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Widening Participation

Annual Report 2015-16



**CONTINUALLY
PERFORMING ABOVE
OUR HEFCE BENCHMARKS**

**90% OF OUR STUDENT
COHORT CAME FROM
STATE SCHOOL**

**INCREASE IN THE NUMBER
OF STUDENTS WITH HIGH
ENTRY GRADES**

WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL REPORT ON WIDENING PARTICIPATION WHICH REFLECTS AND CELEBRATES OUR SUCCESSES FOR 2015-16 AS WELL AS OUTLINING OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE.

The past 12 months have seen a number of significant challenges and changes nationally including within the Higher Education landscape. However, we remain committed to widening participation (WP) and to supporting both our own students and the next generation of students to improve their own social mobility. We are working hard to ensure that future applicants to and current students of Lancaster University are not held back by any barriers and that our student cohort reflects and celebrates the diverse society in which we live.

We are committed to the ongoing success of our current student cohort. Across the University we have ensured that opportunities are available to students who have progressed to our university from a WP background, providing them with the skills, opportunities and support needed to progress successfully in their current studies and on to graduate employment or further study once they have completed their degree.

Each year, the Widening Participation Coordinating Group supports academic departments and sections of our professional services from across the University, as well as our Associate FE Colleges and other key local and national external partners, to develop and deliver exciting and innovative outreach activities supporting prospective and current students to aim higher and achieve their goals.

Ranked top 10 in every major UK University league table we are incredibly proud of the progress we have made in supporting students from a widening participation background to achieve and succeed, and we continue to perform above our HEFCE benchmarks in areas such as percentage of students from state schools (90.4%), from low participation neighbourhoods (9.8%) and from NS-SEC categories 4 – 7 (26.2%).

We look forward to continuing to support widening participation activities by adopting a strategic and evidence informed approach enabling the University to meet its goals as outlined in the 2020 Strategic Plan.

PROFESSOR ANDREW ATHERTON
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Lancaster University
Chair, Widening Participation
Coordinating Group





Highlights of the Year

Student clubs and society engagements

This past year, Lancaster University Students' Union worked closely with a selection of our 200 student groups, clubs and societies on campus to showcase the extra-curricular provision offered at Lancaster, as well as creating more opportunities for student clubs and societies to volunteer within the local community and share their hobbies and interests with the next generation.

The activities gave young people an insight into 'a day in the life of a Lancaster student' to celebrate the student experience and promote the benefits of being involved in an extra curricular activity.

The activities also helped to raise aspirations and the accessibility of Higher Education to those young people involved. In 2015-16 the following student clubs and societies delivered outreach activity to over 263 young people:

- Debating Society
- Parkour and Trioking Society
- Archery
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Ballroom Society

- Magic and Circus Society
- University of Lancaster Music Society

The activities also gave our student volunteers the opportunity to demonstrate and evidence their leadership skills, gain insight into working with young people, boost their confidence and engage with the wider community. The activities provided young people with an insight into Higher Education and the student experience. Meeting highly motivated and engaged students provided a positive role model and gave those involved the opportunity to try activities not readily available in the classroom.

"The classes had a wonderful time and did some really deep thinking during all the fun activities. The debating will be hugely useful in our literacy – we have touched on it before but they [the pupils] now have a better understanding."

TEACHER

Skerton St Luke's Primary School,
Lancaster



Lancaster Law School Access to the Professions

The Law School Access to the Professions Scheme provided eight funded placements with leading firms such as Pannone Corporate and King and Spalding as well as mini-pupillages with barristers' chambers such as St John's Buildings and 4 Brick Court. In addition, the scheme supported one student to travel to a placement in the USA. He had already secured his own placement but was unable to afford the travel costs without the scheme.

"When I first heard about the scheme being announced to students a few months ago I honestly felt so happy to be part of Lancaster Law School. For Lancaster Law School to be running this initiative I feel it is crucially important to say that I'm genuinely grateful for the opportunity to apply - and the experiences you are giving to other people who may never otherwise have owing to socially constructed stigmas in the industry."

LAW STUDENT
Lancaster



Smart Start support for students on the Autistic Spectrum:

The inaugural Smart Start residential which ran in September 2015 by our Student Based Services team was aimed at facilitating the transition to university for students on the autism spectrum. It was pleasing to see that all students who attended have successfully completed their first year at Lancaster. Feedback from the event was very positive and informed the planning of the 2016 residential. Following the residential group mentoring was initially

planned to run for five weeks but continued throughout the academic year due to popular demand. Feedback from the students has been very positive.

