1.0 Introduction

The University of York was established under principles of equality of access and social inclusion and has been since its inception one of the most socially diverse among its peers. We have established ourselves as a successful research-intensive university which aims to admit bright students from a wide diversity of backgrounds provide excellent support and opportunities while they are with us and prepare them for their future careers. We are a popular choice for applicants and are a national recruiter, drawing students from all areas of the UK and globally from more than 160 countries.

As a leading higher education institution we recognise that we have a responsibility to contribute to the national widening participation agenda. This means raising aspiration and attainment among young people and ensuring that these objectives are reflected in our own admissions outcomes. In our teaching, learning and non-academic activity and support structures, including our colleges, we aim to retain our students and ensure they are afforded every opportunity for success throughout the student lifecycle.

Our Widening Participation team is engaged in outreach activity locally, regionally and nationally with much of its work undertaken collaboratively with other HEIs.

In spite of a changing and challenging admissions environment we have maintained or increased our proportions of entrants with key widening participation characteristics and are close to our HESA benchmarks in most of the indicators. In terms of access, over the last three years we have increased our proportion of entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and of BME entrants and our intake from State Schools remains at around 80% (higher than our benchmark in 2014/15). Entrants from NS-SEC 4-7, which had risen above 20% in 2012/13 and 2013/14, dipped in 2014/15, when we were below our (increasing) benchmark, but our own data suggests this has reversed in 2015/16.

The University Plan for 2014-2020 and our Access Agreement for 2017/18 confirm our commitment to widening participation both in relation to the profile of our own students and in raising aspiration more widely through our collaborative and other work. Our updated targets continue to be stretching, are focused on areas which will support OFFA in its objectives as outlined in the OFFA Strategic Plan 2105-2020 and address identified local issues relating to the student lifecycle. In the light of the HESA decision on NS-SEC 4-7, we have removed our earlier target relating to NS-SEC 4-7 and will focus on increasing the percentage of our entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods as well as adding a target for BME entrants.
Through our ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the student body, we have identified a clear difference in the retention of mature students when compared to young students, and have added a target to improve retention in this group.

In terms of student success, we seek to offer all of our students an environment in which they can optimise their academic and personal potential and our collegiate structure supports the creation of cohesive student communities and promotes students’ personal well-being and personal development. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy aims to develop students’ intellectual skills, resilience, self-awareness and self-assurance as well as the ability to form networks which will help close the social gap for all of our graduates. Our non-continuation rate following year of entry is low in relation to our comparators and below our HESA benchmark (HESA PI Table 3a).

In terms of progression, the University Strategy is clear that ‘we will give our students opportunities to gain experience that will prepare them better for employment or further study.’ This includes enhancing students’ employability throughout their time at York by engaging with development opportunities offered by departments, colleges and the Careers Service. We will also further develop opportunities for students to spend time studying abroad through our Centre for Global Programmes.

2.0 Responsibilities

Within the University, responsibility for the Access Agreement is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Executive Board</td>
<td>Sign-off of OFFA Agreement prior to submission</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor (Chair); Members of the University’s Senior Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFA Monitoring Group</td>
<td>Preparation and submission of the OFFA Agreement; monitoring of progress towards target and coordination of OFFA-related activity across the institution</td>
<td>Director of Corporate Planning (Chair); cross-University representation from Academic Departments, Students’ Union, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Student Support Services and Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting, Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation Group (sub-group of above)</td>
<td>Development of Evaluation Strategy and operation of mechanisms designed to enable effective targeting of outreach activity and measurement of impact in order to enable effective use of resources</td>
<td>Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (Chair); cross-University representation from Academic Registry, Institute of Effective Education, Business Intelligence Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 Fees and fee income

Note: Fee arrangements for students from the European Union are based on regulations current at the time of writing, July 2016. As a result of the UK’s decision to leave the EU in the Referendum of 23 June 2016 these regulations may change. We will charge EU students the fees shown unless and until there is a change in the regulations.

