



Access Agreement 2018-19

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1. Introduction

1. Askham Bryan College is a specialist land-based college offering a range of both further and higher education programmes. Undergraduate higher education programmes are offered in the areas of Agriculture, Animal Management, Equine, Horticulture, Sport and Veterinary Nursing.
2. There are currently over 600 students studying on higher education undergraduate programmes at the College in 2016-17, with a significant proportion of enrolments (over 50% in 2016-17) from areas classified as 'disadvantaged by postcode'. The College's commitment to widening participation is articulated in the Strategic Plan, and significant steps have been taken in increasing progression from our wider further education campuses.
3. Directly funded higher education provision is currently delivered in validated partnerships with three university partners: Harper Adams University, the Royal Agricultural University and Leeds Trinity University.
4. Our graduate employability is very good, with over 90% of full-time undergraduates in either work or further study within six months of graduating.
5. Undergraduate tuition fee limits for 2018-19 have been set at £8500 per year for full-time students (Home). Part-time students, and students on blended learning programmes, will be charged a pro-rata fee, which will not exceed £5667 in any one academic year. Students on a sandwich year as part of their programme of study will be charged a maximum of £1800 per year for the sandwich year.
6. The College works collaboratively with a range of strategic partners, both locally (Higher York- a collaborative network of Yorkshire-based higher education providers) and nationally (e.g. LANDEX and Association of Colleges), to promote higher education.
7. We are working to develop our overall student experience through an evaluation of our student lifecycle, with an integrated team of academic and support staff, to enable us to improve data collection, monitoring and analysis. This will be a key focus over the period of this access agreement.

2. Fees, Student Numbers and Fee Income

2.1 Student Numbers

Based on projected student numbers for 2018-19, the College estimates that a minimum of £360,000 will be allocated to activity and expenditure in improving access, student success and progression. Given the high proportion of student enrolments from under-represented groups (Section 3.1), the expenditure level for this access agreement should be a minimum of 15% of fee income above the basic fee (OFFA Guidance on Access Agreements 2014-15). Expenditure may vary depending on actual numbers enrolling onto programmes in 2018-19, which will affect the higher fee income generated.

2.2 Tuition fee limits

We have a single fee rate for our full-time undergraduate provision, and do not charge differential tuition fees for different subject areas. This is easier for prospective and current students to understand, and reduces barriers if students wish to transfer across programmes. The fees for (part-time) blended learning programmes are lower to reflect the dispersed nature of this type of delivery.

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Programme of study	Tuition fee (2018-19 new entrants)
Any undergraduate full-time students on Extended Foundation Degree, Foundation Degree or BSc programmes (Home students)	£8500
Any undergraduate part—time students on Extended Foundation Degree, Foundation Degree or BSc programmes, including blended learning programmes (Home students)	£5667 (maximum)*
Students on sandwich year	£1800

Table 1. Tuition fee limits for 2018-19 new entrants.

**dependent on mode and intensity of study*

The College may increase tuition fees annually by the inflationary amount and/or agreed amount set each year by Government.

With a minimum expected enrolment of 250 new full-time students in 2018-19, it is expected that a minimum of £93,750 will be invested in access measures for these students.

3. Access, Student Success and Progression Measures

The College continues to support access, student success and progression by investing a minimum of 15% of the higher fee income into development of structures and processes to improve these measures.

This investment is in addition to commitments outlined in previous access agreements for continuing students.

3.1 Access priorities and work

As a College that also offers FE programmes of study, the College is very well placed to inform and promote participation in higher education study via its FE learners at a number of campuses across the north of England. The College continues to place emphasis on advice and guidance on progression to higher education in general, and implements a programme of progression activities to promote opportunities internally and externally. This is achieved through an integrated approach, involving staff working in both further and higher education areas to provide support for students prior to enrolling on a higher education programme.

3.1.1 Students categorised as disadvantaged by postcode

A significant proportion of the student body at the College are defined as disadvantaged by postcode, with over 50% of enrolments in 2016/17 from postcodes classified as POLAR 1-3. Activity to increase access from disadvantaged areas is largely driven by the College's commitment to encourage students to progress from level 3 programmes to a higher education programme at the College.

3.1.2 Students with additional learning support needs

In 2016/17, over 20% of enrolments had self-declared an additional learning support need. Students are supported prior to enrolment (post acceptance of offer) with their application for disability support allowance via the College's Learning Support team. The College offers full financial support to students requiring an Educational Psychologists report, which may be a barrier to entry for some individuals.

3.1.3 Enrolments by mode of study

Enrolment of part-time students has shown a steady decrease over the past four years, since the introduction of higher fees. In 2016/17, less than 3% of enrolments were for part-time study. Historically, part-time programmes at the College were offered as 'infill' with full-time programmes, which allowed a financially viable model of provision, however we recognise that more flexible part-time offering could increase access for part-time students.

For 2017/18, two new blended learning programmes will be offered, in addition to a higher-level apprenticeship, which offers alternative study modes for applicants seeking part-time or flexible modes of study. The College is currently developing more programmes which could increase access for part-time students, and will continue to monitor trends in part-time recruitment.