Those students who expressed an interest were paired up with a student peer mentor who they met with on a weekly basis. Students who engaged in this now wish to continue with this support in 2016-17.



The Dukes Theatre

Lancaster University works closely with one of our local theatres, The Dukes, to support young people and the community in engagement and enrichment activities. Over the past year 'The Young Carers' theatre project led directly into supporting five Lancaster University students to gain A* for the 'Creative Enterprise' module of their degree.

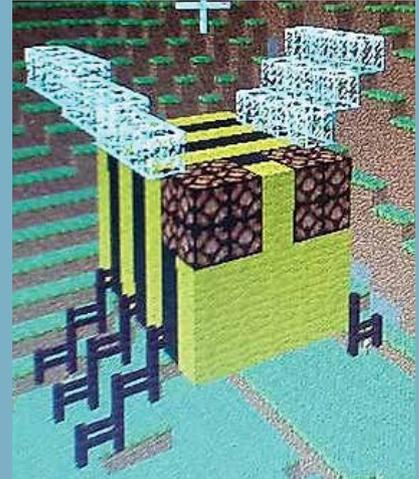
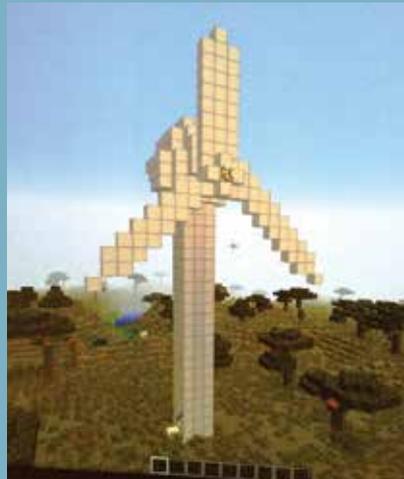
Our Voice

A film created by the Gypsy, Roma and Travelling community has been launched on a national scale to address issues surrounding barriers for GRT girls accessing education. The film will be showcased in Wales in 2017 as part of a national GRT conference, as well as to support a 'Charter for Change' in partnership with the Children Services, Lancashire County Council. Three members of the 'Our Voice' project from WP backgrounds enrolled in an FE basic skills course, and with support are aspiring to continue their learning journey. In addition the project supported one participant to gain entry onto the foundation GCSE Maths course. We have recently been approached by a national TV company who will be creating a documentary about the project.



Highlights of the Year

Science Hunters: Minecraft



Using the popular computer game Minecraft, Science Hunters teaches and entuses young people about science. The programme sets young people a series of science related challenges and introduces them to parallels between what happens in the game and science in the real world. For example, how obsidian is created when lava and water touch. During the activity the process of how this happens is explained while young people are then given the chance through Minecraft to handle obsidian and are challenged to create it through the game. The activities aim to inspire young people in learning and science,

break down barriers and to raise aspirations as well as introducing students to topics they might not normally encounter at all or until later in their education.

As a result of the programme so far:

- Three of our student volunteers, all of whom are from WP backgrounds, have gone on to get jobs as a result of their volunteering experience with Science Hunters
- Minecraft Club has presented an opportunity for researchers in the Psychology Department to conduct highly-novel research into how children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) interact while playing Minecraft, which has strengthened collaborations with the local ASD community and opened up more volunteering/work experience opportunities for LU students
- We have received very positive feedback from parents attending Minecraft Club through the National Autistic Society, not only about the opportunities for their children to experience coming onto campus, learning about science and interacting with university staff, but also about the positive impact on their social and communication skills development

Mature students' induction and events

The focus of these events in 2015-16 was to better understand the needs of mature students so that effective support mechanisms could be put in place in the future.

As a result, the information and feedback gathered from these events is helping to develop and expand the support in 2016-17.





Cultural exchange and international experiences

Lancaster University Students' Union international programmes offer unforgettable experiences which stray far beyond the familiar and well-trodden tourist trail. Working closely with our HE partners worldwide the Students' Union create unique three week cultural exchanges forged from local knowledge and inspired by Lancaster's on campus global community. University funded travel bursaries were given to 73 students from a widening participation background or who had personal or financial situations that meant that they otherwise would have not been able to participate. Another 32 students were funded by Santander for similar reasons.

