1. CONTEXT

Founded in 1963, the University of York was established under principles of equality of access and social inclusion. During its first 50 years, the University has established its position as a successful research-intensive, selective university. In its 50th anniversary year, the University was ranked as the top UK university in the Times Higher’s ‘100 under 50’ league table and the University joined the Russell Group. We were positioned 8th in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise. We are a popular choice for university applicants with an increase in applications for 2013/14 entry outstripping the national increase. We are a national recruiter, drawing students from all areas of the UK and from a wide diversity of backgrounds.

York’s current access profile is strong for a university of its size, type and subject mix and we have been described by the Sunday Times as “easily the most socially inclusive [university]” in our peer group. In the current year, more than one in five of our undergraduate entrants came from households with a residual household income under £25,000. Despite the challenges of the current environment, we are close to or above our HESA benchmarks in all the key widening participation categories. In all measures we perform well in relation to our standard comparator set of universities. Recent progress in increasing the proportions of entrants from underrepresented groups has slowed in the past two years in a changing admissions environment but we expect the situation to stabilise as the effect of these changes diminishes and as we see the impact of our new outreach activities and engagement with closely targeted groups of students particularly through the Shine and Next Step York programmes (see below).

The University Plan for 2009 – 2019 restates the University’s intention to maintain our position as one of the UK’s strongest universities in both teaching and research while remaining true to the principles established by our founders. The Plan focuses on four strategic objectives: excellence, internationalisation, inclusivity and sustainability. The activities proposed under our Access Agreement contribute directly to three of these four objectives by:

- raising aspiration and achievement of the students ‘most able but least likely’ to access Higher Education in general and the University of York in particular;

---

2. Source: www.hesa.ac.uk Widening participation of under-represented groups (tables T1, T2)
3. http://www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/management/plan/
University of York Access Agreement 2014/15

• setting out measures to increase the diversity of the student body;
• maximising student success and the benefits of studying at the University of York;
• maintaining subject breadth and the size of the student population;
• underpinning the University’s financial sustainability.

The objective of inclusivity is at the heart of the Access Agreement agenda. The University Plan states that “we will promote greater diversity amongst students and staff along a number of strands: country and region of origin; ethnic and social background; age on entry; mode (part-time/full-time) and level (masters, bachelors, diploma, certificate) of study [and] attract students from a range of backgrounds by developing a varied subject and programme mix, a welcoming and supportive environment, and opportunities through strategic partnerships.”

Collaboration is central to much of our activity and we are active participants, and in some cases leaders, in local, regional and national partnerships. These include Higher York and Green Apples (local), the Excellence Hub (regional) and Realising Opportunities (national).

York’s positive profile, together with current economic circumstances and the changing funding environment, make the prospects for further increases in diversity beyond the relatively high rates already achieved particularly challenging. Our location, away from major conurbations which have a high incidence of low participation in HE and which are well served by other institutions, adds to that challenge. The measures we have set out in our Access Agreement are designed to maintain our performance as one of the most socially diverse among the top universities.

2. FEES
The University will charge a UK/EU undergraduate tuition fee of £9,000 for 2014 entrants. This fee will apply to all our undergraduate programmes, and to our PGCE programme. Following the Government’s response to the Riordan report on outward student mobility, home students on ERASMUS and non-ERASMUS study years abroad will be charged £1,350. We will continue to support all students, including those from under-represented groups to gain valuable work experience as part of their studies by applying the lower £1,350 fee to all sandwich work placement years regardless of location.

Fees for Medicine (including intercalated study), which we offer jointly with the University of Hull via the Hull York Medical School, will be £9,000. Full-time Nursing and Midwifery programmes are presumed to remain funded by the Department of Health in respect of the resourcing of tuition and student bursaries, therefore falling outside of this agreement.
We reserve the right to apply inflationary increases to fees when possible to do so for both new and continuing students. 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.

3. SPENDING ON ACCESS MEASURES
In broad terms, the University proposes to spend over 30% of its additional undergraduate fee income on activities which will raise aspiration to higher education among potential students and support their achievement, promote access to the University, and support successful completion among our target groups. Our projected spend by the end of the period is 32%. In addition we shall follow through our commitment to spend at least 22% of the ‘additional fee income’ generated by cohorts of undergraduate home students entering under earlier Access Agreements.

Table 1 below shows the increase in planned spending on OFFA-related activity from £8.7M in 2014/15 to £9.0M in 2017/18.4

Table 1: Anticipated expenditure on OFFA-related activity, 2014/15 and 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and Access</td>
<td>£1,733,473</td>
<td>£1,760,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention and Student Success</td>
<td>£981,000</td>
<td>£1,064,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursaries and fee waivers</td>
<td>£5,977,445</td>
<td>£6,176,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£8,691,918</td>
<td>£9,000,567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to PGCE students, at least 10% of our additional fee income will be spent on access and retention measures, which reflects the availability of targeted bursaries from the Teaching Agency.

