From the margins to the mainstream
Embedding widening participation in higher education
From the margins to the mainstream: embedding widening participation in higher education
About this report

This report is the outcome of a project commissioned by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP). This is the third in a series of reports undertaken to explore how universities and colleges in the UK are supporting access to higher education for young people from lower socio-economic groups (the previous studies, From Elitism to Inclusion and Social Class and Participation, were published in 1998 and 2002 respectively).

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Preface

This is the third in a series of reports published by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) charting the development of widening participation activity across the UK higher education sector. The study analyses 34 in-depth case studies (including a re-examination of the 23 previous case studies from the 1998 and 2002 reports) and evaluates their effectiveness in increasing access to higher education by disadvantaged young people. The report examines the policy context for widening participation in all four nations, and also includes a substantial analysis of recent data.

One of the key innovations of this report is the focus on how institutions and partnerships have embedded their widening participation practices to improve both access to higher education and success within it. This is the main challenge now facing the sector as it moves away from a project-based approach - as seen in the 1990s when the first Universities UK/SCOP report was published - towards longer-term, sustainable processes and practices. Embedding widening participation across higher education institutions will depend on the development of more sophisticated tools for monitoring and evaluation, and measuring the impact of initiatives like those highlighted in the report.

A key fact highlighted in the report is that the overall participation rate for young students in higher education with two or more A-levels or Highers is already approaching 100 per cent. The challenge remains to increase the number of students from disadvantaged groups achieving the qualifications required for entry to higher education, including the development of more robust vocational routes allowing for progression into the sector at different levels.

This report (alongside the two previous studies) is a testament to the skills and dedication of staff throughout the sector that are committed to inspiring those students with no family experience of higher education to gain the confidence and qualifications to apply to higher education institutions and ensure that they are supported throughout their studies. We believe that concerted action by the sector - in partnership with other agencies - is essential in moving to a more socially inclusive higher education both in terms of the student body and the learning environment.

Professor Drummond Bone
President
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Chair
Standing Conference of Principals
1. Introduction

Summary

Purpose of the Research

- To explore how HEIs are supporting access and success in higher education for young people from lower socio-economic groups

Key objectives include:

- Analysis of statistical evidence
- Identify, analyse and share examples of widening participation practice within HEIs through new case studies and re-visiting previous case studies.

1.1. Purpose of the report

Overall rates of participation in higher education (HE) have increased dramatically. However, equality of participation by students from lower socio-economic groups remains a challenge in the UK (Corver 2005, UNITE 2005, Goddard and Utley 2004 and Archer et al. 2003) and internationally (Thomas and Quinn, 2003). It is therefore necessary to undertake further research to understand how the HE sector is responding to this persistent challenge and identify ways to address it in the future. Furthermore, at a national level, undergraduate degree students from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN) are less likely to continue in HE in the year following entry than other undergraduate degree students. While this pattern is not replicated in every higher education institution (HEI), it is the case in each country of the UK. Table 1 shows the rates of access for students from lower socio-economic groups (SEGs) and LPNs in each part of the UK (2002/03), and the rates of non-continuation in HE following year of entry for students from LPNs and other neighbourhoods (2001/02).

Table 1: Access and non-continuation in UK higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Access by lower SEGs (%)</th>
<th>Access by LPN (%)</th>
<th>Non-continuation in HE by LPN (%)</th>
<th>Non-continuation in HE other neighbourhoods (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Young, full-time undergraduate entrants, 2002/03. Source: HESA
2 Young, full-time undergraduate entrants, 2002/03. Source: HESA
3 Young, full-time first degree entrants, 2001/02. Source: HESA
4 Young, full-time first degree entrants, 2001/02. Source: HESA
This report explores the UK higher education sector’s progress in developing successful approaches to widening participation. It was commissioned by Universities UK and the Standing Committee of Principals, and is the third report of its kind. The first report (Woodrow et al 1998) identified and analysed examples of good practice in relation to widening access to higher education for young people from lower socio-economic groups. The examples, analysis and guidance informed and shaped many subsequent widening access initiatives. The second report (Woodrow et al 2002) explored access to highly competitive and selective disciplines and institutions by young people from lower socio-economic groups.

Like its predecessors, this report focuses on the experiences of young students from lower socio-economic groups. But this report examines student success within HE, as well as entry to HE. This reflects the shift in the sector from widening access to widening participation, which is captured in the student lifecycle approach to widening participation (Layer 2002). Consequently the emphasis of this study is away from projects, towards collaborative partnerships and institutional adaptation and development to support all students throughout their HE experiences in different learning sites. This report does not therefore look at examples of practice in isolation, but rather explores them within their broader context.

1.2. Aims and objectives
The aim of this study is to explore how HEIs, both autonomously and in partnership with other organisations, are supporting access and success in higher education for young people from lower socio-economic groups within a changing environment.

The project objectives are as follows; to
a) Analyse the statistical evidence of the performance of HEIs and UK regions in widening participation.
b) Identify and share examples of widening participation across the sector.
c) Explore and learn from new examples of practice which increase the participation of students from lower socio-economic groups.
d) Re-visit the 23 previously featured case studies to review their progress and learn about the impact of widening participation initiatives in the longer term.
e) Evaluate the contribution of different institutional structures to widening participation.
f) Examine the strategies for embedding good practice into institutions and evaluate their impact.
g) Assess the sustainability of the widening participation work of the sector.
h) Inform policy about the wider applicability of alternative approaches to widening participation across the sector.
i) Consider the opportunities and challenges facing widening participation.
j) Disseminate examples of practice, findings and recommendations widely across the sector.

1.3. Structure of the report
The report starts by providing details of the current, and anticipated, policy context for widening participation in each of the four countries in the UK. (UK Policy Context - section 2).

Section 3 (Statistical information about participation) presents an analysis of statistical information from UCAS about applicants and acceptances to full-time undergraduate higher education from
2000/1 to 2003/4. This examines the position of students from lower socio-economic groups and other under-represented groups and identifies disciplinary, institutional and regional differences.

The research has updated the existing 23 case studies (featured in Woodrow et al 1998 and; Woodrow et al 2002), with a particular focus on learning from good practice, and integrating activities into broader developments. In addition, 11 new case studies have been commissioned, selected from 141 examples that were submitted to the research team. Details of these 34 case studies are given in section 4 of the report. The 141 submitted examples of practice have been used to create an electronic searchable directory. Further details of this updateable directory, as well as information about the research methods used to collect the data, is contained in the appendix.

The report then turns to issues in relation to delivering activities to widen participation (section 5). It discusses the types of activities that the higher education sector is engaged in, the ways in which initiatives are targeted, the issues involved at different stages of the student lifecycle and project monitoring and evaluation.

At a more strategic level, section 6 explores how widening participation activities are organised. This section considers organisational commitment, purpose and structure, achieving organisational change, sustainability and monitoring and evaluation within and between institutions.

The conclusions of the study (section 7) assess the progress of the sector, identify ways to further improve and discuss actual and potential barriers to success within the current and anticipated policy context in the UK. Finally, recommendations are made for national and regional policy makers and agencies, HEIs and widening participation partnerships, practitioners and researchers.
2. UK policy context

Summary
Widening participation has become a key policy commitment of the Government and this is reflected across the four countries of the UK:

England
- Aimhigher is the major vehicle for outreach activity to widen access to higher education.
- The Higher Education Act (2004) will permit higher education institutions to charge variable fees from 2006. The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) has been established to provide an assurance that the new fees regime will not have a detrimental effect on widening participation.
- Admissions is one of the four key areas targeted within the Government’s widening participation strategy. Higher education institutions are required to demonstrate that they subscribe to the five principles of a fair admissions system, as outlined in the Schwartz Report (2004).
- The Government is committed to improving the parity of vocational and academic qualifications. Lifelong Learning Networks are a key part of this strategy.
- Higher education institutions receive a widening participation premium to support student success. Proposed changes to the funding of teaching (HEFCE 2005) may lead to enhanced support for the widening participation agenda.

Scotland
- There is an emphasis on institutional collaboration within and between sectors. Four regional fora have been established to span both further and higher education.
- There has been an emphasis on the role of further education colleges as providers of higher education. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is available to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of credit across institutions and sectors.
- Student access, retention and success have been promoted through Scottish Funding Council formula-based grants to higher education institutions.

Wales
- Key policies include: the widening access premium funding; widening access funding based on higher education institution success in the recruitment of students from lower socio-economic groups; and the Reaching Higher Reaching Wider initiative.
- A Skills Action Plan was launched for consultation in June 2004 with a view to improving vocational routes into higher education and to support lifelong learning. The Welsh Assembly met in June 2005 in which the majority voted not to act upon the Rees commission recommendations.
- From 2007/08 Welsh higher education institutions will be given the flexibility to charge fees up to £3,000. Welsh domiciled higher education students studying in Wales will be eligible for a £1,800 fee grant which offsets entirely the additional fees they would otherwise be charged. A national bursary scheme will be made available.
Northern Ireland

- There is an Aimhigher roadshow to communicate routes to higher education for young people in Northern Ireland.
- Higher education institutions in Northern Ireland run outreach activities in order to stimulate demand for higher education from under-represented groups.
- Higher education institutions receive a widening access premium to support the retention and success of students from low-income families, calculated on the basis of the number of students who do not pay fees.
- Variable fees will be introduced in 2006 for universities in Northern Ireland, and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI) will take a comparable role to OFFA in England. Higher education institutions will provide Access Bursaries to students from lower income families.

2.1 Overview

Widening participation in higher education has become a key policy commitment of the UK Government, but the effects of devolution are creating a more complex policy environment. Broadly common approaches include an emphasis on partnership and collaboration between higher education institutions and other sectors (especially in England, Wales and Scotland), payments to institutions to support the retention of students from under-represented groups, and recognition of the need to improve vocational routes into and through higher education. Significant variations include the absence of variable fees in Scotland and the differential rates of funding to support widening participation activities.

2.2 England

Outreach

Aimhigher is the major Government vehicle for widening access to higher education. Aimhigher supports regional and sub-regional partnerships between HEIs, schools, colleges, employers and other agencies to promote interest in higher education and support admission into HE. These partnerships aim to increase participation in each geographical area and to address low rates of participation by students from lower socio-economic groups, low participation neighbourhoods and by those with disabilities.

Student fees and financial support

The Higher Education Act 2004 allows higher education institutions to charge students variable fees of up to £3,000 a year from 2006. As a result of the legislation, students will no longer have to pay up-front tuition fees. The Office for Fair Access (OFFA) was established as part of the 2004 Act to work collaboratively with institutions to ensure that the introduction of variable tuition fees does not have a detrimental effect on widening participation, and that institutions remain committed to increasing participation rates of under-represented groups (OFFA, 2004/01). Institutions planning to raise full-time undergraduate tuition fees above the standard level (i.e. currently £1,125 per year) have submitted an Access Agreement to OFFA setting out how they will safeguard and promote fair access—particularly for students from low income groups—through bursary and other financial support, and through outreach work. The majority of higher education institutions in England propose to
charge fees of £3,000, and early evidence shows that bursary schemes differ markedly between
institutions, largely dependent on their market position.

**Fair access**
The Government has targeted the promotion of fair access as a key priority area. In its widening
participation strategy (DfES, 2003), the Government outlined the action being proposed under four
headings including attainment, aspiration, applications and admissions. As part of its proposals for
admissions, the Government argued for admissions to be based on merit, achievement and potential,
irrespective of class, background or school attended. The strategy also led to the publication of the
Schwartz Report (2004), which provides recommendations for fair and transparent admissions
processes to promote equality. The report proposed five principles of a fair admissions system:

- It should be transparent;
- It should enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged
  by their achievements and their potential;
- It should strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid;
- It should seek to minimise barriers for applicants; and
- It should be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate structures and
  processes.

The Government recommends that universities and colleges should adopt these principles with the
aim of increasing opportunities for those from disadvantaged groups to apply to higher education.

**Vocational access**
The Government aims to achieve parity between vocational and academic qualifications. This will
require improving vocational routes into and through higher education. A Joint Progression Strategy
(2004) has been developed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the
Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and DfES to advance vocational and workplace progression into
and through higher education. Lifelong Learning Networks are part of this strategy. The networks are
formed by groups of institutions to offer improved/new progression routes for vocational learners and
promote lifelong learning.

**Student retention and success**
Higher education institutions receive a widening participation premium from HEFCE with respect to
students from low participation neighbourhoods to assist with the additional costs of supporting
student success, though this is deemed to be insufficient to cover the full costs. HEFCE has launched
a consultation (October 2005) on a series of proposed changes to its method of funding teaching.
Some of these changes may lead to enhanced support for widening participation activity in the higher
education sector.

2.3 Scotland
The Scottish Executive has given priority to expanding the participation of students from under-
represented groups. The Scottish Funding Council has provided formula-based grants to institutions
to support the access and retention of students from neighbourhoods with participation rates of less
than half the UK average (the widening access premium) and disabled students (the disabled
students premium), the part-time incentive premium and the FE/HE articulation grant. There have
been significant increases in formula-based funding of this type for 2005/06.
Of particular note in Scotland is the role of further education colleges as providers of higher education level provision (Raab and Davidson, 1999; Raab and Storkey, 2001) and the use of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SQCF) as a means for students to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of credit across institutions and sectors (see QAA 2001 and SQCF 2003 for details).

The Scottish Executive has published a number of policy documents (1999; 2000) which emphasise inter-institutional collaboration within and between sectors as one of the key mechanisms for alleviating current disparities. The commitment to a strategy that brings all sectors together is manifested in measures such as the merger of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council in 2004. Also, SHEFC established a group in 2004 bringing together the school sector, further education colleges and higher education institutions to "carry out a root and branch review of, and identify ways of achieving real change and progress in, widening access" (SHEFC 2005, p. 9). In addition, recent reviews of the school/college interface have taken place (Scottish Executive 2005).

The Higher Education Review (Scottish Executive, 2003) had already put particular emphasis on the policy imperative of improving links between further and higher education and these policies can be observed clearly within the formula-based funding models. Additionally, there is targeted funding for some part-time students through the part-time fee waiver, the part-time incentive grant for higher education institutions related to the number of part-time enrolments, and funding for other initiatives that support widening access. Much of this funding is awarded to support supra-institutional developments through, since 1998/99, the establishment of four regional access fora, which cover both the further and higher sectors. In 2004/05 the role of the fora was strengthened, and given a more strategic focus. Together they provide a range of coordinated actions, including a range of initiatives to raise awareness and aspiration among primary and secondary school pupils who attend schools with low progression rates into higher education.

2.4 Wales
In Wales, public support for widening access to higher education is delivered through the following linked initiatives: widening access premium funding for institutions recruiting students from low participation neighbourhoods; widening access funding based upon HEI success in recruiting from social classes 111M-V; and the Reaching Higher Reaching Wider (RHRW) initiative, which supports four regional partnerships to widen participation in four key areas: disability, ethnic minorities, socio-economic position and Welsh language medium provision. This initiative is closely linked to the Welsh Assembly’s education policy. The initiative has been project based but will become mainstreamed in Wales after 2006. In addition, a new Skills Action Plan was launched for consultation in June 2004, with a view to improving vocational routes into higher education and to support lifelong learning.

From 2007/08 Welsh higher education institutions will be given the flexibility to charge fees up to £3,000. Welsh domiciled higher education students studying in Wales will be eligible for a £1,800 fee grant which offsets entirely the additional fees they would otherwise be charged. A national bursary scheme will be made available.
2.5 Northern Ireland
Since the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly in October 2002, the Higher Education Branch of the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI) has assumed responsibility for higher education policy. Widening access to higher education is mainly delivered through institutional outreach activities in order to stimulate demand from under-represented groups, and through a widening access premium.

Aimhigher
The Aimhigher Roadshow is a communications campaign that aims to provide clear information and better marketing of the routes to higher education for young people in Northern Ireland. The Roadshow visits schools and colleges across the province to promote the benefits and dispel the myths about higher education.

Student retention and success
Higher education institutions receive a widening access premium to support the retention and success of students from low-income families. This premium is based on the number of students who do not pay fees as a result of means testing.

Student fees and financial support
Variable fees will be introduced in Northern Ireland in 2006, and DELNI will have a comparable role to OFFA in England. Higher education institutions will provide Access Bursaries to students from lower income families and these will be linked to Access Agreements.
3. Statistical information about participation

Summary
This section provides information about the applications and acceptances of full-time UK higher education students from different backgrounds between 2000 and 2004; it also includes institution type and discipline area. Issues reviewed are:

- Socio-economic status (SES): applicants from the highest socio-economic groups (SEGs) have increased their share of applications to the more selective institutions.
- Ethnicity: many ethnic groups continue to be over represented in higher education compared to their population share.
- Age and gender: younger students are more likely to be from high SEGs, while older students are more likely to be from low SEGs.
- School type: there has been an increase in acceptances to HE by students from low SEGs from the independent sector. Those from a grammar or independent school are considerably over-represented in successful applicants to Medicine and Dentistry courses and under-represented in education.
- Tariff scores: the possession of a good tariff score is no guarantee of acceptance to higher education. The tariff score has an important role in acceptance to the selected subject groups, and those from a low SEG have lower tariff scores overall.
- Region of domicile: There is little difference in application to higher education by SEG between regions. Regional patterns relating to ethnic minorities reflect population trends.
- Subject groups:
  a) there are stark differences between the socio-economic status (SES) of acceptances between different subject areas.
  b) gender differences for Engineering and Physics courses are apparent across the age bands.
  c) there is over-representation of a number of ethnic groups in Medicine and Dentistry. There is a relative lack of interest amongst almost all ethnic groups in participation in Education courses.

3.1 Student origins and destinations
In this section data from the year 2000 are compared with those from 2004 on a number of different indicators including socio-economic status, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and previous educational background. There are some limitations in the analysis that relate to missing data for a number of relevant variables. In respect of the data for 2004, when all home applicants are considered, 22.3 per cent have a tariff score of zero, 20.4 have ‘unknown’ socio-economic status recorded and 20.7 per cent have no school type recorded. It should also be stated that this is mainly a problem for older applicants, with between 52 and 76 per cent of all applicants over 21 having no recorded tariff score; between 35 and 44 per cent with ‘unknown’ socio-economic status; and, between 58 to 60 per cent with no previous school type. For 2000 between 29 and 38 per cent of applicants had ‘unknown’ socio-economic status, between 51 and 54 per cent had unrecorded school type, while tariff score is not applicable to that year’s data. This should be borne in mind in interpreting the following results.

