

Programme Specification

Foundation Year Liberal Arts

<i>School:</i>	School of Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Liberal Arts
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Foundation Certificate Liberal Arts
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not applicable
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full time for 4 years
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	Not applicable
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The Liberal Arts Foundation Year at York St John University will provide you with an interdisciplinary introduction to the questions and approaches that have shaped teaching and scholarship across a range of subjects in the Humanities (incorporating English language and linguistics).

This programme has been designed as an alternative entry route into a range of undergraduate programmes for prospective students who may not wish to or be able to start their university journey at Level 4. For instance, you may be a mature student who has been out of education for a while, you may not have the entry requirements for the degree programme of your choice, or you may just want a more supported step into university-level study. At York St John University, the Foundation Year forms the first part of an extended four-year undergraduate programme, facilitating access for foundation students at Level 3. It has been designed with the specific goals of widening participation and building student confidence.

All students, regardless of your chosen degree programme, will undertake a series of thematic modules exploring topics central to the Humanities, as well as an independent project module that will allow you to

focus on your specific subject interests. Exploring universal topics across these modules will enable you to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and attitudes necessary for subsequent study. Our priority is to foster your intellectual curiosity, training you to evaluate different ways of understanding and interpreting the world, whilst also encouraging you to search for new approaches to acquire knowledge and advance your thinking.

We will ensure not just that you learn, but that you learn how to learn, whether on your own or in formal study. You will be offered opportunities to reflect on your entry skills and engage in identifying your own areas for development, enhancing your confidence in written and oral communication and processing information. We will cultivate your study skills and IT abilities whilst also building your cultural literacy, global awareness, and civic values, ensuring that you can acquire all the new skills and experience necessary to thrive during undergraduate study. You will be taught by a dedicated Foundation Year team but will also be able to meet staff in your subject area, through a series of specialist guest lectures.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition, you must have:

- English Language GCSE at grade C, or equivalent level 2 award
- A relevant level 3 qualification or two A2 levels (for this programme the standard entry level is DD at A Level or equivalent –48 points on the UCAS tariff)

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

To prepare students for entry into Higher Education by supporting them to develop their academic skills and to engage with a wide range of subject areas in the School of Humanities and English Language and Linguistics.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 3

3.1. Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems and complete tasks.

3.2. Demonstrate an ability to communicate critical information in a variety of forms.

3.3. Demonstrate a factual, procedural, and theoretical knowledge and understanding of concepts applicable to the study of the subject areas included within the Foundation Year's progression routes.

3.4. Demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives and approaches within the study of subject areas included within the Foundation Year's progression routes.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
LIB3010M	3	1	York in Flux	20	C	X
LIB3011M	3	1	Identity and 'Otherness': The Self and Society	20	C	X
LIB3012M	3	1	Truth and Invention: Culture, Myth and Representation	20	C	X
LIB3013M	3	2	Freedom and Justice	20	C	X
LIB3009M	3	2	Imagining the Future	20	C	X
LIB3014M	3	2	Independent Project	20	C	X

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The Foundation Year in Liberal Arts provides a safe and stimulating environment in which you can first encounter those key questions and challenges that will shape your further study. In addition to building your understanding and awareness of core concepts and study skills, this programme is designed to build your confidence and welcome you to the diverse and inclusive community that we enjoy at York St John University. We will make sure that you are fully aware of the resources and opportunities available to you, whilst also introducing you to York, a city steeped in rich history and culture.

As you progress through the Foundation Year programme, you will take six modules, building your knowledge and skills across the year. To build your confidence, our modules are taught in a unique 1-2-3 module structure. You will start by studying just one intensive five-week module to introduce you to university study, followed by two seven-week modules, which are studied simultaneously. In semester two, you will then be introduced to studying three modules at once, thereby ensuring you are ready for your first year of undergraduate study.

The thematic nature of each module allows for a wide range of staff from across the University to deliver a series of guest lectures, giving you direct access to teaching and research from many different disciplines within the university. You will be offered an unprecedented insight into ground-breaking research taking place at York St John University and invited to participate in discussions which have local, national, and global scholarly implications. Different staff will also introduce you to different pedagogical approaches and teaching formats. For example, throughout the programme you will experience lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops and writing labs, as well as other group activities such as visits to relevant places of interest.

You will be encouraged to participate actively in the teaching and learning sessions and develop your confidence through activities such as group discussion and presentations. Though you will encounter different tutors from week to week, you will remain in constant contact with your Programme Team, who will deliver a substantial share of your teaching. Additionally, a member of academic staff from your elected destination programme will be assigned as your Progression Tutor. You can meet with them regularly for support and advice and, as the Foundation Year draws to a close, they will offer you discipline-specific guidance before your undergraduate journey continues.

Today's graduates are confronted with an unprecedented set of problems and questions, faced with an economy where traditional jobs are shrinking and changing faster than ever before and a world that challenges traditional values around social justice, environmental responsibility, and cultural entitlement. We will provide you with the space to confront these realities by embracing change and innovation. By the end of the Foundation Year, you will be well-equipped to get the most out of your undergraduate degree,

ensuring you can become an engaged global citizen, an effective researcher, and a persuasive critical thinker.

Assessment

In order to introduce you to the various forms of assessment used at York St John University and ensure that you are equipped to get the most from tutor feedback, this programme is committed to embedding formative assessment as a fundamental component of learning and teaching. Formative assessment activities, which do not result in a grade, take place midway through each module, and involve practising different areas of the assessment to develop student's ideas. They also allow your tutors to monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback. These practice assessment tasks are directly related to your formal graded, summative, assessments, ensuring that you feel confident and supported before submitting your graded work.

As the culmination of each module, you will submit a summative assessment: a graded assignment on a topic of your choice, showcasing your learning and the development of academic skills. Our assessments are structured in a way which will allow you to develop your knowledge and understanding of your chosen undergraduate programme, and there is often a degree of flexibility and choice in our assessments. This choice allows you to develop the skills you will need specifically for your undergraduate programme. For instance, in the second half of your studies, you will have the opportunity of whether to focus on a creative piece or an academic essay, thereby allowing you to work towards your own individual learning and assessment goals. Together, the grades from the summative assessments will determine your overall mark for the Foundation Year. Each summative assessment, usually a portfolio, will be made up of a range of different components indicative of the different assessment forms encountered during further study. Portfolio components will be prepared in draft throughout the modules, often in Writing Lab sessions, avoiding the time and workload pressures associated with end-loaded assessment strategies. Portfolios may include the following components: literature review; annotated bibliography; primary source analysis; research reflection; self-reflection; critical essay; creative writing; blogs/vlogs/podcasts; academic poster; independent project; PowerPoint presentation slides and presentation handout. Dedicated classes throughout the year ensure that you have the knowledge and skills to succeed in these assessments.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
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Date written / revised: April 2025

Programme originally approved: 25 January 2023