4. OUTREACH AND ACCESS
The new funding arrangements from 2012 entry have provided an opportunity to effect a step change in the University’s WP, access and outreach activities. Our WP team now comprises 9 staff, including a WP Manager, 4 WP Officers, a WP administrator and 3 WP Graduate Ambassadors.

---

4 Includes spend under both current and new Access Agreements; assumes future student numbers as in current University plans. Excludes Government contribution to the National Scholarship Programme. These figures have been adjusted for the reduction in NSP funding for 2014/15 and the University’s response.
All our activities share common characteristics:
- Clear aims
- Appropriate targeting
- Ongoing relationships
- Involvement of parents, teachers and advisors
- Involvement of current University of York students
- Access to residential provision
- Mentoring for some participants

Our strategy is informed by our own experience and best practice elsewhere, for example lessons learned during the Aimhigher programme. 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 – 9 are designed to raise achievement and aspiration in disadvantaged populations. Programmes targeted broadly at Years 9 - 11 aim to demystify higher and further 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 focus on building confidence in applying to research-intensive, selective universities. Other work focuses on mature learners and those returning to study. Our range of programmes will serve both national sector and University of York objectives in widening participation.

In the period covered by this Access Agreement, we will maintain and develop current work in collaborative partnerships (national, regional and local) and will develop outreach programmes focused primarily on achieving University of York targets. This will involve building on established relationships and developing new ones with a targeted set of schools and colleges, for example those in areas with proportionately high levels of pupils/students from low participation neighbourhoods, under-represented socio-economic groups or with high ethnic minority populations. We will make a particular effort to encourage the inclusion of looked-after children and care leavers with special attention to guidance for this group through the admissions process.

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 2012 publications: Higher Education Outreach to Widen Participation Toolkits and feedback from our own student surveys.
We are building on our collaborative Schools and Colleges Network (SCN) with an additional five partners being invited to join the SCN in 2013. The Network promotes mutual understanding between the sectors, assists better informed policy making and staff development, and develops student aspiration and effective university applications. We will also reinforce our foundation level activity with York College, enabling non-traditional groups to access a wide range of subjects at the University.

4.1 York access programmes

We are developing a suite of programmes, which support aspiration raising, achievement and progression for learners, in consultation and collaboration with our school and college partners. Designed as a coherent set of interlocking initiatives to support schools and colleges and to promote access to the University of York as well as to other research intensive, selective universities, the programmes work with more able students from years 6 – 13 and students following extended degrees at York College, a significant proportion of whom are mature students from more socially disadvantaged areas.

Shine and Next Step York are our flagship programmes under the new Access Agreement.

**Shine**

This programme is aimed at students in Years 6 – 11 and consists of an appropriate mix of sessions in schools and on the University campus, including residential provision on the University campus and subject-based taster sessions at the University. There is a focus on general aspiration raising and supporting achievement but the programme also introduces pupils to the kinds of work going on at York and the opportunities the University provides both academically and socially. There is an emphasis on Information, Advice and Guidance – for example in choosing subjects at GCSE and post-16 programmes - and mentoring opportunities for students in some year groups. This enables students to make informed decisions as they consider progression opportunities both at school/college and beyond. We expect that at steady state, we will be working with 30+ schools and reaching approximately 1200 pupils per year.

**Next Step York**

This programme works with students in Years 12 and 13 and focuses on progression to Higher Education, providing a mix of visits, information, advice and guidance, study skills, master classes, mentoring, a residential visit to the University as well as support for the transition to HE. We expect to recruit an annual cohort of 200 students at steady state.
As with our existing programmes, these new programmes provide significant opportunities for our own University students, in particular those from a WP background, to become involved in outreach through mentoring and other guidance work. These programmes will have a direct impact on the targets that we have set in the Access Agreement. We will also use the experience gained in making alternative offers to students involved in the Realising Opportunities programme (see below), and we will also continue to consider the part an assessment of contextual data can play in our admissions policy.

Extended degrees
The University remains committed to offering Foundation Year opportunities to students from non-standard admissions backgrounds across a range of subject areas, including vocational and non-vocational subjects and the sciences. Both University-delivered programmes and our successful collaboration with York College will continue. We will maintain our provision of enhanced financial support in the form of substantial Foundation Year fee waivers.

