham

### 1. Introduction

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In his 1990 Apostolic Exhortation, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, St John Paul II described a Catholic university as 'an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities'. It is 'dedicated to research, to teaching, and to various kinds of service in accordance with its cultural mission'. From its foundation in 1850, a crucial part of St Mary's mission has been serving those parts of the community who find it difficult to access education. Throughout our history we have incorporated into our ethos St John Paul II's exhortation that the 'education of students is to combine academic and professional development with appropriate ethical formation'; we aim to educate the whole person. Our friendly and inclusive culture is built on four core values:

- **Generosity of Spirit** – which emphasises service, empathy, helpfulness, encouragement and collegiality.
- **Excellence** – which emphasises the need to strive for high standards and continuous improvement in our practices and in professional development.
- **Respect** – Our Faith teaches us that we are all of unique value in the eyes of God, and therefore all students and staff should be treated with the respect that insight requires
- **Inclusivity** – We celebrate our Catholic identity, and as part of a pluralistic, multi-cultural community, we welcome all and discriminate against none. We ask only that we each respect each other's' beliefs and strive to advance the cause of higher education.

In October 2016 the University launched its 'Vision 2025' plan for our future. We will invest £100m in our students and staff across the next decade, with the aim of enhancing our students' 'learning and personal development', and of increasing the

'diversity of our students and staff without undermining the powerful sense of community that characterises St Mary's'.

The University's Widening Participation Strategy (2015 - 2020) committed us to taking a strategic approach, using evidence from evaluations to raise awareness of, and to encourage participation in, higher education, with the aim of widening access and encouraging a more diverse student body. This ongoing quantitative review of our Widening Participation (WP) and Outreach activity will be improved through the introduction of the Higher Education Activity Tracker (HEAT), which will be utilised both within our targeting (WP and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students) and evaluative work, to refine our current offerings with a view to providing a more cohesive strategic approach, focussed, initially, on West London based schools.

The wider WP networks that we have been forging have increasingly been focussed upon helping secure higher attainment in the schools with which we have partnerships. We have begun to work with the Team-Up organisation in 9 schools in West London to improve results in Maths and English, and, once we have evaluated the results of this collaboration, plan to use the resources of our School of Education to extend the programme. We are also working with the Archdiocese of Westminster to devise programmes to provide leadership training for Heads of Catholic schools, an initiative which has attracted attention from other dioceses in the region. We expect to have more to say about this method of helping raise attainment in the next two years.

We have traditionally used a mixture of scholarships, bursaries and fee waivers to support our Access Strategy and to help with student progression and success, but our evaluation of the effectiveness of these measures has led us to continue the strategy of abandoning fee waivers and putting more money into our hardship fund. Continued monitoring, based on data about degree outcomes and retention, will lead to further refinement in our policies here. For 2017/18 we are introducing a series of extended Degrees on Management and Business and Arts and Humanities, designed to offer a Foundation year to those students without the grades we usually require for entry. The Foundation year is aimed primarily at WP and Access Students

and will utilise our Learning and Development Lecturers (LDL) to offer bespoke, intensive study skills modules, and our Work-Place Learning Team will be offering a module on employability skills. We shall also be making bursaries available to students on the new programmes.

## **2. Fees, student numbers and fee income**

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Following the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and confirmation that St Mary's University "Meets Expectation" we will charge a fee of £9,250 to all new UK & European Union students starting their studies in 2017/18. Existing students in the second year of their studies will be charged a fee of £9,100 and those in year 3 will be charged a fee of £9,000. This is applicable to all full-time undergraduate programmes apart from our foundation programmes, and will also apply to all full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes.

Fees charged on our foundation programmes are £4,625 with the exception of the Foundation Degree in Football Education, Coaching and Development for which a fee of £6,000 has been set for 2017/18.

Part-time students who are undertaking full time programme at a lower intensity will be charged pro rata fees. The highest rate that could be charged in cases such as this for 2017/18 would be £6,000. In most cases, new part-time students will be charged £4,625 per year (being 50% of the full time rate).

The University reviews its fees annually and we plan to increase fees in line with inflation or within the limits of any Government guidance to us.

The University plans to grow the number of Home & EU Undergraduates and fee income will rise in line with this. The planned spend will also rise in line with fee income and will make up 24.1% of higher fee income in 2018/19.

### 3. Access and student success

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Our continuation rates for young first degree students after the first year of entry fell slightly in 2013/14 and continued to be slightly (0.6%) below the benchmark for 2014/15 entrants. The continuation rate for mature 2014/15 entrants was 2.3% higher than the benchmark. The percentage of BAME students as a proportion of the St Mary's population continues to grow, rising from 18% in 2011/12 to 28% in 2015/16. The figures for participation from state schools and colleges, underrepresented socio-economic groups and from low participation neighbourhoods showed significant improvement in 2014/15. During 2015/16, the number of students from State schools rose, but those from low participation neighbourhoods fell. We will continue to target students from low participation areas for involvement in our pre-entry programmes, 'Get Set for Success' and 'English for Academic Purposes', and provide priority on-course academic literacy support for targeted programmes and students through our Learning Development team (LDT).

