

Part Two: Fee and Access Plan (required for publication)

| Fee and Access Plan | |
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| Name of institution | Aberystwyth University |
| Duration of the fee and access plan | 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2025. |
| Section 1 - Fee levels | |
| Section 1.1 – Fee levels or the determination of a fee level at each location (Guidance paragraphs 88-97) | |
| Fee level | Location of course |
| Maximum regulated fee | <p>Aberystwyth for 2023/24 and 2024/25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home (including Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) undergraduate • Home Integrated master's • Home PGCE <p>We will inform all applicants and students of the regulated fee levels for 2023/24 and any inflation-linked increases for successive years of study as soon as confirmation is received from Welsh Government, and will publish updates on our website. Up to date details of the relevant fees will be set out in our offer documentation.</p> |
| 15% of the maximum regulated fee in line with HEFCW guidelines | <p>Aberystwyth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Study Year Abroad |

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| | <p>We will inform all applicants and students of the fee levels for 2023/24 and any inflation-linked increases for successive years of study as soon as confirmation is received from Welsh Government, and will publish updates on our website.</p> |
| <p>20% of the maximum regulated fee, in line with HEFCW guidelines.</p> | <p>Aberystwyth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated year in industry • Integrated year in professional practice <p>We will inform all applicants and students of the fee levels for 2023/24 and any inflation-linked increases for successive years of study as soon as confirmation is received from Welsh Government, and will publish updates on our website.</p> |
| <p>Fee specified in Franchise partner agreements</p> | <p>Fees for UG programmes offered by our Franchise Partners are determined in agreements with our franchise partners.</p> <p>For courses subject to the regulated fee, these are subject to the increase limits on regulated fees set out by the Welsh Government. Where these are offered at less than maximum they may be subject to annual review.</p> |
| <p>Section 1.2 - Aggregate fee levels (Guidance paragraphs 98-102)</p> | |
| <p>Aberystwyth will charge the maximum regulated fee level for Full-time Home Undergraduate, Integrated Masters and PGCE students covered by this plan. The maximum fee is governed by the Welsh Government, and for 2023/24 was £9,000. For 2024/25 the fee will be £9,250. Any increase in the FT Home UG, Integrated Masters and PGCE fee for future years of the course will be tied to the maximum fee rise, to be set by Welsh Government. Aggregate fees for the whole duration of the course will depend on the length of the programme (most of our UG programmes are three or four years long), and whether or not the programme includes a Study Year Abroad (currently charged at 15% of the maximum regulated fee) or a Year in Industry/professional practice (currently charged at 20% of the maximum regulated fee), and whether there are inflation-linked increases as outlined above.</p> | |

Section 2 - Student Partnership (Guidance paragraphs 103-106)

Aberystwyth University engages with its Students Union and the wider student body throughout the year in a wide range of ways, both formal and informal. All students are encouraged to feed back on their experiences and contribute ideas and suggestions to help shape their education. Our Strategic Plan 2018-23 commits to 'further improve the student experience in close partnership with the Students' Union, putting the student voice at the heart of our activity.' We uphold the core principle of the *Wise Wales Statement on Partnership for Higher Education (2014)* that '*students should be active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of knowledge*'.

The Student Charter

The annually updated Student Charter encapsulates the importance of effective student representation, with a commitment to involve student representatives as full partners in our committees and structures.

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/charter/>

Additionally, the Students' Union and University sign a Relationship Agreement, based on ten agreed principles. Principle 4 states that 'AU recognises that AberSU is the primary voice of students and will ensure that AberSU is consulted in a timely fashion before decisions are taken with impact on students'. Embedding the student voice within our governance processes is a way to ensure that the University adheres to this principle.

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/governance/studentsunion/2018-08-01---Relationship-Agreement-1.pdf>

The Student Voice in Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement and Governance

At the highest level, regular meetings between the University Executive officers and Students' Union officers take place. These provide opportunities for the Students' Union to ensure that the student voice is being heard by senior management and ensure that there is close collaborative working on issues which contribute to student success. As well as these meetings of the two executives, there are informal frequent meetings between the Vice-Chancellor and the Students' Union president.