Access to the professions
An important strand of our work focuses on access to professional programmes at York including Accounting, Law and Medicine. An example of this is the ‘Science Trail’ when over 200 Year 10 students on campus for a day are able to experience several exciting academic sessions in science and related subjects. Accompanying staff attend continuing professional development activities at the National Science Learning Centre. These complement extensive outreach and access work undertaken by the Hull York Medical School.6

4.2 Broad HE access activities – collaborative outreach
Green Apples
York is the lead partner in Green Apples, a successful, innovative partnership involving all local York Further and Higher Education partners as well as the Local Authority, North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership, Higher York (our local Lifelong Learning Network) and local primary and secondary schools. This initiative was previously supported by Aimhigher and is now supported by all partners with the main funding coming from the University of York and York St John University.

This is a progressive programme of interventions starting with primary school pupils but focusing mainly on Years 9 – 11. Green Apples also addresses transition points, such as that from primary Year 6 to secondary

6 See http://www.hyms.ac.uk/about/widening-participation.aspx
Year 7 and secondary to college where appropriate. The programme is evaluated regularly and students, school staff as well as F/HEIs influence the development and shape of the initiative so that it continues to target those local young people who may have the potential but not the aspiration to progress to higher education. Enhanced information, advice and guidance forms part of this programme. Parents of pupils participating in Green Apples are supported within the project and through our Centre for Lifelong Learning, for example through involvement in taster sessions at the University.

Alongside Green Apples lie other initiatives targeted at younger age pupils. These include the York Children’s University\(^7\), to which we contribute modules led by teams of university student and employee volunteers working collaboratively with a cluster of primary schools.

A feature of our local collaborations is the involvement of the parents of primary pupils. Through the work in Green Apples and the Children’s University they also gain a greater understanding and insight into the opportunities available to their children and are able to support them in their decision-making. Other work in this area includes the ‘Simple Science’ programme developed by the University’s Centre for Lifelong Learning\(^8\) which provides a range of free and accessible materials for parents to help explain basic scientific concepts and try them out at home. The linked programme ‘Science is for Parents Too!’ is a free course helping parents understand the science taught in schools which is open to all parents of York primary school/Year 7 children. Through all of these engagements, parents, as well as being provided with knowledge and understanding to support their children, are also encouraged to consider what opportunities might be open to them.

**Regional Excellence Hub**

The University has committed to continued regional collaboration to maintain and further develop our successful Excellence Hub partnership between the Universities of Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York for gifted and talented young people to help enrich pupils’ experiences in school/college.\(^9\) This partnership has been widely viewed as the most successful of the Regional Hubs and the University was invited to advise the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office on policy in this area. It is coordinated from York and will continue to target high achieving students from currently under-represented

---

\(^7\) The York Children’s University is lead and managed by York Cares, under the umbrella of the national Children’s University.

\(^8\) [http://www.york.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/simple-science/]()

\(^9\) [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/uao/excellencehub/]()
groups from across the region to encourage and facilitate progression of the “most able, least likely” group of students to selective HEIs. A key aim of this work is to encourage young people to consider entering selective HEIs and to better prepare them for study at a research intensive university.

Our multi-pronged approach will reach in excess of 900 young people at key transition points (Year 8/9, Year 11 and Year 12) and will also target a similar number through a series of master classes and academic taster days at the four HEIs.

Realising Opportunities
The University is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a national collaborative Partnership of 12 research intensive universities working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from under-represented groups. The Partnership was awarded the Times Higher Education, Widening Participation Initiative of the year 2011 and in October 2012 featured as an example of good practice in Alan Milburn’s report ‘University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility’.

The Realising Opportunities programme provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations and enable them to demonstrate their potential for success at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered both at their local participating university, and nationally. The programme includes a National Student Conference and each student is provided with ongoing support and encouragement by a student e-mentor who is an undergraduate student from one of the 12 universities.

Successful completion of RO, which includes a robust academic element, will result in additional consideration given to applications through UCAS from all 12 universities, and the potential at many, including York, for an alternative offer up to two A level grades or equivalent lower than the normal offer for entry to a programme.

Realising Opportunities has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the tracking of students through the UCAS process. In 2013 an academic research team will be appointed to provide an overarching Academic Study for RO.

Each of the 12 participating Realising Opportunities institutions has committed future funds to ensure the on-going delivery and development of RO to 2016. Each of the 12 universities has agreed a financial contribution of £42,092 to support delivery in 2014 – 2015.
York also offers a residential summer school for Realising Opportunities Year 12 students.

**Collaborative Target**

For the first time the Partnership has set a joint target with regard to progression to research intensive universities (RIU)\(^{10}\). Our aim is that 36% of students starting the RO Programme in Year 12 in 2013 will progress to an RIU in 2015 and that 38% of students starting RO in Year 12 in 2014 will progress to an RIU in 2016.