The University of York will charge 2017 entrants a UK/EU undergraduate tuition fee of £9250. This fee will apply to all undergraduate programmes, including Nursing, Medicine and PGCE (ITT). Currently, UK/EU students on the year abroad element of both Erasmus Mundus and non-Erasmus programmes and students on sandwich work placement years are charged 15% and 20% of the applicable tuition fee respectively. These arrangements are subject to change in future years as permitted.

The University does not expect to have any part-time undergraduate students paying more than the basic fee defined by OFFA. However, in such circumstances we commit to spend an appropriate portion of any income above the basic limit on access measures in line with the expenditure commitments set out in this agreement. The University reserves the right to alter applicable fees in line with inflation and/or government policy.

4.0 Access, student success and progression measures

4.1 Access

Work with young people at school or college consists of a structured series of interventions at three critical stages. Programmes aimed broadly at Years 6 - 8 are designed to raise achievement and aspiration in disadvantaged populations. Programmes targeted broadly at Years 9 – 11 aim to demystify higher education, raise awareness of subjects and routes and the variety of provision, increase the self-confidence and self-esteem of students involved, and raise aspirations for lifelong learning. They also lay the groundwork for progression to higher education by encouraging appropriate subject choices. Programmes for students in Years 12 and 13 concentrate on the transition to higher education, with a particular emphasis on building confidence in applying to research-intensive, selective universities. Other areas of our work focus on mature learners and those returning to study. We have also been developing our support for care leavers and young carers. Our range of programmes will serve both national sector and University of York objectives in widening participation. The socio-economic profile of our geographical location allows us to focus locally on white males from less advantaged backgrounds while our work targeting BME students is necessarily more regionally and nationally focused.

We intend during 2017-2018 to maintain the current range of the University’s outreach, access and retention activities, including work undertaken in collaboration with the University of Hull in relation to the Hull-York Medical School (HYMS), with further modifications to maximise effectiveness. These activities, which relate to the whole student lifecycle, are detailed in our 2015/16 Access Agreement and include:

- Long-term local and regional outreach, starting with Year 6 pupils and parents, that grows the applicant pool both for York and HE generally
Collaborative work designed to raise aspiration and attainment locally, regionally and nationally
Programmes focused specifically on access to York
Provision of high-quality IAG for prospective university students to ensure that students are making informed choices at all transition points
Work with parents, teachers and advisers
A University environment which promotes retention and successful completion
Activities focused on building employability skills

The table below summarises the main foci of our major current initiatives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main focus</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Common strands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 6-8</td>
<td>Shine, Green Apples, Children’s University, YSIS</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 9-11</td>
<td>Shine, Green Apples, Regional Excellence Hub, Mentoring, Big Deal, North Yorkshire Coast Higher Education Collaboration, Support for graduates in Teach First, YSIS</td>
<td>Information, Advice and Guidance, Residential experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Next Step York, Realising Opportunities, Regional Excellence Hub, YSIS</td>
<td>Independent Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Extended degrees, Centre for Lifelong Learning, Graduate Interns</td>
<td>Parent engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting school/college achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All our activities share common characteristics:
- Clear aims
- Appropriate targeting
- Embedded evaluation measures to enable impact assessment
- Ongoing relationships
- Involvement of parents, teachers and advisors
- Involvement of current University of York students
- A residential element in many programmes
- Mentoring for some participants

The University is also considering its response to Degree Apprenticeships taking into account both the opportunities and the challenges presented by an alternative to traditional full-time campus-based undergraduate degrees.

### 4.1.1 Collaboration and partnerships
Collaboration is at the heart of our widening participation activity. We are leaders or active participants in national, regional and local initiatives in which consortia of institutions combine to maximise effectiveness and good use of resources. These include Realising Opportunities and our Schools and Colleges Network (national); the Excellence Hub and
North Yorkshire Coast Higher Education Collaboration (regional); and Green Apples (local).

Since 2015/16 York has been an active partner with the Sutton Trust and other universities in the development of two new Pathway programmes raising aspirations and preparing students for access to Medicine and to STEM subjects. The first cohorts will complete in 2017 (Medicine) and 2018 (STEM) and the programmes will be evaluated by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University.

