

The Right Revd Richard Moth, Bishop of
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Dear Reverend Moth

Provisional decision to approve an access and participation plan

I am writing to confirm that I have approved St Mary's University, Twickenham's 2025-26 access and participation plan. This approval is in accordance with section 29 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), the Higher Education (Access and Participation Plans) (England) Regulations 2018 (the "Regulations") and informed by our published guidance.¹

As set out in Regulatory Notice 1, initial approval of an access and participation plan is for a period of one year. Approval will then automatically roll over each subsequent year for a maximum of three years unless the OfS expressly notifies a provider in writing that a new plan needs to be submitted for approval. The total possible duration of the plan's approval is therefore 4 years.

Accordingly, unless I notify you otherwise, St Mary's University, Twickenham will not normally need to submit a new access and participation plan for approval until 2028, **for the period 2029-30 onwards**. It is important to note that approval of your plan on this basis is conditional on you taking all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of your plan, your compliance with any related monitoring requirements the OfS imposes on you, and any enhanced monitoring requirements or specific condition(s) of ongoing registration that have been imposed.

We expect that you will continue to comply with all conditions of registration and other relevant legal and statutory duties. The approval of your plan does not provide evidence of compliance with any other condition of registration and should not be relied upon in any OfS investigation of compliance with any other condition of registration.

The basic and higher fee limits are prescribed by the Secretary of State in regulations made under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and may change from time to time. For reference, these fee limits are normally published on the OfS website, but it is the responsibility of a provider

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/>

to ensure that it is aware of relevant law affecting the fee limits. You should not make any changes to the fees set out in your plan without first seeking a variation to the plan and approval from the OfS.

When requesting a fee variation, a provider should ensure it continues to comply with consumer protection law and understands the potential implications this may have for its ongoing compliance with its conditions of registration.

Reasons for approval

In accordance with section 29 of HERA, the OfS may, if it thinks fit, approve an access and participation plan. An access and participation plan is a plan that complies with sections 30 to 32 of HERA. Section 30 of HERA allows a limit to be set on the duration of an access and participation plan. This limit is prescribed in the Regulations, and we have currently set this at a maximum of four years.

The OfS published Regulatory Notice 1: Access and participation plan guidance on 7 December 2023 and this sets out our approach to regulating access and participation.

I have assessed your plan and I am satisfied that it meets the requirements set out in sections 30 to 32 of HERA and the Regulations and is informed by the published guidance relating to access and participation plans.

I have approved your plan for four years and you will not normally be required to submit a new access and participation plan for approval until 2028 for the period 2029-30 to 2032-33.

In assessing your plan, I have noted the following:

- Where you have included commitments to delivering financial support for students in your plan, I expect you to take all reasonable steps to ensure students have clear information about the support they are entitled to, and to deliver this support to them. You should not make any changes to the financial support arrangements set out in your plan without first seeking a variation to the plan and approval from the OfS.
- Where you have students registered with you who are studying under sub-contractual arrangements, you are reminded that that these students are covered by your access and participation plan. As such, you are expected to take all reasonable steps to deliver the provisions of your plan to them.

Review of my decision to approve your access and participation plan

Any decision of the OfS to approve a plan is in the first instance a provisional decision for the purposes of the Regulations. The governing body of a provider affected by a provisional decision may apply for a review of that decision in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations.

A provisional decision becomes final if the governing body either informs the OfS that it accepts the provisional decision or does not apply for a review of the provisional decision within 28 days beginning from the date of the provisional decision.

If you do not accept this provisional approval decision and wish to apply for a review, you must notify independentreferrals@officeforstudents.org.uk within 28 days of the date on this letter. You must not publish your access and participation plan until the independent review process is complete.

The ability of a provider to apply for such a review relates only to my decision to approve your plan. It does not apply to decisions by the OfS to impose requirements to mitigate any increased risk of a future breach of ongoing condition A1.

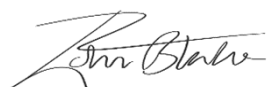
Next steps

Within 28 days of receiving this letter please can you email app@officeforstudents.org.uk:

- To confirm you accept this provisional decision.
- The URL to your published approved plan on your website. This link will be included on the OfS register. A PDF of your plan has been sent to you as a separate attachment. Please ensure that you have complied with GDPR guidance and have not included any identifiable information in your plan, prior to its publication. Please let us know if you need to make any changes as a result.
- An access and participation plan summary. This should normally be provided in the form of a PDF, and be no more than three pages. This should also be published alongside your approved access and participation plan on your website. Please contact us if you wish to provide an alternative format. We will publish this summary alongside your full plan on the OfS website.

Further guidance and templates to support you to write a summary of your plan can be found at Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan - effective practice advice.²

Yours sincerely



John Blake
Director for Fair Access and Participation

² <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-6-how-to-prepare-your-access-and-participation-plan-effective-practice-advice/>