**Higher York**

Higher York is a partnership between Askham Bryan College, the City of York Council, the University of York, York College and York St John University. Craven College is an associate member. The partners fund a small central team to oversee a range of partnership activities.

A key part of Higher York’s mission is to complement the activities of partners in order to facilitate access to higher-level learning, progression and provision through innovative joint-working. Activities include:

- The *Progression to HE Forum* which is chaired by the Widening Participation Manager at the University of York and involves key strategic stakeholders (the guidance community, schools, colleges, Learning City York, North Yorkshire Business and Education Partnership). Through this Forum the partners are able to share and disseminate information on the latest developments regarding access and progression to and through HE at their institution to key influencers. The Forum also enables the exchange of any good practice developed by partners relating to raising the aspirations of young people.

In relation to care leavers, the institutions are working in partnership in order to enhance the outreach and student support they offer. To date colleagues leading on this area of work have been able to share good practice and discuss common concerns. The institutions recognise the benefits for care leavers of partnership working in this area and the two universities already work together on some activities and will develop further joint working on outreach activities (e.g. tips on selling yourself for a university or job application, budgeting skills) aimed at care leavers and other vulnerable groups.

\(^{10}\) Defined by membership of either the Russell Group or the 1994 Group.
North Yorkshire Collaboration
We are developing further collaborative activities which began in 2011/2012 with the Universities of Hull and York St John with the aim of ensuring continuation of activity for learners on the North Yorkshire Coast post-Aimhigher. The arrangement is co-ordinated from the University of Hull, Scarborough campus. Partners have agreed to continue to expand provision and Selby area schools and colleges will now be included in this collaborative activity from 2013/14.

The Higher Education Liaison Officers’ Association (HELOA)
The University of York has been an active supporter of HELOA, with several staff members holding regional and national positions in the organisation. HELOA is the professional association of higher education staff who provide guidance, information and outreach activities to prospective higher education students, their families and guidance advisers right across the United Kingdom. HELOA has over 800 members from over 130 UK Universities and Higher Education Institutions. The Association has a code of practice which encourages collaboration, sharing good practice and rigorous standards of impartiality.

Through these programmes, the University of York makes a significant contribution to widening the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education. These activities sustain and develop collaborative activity with partners, which has been a feature of our outreach activities under the present Access Agreement. Evaluations show that these programmes are well regarded by schools and make a significant impact on the aspirations and progress of those who take part. The partners are agreed that they should continue to form part of their outreach and access strategy.

4.3 Raising standards and changing attitudes
The third strand of our strategy focuses on work which is designed to support improvement in the performance of both schools and the young people in them in order to raise achievement and aspirations. We work with teachers and advisers to inform them of the latest developments in higher education. These relationships also allow us to gain a better understanding of developments and issues in schools and colleges. We recognise the crucial importance of high quality information, advice and guidance and wish to support advisers in their work. We offer training sessions to advisers on topics such as course choice, writing effective personal statements as well as how to write good references.
Supporting school achievement
A significant amount of work at York contributes to the objective of enhancing school performance and therefore opportunity for students as they progress through the education system.

The Institute for Effective Education (IEE)
Through the IEE the University invests significantly in educational programmes focused on improving achievement in primary and secondary schools in deprived urban areas with a particular focus on maths and reading. The IEE develops, implements and evaluates innovative education programmes and practices in order to establish what really works in the classroom and why, and promotes wider implementation of what is found to be effective. The IEE conducts research and development work on programmes and practices for early childhood, primary, and secondary, focusing in particular on literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning. There is an emphasis on children from underprivileged backgrounds and social mobility. University investment in this innovative work in disadvantaged areas to raise young peoples’ achievement will be sustained. The IEE contributes expertise to the monitoring and evaluation of our outreach and access activities.

The National Science Learning Centre (NSLC)
The NSLC, a partnership involving the Universities of York, Leeds, Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam, supports science teachers in enhancing their professional skills by learning more about contemporary scientific ideas and in experimenting with effective teaching approaches and gaining experience of modern scientific techniques. The aim is to improve science teaching to inspire pupils by providing them with a more exciting, intellectually stimulating and relevant science education, enabling them to gain the knowledge and the understanding they need - both as the citizens and as the scientists of the future.