We are an active partner in the local Higher York partnership which is now part of the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO). Schools have been targeted through the use of HEFCE outreach ‘cold spot’ data and further work undertaken to identify specific groups within those chosen. Tailored programmes have been created for each of the schools covering campus visits; open days; taster days; opportunities to attend master classes; talks about various aspects of HE and student life including different routes into HE, finance and funding, applying, writing a personal statement, and welfare and pastoral support; attendance at schools’ options evenings to provide information and answer questions about HE.

The partnership also includes activities to support particular groups of students, e.g. pupils with special needs and/or disabilities, looked after children, young carers; activities targeted at pupils interested in specific routes into HE (e.g. vocational programmes); and activities targeted at encouraging progression into non-traditional routes (e.g. women into science and engineering). We will work towards maximising improvements in targeting and delivery that have come out of the collaboration.

Discussions are underway with our partners about the continuation of the NNCO work beyond the initial period of HEFCE funding as well as how we can best respond to the new National Collaborative Outreach Programme initiative.

The Excellence Hub is a partnership between the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York which targets high achieving students from currently under-represented groups from across the region to encourage and facilitate progression of the ‘most able, least likely’ group of students to selective HEIs through subject specific taster events and IAG events, workshops and conferences. The collaboration continues to focus on raising aspirations and encouraging applications to research intensive universities.

The Excellence Hub partners are developing an evaluation and monitoring plan for implementation from September 2016 onwards. This will include long term tracking of school level data for pre-16 students and individual level data of post-16 students through the HEAT database.

We are also an active member of the Russell Group WP Association which has provided a forum for collaborative work across these highly selective institutions for many years. As well as providing peer support for senior WP staff, the group plans and delivers collaborative activity including the biennial Teachers’ Conference and practitioner networks.
We are a partner in Advancing Access, a national collaboration of 24 selective universities, who are working together with schools and colleges to develop and deliver continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers and advisors that supports student progression to selective universities and courses. Advancing Access has a particular focus on schools with low levels of progression to such universities. We are delivering the majority of CPD events and resources online to allow easy access for all schools, regardless of their location.

Advancing Access complements the excellent work already carried out at York and other partner institutions by engaging those areas that have historically been hard to reach and may be in geographic ‘cold spots’. It is a cost-effective approach to equipping teachers and advisors with the information they need to advise students with confidence. Initially funded through HEFCE’s NNCO scheme, further funding options are currently being explored.

York is a member of the award-winning Realising Opportunities programme (RO), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities developing and delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for students from under-represented groups. RO has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS.

RO, developed through shared best practice, provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations, develop skills and enable them to demonstrate their potential to succeed at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered locally and nationally and include a National Student Conference, ongoing support and encouragement from a trained student e-mentor and an assessed academic element. Successful completion of RO will result in additional consideration being given to applications through UCAS from all Partner universities, and the potential for an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points.

We strongly believe that a collective approach by HE, working with schools, colleges and the FE sector, is crucial particularly in raising aspirations among young people and in defining the signals which groups of institutions and the HE sector as a whole give about what might be possible. As our widening participation agenda expands and broadens, collaboration will remain a core feature of our activities.

As a major provider of initial teacher training, we are strongly committed to maintaining and developing an inclusive approach to recruitment of our PGCE trainees. We wish to provide young people in schools with a range of role models so that the career and life chances of young learners are enhanced, and to develop attitudes in young people which celebrate diversity. We regard ‘non-traditional’ to include a variety of individuals and groups including those with disabilities; BME individuals; those from low income families and areas of the country with below average HE participation rates; and groups that are currently under-represented in specific subject areas (e.g. male trainees in modern foreign languages and women in physics).
We have allocated time to a member of staff to work as the ‘Access Lead’. That person is taking the lead on encouraging applications to increase diversity and ensuring that trainees are supported through to successful completion. The Access Lead facilitates the administration of our Access strands: recruitment, retention and securing of first teaching posts.

