

York St John University Access Agreement 2012/13

1. Background and introduction

- 1.1. The fees York St John University will ensure that we invest in delivering an exceptional experience for our students and support delivery of the University's widening participation and retention aims. The University has a strong reputation for its programme quality, graduate employability and excellent links with business and the professions. The University's success is demonstrated by the significant growth in demand for places, with a 40% increase in applications in the last two years alone. We will provide additional support to many of our students from lower income backgrounds through fee waivers and scholarships, as well as through outreach and retention activities. This Access plan represents an outstanding set of measures to ensure that access, retention and graduate employment success are delivered.
- 1.2. York St John University has a long-standing history of providing educational opportunity to those who would not otherwise enjoy the benefits of an HE experience. This is underpinned within our mission statement. The University

“is committed to the provision of excellent, open and progressive higher education that embraces difference, challenges prejudice and promotes justice ... Building on this foundation the University commits itself to provide widely-accessible opportunities for lifelong learning, underpinned by scholarship and research.”
- 1.3. The University is either on or above benchmark in most key performance indicators relating to widening participation and has a track record in both continuation and completion rates amongst its students.
- 1.4. York St John has a distinctive role as a provider of learning opportunities for a wide range of audiences in its region and is an effective partner in widening participation. The University led the Aimhigher partnership in its sub region and will continue to sustain significant areas of activity amongst low participation audiences in collaboration with other partners and to roll out best practice into other regions and areas of work. It is a partner in Higher York which has maintained its FE/HE and York City Council partnership in York, beyond the Hefce funding support for lifelong learning networks. Higher York works with a wide range of groups with a focus on aspiration raising, progression and employability.
- 1.5. The University places an emphasis on widening the pool of applicants and ensuring success for groups and communities currently under-represented in higher education. Through this agreement we will want to maintain this work but also to ensure that we retain students from under-represented groups preparing them for employment on graduation.

2. Fee limits and fee income above £6,000

2.1. York St John University will set the following fee rates from September 2012 entry:

Full-time	Fee
Undergraduate first degree students on Hefce funded programmes	£8,500
Foundation degree students in Education & Theology*	£3,500

These figures exclude NHS contract funded provision and currently also excludes those places allocated through the TDA. The University awaits further advice on part-time provision before including these rates within the agreement.

2.2. Continuing students plus those topping up to undergraduate degrees from Foundation degrees starting before 2012 will be charged in line with the previous Access agreement. Fees will not be subject to an annual inflation rise for those starting in 2012 and for continuation years. However, for those entering in subsequent years fees will be subject to review. The full details of the number of expected students in each fee category are covered in Annex B.

*The fee rate for Foundation degree students in Education & Theology has been set at this level because these programmes have been developed in conjunction with a range of partners and are primarily targeted at specific mature audiences with no previous experience of higher education. These students will therefore not be eligible to the fee waiver discounts set out in this agreement but may be eligible for the National Scholarship Programme and other bursaries.

3. Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

3.1. The Access plan focuses on three key areas of work: outreach, retention and successful employment outcomes for graduates.

Our current performance

3.2. The following key performance indicators demonstrate where the University is positioned in terms of access, retention and success, sourced from Hefce HESA indicators:

i) Outreach:

- Table 1b Young full-time undergraduates from state schools 95.3% (benchmark 93.9%)
- Table 1b Young full-time undergraduates from lowest NS-SEC 31.9% (benchmark 34.2%)

- Table 1b Young full-time undergraduates from low participation neighbourhoods 14.9% (benchmark 12.4%)

ii) Retention and success:

- Continuation rate 92.2% (benchmark 92.1%)¹
- Degree completion rate 82.0% (benchmark 79.9%)²
- Table E1 Leavers from full-time, first degrees 90.7% (benchmark 91.4%)

iv) Other measures:

- Table 7 Full-time all undergraduates in receipt of DSA 7.3% (benchmark 5.0%)
- Table 2a Mature full-time all undergraduates from low participation neighbourhoods with no previous experience of higher education 9.1% (benchmark 10.4%).
- Table 2b Part-time all undergraduates with no experience of higher education 2.9% (benchmark 4.3%). These figures are small and therefore sensitive to annual fluctuation.