#### Access and Outreach

Our Access and WP strategies were originally designed to raise aspirations among those groups least likely to aspire to higher education, and our initial aim was to build up networks locally. Our target lists of schools/colleges is made up of priority schools with a strong WP focus (including higher levels of pupil premium and Free School Meals) that sit within or border POLAR 1-3 areas geographically within South or West areas of London and the Surrey borders. We target Hounslow as an entire borough as it is our closest borough with the largest area of POLAR 1-3 including one of the key areas for the National Collaborative Outreach Project (NCOP) work we are doing. We are mainly focussed upon our three geographically closest boroughs and have a target list of 21 schools with the highest levels of Free School Meals (FSM), deprivation and that sit within POLAR 1-3 areas.

In total we work with 64 schools in the South and West of London, including all the secondary schools in Hounslow, which is one of two London Boroughs where the BAME population is more than 35%. As our work here progressed, we have moved

increasingly into the area of trying to help schools raise attainment among their pupils, and we have developed a distinctive faith-based outreach strategy as befits a university proud of its Catholic ethos. We are also adding a pre-induction summer school in 2017 targeted at WP students.

Outreach Activity	Target Group	Area	Collaborative Partners
Introduction to University	Year 6	Richmond/ Hounslow/Kingston	
Introduction to University	Year 7	London/Surrey *	
Subject in Action Sessions	Year 6	Richmond/ Hounslow/Kingston	
Subject in Action Sessions	Year 7	London/Surrey *	
Considering GCSE Options	Year 8/Year 9	London/Surrey *	
Tutoring Scheme	Year 7-9 (KS3)	South/West London	Team Up
Applying to University Sessions	Year 10/Year 11	London/Surrey *	
Subject Specific Taster Days	Year 11/Year 12	London/Surrey *	
Compass Project	Year 12 BAME Girls	East London	Tony Blair Faith Foundation
AccessHE Online Law Project	Year 12	Hounslow/ South and West London	AccessHE
Summer School	Y12/Y11	London/Surrey *	
Student Shadowing	Y12/Y13	National	

\*Priority given to schools on our target list from South/West London

## **Evaluation of activities for Widening Participation and Access**

In 2015/16 we worked with a large group of learners, with over 46% coming from BAME backgrounds. We plan to increase this percentage in 2018/19, and with the introduction of HEAT will be aiming to increase by 5% year on year the number of male and BAME learners we work with. There was a high level of first generation HE learners in this group (over 71%). Although the final decision in selecting members for this programme was made by the schools, we provided input in the final stage. HEAT will increase our targeting of these underrepresented groups for 2018/19 and we expect to see levels of these learners continue to increase. In terms of learner feedback over 50% had never visited a University before coming to St Mary's which gave us maximum impact on these learners. Of all learners, 91% stated that the event had been a positive and useful learning experience for them, and over 81% stated that it had positively increased their knowledge of applying to and attending university. In addition to the below of all eligible learners from the last academic year that attended our on-campus activities, 89% to date have put in applications to University, this information was gained from teacher feedback.

## Networks

We have built up strong networks with Aim Higher London South (AHLS) and Access HE. Our current Education Liaison Manager is Chair of the Looked After Children (LAC) Forum for London. Our network now includes the Disability Forum, the Evaluation and evidence Forum, the Student Ambassador Forum and the Access HE Forum. In 2018 we shall be joining Linking London and the newly-formed BAME network. We now have strong networks with the SPARK Business Alliance and the Virtual School for Richmond, Kingston and Hounslow, as well as with the Hounslow Schools Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisors (CEAIG) Network. This has seen us increase our overall activity in this area by 32% in the last year, as well as a rise in invitations to attend key events on the London area. This work will continue to expand for 2018/19.

These strong networks allow us to bring the benefits of the most recent research into our work with our Schools, and our two most recent collaborations evidence the way in which we are combining raising aspirations with raising attainment.

### NCOP

We are currently working with Access HE and Access HE Creative as part of the NCOP project. This is a long-term project over two years to work with learners who have the attainment levels which would allow them to apply to university, but who are resident in the areas of the lowest participation for London. We are working with up to 15 schools across key wards in South and West London, including three schools in the Feltham area of Hounslow; we shall primarily be supporting these schools. Planning is at an initial stage for activities; however recruitment of dedicated Student Ambassadors for this project is already underway. With AccessHE, the NCOP is focussed on specific schools from the East London boroughs of Havering and Barking & Dagenham; initially four schools in each borough are being targeted.

We are in the early stages of planning, and delivery will not begin until the 2017/18 academic year, however initial activities are being looked at that will fit in with our existing portfolio of pre and post 16 work, and further development of this will be addressed in our Outreach Strategy which will lay out in detail our project ideas including our 3 points of contact Taster Days for Year 10 onwards which will be offered to NCOP participants.

### Aim Higher London South (AHLS)

We were involved in the delivery of projects to 461 Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils last year, including two specific long term projects with Looked-After Children. This year we are looking to increase our output with this organisation to include delivery across the entire Secondary cohort. We have already begun the planning and will be launching the new 18 month project with year 10 Care Leavers 'Look to the Future' in April 2017, which includes the recruitment of 5 Student Ambassadors dedicated to work with this cohort until 2019.

This year has seen the specific development and delivery of projects aimed at Key Stage 5 vocational learners including looking at long term projects for alternative options at University including Foundation Courses and Degree Apprenticeship, development of projects for these learners will continue with AHLS for 2018.