4.2 Student success and progression

Our work on student retention and success builds on our outreach and access work through the provision of support and skills training which maximises students’ potential to complete their degrees successfully. A summary is provided in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main focus</th>
<th>Programme or activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic support and skills</td>
<td>Maths Skills Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>The Writing Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Languages for All programme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisory system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The York Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral support</td>
<td>Supervisory system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Door and Disability Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Support Hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>Bursaries and access to hardship funds throughout programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>Employability strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alumni mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much of our work in this area is focused on our colleges, which provide multi-disciplinary and multi-generational communities. The York college system facilitates all stages of the student lifecycle and as part of its work on retention, success and progression, the University has recently invested in modernising the system so that the colleges meet the needs of today’s students, providing structured and coherent support from arrival through to graduation. Our college teams engage with students in an active and targeted way on enrolment and this is continued through our networks of Second and Third Year Contacts (STYCs) who buddy new students in their early weeks of study. Heads and Assistant Heads of college and resident college tutor teams provide advice and support on day-to-day issues and can signpost on to specialist central services for more challenging circumstances, although all of our support structures do enable our students to access support themselves without referral being needed.

Colleges offer workshops that provide academic support on specific topics: including writing skills, study skills, drafting a revision schedule and writing for exams. Some colleges are piloting an academic mentoring programme, matching first year students with a second or third year student on their course who might be able to advise on, for example, resources and strategies they found particularly useful. One college is piloting a Critical Thinking
programme that is considering ways for colleges to support the York Pedagogy through promoting critical thinking.

Colleges are also running Mental Health First Aid sessions to train participants to spot early signs of mental health conditions among their peers and signpost them to the correct support service. Another college is piloting an Intercultural Training course, requiring students to engage in discussion and debate, where there may not be a ‘right’ answer. This course is aimed at supporting student success and employability as our graduates will be working in a global economy. Colleges also aid employability by offering paid internships and interview skills workshops.

Central support services aid student success in a number of ways: mental health and disability professionals work with colleges and academic departments to offer guidance; Welfare Advisers work directly with students to give high level support on housing and money matters and the University has invested in the Blackbullion online financial literacy platform this year to help prospective and current students with money management skills.

We have a dedicated post working with vulnerable groups including care leavers and mature students which provides a specialist point of contact as well as a continued resource to some of the student-led initiatives such as the Mature Students Association. Support for Care Leavers includes organising opportunities for prospective students to visit the University, where we cover travel expenses.

To provide additional transition support for mature students we offer a pre-entry induction programme to build their confidence prior to starting their course through a series of workshops and talks from various academic and support services around the University. The programme has been planned on the basis of recent feedback from mature students. There is also a separate mentoring scheme for non-resident mature students who, due to their circumstances, are not always able to access College mentoring activities.

The Careers Service maintain two schemes that work directly with current students in receipt of a York Bursary to support their studies and to help them acquire work experience, as there is evidence that students from lower socio-economic groups do not access work experience at a graduate or professional level to the same proportion as their contemporaries from more middle class backgrounds (Greenbank & Hepworth 2008\(^1\)).

These schemes aim to:

- offer access to substantive, challenging work experience on a paid basis
- reduce practical barriers to undertaking short term work in graduate fields
- raise aspirations around what type of work a student can, and should, attempt to access

\(^1\) Working class students and the career decision making process: a qualitative study (Greenbank & Hepworth 2008, HECSU)
They are:

(i) The Work Experience Fund (WEF)

WEF offers an award of £800 to students in receipt of a York Bursary to support them in undertaking a substantive piece of work experience over the summer vacation. These awards enable students to undertake a placement, for example when they need to work away from either their family home or York, requiring short term accommodation or substantial travel expenses.

(ii) The Student Internship Bureau (SIB)

SIB works predominantly with organisations in the York area to identify projects for student interns over eight to twelve weeks, generally over the summer vacation period. Internships are paid and have predefined outputs that are judged to be challenging but achievable. It is this focus on project outputs that carry a business forward, rather than jobs within day-to-day operations that lift SIB organised internships to graduate level work experience. Typically, around 30% of participants in internships are in receipt of a bursary.

