



“ I should be able to pick up my needles and feel just as bad ass as somebody with a spray can ”

When knitting gets rebellious >> M4



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Twice as many don't make grades

Neil Johnston
NEWS EDITOR

THE NUMBER of EU and home students accepted to the University after failing to match the grade requirements of their offer has doubled in the past year.

This year 773 students from the UK and EU were accepted, despite missing their offer, compared with 317 for the 2011/12 academic year.

The University have cited the fee rise as an explanation, however applications to York only declined by one per cent, far less than the national figure of 8.7 per cent.

There have also been large differences year on year for some departments. Economics and Related Studies saw 24 students accepted despite not meeting the precise conditions of their offer, compared to none the year before.

English and Related Literature saw 53 students accepted having not met the precise conditions compared to none the year before, while Maths had an increase from ten to 34 and the York Law School had an increase from one to 43.

A spokesperson for the University said: "There are changes in the external environment (principally the removal of the cap on admission of students with qualifications over a certain level and a consequent expansion of places for these students) which mean that we are operating in a more competitive landscape and our admissions policy and practice needs to be flexible

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The perks of the job: Paintings, gardeners, and the Mercedes

Neil Johnston
NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY has spent thousands on luxuries including artwork for Heslington Hall and gardening for the Vice-Chancellor's House.

Other spending, included hundreds of premium mobile phones and iPads and extensive travel costs of nearly £4million, with air travel costing over £1.2million.

YUSU President Kallum Taylor has said there are "definitely excesses" in the spending, calling for higher scrutiny.

Nouse can reveal that earlier this year £19,100 of art was purchased from Bonhams in Edinburgh. This takes the total value of the University's art collection to £640,000.

A University spokesperson said: "The University has one of the top History of Art departments in the world and the section largest in the UK (after the Courtauld Institute). It is very important that our students have the opportunity to study and curate works of art both at the University and in major national and international collections.

"Having said that, York's art collection is very modest when compared with those of our major competitors."

They added students would be given the opportunity to view the artwork but so far hadn't seen the collection: "Students will benefit directly from working with the University's art collection. For example, we plan an exhibition on the history and works of art of Heslington Hall in 2014. We are currently seeking student interns to help us put this together over the summer. There will be further opportunities for stu-

dents to take part in this initiative during the next academic year."

Nouse also obtained a list of vehicles used by the University. Amongst these are a Renault Megane, a Volvo V50 Diesel Sportswagon Drive [115] ES 5dr and a Mercedes E class E250 cdi SE model.

The University has defended this saying it is a cost-saving measure to avoid hotel costs but did not

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provide a reason why a cheaper car could not be used: "The E Class Mercedes (there is only one) is used to transport VIP visitors, the Vice-Chancellor and, occasionally, other senior managers when they are required to travel on University business. The car is leased by the University.

They also confirmed that the car had a driver: "Typically, when University staff use the car they continue to work while en route to meetings. In the case of the Vice-Chancellor, the car is frequently used to transport him home from evening meetings in London and other locations outside York, thus avoiding the cost of an overnight hotel stay.

"The only other vehicles operated by the University are service vehicles used by Estates & Campus Services, and Commercial Services."

Other travel costs totalled £3,857, 933 for 2011-12. This year's total is not yet available.

“There are definitely some excesses here and it's only right that there should be higher scrutiny”

YUSU President Kallum Taylor

Overall air travel costs were the highest at £1,196,971 overseas and £52,248 in the UK.

The University refused to break down the figures further, citing cost exemptions.

However, the cost of air travel works out at £408 per member of staff, or £1052 per member of academic and research staff, many of whom did not use air travel.

Rail travel cost £966,597, while vehicle hire cost £305,941, and the staff car mileage was £199,801.

There was a £145 of bicycle costs, and £581 was spent on motorcycle travel.

However there is another category which the University refused to provide details of. This amounts



to the cost of £513,278 in the UK and £579,339 overseas.

A University spokesperson said: "As one of the best universities in the world, York staff travel all over the globe, to (a) maintain the University's international profile, (b) recruit international students and (c) undertake research projects. Much of the cost of travel will have been funded by research grants which include travel expenses."