Work with Special Education Needs and Disability SEND learners has been developed through this partnership, and the delivery of a SEND conference aimed at practitioners was successfully delivered this year in partnership with our Wellbeing Team in Student Services. In addition, work with parents of SEND learners has begun, including delivery of sessions out to local SEND focussed schools from our Student Ambassadors. In 2018 we hope to develop this work further with AHLS and our Wellbeing Team to introduce some specific on-campus projects aimed at these learners and their parents/carers.

### Raising Attainment

OFFA's focus on the raising of attainment in Schools is a direction of travel we have been following as a result of our evaluation of our work. In view of our strong reputation in the area of teacher training, rather than follow the route of trying to sponsor a specific school we have decided to concentrate our strategy here around using our own trainee teachers to help raise attainment in partnership schools. We are monitoring this development each term by tracking the grade profile of individual pupils.

In 2016/17 we created a post within the Student Recruitment Team designed to focus on working with pre-16 students. In partnership with the Team-Up organisation, we began an attainment raising project. Fifteen of our own students have been trained, and are delivering small group workshops and One-to-One sessions in English and Maths to school students in Years 7 to 9. These are mostly in West London with partnership schools, who have identified more than 30 learners with predicted progression grades of D/E for GCSE. Initial results, after the first semester with 17 learners, have shown an average increase of one GCSE grade level in their chosen core subject for each learner. Feedback assessments at the end of the session have been excellent, with the minimum score being 75%. We initially



aimed to work with only 30 learners, and thought it would require one-to-one tuition, but practice showed that small group learning was more effective, and so we met the target with fewer tutors.

Our initial partnership has been with 9 schools, including Phoenix School, Sacred Heart School and Burlington Danes in West London. We will be looking to increase the number of schools in this project for 2018, and to partner with some of our key target schools in Hounslow. The project encompasses campus visits for learners, and we are developing enrichment activities out to the schools to promote the virtues of higher education. The initial stage of this work is being done with Team-Up, but long term, from 2018 onwards, we aim to develop this tutoring project in partnership with our school of Education, Theology and Leadership to utilise more of our existing teaching students and trained tutors to deliver a Peer Educator/Learning project as a pilot within up to four schools. Initial planning has begun for this with the aim of our trainee teachers and tutors training up key stage 4/5 learners in schools to tutor younger learners in Key stage 2/3 around core subjects. This will raise the attainment of both Peer Educators and Learners in these subject areas. We aim to be ready for initial delivery in 2018, and this will be outlined further in our Outreach Strategy which is currently in development. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, we track each pupil across the academic year to trace the development of their skills and attainment.

### Faith-Based Outreach

#### Compass Project

We have begun work on the Compass Project in collaboration with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. Together we are working with four schools in East London with predominately female BAME students (63% of the 40 participants within the project identify as Asian Muslim). These are young women who have the ability and the grades to go to university but who, for a complex of reasons to do with culture, self-image and finance, do not see higher education as a place where they could flourish.

We will be delivering sessions in all four schools, targeted at learners and parents (with some sessions specifically aimed at the learners) which explore the benefits of going to university, as well as explaining what life at a university is really like. As part of this programme, we will be hosting an event on campus to offer learners and parents an immersive university experience. We aim to develop this new partnership across 2018 to work with other faith-based schools and youth organisations across London, including Catholic schools in underrepresented areas.

### Catholic schools work

With many of our Education graduates going to work in Catholic Schools in the area, we have a good network of partnerships with local schools. This year our Chaplaincy has worked with the Charity, 'Mary's Meals', to deliver sessions in local Catholic schools aimed at promoting the Charity and the ethos that animates us as a Catholic institution, which is that we all have a duty to help each other. Initial planning has taken place: we have identified suitable students, and they have been trained up to promote the project. The delivery phase of the project will be happening in the summer term of 2017 with support from our staff team. Our aim is to develop these local partnerships with our neighbouring borough Catholic schools into 2018, and to deliver Outreach activities, as well as encouraging campus visits from these schools.

### Ethnic Chaplaincy partnership

Our outreach team is aiming to forge links with the Ethnic Chaplains of the Westminster Diocese in order to link in with the BAME learners within the Catholic schools of the diocese. These learners make up over 20% of pupils within these parish schools and we will be looking to develop links with chaplaincies and the learners to deliver specific outreach activities for 2018 to promote St Mary's as a transitional faith-based option from Key Stage 5 into Higher Education learning in London.

## Summer Schools

We are launching a WP Summer School in July 2017. Our long-term aim is to contribute to an increase in student attainment in their chosen subject area for Y12, as initial grade averages will be taken and reviewed with them in January 2018. The summer school will be a week-long non-residential one, with specialist subject strands related to the following three Schools:

Arts and Humanities

Management and Social Sciences

Sports, Health and Applied Science

Each learner will choose one subject strand to intensively explore for the week. It will either be related to the subject they intend to study at the next level of their education, or else it will focus upon introducing students to the basics of a future career. The Summer school will be recruiting up to 120 students, aiming at a 50% conversion attendance in the first year, with a 10% increase for 2018. We are developing new evaluations for these projects, which will form the baseline for future years, and will improve and inform the Summer Schools as they develop. We have a long term aim to build in attainment activities with the Y12 participants to allow continued support with their final year A Level/BTEC study in the academic year following on from their attendance; planning will begin for this in 2018.