Through our participation in the HEFCE PSS consortium led by the University of Sheffield we have gained a greater and deeper understanding of the issues surrounding widening participation relating to postgraduate study. This includes the information, advice and guidance needs of prospective postgraduates, many of whom are existing undergraduate students, and we are continuing our work in this important area for example offering Masters’ Taster events online and on campus, with a view to aiding progression of students with WP backgrounds to postgraduate study.

5.0 Expenditure

At steady state, the University proposes to spend 29.6% of its additional undergraduate fee income on activities which will raise aspirations and support access, student success, retention and progression.

Anticipated expenditure on OFFA related activity 2017/18 and 2020/21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
<th>2020/21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and Access</td>
<td>£1,888,772</td>
<td>£2,648,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention, Success and Progress</td>
<td>£1,083,047</td>
<td>£1,187,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>£6,334,363</td>
<td>£6,495,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£9,306,182</td>
<td>£10,331,711</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least 10% of our additional fee income from PGCE students will be spent on access and retention measures (included in above table).

A consistent increase in annual expenditure over the period to 2020/21 will enable us to invest more in measures to improve access, retention, student success and progression, to support widening participation students’ engagement with study abroad, work experience and other career-enhancing activities and to improve impact evaluation.
6.0 Financial support

We are committed to providing a level of financial aid to our students which encourages and supports their participation in higher education. Students from households with residual income below £25,000 constitute 80% of our bursary recipients and receive 90% of our expenditure on bursary support. This is in line with the University’s policy of concentrating assistance on students from the poorest backgrounds who may be deterred by the cost of higher education. However, the bursary structure also reflects our intention to support students from the “squeezed middle”.

Our decisions about levels and distribution of support are informed by ongoing internal analysis of the costs of living and studying, in consultation with our student bodies and other feedback from recipients of financial support. Our plans for 2017/18 reflect what we know about the impact of financial support on retention. Student feedback strongly indicates that cash/accommodation bursaries paid in instalments are more valued than fee waivers. Accommodation bursaries will be paid as cash in cases where students are not in University accommodation.

During 2015/16 we participated in three evaluation exercises:

i) a survey devised in collaboration with a number of Russell Group universities;
ii) phase two of the OFFA-funded ‘Understanding the impact of institutional financial support on student success’; and
iii) the pilot of the survey devised by Sheffield Hallam University as part of the OFFA funded project.

Feedback from the surveys and our sample student budgets, devised in collaboration with our student bodies, inform our bursary offering and continues to tell us that while bursaries do not significantly influence choice of university, they are invaluable once the student arrives. Financial support aids retention, student success and progression by reducing anxiety, allowing students to focus on their studies and enabling the transition, adjustment to and full participation in university life. The latter is important because several studies have shown that students who feel they cannot participate equally with others in student activities are less likely to complete.

The Sheffield Hallam pilot survey asked a range of questions around the student experience which help us to understand the importance of financial support provided by bursary schemes. For example:

● 91% agreed or strongly agreed that receiving financial support helped them to afford to participate along with their fellow students
● 89% agreed or strongly agreed that receiving financial support helped them to afford to concentrate on their studies without worrying about finance
● 89% agreed or strongly agreed that receiving financial support helped them to feel less anxious than they would have felt otherwise.
The University uses the SLC HEBSS database to identify students who meet the eligibility criteria for the bursaries listed below and automatically awards the bursary to eligible students.

6.1 Support packages

*Note: bursary arrangements for students from the European Union described below are based on regulations current at the time of writing, July 2016. As a result of the UK’s decision to leave the EU in the Referendum of 23 June 2016 these regulations may change. We will provide access to bursaries and other financial support as described unless and until there is a change in the regulations.*

In 2017/18 we will offer the following support packages for new entrants. In any one year a student will only be eligible for one of the bursary and fee waiver packages with the exception of the Progression Bursaries (see below) for students who successfully complete one of our structured access programmes, where the Progression Bursary provides a top-up for students eligible for some of our other bursaries.