3.3. York St John University exceeds targets in a number of areas including young entrants from state schools and low participation neighbourhoods and in participation rates from those with a known disability. The University will work to maintain these levels of performance amongst these groups. We have identified that we need to work further on representation of minority ethnic students and amongst mature students from low participation neighbourhoods with no previous experience of higher education. The University will also want to measure retention success with graduate employability for all, but also within specific under-represented groups.

Expenditure

3.4. From projections on predicted student numbers York St John University plans to set aside around 33% of the additional income during the five year life of this Access agreement which will be focused on a mix of fee waivers, outreach and retention activity, scholarships as well as participation in the Government's National Scholarship Programme. The total spend between 2011/12 and 2015/16 will be over £11,800,000.

3.5. During 2011/12 the University will incur expenditure from its commitments within the previous Access agreement and will sustain a range of activities previously delivered by

¹ These figures were suppressed in the HESA Performance Indicators due to issues with data collection amongst lead Lifelong Learning Network HEIs. Working with HESA, this is an accurate estimate of our figures for 2008-09.

² As footnote 1.

Aimhigher, through the Higher York partnership, plus preparation for increased outreach and information provision. An estimate of these outreach costs is £200,000.

- 3.6. The University will also sustain its bursary provision for those students who are continuing from 2011 entry and before, which is projected to account for £3,100,000 over the lifetime of the agreement.
- 3.7. York St John University will provide financial support in the form of fee waivers to full-time UK home students enrolled on a programme charging the maximum fee. More detail is available in Annex B.
- 3.8. Students will continue under the fee and fee waiver scheme operating at the time they first joined the University throughout the period of their registration until completion of their award. Fee waivers will not be available to Foundation students studying at the lower fee rate of £3,500. The total the University projects it will spend on fee waiver activity will be £5,655,000 during the five years of the Access agreement.
- 3.9. Twenty five academic and widening participation scholarships to the value of £50,000 will be available each year for students for one year of their study. These awards will be limited in number and therefore not available to all who may be eligible. The total spend on this activity over five years will be £250,000.
- 3.10. The University will also contribute towards the Government's National Scholarship programme with awards based on a £1,000 scholarship and £2,000 fee waiver for one year only. Over the life of the agreement this will represent almost £1,300,000 of University contribution.
- 3.11. £200,000 will be spent on retention activities and £1,350,000 on outreach over the period of the plan. It is understood that at the time of submission decisions on Hefce funding including widening participation have not been made for 2012/13 onwards. The University's overall widening participation outreach and retention activity is significantly higher than detailed in this plan and will be reported within the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment report.

A breakdown of expenditure is included in Annex B.

Outreach

- 3.12. The University's widening participation strategy is wide ranging, linking access initiative to those for student progression and success, to community engagement and business development activities. A total of £1,350,000 will be spent on outreach within the agreement.

- 3.13. York St John University has benefited from the best practice developed by a number of widening participation organisations, including Aimhigher and has supported their work through delivery of activities. Participation in York and North Yorkshire widened between 2003 and 2009 with a 43% rise in HE acceptances from the most deprived neighbourhoods in comparison to a 12.7% rise in the most affluent neighbourhoods.
- 3.14. It is recognised that the best results have come from sustained interventions with integrated packages of activity which include influencers as well as beneficiaries. The University will build on these within this plan through Learner Progression Frameworks. These Frameworks will be extended to include elements which support retention, completion and graduate employability amongst under-represented groups. The key Hefce performance indicators above will be used to focus activity within the plan, with the addition of an ongoing commitment to Care Leavers and Frank Buttle where the University is developing significant expertise in multi-agency work.
- 3.15. During 2011/12 the University will build on a number of Aimhigher initiatives in York and North Yorkshire within low socioeconomic and high IMD neighbourhoods, schools and colleges. A number of these programmes will be delivered in partnership with other HEIs, Councils and FECs and schools consortia. In addition, the University will start to work with community and interest groups in other areas beyond York and North Yorkshire. Previous Access agreement work will also be sustained amongst BME, mature and young under-represented audiences.
- 3.16. A range of aspiration raising and attainment pre-entry activities for 2011/12 and the rest of the plan will include:
- Children's' University in conjunction with a range of companies and organisations
 - Green Apples primary and secondary programmes
 - Taster days and events, for example Access in to Healthcare day
 - Student ambassador and mentoring
 - Schools, colleges and adult liaison workshops, information events and personal development sessions
 - Residential summer schools and Extended days
 - Subject revision sessions
 - Business School SME enterprise development
 - BME community development
 - Multi agency care leavers activity from year 6 to 11
 - Redevelopment of a new compact programme to support attainment
 - Working with Business Enterprise Partnership initiatives
 - Development of pre-entry support for information advice and guidance amongst schools and colleges with the Council and also with specific mature group areas, including the MoD resettlement work linked into Education.
 - Online IAG modules, for example, 'Is HE for Me?'

