Overview

Main Areas of work

Disbursement of financial support in the form of:

* Access Bursaries and Scholarships
* Hardship Funds
* Direct Loans for US students
* Emergency Loans
* Non-access undergraduate and postgraduate taught scholarships and bursaries
* Postgraduate research scholarships until September 2012

Equality matters

We all carry out our work with an awareness of equality and diversity not just because of our legal obligations but from a genuine desire to treat students and staff fairly and to make the service as accessible as possible.

This year there has also be guidance on the Equality Act 2010 with regard to bursaries, scholarships and prizes which has proved valuable.

Challenges and opportunities

1. Delivery of the new Access Bursaries as per the OFFA Agreement for 2012/13. The new arrangements require a shift from cash payments using the Student Loans Company (SLC) Higher Education Bursaries and Scholarship System (HEBSS) to awards consisting of fee
waivers and bursaries that are offset against University accommodation fees. Working in collaboration with colleagues in Finance and Registry Services to ensure that the new Student Funding System could be used to approve the new awards, record the information in a way that the National Scholarship Programme at York data could be reported on to HEFCE and notify students of the award.

This work has proved a great opportunity for ‘testing’ the Student Funding System and has shown that continued system development is worth pursuing. Further development of the system is required to allow rolling over awards from 2012/13 to 2013/14, more secure methods of identifying eligible students to departments, to allow the system to be used for other awards including postgraduate and to promote the awards to prospective students. All 171 (worth £4,500 each) National Scholarship Programme at York awards had been allocated by the end of September 2012 as required by HEFCE. As at 9th October 2012 SFSU had approved:

- 319 York Bursaries (worth £3,000 each)
- 60 Foundation Year Bursaries (27 fee waivers at £8,500 each and 33 fee waivers at £7,500 each)
- 1 Care Leaver and Foyer Bursary (worth £4,500)
- 1 HYMS Bursaries (worth £3,000 each)
- 607 Undergraduate Bursaries (ranging in value from £180 - £1,436 each) to continuing students.

Departments have feedback that they found the NSP and non-access bursary allocation process used, simple and straightforward. Generally they were pleased with how unobtrusive it had been.

2. SFSU handed over the postgraduate research scholarships to Registry Services to allow the formation of a new dedicated team of staff who will support research students from the start of their programme through to graduation.

3. Splitting Student Support Services (SSS) into three building is not ideal in terms of providing a completely cohesive service to students and in terms of maintaining a bond and sense of team identity with colleagues in the rest SSS.

Plans for 2012/13

1. To continue to work with colleagues in Finance and Registry Services on the further development of the Student Funding System to enable continued use in the disbursement of primarily Access Bursaries and eventually other awards. Success will be demonstrated by the smooth running of the existing system, students receiving accurate cash payments and the expansion of the use of the system.

2. To prepare for the disbursement of 2013/14 Access Bursaries using a mix of internal systems and the HEBSS fee waiver process (to be developed). Success will be seen in the form of successfully approving awards under the new scheme.

3. To disburse the new postgraduate taught scholarships formed from the 50 for 50 fund raising by DARO. Success will be seen in the smooth application and award process.

4. To contribute to the development of the 2014/15 OFFA agreement.

5. Implementation of a case management system for use by SSS and College Welfare Teams.