6.1.1 York Bursary (UK/EU students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Year 1: paid towards University accommodation or cash if in private accommodation</th>
<th>Subsequent years: paid as cash unless student requests alternative payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £16,000</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£16,001 - £25,000</td>
<td>£1,750</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 - £35,000</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.2 Hull York Medical School (HYMS) Bursary

HYMS students from the UK and EU, including graduate entrants, registered either at the University of York or the University of Hull will be eligible for bursaries. Students with a residual household income of up to £25,000 will receive an Accommodation Bursary of £2,400 for each year of study. Students intercalating in HYMS and undertaking undergraduate study will have access to the same financial support. HYMS entrants will also be eligible for the Realising Opportunities and Next Step York Progression Bursaries (see below), regardless of whether they register with the University of Hull or York.
6.1.3 Foundation Year Bursary (UK/EU students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Foundation Year only: paid as tuition fee waiver</th>
<th>Subsequent years: York Bursary applies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than £25,000</td>
<td>£5,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above £25,001</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.4 Care Leaver and Foyer Bursary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle years</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final year</td>
<td>£2,500 plus £1,000 to be paid in term three to assist with graduation and interview costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bursary will reduce to £1,250 for any full year abroad or on placement.

6.1.5 Realising Opportunities and Next Step York Progression Bursaries

New entrants who are eligible for bursary support (York bursary, HYMS bursary, Foundation Year bursary and Care Leaver and Foyer bursaries) will get an additional £1,000 accommodation or cash bursary in the first year if they have successfully completed Realising Opportunities or Next Step York.

6.1.6 Support for continuing students

For financial support entitlements for continuing students please refer to the Access Agreement relevant to the student’s year of entry.

6.1.7 University Hardship Fund

A fund of £220,000 will be used to support home students who encounter unexpected financial difficulty. The assessment will utilise the same high priority student category list as was identified in the Access to Learning Fund Guidance.

7.0 Targets and milestones

We consider our WP targets to be ambitious in view of our location, size and subject mix and will continue to set stretching targets as outlined in Table 7. In identifying our targets we have concentrated on the areas where we feel we need to make the most progress, with a focus on access, retention and student success.

Following the removal of NS-SEC 4-7 as a HESA performance indicator we have reviewed our targets and have set the following for 2017/18:
7.1 Targets relating to applicants, entrants or student body (Table 7a)

1) Students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods
   We will retain our target relating to the admission of full time first degree UK undergraduate students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and will increase the target to 8.5% of our entrant population in 2020/21. Performance will be measured from HESA PI Table 1a.

2) Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students
   We will add a target relating to the admission of full time first degree UK undergraduate BME students. We have made significant progress in the proportion of our BME entrants since our baseline data (8.7% in 2012/13), but our aim to increase this to 13.75% by 2020/2021 will nevertheless be challenging due to our location away from a major urban centre. Performance will be measured using internal indicators based on HESA data. We aim for between a 0.25% and 0.40% annual increase from 2016-17 to 2020/21.

3) Mature Students
   We will add a target relating to the retention of mature students. We have identified, through detailed analysis, that our non-continuation rate at York for mature UK full-time first degree entrants is significantly higher than for the population of young UK full-time first degree entrants, averaging 9.3% over five years. We aim by 2021 to reduce the difference between the continuation rate at York for young and mature full time UK first degree students to within six percentage points. In order to reach this overall reduction for the 2019/20 entrant cohort, we will initially aim for an 0.3% annual reduction, rising to 0.4%, using 2013/14 as the baseline figure. However, when monitoring these annual changes we acknowledge the difficulty in comparing a linear reduction against a small population size which will show volatility from year to year. Performance will be measured using data from HESA PI Table T3a.

4) Students with disabilities
   The majority of students with disabilities at York have a Specific Learning Disability. We will retain our target of maintaining the disclosure rate of students with disabilities to the University at one percentage point above the national average rate as published in the Equality Challenge Unit’s annual 'Equality Challenge Statistical Report'.

7.2 Other milestones and targets (Table 7b)

Other milestones and targets in Table 7b relate to our own widening participation programmes and to programmes in which we are partners with other Higher Education Institutions.