Examples of activity: Green Apples

York St John University is a 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 and local primary and secondary schools. This initiative has received Aimhigher funding and partners now wish to support and develop Green Apples so that it continues to target those local young people who may have the potential but not the aspiration to progress to higher education.

This is a progressive programme of interventions focusing mainly on Years 9, 10 and 11 but which also addresses transition times, such as that from primary to secondary school and secondary school 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 address the needs of young people. This will support the achievement of the milestone set out in 5B for activity in the York area which will also be supplemented by IAG support activity for years 9 and 11, working in partnership with York City Council, through the local Lifelong Learning Network, Higher York.

Summer Schools

York St John University will continue to commit to Summer School residential activities, previously funded through Aimhigher and aimed at schools with high IMD. These will be subject focused, with additional specific mentoring support for those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The main areas participants will be drawn from include Doncaster, Scarborough, Selby and Leeds but with potential support for high IMD partner schools and colleges outside the Yorkshire and Humber region. This will aid the achievement of the milestone set out in 5b relating to summer schools.

North Yorkshire and Coastal areas

Working in partnership with other HEIs and the local Aimhigher York St John has established a range of activities in the Scarborough coastal region and North Yorkshire. Through the maintenance of learner progression frameworks the University will work with the consortia in the region, along with other HEIs, to deliver a range of activities to high IMD schools and colleges to support progression. In Scarborough almost 20% of pupils live in wards which rank as being in the top 20% most deprived nationally. Through additional liaison support the University will work on a range of activities from family engagement projects and mentoring to subject revision support and taster events targeted at low socioeconomic groups. This will support the achievement of the milestone set out in 5b relating to North Yorkshire work with schools.

York Cares

The University will take fuller role in York Cares which has established the Children's University within the city and surrounding area. This is a national programme which aims to raise aspirations amongst primary aged children and to establish links between work ambitions and education. Additional activities through York Cares include mentoring for

those at risk of becoming NEET and primary reading development work. York St John will also continue to work with the North Yorkshire Business Enterprise Partnership on building links with targeted groups of wp children with education and business (BT represents a recent example of business). This will support the achievement of the milestone set out in 5b relating to York Cares.

Routes into Healthcare

The University will continue to work on this project which helps to raise aspirations and potential progression routes for 14-19 year olds into a range of health related programmes. This includes onsite visits, taster programmes and progression work. This will support the achievement of the milestone set out in 5b relating to Routes into Healthcare.

Care Leavers

The University has a track record in working with care leavers and looked after children with a range of agencies. It holds the Frank Buttle kite mark and is committed to maintaining this. Activity covers a range of interventions from aspiration raising to retention support for current students. By the very nature of this work this group tends to reflect a range of indices relating to multiple deprivation.

BME

BME work will be subject focused in areas from Education and Teaching to Arts and Business Management. Most of the work will be community focused with both adults and young people, working through faith agencies, community centres, clubs and societies, schools and colleges. Projects range from specific curriculum development and more general aspiration programmes (e.g. the University has developed and runs 'Is HE 4 Me' aimed at both general and specific wp mature audiences).

Mature

Mature work will cover a range of initiatives from collaborations relating to resettlement projects to IAG support.