## Mature Learners

We have a set of Foundation Degrees which continue to attract mature students, as well as a part-time PGCE course. In addition to these degrees, we are offering a suite of Extended Degrees (with a Foundation Year) in the Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, from 2017. We work with our local Community College in Richmond, offering sessions introducing their students to higher education.

## 4. Student Retention, Success and Progression

During the 2015/16 & 2016/17 academic year St Mary's undertook a systemic review of the ways in which data is used to drive improvements with regard to student engagement and retention. The annual programme review process requires individual programme teams to reflect on the previous year of operation and address key areas, such as student attainment, student feedback and how this has been addressed, and other significant developments in the context of the quality of the student learning experience. In 2015/16 Programme Directors were asked to consider the student learning experience for different groups of students to consider whether those meeting WP criteria needed more or differentiated support. This work has led to a number of initiatives designed to help us make targeted interventions to address the continuing problem of student retention. Here, initiatives, such as the 'Get Set for Success' and 'English for Academic Purposes' programmes, Peer Mentoring (all designed and delivered by our Learning Development Team) and the Personal Tutoring system, will form key strands of our strategy. Our Learning Development Team plays a crucial part working within our Schools of Study to deliver academic skills development activities both embedded within programmes and targeted student interventions at programme level, prioritise strategically to maximise potential of WP students.

Our Careers provision continues to play a crucial role in our success in the area of employability, with more than 95% of our students finding employment within six months of graduating.

### 'Get Set for Success'

This is a pre-induction programme designed to help students from WP backgrounds to transition into higher education. Beginning with a free, 2-day pre-entry residential programme, participants are tracked by our Learning Development Team during their first year and beyond and offered the opportunity for additional intervention if required. Evaluation of the event, and pre and post-course measures, identify the important role this programme plays in developing student confidence in meeting the demands of HE level study.

Evaluation reports are presented to the Access Agreement Scrutiny Group (AASG) and issues arising are discussed by the GSfS team (LDT, WP recruitment team, Student Union) in planning the next year's event.

Recent analysis suggests that the Get Set for Success (GSfS) cohort achieve better outcomes than those who did not take part in the programme. The 2016-17 GSfS cohort has no withdrawals (as at March 2017) compared to a 7.76% withdrawal rate among other year 1 students. In 2015-16, the GSfS cohort had a withdrawal rate of 10.53% compared to a 13.21% withdrawal rate for other year 1 students. Furthermore, data for students who have to resit one or more modules indicates that GSfS students are significantly more likely to progress to Year 2 of their programme than other students.

### Personal Tutoring

The University's Personal Tutoring scheme is designed to support students to fully engage with their University experience and to offer them additional support during their studies. The scheme ensures the provision of academic and pastoral support for all students and allows us to monitor progression and attendance. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their learning and academic progress with their Personal Tutors and to discuss and formulate appropriate strategies to fulfil their potential.

The scheme is being phased in over three years from September 2016. It is built around a set of minimum expectations in relation to what all undergraduate students can expect in terms of support from Personal Tutoring. Through it, students have the opportunity to access professional and career development and receive guidance on the planning and recording of skills development throughout the year.

### Student Academic Development

Our Learning Adviser Service has become our Learning Development Team and has significantly expanded in staffing, scope and sphere of responsibility extended. Whilst continuing to provide a response to students' individual needs, through one to one and group appointments, workshops, study guides, online materials, telephone

and email services, the service now focuses increasingly on designing models of skills development which are more embedded within curriculum programmes. By providing activities which are developed and delivered collaboratively with subject staff, they are better able to offer focussed, timely and relevant services and resources which are accessible to greater number of students. These address the needs of a diverse student population and facilitate independent learning, but do not rely on students self-selecting or presenting themselves for additional input, as research suggests this has limited success. Programme review boards, student surveys and external examiner reports all continue to highlight academic skills development work embedded within curriculum delivery as being particularly beneficial in meeting the specific needs of part-time and/or mature students who have limited time on campus (e.g. part-time Education programmes).

All these developments, 'Get Set for Success', the Personal Tutoring system, and the focus of the Learning and Development Team are subject to review, and the evaluations will feed into further refinement and focussing of our activities in these areas in order to ensure the ongoing development of our students' potential.

### Student Ambassadors

We have continued to increase the number of our student ambassadors in line with our targets, and in view of where we need to concentrate in order to meet some of the other targets we are, following recommendations from our participation in the London AccessHE BAME project, working through our Learning Development Team to develop a greater awareness of issues in this area of recruitment.

### Careers and Employability

The Careers Services works hard to support the skills development and employability of our students and graduates. It supports career decision making, CV and application writing, interview skills practice, and a multitude of other activities that help students and graduates secure employment, volunteering and further study opportunities. The service delivers one-to-one support, careers sessions in the

curriculum, and employer / alumni engagement events throughout the academic year. They also provide sessions for personal tutors (3/11/16 – 16/2/17 x 48 student interactions) and deliver the Universities online jobs board.

The Careers Service (through the University of London Careers Group) provides access to expert professional advice for students who feel they face barriers to reaching their potential (those with 'protected characteristics') including pre entry students. The service provides inspiration and ideas for careers options, answers specific questions, and signposts students to dedicated resources and support groups. In addition, the Careers Service has developed a suite of resources specifically targeted at mature students and those with disabilities, to help them prepare for employment. Careers consults with the Student Union regularly via the Student Experience Working Group and delivers targeted support for student groups as needs are identified through feedback.