**Socio-economic status**

Table 3.1 compares the socio-economic status of applicants to higher education for 2000 and 2004. There has been a slight reduction in the proportion of those classified as higher professional and a slight increase in the proportion of the second highest socio-economic group.

Table 3.1 also reports the percentage of each socio-economic group in terms of their successful destination by institutional type. This allows a comparison between not only 2000 and 2004, but also allows a comparison with the proportion of the working age population as recorded in *Social Trends* (Summer 2003) for each socio-economic group. In general, those at the top are over-represented in terms of their population share while those at the bottom are under-represented in terms of their population share. There is also an apparent ‘institutional type’ effect with applicants from high status groups showing the greatest increase over population share at more selective institutions.

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5 The classification of institutions into ‘types’ consisting of ‘Russell Group’, ‘pre-1992’, ‘Post-1992’ and ‘HE College’ was undertaken by the research team.
Table 3.1: Socio-economic status by successful destinations for full-time undergraduate home students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-economic Status</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russell Accepted</td>
<td>Pre-1992 Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>30.5 19.9 13.3 12.9 16.9</td>
<td>33.5 22.7 15.4 14.6 19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>11.9 13.0 12.0 12.7 12.2</td>
<td>11.2 12.1 11.6 12.7 11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate occupations</td>
<td>30.4 27.3 23.2 24.3 24.9</td>
<td>32.8 30.8 26.2 26.5 27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower supervisory and technical occupations</td>
<td>2.9 4.0 4.3 4.8 3.9</td>
<td>3.3 4.6 5.2 5.4 4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine occupations</td>
<td>2.5 4.3 5.4 5.4 4.7</td>
<td>2.5 4.5 6.4 5.7 5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-routine occupations</td>
<td>7.1 9.7 12.4 12.3 11.1</td>
<td>5.8 8.2 11.2 10.4 9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small employers and own account workers</td>
<td>5.0 6.3 6.0 6.9 6.0</td>
<td>4.0 5.8 5.7 7.3 5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown***</td>
<td>9.7 15.4 23.5 20.7 20.4</td>
<td>6.8 11.3 18.5 17.3 15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Socio-economic status of working age population (Social Trends 33, Summer 2003) ** Classified as long-term unemployed and those who have never worked. *** Often mature home students
Table 3.2 reports the ‘success rate’ in acceptance at different types of institutions for those in high and low socio-economic groups in 2000 and 2004. This is done for all home applicants by dividing the number accepted at a specific institutional type by the number applying to that institutional type and controlling for socio-economic group (SEG).

This suggests that the chances of a successful application are greater for all social groups at post-1992 institutions. The second most successful application route for those from the high SEG is at Russell Group institutions while for those from the low SEG it is at pre-1992 institutions. For those with ‘unknown’ socio-economic status, their second best chance of success is at a higher education college. Interestingly, the highest success rates overall are those from the ‘unknown’ group who apply to post-1992 institutions. This may reflect articulation routes from further education. There has been little change over the short period investigated, although slight increases in success rates can be observed.

Table 3.2: Success rate by destination and socio-economic group (SEG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Rate (%)</th>
<th>High SEG*</th>
<th>Low SEG**</th>
<th>Unknown SEG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2004</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1992</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1992</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE College</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Group</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1992</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1992</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE College</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* High SEG = Higher managerial and professional occupations + Lower managerial and professional occupations + Intermediate occupations. ** Low SEG = Lower supervisory and technical occupations + Routine occupations + Semi-routine occupations + Small employers and own account workers.

**Ethnicity**

The data in table 3.3 highlight the ethnic composition of those who apply and are accepted to full-time undergraduate programmes for 2004. This is compared to the ethnic composition of the UK population. Gender differences in the ethnic composition are also reported. Due to changes in the classification of the variable a direct comparison with the data for 2000, and with the 2001 Census, is not possible although an approximate comparison can be achieved.
There has been little change in the ethnic composition of applicants to higher education in the UK between 2000 and 2004. A number of ethnic groups apply in greater numbers than their population share would suggest, including ‘Asian Indian’, ‘Other Asian’, ‘Asian Pakistani’, ‘Chinese’ and ‘Black African’. The latter group has the greatest increase in participation over the period. Some groups appear to have suffered a small decrease in their share of applications to higher education over the period in question, although their participation rate is still above their population share. In terms of gender, only females from a ‘Black Caribbean’ ethnic background have greater participation rates than males in both 2000 and 2004. Finally, when applications are compared to acceptances, only ‘Asian Indian’ males and females have a higher acceptance than application share for both 2000 and 2004 amongst ethnic minorities. Ethnic differences are revisited in relation subject areas.

**Age and gender by socio-economic status**

In this section, the profile of students by age, gender and socio-economic status is reported. The indicator for socio-economic status has been recoded as described in Table 3.2 and data on applications and acceptances are reported in Table 3.4.
Table 3.4: Applications and acceptances by age, gender and SEG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Acc</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Acc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bold = High SEG, Italic = Low SEG, and Underline = Unknown SEG)

As can be seen for those aged under 20, in all socio-economic groups, the percentage accepted is greater than the percentage of applications. Differences can be noted in the greater proportion of younger students in the ‘high’ group compared to the ‘low’ group, and conversely the greater proportion of students in the two middle age bands in the ‘low’ group compared to the ‘high’ group. Those who are classified as ‘unknown’ exhibit the greatest diversity in terms of age.

In relation to gender, a greater proportion of males compared to females in the two youngest age groups are accepted in the ‘high’ group while for the two oldest age groups the situation is reversed. Moreover, females aged 20 and under and in the two oldest age groups in the ‘low’ group do better than the males in terms of acceptances. Finally, for those in the ‘unknown’ group, males in the two youngest groups do better than females in the same age groups in terms of the proportion of acceptances, while for the two oldest age groups the situation is reversed. There is little difference between 2000 and 2004.

School type by gender and socio-economic status

This section is concerned with the relationship between gender, socio-economic group and previous educational experience as defined by school type. For both 2000 and 2004 around two thirds of all
applicants are drawn from: further and higher education; comprehensive schools; sixth form colleges and the independent sector.

Overall, both applications and acceptances have fallen for those from ‘further and higher education’, ‘other maintained’, ‘sixth form centre’ and perhaps interestingly from ‘independent’. For all other school types the proportion of both applications and acceptances increased between 2000 and 2004.

Table 3.5 reports variations in the data on the basis of gender and socio-economic status of those accepted to higher education for 2000 and 2004. To aid interpretation, those whose socio-economic status has been classified as unknown have been excluded.

Table 3.5: School type by socio-economic status and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School type</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High SEG</td>
<td>Low SEG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE/HE</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>22.28</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Form College</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other maintained</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar school</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Form Centre</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>18.36</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(All acceptances UK domicile)

As perhaps is to be expected, there is a socio-economic dimension to previous educational background categorised by school type. Those from a low SEG are more likely to be drawn from the further and higher education sector, from a sixth form college or to have an unknown educational background. The other difference is the proportion of those from a high SEG, compared to those from a low SEG, coming from the independent sector. However, it is interesting to note that the proportion of those from a low SEG coming from the independent sector has increased between 2000 and 2004.

In relation to gender, the greatest imbalance, in favour of males, would appear to be within the independent sector and this is consistent for both high and low SEG. Overall however, with the exception of the independent sector and the small proportion from ‘other maintained’, the gender imbalance is in favour of females. One further point of interest in relation to gender, socio-economic status and school type is that for 2004, a greater proportion of males compared to females from a
high SEG, are accepted from a ‘comprehensive’, while for those from a low SEG, the converse is the case.

**Tariff scores, socio-economic status and destination**

In this section attention is focused on tariff scores while controlling for socio-economic status and type of institution. Due to the absence of tariff scores for 2000 this will only involve an analysis of the data for 2004.

Figure 3.1 reports the distribution of tariff scores by SEG. For the purpose of interpretation, those with a tariff score of zero are not included. As can be seen, the tariff scores by SEG reflect a relatively normal distribution. The difference is the position of the mean for each SEG. Using the distribution of the tariff scores for those from a low SEG, then in comparison, those classified as ‘Unknown’ are skewed to the bottom end of the tariff scale, while those from a high SEG are slightly skewed to the top end of the scale.

**Figure 3.1: UCAS tariff scores by SEG- 2004**

The possession of a good tariff score is no guarantee of acceptance to HE, as the following figures show. Altogether 19.1 per cent of applicants were unsuccessful in their attempts to gain access to higher education. Again, when those with a tariff of zero are ignored, the scores generally conform to a normal distribution. This is followed by a figure reporting the same variables for those who were accepted in 2004.
Figure 3.2: Tariff scores of unsuccessful applicants by SEG- 2004

(N=79039)

Figure 3.2 also suggests that socio-economic status is no guarantee of success. However, when success rates are considered below, the picture is complicated when institutional ‘type’ is considered.

Figure 3.3: Tariff scores of successful applicants by SEG- 2004

(N=334295)

While Figure 3.3 replicates to some extent the data presented in Figure 3.1, the former uses count data rather than percentage and thus allows some indication of the magnitude of the differences for those whose applications were successful, and those whose applications were not, when compared with Figure 3.2.
Table 3.6 provides details on students who gained conditional acceptance to higher education in 2004 while controlling for institutional type, tariff score and SEG.

Table 3.6: Tariff scores by SEG and institutional ‘type’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tariff</th>
<th>SEG</th>
<th>Institutional ‘type’ %</th>
<th>Pre-1992</th>
<th>Post-1992</th>
<th>HE College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>Pre-1992</td>
<td>Post-1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30.96</td>
<td>48.03</td>
<td>74.50</td>
<td>53.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>23.05</td>
<td>46.79</td>
<td>76.08</td>
<td>55.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>34.70</td>
<td>81.86</td>
<td>151.46</td>
<td>107.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-79</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>22.80</td>
<td>41.48</td>
<td>67.52</td>
<td>47.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>39.06</td>
<td>68.34</td>
<td>47.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>36.41</td>
<td>72.97</td>
<td>46.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-119</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>14.01</td>
<td>31.84</td>
<td>69.02</td>
<td>46.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>30.96</td>
<td>70.46</td>
<td>48.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>30.55</td>
<td>75.25</td>
<td>47.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120-179</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>26.90</td>
<td>67.79</td>
<td>44.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>26.08</td>
<td>69.96</td>
<td>44.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>27.28</td>
<td>73.16</td>
<td>44.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180-239</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td>31.67</td>
<td>67.35</td>
<td>39.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>33.02</td>
<td>68.20</td>
<td>40.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>12.96</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>69.87</td>
<td>39.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240-299</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>19.94</td>
<td>41.19</td>
<td>60.22</td>
<td>35.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>16.74</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>60.60</td>
<td>37.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20.29</td>
<td>42.10</td>
<td>62.15</td>
<td>38.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-359</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>34.79</td>
<td>45.81</td>
<td>49.00</td>
<td>30.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>29.92</td>
<td>47.34</td>
<td>51.23</td>
<td>33.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>32.58</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>53.22</td>
<td>32.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-419</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>48.82</td>
<td>43.41</td>
<td>38.35</td>
<td>28.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>41.41</td>
<td>46.68</td>
<td>42.08</td>
<td>31.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>47.05</td>
<td>45.74</td>
<td>41.40</td>
<td>32.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-479</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>56.69</td>
<td>40.54</td>
<td>31.93</td>
<td>27.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>48.70</td>
<td>45.19</td>
<td>36.11</td>
<td>27.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>53.85</td>
<td>43.25</td>
<td>34.17</td>
<td>28.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480-539</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>62.62</td>
<td>36.48</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>24.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>58.77</td>
<td>38.14</td>
<td>27.90</td>
<td>23.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>60.78</td>
<td>38.30</td>
<td>30.52</td>
<td>41.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540+</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>69.41</td>
<td>30.89</td>
<td>20.79</td>
<td>25.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>62.99</td>
<td>37.05</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>22.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>68.51</td>
<td>34.04</td>
<td>26.39</td>
<td>17.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(All UK domicile accepted)

The data suggest that there is considerable variation in the chances of success and that this manifests itself differentially when tariff score, SEG and the institutional ‘type’ are considered. Of interest are the figures for those with a tariff score of zero and those, whose SEG is unknown. The data suggest that those in ‘Post-1992’ and ‘HE College’ provide more acceptances than they receive.
applications. In addition, for certain categories those with unknown socio-economic status have greater success rates in comparison with the rest of the population.

**Region of domicile**
In this section, data relating to geographic participation in higher education are reported. The figure below shows those accepted in 2004 by region and by SEG.

**Figure 3.4:** Full-time undergraduates accepted by region and SEG – 2004

The exception is the high proportion from Greater London classified as unknown.

**Table 3.7:** Accepted by region, gender and age - 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>20 and under</th>
<th>21-24</th>
<th>25-39</th>
<th>40+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A North East</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Yorks &amp; The Humber</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C North West</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D East Midlands</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E West Midlands</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Eastern</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Greater London</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H South East</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I South West</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Wales</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Northern Ireland</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Scotland</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Merseyside</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UK</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When age and gender are considered there are some differences within the regions. Some of the regions with a large percentage of those accepted to higher education (Greater London, Scotland and
to a lesser extent the South West) also seem to have a relatively larger percentage in the older age
groups. In contrast, Northern Ireland and to a lesser extent the South West had a greater percentage
of younger students relative to the older groups. There was little difference in terms of applicants and
accepted or when the data for 2000 was compared with that for 2004.

The following table is concerned with ethnic minority participation by region and as such will probably
reflect existing geographical patterns of habitation in general. Table 3.8 reports the three highest
regions in terms of participation by ethnic minority with the Greater London region having the greatest
concentration of ethnic minority applicants who were accepted in 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.8: Participation by ethnic group and region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian - Bangladeshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian - Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian - Other Asian background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian - Pakistani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black - African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black - Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black - other black background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed - other mixed background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed - white and Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed - white and black African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed - white and black Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic background</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Origins and destinations by selected subject group

In this section a comparison of selected subject groups will be considered. The focus will remain on
the variables reported above. As above, only home domiciled students are analysed for the years
2000 and 2004. The subject groups selected are:

- Group A – Medicine and Dentistry
- Group F – Physical Sciences
- Group H – Engineering
- Group N – Business and Administration Studies
- Group X – Education.

The group selection was arbitrary but reflects a range of subject groupings and a range of possible
career destinations. The subjects listed above accounted for: 25.5 per cent of applications and 21.5
per cent of acceptances in 2000, and 23.5 per cent of applications and 20.7 per cent of acceptances
in 2004.
Socio-economic status and selected subject groups

The first table compares the socio-economic status of those who are accepted, to the subjects listed above for the years 2000 and 2004. This may be compared with the data in Table 3.1.

Table 3.9: Socio-economic status of accepted to selected subject groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate occupations</td>
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<td>11.3</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower supervisory and technical occupations</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-routine occupations</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small employers and own account</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown (Home domiciled)</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, there are obvious differences in the socio-economic status of those accepted for the selected subject groups. Medicine and Dentistry has high rates of acceptances from the high SEGs and low rates from the low SEGs. Education has a much flatter spread across the SEGs. There have, however, been some small changes over the relatively short time period examined. In all subject areas there has been a slight decrease in the percentage accepted for those classified as ‘higher managerial’. In contrast, with the slight exception of ‘Group H’ those from ‘semi-routine’ and also from ‘small employers’ have increased the percentage of acceptances.

Age, gender and selected subject groups

In recognition of the small differences over time referred to above, the following sections will concentrate on the data for 2004. The next table will report the age and gender profile of those accepted to each of the five selected subject groups. The table uses count data to better illustrate the magnitude of the gender and age differences within the five selected subject groups.
### Table 3.10: Age and gender of accepted to selected subject groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th></th>
<th>H</th>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 and under</td>
<td>2634</td>
<td>3911</td>
<td>7111</td>
<td>4489</td>
<td>11406</td>
<td>1464</td>
<td>15664</td>
<td>14825</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>7361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>2201</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>1066</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>1512</td>
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<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Home domicile)

In terms of gender for the youngest age group, females outnumber males in group ‘A’ (Medicine and Dentistry) and group ‘X’ (Education). In all other subject groups the youngest males outnumber the youngest females. In the case of group ‘N’ (Business and Administration) the difference is relatively small when compared to the difference between males and females for particularly ‘Engineering’ and also ‘Physics’ and is reflected across the age bands. This suggests that efforts to persuade females to enter these subject areas appear to have had little tangible effect.\(^6\) When older students are examined, the largest proportions of older females are to be found in the ‘Business and Administration’ and ‘Education’ subject groups while for older males, greater numbers enter the ‘Engineering’ and ‘Business and Administration’ subject groups.

#### Ethnicity and selected subject groups

This section will examine the position of ethnic minority students in respect of successful applications to the five selected subject groups. Table 3.11 reports both gender and ethnic composition. In addition, comparisons may be made with the ethnic composition of the UK population and with the ethnic composition of all who applied and were accepted for 2000 and 2004, reported in Table 3.3.

---

\(^6\) It should be noted however, that other areas of science (Group C Biological Sciences) attract a majority of females compared to males.
Table 3.11: Ethnicity and gender of those accepted to selected subject groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian - Bangladeshi</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian - other Asian</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black - other black</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.5</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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<td>51.8</td>
<td>52.4</td>
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<td>48.4</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>White - other white</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Home domiciled)

There is a noticeable increase in the percentage of successful applicants to subject groups ‘A’ and ‘H’ from an ‘Asian – Indian’ and to a lesser extent from a ‘Chinese’ background when compared with population and applicant share. On the other hand, the same group would appear to be under-represented in subject groups relating to Physics and especially Education. For those from a ‘Black – African’ background, popular and successful destinations would appear to be in the areas of Engineering and Business, for both males and females. Moreover, in addition to those ethnic groups mentioned above, a number of other ethnic groups (Asian – Pakistani, Asian – Other Asian background, are over-represented (in terms of both population and applicant share) in the higher demand disciplines of Medicine and Dentistry. It is suggested this may reflect the high esteem in which entry to higher education, especially to the medical professions, is held by some ethnic minority groups. Another point of interest is the relative lack of interest amongst almost all ethnic groups in participation in subjects relating to Education with none exhibiting an increase over their share of overall acceptances.

