CAREERS AND PLACEMENTS
Annual Report | 2018
Careers and Placements

The Careers and Placements team is focused on supporting York students in career planning, the development of relevant skills and experience, and securing a positive graduate outcome.

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief overview of the key areas of work during the 2017/18 academic year, including some notable projects and success stories.

"We recognise the important role played by the University of York in producing high-calibre motivated individuals.”

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Employability at York

94% of our graduates in work or further study within six months

Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey 2016/17 (HESA) (UK, full-time, first degree students)

In the top 25 of universities targeted by the largest number of key employers

The Graduate Market in 2018 (High Fliers)

2nd in the Russell Group for the percentage of graduates in work or further study after one and three years

Longitudinal Education Outcomes 2017 (Department of Education)

Unique in our approach to working with students from their first year

By incorporating an assessment of each student’s strengths so early into their career, the University of York has provided a great service which will help develop and equip the workforce of the future.”

AstraZeneca
Recognition this year

Winning strategy
In March, our Student Employability Strategy 2017-2022 received two national awards, as voted for by top graduate recruiters.

- Institute for Student Employers’ Student Development Awards 2018: Best Preparation for Work – Overall Strategy
- TARGETjobs’ National Graduate Recruitment Awards 2018: Best University Employability Strategy

CSE accreditation
In June, as part of the Directorate of Student and Academic Services, Careers and Placements retained the Customer Service Excellence accreditation, and contributed to an increased number of Compliance Plus awards.

Teaching Excellence Framework
In June, the University achieved a Gold Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award, demonstrating that we deliver consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for our students. We are proud to have contributed to gaining the highest possible rating and the acknowledgment of ‘excellent provision of careers support and development of employability skills to ensure very good employment and further study outcomes’.

Green Impact
In June, ‘Green Careers’ were awarded Gold for the second consecutive year at the Green Impact Awards. This means the team can now make a submission for the Excellence award in conjunction with a third year of Gold.

Volunteer to support sustainability
Just one of the many volunteering opportunities available this term
York Strengths Programme

The York Strengths Programme builds self-awareness from the first year of study to inform and motivate career activity. Participants in the 2016/17 pilot, were found to be more confident in their approach to future work/study and 20.3% more likely to have gained recent work experience (captured at 2017/18 re-enrolment).

The new Student Employability Strategy at York focuses on how we engage our students at the earliest point with the many opportunities available to them to develop their employability. We aim to equip our students with a deeper understanding of their personal drivers, the ability to explore relevant career options and the capability to realise their full potential on graduation.

The York Strengths Programme focuses on giving students early insight into their strengths. Strengths are things we are good at and that energise us. Working with CAPP, the University developed a framework of nine strengths; testing their relevance with a diverse set of graduate employers and students. Ranging from ‘digital connector’ to ‘pioneering thinker’ the nine strengths are defined and measurable, offering all our students an opportunity to identify those that most resonate with them.

The Programme consists of three core components:

1. York Strengths Online Discovery; an online situational strengths test that generates an initial indication of the student’s three main strengths based on their reactions to a set of proposed scenarios.

2. York Strengths Development Day; a highly participative series of exercises designed to focus on one or two of the nine strengths in York’s framework. Working in groups of six with an observer, students gain personal feedback on their top three strengths.

3. A new iteration of the York Award, the University’s certificate of personal development. Originally the first of its type in the UK, this version enables students to reflect on their own experiences and consider how accurately the preceding feedback resonates with them and what they might do with this new level of self-awareness.

20.3% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE GAINED RECENT WORK EXPERIENCE.

In 2017/18 we saw 917 students go through the programme and we received positive feedback from students, observers and employers. This year, we have been working with all current first years since pre-arrival to raise their awareness of York Strengths before they are invited to participate in the Spring and Summer Terms.