Retention activities

3.17. York St John University recognises that success for under-represented groups as well as for its broad student body is not just about access but also about transition, retention and success. This is an area which the University already takes very seriously and is a key part of our strategy. Additional focus on student success and progression is the main approach to ensuring wp audiences are supported on programme, particularly when linked to inclusion, employability and enterprise, finance and funding support. Under the plan the University will spend an additional £200,000 on retention work.

3.18. The following range of activities will be part of the plan.

Pre-advice and guidance

- Increasing information and guidance prior to entry through online activities and opportunities to meet staff and existing students before arrival.

Transition

- Development of induction centrally and embedded within faculties to extend beyond first weeks of term, with high risk interventions and support in specific subjects with higher under-represented groups.

Progression

- Introduction of specific student communication support to ensure integrated and focused approach to inclusion and retention.
- The establishment of coaching and mentoring support both within faculties through central support services supported by alumni work with potential and new students.
- Research and targeted interventions on transition between levels (for example, amongst those living at home).

Employability and enterprise linked into success

- Embedding curriculum vitae and personal development from Stage I of programmes.
- Development of increased careers guidance and support and opportunities for internships, along with online opportunities around volunteering and enterprise.

4. Financial support for students

4.1. Given the transition of funding to fees, waivers will support under represented students to participate in higher education during an uncertain economic climate. The fee waivers are intended to provide a reduced financial burden for students with different levels of family income background and are designed to be complementary to the government funding support arrangements.

4.2. Fee waivers will be awarded against a single criterion based on residual family income and provided at the following levels.

Residual annual family income	Fee Waiver per annum for 2012/13 onwards
Below £10,000	£2,000
£10,000 - £19,999	£1,250
£20,000 - £30,000	£750

The fee waivers will not be limited in number and all who qualify will receive the fee waiver, with the exception of those on Foundation programmes with tuition fees of £3,500.

4.3. York St John University has run a very successful range of alumni funded scholarships focused on a number of widening participation groups and academic excellence areas. It is intended that this model will be used for entry scholarship and on course student achievement scholarships focused on the following areas.

- Enterprise – current students through open competition
- Access – on entry through nomination
- Community action – through competition
- Sporting achievement – through competition
- Arts contribution – through competition
- Care leavers – through nomination
- Range of subject specific scholarships focused on academic achievement on entry - through competition

The scholarships will only be provided once for one year of study for each student who receives an award.

4.4. The National Scholarship programme will award a £1,000 scholarship and a £2,000 fee discount for one year of study only. The scholarships will be focused on student entry from 2012 for each of the outreach groups covered within this agreement for those on household incomes of less than £25,000 per annum and will be for the first year of study only. However, eligibility criterion does not provide entitlement to the scholarship. Those on NHS funded programmes, on TDA provision or progressing from Foundation study to degree level will not be eligible. A pro rata amount is also available to part-time students studying a minimum of 25% intensity of the full-time equivalent. The match funding by government will be used to benefit additional students. These scholarships will be made available to

- Care leavers
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Students with disabilities
- Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Refugees
- Learners entering part-time programmes with no previous experience of higher education

If the National Scholarship programme is oversubscribed the following groups will be prioritised:

- Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- Black and minority ethnic groups

Those from other categories will still be eligible for consideration through our in-house scholarships and fee waivers.

5. Targets and milestones

5.1. The agreement has already set out those areas where the University will focus outreach and retention activity and the key performance indicators drawn from Hefce HESA reports which will be used to define targets.

Area of focus	Baseline year	Baseline Data	Milestone
% of young people from state schools on full-time undergraduate programmes	2009/10	95.3%	To be above benchmark currently at 93.9%
% of young people from lowest NS-SEC groups on full time undergraduate programmes	2009/10	31.9%	To meet the benchmark currently at 34.2%
% of young people from low participation neighbourhoods	2009/10	14.9%	To be above benchmark currently at 12.4%
% continuation rate	2008/9	92.2%	To be above benchmark currently at 92.1%
% degree completion rate	2009/10	82.0%	To be above benchmark currently at 79.9%
% full-time undergraduates in receipt of DSA	2009/10	7.3%	To be above benchmark currently at 5.0%
% mature full-time undergraduates from low participation neighbourhoods with no previous experience of HE	2009/10	9.1%	To meet the benchmark currently at 10.4%. (This proportion represents small numbers)
% part-time undergraduate from low participation neighbourhoods with no previous experience of HE	2009/10	2.9%	To meet the benchmark currently at 4.3% (This proportion represents small numbers)

5.2. A subset within this group is Care Leavers and through our commitment to Frank Buttle the University will continue to plan towards increasing numbers both enrolling on and continuing in study.

