

Opposition Day debate on 'Access to Higher Education' Tuesday 16th March 2010

SHORTFALL IN UNIVERSITY PLACES THIS SUMMER

1. Increase in applications and shortfall in university places

- The UCAS application figures for entry to Higher Education in 2010 show a **22.9% increase in applications** from 2009 (UCAS data release 8 February 2010).
- Steve Smith, President of Universities UK has commented: "Last year about **160,000 students who applied didn't end up going to university**. This year, we already know that there are about **another 75,000** applying for university. So... **there will be a lot of students this year who do not get a place at university.**"
- University Alliance represents 22 universities at the heart of the sector. There have been significant increases in applications across Alliance universities.

2. Large increase in applications for Science and Maths (STEM) related courses at Alliance universities

- There has been a large increase in applications to STEM subjects at Alliance universities.
 - At **Oxford Brookes University** applications to **mathematics** have **increased by 42%**.
 - At The **University of Portsmouth** applications to **science** are **up by 30%** - with applications to earth and environmental science up by **42%** and to health sciences by **43%**.

3. Alliance universities plugging a national skills gap

- Alliance universities are plugging a national skills gap in strategically important STEM and STEM-related subjects.
- For example there has been an increase in applications to **engineering** at the University of Hertfordshire by **32% from 2009** and at the University of the West of England by **58% from 2008**, compared to a **14% national average increase**.
- Nearly **22% of all students studying STEM-related subjects are at an Alliance university** and around **45%** of all students at an Alliance university are studying a STEM-related subject.

4. At the highest level of skills need Alliance universities are working with industry to provide postgraduate and doctoral skills which are driving the new economy

• Case study: The University of Plymouth and Orange / France Telecom

The University of Plymouth has a long-term relationship with Orange / France Telecom based on a collaboration within a European Framework IV research project. Orange / France Telecom have sponsored a number of PhD and MRes students as well as commissioning specific research studies from the university (with a cumulative sponsorship figure of £190,000).

For further information please contact University Alliance direct or the communications/press office of your local Alliance university.