

Askham Bryan College Access Agreement

Full-time fees from September 2006 onwards

The College is directly funded from HEFCE to offer a range of HE programmes validated by the University of Leeds (all foundation and honours degree programmes) and Edexcel (all Higher National programmes). That is the entire extent of our HE provision and comprises approximately 14% of the College's total activity.

The College has recently developed a number of Foundation Degrees in response to the Government drive to increase participation in HE, demonstrating its flexible approach to its specialist provision and building on its excellent links with industry. We have plans to further extend the range of Foundation Degrees within the life of this agreement.

The College has extremely well articulated internal progression routes, offering such routes for all our land-based FE curriculum areas with the exception of engineering. In terms of our reliance on clearing, the percentage of our entrants that come via that pathway is remarkably small - around 1-3% annually. Thus the majority of our HE students come through well tried pathways. A number of students from other institutions including a number from the EU are attracted to our top-up degree schemes, typically 35% of enrolments.

The specialist nature of provision means that students attending the College originate from all over the region, with the College recruiting HE students from more than 50 postal regions. As a specialist land-based college we have a regional position and are generally seen as the appropriate destination for candidates committed to a career in the land-based sector in all its guises.

The fee level set for all full time Higher National, Foundation Degree and Honours Degree courses directly funded by HEFCE at the College will be **£2100** for the session 2006-07 and subsequent years, but subject to the annual inflationary increase announced by the Government within the life of this agreement. (see Annex).

Financial support mechanisms funded via additional fee income

The College has designed its HE fee strategy to ensure continued access to programmes to its traditional recruitment pool whilst also improving the level of resource available to HE students in the College. The measures outlined are designed to increase participation on HE programmes from non-traditional entrants.

The College's current level of participation from lower income groups (as defined by UCAS Standard Occupational Categories 6 and 7 combined, semi-routine and routine occupations) was 24% in 2004 and 26% in 2003. This compares with 16% in both of the years 2003 and 2004 for these categories in the UCAS national data. The College attracts correspondingly fewer applicants from Standard Occupational Categories 1 and 2 (higher managerial and professional and lower managerial and professional) than UCAS national averages – 29% in Askham Bryan College in comparison to 42% nationally. It is anticipated that the measures outlined should

increase the level of participation of candidates from the lower Standard Occupational Categories.

The principal elements are:-

- All students who qualify for the full Higher Education maintenance grant of £2700 (see Annex) will receive a fee waiver to the value of £200 (see Annex). This information will be provided by the Student Loans Company.
- All mature students not in receipt of a full Higher Education maintenance grant will receive a fee waiver to the value of £200 (see Annex) in each year of study. It is important to note here that mature entrants to HE programmes for the last two intakes have oscillated around 41%. Thus a large component of our HE student body will receive this bursary, including a substantial component of the estimated 24% from underrepresented groups as discussed below. It is currently impossible to other than crudely quantify this aspect.
- All new entrants to full-time HE programmes will receive a training voucher for £300 (see annex). Students enrolling on more than one full-time programme at the College (for example a student who on completion of a Foundation Degree at the College progresses on to the Honours Degree top-up) will not be eligible for another training voucher on enrolling on the second programme. The proportion of underrepresented students (currently as measured on UCAS Standard Occupational Categories) likely to benefit from this is forecast to increase from a baseline of around 24% in 2006 to 37% at the end of the plan. This is, of necessity, a crude indicator and we would expect more sophisticated measures of under-representation to develop as the process unfurls.

All eligibility criteria for fee waivers and/or allocation of training vouchers will be supported by evidence from external sources and enrolment data.

Additional outreach activities

The College is an active partner in the Higher York consortium comprising Askham Bryan College, the University of York, York St John College and York College and participates fully in sub-regional and regional AimHigher activities. The Higher York initiative is a successful partnership designed to improve participation in HE in the region, and has just received SDF funding as a Lifelong Learning Network from HEFCE. One long-term goal within Higher York has been to use the College's out centres around North Yorkshire and Redcar and Cleveland as delivery centres for community HE initiatives developed through Higher York.

The AimHigher projects that the College is involved in sub-regionally include:

- **Green Apples** - the main aim of the project is to raise the aspirations of young people in York comprehensive schools. The objectives of the project are to: Demystify HE; Raise awareness of the routes and variety of provision within F and HE; Increase the self confidence and the self esteem of these students so that they feel that HE could be for them; Raise aspirations, not solely for F and HE, but for lifelong learning; Assists with build up of skills for access to HE at some point, not just at 18.

