



Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

Background

Higher York was created in 2002 and continues to thrive as a partnership. The core partners remain Askham Bryan College, City of York Council, the University of York, York College and York St John University. Craven College is the one associate member. A small Higher York team acts as secretariat for the partnership.

The mission of Higher York is to:

- a) Complement the activities of partners in order to facilitate access to higher-level learning, progression and provision through innovative joint-working.
- (b) Underpin the economic and social agendas of the City of York and adjacent areas through maximising and promoting the positive impact of Further and Higher Education.
- (c) Exploit other appropriate opportunities for mutual benefit between partners.

Priorities 2013 -2016

The Higher York Board has determined that in the period 2013 – 16 Higher York will prioritise the following areas:

Promoting Higher Education Participation	Enhancing Graduate Employability	Encouraging Student Community Engagement
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Accordingly, the majority of Higher York activity will be focused on the above. However, partners will continue to share information and good practice in areas such as student support and e-learning, as well as responding to new opportunities as they arise, provided these support the wider mission of the partnership.

In addition, Higher York will continue to work in partnership with other organisations across the locality. These include: LEPs, community groups, businesses, public and voluntary sectors, Learning City York and Science City York – ensuring, where appropriate, that the HE perspective informs thinking amongst relevant stakeholders and that we understand how we can contribute to their strategic priorities.

What do the priorities mean and how will we achieve them?

Promoting Higher Education Participation means:

- Making York an attractive destination for HE learners from all backgrounds and cultures.
- Raising aspirations of potential HE students and continuing to improve access for individuals experiencing barriers to progression into HE.
- Ensuring that local people wishing to study close to home are aware of the quality HE opportunities and support offered by the universities and colleges within Higher York.
- Increasing the numbers of businesses and other organisations accessing continuing professional development opportunities.

In order to achieve the above we will:

- Ensure that there are clear progression routes and transition arrangements between Higher York institutions so that students who wish to remain within the locality have an opportunity to do so.
- Continue to support local schools and colleges to raise the aspirations of individuals to progress into HE or other higher level learning opportunities through impartial information, advice and widening participation activities and events.
- Continue to produce targeted information relating to progression to HE and ensure that this is effectively communicated e.g. termly email alerts and Higher York website.
- Ensure that potential students are aware of student support, such as, bursaries and the Higher York Access Centre.
- Explore opportunities to attract international students to York building on existing good practice.
- Explore the potential for different forms of delivery and qualifications to respond to the needs of learners including those within the business community.
- Work with businesses and other organisations and networks to understand their skills and training needs whilst raising awareness of the Higher York employer offer and how to access it.
- Work closely with LEPs to help shape skills and economic strategies and influence how they are delivered.
- Support and develop professional practice across Higher York institutions as a means to ensure the continuing enhancement of a quality HE student experience.

Enhancing Graduate employability means:

- Improving the work readiness of graduates from the Higher York's universities and colleges for local, national and international markets.
- Ensuring all students can access opportunities to improve their employability and entrepreneurial skills.
- Supporting graduates to access graduate level jobs or establish their own businesses.
- Creating the environment where businesses understand the value of engaging students and graduates.

In order to achieve the above we will:

- Improve our understanding of graduate employment in York.
- Find ways to expand student and graduate internships including extending HE student internships processes to the partner colleges.
- Share information and practice relating to models of developing student employability and entrepreneurship skills e.g. curriculum or enrichment activities.
- Implement activities to support unemployed and underemployed graduates to access jobs appropriate to their skills levels and to establish their own businesses.
- Explore ways in which to enhance the matching of graduates to the actual graduate job market in York and the region.
- Provide information/reports to support inward investment activities in York and for the LEPs and profile raising of York in the international community.

Encouraging Student Community Engagement means:

- Improving and promoting local knowledge about the economic, social and cultural value brought by the HE/FE institutions and their students.

- Continuing to create an environment which supports student community dialogue and understanding.
- Creating further opportunities for students to be involved in the local community.
- Ensuring that students of all backgrounds and cultures feel welcome in York.

In order to achieve the above we will:

- Continue to convene the Student Community Partnership and deliver its Action Plan ensuring connectivity with wards, elected members and community groups.
- Collate and disseminate positive stories and case studies about the HE/FE institutions and their students/graduates.
- Communicate with a wider range of community groups and influencers in our local community in order to get our messages heard and understood.
- Organise events to showcase student achievement, such as the Higher York Volunteering Awards.
- Organise events and opportunities to make sure all students feel welcome in York, such as the Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students.
- Facilitate access for international students to a greater range of social opportunities across the city and address other issues which may impact on the international student experience.
- Identify inter-institutional opportunities for academic and social enrichment activities for students.
- Identify and promote the process to support personal development of nominated/elected student representatives in the FE colleges.
- Consideration around developing a process for sustainable management of HE alumni in the FE colleges.