York Students in Schools (YSIS)
YSIS is a volunteering programme which harnesses the expertise and enthusiasm of students to provide additional help and value to local schools including all schools involved in the Green Apples programme. It is a large scheme which has been established for 17 years, and places over 600 students a year in and around York. Schools appreciate the contribution students can make to the understanding of curriculum subjects as well as the “extra pair of hands” to help with a wide range of activities. Students are also great role models for young people. The programme is well respected and benefits both the community and the participating students who gain a wide range of transferable skills and experience relevant to many career areas.
Teach First
The Teach First programme recruits exceptional graduates into teaching positions in the most challenging schools. York graduates are particularly successful in the competition for places on the Teach First programme and we encourage our students to consider Teach First by offering financial support of £1,000 to York students recruited to the Teach First programme in the year they graduate. Bursary recipients are supported before they start their programme with a training session on issues relating to widening participation, student recruitment and admissions.

The Big Deal
The Big Deal is a University of York initiative, which helps young people in disadvantaged areas to develop skills and experience in enterprise. The project is entirely funded and run by the University. Students from Year 9 and Year 10 from across the region get involved in a three month intensive business development programme. Annually about 25 teams (each of four pupils) are guided by mentors drawn from industry, including organisations such as HSBC and Google through engagement with Brightside and ‘Big Deal Blogs’. By working in partnership with businesses and schools, the University promotes dynamic relationships between pupils and professionals to bridge the gap between education and industry. The programme raises pupils’ expectations and awareness of competitive career routes by demonstrating educational pathways in an engaging way. Feedback from school students, their teachers and mentors has been very positive. The programme began in 2008 and some mentors have shown a long term commitment to, and engagement with, the programme. The Big Deal was shortlisted nationally for the Times Higher Education Widening Participation Initiative of the Year in 2010 and one of our mentors won the Brightside “Industry Mentor of the Year” award in 2013.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
We recognise the importance of high quality IAG at critical transition stages in the learning journey. We offer our partner schools and colleges 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, students.
PGCE/ITT Access
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 in young people attitudes 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 English and Modern Foreign Languages).

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 to ensure 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.

Table 2 summarises the main foci of our major initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main focus</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
<th>Common strands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Shine, Green Apples, Children’s University, YSIS</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 7-11</td>
<td>Shine, Green Apples, Regional Excellence Hub, Mentoring, Big Deal, North Yorks 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, Support for graduates in Teach First, YSIS</td>
<td>Independent Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Extended degrees Centre for Lifelong Learning Support for graduates in Teach First</td>
<td>Parent engagement, Supporting school achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

The overall rate on completion at York is consistently high for the sector, with over 90% of York’s undergraduates completing degree programmes, whilst we maintain a diverse student population. This reflects the commitment of the students we attract and the strong support provided through our Colleges and student supervision structure, as well as the specialist study skills and support services we offer. We consider it very important to continue to focus on maintaining this level of successful outcome and we will continue to invest between 3% and 4% of our additional expenditure in activities to further support the retention and success of our students from non-traditional backgrounds. This includes skills development for prospective students on a number of our WP programmes, work with students in the transition period, for example through the development of web-based preparation materials as well as the support offered to students once they commence their studies at the University. Retention and success for students from poorer sections of the community is also supported by financial support which is covered below in Section 6.

Activities focused on retention and success also make a significant contribution to students’ employability as does the University’s Employability Strategy. We plan to provide particular support for employability among WP groups with an additional spend of £100,000 on employability measures from 2013/4. This strategy aims to provide students with the best possible curricular and co-curricular support in developing their employability, facilitates access to internships and helps to develop graduates who are characterised by their entrepreneurial talents and their ability to realise their full potential as leaders and role models in organisations and society.

Training for staff in a wide variety of student-facing roles continues to be an important priority, with new academic staff involved in our Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme, an annual programme for those in College welfare teams and more widely for those with supervisory or other pastoral responsibilities.

5.1 Academic Skills Development

York provides an innovative programme of academic skills development which is designed to support students during their pre-HE studies, to prepare them for the transition to HE and, for those who come to York, to maximise their ability to complete their programme successfully. At the pre-HE and transition stages, the programme is embedded in our WP work. For York students, it is provided through both online tutorials and drop-in support centres.

We will continue to enhance this programme, improve co-ordination of skills development opportunities at the undergraduate level and develop our capability to track student participation, enabling better understanding of the impact of these programmes.
5.2 Maths Support Development
The York Maths Skills Centre has been set up to provide University-wide support for elements of maths learning which is independent of departments and which complements departmental provision. A pilot programme providing support for first year students whose modules include, or require, elements of algebra and calculus, was very well utilised and, following positive evaluation, the Skills Centre has now been established with recurrent funding. We are expanding this service to meet some additional areas of identified need, in particular the provision of support for statistics. The successful establishment of the Mathematics Skills Centre to support students across a wide range of disciplines was identified as a 'Feature of Good Practice' by the QAA in its 2012 Institutional Review.\(^\text{11}\)

5.3 Writing Skills Centre
In 2013/14 we are piloting a Writing Skills Centre which will provide drop-in and appointment-based support to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students who have concerns or questions about the quality of their writing. As with the Mathematics Skills Centre, the Writing Skills Centre will complement the support which is embedded in programmes and modules at departmental level.