The TEF metrics show a strong track record in careers support to all students with 95.8% in employment or further study, and positive flags particularly around BAME, disabled and mature graduate outcomes. 'Careers Registration' has been introduced for 1<sup>st</sup> years this year to track the careers thinking progression of students on entry to the university and how that correlates to when they graduate. This will help the University to understand how it impacts on careers opportunity. Additionally, the University is developing a St Mary's Award scheme and this will enable us to formally recognise all forms of extracurricular and in curricular student development.

## **5. Financial support for students**

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In response to the regulatory authority's advice on the subject, the university will conduct an investigation into the effectiveness of its scholarships and bursaries, and will prepare to adjust its policy on scholarships in future years as a result.

The university is mindful of the challenges students face after the loss of the maintenance grant – accessed by an average of 25% of St Mary's students when it

was in effect – as well as possible changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and so will maintain our general Hardship Fund support at £200k for 2018/19 in order to best help students who most need specific financial support whilst studying with us. As well as this, by 2018/19 we will have greatly increased the capacity for which we can help Care Leavers and Estranged students with this fund, enhancing our care and outreach to students studying with us, so that we may help them in any way we can.

In relation to financial support, we have listened to student opinion and are therefore offering fewer fee waivers and more payments directly to them as part of their scholarships and bursaries. The emphasis of our financial support remains to provide the greatest benefit to the highest number of students whilst continuing to provide targeted support to other students such as Care Leavers, those identified through our outreach programme, and students from Catholic schools in line with our Catholic ethos, mission and values. The financial support that is counted in our agreement is specifically targeted at under-represented and disadvantaged groups in Catholic Schools.

### St Mary's Scholarships

Up to 50 Scholarships of £6,000 awarded as cash or fee waivers over 3 years to students who meet the following criteria:

Successful applicants will be awarded the following:

- Year 1: £3,000 as a cash award and/or tuition fee/accommodation fee waiver
- Year 2: £2,000 as a cash award/tuition fee waiver
- Year 3: £1,000 as a cash award/tuition fee waiver

Successful applicants studying on a part-time course will receive a cash award on a pro-rata basis calculated according to their FTE. For example students undertaking 60 credits of an undergraduate degree with a tuition fee liability of £4,500 would be eligible for an award of £1,500 at Level 1, £1,000 at Level 2 and £500 at Level 3.

To be eligible to apply for a St Mary's 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 ordinarily resident in the UK or the EU at the start of their course, and
- have completed an Application for Student Support through the relevant awarding authority and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University, and
- not be in receipt of full or part payment of fees through a sponsorship arrangement, and
- be entrants new to higher education in 2018, and
- make/have made St Mary's University a firm choice, and
- register on an undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University in September 2018

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

- be a student who has completed an Access course
- 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 2018/19
- be a Young Carer<sup>1</sup> under the age of 24 at the start of the academic year 2018/19
- hold Refugee status
- be the first generation<sup>2</sup> in the family to study in higher education
- be studying in a school/college in one of the London Boroughs

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 and have the lowest assessed household income.

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<sup>1</sup> Young carers are defined as "young people aged 14-24 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction" (Carers Trust 2015, 'Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities', (England version). Caring responsibilities may include practical tasks, physical care, personal care, help with medication, managing family budgets, helping with communication, support for siblings, emotional support.

<sup>2</sup> neither parent studied at university or holds a higher education qualification

### Academic Excellence Scholarships

Up to 30 Scholarships of £1,000 awarded, in the first year of study only, to UK & Republic of Ireland students who achieve at least AAB at 'A' level or equivalent and:

- have an assessed annual household income of less than £42,620, and
- have completed a means-tested assessment through the relevant awarding authority and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University, and
- make/have made St Mary's University a firm choice, and
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University in September 2018.

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

### Catholic Schools Scholarships

Up to 30 Scholarships of £1,000 awarded as cash in the first year of study only to students who are studying at a Catholic School or College in the UK or EU within a 3 year period prior to the 2018/19 academic year and who:

- have an annual assessed household income of less than £42,620, and
- have completed a means-tested assessment through the appropriate awarding authority and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University, and
- make/have made St Mary's University a firm choice
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University in September 2018

and

- are the first generation in the family to study in higher education.

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

### Care Leavers Scholarships

A cash award of £1,000 will be given to Care Leavers for each year of study and who:

- have been made an offer of a place to study on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree programme at St Mary's University, 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 2018/19, and
- make/have made St Mary's University a firm choice
- register on a full-time undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University in September 2018.

### St Mary's Bursaries

A bursary of £1,000, paid as cash over 3 years, to all full-time undergraduate students with a household income of less than £25,000, as verified by the Student Finance assessment. We have calculated that this will benefit around 39% of our student intake. Students will be required to meet the following criteria:

To be eligible to apply for a St Mary's Bursary 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 ordinarily resident in the UK or the EU at the start of their course, and
- have completed an Application for Student Support through the relevant awarding authority and agree that their financial information can be shared with St Mary's University, and
- make/have made St Mary's University a firm choice, and
- register on an undergraduate/foundation degree course at St Mary's University in September 2018

The bursary is subject to progression to the next level of study and will be paid as follows:

Year 1	£500
Year 2	£300
Year 3	£200

Students who register on a part-time undergraduate or foundation degree course will receive a bursary pro rata to the percentage of full-time study at each level of the course.