They added: "Any University of international repute will spend a considerable sum on international travel. Much of that expenditure will have been granted by research funding bodies explicitly for this purpose. All travel expenses have to be approved in accordance with our standard financial procedures and are subject to independent audit."

On campus, the V-C's house is also costing thousands.

As well as gas bills of £2,807 and electricity bills of £476, the University foots the bill for the water bill of £1,784.

There was also a £5,295 bill for external maintenance and £638 for internal maintenance. The previous year £2,714 was spent on internal maintenance.

£2,335 was also spent on gardening at the V-C's lodge last year.

In total £14,607 was spent on the V-C's lodge last year compared to £8,363 two years ago.

Kallum Taylor, YUSU President, said: "Obviously some ex-

penses are necessary in not leaving staff out of pocket for performing work related duties - but there are definitely some excesses here and it's only right that there should be higher scrutiny on them considering the current climate, and how better these excesses could be spent elsewhere on students' tuition and services.

"Some form of student oversight on a regular basis might help keep things tighter.

"On the artwork, it might be a good thing for the University to pay our own art students for their own extra work. There's certainly a lot of immensely talented artists in our own membership and it could be used to elevate their own names and platform."



How the new V-C's expenses compare

THE NEW Vice-Chancellor's expense claims while at the University of Warwick can also be revealed.

Included in the claims are a £475.15 at a Hotel in Venice and a £3.65 snack at Heathrow.

There was also £67.80 in miscellaneous expenses in the US.

He claimed £12.50 for breakfast in Boston during visit to Boston University, while there was also a claim for a £4.95 lunch on train to a Russell Group Meeting. There was also a £36.39 claim for Refreshments while in Brazil for SEMESP National Forum Conference.

Overall he claimed £5,527 in 2011/12 and £9,133 for office expenditure in 2012/13.

This was broken down into £366 and £406 for Furniture and

equipment. £1,532 was spent on accommodation, travel, and subsistence in 2011/12 and £2,270 in 2012/13. Overseas accommodation, travel and subsistence amounted to £1,550 in 2011/12 and £4,818 in 2012/13.

His expense claims & corporate card was £5,147. Total accommodation, travel and subsistence totalled £10,398.



More premium handsets for staff

Anwen Baker DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY has spent over £100,000 furnishing staff with mobile phones in the last financial year.

Information obtained through the Freedom of Information Act shows that £100,750 was spent in total (exclusive of VAT), including £12,480 on line rental, £11,621 on data usage and data packages and £27,532 on telephone calls. These figures are taken from the 2011-2012 financial year.

512 devices were provided for staff in this period. This figure does not include devices bought from the budget of individual departments, of which no record is kept centrally.

These devices include 57 Blackberries, 13 iPads, 5 iPad 3's, 9 HTC (Wildfire and Desire), 23 iPhone 3GS, 53 iPhone 4 and 281 Nokia phones. Other accessories bought include 42 USB dongles.

This data comes after a Nouse investigation last year, which revealed that the University had spent over £35,000 on iPhones and iPads for staff during the latter part of 2010 and the early part of 2011.

The University stated in response to these figures that



University staff treated to premium iPads and iPhones

“Expenditure on technologies such as this help us to make more efficient and effective use of staff time”. They were heavily criticised by YUSU for such expenditure, particularly at a time of increasing student fees.

The University, when asked by Nouse whether such top of the range mobile phones were a necessity, defended the costs, stating that “Expenditure on technologies such as this helps us to make more efficient and effective use of staff time.

Many members of staff need to be in contact at all times of the day during the week and over weekends, and multifunction mobile phones help them to do that.”

Costs by numbers

- **£1052** per member of academic and research staff on air travel within the UK and overseas.
- **£7249** on gardening at the Vice-Chancellor's lodge.
- **£19,100** on artwork for Heslington Hall, where the senior management reside.
- **£1,092,617** spent on 'other' travel with air, rail, car, motorcycle, and bicycle travel already accounted for.

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