

York looking unlikely to increase fees under TEF

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Image: wfeiden

This academic year did not see a rise in fees for University of York students. Unfortunately for some students however there was a secondary increase in fees from £9000 to £9250. Despite last years cohort of freshers starting higher education under the former bracket, institutions such as Exeter and Durham saw this rise as having precedence.

For students starting in 2018 the Government has indicated that universities which perform well in the Teaching Excellence Framework will again be allowed to raise undergraduate home fees each year in line with inflation.

The Teaching Excellence Framework was introduced this year with a ranking system based as either bronze, silver or gold.

In response to the new league tables, Pro-Vice Chancellor John Robinson said: "Although we already knew the TEF results would be in three ranks, until now we didn't know they would be called Gold, Silver and Bronze."

Universities who receive a bronze rating will have been underperforming in one or more areas and silver for universities that offer courses where students are 'significantly challenged.' He continued, "Is using medal-related terms helpful for students, universities and the reputation of British universities? Some will say that with 20-30 per cent of universities awarded gold, 50-60 per cent silver and 20 per cent bronze, the overall world-leading quality of UK higher education will be undermined: most institutions will be 'only' silver. Others will say that the medal metals are better understood as ranking terms than any others.

“I don’t have an immediate opinion, but the names are important and I hope the effects of using them will be thoroughly tested once the results are out. So far as York is concerned, we will go on improving our already excellent learning and teaching, working in partnership with students, and we will do what we can to get that quality recognised nationally and internationally.”

The rating will be based upon “student satisfaction, non-continuation rates and employment data,” as determined by students and education experts. An appeal process will be made available to dissatisfied institutions. Universities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be allowed to opt in, although this will not affect their tuition fees.

All universities will be allowed to raise their tuition fees this year, and those who meet the excellence framework will be permitted further increases in subsequent years. The new rating system will commence before the new intake of students apply for university in autumn 2017.

Universities minister Jo Johnson said: “By setting out clear incentives for universities, the framework will drive up quality in the sector at the same time as improving student choice and crucially, graduate outcomes – so that we can be confident we have the skills employers need now and for the future.

“The framework will also give students clear, understandable information about where the best teaching is on offer and for the first time, place teaching quality on a par with research at our universities.” The University came 44th in the benchmarked TEF rank and 26th in the absolute TEF rank in June 2016 – notably below York St John. In light of this it appears unlikely that York will be able to increase it’s fees. David Duncan, university registrar, has clarified: “At this stage we have not made a decision about fee levels in 2018 and beyond – this would depend partly on market conditions. However, we would not wish to see an increasing imbalance between expenditure and income, so fees increases in 2018 and beyond are certainly possible, but these would be pegged to the prevailing rate of inflation.’



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