5.4 Language skills
All students are offered free foreign language courses in the year of their choice through our Language for All provision, with English language programmes available as an alternative for students for whom English is not their first language.

5.5 Disability Services Development
Our Disability Services aims to develop a supportive environment for students with disabilities through assessment of needs and the provision of particular services for individuals and the fostering within the University of positive attitudes. The impact of services is regularly reviewed and provision developed in response. To add to our existing support capacity, we have now appointed an additional dyslexia tutor and will survey our 2012/13 entrants in the summer term to assess the impact this appointment has had on student transition and retention.

5.6 Central Student Support Services
We will appoint our first graduate trainee in September 2013 as part of our initiative to improve the availability of financial information, advice and guidance to prospective students and improve our response rate of response. We intend to double the provision of graduate trainees in this area with a second appointment from September 2014.

\(^{11}\) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/reports/Documents/RG853UniversityofYork.pdf
6. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Note: This section has been revised following the November 2013 announcement by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) of reductions in funding for the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) for 2014/15 entrants. The University has responded to this reduction by:

- Committing more of its own funds to financial support for students, reducing the impact of the reduction by approximately half
- Adjusting the amounts of funding available to students in their first year while retaining the overall structure of bursary provision and, in particular, our commitment to providing an enhanced bursary for those with the lowest household incomes
- Using the lifting of the restriction on the limit within the National Scholarship Programme on the amount of funding which can be provided as cash to re-profile entitlements as 100% accommodation bursaries (with cash payments for those not in University accommodation) which is in line with student preferences.

The revised bursary rates are shown in the tables below.

We are committed to providing a good level of financial support to our students. We will pay bursaries at the current levels to continuing students who meet the eligibility criteria. For home undergraduates new in 2014 we will have accommodation bursaries (complemented by fee waivers) targeted at those with residual household incomes below £35,000 with a particular focus on those with the lowest residual household incomes and an enhanced hardship fund available to those eligible for means-tested grant support. Accommodation bursaries will be offset against accommodation charges for students in University residence and will be payable directly in the case of students living in other accommodation.

In any one year a student will only be eligible for one of the bursary and fee waiver packages: 6.1 – 6.6 below\textsuperscript{12}.

\textsuperscript{12} EU students will be eligible for the fee waivers based on residual household income, but not scholarships or bursaries (see paragraph 6.1.3 below). Undergraduates studying Social Work will be entitled to the York Bursary including the National Scholarship in any year in which they are not supported by a Department of Health-funded bursary scheme.
6.1 Fee Waivers and bursaries: New students in 2014/15

6.1.1 National Scholarship Programme

For 2014/15 the University of York will use its NSP allocation to focus financial support for entrants on those with the lowest household incomes. Our matching commitment will bring the total to £1,740,000, enabling us to offer an enhanced award of £4,000 to all entrants with a residual household income of less than or equal to £15,000 (students of the Hull York Medical School will be assessed for their own distinctive package of support rather than NSP). We will extend the eligibility for this level of award to all UK students including those from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through the use of our own funds. These awards are for the year of entry only.

Table 3: National Scholarship Programme 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Accommodation bursary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 only: National Scholarship</td>
<td>£0 - £15,000</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent years students move to the York Bursary</td>
<td>£0 - £25,000</td>
<td>£2,000 (choice between fee waiver and bursary; default will be bursary)</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to consultation with our students, award holders will be able to vary the relative proportions of their fee waiver and bursary in their second and subsequent years.

6.1.2 York Bursary

For UK undergraduate students starting in 2014 with a residual household income of £15,001 - £35,000 there will be a graduated package of support. This support is available for each year of full-time study, excluding whole-year placements in industry or study abroad and more specific categories of student whose eligibility is detailed in 6.3 - 6.6 below. In response to consultation with our students, award holders will be able to vary the relative proportions of their fee waiver and bursary in their second and subsequent years.
Table 4: 2014 entry York Bursary for UK students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fee waiver</th>
<th>Accommodation bursary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0 - £15,000</td>
<td>Students receive the National Scholarship Programme see Table 3 above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,001 - £25,000</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
<td>(choice between fee waiver and bursary; default will be bursary)</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 - £30,000</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>(choice between fee waiver and bursary; default will be bursary)</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30,001 - £35,000</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>(choice between fee waiver and bursary; default will be bursary)</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.3 Fee waivers: EU students