Tariff scores for selected subjects

In this section, tariff scores for those accepted to the five selected subject groups are examined. In the following table, tariff scores, gender and SEG are compared for successful applicants to the selected subject groups.
### Table 3.12: Tariff scores by gender and SEG for those accepted in selected subject groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>31.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-79</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>120-179</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.5</td>
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<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15.0</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>300-359</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-419</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-470</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>480-539</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Home domicile)

Whilst Table 3.12 is rather dense, it does provide information on the variation in terms of tariff scores, gender and SEG. As can be seen, for subject group ‘A’ (Medicine and Dentistry), the highest percentages, for both males and females and for SEG are clustered at the top end of the tariff scale. Again reflecting the problematic nature of missing or unknown data, the majority of those who have a tariff score of zero are also classified as ‘Unknown’ for SEG across all subject groups with the exception of group ‘A’. The variation in the tariff score of successful applicants to the selected subject groups is perhaps more clearly illustrated in the following figures. Figure 3.5 reports tariff scores by subject group for those from a high SEG. While Figure 3.6 reports the same data for those from a low SEG.
The two figures above suggest that the tariff score has an important role in acceptance to the selected subject groups. (And that those from a low SEG have lower tariff scores overall). It must be noted however, that the entry requirements of particular subjects may also have an effect upon behaviour of applicants. It may be that rational choice theory suggests to applicants that the greatest individual benefit accrues to those with the highest tariff scores within this selection of subjects from a degree obtained from subject group ‘A’. Others operating in the same way may make the decision to forego the perceived benefits from a career in medicine when balanced against the greater competition for the limited places available.
School type and selected subject groups

The final variable of interest in this section relates to school type when the five selected subjects are examined. Once again, these figures can be compared with the data presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.13: School type by gender and selected subject group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further/Higher Education</td>
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(Home domicile)

Those from a grammar or independent school are considerably over-represented in successful applicants to group ‘A’ (Medicine and Dentistry) and under-represented in group ‘X’ (Education) and, to a much lesser extent, group ‘N’ (Business and Administration). For the other subject groups those who entered from a comprehensive school are represented at around the level of their application share, with the exception of group ‘F’ (Physical Sciences), where they would appear to be over-represented for both males and females.

3.3 Summary and implications of the data

It is suggested that the result of the analysis reported above provides evidence of the variation in both applications and acceptances when variables frequently used to examine issues of widening participation are employed. Variation exists in terms of age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, tariff score and school background. This variation extends not just at the macro level of all applicants but exists at the more micro level of the subject group and although not reported, within subject groupings at the level of the individual subject or programme.

The greater disparity when selected subjects are examined may be a feature both of the distribution of tariff scores and also of specific entry requirements as they relate to different subject groups. However, this does not fully explain the variation described. It is suggested that in addition to the aspiration raising initiatives, which aim to increase the proportions of non-traditional entrants, further work would seem necessary in relation to raising aspirations to different subject areas. Would this self-selection in relation to subject area account for the variations reported above in respect of the five selected subject groups when tariff score, gender and ethnicity are considered? Or, does it mean that
applicants make a choice of what subject and what institution to apply to on the perceived chances of a successful application rather than on a reasoned and intrinsic interest in the subject chosen.

For example, a student who gains a high tariff score but who came from a school and background with little or no history of higher education participation may be reluctant to apply for a highly competitive course at a highly competitive institution. Although not reported above, a correlation exists between socio-economic status and institutional destination. Generally, those with high socio-economic status tend to apply and be accepted for Russell Group and Pre-1992 universities, while those from low socio-economic status tended to apply and be accepted by HE Colleges and Post-1992 institutions. So is it the case that under-representation by specific groups in specific subjects and at specific institutions is explained by the fact that generally that they do not apply for these places and if this is the case, are they making a rational choice based on their perceived chances of a successful application to a course or an institution.

There would also appear to have been little movement in terms of increases in participation of those with low socio-economic status and of those from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, recall the relatively high percentages of certain ethnic groupings in relation to access to the higher demand group containing Medicine and Dentistry. In addition, there were few differences over the relatively short time period examined.

To summarise, this section has reviewed the data and found numerous instances of variation which cannot be explained with recourse to single factors. It would also appear to be the case that interactions between combinations of factors are in operation and more sophisticated analytical techniques are required to disentangle the effects of multiple influences and hence go some way to explaining the apparent variance. Finally, as suggested above, this would necessitate an examination of each specific subject or programme and attempts to estimate the relative influence of each of the variables reported above.
4. Case studies

4.1 Overview

The study has reviewed the 23 case studies from the previous two reports (published in 1998 and 2002), focusing on evaluating the continuing effectiveness and embedding of these initiatives. This has been done via a questionnaire and telephone follow-up. In addition, new examples of practice were sought via a sector-wide survey distributed to institutions by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals. A total of 141 examples of practice were returned, which have been collated into a Directory of Practice available at www.heacademy.ac.uk/wpdirectory. Eleven new examples were selected for more in-depth analysis via a research visit, including observation and interviews, and analysis of key documents.

The case studies, many of which are collaborative, are spread throughout the UK, in all types of institution. All of the institutions have a strategic commitment to widening participation and different areas of expertise.
4.2 1998 case studies

University of Bradford: The Junior University

Summary description of the project

The Junior University was originally set up to tackle the on-going intergenerational pattern of educational disadvantage among Bradford’s minority ethnic communities by opening up the University’s facilities to young people in school and preparing them for higher education.

The Junior University invites young people, aged 13 or over from Bradford’s ethnic minority communities and their parents to attend the University on Saturdays. The Junior University offers young people both practical support with their homework and preparation for GCSEs and A-levels, and offers access to university facilities for them and their parents.

All young people are welcome on the project, which was originally set up to develop education provision for minority ethnic communities, whilst developing initiatives which encourage participation and impact on educational under-achievement. The target group has recently been extended to include children in care.

Project development

Since the last review in 2002, the Junior University has developed as a major strand of activity within the University of Bradford Academy for young people aged 10-19, which involves primary and secondary schools and FE colleges. The emphasis has moved from aspiration raising as an end in itself to aspiration raising linked to achievement. Additional activities include revision schools, summer and spring schools, citizenship days, youth conferences, primary fun days, intergenerational workshops and social cohesion days.

Another strand in the Academy is the Bradford Children’s University which will take the branding from the national development of academies, but will retain a pan-Bradford and Yorkshire approach to working with primary school young people, their parents, carers and teachers. This scheme is now into its third year and more schools and colleges are involved.

One of the most significant developments has been the work with parents and carers, which aims to raise their educational achievement, which in turn positively impacts on the educational aspirations and achievements of their children.

The Junior University is part of the University’s Academy initiative which provides a common brand and co-ordinates all activities for young people across the University. An infrastructure of governance has been set up which links practitioners to senior management in the University. It has provided the model which has shaped widening participation activities, especially within Aimhigher, delivered by the University to young people in the district and sub region.

The project has successfully impacted on academic practice and curriculum, through the development of modules which can be taken with any first year undergraduate award programme at the University. These include: diversity, mentoring with young people and volunteering.
The Bradford Academy is a one-stop shop which teachers, Learning Skills Council staff and young people can access. It is linked to Connexions and Aimhigher. The University leads the regional Aimhigher strand – Intergenerational Approaches to Learning. This targets young people in and out of school and, in addition, their parents, carers and other influencing adults to encourage them to engage with the University.

**Institutional development**

Strategically the good practice developed as a result of the project is integrated into the University’s corporate plan, race equality policy and teaching and learning policy. The University’s corporate plan has widening participation as its core business, which ensures commitment at senior management level and long-term stability.

A special arrangement has been developed as part of the Bradford University Academy which enables young people aged 17 to 19, once enrolled, to access workshops based on undergraduate programmes and attend a summer school to take accredited modules which contribute towards their UCAS points for the Bradford award they have selected.

Since the publication of the first set of performance indicators in 1999 by HEFCE, the University has performed above the national benchmarks, particularly in relation to students from lower socio-economic groups. This performance has increased over the past two years and the University outperforms the sector on average by 12 per cent. A steadily increasing proportion of its student population comes from ethnic minority backgrounds (in 2003/04 approximately 50 per cent compared with just over 20 per cent in 1996/97).

The student life cycle model is used to ensure students access appropriate support from pre-entry through to first destination after completion of award. Sources of support include mentoring, study support, staff student liaison committees and personal tutors in some instances.

The University’s equality and diversity policy has been shaped by widening participation practice. A working group on inclusion and diversity in the curriculum has been established. A new coaching/leadership programme is in place to support black and minority ethnic staff and develop their skills so that they can progress within higher education.

The University’s learning teaching and development strategy provides the framework that enables the main educational outcomes for the students to be achieved. The strategy includes the following main components:

- General principles and curriculum framework;
- Development of transferable skills for students, including key skills assessment and progress files;
- Assessment;
- Work-related learning;
- E-learning;
- Student success and retention; and
- Rewarding excellence in teaching.
Two major developments provide the flexible and supportive environment needed for the widening participation cohort students to succeed in higher education:

- **Foundation Degrees**: which are part of the government initiative to fill skills gaps and give more people access to higher education. HEFCE has increased funding to the University in order to develop more foundation degrees. In 2004 the University launched the first foundation degree in the country in education and training policy and the first in community justice, as well as a foundation degree in community regeneration and development – offered at only one other university in the UK. Starting in January 2005, other foundation degrees to be launched are leadership and management and public sector administration.

- **Combined Studies Degree – Foundation Year Level 0**: which is an initiative that is developing across the University and allows students to access Level 0 modules that form a Foundation Year. Students can then follow progression routes onto other, mainly social science based, degree programmes within the University. This award targets, among others, young adults who have not achieved success in school-based education provision. They might have been school ‘refusers’, felt alienated by school or taken out of the education system at an early age for cultural or other reasons. The foundation year provides the confidence and self-esteem, skills, knowledge and experience needed to re-engage with education.

There is a central database and an ‘e-pository’ system for tracking students who take up activities of the Academy and then progress into the University.

Research into the retention and success of widening participation students at Bradford University has not yet been carried out. However, the University was funded by HEFCE to appoint three Excellence Fellows (teachers in either FE colleges or schools) to conduct action research on topics of mutual interest to the University and the teachers’ organisations. The Fellows researched into:

- Transition needs of students progressing from FE to higher education;
- The impact of widening participation activities on school pupil destinations; and
- Support and development for FE staff working with students aspiring to higher education.

Most of the initiatives are funded through external monies. The major funding source is the Widening Participation Premium. Other sources include Aimhigher.

**University of Dundee: Access Summer School**

**Summary description of the project**

The Dundee Access Summer School carefully targets disadvantaged young people and offers guaranteed entry across the University to successful students. The University’s project had achieved a very high progression rate into higher education and above average retention rates post-entry. This Access Summer School has become a model for other institutions of how to prepare and qualify potential undergraduates lacking traditional entry qualifications through disadvantage. The initiative has been extended to new taster activities aimed at providing authentic insights into undergraduate study, which included ‘Discovering Degrees for Schools’ and ‘Discovering Degrees for Adults’ taster courses, student tutoring, student shadowing, the transition course and ASPIRE (to prepare and qualify for study).
The Access Summer School has grown in scale and, along with other programmes listed above, continues to be offered by the University’s Wider Access Study Centre (WASC). WASC continues to be the central unit for all issues related to widening access and participation within the University and in 2005 will co-ordinate around 65,000 hours of access student contact time, which equates to 1 in 10 of all entrants.

**Project development**

Through the appointment of a schools’ outreach officer in late 2002, WASC has been able to focus its efforts more directly on local high schools with low progression rates to higher education. The outreach officer has developed a series of workshops designed to engage high school students. With changes that have been made to the Discovering Degrees for Schools course, the University has been able to work with more than 500 school pupils in each of the past two years.

The popularity of the Access Summer School is believed to be partly down to the fact that it breaks the pattern of a disrupted schooling, inevitably leading to a slow track through further education to higher education – something many of these students see as further disadvantaging them in terms of the time and money needed to obtain a degree.

The Wider Access Study Centre offers access students a higher education experience, offering them admittance to all aspects of the University through access provision delivered in each faculty and academic support (all prior to semester one). Lessons learned from this work continue to be rolled out to all undergraduates, for example, a new peer-support scheme is being set up for all undergraduates that mirrors access-style support offered over the last thirteen years. Further internal developments include new subject modules for ASPIRE, such as Applied Computing, Architecture and Social Work. Finally, the practice of teaching personal academic student skills (‘P@SS’) to all students on each full-time WASC course has been extended to become a fully accredited Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer scheme rated undergraduate module offered to students within the Faculty of Arts & Social Science. The University sees ‘P@SS’ (and its predecessor courses) as a vital ingredient in the success of the students who have progressed into higher education from the Access Summer School.

WASC’s remit for widening access extends across the University and the Centre is closely linked to initiatives within all faculties and the Admissions and Student Recruitment (ASR) department. WASC works independently of the ASR department but influences admissions policy directly and offers impartial advice to all at a very early stage of their consideration of further study, with many students being supported from the age of 12 onwards.

WASC is also involved in a number of teaching and learning initiatives and has been part of staff development sessions highlighting issues around the changing nature of higher education for staff from all areas of the institution. WASC has contributed to sessions on the ‘Teaching in Higher Education’ certificate course, for academic staff wishing to gain formal recognition of their teaching, which is accredited by the Higher Education Academy.

In the Centre for Learning and Teaching, a new Arts and Social Science degree route has been developed, by modifying the former New Opportunities course into a daytime timetable over two consecutive days, thus clustering subjects for those in part-time work or with caring responsibilities. The Arts and Social Science Faculty also provides a suite of evening modules, which give students...
the opportunity to study for a degree entirely through evening study. A new post of Part-time Degree Co-ordinator has been created to advise and support new entrants following these routes.

**Institutional development**

Access and widening participation is of strategic importance to senior management and is a key part of the University’s vision for its development by 2007. More than 10 per cent of all entrants to the University come via WASC initiatives. WASC reports through the Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching to the vice-principal with responsibility for teaching and learning.

The Access Summer School has run for thirteen consecutive years and demand continues to increase. It targets students of school-leaving age, or beyond, who have been disadvantaged by circumstances outside of their control and who are likely to be excluded from immediate higher education opportunities available to those more fortunate. There are clearly specified criteria for identifying this disadvantage and the same criteria are also applied to the ‘Discovering Degrees for Schools’ and ‘Discovering Degrees for Adults’ courses.

The University continues to monitor the progress of Access students through WASC. For Access Summer School students for the period 1993 to 2003:
- 779 students began the Access Summer School;
- 592 of these students went on to study at the University of Dundee;
- 187 of these students have already completed their course and graduated from the University of Dundee;
- 213 students are continuing their studies at the University of Dundee;
- Six former Access Summer School students have gained first class honours degrees;
- Two former Access Summer School students are known to have graduated from Doctoral degrees and a number of others are studying postgraduate degrees and diplomas;
- The progress of a further 174 students who joined the course in 2004 and 2005 is also being recorded.

Tracking of all former Access students demonstrates that the progression rate for former access students is virtually identical to that of traditional entrants. There has been no need for further specific induction, on-going support or targeted retention strategy for these students beyond the standard provision offered to all students, suggesting that they are fully prepared by their access course. The support mechanisms developed for students in the Access Summer School are now being applied to the wider student population.

Other evidence of broadening participation in the institution is the increase of students on part-time programmes claiming fee-waivers on the grounds of low income. Over the last three years the number of students studying for credit on a part-time basis within the Faculty of Arts and Social Science has averaged about 150, with 50 per cent claiming fee-waivers and the majority of these students are entitled to student loans and other funding as offered by the Students Awards Agency Scotland.

The Access Summer School has often been the test-bed for initiatives which are then applied to the wider student body. As a university with a diverse student population, it has been keen to examine and adopt a variety of learning and teaching styles, and develop e-learning initiatives which form a
core part of Access Summer School. A recent example is the introduction of an information
technology induction course which is compulsory for all entrants in their first two weeks of study. This
course was pioneered on the Access Summer School, and substantially modified in the light of that
practical experience.

The dynamic nature of the medium sized, research-led university environment in which WASC
operates means that it is difficult for the Centre fully to quantify the contribution widening access and
participation has made to curriculum development. Individual departments and tutors have modified
their curricula in the light of student diversity and staff development and all have reflected the growth
in widening participation. The further/higher education transition course is one development that
continues to provide a bridge from one type of learning experience to another and is offered to all
students at the point of transition from further education.

All of the University’s programmes are carefully monitored and evaluated. It takes student feedback
very seriously and the majority of changes made to the programmes have been student-led. Former
Access School students are invited to sit on the Board of Studies that meets twice each year to
discuss policy and practice issues relating to this course.

The University has also published an evaluation study, supported by the Sutton Trust, into post-
Access Summer School experiences of former students. This evaluation has helped to influence a
number of changes made to the course in the last year, principally the introduction of a ‘reality check’
session where former students return to share their experiences with present students.

The Wider Access Study Centre has maintained its research profile and this research has been
published, primarily in the Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning and the European
Access Network conference proceedings. Having a researcher from the Sutton Trust and another
funded by the Royal Bank of Scotland working in the Centre has ensured that research has remained
high on the WASC agenda.

All WASC courses which are fully funded by the University are provided free of charge to participants.
Financial support for students on the Access Summer School – ten weeks of full-time study –
continues to rely heavily on local education authorities and alumni donations, as students attending
are generally not entitled to claim state benefits, yet are also not entitled to any form of support from
the normal student funding bodies. To date, no student has had to reject the opportunity to develop
his or her potential through Access Summer School purely because of financial hardship. As
highlighted in previous assessments of this project (Woodrow et al, 2002; Woodrow et al 1998)
however, the “study or enter paid employment” dilemma for academically able but disadvantaged
students remains the biggest barrier to participation.

**Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS)**
Multi-institutional, based at the University of Edinburgh

**Summary description of the project**
Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) was originally designed to maximise
opportunities for the admission of able students to university, to increase recruitment from under-
represented groups and to increase participation by disadvantaged young people from schools in deprived areas of Edinburgh. LEAPS targeted schools that served the most disadvantaged areas of Edinburgh and in particular those young people whose school careers have been affected by adverse economic or social circumstances.