- **Progress Higher! Advanced Guidance for Adults** – the primary aim of the project will be to contribute to increasing participation rates and progression into HE in North Yorkshire through provision of high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance. The project has been designed to support other AimHigher project providers under Objective 2 and 3 through delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance on a ‘call off’ basis.
- **Higher Ambitions** – the primary aim of this project is to ensure that a student’s decision making is based on sound knowledge, information and awareness of the range of learning and funding options available. In addition, this will also serve to challenge perceptions held about HE and the ultimate benefits with regard to employability and income. A multi-agency approach will ensure that this project enhances and extend current provision, that good practice is rolled out across the district and pilot a flexible menu of provision customised to the needs of those with no family or peer tradition of higher education, low aspirations or confidence but with the ability to succeed in HE; access to only a limited range of provision at 14-19; facing specific barriers to progression (through disability, leaving care etc) and gifted and talented young people.
- **York & North Yorkshire Progression Partnership** - the York & North Yorkshire Progression Partnership’s aim is to widen participation and access into HE by developing a credit based framework for York and the county of North Yorkshire, which identifies seamless progression routes into HE.
- **HE for the Rural Community – Real Progression** - this project provides a delivery mechanism to lock in HE progression routes for rurally isolated learners currently participating in community and/or further education. There are a number of initiatives already providing community based learning, especially in rural areas of the county. This project will enable progression to HE by ensuring appropriate information and advice on progression routes is available.

The College intends to appoint an HE Outreach Officer working in close collaboration with Higher York colleagues and North Yorkshire AimHigher, a key task of this post being the promotion of participation in HE amongst target groups. This post will also be responsible for articulating employer links in these predominantly rural areas. The postholder will liaise with schools, colleges, local employers and community groups to promote HE participation. College will offer targeted roadshows, taster and shadowing opportunities to aspirant HE entrants **in addition** to its existing school liaison activities.

Informing students of financial support available

Information will be provided in a range of ways and at a range of interfaces with prospective entrants. The prospectus and website will contain user friendly guides to financial support available to students. All promotional literature will include clear references to the mechanisms available for financial support, clearly signposting College sources where comprehensive information can be obtained. The College will provide a comprehensive pack of information detailing all the available support mechanisms to all potential applicants, including illustrative examples.

The College invites all HE applicants and their parents/supporters to a series of HE Open Days throughout the year. Currently applicants and their parents/supporters

are given information on loans, hardship funds and other sources of support that they may be able to access. In preparation for the session 2006-07 a comprehensive presentation detailing the new fee situation and the bursary scheme will be produced by the Assistant Director Food Farming and Innovation, HE Senior Tutor, Student Support Services Manager and the Admissions Manager. These materials will be circulated to all applicants for the 2006-07 session and form the basis for information sessions with applicants and their parents or supporters. These information materials will then be incorporated into the brief of the HE Outreach Officer as detailed below.

The financial information will be generally available to all partnership schools, colleges, internal progression routes and industry and community organisations as a matter of course. In addition, the HE Outreach Officer will be tasked with offering workshops and drop-in advice centres at a range of venues in the region with the express purpose of providing an accessible service to under-represented groups. These venues will include schools, colleges, community centres, libraries, pubs and commercial premises.

Access Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2 et seq
Maximum total additional income	£99000	£135000
Maximum bursaries (including laptops, training vouchers, students in receipt of full HE maintenance grants, mature students)	£ 70000	£75000
HE Outreach Officer	£14000	£14000
HE promotional activities	£3000	£3000
Enhanced on-line learning resources	£3000	£10000
Total expenditure	£90000	£102000

The component of the total bursary support allocated to disadvantaged students in year one is estimated to be approximately 35%, rising to 40% in year two and on to 48% through the life of the agreement.

Institutional milestones and objectives

- The College will prepare full, clear information on financial arrangements and bursary support for applicants for September 2006 by October 2005.
- The College will appoint the HE Outreach Officer in May 2006. The HE Outreach Officer will be tasked with the following key priorities over the life of the agreement:
 - Increasing awareness, attitudes and aspirations toward HE among those from defined under-represented groups, particularly in the rural areas of the region
 - Increased application rates from target groups in both rural and urban areas
 - Improvements in the level of involvement and positive attitudes of key stakeholders, particularly parents and employers.

- Application rates to the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) from under-represented groups (currently as indicated by UCAS Standard Occupational Categories) increasing year on year, resulting in 3% increase in such enrolments in year 1 of the agreement (from an estimated of baseline of 24%), increasing incrementally by a total of 13% to 37% by the end of the agreement period.
- The College will establish support arrangements for under represented groups and those that access HE in the community to enable retention and progression.

Compliance Monitoring

A Monitoring Group will be established to confirm progress against milestones and targets articulated in this agreement. This group will be Chaired by the Assistant Director Food, Farming and Innovation and include the HE Senior Tutor, the Student Support Services Manager, the Admissions Manager and the HE Outreach Officer. This group will produce an annual monitoring report which will be scrutinised at the Academic Board and on to the Corporation.

This group will meet bimonthly to track progress against targets and will, if appropriate amend strategies and activities to accommodate achievements and missed opportunities. In addition, the response rate to planned activities (such as roadshows, employer engagement activities) will be monitored to ensure their effectiveness.

Additional information

Regional participation in HE (Yorkshire and Humberside), at 25.6%, is ranked tenth lowest of the eleven UK regions. This provides additional challenges to the College in widening access to HE. Currently (as detailed earlier in this document) the College outperforms the UCAS average for participation by the lower Standard Occupational Categories by 50%. However, the College's current HE population does not include any students in receipt of disadvantage uplift. Only a small number (3%) of students have some form of disability, 1% are recorded as having moderate learning difficulty and only 2% are from visible ethnic minorities. The land-based sector's workforce shows a significant under-representation of ethnic minorities: 0.7% of the workforce, compared to 5% nationally. This mainly reflects the fact that ethnic minorities tend to live in or near urban areas and not within rural areas. We would expect the HE Outreach Officer to positively impact on these low participation rates at the College

Within England there are 355 local authority districts, which are ranked according to the multiple deprivation indices calculated by the DETR. The lower the score, the higher the extent of deprivation. Thus York is the 219th most deprived district in the UK and Hambleton the 285th out of a total of 355. Although deprivation denoted by aggregate measures is low throughout York and North Yorkshire, there are significant pockets of deprivation.

The College actively engages with significant numbers of learners in both Redcar and Cleveland and Darlington districts through our centres at Bedale, Guisborough

and Middlesbrough. These districts are considerably more deprived than the bulk of the sub-region.

It is evident that amongst all of the rural districts, although ward scores may be high, nevertheless there remains a significant number of individuals and families who are economically and socially deprived. This phenomenon has long been acknowledged as “hidden” deprivation and the North Yorkshire local authorities have developed rural services to address this issue. The College has learning centre locations in a number of districts which have higher levels of deprivation – both real as measured (Middlesbrough and Guisborough) and “hidden” (Bedale, Pickering and Guisborough).

Local Authority	Multiple Deprivation Index (Rank of Average Score)
York	219
Craven	262
Hambleton	285
Harrogate	277
Richmondshire	251
Ryedale	242
Scarborough	91
Selby	239
	<i>Authorities outside the sub-region but significant sources of learners</i>
Redcar and Cleveland	44
Darlington	90

Source – ODPM, 2004

The four Askham Bryan Centres, in addition to the York campus, enable the College to make it easier for individuals and organisations to access learning for both development and employability. There are plans to extend the network to include Thirsk, Masham and Northallerton, extending our capacity to develop vocational HE in rural settings.

From the preceding observations it is evident that, whilst the College is performing well in attracting underrepresented groups as defined by UCAS Standard Occupational Categories, there exists a considerable body of potential participants in HE within our region. Our challenge will be to attract significant additional numbers of those individuals to our programmes to meet our earlier listed targets.

Annual report

An annual monitoring report will be produced by the Monitoring Group and presented to the Senior Management Team for approval. Once it has been through College procedures, the report will be submitted to the Director of OFFA. The scheduling of production and approval of the report will ensure that it is submitted to OFFA in a timely fashion. The report will include a review of outreach activities, progress against targets and milestones and data on recruitment and bursary and other financial support mechanisms.

Annex to Access Agreement January 2008 – effective 2008-09

The College has improved its student IT facilities available for HE students, year on year, and the provision of individual laptops to students is no longer necessary. In its place the College will provide a voucher to the value of £300 to all first year Foundation Degree students to spend on industry standard training courses which are necessary for successful employment in the landbased industries. These courses could include, but are not restricted to:

Certificate of Competence in the Safe Use of Veterinary Medicines
Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA) courses
Riding and Road Safety
Quad Bike Driving
Chain Saw Certificates
Tractor Driving

For clarity the tuition fees and bursaries allowing for inflation rates set by Government are stated below:

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Annual Tuition Fee	£2,100	£2,149	£2,200
Maintenance Grant Bursary	£200	£205	£210
Mature Students Bursary	£200	£205	£210
Training voucher	na	na	£300

The only courses which are exempt from this agreement are the Introductory Year (Year0) component of courses which are part of named awards offered by the College. The Tuition fee for this year will be £210 in 2008-09 and a bursary of £210 will be offered to students who are:

19 years of age or older at the start of the course, and
have no full level 3 qualification in a relevant discipline.

Amended January 2008