Within the University's formal structure there are student representatives appointed by the Students' Union on most of our major committees, including:

- Council and its sub-committees,
- Senate (which is the main body responsible for Learning and Teaching Strategy)
- Institute (Faculty)-level representatives who participate in discussions of key elements of quality assurance (including approval of new study schemes and their annual monitoring and review)
- Departmental representatives who participate in the Staff Student Consultative Committees, where student concerns can be raised and addressed in discussion with departmental staff. The academic representatives' work is an important part of the work of the Students' Union in ensuring the student voice is fully heard.

- Academic Representatives receive training and support for their role from the Students' Union. They are responsible for representing students at course, year group or subject area level, or may have responsibility for representing specific cohorts such as Joint Honours students or Mature students.
- Learning and Teaching Strategy (Student Success Plan). The Learning and Teaching Strategy is implemented through various work strands. There are student representatives on the delivery groups of all relevant strands.

The Student Voice in the Fee and Access Plan

The Student Voice Group (SVG), which is comprised both of Students' Union and AU staff, has a remit of triaging and analysing student comment and feedback received through the following main routes:

- i. Staff Student Consultative Committees (the academic representative system)
- ii. The University's Your Voice Matters feedback scheme.

Your Voice Matters is a university-wide approach to student engagement which encourages students to suggest ways in which activities and processes at the University can be improved. Your Voice Matters comprises two elements:

- *Tell Us Now* - an anonymous online portal through which students can contribute ideas and comments. This is essential to monitor the realisation of initiatives.
- *Module Evaluation Questionnaires* - centrally-coordinated surveys are run for each undergraduate and integrated masters module, enabling a wealth of data and information to inform both departmental and the overall AU approach to improving the student experience.

The SV Group analysis, and recommendations from the Group, is provided to all staff involved in academic leadership and planning, and feeds up to senior management. The analysis informs strategic decisions about levels of investment, including Fee and Access Plan expenditure. The feedback loop to the student (about action taken) is closed through a regular communications campaign which keeps students informed on how their voices are driving change.

The Student Voice in agreeing the Fee and Access Plan

Members of our Students' Union are members of the Fee and Access Plan Monitoring Group, which approves the content and priorities of plans and receives reports on activity and spend. The Students' Union is kept abreast of the responses to the Student Voice achieved through the SV Group. Meetings with the Student's Union over the next two year will enable continued clarity on where the Fee and Access Plans align with the priorities, campaigns and concerns of the Students' Union.

The Students' Union President and Welsh Culture Officer/UMCA President also sit on the University's Council, which approves the final version of our Fee and Access Plans.

The University works with a number of partners to deliver Undergraduate provision across Wales and recognises its responsibilities towards those students. We work closely with all our partners to ensure the quality of both the provision and the student experience. The requirement to engage appropriately with the student voice is embedded in our partnership agreements and we are assured that their processes for student representation are robust and that students have a mechanism through which their needs can be expressed and met. We are also confident that the level of investment at the Partner Colleges meets Fee Plan requirements. Partners participate, for example, in our Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQ's), as well as having other ways of engaging with the student voice. At both Colegs Cambria and Gwent, the students meet with the Link Tutor from AU twice a year to discuss how they are finding the programs and to raise any issues directly.

Additionally :-

At Coleg Cambria this takes the form of student representation on the Higher Education Operational Group. Student feedback is also received via the Module Evaluation Questionnaires and through 'mock NSS' surveys. Additionally, our Students' Union is active with students at our franchise partners.

At Coleg Gwent for each year of study there are 2 student reps. Students can also provide feedback through the Learner Voice forum which is held twice a year. Additionally, students have a campaign "Together we've" where changes or new implementations introduced at the Coleg as a direct result of student feedback are promoted. Students are also invited to a forum with the Coleg Vice Principal and Head of Learner Services.

