



Student Transitions: Example of Transitions Practice

Title: Bridging the gap between school and higher education: Young Applicants in School Scheme

Transition(s) the practice supports: Transitions from school to higher education study

Abstract: The Open University's Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) provides Scottish students in their final year of secondary school the opportunity to experience higher education study in school alongside their other studies. YASS therefore provides a unique opportunity to school students, which is designed to bridge the gap between school and full-time university or college, to help able and motivated students stand out from the crowd. Over 500 young people from more than 100 schools participated in YASS during 2014-15.

Description: The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) in Scotland is a unique opportunity for students in their final year of secondary school to bridge the gap between school and university or college, by studying Open University (OU) modules in school alongside their other studies. Students can choose from a range of modules at SCQF Level 7 in various subject areas including science, engineering, business studies, health and social care, IT and computing, arts, mathematics and sport and fitness. YASS provides students with a different type of study experience – in the familiar learning environment of their school and existing peer support networks. Study fits around school work and social lives and is structured to encourage independent learning and build confidence.



- **Nature of YASS**

Whilst the registration is organised with their school, each student is treated as an Open University (OU) student, working with a tutor or study advisor, with support in higher education study skills, and access to the OU's blended learning resources and online library.

- Through YASS students are offered modules in a wide range of subject areas including science, engineering, business studies, health and social care, IT and computing, arts, mathematics and sport and fitness. Each Level 1 module offered through YASS gives credit at SCQF Level 7.
- Modules can last from 10 to 40 weeks and are clearly structured with timetables and deadlines. Shorter modules normally require up to 10 hours of study a week, while one of longer duration can require up to 16 hours study a week.

- **Project Background**

YASS was originally introduced in Scotland in 2007 as a pilot with Highland Council, involving 30 students in 10 schools. It has grown significantly with more than 3,000 students from 182 schools having participated in YASS by 2015.

With support from the Scottish Funding Council, the scheme is now working alongside the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) to target schools with low progression rates to higher education, to encourage pupils from non-traditional areas to consider and prepare for university study.

- **Benefits of YASS**

YASS modules supplement the curriculum schools offer to sixth year students. It provides the opportunity to experience university-level study, either as an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of an existing subject area, or to try something different.

Furthermore, YASS makes a significant contribution to the objectives of the Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence in the following ways:

- Successful learners: students will learn independently, often using new technologies.
- Confident individuals: students can pursue personal interests and ambitions in significant depth, exploring subject areas not normally available in schools (such as robotics, astronomy, law finance, chronic diseases, nutrition).

- Responsible citizens: our open entry approach means that students from all subject areas can engage with important contemporary issues (for example, environmental studies, technology of science).
- Effective contributors: students will be stretched, required to work in new ways, managing their own time effectively and developing self-reliance.

In preparing students to make the transition to higher education, participation in YASS develops important skills such as independent learning and time management. Indeed, YASS modules also contribute valuable content to UCAS personal statements that may strengthen an application to university, and if a student decides to continue studying with the OU their YASS module may count towards their degree.

- **Additional sources of information**

- Website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/young-applicants-schools>
- [YASS leaflet](#)

Contact details: Kitty Chilcott (Project Officer)

Email: kitty.chilcott@open.ac.uk