The following levels of fee waiver will be available to EU students with residual household incomes between £0-35,000:

Table 5: 2014 entry fee waivers for EU students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Fee waiver (applied to all years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0 - £25,000</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 - £30,000</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30,001 - £35,000</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Fee Waivers and bursaries: Continuing students

6.2.1 Students who commenced in 2013

Bursary levels for full time UK undergraduates who commenced their programmes in 2013 will be £2,000 for those with a residual household income of £25,000 and below and £1,000 for those with a residual household income of £30,000 and below. Those eligible will be invited to choose whether to receive this entitlement as 100% fee waiver, 100% bursary or 50% of each. The default is 100% bursary.
6.2.2 Students who commenced in 2012

Bursary levels for full time UK undergraduates who commenced their programmes in 2012 will be £2,000 for those with a residual household income of £25,000 and below. Those eligible will be invited to choose whether to receive that as 100% fee waiver, 100% bursary or 50% of each. The default is 50% of each.

6.2.3 Students who commenced prior to 2012

Those who commenced prior to 2012 will remain eligible for the bursary package in place when they arrived. For those who commenced their programme in 2009-2011 these levels are:

Table 6: Bursaries for undergraduates entering before 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Bursary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£25,000 and below</td>
<td>£1,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 - £35,910</td>
<td>£718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£35911 - £41,040</td>
<td>£360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 Hull York Medical School students

6.3.1 New students in 2014/15

For undergraduate students starting in 2014 on the HYMS MBBS, there will be a package of fee waivers and bursaries based upon residual household income. These are available to students regardless of their registration at the University of York or the University of Hull and will be made available to graduate entrants. Students in the clinical phase of study in years where the NHS does not support their tuition fee may choose to take their eligibility as 100% cash or fee waiver, or 50% of both, depending on their needs and preferences. This reflects the particular challenges for students studying in the clinical phase, where placement patterns may prevent them undertaking part-time or casual work to support their studies.

Table 7: HYMS students, 2014 entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income below £25,000</th>
<th>Fee waiver</th>
<th>Cash bursary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 and 2 (pre-clinical)</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 and 4 (clinical)</td>
<td>£3,000 (choice between fee waiver and bursary)</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5 (clinical)</td>
<td>£3,000 bursary</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page 19
Students intercalating in the Hull York Medical School and undertaking undergraduate study will have access to the same package of fee waivers and bursaries.

6.3.2 Continuing students

Those who started in 2012 or 2013 will be eligible for a package of support equal to that set out in Table 7. For HYMS MBBS students who entered between 2008 and 2011 the support package is set out in Table 8.

Table 8: HYMS students, 2008-2011 entry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual Household Income</th>
<th>Bursary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £25,000</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,001 - £40,000</td>
<td>£500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Foundation years

Students on an extended degree programme with a foundation year starting in September 2014 will be entitled to an enhanced fee waiver in their foundation year and then the same package of fee waivers and bursaries as other undergraduates in subsequent years (Table 4). For 2014 the fee waiver levels for students on the foundation year of their programme are given in Table 9.

Table 9: Foundation year fee waivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Fee waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£25,000 and below</td>
<td>£8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 and above</td>
<td>£7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 Care leavers and Foyer students

In support of our commitment to those from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds we are offering a package of support to young students who come to York having been in the care of their local authority or have come through the national Foyer project. The package is available for each year of full-time study, reduced by 50% for full year sandwich placements or study abroad years.

Table 10: Care leavers and Foyer students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fee waiver</th>
<th>Accommodation bursary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>£4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£4,500 (choice between fee waiver and bursary; default will be bursary)</td>
<td></td>
<td>£4,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.6 PGCE students

We intend to take a highly targeted approach to providing financial support to PGCE students, through providing financial assistance for those trainees who are placed in schools at distance from York as well as supporting those trainees who because of personal circumstances need to be live at home rather than be resident in York. In addition, PGCE students starting in 2014 will be eligible to apply to the University hardship fund (see paragraph 6.7 below) and for targeted bursary support from the Teaching Agency.

6.7 Hardship Fund

Home undergraduates who commence in 2014 may be eligible to apply to this fund, which supports students who encounter unexpected financial difficulty. Some students will have a particular priority for awards from the fund, including mature students, students with dependants, students with disabilities and care leavers.

---

13 Eligible students will be those with household incomes assessed by their funding agency as being below £42,611.
7. TARGETS, MILESTONES AND ASPIRATIONS
As we have shown, social inclusivity is at the core of the University’s values. There is considerable debate over the merits of different measures of progress in fair access and widening participation. We have defined the target below at the start of the period covered by this new Access Agreement but will keep this under review as the debate continues and our own and national monitoring produces additional evidence on which to base future targets.

The University’s target is to maintain and if possible increase the number of young first-degree entrants from known Socio-Economic Classes 4-7 (NS-SEC 4-7). Our aspiration is to increase the proportion of known NS-SEC 4-7 entrants from the 2010/11 baseline of 18.1% to 20%. In section 1 we have drawn attention to our strong performance relative to our competitors and we consider that maintaining our position will be additionally challenging in the new funding environment, in the context of the economic downturn, our geography and the increased competition from other selective universities now targeting the relatively limited pool of students from this social stratum. We will therefore keep this target under annual review.

While maintaining NS-SEC 4-7 as our principal target, we expect to maintain or increase our proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods where York at 6.2% is currently close to benchmark and in line with our major competitors; to continue to increase our proportion of entrants from black and minority ethnic backgrounds which has risen over the past five years; and to maintain the proportion of mature students on first degree programmes. In relation to students from state schools, we expect that we will maintain current levels (close to our HESA benchmark and ahead of major competitors).

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION
Monitoring and evaluation of Outreach and Access activity is an embedded part of the programmes we are currently involved with. Key components of outreach and access work include appropriate targeting, evaluation of particular schemes, attention to admissions processes and enhanced engagement with and support for departments, promoting best practice to ensure that process and behaviour serve our target objectives. In relation to retention we will also increase our capacity to monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions on the performance and progression of WP target groups, monitoring completion rates and targeting support accordingly.

---

14 See for example, the Sutton Trust report Responding to the new landscape for university access December 2010, http://www.suttontrust.com/research/responding-to-the-new-landscape-for-university-access/
We have established a Targeting, Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation group to develop strategy which includes academic and student membership, including a representative from the Institute for Effective Education (see paragraph 4.3), and which draws on other evaluative expertise within the University. This group is developing our evaluation strategy and will report regularly to the OFFA Monitoring Group in order to help determine future prioritisation of activities and the allocation of resources. We have further improved our capacity to monitor and report on progress towards our targets through the creation of a new Business Intelligence Unit to provide management information to the OFFA Monitoring Group (see paragraph 10 below).

9. INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER GUIDANCE STAFF
The University is committed to providing the information necessary for students to make informed choices, including information about fees, NSP and other financial support as well as access and programme information. We use a variety of media, including print publications, web pages and social media. As part of a broader restructure of the University’s outward-facing web pages, we will be expanding our information targeted at WP groups. We recognise the importance of supporting students at key transition points (for example in the run-up to entry to HE) and consider web and social media tools to be particularly effective for this purpose. We have invested significant resources in the development of an applicant portal which facilitates communication in both directions between the University and incoming students.

We also understand the importance of providing the required information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company and of ensuring that KIS information is accurate and up-to-date.

10. CONSULTATION
Consultation with our student body has always been a feature of the development and implementation of our access agreements and the President of the University of York Students Union (YUSU) is a member of the OFFA Monitoring Group (see paragraph 10 below). Specifically in relation to the 2014/15 agreement we have consulted YUSU on the changes to targets and on the distribution of financial support between fee waivers and bursaries and taken account of feedback from our termly bursary impact survey. We are committed to continued consultation with a range of stakeholders both in relation to financial support and widening participation issues more broadly.
11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
We completed an Equality Impact Assessment Statement relating to our 2013/14 Access Agreement, which summarises the consideration we have given to the impact of this Agreement on those with protected characteristics. This EQIA has been updated and is provided as an attachment to the 2014/15 Agreement.

12. COLLABORATION
As is evident from much of the above, collaboration is at the heart of our widening participation activity. We strongly believe that a collective approach by HE, working with schools, colleges and the FE sector, is crucial particularly in raising aspiration 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. We have cited some examples in Section 1 above and given detail of local, regional and national initiatives in Section 4.2. As our widening participation agenda expands and broadens, collaboration will remain a core feature of our activities.

13. GOVERNANCE
The University’s Access Agreement is reviewed annually and is signed off for submission to OFFA by the Senior Management Group chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Responsibility for the Access Agreement, including monitoring progress towards targets, lies with the OFFA Monitoring Group, which includes student representation, and which is chaired by the Director of Corporate Planning (who is a member of the Senior Management Group).

Reports as required will be made to the Office for Fair Access. Activities and spending may be modified for future years in the light of evidence gained through monitoring and evaluation processes, subject to the agreement of OFFA.

University of York
December 2013