"The grant enabled me to travel to rural China and understand issues to do with food security. This hugely increased my understanding and was relevant to my dissertation. Without the grant, I would have struggled to fund it myself"

WP STUDENT, VISITING CHINA IN 2015

Careers Networking Support

This project was one of five delivered by Careers to help promote student success. Developing an awareness of the benefits of networking and the ability to confidently develop networking skills are extremely valuable career development and life skills.

Some students come to university well networked through family and friends; others have to work harder to develop their professional networks. This can be a daunting task and students have told us that they find the thought of talking to people they don't know at networking events very intimidating. An AGCAS survey of first year students reported confidence levels in career/employability related

activities are lowest for networking and using social media at 2.72 and 3.02 out of a maximum of 5.

In 2015/16 activities included:

Networking skills workshops delivered by experienced external networking professionals and held before Careers Fairs and Career Networking Club (CNC) events, which were attended by 166 students.

Establishing a Careers Networking Club which met three times and provided an opportunity for students to network with employers, staff and other students, attended by 182 students. 94% of students felt CNC helped them understand the value of professional networks.



Highlights of the Year

Travel Bursary

Our travel bursary was introduced in 2013/4 to assist students on a low income with the costs of attending interviews for graduate jobs and internships. In an increasingly competitive job market, students were faced with the need to make multiple applications and attend multiple assessment centres and interviews, often in major urban centres at some distance from Lancaster. The associated costs proved to be a challenge for many students, and particularly those on low incomes. 82% of leading UK employers have graduate vacancies in London compared to 49% in the North West. Two main aims of introducing the bursary were to remove potential barriers to student mobility and enable students to consider vacancies with the widest range of graduate recruiters.

The Travel Bursary is open to all current Lancaster University UK undergraduate students who are in receipt of a Lancaster Bursary;

£150 per annum is available towards travel and subsistence expenses to attend interviews or assessment centres for graduate jobs, internships or further study;

70 UG UK students applied for the travel bursary in 2015/16.



SPRINT: Summer Project Research INTernships



Introduced in 2013, SPRINT is an internship programme organised by the Linguistics and English Language (LAEL) Department. SPRINT specifically targets Year Two undergraduate students and offers them the chance to work on a research project under the supervision of an academic member of the department. In 2015-16, following positive feedback, LAEL offered four internship places specifically for WP students.

Activities included:

- Preparing and planning research projects
- Team working
- Learning new technologies
- Reflective journal writing

The internships had short and potential longer term benefits. In the short-term, interns reported increased confidence and learning new skills that may have the additional advantage of helping students in their undergraduate studies.

In the longer term, the placements offer valuable experience to assist in gaining employment and, perhaps more importantly, it boosts individuals' confidence such that they consider opportunities as more within their reach than would have otherwise been the case.

In one particular case, an intern excelled to the extent that she is being encouraged to continue her studies at postgraduate level. The project supervisor reported that this student had showed remarkable abilities in learning quickly how to use the software and she was very independent in her work. "We were very impressed by her work ethic, diligence and excellent cooperation skills. She achieved far more than we would have expected. We gave her a lot of praise and positive feedback on her work and encouraged her to think about postgraduate studies."

From the perspective of widening participation, this latter aspect of the internship is very important. We hope this experience gives her the self-confidence to consider continuing her studies and to fulfil her potential.

Political role-plays with WP students

Richardson Institute interns working alongside a member of the department of Philosophy, Politics and Religion (PPR) developed and delivered a series of Role Play activity days designed to raise awareness of Politics and International Relations for students from Widening Participation backgrounds. Of the students who attended the day there was an equal split of males and females with the vast majority from year 12 (91%). Five schools and two sixth form colleges participated. Students from several schools were brought together to act out the characters and roles of actors in political crises, such as that associated with ISIS. The activity was designed to consider

- a. their contribution to understanding of current affairs;
- b. the way in which they can foster appreciation of values such as tolerance, acceptance,

co-existence, in accordance with the Government's promotion of 'British' values;

- c. the experience which they can add to students' CVs and personal statements.

The majority of students, 71.2%, had learned about Politics in school. But noticeably fewer had experience of International Relations and the Middle East Crisis at 36.7% and 26.2% respectively. Students indicated the ways in which they would use the learning from the activity. The highest selected options were to use the learning in current studies, 64.2%, and to enhance their CV, 62.3%. The students identified the skills which they felt they developed through the activity. Communication (79%), negotiation (72.6%) and team working (78.2%) were all rated highly. Other comments included: deadline management and aggressive negotiations.