LEAPS ran a Schools Programme and the LEAPS Summer School. The former aimed to raise young people’s awareness of higher education and the latter aimed to prepare young people for higher education and optimise their chances of success.

LEAPS continues to promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity by facilitating the increased participation and success in higher education of young people (in Edinburgh and the Lothians) whose ability to choose higher education as a post school option and/or to demonstrate or realise their potential may have been inhibited by economic, social or cultural factors.

The LEAPS objectives are to:
- Provide young people and their parents with advice, information and encouragement to consider higher education, accessed directly or through further education, as an attractive and attainable option.
- Provide impartial information and advice about courses and routes to higher education.
- Raise awareness of widening participation issues and the need to challenge traditional assumptions about admissions criteria within higher education institutions and schools.
- Enhance the prospects of young people fulfilling their academic potential by promoting positive attitudes to learning and the acquisition of learning skills to ensure effective transition to and success in higher education.
- Monitor and evaluate student progression into, through and beyond higher education.

The LEAPS Schools Programme aims to raise young people’s awareness of higher education through a range of activities delivered throughout their school career, including:
- Student for a day (secondary 2 and 3)
- Student tutoring (secondary 1 through secondary 6)
- School workshops (secondary 4 through secondary 6)
- Student shadowing (secondary 5)
- On-campus parents information evenings (secondary 2 and 5).

The LEAPS Summer School seeks to:
- Prepare students for university life;
- Help students to develop study and social skills;
- Boost self confidence;
- Reinforce knowledge of subjects studied in greater depth;
- Offer an opportunity to try out subjects not offered at school; and
- Provide an additional opportunity for students to show potential to succeed on a degree course if they do not meet the criteria of their conditional offer.

All 46 state secondary schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians are included in LEAPS. Fifteen are Designated Schools, schools with very poor progression rates to higher education which are eligible for all elements of the LEAPS Schools Programme, including the LEAPS Summer School. Seven are
designated LEAPS Associated Schools, which are eligible for a proportion of the LEAPS activities, and the remaining schools are eligible for Individual Student Support as required.

Within these schools, young people are targeted if they come from households with low income, will be a first generation applicant to higher education or if their studies have been significantly hampered by circumstances outside their control (for example, long term physical or mental illness or disability of a close family member, member of a large or complex family such as a step family/single parent family, living in overcrowded accommodation, experiencing bullying at school or negative peer influence). Eligibility criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure the project is helping those who need the support most.

**Project development**

At the time of the 2002 update, LEAPS was a partnership involving five higher education institutions, four local councils and Career Development Edinburgh and Lothians. Now there are eleven partners: City of Edinburgh Council, West Lothian Council, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Napier University, Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh College of Art, Scottish Agricultural College and Careers Scotland. Adoption of the LEAPS model across a broader geographical area has been proposed using the South East of Scotland Wider Access Regional Forum.

It is difficult to assess project dissemination across individual institutions as LEAPS is a partnership between many institutions. However, across all partner institutions and at “nearly all” UK higher education institutions, a positive LEAPS Summer School report is accepted as evidence of a student’s ability to cope with first year university work. LEAPS Summer School has been highlighted as a best practice example in the Universities Scotland Report ‘Access to Achievement’ and the LEAPS tracking initiative, in collaboration with South East Scotland Wider Access Forum, is attracting attention from individual institutions wishing to adopt similar activity.

It is also difficult to assess the impact of LEAPS because of the nature of the partnership among many institutions. However, for example, changes have been adopted by the University of Edinburgh in relation to its admissions policy which apply across the board. For entry to Medicine, for example, LEAPS eligible students do not necessarily have to obtain the Highers grades for entry at a single sitting if they successfully complete the LEAPS Summer School. The admissions pledge is honoured across all departments and disciplines (including Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh). The LEAPS Director sits on the Advisory Group for the University of Edinburgh Pathways to the Professions initiative. All partner institutions have signed up to the LEAPS pledge which pledges admissions officers to:

- Make offers of places if at all possible to students who are identified as LEAPS eligible.
- Hold open places for LEAPS students who do not meet their conditional offers until reports on their Summer School performance are available.
- Consider admitting any Summer School Student who does not meet their conditions but whose Summer School report shows potential to succeed on the course for which they hold an offer.

Links between LEAPS and its partner institutions are well embedded. Academic and admissions departments reply to LEAPS pre-application enquiries to allow students to know whether they have a chance of gaining access. This can give students a confidence boost particularly if they have had to
cope with difficult circumstances. The LEAPS brand is well recognised and Summer School reports are requested for many students as a matter of course. LEAPS negotiates with academic staff prior to students entering Summer School to ensure they are happy with subject choice.

**Institutional development**

Over the years that LEAPS has been running, progression rates to higher education have risen in 43 of the 46 schools. As LEAPS partners become more adept at identifying eligible young people, the numbers applying to higher education from LEAPS backgrounds have risen. In 2002 just over 500 young people who had been interviewed by LEAPS as part of the Schools Programme progressed to higher education at Scottish institutions. The number rose by 19 per cent (to 596) in 2003 and by a further 27 per cent (to 757) in 2004.

Numbers attending the Summer School have also risen steadily in recent years. In 2002, 125 started of which 90 per cent completed, 85 per cent of whom entered higher education. In 2003, 144 started of which 92 per cent completed, 85 per cent of whom entered higher education. In 2004, 157 started, of which 92 per cent completed and 91 per cent of whom entered higher education. LEAPS students enter a wide range of higher education institutions.

A LEAPS tracking project ([details](http://www.snap.ac.uk/seswarp)) is now under way. Data are available for 328 LEAPS students who have progressed to higher education. Overall, 83 per cent were successful (i.e. gained sufficient credit to allow them to pass on to the next year of study). A combination of factors were significant in predicting success including UCAS score on entry, first generation to attend higher education, subject studied and attendance at the LEAPS Summer School.

Research has had some effect on how LEAPS approaches its work. New developments tend to come about as a result of experience or research through questionnaires. However, practice elsewhere in the UK or beyond informs LEAPS work only in very general terms. For example, LEAPS is doing more work lower down in schools and this is as a result of received wisdom that the earlier higher education is promoted, the more likely it is that awareness will be raised and perceptions changed.

LEAPS underwent a major evaluation in 2000 from which many recommendations have been implemented. The LEAPS Tracking Project is a major piece of long-term evaluation. All activities are evaluated for quality and numbers are also monitored. LEAPS sets annual targets through a Preview Document which is approved by the LEAPS Management Group. These targets are monitored and costed against staff time so that LEAPS partners know the cost of each activity. LEAPS also produces three reports annually, a Schools Programme Report, a Summer School Report and an Annual Report. For the 2004-2008 cycle LEAPS produced a business plan to allow partners and stakeholders to see exactly what is intended for the four year plan and how their investment will be spent.

All LEAPS partners are committed for a further four years. All partners contribute financially to the programme through an agreed formula. Higher education institutions contribute through a percentage of the teaching grant and local authorities match this in proportion to their size. External monies flow into the project from private benefactors, corporate sponsorship and from the South-East Scotland Wider Access Forum though delivery of the programme is not dependent on this external finance.

In 2001 LEAPS a new staffing structure with four full-time staff (headed by a Director) was adopted.
LEAPS has a comprehensive management structure. All partners are represented on the LEAPS Management Group (LMG) by a high level institutional manager and the Director also sits on LMG. The Director and Business Manager report to LMG four times a year. LMG offers advice and guidance as well as scrutiny of business practices, activity and evaluation of the work carried out by LEAPS. The LEAPS Schools Programme and the Summer School also have management groups which deal with specific issues relating to these areas. The partners are also represented on these groups. LEAPS is also represented within the South East Scotland Wider Access Regional Forum.

University of Glamorgan: Compact Scheme
Summary description of the project
The University of Glamorgan’s widening participation initiatives had made considerable progress since 1998. Significant increases have been noted in the level of internal investment and development, trebling the number of partner schools and increasing the extent and range of its activities. The University also saw a proliferation of external partnerships and an expansion of their original target group to include more underachieving pupils in the valleys and to cover inner city areas of Cardiff and Newport.

The compacts and student tutoring initiatives reported in the last Universities UK/SCOP report (2002) have expanded significantly and are now an operational unit, the Community University Schools Programme (CUSP), which is based in the University’s Centre for Lifelong Learning (CeLL). Experience from the compact initiative emphasised the need to intervene at a much younger age to enable engagement with a large number of young people who have no family background of higher education. This has led to a number of new projects and initiatives which also target other minority groups. The University of Glamorgan is now centrally involved in promoting a comprehensive approach to social and cultural community regeneration and the advancement of educational opportunities. This commitment extends through to work being done with adult learners and is founded on establishing key partnerships with local schools, authorities and employers.

Project development
CUSP targets 11 to 16 year olds in disadvantaged educational wards. In addition to the compacts and student tutoring, there is a programme of week long, on-campus work experience placements for 16 to 18 year olds from compact schools.

There are a number of other initiatives and projects run by CUSP and CeLL:
- Partnership Learning through University Schools (PLUS) – a pilot project working with a local comprehensive and one of its feeder primary schools. This programme allows the University to make a significant contribution through an intensive sharing of its resources with the pilot schools and brings together pupils, undergraduates, teachers, lecturers, technicians, administrators, parents and grandparents through a wide range of training and activities.
- First Campus – this project emerged out of the University’s compacts and student tutoring work in 2002 and is in its third year of activity. It is led by CeLL but involves close collaboration with several other higher education institutions and further education colleges. The project introduces younger pupils aged 10 to 16 to campus life and targets disadvantaged learners from low participation neighbourhoods. It also targets students from ethnic minorities, disabled learners and Welsh speakers.
• Mentoring – this is a new development involving close liaison with Cardiff University to launch one-to-one mentoring between undergraduates and compact pupils throughout South East Wales.
• Glamorgan Literature (GlamLit) Festival – an annual two day event since 2002 involving close partnership with the Hay-on-Wye Book Festival. GlamLit invites famous children’s authors to present their work to visiting year 9 and 10 compact students on the campus.

CUSP initiatives and networks have also helped other departments and units within the University to develop a range of widening access initiatives and expertise aimed at cementing links with compact schools.

**Institutional development**

The University’s Widening Access Strategy 2004/05 sets out the specific targets for increasing the diversity of its student enrolments and compact schools portfolio. It is also embedded as a strategic objective in the University’s Strategic Plan 2004 to 2008, its Learning and Teaching Strategy, and the Retention Strategy.

The University of Glamorgan created the CeLL in order to pioneer and coordinate future developments. The involvement of CeLL within the University’s committee and working group structures has led to the embedding of policies within the institution. A departmental base for CUSP and other related activities has created stability, although some of the externally funded projects, such as First Campus, experience volatility because of short-term funding policies.

The approach adopted by CeLL is target driven and this is reflected in CeLL’s departmental one year and five year plans, which are updated every three months through risk assessment interim reports. The First Campus project has a more detailed set of targets, including disability, ethnicity, and Welsh language provision, which are agreed on an annual basis with HEFCW. The use of targets has been extended beyond the secondary school sector and now includes all aspects of the University’s access work, including community delivery for adult learners, and student retention.

The University has an established procedure for processing compact admissions, which involves all departments. A 40-point deduction is made on all offers for courses listed in the compact agreement with schools. Furthermore, a place is guaranteed on the university’s foundation studies programme for all compact students if the reduced points entry requirement is not achieved.

The access rates for school leavers from disadvantaged families, black minority ethnic students and disabled students appear to have improved but the University remains self-critical of its own data and feels it still has much to do, particularly in relation to targeting socio-economic groups IV and V in the most deprived electoral wards in the valleys. The University can confirm that the number of compact nominations being made by sixth form tutors has steadily increased (from 626 in 2001/02, to 1660 in 2004/05).

Induction is a key part of the University’s recruitment and retention strategy. CUSP begins an induction process whilst compact students are still at school by hosting two and three day residential sixth form conferences. Discipline specific master classes follow these up for Years 12 and 13, as well
as key skills workshops on study techniques, learning styles, and critical thinking skills. These experiences help to prepare school-leavers for their arrival at university for full-time study.

Once in higher education, all students have access to education drop-in centres which provide study skills surgeries. The drop-in centres are organised by the Centre for Lifelong Learning, and this ensures continuity in care and support for the many disadvantaged learners that CeLL targets. The drop-in centres are currently preparing study skills materials online through use of a ‘virtual blackboard’ system, allowing further support for students during very busy times of the year.

CeLL also leads the University-wide foundation programme, where pre-degree courses lead into undergraduate study and compact applicants are guaranteed a place, even if they do not get the required grades for a degree programme. The foundation programme also acts as a safety net for students who are struggling with their undergraduate level 1 studies, and who would benefit from stepping back into more introductory programmes rather than withdrawing altogether.

Two recent developments involve close partnership between CeLL and Student Services. First is the creation of a dyslexia centre. In 2003/04 over 430 students were diagnosed with dyslexia by the centre and then received additional support for their studies. Second is the expansion of the Student Finance Centre to include financial counselling for compact students.

All of the University’s initiatives and support systems are open to all students from the start of their studies. Targeted at-risk groups then emerge once lecturers, student services counsellors, the foundation programme team, the student finance centre, and drop-in centre staff identify difficulties. Intervention methods and initiatives, determined by the University’s overall retention strategy, then try to provide as much support as possible prior to students experiencing crisis deadlines.

In addition to central support provided by CeLL and Student Services for the entire student population, academic departments have been encouraged to explore the use of their own student retention centres, and mentoring schemes. Advice shops have now been established successfully in humanities, law and social sciences, and applied sciences and care sciences. The business school has developed a Peer Assisted Student Support (PASS) programme where more advanced students help less advanced learners.

After much debate the University decided that this kind of inclusive strategy for student support ensured more equality when compared to defining and labelling vulnerable at-risk individuals prior to arrival at the University; people who staff and other students may then perceive as having some kind of remedial status.

The University has established a learning and teaching office in order to develop and disseminate good practice. There are numerous examples of learning and teaching innovations in response to widening participation including:

- An accredited postgraduate diploma and masters programme in teaching and learning in higher education.
- A major eLearning programme, offering entire degrees as well as individual modules to learners studying at a distance.
- Progress file initiatives in all academic departments.
• Good practice in detecting plagiarism and in warning students about the dangers of plagiarism.
• Self and peer assessment which uses learning outcomes and transparent assessment criteria.
• Inter-generational and family learning.
• Portfolio and project assessment based on action learning principles.
• Staff development workshops for lecturers and school teachers.

Compacts and First Campus activities have helped staff recognise the need to develop a curriculum that appeals more to the imagination and contemporary experience of teenagers (as well as adult learners in community centres). This has included the use of the Glamorgan Summer Programme for pre-entry courses, but it has also involved the design and validation of higher education awards in broader discipline areas. Examples include: Science and Science Fiction; Astrobiology; Popular Music; Digital Music Technology and Sports Science.

The University has also established a Race and Ethnicity Access to Learning (REAL) project which is developing strategies for increasing recruitment from black and minority ethnicity populations within the UK. A key part of the REAL project is the identification of curriculum areas which have more relevance and impact on black and minority ethnicity groups.

The work of the Centre for Lifelong Learning is monitored annually by the Quality Audit Committee, including student and staff feedback. The First Campus project is also monitored. In 2004 this included a full external evaluation of the mentoring component of the project by the National Foundation for Education Research. The results supported mentoring as an effective way of using undergraduates as positive role models when working with compact pupils.

The University has conducted an internal research study which compared the academic performance of two cohorts of level one undergraduate students with matched non-compact samples, and the results were published recently in the Journal of Post-Compulsory Education. The University’s monitoring and evaluation work has contributed to peer reviewed research output in journals and conference proceedings.

The deputy Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for widening access initiatives and chairs the First Campus steering committee. Widening access and lifelong learning programmes are led by the head of the Centre for Lifelong Learning who reports directly to the deputy vice-chancellor. The Head of CeLL is a member of the academic board, policy committee, quality audit committee, and the teaching heads forum. The Centre for Lifelong Learning is divided into three operational units, each with its own head at principal lecturer level or equivalent. The Centre also convenes a Widening Access Forum which brings together colleagues from different parts of the University in order to share good practice and plan new initiatives.

University of Glasgow: Pre-University Summer School
Summary description of the project
The Pre-University Summer School (PUSS) has run annually at the University of Glasgow since 1986 and was one of the oldest schemes in the 1998 Universities UK/SCOP report. PUSS provides a programme that allows school-leavers from targeted schools in social and economically deprived areas of Glasgow and the West of Scotland an opportunity over the summer to undertake a
programme of study, which can gain them entry to the University of Glasgow and other local HEIs. Good performance provides evidence of potential for students whose Scottish Higher grades would not normally allow entry to HE. In 1998 PUSS was well established and had demonstrated success in facilitating access by disadvantaged local students into a Russell Group university. Retention rates were good and it was recognised that these students "contributed great value to the ethos of the University". By 2001 there had been a considerable increase in the number of participants, schools and LEAs involved. It had been relocated to the student recruitment and admissions service and was receiving many more students referred by university admissions departments. Despite its success, the scheme was in 2001 under considerable financial pressure as funding had been reduced.

The work of PUSS continues in 2005 and its target group remains largely similar. At its height it enrolled approximately 300 students; in 2004 there were 229 students accepted to PUSS and 165 entrants to the University, the decline in numbers over the years possibly being due to the increasing need for prospective undergraduates to work during the summer prior to entering university.

Most participant schools are Greater Opportunity for Access and Learning with Schools (GOALS) schools, though some GOALS schools outside the geographical reach of PUSS (for example on Islay, and in Ayrshire) are now involved. Some other participant schools are assessed as being in deprived areas even though they are not in GOALS. The involvement of some geographical areas in PUSS became constrained by the break-up of Strathclyde region in 1996, and subsequently, of the new local authorities, only Glasgow City has regularly financially supported the Summer School.