5.3. York St John will also aim to raise applications from under-represented groups across the board and will use UCAS statistics and contextual data to support the development of milestones and targeting of outreach work.

5.4. Milestones will also be linked to graduate employability, specifically amongst under-represented groups, but also more broadly amongst all groups.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

6.1. Overall responsibility for widening participation will be led at a senior level at York St John by the Pro Vice Chancellor Development supported by the Director of Marketing and a team of liaison support staff. The Pro Vice Chancellor Development also has responsibility for the student experience which will ensure integrated leadership in relation to both outreach and retention.

6.2. The University has established systems of monitoring and evaluation and will ensure it keeps abreast with best practice. The University will also retain best practice from Aimhigher in relation to targeting as well as monitoring and evaluation. The local Aimhigher partnership was one of few such organisations in the UK to develop data sharing protocols which included the local Councils and we will work towards incorporating this approach under the new Access agreement.

6.3. In addition, the University has a robust approach to data capture relating to its students, which enables it to track student success within different groups and to highlight potential pressure points for retention and success in order to inform programme and support development to reduce attrition.

6.4. To support new activity under the Access agreement the University has recently established a policy for capturing additional UCAS data to provide more contextual information about applicants in comparison to acceptances. This will not be used in decision making but will inform outreach, conversion and enrolment activity amongst specific groups.

6.5. The University Academic Board receives and discusses a WP progress activity and evaluation update along with a Student Outcomes Report on an annual basis. These reports include a range of key statistical and other evidence. The Academic Board will continue this practice. Specific development of evaluation methods and monitoring are picked up through the Evaluation sub-committee of the Quality and Student Experience Committee and each programme has an annual evaluative report which profiles applicants, students and outcomes.

7. Information, advice and guidance

7.1. York St John will work with Higher York, York City Council and North Yorkshire County Council to ensure that Information Advice and Guidance is supported amongst schools and

colleges and other networks within the area. There is a specific Information Advice and Guidance project planned for 14-19 year olds within York.

- 7.2. York St John University provides prospective students and their families with significant information about fees and finance packages and has an individualised approach to admissions handling to ensure appropriate information is provided. This information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains up to date. The University will also work with the national expectations around the provision of key information sets. Fees information will be provided to UCAS.
- 7.3. The University's website will include information on 'Fees and Financial Support' which will encompass all the information around fees and funding packages, with worked examples covering illustrations of the net costs of studying undergraduate programmes at the University, taking into account estimates for the cost of living and the total financial support that will be available.
- 7.4. This information will also be developed into printed materials and information packs around Student Finance and Support. A brief summary will be included in the prospectus with signposting back to the website and direct contacts for further information. The brochure and pack will be used in all our liaison activities with a particular focus on under-represented groups.
- 7.5. The detail available on the website and in the Student Finance Support pack will also be used as the basis for advice and guidance through talks, seminars and workshops targeted at parents, key target widening participation groups, prospective students, advice and guidance professionals, school staff (and others who may have a key influence on student decision making) not only in areas of student recruitment but also in new areas of activity.
- 7.6. Students are currently provided with financial advice, guidance and support as an embedded feature of the schedule of induction (both prior to and after arrival). This approach will remain the main vehicle for providing new students with individualised advice and guidance about fees and financial support arrangements and will reinforce information they have already received. We will also establish forums and webinar activity to respond quickly to queries and to provide additional information.

Information for current students

- 7.7. The University has actively engaged with students in developing the new fees and funding structure. Members of the Students' Union Executive have been actively involved in formal discussions at University committees and within other forums.
- 7.8. Student services staff work very closely with welfare and guidance support in the Students' Union and through employability, volunteering and advice services online.