Code Clubs 2015-16

Code Clubs are Computing classes and after school activities held for primary school children, typically around Year 5, though participants range from 7 to 11. In most cases the Code Clubs were held for approximately one hour after school and facilitated by at least two Code Club Ambassadors (current Lancaster University students). The Clubs provided primary students with the chance to learn basic programming skills and to put these into practice by designing and creating their own programmes. The project also linked to work undertaken by the department with the BBC's Microbit (<http://microbit.org/>).

Chemistry work experience

The work experience programme aimed to raise aspiration and awareness about studying Chemistry at university. The scheme allowed Key Stage 4 students to work in the University Chemistry department for one week. During this time they were tasked with optimising chemistry experiments and activities suitable for Key Stage 3 students. On day 4, teams of Key Stage 3 students came into the department for a chemistry Olympiad; the work experience students were then supported in leading these activities. 70% of students reported they were now more likely to study a science based subject to a higher level as a result of their experience.



Highlights of the Year

Physics Roadshow

The Physics Roadshow was developed and delivered by the Physics Department. The Roadshow was successfully introduced to local schools in 2014-15 and the programme was extended in 2015-16 to continue work influencing WP students. The Roadshows comprise interactive Physics demonstrations which are done on site at schools to large groups of secondary school pupils up to and including Key Stage 4.

The Roadshows are particularly effective in relation to addressing the gender imbalance inherent to physics.

Activities included:

- Recruitment and detailed training and mentoring of five undergraduate students who were in their third year to deliver the Roadshow;

- Delivery of the Roadshow to Primary and Secondary students;
- Demonstrations which are not typically possible within a school environment help to increase motivation (e.g. Liquid Nitrogen and particle experiment);
- Interactive talks on Space and the History of the Universe.

A key part of the roadshow was to ensure it as an interactive learning experience for students, and this was shown to be a highlight of the event. For example, one student said it was "Fun, more practicals than lessons. It was a lot of information to take in but I managed it, the practical dimension of the Roadshow 'made me understand more'".



Physics work experience

Lancaster recognises that work experience is an important element of a young person's education and personal development. For the fourth year running our Physics departments has offered a week of work experience to year 12 students. The work experience supports students to improve analytical and communication skills and give them a deeper understanding of physics concepts studied at university. Students valued the time they get in our laboratory and the opportunity they have to become more independent learners.

Activities included:

- BA Gold Crest Award
- Academic talks
- Particle Physics
- Nanotechnology
- Minecraft session
- Relativity
- Wacky experiments

"I learnt the basics of report writing...also what PhD students do more specifically than I already understood. But most of all a very in-depth view about the topics around 2D material, which I have discovered I am really interested by."

YEAR 12
WORK EXPERIENCE STUDENT

Research in a Box



Research in a Box aims to introduce GCSE and A-Level students from WP backgrounds to the world of research in their own school environment by showcasing cutting edge research from Lancaster University, with the intention of inspiring them through research and skill development. Each box contains discipline-specific research resources and equipment and are loaned to schools free of charge for a two to three week period. RinB Boxes can be used for either one standalone class or a series of classes over the loan period. There are now over 14 boxes in existence with a plan in place to develop a further five in 2016-2017.

An overview of some of our boxes include:

1. Design in a Box (Roger Whitham, Imagination Lancaster, FASS) A web based Box to engage students in exploring their material world and the meaning, values and intents embedded in designed products, services and their interactions. Designed to be used in DT, PSHE and Citizenship classes.
2. Disadvantage in a Box (Matthew Johnson, PPR, FASS) This project seeks to enable GCSE and A Level students from WP backgrounds to reflect upon and understand the political processes which have contributed to their being disadvantaged. School students Designed to be used in Citizenship classes.
3. Observation in a Box (Sue Ward and Ali Birkett, LEC, FST; Gerry Davies and Sarah Casey, LICA, FASS) Building on a number of links between drawing, science and the environment 'Observation in a Box' will promote skills in looking and recording, critical judgement, taxonomy and, the ability to use identification keys. Designed to be used in Art and Biology classes
4. Parasites in a Box (Michael Urbaniak and Rod Dillon, BLS, FHM) Audio, images, tactile representation of important unicellular parasites, and live (non-infectious) parasites and resources to explain what a parasite is, how they are spread, how they cause disease and current therapies. Designed to be used in Biology and Citizenship classes.
5. Diet in a Box (Beccy Whittle and Beth Brockett, LEC, FST) Students have to design a diet using information on the UK Recommended Daily Amount of fibre, protein etc., and environmental, social, cultural, economic and political concerns. Designed to be used in Geography, PSHE and Citizenship.
6. Health inequalities in a Box (Jenny Irvine, Heath and Medicine, FHM) A snakes and ladders inspired game for groups of four students to explore the issues involved in health inequalities. Designed to be used in Careers and Citizenship classes.
7. Turning points in Physics in a Box (Chris Arridge, Physics, FST) Boxes containing the equipment to carry out seminal experiments that proved to be turning points in our understanding of the physical world. Designed to be used in Physics classes.
8. Religious Studies Teacher Conference (Brian Black, PPR, FASS) Funding supported a Religious Studies Conferences on Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. The event allowed for a valuable gathering of teachers from topics often under-represented in schools. The conference was used to launch some new teaching resources and begin the collaborative development of new teaching resources relevant to the new GSCE and A level specifications.

Highlights of the Year

LUMS 11-16 Schools Project



The project engaged with a series of schools across the North West of England. The project worked with Year 9 and 10 students and delivered three sessions; two academic sessions and one visit to campus encompassing a showcase of the business in a box project the students had been working on in school and sessions on university life. The project engaged with 140 students from six schools.

The first session was delivered by an academic from the department of Entrepreneurship, Strategy and Innovation and the second was delivered by 10 centrally trained student ambassadors, of whom 71% came from a WP background.

Activities included:

- A double lesson introductory session (usually 1.5 hours in duration) in school delivered by an academic member of staff. This introduced the business in a box concept to the students and set out the expectations and objectives for the project.

- A double lesson follow-up session delivered by Student Ambassadors between two and four weeks later. Ambassadors worked individually with each group on their business idea and resolved questions concerning concepts or work they needed to prepare for the showcase event.
- A full day campus visit where students presented their business in a box idea to academics, entrepreneurs in residence and their peers thus drawing to a close the activity worked on during the two previous sessions. The day also included a campus tour and student life talk delivered by Student Ambassadors.

"As a result of the work with LUMS I have more confidence about my future education." "It was a good and interesting day and I learned a lot" "University life isn't as difficult as I thought it would be" "I now have more confidence and know how to present my idea"

Mathematics Student Learning Advisor

In 2015-16 we developed a programme to provide additional maths support for students within our Faculty of Science and Technology as an aid to retention and success. Mathematics forms an essential requirement for many departments within the Faculty of Science and Technology. The University attracts students from a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Although on paper the syllabus satisfies prerequisite requirements, performance in practice has been found to be very variable. This project aims to support students who have difficulty in understanding key themes within mathematics. A tutor with experience of offering this type of support was recruited and worked in collaboration with other tutors and staff, and subsequently students to develop and offer a range of different support structures that were designed to enable students to engage with the project.

Activities included:

- Drop in clinic
- Integrated workshops linked to the undergraduate curriculum
- One to one support
- Tutorial sessions
- Intensive weekend "boot camps"

The programme was welcomed by many students who felt it removed the stigma of asking for help. Linked support to undergraduate curriculum worked very effectively and Weekend intensive "boot camps" helped overcome limitations of access during the week by students because of their timetable.



East Lancashire Scholars Programme

Working in partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust, in 2015-16 UKSRO launched our new scholars programme with six schools in East Lancashire. The programme aims to support the most able but under-represented students to achieve the highest grades within their GCSE and Post 16 qualifications and to support them to achieve a place at a top UK University. The Programme provides students with a four year long programme of support including one to one and group mentoring sessions with a Lancaster University Outreach Learning Mentor (a recent Lancaster graduate employed to work on the programme), masterclasses, workshops and residential. All activities are designed to raise attainment, to support students studies and develop their knowledge and abilities in key subjects and transferrable skills.

Target Lancaster

Our Target Lancaster Mentoring Programme employed 54 Lancaster students to provide group mentoring support to 300 Year 12 students from a WP background. The Target Lancaster Programme focuses on supporting very bright students to progress to a top university. Target Lancaster provides a variety of interventions designed to tackle common misconceptions and known problem areas where mentees have lots of questions such as finance, independent living, where and what to study. Based on previous evaluations the programme also includes space for mentees own interests to shape the course of activities and enable them to get the information they require.