**Project development**

PUSS has gradually moved from being a departmental activity to becoming a centralised core provision. It started in the Department of Education where it was located until 1992. From 1992 to 1999, it was in the Department of Adult and Continuing Education and from 1999 to 2001 in Student Recruitment and Admissions. From 2001, the Director of PUSS has reported to the Head of the Widening Participation Service who, in turn, reports to the Academic Secretary. PUSS has links with almost every area which impinges on the life of undergraduates, eg admissions, the advisory service, academic departments, the library, the students' union, the registry, the support services, the careers service, the sports and recreation service. The University now provides the vast majority of the funding to support PUSS with some additional cash from some local education authorities. The students have also benefited from a bursary scheme provided by the Royal Bank of Scotland (2002/2004).

Research in continuing medical and pharmaceutical education convinced the University that relevance was the most important feature of the curriculum. Accordingly, it reports that it aims to ensure that everything at the PUSS is relevant to what the student will encounter as an undergraduate. The University's own data referring to access figures (see below) via the Summer School and details of the students' progress when at the University have influenced development.

PUSS work has now been made available to all students who accept an offer, conditional or unconditional, from the Faculties of Science at the University. Furthermore it remains the University's policy that students at any of the 45 participant schools can attend PUSS regardless of which universities they have applied to. The Student Recruitment and Admissions Service also refer applicants to the Pre-University Summer School.
For the most part, the University admits by faculty and not by department. There is now a regulatory arrangement with the Faculties of Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences and the School of Divinity whereby applicants who do not meet their conditions of entry in their Scottish Highers are accepted for their chosen course should their PUSS performance reach stated standards. Otherwise, entry to all faculties at the University is at the discretion of appropriate admissions officers, all of whom are prepared to consider students on the basis of their PUSS performance. Many admissions officers at other universities also take applicants’ PUSS performance into account when determining entry. Over the years PUSS has acquired considerable credibility as access currency beyond the University.

One of PUSS’s main aims is to prepare students for university life and work. The first week is an induction course and students can attend this element of the provision only; this week now also forms the basis for the University’s Orientation Programme for all entrants. Every year a letter goes to all former PUSS students believed to be at the University reminding them to get in touch should they feel the need for advice, and every year some 20 to 30 former PUSS students will seek advice.

The University does not differentiate in its teaching between undergraduates on the basis of social background. Nonetheless, many support networks and activities exist, available to all students, which are brought to the attention of former PUSS students by word of mouth and letter. Much of this work is undertaken within the Widening Participation Service.

In addition to running the pre-entry course, PUSS runs a ‘Taster Week’ in June for school students who have only just entered S5 (the fifth year of secondary education in Scotland). This programme gives youngsters who will be sitting Highers in the following May the opportunity to be at university for a week, to experience for themselves what it is like being a student and try out subjects which they might be interested in. The aim is to make university as attractive as possible so that they will consider it as an option after finishing school. There are also several other initiatives designed to help students from under-represented groups, but these are part of the Widening Participation Service’s and/or departments’ activities and not within the remit of PUSS. These include, for example, the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Network.

PUSS holds data on students who attended the summer school and who proceeded to an HEI. These data provide information as to whether an individual entered via an ‘assisted’ place (i.e., based on PUSS performance and otherwise ineligible based on Highers grades alone) and if so to which university and faculty. In 2004, 118 students proceeded from PUSS to university level study, of whom 33 received an assisted place. Of the 118, 62 proceeded to the University of Glasgow, 41 to other universities, and 15 elsewhere. More detailed data, by faculty and for other years, are available.

Students at Glasgow are tracked throughout their period of study. More generally, whilst numbers proceeding to the University of Glasgow are known, the contribution that these students make to overall changes in widening participation targets is not monitored. It is argued by the University of Glasgow that PUSS in itself may not necessarily lead to increased numbers from target groups entering its own provision. It argues that PUSS is not only about access but also induction, and it is provision that does not exclusively target the University alone as an exit point representing success.

The reported non-completion figure for the University of Glasgow is 14 per cent. Between 1996 and 1999 inclusive 40 PUSS students from the participant schools were given an “assisted” place, of
whom 32 gained a degree (i.e., a 20 per cent dropout rate). However, it is argued that these students would not otherwise have entered the University had they not attended PUSS. In other words, these 32 students who got degrees were not eligible under traditional entry methods. It is also noted that in that same period, 1996 to 1999, 100 PUSS students were admitted to universities other than Glasgow to an “assisted place” on the basis of a good Summer School performance. Their progress in higher education is unknown. Retention initiatives established more recently may help to improve retention rates.

Institutional development
PUSS and other widening participation (WP) activities form part of the strategic objectives of the University of Glasgow. The university’s future shape and direction include and support for PUSS and widening participation more generally. PUSS has informed central policy imperatives, in particular the orientation and retention direction of the University. It is likely that PUSS will expand and develop further to accommodate a yet more diverse student body including FE students.

PUSS has successfully impacted on other areas within the University, for example, the establishment of the Orientation Programme, The University and Its Ways, a plenary session introducing students to university life which is now available to all freshers in September. Initiatives such as the IT Certificate of Competence (required now by all students before proceeding to second year) and the Introduction to the University Library (again available to all freshers) also have their origins in PUSS. Furthermore, several aspects of the GOALS project are developments from PUSS activities.

University of Lincoln: AimingHigher (formerly the Access to Higher Education Project)

Summary description of the project
The Access to Higher Education Project originally targeted pupils from the age of 14 who were identified by participating schools as having the potential to succeed but who would not consider higher education as a possibility. The project initially targeted pupils in Hull and was then expanded to include schools in disadvantaged areas in three additional Local Education Authorities (North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire). The University’s unique offer of accreditation of prior experience for school pupils became embedded in its admissions procedures.

Access to new sources of funding has led to the expansion of the existing Access to Higher Education Project and the development of new initiatives, which all now come under the University’s AimingHigher programme. This expansion has seen the target group widen geographically to include additional local areas of deprivation. The University has also adopted a wider social focus and now takes in issues of rural isolation and economic deprivation in addition to its initial focus on urban issues and satellite estates. The Government’s AimingHigher initiative has contributed to the expanding the AimingHigher Project beyond schools, including students in further and higher education, young unemployed adults, and young people in work-based and related learning.

Project development
The AimingHigher project has continued and begun to run alongside and support the national AimingHigher agenda. In addition to the expansion noted in the Universities UK/SCOP Social Class and Participation (2002) report, three schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire now form an Excellence Cluster, and have been brought into the programme through funding from the European Social Fund.
Additional work, bringing Key Stage 2 pupils into the “grown-up university”, has developed with the Hull Children’s University.

In partnership with Hull Excellence in Cities (EiC) and the University of Hull, the Achievers in Excellence initiative brings over 300 of the most able Year 8 pupils from state schools in Hull into both Hull and Lincoln Universities, and the pupils work towards a ‘graduation ceremony’ where they receive guaranteed standard offers from both institutions.

In partnership with Aimhigher Humber, the University also runs a ‘Summer University’ for Year 9 pupils. Initially places were offered to pupils from Hull, then in 2004 they were run for the whole of the North Bank area, and in 2005 they will be run for the whole Humber region.

The University is also a pilot institution for the Teacher Training Agency’s Aimhigher Student Associate scheme, primarily within schools already involved in AimingHigher in Lincolnshire (which has the larger campus).

**Institutional development**

The University’s widening participation strategy was drafted by a broad team including staff from education partnerships, widening participation, teaching and learning development, learning support, disability support, student support, recruitment and marketing, staff development, and faculty representatives. Wide consultation took place beyond this group, and subsequent University and faculty development plans are checked against this widening participation strategy.

The University’s primary focus is still on reaching school pupils in disadvantaged communities, although the initial focus on urban issues in inner city and satellite estates has expanded to take in rural isolation and economic deprivation.

Resulting in part from Aimhigher, the project is also expanding beyond schools, and starting to work with students in further education and 6th forms (particularly with students in Centres of Vocational Excellence areas of study), young unemployed adults, and young people in work-based and related learning. An additional Aimhigher Humber funded project will provide staff development for corporate parents and develop support materials for carers, to assist in supporting and raising the aspirations of young people in care.

At the time of the *Social Class and Participation* (2002) report, the University stated that “initially the early conditional offer, and its methodology of offering accreditation of prior experience for pupils still in schools, was seen as a major departure from normal practice, but is now embedded across the institution”. This embedding means that the conditions of the early offer apply equally to all programmes. Interestingly, only a handful of applicants have needed to make use of the enhanced credit available to them.

Access rates to University have exceeded the 2001/02 locally adjusted HEFCE benchmarks for young full-time first degree students.

The University’s teaching and learning strategy reflects the importance of induction to the institution’s approach. The strategy states that “for students, the shift in learning practices will require highly
effective learning induction systems that are designed to enable all students, whatever their abilities, to confidently engage with their faculty's learning environment. We regard effective induction as playing a major part in retention of students.”

The University’s retention strategy includes all students rather than targeting different groups of students. This strategy is supported by initiatives such as the reform of the academic year (see below), the induction and training of new and current staff, as well as a well-articulated strategy for teaching and learning. These reforms help to embed a philosophy of care and support for students throughout their stay with the University.

The teaching and learning strategy has involved changes to the institution’s semester pattern. Under this new semester pattern, student learning activities recommence immediately following the Christmas and Easter vacations, but formal examinations will not be available as a means of summative assessment at the end of the first semester. Students return to structured learning activities (which may include in-class tests) rather than to the hurdle of formal examinations, perceived by many as a potentially isolating and stressful experience. It is expected that this will help to reduce the incidence of students choosing not to return to the University after the Christmas break.

Beyond teaching and learning there are issues around the socialisation of students. One response the University has developed is to aim to allocate student residence places tactically to encourage friendships to develop amongst groups of first year students from the same courses.

The teaching and learning strategy specifically addresses the link between widening participation and curriculum design, and states “Widening participation involves attracting higher numbers of students from under-represented socio-economic groups. For these students, and all others, this Learning and Teaching Strategy seeks to create a level playing field by continuously designing the curriculum and learning environment in such a way as to make transparent what a student is trying to achieve, how they can achieve it, and how their achievement is going to be assessed. Making available online learning activities that are integrated into the curriculum means that, particularly during the first year, students will find support which will enable them to develop the confidence and ability to become self-directed learners. Although access to the University’s virtual learning environment does of course require a computer, it nevertheless does improve access to learning resources, and delivers the potential to increase the flexibility of study modes.” It is worth noting that AimingHigher, the University's access programme, which includes outreach to schools, makes use of a version of the 'virtual campus' as a means of promoting continuity with higher education.

The University’s approach to widening participation has been informed by the use of national and local data to identify target areas, groups and schools. The University’s widening participation work has also been supported through various formal and informal networks of practitioners in the United Kingdom. In addition, the University has made use of HEFCE and Action on Access publications, as well as the From Elitism to Inclusion (1998) and Social Class and Participation (2002) reports, and has used this research to inform their initiatives.

All of the key access projects run by the University operate with a mix of both internal and external funding, including the European Social Fund and Aimhigher funding.
Overall responsibility for the widening participation programme lies with the pro vice-chancellors and then flows through the University structure.

Liverpool John Moores University: Compact Partnerships Scheme
Summary description of the project
The Compact Partnerships Scheme provides higher education preparation, guaranteed places, and student tutoring for sixth-formers in 24 partner schools in the poorest parts of Liverpool. Following a thematic review of the University’s widening participation work in 1998, funding for the compact scheme was stopped in favour of a more mainstreamed approach to meeting the needs of non-traditional students. The widening participation activities that superseded the compact scheme involved outreach work, summer schools, targeted marketing, progression guidance, and student volunteering in local schools. The advent of the Government’s Aimhigher initiative, which took on similar activities to the compact scheme, meant that the University had, to a certain extent, kept the original links they had built up with their compact schools.

The University has maintained its approach of mainstreaming widening participation whilst forging strong links with external initiatives. The University now works with more schools and the way Aimhigher work is structured and delivered at Liverpool John Moores has evolved from the earlier compact scheme. The University now targets the northwest region and sub-region of Merseyside and Aimhigher work is concentrated in the widening participation department focusing on the further education sector. With Aimhigher funding there is a strong focus on vocational areas and a concentration on addressing skills shortages rather than education for its own sake.

Project development
Although the Compact Partnerships Scheme no longer exists, the University’s widening participation activities are still broadly based on what was delivered during that scheme. The University has been able to extend that approach to a much wider group. The University’s widening participation unit now forms part of the student recruitment and widening access unit and the recent merger of these two functions is working very well.

Liverpool John Moores is the biggest provider of higher education (HE) in Merseyside with a large number of students from the widening participation target groups. Through Aimhigher the University works in partnership with three other higher education institutions (HEIs) in Merseyside. The University now works with more schools, which are selected by the Aimhigher local education authority coordinators based on matching the University’s activities to the schools where it will have the greatest impact.

The University has mainstreamed its widening participation activity across all faculties and this has led to developments across the institution such as: post-entry learner support; alternative routes into higher education through the Liverpool John Moore University Foundation Degree Consortium; and financial support to widening participation students through scholarships and bursaries.

The widening participation programme is linked to other practical initiatives within the institution including:
• Campus centres which provide single point delivery for support services that are not directly linked to teaching and assessment.
• Students’ learning difficulties/needs are assessed and an effective support package is put in place.
• Employability curriculum development provides critical teaching materials for motivating students to take control of their career planning.
• Students are encouraged to take up work based learning.
• Aspiration raising elements of the Aimhigher project are continued post-entry, focusing on employability and career development.
• Strong links have been developed with the students’ union. Undergraduates are recruited as role models for school and college visits.
• The creation of a mature students’ dedicated post.
• Staff and student volunteering projects support widening participation activity in schools and colleges.
• Equal opportunities co-ordinators have been appointed across the institution.
• Successful external projects include work with Aimhigher, the Teacher Training Agency, and the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth.

Institutional development
This widening participation work has informed the institution’s 2003 to 2005 learning, teaching and assessment strategy which has specific focus on enhancing the students’ learning experience to ensure it is inclusive and accessible. The University’s human resources strategy has also been influenced and now includes a focus on staff development for developing new ways of working with increasingly diverse learners.

The University has a long-standing history of success in recruiting a diverse student population and this continues to be the case. Over sixty per cent of students at Liverpool John Moores are from widening participation target groups.

The University’s induction strategy involves an academic induction which begins on the first Monday and runs for up to a week. An induction to the University then takes place over the weekend co-ordinated with the students’ union, the halls of residence, the police and the university support services department. A new induction programme is being developed to explore the possibility of offering a mentoring system for first-year undergraduates to aid student retention.

Liverpool John Moores is implementing new methods to support its retention strategy following recommendations made by the learning support team, including:
• A rigorous support system for students with disabilities.
• Needs assessments that are linked to learner support resources.
• A learner support system aimed at mainstreaming students.
• Students’ needs assessed in a holistic manner.
• Students’ progress checked regularly against specific targets to ensure that they don’t slip through the net.

It has undertaken a wide range of development work on its learning and teaching practices and staff development has focused on learner support. Every faculty has appointed a member of staff to the
staff development and learner support group and the aim is to develop a new mainstreamed support system for all students rather than aiming separate tailored support at different target groups.

Curriculum developments have involved the production of a curriculum design guide, a learner support guide and an e-learning good practice guide. The learner support guide is used by programme teams in annual programme self-assessment, programme review and validation. The University has also started offering staff development opportunities to staff supporting teaching and learning. Its approach to widening participation has been informed by a survey of other institutions and Action on Access developments, particularly through Aimhigher.

Widening participation is a core activity within the University and funds are distributed institutionally and also supported by external project funding streams for targeted widening participation activity. All faculties are involved in widening participation work. The funding that goes to the faculties includes an amount for widening participation.

The University's widening participation activity is supported at a senior level by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for marketing and collaborative partnerships who is the senior management group member with a remit for widening access. The University has also appointed a Faculty Dean as the institutional representative for widening participation and a Director of Student Recruitment and Widening Access.

London Guildhall University (now London Metropolitan University): Bengali Education Advice Centre (BEAC)

Summary description of the project
The project's original aims and objectives were to enable people primarily from the local Bangladeshi communities to benefit from higher education. The project provided information, guidance and counselling. More importantly, it acted as a 'cultural mediator' between the University and an under-represented ethnic minority community in the East London area. The project focused upon Bangladeshi families who had no previous education experience. The widening participation programme was mainly concerned with young Bangladeshi people aged 18 to 19. The programme, by absolute necessity, engaged with the wider cultural community to assist/enable young Muslim women especially to engage with HE.

The aims and objectives remain the same but the BEAC unit is now part of a larger Widening Participation (WP)Unit at London Metropolitan University which targets other under-represented ethnic minority groups.

Project development
The project continues to support and facilitate the participation of students from the Bangladeshi Communities in the University's catchment area. The knowledge and expertise of the team has been utilised by both academic and professional services departments across the University. In so doing the BEAC team works very closely with the Department of Applied Social Studies and delivers a seminar programme which focuses upon the nature and ethos of its widening participation work. The WP Unit also works closely with the Schools and Colleges Liaison Unit.
Since the initial assessment in the report *From Elitism to Inclusion* (Woodrow et al., 1998), London Metropolitan University has built upon the original BEAC format, through its widening participation unit, to currently have in place “a range of key outreach workers who include African Caribbean, Turkish, Somali and specific Asian Women team members … a Community Learning Co-ordinator has been appointed to work alongside the outreach workers”. The BEAC programme has grown to a position whereby there are currently 477 students of Bangladeshi origin as undergraduates at London Metropolitan with a further 674 students studying at postgraduate levels or on other courses (1,151 in total). When the first study (Woodrow et al., 1998) was undertaken there were just over 400 students of Bangladeshi origin at the then London Guildhall University.

In an institutional sense, the project is linked to:
- Academic departments across the University as an available advisory service;
- Student support services;
- The newly formed ‘Admissions and Community Education Enquiries Unit’;
- Aimhigher; and
- The Employability Unit.

**Institutional Development**

All teaching departments now have a widening participation staff member to support a wide range of initiatives and to liaise with the WP Unit. It was suggested that the project absolutely reflects the institution’s long-term commitment to widening participation. In addition, that a planned merger between the College of London – within which the WP Unit sits – and the Department of Education to create a new Centre for Lifelong Learning, demonstrates the University’s commitment to the long-term stability of the project.