Strengths has provided York with a strong story to tell prospective and new students. It is clear that we offer a supportive package from the first year that will help them navigate the available opportunities to enhance their personal and professional development.
Placement Year

Work experience remains one of the most important factors in a student’s employability. DLHE (Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey) consistently reveals that those students undertaking a placement year are between 12 – 16 percentage points more likely to be in a graduate job than those who took the same course of study without a placement.

In response to this factor the University has expanded the opportunity to undertake a placement year to those academic departments beyond the sciences, technology and management, where this activity is already well established. An accredited placement year, supervised by Careers and Placements, allows all students, regardless of their academic course, to take up this option. Over the course of 2017/18 a total of 21 students successfully secured placements through this module and are now working with their host organisations.

Placements were secured with a range of employers including Disney Corporation, City of York Council, Criterion Games and Amazon and included students from the departments of Economics, TFTV and English Literature. Plans are now in place to expand the numbers undertaking this module as well as to enhance and support the work of existing department based placement options.

“I’m developing so many more skills than I thought I would in such a short time.”

Jade, on placement at Criterion Games
Continued good work

Volunteering
The volunteering team has continued to offer a broad range of opportunities for students to engage with the wider community, including more opportunities with North Yorkshire Police, NHS and National Trust. This year they have also launched a new Student Volunteering Forum to support student leaders in volunteering and enable more collaboration between volunteers from across all areas of the University. This builds on a pilot to support Social Leaders, which enabled a group of student volunteers to attend a range of national events and insights to support their career planning in the non-profit sector.

York Students in Schools
This year York Students in Schools has piloted a GCSE tutoring scheme along with colleagues in Widening Participation. The project came from a request from schools to support those pupils most in need to be able to reach their potential. Twenty students supported 40 pupils across the year, with the plans to double the size of the pilot next year. The scheme has been evaluated by the Department of Education, and we are hoping to be able to demonstrate an impact on the attainment of the young people. This scheme has complimented the schemes ongoing research into the learning gain of student volunteers. This year the data shows that students are reporting gains across a wide range of skills, including 10% increased confidence in conveying ideas and problem solving and a 7% increase in resilience. Overall there is an increase in confidence for students between the start and end of their placements about their future careers.

Digital Leaders
Made possible by a generous gift from Santander Universities, the Digital Leaders initiative is aimed at students with a combination of creative and entrepreneurial talent in the digital field. The eight students selected as Digital Leaders are given the opportunity to network with organisations and individuals with proven expertise in the digital field. These interactions provide both inspiration and practical advice to help the students realise their ambitions. This year included visits to Creative England, the BBC and local games development companies. Two of the students on the scheme went on to set up their own games company and secure £30k from the UK Games Fund.

The York Business Challenge and Freelance Challenge
The York Business Challenge and Freelance Challenge competitions provide an opportunity for York’s many young entrepreneurs to showcase their businesses. Also funded by Santander, the competitions culminate in a final dinner where the top entrants present their ideas to fellow entrepreneurial students and business leaders drawn from the City of York and the University’s alumni. This year’s winner was Matt Barrie, with his startup Solu, which aims to reduce the amount of waste in the ocean in the Philippines.

Proof of Concept Fund
Part of our service to student entrepreneurs is to offer small grants to help them test their business idea. In 2017/18, we received 37 applications for our proof of concept fund. The fund has a great track record of supporting successful businesses; enabling students to kickstart their ventures.

Summer Accelerator
We also supported nine students who were working on their business ideas over the summer vacation. These students were given funding for their living costs, as well as workshops and access to workspace.
2017/18 key figures

120
enterprise consultations

385
engaged in enterprise

1,398
volunteering opportunities

10,509
event attendees

3,500
1-1 interactions

72
community partners

917
attended a York Strengths Development Day

276,249
unique website views

I have found out that I was successful in my application to the Teach First scheme and the mock interview was extremely helpful!"

Third year student

1,398
VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

equates to

41,624
VOLUNTEERING HOURS

equates to

£325,915.92
(based on National Minimum Wage)