Working with the student body, it is apparent that there is an expectation for additional financial support, especially from students with a low household income. It is intended that the package of financial support offered by St Mary's will help meet this expectation.

#### Foundation Year scholarship

Additionally, St Mary's will be offering scholarships of £500 to up to 10 Foundation year students.

## 6. Targets and milestones

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The WP and retention targets are monitored by the Access Agreement Scrutiny Group, which is actively chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy). They form part of the new 'student journey' project upon which we embarked in the second semester of 2016/17, which is designed to track each student from the point of application through to post-graduation. The projects described in section 2 mark a shift from short-term activities toward more substantial, sustainable ones, and our investment in HEAT will allow us to intensify this development in future. Although the work we are doing on student attainment with our partner schools is not, at present, a target, it is a key part of our engagement with schools. In terms of retention, our Personal Tutoring scheme, which was introduced in 2016/17, allows us to monitor more closely initial student progress; we plan to expand the scheme (subject to the review of it showing it has been successful) to years 2 and 3 across the period 2017/2019. We have also, with the help of external consultants, reviewed our degree algorithms to bring them into line with the rest of the HE sector; this should have an

immediate impact on Good Honours. Our Careers Centre now has a dedicated member of staff working with each of our 4 Schools to embed employability into the curriculum, and this work is monitored by our Teaching, Learning, Quality and Enhancement Committee, (TLQEC) which is chaired by the PVC (Academic Strategy) We are developing a St Mary's Award Scheme, which will allow students to identify their graduate attributes by focussing upon the transferable skills they have developed during their time with us, both through their academic work and their extra-curricular activity. Once in place, the 'Student Journey' project will allow us to harvest data from each stage of the student's progress at St Mary's in order to feed it into improving the student experience, and helping us achieve and extend the milestones and targets upon which we comment in tables 7a and b in the annex. Section 7 outlines how we evaluate the success of our efforts, but we are aware that more needs to be done in this area, and the new Access Scrutiny Group will monitor progress on our projects each semester. In addition to a new WP strategy, we are also examining the spend on student progression to ascertain how effective it is in delivering on the targets we have set ourselves for Access and WP students in particular.

The University continues to recruit significant numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. As noted earlier, HESA PIs show that the University has a high number of state school students and is above the benchmark in this area. HESA data shows that in 2015/16, 27.6% of first year students with a known ethnicity were BAME compared to 23.8% across the sector. Similarly, 13.2% of first year students at St Mary's in 2015/16 declared a disability compared to 12.4% of students across the sector. As the rest of this documents outlines our activities in this area are growing and we expect to achieve the targets relating to access.

### Student Success & Progression

Over recent years our continuation rate has fallen from 92.6% of young first degree entrants in 2012-13 continuing or qualifying to 88.4% in 2014-15, and we have a project underway to determine why this has happened, and we shall work with our Schools to rectify this situation once the data has been analysed by the Planning

Office. The targets set out in our Access Agreement are challenging, but reflect the stretch and commitment that the University has made to improving continuation rates. The University recently published a new 10 year Strategic Plan which sets out ambitious plans in this area including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) specifically relating to improving continuation rates.

### Initial Teacher Education

Performance in these areas has improved considerably in 2016/17 and we feel confident in meeting the targets set out in the Access Agreement. At Primary level the percentage of men was 21% and the percentage of BAME entrants was 17.5%. At Secondary level 16.4% of entrants to the PGCE were BAME.

	2016/17 Actual	2020/21 Target
The percentage of male students recruited to our undergraduate ITT Primary Teaching programme.	11%	16%
The percentage of male students recruited to our PGCE Primary course	21%	25%
The percentage of BME students recruited to our ITT Primary Teaching programme	12%	15%
The percentage of BME students recruited to our PGCE Primary course	18%	15%
The percentage of BME students recruited to our Secondary PGCE course	16%	28%

## 7. Monitoring and evaluation

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### Evaluation

#### Access and Outreach

We continue to collect evaluation data as far as possible upon all our organised outreach activities that come onto campus. This is both qualitative and quantitative, looking at short term, medium and long term impact. For most of our activities this continues to take the form of paper based evaluation for feedback and analysis.

However we are introducing an e-form likely to be Survey Monkey format that will capture more in depth response both pre and post evaluation for our Summer School for 2017. For 2018 we are looking to introduce The Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) for targeting and evaluation and this will replace any existing forms of evaluation.

For large scale events on and off campus we continue to use a purpose built St Marys' app to capture data and target learners with bespoke interested communication post event. This will continue to be looked at for 2018 although HEAT is likely to replace all targeting and evaluation of this kind.

St Marys will invest in HEAT for 2017/18 onwards allowing us to expand our existing projects on a granular level with WP/BAME recruitment in line with the Access Agreement, aiding in clear targeting in potential areas in need of support. Utilising this information will be paramount in building tailored approaches for the 5 ETL based targets, whilst increasing support and access opportunities across our academic schools for WP/BAME students into higher education. We will also use HEAT to evaluate the success of our WP, Outreach and student success work pre and post application. Across the institution we are building a strategic network of users, aiming to use the system long term to reflect on the ever expanding portfolio of work we are committed to.