Whilst the fact that the WP Unit and Admissions were in the same Department previously and “helped shape the admissions strategy across much, but not all, of the University”, London Metropolitan retains a single admissions policy that governs applications to all courses. Students from the target group are not treated any differently to other applicants. Target students, like all students, can avail themselves of the services of the Learning Development Unit. Students are not directly admitted through the BEAC Unit or the WP Unit as a part of the College of London. Thus, they are ‘in the system’ like any other student.

The University has Level 0 courses in place to develop the skills of applicants who may not yet be ready to engage with undergraduate study and Literacy and Numeracy courses are organised each summer for applicants who do not possess GCSE Maths and English equivalents. The University also currently offers foundation degrees in nineteen different subjects and delivers at Level 0 in Business Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Computing, Electronics and Mathematics.

Currently, there is no tracking or monitoring of WP students at undergraduate level taking place. In addition, there is no evidence that this project has been influenced by research from within or without the institution.

The work of the WP Unit, of which the BEAC project is a part, is seen as a core activity by senior management. The Head of the WP Unit and Community Learning Unit is also the Director of the College of London and is directly responsible for these areas of work. This person sits on the University’s Strategy Committee and chairs the Widening Participation Steering Group.
University of Manchester: Targeted Access Scheme (TAS)

Summary description of the project

The project’s main objective was to raise aspirations and increase awareness of higher education (HE) in disadvantaged schools in deprived areas of Manchester. As a part of this process, the project delivered new learning opportunities to disadvantaged young people and attempted to counter underachievement by raising awareness of opportunities available in further education (FE) and HE. The project specifically targeted first-generation entry to HE pupils, disadvantaged young people aged 13 to 18, and pupils who have academic ability but who underachieve due to family circumstances.

Currently, widening participation activities are focused upon the 13 to 16 age group, rather than concentrating upon year 12 and 13 students. This is the result of a recognition that many potential students are effectively debarring themselves from applying to HE by failing to select appropriate FE routes.

Project development

The project continues to work with 23 high schools in Manchester, which are a part of the Government’s Excellence in Cities initiative.

The Targeted Access Scheme (TAS) approach has been disseminated widely within the institution and is now described as integral to the University of Manchester’s new strategic plan ‘Towards Manchester 2015’. The TAS project is seen as the University’s flagship widening participation project.

The TAS ethos and practice is reflected within the University’s Widening Participation and Admissions policy documents. Admissions tutors have received formal training in TAS aims and process to ensure consistency of approach to TAS students throughout the institution. TAS also has links with the national Excellence in Cities and Aimhigher initiatives.

Institutional development

TAS is described as having influenced the strategic development of Manchester’s approach to widening participation. The project’s focus on aspiration raising activities, to counter low levels of participation in HE, was central to the development of the University’s new strategic plan. Within this plan the TAS programme is a longer term commitment which contributes significantly to securing some of the key aspects of social inclusion through participation at higher education levels. The scheme has been central in enabling the institution to reach students from under-represented groups. However, the primary role of TAS has been to widen the pool of potential applicants to HE rather than act as a recruitment tool for the University of Manchester alone.

In relation to the tracking and monitoring of participants it was confirmed that “TAS has never been a scheme designed to recruit to Manchester alone …the number of participants being accepted to this University (Manchester) is therefore not a key indicator of success…” (Project Co-ordinator 2005). However, as the scheme evolves, it is Manchester’s stated aim to monitor applications from TAS participants and to develop tracking and evaluation processes to enable this monitoring to take place.

The University has developed a number of induction and on-going support mechanisms for all students. Student support is offered through the Central Academic Advisory Service, Peer Assisted Study Support and a ‘one stop shop’ Student Services Centre. Moreover, Manchester has developed
a number of foundation progression route opportunities through Year 0 programmes in Science, Engineering and Life Sciences. TAS participants are referred to these schemes if necessary. Whilst there was no evidence of social class participation and no records of TAS student entry to Manchester, or elsewhere, research undertaken by colleagues within the WP Office provided information on aspirations of Year 11 pupils. This was administered across six high schools in the Manchester area.

It was suggested that by the end of the 2003/04 academic year 2200 pupils had been involved in TAS and that as a result of the questionnaires sent to participants the University was aware that:
- For students studying at FE, contact was established with 27 per cent of the original cohort and 97.5 per cent were undertaking post-16 qualifications;
- For students studying at HE, contact was established with 14 per cent of the cohort and 52 per cent had begun HE courses in 2003 with 17 per cent commencing their courses in 2004;
- 14 per cent of the cohort applied to Manchester for entry in 2004 (40 students), 24 were offered a place and 15 accepted. A further five accepted places elsewhere across the UK.

Widening participation funding received by Manchester is ring-fenced for widening participation (WP) activities. TAS is a beneficiary of this external funding. The University’s Vice President chairs the Board of Communications and External Relations to which strategic issues on WP are directed. The University’s Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions chairs the WP Forum.

The University of Manchester employed an external consultant to report on the progress of TAS for each year 2001/02 to 2003/04 but only an abridged version for 2003/04 was available at the time of the case study update.

Middlesex University: Compact and Progression Agreement

Summary description of the project
Originally a strongly targeted compact scheme designed in 1998 to increase participation among some of the poorest communities in North London, this work was included in a HEFCE funded widening participation project and re-launched in 2001 from a new central base within Middlesex registry. The project has continued, developed and been integrated with a range of other existing measures intended not just to improve participation of under-represented groups, but to improve the readiness of those groups for higher education and to recognise the ability, talent and motivation needed to progress to HE.

Project development
The Compact arrangements, in their original form, have not proved popular in the longer term with schools or students for a number of reasons and are being modified into a simpler portfolio entry scheme, which operates in addition to the standard progression agreements with established partner schools and colleges. This work is implemented across the whole of the University by the Education Liaison and Admissions Teams in Academic Registry under the supervision of the Deputy Academic Registrar. This and other schemes are monitored by the Widening Participation Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Student Lifecycle Group at which managers and other staff are present.
Institutional development
Widening access and related activities have been central to University policies since being established in 1992. This initiative, and indeed the whole of their strategy towards widening access, is longstanding, stable and long-term. The same target group has been retained and the scope extended to FE colleges and to adult learners. There are standard entry qualifications and compact and progression agreements are used for most subjects at Middlesex. However, courses such as those in Law, Dance and Drama, which, because of popularity, select rather than recruit, have proved reticent about improving access from the target groups.

No data was provided in this case. However, the respondent offered published data, eg HESA data and newspaper league tables, coupled with an assurance that ‘high proportions’ of target group students had been maintained for many years.

All induction and support has been developed over many years in response to a highly diverse student intake and is mainstreamed. The University takes the view that it is opposed to singling out any specific group for learning support and help is provided to all students according to need. In the first year, all students undertake modules dedicated, sometimes in a subject specific way, to developing transferable learning skills. During these modules, students with particular support needs are identified and directed to the appropriate service.

Monitoring of this work is conducted by the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee of the Academic Board, which is chaired by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Tracking of individual students has proved difficult with the old database, but the system currently being installed will enable much closer tracking and reporting on this.

Staff at Middlesex attend conferences under the Aimhigher and Widening Participation banners, as well as networking amongst other Aimhigher partnerships and similar groups. As banker for the Aimhigher North London Partnership, they are in touch with London Regional and National Aimhigher groups and use these information sources to develop a critical understanding of best practice.

It was considered most unlikely that the data collected at the institution on the project would provide any significant measure of the success or failure of the compact strategy, in the context of many new strategies for access, progression, retention and achievement and the very low take-up of the offer by students in schools and colleges. Overall figures indicate a steady state of widening access – well above national benchmarks for all groups, and a consistent and improving retention rate.

Running the and progression agreements and compact arrangements is a core activity run by the Admissions Office together with the London Region Recruitment Officer. Widening participation is under the overall guidance of the Deputy Academic Registrar (Recruitment, European and Collaborative Programmes) together with the Dean of Lifelong Learning and Education who chairs the Widening Participation Committee.

Newman College of Higher Education: The Inner City Network Community Project
Under the first widening participation project, Newman College developed two different approaches. The first was a new method of assessing student errors in academic writing in order to provide better
targeted support. The study brought out the very real difficulties that some groups had in adjusting to academic discourse and also showed the particular challenges faced by those for who English was not their mother tongue. A second strand of this project illustrated the differing responses of different subject disciplines to students’ writing. As a result of the findings a staff development programme was run which enabled staff to improve the quality of their response to written work.

The second approach to widening participation was the development of a part time work-based programme for Early Years practitioners. This programme was highly successful in supporting many mature women back into higher education and in addressing barriers to career progression for women.

The work from both programmes has been embedded into the College’s mainstream work and the early years programme has gone from strength to strength, resulting in major growth in this work.

The most recent project developed by the College to enhance its work in widening participation is the development of a certificate in higher education targeted at those students who do not achieve the grades needed for degree level study. The certificate enables students with two poor A-levels or one good A-level and two AS levels to start a higher education qualification, which enables them to develop their academic skills, their self-confidence and their understanding of what higher education is about. If they complete the year successfully, students are then offered a place on their chosen degree course. The programme has been successful in bringing students back from a point where they might have abandoned their higher education ambitions and rebuilding confidence. Progression rates have been good with around 86 per cent of students progressing into the full degree programme.

Nottingham Trent University: Progression Partnerships

Summary description of the project

The aim of the Progression Partnerships initiative is to raise the aspirations and attainment of local young people aged 12 to 19 to enable them to achieve their potential and access HE. It operates within a 30 mile radius of Nottingham City where educational attainment and progression rates to further and higher education are low. It adopts the ‘continual presence’ strategy and focuses in six key areas: the School Activities Programme, the Admissions Compact Scheme, the Students in Classrooms schemes, the Access Programme, Activities Breaks, and the Active in Communities Project.

Project development

The Progression Partnerships work continues to expand. The number of primary and secondary schools and colleges has increased from 11, 44 and 16 respectively in 2002/3 to 30, 64 and 21 in 2004/5. It now concentrates its activities in five Mini Education Action Zones around primary school projects, which support children through into secondary school. It also works with the transition coordinators in the secondary schools so that there is continuity of support for the same group of pupils when they progress to secondary school programmes in Years 7 and 8.

Through its six key areas Progression Partnerships has been successful in reaching students from under-represented groups. It keeps its ‘continual presence’ approach in primary and secondary
schools for the School Activities Programme. The Admissions Compact Scheme has extended its programme of pre-entry support to include additional events involving parents of potential students, pre-entry study support and pre and post entry social events for ‘home’ students. In Students in Classrooms, undergraduates work alongside teachers to raise attainment in local schools thereby complementing activity to raise aspirations also being carried out in the same schools. The Access Programme, piloted in three Further Education Colleges, encouraging and supporting students during the transition to HE, has now been extended to five Colleges. A range of subject and Year specific ‘activity breaks’, designed to raise aspirations, stimulate career interests and support attainment, has been introduced to include:

- Fresh Air – a two-day non-residential for Year 10 inner city pupils focused on subject areas not traditionally considered, eg horticulture, animal science, equine studies;
- Real Experience – a two-day non-residential for students considering apprenticeships to demonstrate progression routes to HE through training providers, Further Education Colleges and university foundation degrees;
- Up2U – a five-day part-residential for Year 11 students: comprising a three-day Easter Revision School followed by a two-day higher education experience in June with a range of academic ‘tasters’ in order to experience HE teaching and learning styles;
- Eurostars – a two-day residential for Year 12 students focusing on improving modern foreign language skills and raising awareness of graduate employment opportunities available from Modern and Foreign Language degrees;
- Year 6 – a two-day non-residential summer school focusing on curriculum development and the transition to Year 7;
- Crime Theme Day and Construction Theme Day – for Year 10 students focusing on study programmes and career progression in higher education; and
- Year 11 Transition Programme – a series of events running throughout the year for targeted Year 11 students and also one-off Year 11 events with revision in core GCSE areas of Maths, Science and English.

The Active in Communities Project facilitates links with widening participation activity and enables complementary provision to be developed around support for schools, eg sports coaching, after school clubs, mentoring.

Progression Partnerships has a person with responsibility for Marketing who liaises with Press and PR over opportunities to ‘spread the word’ about the work of the team more widely. It disseminates news about programme activities and strategy through:

- Induction talks to all new members of staff, both academic and support;
- Talks at programme leaders conferences;
- Staff development events for staff from all academic Colleges;
- INTUNE Newsletter published twice a year;
- Friends of College newsletter e-mailed once a month;
- Articles in staff magazine, Grapevine;
- Sessions delivered through PGCE (HE) programme; and
- Two national conferences (2003 Forward Thinking and 2004 Students in Classrooms).
The team evaluates all its activities through participant questionnaires and SPSS, which are then used to review practice and feed into planning for the coming academic year. The Data Officer (Widening Participation) works across Student Support Services and Progression Partnerships to provide data analysis as requested. Progression Partnerships continues to concentrate on young people from low socio-economic backgrounds in low participation neighbourhoods. However, as its widening participation work within the University expands, many of its activities have become mainstream provisions thus benefiting a wider range of students.

**Institutional development**

Progression Partnerships is not a project anymore. It is funded through institutional premium and all staff are on full-time contracts. It has made its presence felt across the institution and its work has informed the University’s new strategic plan 2004 to 2009 and the Access Agreement. With its involvement in the various committees, particularly the Institutional Learning and Teaching Continuation Strategy Management Committee, the Centre for Academic Practice and Friends of the College, it is much more ‘stitched into’ the University structure than it was in 1998. This has enabled it to make an impact on the University’s outreach, student support and retention, and curriculum development strategies.

The Friends of College scheme was established two years ago to pair up Progression Partnerships team members with a link in a particular College within the University to promote outreach work. The team members are responsible for liaison with the College, delivering staff development events, promoting new courses and assisting with marketing. The College contacts support the team in engaging academics to participate in widening participation events. This, and increasing awareness of the types of activities organised by the Progression Partnerships team, has resulted in a big increase in the number of academic staff supporting events. Consequently, activities involving academics have expanded considerably over the last three years.

The Progression Partnerships ‘continual presence’ strategy in schools has been adopted by the Access Programme in offering pre-entry support for Access students operating from the time they enrol on an Access programme through to entry to their chosen higher education study programme. The Admissions Compact Scheme has grown considerably and remains university-wide in its scope. This route continues to feed students to ‘recruiting’ as well as ‘selecting’ programmes of study, and in particular, to the Business School. Over 750 students have enrolled at the University through this scheme over the last three years. The School of Art and Design works with schools and colleges through Progression Partnerships schemes to try and target students from different areas.

The Careers Service within the university actively supports events run by the team, getting involved in activity breaks by delivering skills sessions and CV writing, and also promotes Students in Classrooms opportunities to undergraduates looking to progress to a career in teaching or interested in developing and evidencing their key transferable skills. The team liaise closely with Student Support Services, especially through initiatives such as the Access programme, which involves the University’s Mature Student Advisor. The team also jointly employs, with Student Support Services, a Student Finance Officer who works 50 per cent of her time with the outreach team and 50 per cent supporting enrolled students.
The union of students supports the work by delivering talks and tours as part of visits to the University organised by the Progression Partnerships team and the Student Welfare Officer sits on the Steering Group for the Active in Communities volunteering project. The Head of Student Support Services, Head of Graduate Careers and Director of the Centre for Academic Practice sit on the Steering Group for Progression Partnerships.

Integrated Study Support has been included in lectures and seminars as the norm rather than as a bolt on measure. Each school has developed activities tailored to the needs of its undergraduates. These have included peer ‘buddying’, attendance monitoring, increased pastoral support, additional study support, social events and research projects. Dissemination of outcomes has been carried out through the annual Teaching and Learning Conference and through individual seminars. Successful initiatives have been mainstreamed. This provision is of benefit to all undergraduates, but in certain cases has directly targeted students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Three programmes run by the Progression Partnerships team specifically support retention through improved pre-entry information, advice and skills development. These are: Access Programme; Post-16 Programme; and Admission Compact Scheme (ACS). These programmes run a range of pre and post entry activities designed to smooth transition and support retention including skills development, financial advice, associate reader status at the library and activities for family members. Attendance monitoring has helped to provide an early indication of who might be at risk and thus need intervention. ACS students are monitored to see if non-completion rates are lower than for students from non-traditional backgrounds who have not received these interventions.

The Progression Partnerships team, through the development of Year 11 Transition activities, is facilitating the exchange of curriculum ideas in subject areas of Maths, Science and English. As more academic staff become involved in activities with schools, this is encouraging an awareness of learning styles and teaching methods – eg the development by the College of Science and Technology of a ‘Students in Classrooms’ academic module for Science undergraduates and co-ordination of Science activity with local schools to develop curriculum provision.

To support and facilitate the work of the Progression Partnerships a widening participation ‘base room’ has been created. It is a showcase room equipped to a high standard with the latest technology (interactive whiteboard, optical image enhancer, touch screen projection equipment) to be used for visits to the university by pupils, parents and staff and other Progression Partnerships activities. The room is also used two days each week as a general teaching room, which enables university lecturers and students to find out more about widening participation activities. The creation of the ‘base room’ has given the Progression Partnerships visibility and status within the University. It remains true, as it did in 1998 and 2002, that without high-level support from the Vice-Chancellor and the Strategic Leadership Group the work of Progression Partnerships, within the institution and beyond, would not have been so successful.

Sheffield University: Early Outreach Programme (EOP) and Compact Scheme

Summary description of the project

The original aims of the project were to raise awareness of higher education amongst pupils in target group and enthuse them to apply to HE. This was achieved through day visits to the University, visits
to schools by University staff, parent’s evenings, two-day residential course for pupils and a University one-day conference for pupils. The project activities were targeted at pupils who ordinarily are unlikely to consider higher education. In order to reach these pupils the project worked in partnership with local/regional schools. However, participating schools were required to meet the following profile criteria:

- Low attainment levels;
- Staying-on rate of less than 50 per cent;
- High proportion of pupils for whom English is a second language;
- No tradition of higher education in the family.

The activities and focus of EOP remain largely the same but the programme has expanded to include two new additional programmes, ‘Building for Success’ and ‘Strive for Excellence’, for schools in North Derbyshire.