Activities included:

- School or college based personalised face to face mentoring sessions covering a wide variety of topics;
- Full Conference Day at Lancaster University enriching their

knowledge of HE that is attended by mentees and teachers from their school;

- Training and careers enrichment for Lancaster University Student Mentors

Mentors valued working with young people and building up relationships with schools, especially where they hope to go into a career in teaching, as well as their own self-development in training.

"The Programme 'is excellent – it gives the students who participate a headstart on their uni preparations which is perfect."

NELSON THOMLINSON SCHOOL, CUMBRIA.

"Our mentors...were excellent- they were patient, kind and encouraging and showed great maturity and altruism in working with students."

CRONTON SIXTH FORM, WIDNES.



Highlights of the Year

Summer Schools

In 2015-16 UKSRO ran free residential summer schools for students in Years 11 and 12 on the Lancaster campus. Our Year 11 programme, which took place in March 2016, supported students with their final prep for their GCSE exams. Sessions included:

- Mindset Theory and Learning Styles– designed to encourage students to recognise the importance of working hard and becoming aware of their learning styles
- Lights, camera, action – enabling students to develop communication skills and share learning acquired during the residential
- Focus on English / Focus on Maths
- Managing stress – to assist with forthcoming GCSE exams
- Independent study – to offer experience of university style study

- Academic tasters – with student ambassadors to raise awareness of university degree programmes
- Social evening events including opportunity to talk informally to evening student ambassadors

Feedback from students indicated that they had appreciated the chance to make new friends to 'learn how to revise'. One student commented "I gained more confidence in myself for making uni choices and meeting new people and also found some new revision techniques I will use in the future."

Many students attending were concerned that they wouldn't be able to make friends and worried that they wouldn't fit in. Allaying these fears is seen as important as one student explained: "university isn't as scary as I thought" and another "...I can do uni as it was easier than I thought" For one student it was a, "fantastic residential which enabled me to learn vital skills but I also made new friendships."

Our Year 12 programme of summer schools were based around the four academic faculties at Lancaster with a range of subjects available for students to choose from including: Medicine, Law, English, Maths, Religious Studies, Sociology, Computing, Management, Marketing, Biomedicine and Biochemistry, Physics, Psychology and Chemistry. Working on a set project with Lancaster academics and PhD students the summer schools aim to show students what it might be like to study that subject at degree level. Students are also given the chance to develop and build key skills such as team work, report writing, research and presentation skills. Following the programme students commented that they had appreciated 'Learning about the different skills that I can use to prepare for uni life' and that the summer school had given them "the confidence to talk about a subject I don't think I'm good at."

Progression Pathways

In 2015-16 the UKSRO Progression Pathways provided over 200 Year 11 students from a WP background with a series of interactive skills based workshops designed to help them raise their attainment and to provide clear information, advice

and guidance about the next steps in education. Workshops lasting from 1 to 3 hours were delivered by Lancaster University ambassadors to groups of young people in schools. Topics included time management, study skills, report writing, research,

referencing, stress managements, presentation skills. All sessions were designed to be interactive with students introduced to each skill through a topic either recently in the news or relevant to their current studies.

Facts and Figures

£3,827,000

2,824 students benefited from a Lancaster scholarship or bursary totalling £3,827,000 in support

80%

80% of WP students involved in the Target Lancaster mentoring programme claimed they were now more likely to apply to university as a result of the programme

89%

89% of students claimed the summer schools exceed their expectations

100%

100% of Lancaster students on the Smart Start programme successfully transitioned into the second year of their studies at Lancaster

94%

94% of Lancaster students felt the Care Networking Club helped them to understand the value of developing professional networks

£1,218,000

£1,218,000 was spent on outreach and student success activities for WP students



Lancaster worked with 5031 WP students across the UK

59%

59% of NEETs involved in our work with The Dukes continued in formal or informal training after the project had finished

328

Lancaster worked with 328 schools across the UK

1605

1605 Lancaster staff and students worked or volunteered on a WP programme with school aged students



LU Staff and Students spent over 72,000 hours on WP programmes and activities throughout the year



203 Lancaster students had the opportunity to travel abroad on one of our LUSU Cultural Exchange Programmes