Collaborative programmes, working with partners towards agreed targets, have been a significant feature of our Access Agreements. We lead on the local Green Apples programme and the regional Excellence Hub and we continue to develop these, working with local (Green Apples), regional (Excellence Hub) and national (Realising Opportunities) partners. As collaborative partners we recognise the importance of shared targets and evaluation processes. Since its inception, Realising Opportunities has had a detailed evaluation plan and involved external evaluators to monitor evaluate and help us develop the programme.
From research available we recognise the importance of long term, progressive work with young people and so we have continued to develop our outreach programmes such as Shine, where we engage with pupils from Year 6 upwards and have in place clear aims and objectives for each activity and for each Shine Year Group. By following the Shine programme students develop skills to help them make informed choices at transition times.

We carefully target schools and colleges, using multiple indicators of disadvantage depending on the programme and partner agreements. These indicators include Polar 3, quintiles one and two; Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD); Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), Free School Meals, school performing below the national average at GCSE or at Key Stage 5. We also work with schools to carefully select those students who would benefit most from our programmes and use individual eligibility criteria including: LPN; first in family to attend HE; children in care; free school meals; be in receipt of discretionary payments.

8.0 Monitoring and Evaluation
Our Targeting, Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation Group, which reports to the OFFA Monitoring Group, oversees strategy in this area. The group looks at all stages of our student lifecycle and is overseeing a major project to develop the tools necessary for even more effective tracking of the students we engage with. We have been assisted in this by colleagues from the Institute for Effective Education who have expertise in the evaluation of innovative education and practice in order to establish what really works and why.

Our strategy is informed by our own experience but also draws on best practice elsewhere, for example the practitioner toolkits issued by HEFCE\(^2\). Staff regularly attend events to share WP practice and research, we are informed by the significant input to widening participation and postgraduate study research of Dr Paul Wakeling from our Education Department and were major players in the Sheffield-led HEFCE PSS consortium in 2015. We meet with other practitioners at training and other events, such as HELOA meetings and conferences, where we also learn from others’ best practice and research.

We have an overall evaluation strategy in place and each of the outreach programmes has its own evaluation plan with aims and objectives monitored. We provide reports for each of the schools involved in our major programmes and hold annual meetings with relevant school staff to monitor and review the programmes.

We are a new member of the collaborative Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT) which assists members in the targeting, monitoring and evaluation of both their individual and their collaborative Fair Access activities. It allows member universities to demonstrate outreach participation in relation to success at key transition points, collectively explore best practice in combining qualitative and quantitative research on outreach and in

\(^2\) References include research by the Sutton Trust; the HEFCE publication 2007/12 *Higher Education Outreach: Targeting Disadvantaged Learners*; the report by the Director of the Office for Fair Access *What more can be done to widen access to highly selective universities?: Have bursaries influenced choices between universities?* (Office for Fair Access, September 2010) and *Unleashing Aspiration*, (the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, July 2009); HEFCE 2014 publications: *Higher Education Outreach to Widen Participation Toolkits* and feedback from our own student surveys.
the future, perhaps, facilitate the development of collaborative targets. Data from HEAT will integrate with our own CRM system to give the fullest possible picture of engagement with outreach activity.

Membership of HEAT will assist us in fully understanding patterns of participation in outreach and the effectiveness of different types and combinations of outreach, something which is made possible by the collaborative nature of the service. Collectively this allows HEAT to analyse the timing and combinations of activities that show most impact on enrolment in HE.

Where HEAT data has matured it allows us to understand the relationship between outreach participation and HE enrolment, retention and success. We will be able to see if and when its outreach participants enrol in HE. Crucially this data will show enrolment not only to the University of York but to all other HEIs. This will allow us to demonstrate our contribution to the sector as a whole. Furthermore, we will be able to build a picture of the retention and degree classification of outreach participants, as well as seeing destination and postgraduate enrolment data.