**Project development**

The Early Outreach Programme’s partnership with schools has been consolidated but has also expanded. There are 22 schools on the Early Outreach Programme plus a further four on each of the ‘Building for Success’ and ‘Strive for Excellence’ projects, which are in fact extensions of the original project. These programmes follow the same format as the original programme but allow for greater participation by a larger number of schools and pupils.

Within the institution, the project has been disseminated widely and has influenced a number of other initiatives that complement it and work alongside it. For example, Sheffield’s Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme (SOAMS) – which was developed to encourage young people from under-represented groups to consider Medicine; the Professions Partnership Programme; and Master Class activities which target widening participation cohorts.

Many of the recent widening participation (WP) initiatives at Sheffield are organic developments, via the Early Outreach Programme (EOP), which target older pupils and are linked to subject specific activities. The project is linked to Aimhigher (South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire) and the University also collaborates with Sheffield Hallam.

**Institutional development**

Good practice through WP activities on the EOP is fed back through the strategic policy making process at Sheffield. It is used to inform strategic development and current activity elsewhere in the institution.

The University is committed, through its Learning and Teaching Strategy and Widening Participation Strategy, to “recruit students of the highest intellectual potential regardless of social, cultural or national background and provide support to ensure students fulfil their potential” (University of Sheffield 2004). The University’s policy is to raise awareness and increase aspirations towards HE amongst young people in South Yorkshire and the surrounding area.

The EOP is expected to continue in the long-term. Given that the programme targets younger pupils and given the development of complementary programmes, which target older students/pupils, the EOP is seen as an essential early intervention factor that progresses participants to other
programmes at Sheffield. Tying the EOP to other schemes allows participants to have continued involvement with the University.

This activity, undertaken by the University of Sheffield, was described as being done on a general widening participation basis and that the University did not expect to see increases in the intake of students as a result of programmes like EOP. Nevertheless, some monitoring does take place. All participants are contacted by the Compact Officer when pupils finish on the programme at Year 11. Two years later, those who responded at the end of Year 11 are contacted again to ascertain how many went on to study at HE. For the period 1991/92 to 1999/2000 of the 282 pupils who responded 48 were studying in HE and eight had progressed to Sheffield. There is, however, no indication or analysis of social class, gender or ethnicity.

Appropriate ongoing support and induction has been integrated into existing provision to ensure that students from under-represented groups prosper in HE. Upon completion of the EOP students are offered the opportunity of signing up to the Compact Scheme. This presents the University with limited scope for tracking/monitoring students. However, for full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods the University performs well in relation to retention of under-represented groups. Whereas the HESA benchmark is 5.2 per cent the University’s drop out rate is 3.1 per cent (Project Co-ordinator 2005).

It is Sheffield’s stated intent that WP activities such as EOP become embedded so that when the project funding ends the activity continues. Moreover, responsibility for WP at Sheffield resides with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching who also participates in the regional Aimhigher Strategy Group.

University College Worcester (now the University of Worcester): Widening Participation in Higher Education and Meeting Regional Employment Need through Collaborative Higher Education Provision

Summary description of the project

The project seemed to be well on target to meet the challenges it faced to identify, motivate and meet the needs of a dispersed rural population, within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area, which was remote from higher education both physically and aspirationally. The target group was broadly described as “young and mature people living in remote parts of the region” but this group had been refined to focus on local secondary school pupils from social classes IV and V. The main focus of the project was the development of vocational progression routes, especially for young people.

The project has continued to focus on its original aims, methods and target groups. It has also taken opportunities to expand its initiatives to a wider target group, including older learners who may be changing career and moving out of the dwindling rural and agricultural sectors, and to positively influence the wider policy and strategy of the University College.

Project development

The project originally focused on the development of vocational progression routes, especially for younger learners. The project aims have now been incorporated into the general widening
participation strategy of the institution and regionally into the Government’s Aimhigher initiative. Latterly, the Lifelong Learning Network initiative will be progressing similar objectives.

The project has successfully impacted on other areas within the University to a high degree. The national profile of the project has been helpful in advancing the widening participation agenda within the institution by attracting attention to the project’s progression and completion data.

The University’s initiative is successfully integrated into departments, particularly through required reporting on widening participation within departmental reports, and individual initiatives, eg involving collaboration with partner further education colleges.

**Institutional development**

There has been a two-way interaction between the University’s institutional policy making in all areas and the work of the project. The existence of senior manager ‘champions’ has been of key importance to the project. The project’s practice, together with other initiatives – particularly disability projects – has had a high degree of influence on the University College’s central policy imperatives.

In terms of developing the University’s regional role, the initiative is seen by the institution as having a long-term future.

The University has retained the same approach for their original target group but this approach has been extended in order to widen the target group. This reflects the fact that their initiative was never focused entirely on younger learners. For example, in a rural setting it has been important to develop progression routes for older learners, who may be changing career, moving out of dwindling sectors etc.

The University has not reformed its admissions procedure because admission requirements at the institution have always been very flexible, eg they provide an ‘essay route’ for mature students. The admissions procedure is largely the same across the University College although departments do still retain some subject specific differences.

The University benchmarks itself against the sector as a whole, together with local and similar institutions, to measure its progress in extending access for target groups. Improvements against benchmarks, such as those for social class, have now been incorporated into their access agreement and participation strategy.

There has been a refocusing on retention strategy within the institution. This has involved the revision of the induction programme which has been a major initiative this last year. In addition, the University has developed more modules and increased the level of drop-in support being offered to students. In addition to the support identified above, the retention strategy has led to the creation of a new post of Retention and Achievement Officer that has overall responsibility for leading this work.

Changes in learning and teaching practices have been a big area of development. The institution has made a general shift towards more progressive practices including blended learning, the ‘modern classroom’ initiative, independent learning with targeted support, early warning systems, later assessment points, and enhanced induction.
The University has worked on broader curriculum developments including closer linkage with level 3 curriculum in colleges, discussions about integrating sub-degree (foundation degrees and higher national certificates/diplomas) with honours degree schemes to improve progression (although progression top-up degrees were already very strong locally).

The University has generally monitored and evaluated the success of its initiatives through the end of project reporting which is attached to specific initiatives. Some embedding has now taken place where projects are particularly successful – the creation of a ‘Retention and Achievement Officer’ role is a good example of where this has happened.

The University’s approach to widening participation has been largely informed by its own research work and there is an iterative relationship between their widening participation work and the research they undertake.

It has been difficult to disaggregate retention and achievement data for the target group over the period covered. However, progression arrangements for this group have been significantly enhanced evidenced by increased take up of specially designed top-up courses.

The widening participation work is now part of the institution’s core activity to a certain extent. Some widening participation initiatives have been successfully integrated into core activity; others are now delivered through Aimhigher. A sub-regional Lifelong Learning Network is currently under consideration by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Learning and Skills Council, which will further develop capacity, particularly in the curriculum development area and support for learners and employers.

The Registrar line manages the Head of Student Services who is responsible for widening participation strategy and staffing. The Director of Lifelong Learning is responsible for educational partnerships through which much of the widening participation agenda is delivered, particularly attracting students from ‘hard to reach’ groups. The Director also chairs the sub-regional Aimhigher area steering group.
4.3. 2002 case studies

**University of Wales, Aberystwyth and University of Wales, Lampeter: Wales Summer University (formerly the West Wales Summer University)**

**Summary description of the project**

The West Wales Summer University was modelled on the University of Dundee’s summer school, via the *From Elitism to Inclusion* (1998) report, and customised to suit a rural West Wales environment. It was developed as a six week residential preparation for higher education with much of the curriculum delivered in Welsh and resulting in the promise of guaranteed entry to higher education (HE) at either of the partner institutions (University of Wales, Aberystwyth or University of Wales, Lampeter). The programme specifically targeted year 12 pupils entering their final year of school study. It was designed to offer progression to HE for pupils from lower socio-economic groups whose entry prospects were weakened by underachievement for reasons relating to low family income, absence of parental experience of higher education or disability.

The Summer University has continued between the partner institutions and has, in its turn, become a model scheme for the University of Wales, Swansea. Successful applications for additional funding from the European Social Fund and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) have necessitated a widening of the target group to include young people living within a ‘community first’ area, with a disability, from an ethnic minority group or welsh-speaking. These criteria together with the scheme’s original target groups are all given equal weighting, which represents a move away from the emphasis placed on social class when the scheme was first developed.

**Project development**

The project has been continued and further developed by the two partner institutions through a successful application for European Objective 1 funding during 2003 and 2004 and through the formation of a new West and Mid Wales Widening Access Partnership, funded by HEFCW under the Reaching Wider initiative. The scheme has continued to benefit from additional funding support made available by Scottish Power Learning. Representatives from Scottish Power also visit the programme and advise the participants about the kinds of skills and competencies required by employers.

The project has been widely disseminated and has led to developments both within and outside of University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Within the institution more departments have become involved and the scheme is now regarded as an integral part of the institution’s widening access activities. In addition, the University of Wales, Aberystwyth Guild of Students (students’ union) promotes the employment opportunities provided by the scheme and provides active support during the programme. Outside of the institution, University of Wales, Aberystwyth has provided considerable assistance to the University of Wales, Swansea in their development of a similar scheme, by providing Swansea with a ‘How to do a Summer University Handbook’ which includes details of all promotional materials, processes, procedures and curriculum details. Staff and students from Aberystwyth also assisted in the training of Student Leaders for the Swansea programme. Joint social activities have been run between the Swansea, Lampeter and Aberystwyth Summer Universities.

Lampeter University has been actively involved in the project for the last three years, during which it has been disseminated within the institution and the majority of departments within Lampeter are now involved in the project. Within the institution the project has been an exemplar of practice that has
successfully engaged the Students' Union, which is actively involved in providing advice and assisting with organising activities for the project. The Student Support Unit is also involved, providing support for a range of learning needs and disabilities.

Both of the partner institutions note that an additional benefit afforded by the project has been the opportunity for high quality training and employment for the Student Leaders involved with the scheme.

As a direct result of the success of the Summer University an Easter residential provision, 'Expanding Horizons', has been developed to target young people who are unlikely to gain a C grade in their core GCSE subjects and, therefore, unable to continue in post-16 education without additional support. Lampeter University was involved in the delivery of this project for the first time during Easter 2005.

The Widening Access Unit at Lampeter has been responsible for the delivery of a Foundation Studies programme, which employs the same staff and tutors as the Summer University programme. This programme aims to provide a stepping stone for those whom degree level study is not yet appropriate.

The success of the Wales Summer University has led to the opportunity for University of Wales, Aberystwyth to link with a new initiative involving mentoring. Aberystwyth University has agreed to pilot a mentoring scheme for Summer University 'graduates' who enter the institution. This initiative came from recognition that widening access needs to encompass student support, in addition to pre-HE support and flexible entry, in order to ensure that a more diverse cohort of students are successful in their HE studies. The mentoring scheme has been made available to all former Summer University students and consists of matching trained mentors (drawn from third year or postgraduate students) with mentees and providing regular contact and support during their first year in Aberystwyth.

Institutional development
The Wales Summer University initiative has impacted on a number of internal strategies at University of Wales, Aberystwyth. The University’s strategic plan now includes widening access within its core institutional aims.

The Summer University at Lampeter is run via the institution’s Widening Access Unit. Widening access is a core activity of the institution and is incorporated within the institutional strategic plan.

The University of Wales, Aberystwyth and University of Wales, Lampeter widening access strategies both include this project within a menu of activities and the scheme has become incorporated into the institutions’ regular summer activities. The additional funding received to support the scheme benefits the student population in general as full bookings for accommodation over the vacation assists the institutions in keeping costs down for the remainder of the year.

Widening access has long been, and continues to be, of central importance to the partner institutions. The institutions are partners (with University of Wales, Aberystwyth taking a lead partner role) in the West and Mid Wales Widening Access Partnership and have also developed some significant institution-wide projects, which have required considerable support in their development.
The initiative is stable in the sense that the partner institutions are committed to its continuation. The Objective 1 European Social Fund funding has enabled the initiative to grow considerably over the last two years and has provided fully-funded places for 150 young people each year (on average 30 of these places are on the Lampeter campus). As this funding source is now finished the only available funding is from the Reaching Wider initiative and some sponsorship by Scottish Power Learning, added to resources provided by the partner institutions, and this has resulted in a considerable reduction in the number of places available. It is hoped that the Reaching Wider funding, which is currently subject to an annual bidding round, will develop into a three year project funding initiative enabling more long-term planning and stability.

The partner institutions made considerable efforts to retain the original target group to ensure that participants fulfill the strict entry criteria, relating mainly to parental experience of higher education and family income. However the funding made available through the Reaching Wider initiative requires the partner institutions to include all of the following four Reaching Wider target groups (see section 2 above) in addition to the existing entry criteria.

The Wales Summer University acts as an entry qualification to study at one of the partner universities. Participants who successfully complete the Summer University receive a conditional offer, of two E grades at A-level (or equivalent), in recognition of their achievements to date and their potential for future success at a university. This progression route is made available to students across the range of departments and disciplines. The only requirement is that the progression scheme is relevant to whatever the young person has done as a level three qualification, and to their career intentions.

Aberystwyth University has recently developed a new system to provide additional on-going support to help ensure Summer University students prosper on their chosen degree scheme. Under this system departments will receive a brief profile of Summer University students when they enter a degree scheme. This profile indicates areas where the student may require further support. The mentoring scheme provides a further level of support and is primarily aimed at ensuring that former Summer University students are aware of the existing sources of support and how to access them.

At present Wales Summer University students have a slightly higher withdrawal rate and the partner institutions have already made some changes to the Summer University programme in an effort to address this.

The University of Wales, Aberystwyth mentoring scheme being developed for former Summer University students is another method aimed at increasing the students’ chances of success in HE.

The University of Wales, Aberystwyth Learning and Teaching Strategy reflects the institution’s commitment to widening access and recognises that this is an evolving agenda:

“The University is currently involved in a range of collaborative learning and teaching initiatives in response to the Assembly’s and HEFCW’s Reconfiguration and Collaboration Agenda...there will be particular emphasis on widening access and on Welsh-medium provision. Details of actions and targets relating to these developing initiatives will be incorporated into our Learning and Teaching Strategy document.
We are enthusiastic supporters of Reaching Highers emphasis on widening access to sections of the population amongst whom there is no tradition of higher education; and on making the University a truly lifelong educational service. Our concern is not only with the expert knowledge that students gain from following our various degree programmes, but also with a set of skills, some subject specific and some generic, that will increase their value to employers.” (University of Wales, Aberystwyth Learning and Teaching Strategy, paragraphs 7/8)

Each year a number of students are referred onto the Summer University by departments who want to ensure that the applicant is fully prepared for full-time undergraduate study. Where these individuals fulfil the strict access criteria then they have been welcomed onto the Summer University.

Widening access and gender issues, amongst others, led to a broader curriculum development at Aberystwyth University through the establishment of Sport and Exercise Science as a new curriculum area. This department is now in its third year and has contributed significantly to the Summer University and other widening access initiatives.

The Summer University scheme has been evaluated by an external moderator for the last four years and the resulting report has been presented to the operational group. Generally the moderation report has been overwhelmingly positive but where opportunities for development or improvement are identified these have been considered by the partner institutions. A further evaluation exercise was undertaken last year of all the Partnership’s activities, including the Wales Summer University, and the results were also very positive.

The Centre for Widening Participation (formerly Lifelong Learning) at Aberystwyth has been active in research into widening participation and this has informed the development of the Summer University programme. In particular the University has consistently attempted to target those schools and colleges which are situated in areas of disadvantage and where there is no strong tradition of progression to higher education. The University has also used its own research to guide the approach to teaching and learning techniques employed on the programme.

The scheme was developed following visits to the Dundee Summer School and the LEAPS programme at Edinburgh. Both of these schemes provided valuable models which actively influenced the development of the Wales Summer School together with a considerable amount of research evidence. For example, findings published in the From Elitism to Inclusion (1998) report prompted the initial concept of an access summer school which was then customised into a rural, bilingual context.

University of Wales, Aberystwyth has a very high retention rate overall. It monitors non-continuation of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods in comparison with young entrants from other neighbourhoods and seeks to make improvements wherever possible. The University also monitors the progress of Summer University students compared to that of the wider cohort and provisional progress reports indicate some issues which the Partnership is seeking to address.

To some extent the Partnership institutions have been reliant on external funding streams from the European Social Fund and from the HEFCW Reaching Wider initiative but there is also substantial investment from the institutions and a commitment to keep the initiative running. Intake to the programme was reduced as a result of the European Social Fund funding stream coming to an end.
Aberystwyth and Lampeter Universities have prioritised widening access and made considerable resources available to support this activity, including involvement of senior management. The management group of the West and Mid Wales Widening Access Partnership, which is now responsible for the development and delivery of the Summer University, is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and the operational group is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor which reflects the importance accorded to this and other widening access schemes within the institutions concerned.

University of Birmingham: Access to Birmingham

Summary description of the project

The Access to Birmingham scheme was launched in 2000 as an admissions scheme that directly targeted applicants from under-represented groups. The programme was established to provide support with A-level study and to help students understand the implications of university level study.

In partnership with local schools, applicants completed an additional application form, allowing space to describe difficult circumstances that they would not necessarily put on their Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) form. There was also space within this additional form for a teacher’s reference that could describe school or home circumstances and added weight to the application. Admissions tutors then considered the additional application form alongside the UCAS form. Typically, offers made under the scheme would be one or two grades lower than the standard, published prospectus grades.

The three criteria for the scheme include first generation into higher education, low socio-economic background, and state school, or college, attendance. The school or college attended must also be signed up to the scheme.

The scheme has continued with its original aims, methods and target group. In 2004-5, because of the huge success of the scheme and the expanding numbers, a comprehensive review of the scheme is being undertaken by the University. The aim of this review is to ensure that the scheme continues to meet the changing demands of applicants whilst ensuring that the University maintains the quality of its first year intake.

Project development

In the first year of the scheme, there were a total of 63 applications from just a few schools and colleges in Birmingham. In 2003/4 there were a total of 354 applications, with more than 60 schools being signed up to the scheme. Applications have therefore risen by more than 500 per cent in just four intakes. Students taking the Foundations of Learning module now number more than 150 and entrants to the University through the scheme now total 123.

The project has been disseminated within the University to the extent that all University schools now participate in the scheme across all academic disciplines.