3.1.4 Outreach and collaborative work

The College participates in a well-established programmes of outreach activities including:

- Working with schools at primary and secondary level to promote participation in higher education, including participation in the Network for Collaborative Outreach (2015-2016) and National Collaborative Outreach Partnership (from 2017).
- Working directly with other FE colleges to promote participation in higher education
- Continual internal outreach activities within our FE student body to promote opportunities in higher education, both internally and externally
- Collaboration with other partners to support outreach and access activities, notably Higher York, which is a collaborative partnership with other colleges and universities in the York area

3.1.5 Other access arrangements

The College provides free transport for all full-time students from surrounding areas during term-time, increasing access for those students who cannot live on-campus.

3.2 Student Success

3.2.1 Bridging activities

Intra-programme bridging activities are embedded into the beginning of each academic year to assist with students transitioning between years of study. For new starts, this is integrated into the induction programme, and for continuing students, bridging activities are embedded into the tutorial programme early in the academic year.

3.2.2 Tutorial support

High levels of pastoral and academic support via weekly tutorial arrangements helps to support student attainment and retention. We have committed to increasing tutorial time allocated from 2015-16 academic year to help improve retention and student success.

3.2.3 Module structure and delivery

Students benefit from increased contact time in modules where we have identified higher levels of support required. Students feedback has indicated that they have a better experience in smaller class sizes, so the College has committed to staffing additional groups to continue to support student achievement.

3.2.4 Learning support arrangements

Students are supported financially via full payment of Educational Psychologist reports and payment of the £200 contribution towards specialist equipment. We believe that these additional costs may be a barrier to some students accessing learning support and we have committed to financing these support measures.

3.3 Progression

3.3.1 Link with employers

The College sustains an excellent relationship with a range of employers via regular technical advisory group meetings and employer events. The vocational nature of the majority of our

programmes ensures close links with employers are valued and encouraged. Employers regularly attend College events to promote career opportunities.

3.3.2 Link with partner universities

The College maintains supportive links with all of our validating partner universities to raise awareness and promote progression into further study, notably postgraduate study. Partners regularly attend careers events and students at the College are provided opportunity to attend postgraduate information events at partner institutions.

3.3.3 Careers advice and guidance

The College employ a higher education careers advisor to support students progression into employment. Activities such as Careers Fairs, mock interviews and guest lectures promote opportunities to students.

4. Financial Support

Financial support and bursaries will be made available to students who are able to provide evidence of hardship and are within our access target groups. Our access target groups include students who are within one or more of the under-represented categories, as defined by OFFA.

The College proposes that in 2018-19 the funding available from increased fees for access activities should be mainly targeted at measures which will focus on student support:

4.1 Bursary (Student Success)

A minimum of 25 cash bursaries will be available to student in 2018-19, which will be fully awarded upon successful achievement of a complete year of study. The breakdown of bursaries available is summarised in Table 1.

The criteria for success will include:

1. Evidence that the candidate fits into one or more under-represented category as defined by OFFA
Rationale: To ensure that funding is targeted to students with greatest need.
2. Good attendance, including attendance at any support for learning sessions arranged by the College
Rationale: To encourage a good attendance record for both teaching and where appropriate support sessions – evidence confirms that attendance and success are closely aligned.
3. Progression to the next year of study at first sit of assessments (unless agreed mitigating circumstances exist) and (in subsequent years) for final year students, progression to graduation.
Rationale: To encourage students to focus on success.
4. Any other special circumstances presented by the candidate.
Rationale: To ensure that all personal circumstances are considered.

The criteria will be made explicit to students at the start of the academic year and application will be via an appropriate pro-forma. Applications will be considered by the College's Access Funds Decision Panel and will be open to all students studying both on full and part-time Higher Education programmes at any of the College's centres. The College may use additional measures to award bursaries where applications exceed funds available.

Students will initially be awarded the bursary in the first year of their programme, and will subsequently re-apply each year to the Access Funds Panel via the application process.

4.2 Provision of specialist resources (Student Success)

The College is aware that studying on specialist land-based programmes can carry additional resource costs, which some students particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds may find hard to meet. It is therefore proposed that a minimum sum of £10,000 will form a Specialist Equipment and

Resources Fund to which students can apply to for support. Application will be via an appropriate pro-forma, available to all students and will be considered by the College’s Access Funds Decision Panel.

Students may be awarded this specialist funds in any year of their programme, and may apply no more than once in any year of their programme. This support may be in the form of a cash bursary, in-kind support (e.g. purchase of equipment such as laptop or books) or a fee waiver, depending on the application.

4.3 Broadening Horizons & Specialist Support (Student Success and Progression)

Further awards may be made to cover additional costs associated with HE study, specifically:

- Cost of additional specialist learning support
- Travel and/or subsistence relating to accessing specialist and often remote (from place of study) work placements.
- Purchase of items to support undergraduate study/specialist projects
- Cost of trips and study tours to support learning
- Support for attending conferences and other learning opportunities

Students may be awarded these funds in any year of their programme, and may apply no more than once in any year of their programme. This support may be in the form of a cash bursary, in-kind support (e.g. purchase of equipment such as laptop), depending on the application.