9.0 Equality and diversity

The University is committed to maintaining a community in which everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect. Activities in this area are overseen by the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee is supported by a number of networks and fora, such as the LGBTI Matters forum, INCLUDE (the staff disability network), the Race Equality Forum, and the Athena Swan Steering Group covering gender equality issues, chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research. The Committee and its associated fora and networks have supported many initiatives which have led to numerous positive outcomes. We are appointing a full-time Head of Equality and Diversity, and we will undertake a comprehensive review of our equality and diversity strategy, working with our formal forums and networks, interest groups, trade unions, student representatives and external advisors.

All activities previously listed in the University’s Equality Impact Assessments enclosed with earlier submissions remain active and relevant.

Current work includes:

- providing students on the autistic spectrum with skills to prepare them for seeking and securing employment;
- an annual “Access your Future” event, sponsored by the Careers Service and the Disabled Students Network, for students with disabilities including networking, workshops and a panel of guest speakers (including Alumni) personal experiences of overcoming barriers in their personal lives;
- a working group is exploring options for mitigating the impact of changes to the Disabled Students Allowance. These will include more inclusive practice as well as lecture capture and other assistive technology solutions to enable independent learning strategies. We will maintain internal dyslexia support services and continue to work with our Disabled Students Network to monitor progress;
- training for staff in teaching students with disabilities;
• measures to support the retention and progression of students with disabilities by facilitating links between the improve mental health awareness and support available to students at the University;
• a “Mind Your Head” initiative to improve mental health awareness and support available to students at the University;
• measures to support toleration on campus, including a major event at the start of the academic year designed to generate debate about community standards and create a space for discussion on diversity.

10.0 Provision of information to prospective students

We recognise the importance of high quality Information, Advice and Guidance at critical transition stages in the learning journey. We provide information to prospective students in our annual Undergraduate Prospectus and on our web pages, through information sessions in schools and colleges and during on-campus events such as Open Days, Taster Days and residential visits and at our annual Teachers’ Conference. This includes both factual information (programmes available, entry requirements, opportunities to visit the University, tuition and accommodation charges, financial support) as well as guidance on making university choices, completing the application (with a particular focus on the personal statement) and on issues relating to the transition from secondary to higher education, for example Academic Skills Conferences to encourage independent learning. There is also a link on the website to our Admissions Policy (http://www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying/entry/policies/) and information for applicants with particular circumstances, for example mature applicants, applicants with disabilities or applicants who have faced challenging circumstances (http://www.york.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying/how-to-apply/).

For schools and colleges, we offer a range of support both for students and staff through a programme of talks, conferences and guidance sessions conducted by York staff and, where appropriate, trained student ambassadors. A special section of our website details these opportunities and carries information about our widening participation activities.

We are committed to providing up-to-date information for prospective applicants as early as possible and at the latest by the opening of the undergraduate admissions cycle in UCAS. Information will also be provided to the SLC in a timely manner.

All information for prospective students has been reviewed with a view to compliance with Consumer Protection Law and the guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority and awareness of CPL issues has been raised among staff and student ambassadors.

Current students are informed of the financial support available and reminded of forthcoming bursary payments via the University’s web pages, welcome talks, information screens located around campus, social media and University and Student Union Welfare Advisers.

11.0 Consultation with students
York has a productive relationship with both of our student unions, York University Students Union (YUSU) and the Graduate Students Association (GSA). The President of YUSU is a
member of the University’s OFFA Monitoring Group and the targets and aspirations within this agreement have been developed in discussion within this Group and with the YUSU President and other officers.

In addition to this formal representation, we are in regular dialogue with students at many different levels through course representatives, in public Q&A sessions or via Committees. Dialogue happens throughout the academic year both through informal meetings with various university colleagues, including the Director of Student Support and student-facing teams from Student Support Services, the Equality and Diversity team, the Registrar and the College leadership teams. This is in addition to more formal college and departmental fora.

In particular our dialogue with mature students, disabled students, care leavers and other key groups of students including students from particular religious or BME backgrounds has developed greatly and we continue to engage regularly with students and staff to ensure our direction of travel is the right one.

University of York
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