Section 3 - Under-represented groups (Guidance paragraphs 107-113)

Groups recognised by HEFCW as under-represented in Higher Education :

We recognise the following groups as under-represented in higher education and/or requiring additional support. Some of these groups are recognised by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) as a national indicator of low participation performance in HE or identified by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) as under-represented in Higher Education. The rationale for including these groups is that Fee and Access Plan work to improve recruitment and retention of individuals from these groups contributes to national recruitment priorities and addresses inequalities which are recognised across Wales.

- Students within the bottom quintile of lower super output areas in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Welsh medium students.
- Students from UK low participation areas.
- Students who are identified as a priority under the Reaching Wider Programme :
 - Post-16 young people in the bottom two quintiles of Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

- Adults without level 4 qualifications in the bottom two quintiles of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation to provide progression to level 4 provision
- Care experienced applicants and carers in all age groups across Wales.

Other groups recognised as under-represented in Higher Education

Additionally, we have included a number of groups in our plans which we have, traditionally, found difficulty in recruiting, including:

| Applicant/Student Group | Rationale for inclusion in this plan |
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| Students with disabilities, including specific learning disabilities and those living with long-term mental health challenges | Students with disabilities are recognised by HESA as a national low participation performance indicator. In the latest published HESA Performance Indicators, for 2020/21, 11.8% of our FTUG First Degree students were recorded as being in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance, against an expected benchmark of 8%). The investments in this plan are aimed at helping us to remain above our benchmark in this area. |
| Mature Students | The Office for Students includes mature students in the groups under-represented in HE. According to HESA Performance Indicators for entrants in 20120/21, 15.7% of our entrants were mature, compared with a UK average of 29.9% These students may have particular support needs having been out of education, entered via non-traditional routes, or have additional care responsibilities. Adult learners are recognised as being a priority group through the Reaching Wider Programme. |
| Students from a minority ethnic background | A report by Universities UK found that between 2006 and 2016 participation in HE from students from a minority ethnic background has increased by 50%. However, the report concluded that more needed to be done in Universities to address retention, fairness in attainment and graduate employability prospects of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. |
| Care leavers, young carers and estranged/unsupported students | These students make up a small number of our student cohort, but have particular needs as they lack the support that most of our students receive from family. According to a 2014 UCAS |

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| | report, only 6% of care leavers enter HE (compared with 40% of the general population). UCAS identifies the barriers to entry as being lack of information about available support. |
| Students from low income backgrounds | The Department for Education reported in July 2020 that in terms of progression to HE, the gap between students who are eligible for free school meals and those who are not continues to widen. 26.3% of students who claim free school meals now enter HE, compared with 45.1% of their counterparts from wealthier households. |
| First in family to attend Higher Education | Students from low participation areas may be the first in their family to attend Higher Education. They need particular support pre-entry in terms of aspiration raising. |

We also recognise our responsibility to all students with protected characteristics, and will carefully monitor the progression and attainment of these groups in line with the stated aim of our Strategic Equality Plan to ‘foster an inclusive learning and working community which is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and where all our staff and learners are supported, feel respected and can realise their potential.’

Fee Plan investments support these students in two ways:

- Through activities targeted at groups under-represented in higher education and intended to widen participation and improve retention.
- Through activities accessible by all students but where the specific needs of students from under-represented groups are given additional attention to ensure that all potential barriers to access are removed and where the potential benefits to students under-represented in higher education are emphasised. There are also activities which, though accessible to all students, are more likely to be accessed by students who need additional support (e.g. our Student Support services activities).

Section 4 – Objectives as they relate to supporting equality of opportunity and the promotion of HE
(Guidance paragraphs 114-148)

Section 4.1 - Equality of Opportunity

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| Objective 1 | <i>Promote wider and fairer participation in higher education, raising educational aspirations and helping to prepare students from under-represented groups for higher education.</i> |
| Objective 2 | <i>Improve the retention of students from groups under-represented in higher education and support their progression and completion through the provision of high quality academic, welfare and financial support</i> |
| Objective 3 | <i>Improve the higher education experience for students from under-represented groups</i> |
| Objective 4 | <i>Improve the employability prospects of students under-represented in higher education through targeted programmes to increase skills, skills awareness, ambition and confidence</i> |
| Objective 5 | <i>Expand bilingualism through the provision of additional academic and service provision through the medium of Welsh</i> |