#### Pre-entry and On-course

As described in Section 3 above, we have systems in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the Learning Development Team and to track under-represented students in terms of attainment and retention. These have recently been further developed, to enhance their scope and effectiveness and to take account of changes to the fair access landscape, including the Prime Minister's social mobility goals; for example increasing the focus on examining the experiences and outcomes for BAME students and Young White Males. We monitor Widening Participation students in terms of their usage of employability services (Careers and Centre for Workplace Learning) and can identify those that are not engaging with the services

in order to encourage them to do so, as well as to evaluate the benefits of the services to them. Long-term impact of on-course activities will ultimately be measured through improved student outcomes related to retention, achievement and graduate success, as detailed in the Corporate Plan and Education Strategy.

### Institutional Responsibilities

At an institutional level, the Access Agreement Scrutiny Group (chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Strategy), oversees the overall strategy and performance for widening participation in the institution. This is supplemented by a working group, chaired by the PVC Academic Strategy, composed of the Head of Recruitment, Education Liaison Manager, Management Accountant, SU President Student funding Manager, Statutory Returns Manger, Head of Corporate Planning, Learning Development Team Manager and the Scholarship and Student Loans Company Liaison Officer.

## **8. Equality and diversity**

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The University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded within its Mission and Corporate Plan, and is embedded within our cultural DNA. We originated as a college designed to provide training for teachers to work with poor Catholic schools, and we remain committed to 'an inclusive, supportive learning environment' by 'active encouragement and support for students from diverse backgrounds'. These values and objectives are underpinned by the University's Equality and Inclusion Objectives, which aim to:

- promote equality
- prevent and eliminate discrimination
- foster an environment in which all staff and students can realise their full potential
- ensure that all students, staff and applicants are treated equally with respect and dignity and receive fair and equal treatment



- ensure compliance through the provision of appropriate training
- The implementation of the Equality and Inclusion Objectives is led by our Senior Director of People who reports to the Senior Management Team, and the Finance and Resources Committee of the Board of Governors. Following an external review of the University's committee structure, a new Equality & Inclusion Working Group (EI Group) has been formed. The purpose of the new EI Group will be to scrutinise, advise, direct and challenge to ensure that the University is not only meeting its legal obligations but is also delivering against the Equality and Inclusion Objectives of the University. The EI Group will be supported by the Equality & Inclusion Network (EIN). The purpose of this network is to ensure that the operational action plans that underpin the equality and inclusion objectives are implemented in an effective and timely manner. EIN members are expected to take an active and collective role in delivering the action plan as guided by the Co-Chairs and to promote the work being done in relation to equality & inclusion within their department and/or remit.
- Our Equality Objectives have recently been reviewed and re-published. Some student-focussed actions have been continued from the previous Objectives including further promotion of inclusive practices to enhance the student experience, improved accessibility for disabled students in the context of the University's developing Estates and Technology strategies. The new objectives include the development of metrics to enable a clear focus in Annual Monitoring on the admission, performance, progression and achievement of students from under-represented demographics and/or with protected characteristics. These metrics are incorporated into the University's development of KPIs, (Performance Indicators (PIs) and enhanced management reporting. The University will develop clear action plans to investigate and address any issues identified by the metrics.
- The Admissions Policy represents the mission and values of the University with its commitment to distinctiveness and inclusivity. The admissions

process is overseen by Registry through a centralised system which enables a consistent professional and fair decision making process. Admissions and selection processes are governed by the principles of fair access set down by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme (SPA) and UCAS. All applicants are considered impartially and consistently within the terms set for the different routes to admission, and on the basis of both merit and potential. As part of the University's enhancement of its performance monitoring capability, metrics will be developed to monitor the admission of students from under-represented groups: these will complement the existing monitoring of the pre-entry programme and other access policies.

- Support for disabled students continues to be a key priority for St Mary's. In order to best support the increasing numbers of students with additional needs, the dedicated Disability and Dyslexia Support Team has merged with the Counselling Team and has added a specific Mental Health Advice section, now known as the Student Wellbeing Service, based in Student Services. This new service is better placed to offer a more holistic approach in its support provision and aims to reduce the stigma surrounding the label of disability and/or mental health challenges. The Student Wellbeing Service recruits students as peer support workers to promote greater understanding of disability in the student body. The University is also aware of ongoing changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and will ensure that corporate planning takes into account any additional financial resource needed in the light of those changes in order that the University meets its legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments where required. The Student Wellbeing Service is working in collaboration with the Students Union and other groups to promote a positive, proactive approach to students' wellbeing that take into account students' varied personal situations and backgrounds, further strengthening the University's inclusive agenda.

- Disabled students are, and will continue to be, prioritised as the first group of students invited to attend the free Get Set for Success programme (described previously). This proactive approach gives them the opportunity to meet other students, explore the campus and identify any access issues, meet Student Services, key SU personnel, Student Ambassadors and the Learning Development Team even prior to induction to increase their confidence, sense of belonging and knowledge of opportunities for support from the very first days at university. The programme is fully accessible and current students with disabilities are actively encouraged to enlist as paid Student Ambassadors in subsequent years. Evaluations of this approach suggest that it is highly valued and successful; students attending GSfS are less likely to withdraw than the full population of undergraduates and students with disabilities have had similar withdrawal rates to the non-disabled student population over recent years. This approach will therefore continue for 2018/19

The equality and inclusion agenda, together with internal research and scholarship on the most effective ways to support students with protected characteristics, was one of the main driving forces behind the changes to the way that student Learning Development is delivered at St Mary's. The examination of impact data which was undertaken by the LDT between 2014 and 2017 has supported the findings of much national and international research and data which suggests that students in such are groups are often the least likely to self-select for voluntary or generic activities to support their learning, despite this being a popular model of 'study support' in many UK HEIs. Therefore, at St Mary's we have moved away from such 'stand-alone' activities and now offer embedded academic skills development in a broad range of programmes in all 4 Schools (see previous details). Our strategy of delivering whole cohort collaborative academic skills development activities integrated into curriculum programmes across the university is the most effective way to ensure that it is accessible and delivered to all students in the cohort and therefore the most likely to be fully inclusive. It also enables the LDT to offer focused 1:1 or small-group support to the students identified as being at particular risk of under-achievement or withdrawal. The impact of this approach is being evaluated across a range of

programmes in 2016-17 and 2017-18 and results and findings will inform continued improvements to delivery in 2018/19. This comprehensive approach to improving the student learning experience has been highly praised at programme review and external examiner scrutiny stages and is also being supported by staff development activities promoting inclusive teaching at a university and individual programme level.

The University operates an "Article 26" scheme for Asylum Seekers which waives the fees, for the whole of their studies, of selected Asylum Seekers who meet relevant criteria.

### First Star Academies

First Star Academies are now working with St Mary's to develop a British model to offer transformational support helping young looked after children in the UK progress to university. The academy will recruit 30 looked after young people aged 14, and for four years students will spend a day a month and four weeks each summer on St Mary's campus, supported by peer mentors drawn from St Mary's students. The programme will include:

- Academic support – to achieve good GCSE and A Level results and prepare them for HE
- Life skills – financial management, healthy living, risk reduction and confidence building
- Emotional resilience – including social engagement skills
- Support for foster parents – to improve foster placement stability

The first cohort will be on campus in summer 2017.

## 9. Provision of information to prospective students

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St. Mary's ensures that it provides clear and user friendly information about its fees and financial support to existing and potential students, outlining what is available in each year of study. This information is disseminated through the University brochures and prospectus, the University website, HE Fairs, pre- and post-application Open and Visit Days.

The Applicant Days at St Mary's offer a wide range of activities and support for our offer holders, aiding them in making the correct decision for themselves on which University they should choose to study at. These activities are under constant review, aiming to offer a wide scope of support across the potential student audience.

Timely information is provided 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 website (publications) and through one-to-one appointments with the Student Funding Officer. Students are able to obtain detailed advice and information about bursaries and scholarships at St Mary's and detailed information about local rent and living costs. Current and prospective students are also able to access the Brightside Student Calculator online to enable them to work out how much money they will have at university, and how much they will need.

The Access Agreements are published on the University 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.

Feedback gathered from the 'Are You Ready' campaign which provides pre-entry interactive online information and activities will help to inform both the content and format of information which could be made available to future applicants. In addition, the results of a project analysing the BAME experience at St Mary's (undertaken by

the Learning Development Team as part of a London-wide AccessHE initiative) used focus groups of students to first examine and then improve the quality of pre-entry materials to ensure they were both accessible and useful for students from BAME and other WP backgrounds. This work will continue to be developed by the Student Engagement Officer and the LDT for 2017/18 and beyond. Furthermore, the pre-entry programme 'Get Set for Success' targets information to under-represented groups. This process of St Mary's University, Twickenham Access Agreement 2018/19 improving information to students generally and to targeted groups in particular is ongoing; feedback is taken into account year on year and improvements are made.

## 10. Consulting with students

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The primary mode of student consultation is through the Students' Union. St Mary's Students' Union (SMSU hereafter) is the representative organisation of students at St Mary's University. SMSU through its elected Executive Members (student officers) and Sabbatical Officers (full time officers) represent students on all University committees and many working groups and also feeds information back to the student body through many different forums such as the Student Union (SU) Council, Programme Representatives, website and social media. The University considers this partnership approach as integral to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities and the wider student experience.

## GLOSSARY

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AccessHE	Pan-London organisation that aims to support the progression of underrepresented groups to higher education
AASG	Access Agreement Scrutiny Group
AHLS	Aim Higher London South
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CEAIG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisors
DSA	Disables Students Allowance
EI Group	Equality & Inclusion Working Group
EIN	Equality & Inclusion Network
FSM	Free School Meals
GSfS team	The 'Get Set for Success' team
HEAT	Higher Education Activity Tracker
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAC	Looked After Children Forum for London
LDL	Learning Development Lecturers
LDT	Learning Development Team
NCOP	National Collaborative Outreach Project
PGCHE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PIs	Performance Indicators
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disability
SIMMSpace	The student portal
SMSU	St Mary's Students' Union

SPA	Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme
StaffNet	The Staff Information Portal
SU	Student Union
TEF	The Teaching Excellence Framework
TLQEC	Teaching, Learning, Quality & Enhancement Committee
WP	Widening Participation