Category	Bursary available per student	Minimum number available
Bursary (Student Success)	Up to £1000	20
Specialist Resources	Up to £500	20
Broadening Horizons & Specialist Support	Up to £500	10

Table 1. Breakdown of categories of financial support available for students entering programmes in 2018-19

5. Raising attainment in schools

The College is involved in the following activities which support school related activity and raising aspiration in students at schools:

5.1 Green Apples Collaboration

This is a collaborative project which the College participates in with two local universities and a local college. Green Apples has been established for almost 20 years and the aim is to engage with students at primary and secondary schools in the local area to raise aspirations in relation to higher education. This project now engages hundreds of school students from years 6-13 on an annual basis.

5.2 Taster Days

The College operates several taster days throughout each academic year, offering students the opportunity to explore post-16 educational options. As the College offers Level 2 and Level 3 education, we actively support and advise our 16-18 year old students about higher education options. In terms of higher education at the College, we have grown the number of students progressing from Level 3 programmes at the College onto higher education.

5.3 'Progression onto Higher Education' events

The College operates a series of internal progression to HE events for our 16-18 students, including:

- Bringing 16-18 students from our out-centres/smaller campuses to our main HE campus for a HE taster event
- Collaboration with two other FE Colleges in the region to promote the Colleges specialist higher education provision, including visits to the College and talks about higher education options
- Promoting higher education option to our 16-18 students through a series of targeted activities, linking FE and HE staff

6. Targets and Milestones

The College believes that it is already successful in promoting access to students from under-represented groups and therefore meets many of the criteria for success in addressing the widening participation agenda. It is therefore proposed that given the focus of the increased spend on access activities outlined above, the most appropriate milestones will relate to student success, whilst continuing to attract applicants from underrepresented groups. Data on retention and achievement is readily available from the ILR and is already closely monitored through the College's self-evaluation reporting processes.

The College intends to assess the impact of Access Agreement expenditure through monitoring of retention and achievement data, destinations of leavers data and annual internal monitoring of student data. Access Agreement expenditure is targeted at providing financial support for students across all stages of the lifecycle, with the majority of spend focussed on student success throughout their programme of study, which is linked to the strategic priority of supporting student success. As the College continues to successfully recruit students from underrepresented groups into specialist land-based education, thus the strategic priority will now focus on improving student success and progression post-HE study; for example, the Broadening Horizons funding is linked to supporting student progression and may include funding students to undertake research, attend conferences or specialist facilities which might enhance their career prospects or provide exposure to postgraduate study opportunities.

Monitoring progress against the milestones and targets outlined in section 7 above will be the responsibility of the Director of Higher Education and will be monitored by the SMT. The wider HE team will also be involved in monitoring the distribution and effectiveness of the Access Agreement. Students in receipt of any financial support made via the Access Agreement will be monitored throughout their programme of study and at the end of the programme to evaluate the impact of the support (outcomes, grades achieved, onward progression). Students may also be asked to complete a short survey to assist with this monitoring process.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The College is currently developing a more robust monitoring and evaluation system to effectively measure the impact of this expenditure. It is anticipated that by 2018-19, an effective monitoring and evaluation process will be embedded, which will allow us to make informed decisions in relation to future access arrangements and funding.

8. Equality and Diversity

In making these awards the College is mindful of the provisions of its Single Equality Scheme and the fact that in supporting students from less advantageous backgrounds in pursuit of their studies, it must not give them an unfair academic advantage over those who do not receive this support.

Therefore the final decision to support or reject claims falling under this heading will take account of the Askham Bryan College Equality & Diversity Policy.

9. Provision of information to prospective students

The College ensures that accurate, current and accessible information is provided to prospective students and their families via the following measures:

- Through provision of clear information about fees, finance and additional costs at open days, taster days, internally via tutorials, and via our websites and other marketing materials. Information is reviewed regularly to ensure currency and accuracy.
- Timely updating of our undergraduate prospectus to ensure earliest promotion events (e.g. UCAS fairs) are providing the most current information, with further signposting to the website, which contains additional guidance sheets in relation to e.g. additional costs, extra-curricular activities
- By participating in the Higher York network, appropriate information and guidance is supplied to schools and colleges in the area through targeted events, information sessions and collaborative activities.
- By ensuring enrolled students complete an embedded induction programme at the beginning of their programme which provides further additional guidance in relation to learning support, Students Union, student council, student support, welfare and accommodation information.

10. Student Consultation

Students sit on all academic board sub-committees and are an integral part of the College's decision making process. The access agreement was developed in consultation with students throughout the academic year and feedback from students in receipt of bursaries was considered when developing the 2018-19 access agreement. In drafting up Access Agreements, the College consults the student body via the nominated student representatives. Student input has defined some of the planned expenditure as outlined in this agreement. The College will continue to consult with students to allow their contribution to the process.