Section 4.2 - Promotion of higher education

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| Objective 1 | <i>Promote the student voice, ensuring that our students are active partners in the development of our activities, curricula and processes</i> |
| Objective 2 | <i>Improve the quality of learning and teaching, including technologies to improve the learning and teaching experience.</i> |
| Objective 3 | <i>Strengthen graduate employability</i> |
| Objective 4 | <i>Raise academic aspiration through partnership working with schools and colleges and the provision of a package of scholarships that reward academic excellence</i> |
| Objective 5 | <i>Improve the student experience through initiatives to enhance wellbeing</i> |
| Objective 6 | <i>Improve fee plan delivery, monitoring and awareness of impact</i> |

Authorisation of the fee and access plan application to HEFCW (required for publication)

In authorising fee and access plan applications, the governing body:

- i. confirms that it continues to be an institution that provides higher education in Wales and is a charity.
- ii. has seen and considered appropriate evidence to support the declarations being made in this application.
- iii. confirms that there has been appropriate consultation with its students, both those studying at the institution and at other providers where education is delivered on its behalf.
- iv. confirms that the information provided in this fee and access plan application is accurate and current, at the time of writing, and is based on verifiable data.
- v. confirms that: **[delete one or more statements, as appropriate]**
 - a. it is acceptable for HEFCW to use financial, quality and/or other information/data that it holds about a currently regulated institution, regardless of whether the information/data was originally provided for purposes of regulation under the 2015 Act;
 - b. it is not acceptable for HEFCW to use financial, quality and/or other information/data that it holds about a currently regulated institution for purposes of regulation under the 2015 Act; and
 - c. it is submitting new, up-to-date, more recent information/data to inform HEFCW's assessment.
- vi. understands that HEFCW reserves the right to undertake a visit to the institution to better understand eligibility related to the organisation and management of financial affairs, the data submitted on fee and access plans and/or the quality of education provided on, or on behalf of, the institution.
- vii. understands that it must provide HEFCW and/or HEFCW's agent, with information, assistance and access to its facilities and the facilities of other bodies providing higher education on its behalf.
- viii. understands that HEFCW may carry out, or arrange for an agent to carry out, a review relating to the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of the institution, and its governing body must take into account any advice given to it by HEFCW or the body appointed by HEFCW for this purpose.
- ix. confirms that all education provided by, or on its behalf, regardless of the level or location of the provision has been taken into account in this fee and access plan application.

- x. confirms that the institution is at a low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium- to long- term.
- xi. confirms that the accounts are audited each year by a registered auditor and that the registered auditor is not the same firm and/or individual that prepared the accounts.
- xii. confirms that the institution complies with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines for higher education.
- xiii. understands that any financial commitments to students made in the fee and access plan, as approved by HEFCW, must be honoured.
- xiv. confirms that it will continue to invest the same proportion of full-time undergraduate fee income to promote equality of opportunity and promote higher education and not reduce invest to promote equality of opportunity which is intended to support only under-represented in higher education.
- xv. confirms that it will continue to invest its institutional contribution to the Reaching Wider Programme aligned to its agreed Reaching Wider Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- xvi. confirms that it will maintain student support levels.
- xvii. confirms that the institution will ensure that a copy of the fee and access plan can be made accessible to its students in any format.
- xviii. confirms that the institution will clearly signpost its students to HEFCW’s complaints processes.
- xix. take all reasonable steps to supporting under-represented groups that are studying for postgraduate courses.
- xx. considers how investment can best support students most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic where they are not already identified as under-represented groups.

| Fee and access plan application submission to HEFCW¹ | |
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| Date of Governing Body approval: | 14 th May 2022 |

¹ Fee and access plans published on the institution’s websites must only include versions approved by HEFCW.

Governing Body authorised signature:



Date of Governing Body approval:

10th April 2024

Governing Body authorised signature:

