SECTION A: CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC STATEMENT

1. CONTEXT

The University of York was established under principles of equality of access and social inclusion and is one of the most socially inclusive among its peers. We have established ourselves a successful research-intensive, selective university which aims to admit the brightest 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 university applicants and are a national recruiter, drawing students from all areas of the UK and globally from more than 160 countries.

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. Our updated targets continue to be stretching and are focused on areas which will support OFFA in its objectives as outlined in the OFFA Strategic Plan 2105-2020.

2. STRATEGIC STATEMENT

2.1 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 Access Agreement contains a balance of activities which address both these aims. It also takes a carefully calibrated approach to the balance between infrastructure and activity, making the most effective use of the resources available. As the funding environment changes we will want to maintain an appropriate distribution of resource but will always want to have a strong focus on activities which enable potential students of all ages to take informed and aspirational decisions about their futures.

The University Strategy 2014-2020 restates the University’s intention to maintain our position as a globally excellent university, while remaining true to the principles established by our founders. The institution is committed to making contributions to achieve a fairer and sustainable world, and to recruiting the most able and dedicated students regardless of economic or social background.
The following is an extract from the University Strategy 2014-2020:

‘We will be inclusive and provide equal opportunities for all. We apply the highest ethical standards to all our activities and want to make a positive contribution to the development of a fairer and sustainable world.

- We will offer programmes that are designed to be engaging and stimulating for the most able and dedicated students.

- We will maintain our commitment to recruiting such students, regardless of their economic and social background, age, nationality, personal characteristics or circumstances.

- We will continue to invest in activities that raise aspiration to higher education among potential students, promote access to the University, and support successful completion.’

Our Admissions Policy states that ‘principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity are central to the recruitment, selection, admission and retention of students.’

Subsequent to our new University Strategy we are developing a Learning and Teaching Strategy where the intentions are towards inclusive support and where we will aim 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 our graduates.

We seek to offer all of our students an environment in which they can optimise their academic and personal potential. Our collegiate structure supports the creation of cohesive student communities and promotes students’ personal well-being and personal development.

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.

We have been an active partner in the Consortium for the Postgraduate Support Scheme and through this 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 would hope to continue our work in this important area.

We consider our WP targets to be ambitious in view of our location, size and subject mix. In order to achieve our aims, effective targeting is a critical aspect of all our activities. Targeting is informed by evidence of the impact of our activities both in the short and longer terms and we have spent a considerable amount of time in 2014-2015 developing an even more
robust targeting system. With the implementation of a CRM system as well as participating in HEAT we will significantly increase our capacity to track and monitor participants in our activities. Our Targeting, Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation Group oversees strategy in this area. The group looks at all stages of our student lifecycle and we are continuing with a major project to develop the tools necessary for even more effective tracking of the students we engage with. We are assisted in this by colleagues from the Institute for Effective Education, located at York, who have expertise in the evaluation of innovative education and practice in order to establish what really works and why. There is a strong alignment between our objectives and activities and OFFA’s aims and priorities.

Our strategy is informed by our own experience but also draws on best practice elsewhere, for example the practitioner toolkits issued by HEFCE.

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 focus 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 focusing more of our work in supporting care leavers and young carers. Our range of programmes will serve both national sector and University of York objectives in widening participation.

Overall completion rates at York are consistently high for the sector, with over 90% of York’s undergraduates completing degree programmes, whilst we maintain a diverse student population. 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. Detail is given in the 2014-15 Access Agreement and a summary is provided in the table below:

1 http://www.york.ac.uk/iee/
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.
Main focus | Programme or activity
--- | ---
Academic support and skills development | Maths Skills Centre
 | The Writing Centre
 | Languages for All programme
 | Supervisory system
 | The York Award
Pastoral support | Supervisory system
 | College system
 | Disability Services
 | Student Support Hub
Financial support | Bursaries and access to hardship funds throughout programme
Employability | Employability tutorial
 | Alumni mentoring
 | Internships
 | Professional Connect
 | Volunteering
 | College system

Our Access Agreement 2014/15 details the current range of the University’s outreach, access and retention activities, including work done in collaboration with the University of Hull in relation to the Hull-York Medical School (HYMS). 2015 will see the start of a *Pathways to Medicine* programme, in collaboration with The Sutton Trust. These activities and programmes reflect best practice both at York and in other HEIs and have been developed over a number of years as our experience has grown and evidence of impact has become available. We intend during 2016-2017 to maintain these programmes as outlined in the previous agreement, with further modifications to maximise effectiveness. These activities, which relate to the whole student lifecycle, 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**
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 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>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 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, Support for graduates in Teach First, YSIS</td>
<td>Independent Learning, Parent engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Extended degrees Centre for Lifelong Learning Bursary support for graduates in Teach First Graduate Interns</td>
<td>Supporting school/college achievement, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 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).

We are an active partner in the local Higher York partnership which is now part of the National Networks of Collaborative Outreach (NNCO). 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 groups plans and delivers collaborative activity including the biennial Teachers’ Conference and practitioner networks. The group has agreed a ‘Proof of Concept’ project with HEFCE to develop and deliver CPD materials for teachers to support progression to selective universities funded by NNCO.
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. As our widening participation agenda expands and broadens, collaboration will remain a core feature of our activities.

2.3 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 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, 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 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.

2.4 Consultation with our student body has always been a feature of the development and implementation of our access agreements and we are committed to continued consultation with a range of stakeholders both in relation to financial support and widening participation issues more broadly. The President of the York University Students’ Union is a member of the group which oversees all OFFA-related activity.

2.5 As part of our Access Agreement we include an Equality Impact Assessment Statement, 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 2016/17 Agreement.
2.6 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>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>
<tr>
<td>Senior Management Group</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>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
SECTION B: FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

3.0 FEES

The University will charge a UK/EU undergraduate tuition fee of £9,000 for 2016 entrants. This fee will apply to all our undergraduate programmes including medicine and our PGCE programme. Home students on ERASMUS and non-ERASMUS study years abroad will be charged £1,350. Students on all sandwich work placement years will also be charged £1,350. Full-time Nursing and Midwifery programmes are presumed to remain funded by the Department of Health and therefore fall 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.

4.0. EXPENDITURE

The University proposes to spend 30% 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 2016/17 and 2019/20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach and Access</td>
<td>£1,725,719</td>
<td>£1,834,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention, Success and Progress</td>
<td>£844,000</td>
<td>£910,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>£6,441,533</td>
<td>£6,541,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£9,011,252</td>
<td>£9,285,710</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).

5.0 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

We are committed to providing a good level of financial support to our students. Our decisions about levels and distribution of support are informed by ongoing internal reflection of the costs of living and studying, consultation with our student body through the Students’ Union and other feedback from recipients of financial support. Our plans for 2016/17 reflect what we know about the impact of financial support on retention, where students in receipt of bursaries have told us that the support they receive makes a difference in allowing them to focus on their studies without the distraction of financial concerns. In

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3 Subject to any change introduced by HM Government.
addition, student feedback strongly indicates that cash/accommodation bursaries paid in instalments are more valued than fee waivers. Note that accommodation bursaries will be paid as cash in cases where students are not in University accommodation.

In 2016/17 we will offer the support packages set out in paras. 5.1 – 5.6 for new entrants. For continuing students, see para. 5.7. 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 for students who successfully complete one of our structured access programmes (para 5.6), where the Progression Bursary provides a top-up for students eligible for some of our other support packages.4

Prospective students are informed of the financial support available through the following means:
- Undergraduate Prospectus (produced annually)
- Student money talks on Open Days and post-offer visit days
- Student money leaflets issued on Open Days and post-offer visit days
- University website pages for prospective students

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 i.e. there is no application form and students have told us they particularly like this approach.

Current students are informed of the financial support available and reminded of forthcoming bursary payments using:
- University website
- Welcome talks
- Information screens located around campus
- Social media
- University and Student Union Welfare Advisers and College Welfare Teams

5.1 York Bursary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Accommodation Bursary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £25,000</td>
<td>New entrants</td>
<td>£2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 - £35,000</td>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All years</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 EU Students
From 2015/16 we have aligned our support for EU students with support for UK students and EU students will now be eligible for the York bursary shown in Table 1 above.

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4 Undergraduates studying Social Work will be entitled to the York Bursary in Year 1 and any subsequent years in which they are not supported by a Department of Health-funded bursary scheme.
5.3 Hull York Medical School (HYMS) Students
New HYMS students on the MBBS programme, 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 5.6 below), regardless of whether they register with the University of Hull or York.

5.4 Foundation Year Bursary
Students on extended degrees including a Foundation Year will be eligible for the York bursary at the rates set out in para 5.1. In addition they will be eligible for fee waivers at the following rates in their Foundation Year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residual household income</th>
<th>Fee Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to £25,000</td>
<td>£5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above £25,001</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Care Leaver and Foyer students
Students will receive accommodation bursaries at the following rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Leaver and Foyer students</th>
<th>Fee Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New entrants</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent years</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bursary is reduced by 50% for full year sandwich placements or study abroad years.

5.6 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.

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

5.8 Hardship funds
A fund of £210,000 will be used to support home students who encounter unexpected financial difficulty. The assessment will utilise the high priority student category list in the Access to Learning Fund Guidance.

University of York
April 2015