The Access to Birmingham programme has been a vehicle for raising the profile of widening participation initiatives throughout the University community. It has provided the focus for discussion
with academic staff concerning their schools’ admissions policies and practices and now involves all schools within the University.

The University’s access programme has provided a focus for discussion with local schools and colleges. In doing this, it has encouraged dialogue between the University and its neighbouring schools, facilitating a better understanding of the needs of both applicants and admissions tutors in making their decisions about the allocation of offers to applicants.

Institutional development
The Access to Birmingham scheme has become an important part of the widening participation strategy of the University. It also forms a central part of the outreach work the University aims to achieve under its proposed access agreement. The University’s reporting structure means that widening participation issues feed into wider institutional debates about learning and teaching and other related policies of diversity, inclusion and access.

The targeted approach of the scheme has been retained and the application criteria (outlined in the section above) are unlikely to change following the University’s scheme review. The University plans to expand the scheme to a more regional focus going forward.

The Access to Birmingham scheme has encouraged a high level of dialogue between admissions tutors on addressing issues of widening participation and educational achievement.

There has been a significant year on year increase in the number of target group students entering the University over the four years that the scheme has been in operation. However, there has also been significant expansion in widening participation activity beyond this scheme, bringing many more young people, mainly from local state schools into contact with the University. This, together with the numbers on the Access to Birmingham scheme, has meant that the University has made good progress towards meeting its Higher Education Funding Council for England benchmarks.

Students on the Access to Birmingham scheme attend a two-day ‘Foundations of Learning’ module as part of their application process. Once at the University, the responsibility for academic and personal success lies within the academic department in which the student is studying. There is a tension between students wanting to be accepted as ‘ordinary’ students in their own right and being identified as ‘different’. Some schools have specific policies, such as mentoring programmes matching previous students together, or special workshops for different groups of students. The University aims to leave the choice about accessing these services to the student as far as possible.

The University’s approach to ensuring that Access to Birmingham students succeed arises out of the tensions around the individualisation of student support in higher education. The aim within the University is to ensure that:

- Student support remains as close to the academic experience as possible.
- Services are developed to meet all the needs of every student – the University believes that if they get it right for Access to Birmingham students then that means they are getting it right for all their students.
The increasing diversity of students impacts upon the University’s learning and teaching approach in practical ways, such as providing lecture handouts for students as part of coping strategies with dyslexia. However, the driving force for these changes remains the University’s desire to develop knowledge and experience in good practice in learning and teaching.

Diversity is included in the staff development of all new academic staff, although there is scope for more work in this area, particularly in the sharing of good practice amongst different disciplines.

In terms of developing the curriculum, the University’s widening participation team is experiencing increasing requests for information, support and guidance in developing programmes of additional learning for particular groups.

Anecdotal evidence from tutors suggests that pre-entry courses have a positive impact in terms of familiarisation and confidence building amongst students. Currently these pre-entry courses are most prevalent in programmes of support targeted at mature students.

All activities undertaken by the widening participation team are systematically evaluated and recorded, including some pre-activity evaluation where this is appropriate. This includes gathering quantitative data, such as numbers attending, but also qualitative data on student perceptions of higher education, choices being made, etc. There is now a shifting emphasis towards the evaluation of activity to make sure that activities are effective and appropriate.

The aim of the widening participation team is to ensure that all their work is informed by excellent practice and current knowledge from the sector. The team has an emerging research strategy that includes building a team of research active staff in the schools of education and social sciences, together with practitioners and research workers. The University has undertaken research work, with the support of the Sutton Trust, into widening participation and further education colleges, and undertaken a major study into the post-16 learning choices young people in Birmingham are making. The plan is to develop this work into a longitudinal study, in conjunction with a local collegiate of schools, to track young people from Year 8 onwards.

The Access to Birmingham scheme began with relatively low numbers of students and is just into its fourth year. This means that any conclusions about the retention and success of students are inherently risky. Likewise systematic collection of data by social class has become more reliable only relatively recently and therefore the University currently feels unable to draw significant conclusions from the data.

The scheme is funded through the core funding the University receives and is not seen as a special initiative in that sense.

The Academic Registrar has overall responsibility for the University’s widening participation activities. This is delegated on a day-to-day basis to the Head of Widening Participation within the student recruitment and widening participation office.

The work of the widening participation team is considered by the Widening Participation Advisory Board that meets every term, meetings chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibility for
student affairs. Reports from the board are presented at the Educational Development Committee by the Head of Widening Participation. A report from this committee then goes to Academic Board and, in this way, issues are fed into the institution’s decision-making bodies.

Canterbury Christ Church University College (now Canterbury Christ Church University):
Access to Music
Summary description of the project
The original project of widening access to music in the deprived area of Thanet has been continued and is well placed for further expansion. A new Foundation Degree in the Performing Arts is planned to assist in the development of a ‘Cultural and Creative Quarter’ in an extremely poor area of the coastal town of Folkestone. The first students to follow the Diploma in Higher Education/BA Honours degree in Popular Music and Technology have now graduated and two of the first cohort of students achieved a first class honours degree.

Project development
The success of the Thanet Campus project has led to a further major initiative to provide a new campus for higher education (HE) in Medway. Medway is also an area with relatively low participation in HE and high levels of deprivation. As noted above, the success of the project in providing access to Music through the provision of a Foundation Degree in Popular Music and Technology has led the Music Department of the University College to expand its provision yet further and to offer a Foundation Degree in Performing Arts as part of a coastal town regeneration project in Folkestone.

The Thanet Music Project has developed effective links with other parts of the institution and with Aimhigher. Students on the Foundation Degree in Popular Music and Technology are able to benefit from the provision of excellent student support services that include a one-stop-shop for study support, disability and equal opportunities support, and welfare support – including counselling, financial support, accommodation support, childcare support and access to medical and health support.

Canterbury Christ Church University is the lead institution for Aimhigher in Kent and Medway. The central management and administrative team for the Aimhigher project is based at the Thanet Campus, Broadstairs and some of the Aimhigher projects have involved initiatives such as links with schools and mentoring projects. These Aimhigher initiatives aimed at raising awareness, attainment and aspirations to enter HE have been helpful in encouraging participation in the Further Education music provision at Thanet College and the HE provision at the Thanet Campus.

Institutional development
The good practice at the Thanet Campus has informed institutional policy making especially in relation to the widening participation strategy. A central component of the widening participation strategy is to widen access to HE especially for those from lower socio-economic groups. Following on from the successful Thanet project, one of the main ways in which this is being approached is through making HE increasingly available in areas of low HE participation and high deprivation. As a result, new campus provision has been made available in Medway and a further campus (with the support of the Folkestone Creative Foundation and the Kent Institute of Art and Design) is currently being developed in Folkestone. In developing more localised access to HE provision, there are clearly
close links between the University's Widening Participation strategy and Estates policy. The University has a disability statement and a Race Equality Policy, the contents of which apply to all students including those on the FD/BA (Hons.) degree in Popular Music and Technology.

Practice within this project is a reflection of existing institution-wide policy. The University has encouraged the recruitment of mature students, part-time students and students with non-standard entry qualifications (eg, Access qualifications) over a number of years. The quest to make HE accessible in local, deprived communities has influenced central policy imperatives within the university – especially in relation to the development of the university’s Estate and the allocation of financial resources.

The initiative is stable and long term having involved substantial investment in new campus provision. Specifically, the FD/BA (Hons) in Popular Music and Technology continues to recruit strongly and to achieve good outcomes in terms of degree attainment.

The initiative continues to focus specifically on the same target group in the local area of Thanet, which has within it some of highest areas of deprivation in the country. The project continues to target schools in the local area – especially through the strong links with the Aimhigher target schools. Under the new Aimhigher arrangements, the Kent-Somerset virtual Education Action Zone (EAZ) is transforming to become an Excellence Cluster based in Thanet. The project will particularly link with the schools and FE College included in the Thanet Excellence Cluster. The target group is in the process of being extended through developing Performing Arts provision in Folkestone.

The University welcomes students from diverse backgrounds with a wide range of vocational and non-vocational entry qualifications. The system of admitting students with a wide range of qualifications but with the enthusiasm and ability to benefit from the programme of study is, therefore, the norm and not a special arrangement.

There have not been any changes in admissions arrangements other than to have locally available campus provision and therefore the opportunity for those living in areas of low HE participation/high deprivation to be interviewed and recruited locally rather than having to travel to the ‘main central campus’. This applies to all departments and disciplines providing programmes at the new campuses and not just to those who are recruiting rather than selecting. The University has an Admissions Policy based on Section 10 of the QAA Code of Practice (Admissions and Recruitment) which applies to the whole institution.

The student numbers in Popular Music and Technology have risen from 45 full time equivalents in 2002/03 to 75 in 2004/05. A detailed analysis of the socio-economic status of the students recruited on the FD/BA (Hons) Popular Music and Technology Degree is not yet available. However, an analysis of the students recruited to the Thanet Campus shows that just over one third of students (34 per cent) are from Thanet area postcodes.

Of these students from Thanet, 20 per cent are from low participation neighbourhoods ie, the students come from a cluster of postcodes where the participation rate in HE is less than two thirds of the national rate. 30.24 per cent of Thanet enrolments are from areas in the bottom quartile of deprivation in the country.
Appropriate induction and on-going support has been integrated into existing provision to help ensure students from under-represented groups are able to prosper in HE. An ‘Orientation’ website has been developed for students who will shortly be joining the institution to assist their transition into HE. All students are informed of the existence and usefulness of the website in the ‘Offer Pack’ and ‘Joining Instructions’ received from the Admissions Department. On arrival, all students are involved in University and Department welcome and induction arrangements. As part of the induction, students are introduced to a range of staff from the Student Support offices so that they are aware of the range of help and support available to assist them to succeed. Through the induction process, the students are also introduced to the services of the Department of Careers and Student Development so that they are aware of the support available to assist with the development of their career management skills and employability.

Through central University and departmental support there is evidence that the students prosper. Two students from the first cohort of the Dip HE/BA (Hons) in Popular Music and Performing Arts obtained a first class honours degree.

The institution is committed to student retention. As part of the Widening Participation Strategy, the University has committed itself to seeking to achieve a 1 per cent annual improvement in student retention across its major programme areas. To assist with this all programmes, including that for Popular Music and Technology, produce an annual Programme Quality Monitoring Report that has a focus on retention within the programme and asks for actions identified in response to levels of student attrition.

There is a Student Retention Working Group that has led to the introduction of a number of new student retention initiatives including a Student Retention Unit. Staff within the unit make contact with students who are considered to be at risk of non-continuation. The staff work closely with Programme Directors to follow up any students who are identified as ‘cause for care and concern’ as a consequence of following procedures detailed in the Student Attendance Policy. The staff also provide targeted support for any students requiring a re-sit of their end of year examinations.

Changes in learning and teaching practices to support diversity (including those on Popular Music and Technology programmes) include:

- Sympathetic timetabling to accommodate part-time work/childcare commitments (which can be more easily accommodated at the smaller, more local new campuses);
- Development of the ‘Orientation’ website to assist the students with their transition into HE;
- Close academic and pastoral support and guidance from programme tutors;
- Increased one to one support – especially with regard to instrumental tuition;
- Introduction of a one-stop integrated information services help desk and workshops to assist students with the development of computing and information skills;
- Increased use of Blackboard virtual learning environment to promote greater flexibility in learning provision; and
- Use of a wide range of practical and theoretical assessment strategies to suit the diverse range of preferred learning styles eg performance examinations, written examinations, group work etc.

The curriculum for Popular Music and Technology is consciously ‘demand led’ rather than ‘supply led’. The University College offers a more traditional B.Mus (Hons) Music degree but it was felt that in an area of high deprivation and low HE participation it was more appropriate to offer a curriculum which
was more vocationally oriented and appealed to the interests of many of the young people located in the area. The success of the initiative has largely been measured by the growing attractiveness of the programme to potential applicants. The degree and employment outcomes of the programme are also closely monitored.

There are no specific examples of research activity informing the approach of this work. However, as lead institution and Chair of the Aimhigher Area Steering Group, the University does closely monitor and evaluate the success and impact of various interventions designed to widen participation to HE and these practices help to inform approaches to widening participation within the institution. The approach to developing new campus provision in areas of high deprivation/high unemployment and relatively low HE participation was influenced to some extent by the University of Durham/Stockport Campus approach. Research evidence from the study conducted by the University of Central Lancashire into the effectiveness of pre-entry programmes on student retention has influenced the development of the ‘Orientation’ website.

Professor Piotrowski was a member of the National Committee on Student Support Services and Student Retention and so has had the opportunity to work closely with the Institute for Access Studies and to benefit from close knowledge of much of their research intelligence gathered from the UK and beyond.

Awareness of the research findings which indicate that students from lower socio-economic groups and with lower entry qualifications (HE Policy Institute) are more likely to withdraw has resulted in the development of specifically targeted support and guidance and retention activity for students from these backgrounds.

The Heads of University Counselling Services have produced evidence of the beneficial effect of counselling on student retention and therefore a strong counselling service is offered. The University is also aware of the research evidence suggesting that male students from minority ethnic groups are less likely to access counselling services in person and therefore they have supplemented face-to-face support with e-counselling.

Locally, there is evidence from the activity of a neighbouring FE College that telephone contact with withdrawing students can have a dramatic effect on assisting student retention. This finding was influential in their decision to introduce a student retention unit. The retention rate for the FD/BA(Hons) in Popular Music and Technology averages 84 per cent and is comparable with the rest of the institution. This attrition rate of 16 per cent is only slightly higher than the University College average of 14.3 per cent (HESA, 2004). In terms of comparable success for attainment, the first 11 students on the BA(Hons) Popular Music and Technology Degree all gained a good honours degree of 2ii or above.

The initiative is a core part of the institution’s activity and is funded through the teaching grant and widening participation and retention premium funding from HEFCE. The Assistant Principal (Academic) has senior management responsibility for widening participation and line manages a number of those responsible for the central services most closely related to widening participation and also line manages the Director of the Thanet Campus.
The Director of Admissions and Recruitment assists with the recruitment of a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds and provides the link support for the Aimhigher Project Worker. The Director of Learning and Teaching helps to ensure that the approaches to learning and teaching are appropriate for working with students with diverse entry qualifications and from a wide range of backgrounds. The Director of Student Services has oversight for support and guidance services and ensures that there is comparable provision for students at a number of different campuses and that the services are well targeted to meet the wide range of student needs and interests.

**Glasgow School of Art: Artists and Designers in Education**

**Summary description of the project**

Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is one of the leading art schools in the UK and was designated by the Scottish Funding Council as a small specialist institution with effect from August 2001. In the previous Universities UK/SCOP study (Woodrow et al, 2002), GSA was described as being regarded by some as ‘an elite, hard-to-access institution’ but at that time it already had had ten years’ experience of working with local schools. In 2001 it was seeking to put its school contacts to good use by targeting those in deprived areas, and it was implementing internal change in order to increase participation by students from lower socio-economic groups. At that time GSA was aiming at a 10 per cent increase over five years in the recruitment of students from deprived backgrounds, and was reported to be well aware of the need for accurate targeting to avoid the pitfall of more affluent students taking advantage of its access routes.

The Artists and Designers in Education project (ADinED) was established as part of the outreach provision aimed at meeting widening participation targets and continues in 2005. Participating pupils within both primary and secondary schools are identified in schools with low participation rates (less than 17 per cent, and in many case much less) in higher education, which have been targeted by the GOALS (Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools) project. It involved GSA students in Art and Design serving a ten-day residency in schools in the deprived areas of Glasgow. The stated purposes of the residency for the schools and pupils involved are:

- To give the children and the teaching staff the opportunity to participate in, and learn about, art and design processes alongside students; and
- Through these experiences, to encourage and foster talents and provide expressive opportunities for the children, so that art education and GSA itself become de-mystified and more accessible to the children and staff of the school.

The stated purposes for the students are:

- To give them the opportunity to explore how to make their skills and understandings work in an educational setting;
- To enable them, through the carrying out of the residency and the conscious reflection on it encouraged by coursework, to come to a greater understanding of their own motivations and practice, as well as to gain insight into how to work with a variety of people who may have different interests and aspirations; and
- To enable them to develop professional disciplines and attitudes, not only within educational contexts, but also in professional/public situations of all types.
The residency involves students in:
- Acting as mentors to pupils;
- Informing them about opportunities in art and design and at GSA;
- Devising and carrying out art and design projects at the schools;
- Assisting pupils in the preparation of their portfolios for entry; and
- Contributing to workshop sessions at the art school for pupils from participating schools.

Students receive a series of lectures and seminars to support them in their work. Their residency forms part of a menu of freestanding full module options available to students in years two and three of the four-year Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree Course. Students have the opportunity to participate twice – in the spring term for second year students, and from October to December for third year students.

Project development
ADinED has continued to develop and expand since the previous study (Woodrow et al, 2002) and is now firmly aligned to regional strategic planning within the GOALS project, which included a continuum of projects ranging from Primary 6 to Secondary 6. In the intervening years approximately 600 students have worked with more than 8,000 children between the ages of 10-18. The project currently focuses its delivery on 65 primary schools with over 2000 pupils per annum, with an overarching logic that intervention must occur as early as possible in pupils' lives to have maximum impact. It retains its target group, namely GOALS schools, characterised by social and economic disadvantage and/or under-representation in higher education. Other GSA initiatives now focus on older pupils.

Approximately 100 students participate in the course each year (25 to 33 per cent of total year group). The project is at the centre of GSA’s widening access strategy and its funding from the GOALS project has increased in order that ADinED can expand into 160 schools across the west of Scotland.

A second related project, the Portfolio Preparation Programme (PPP), has been developed for the secondary/pre-admission to HE stage of progression. The primary aim of this programme is to inspire secondary school pupils to achieve greater academic success within the visual arts and to increase participation rates for secondary school pupils in Art, Design and Architecture at the GSA or other Art Schools or Colleges. Activities of the PPP include Portfolio Information Visits, Portfolio Clinics, Creative Workshops, Educational Workshops and Tailored Options responding to individual school requests, and has expanded from Art and Design into Architecture.

GSA views ADinED itself as effective enhancement of learning and teaching in a number of different but interrelated ways:
- It is part of the strategy to meet the School’s objective to ensure that the student community reflects the diversity of society.
- It is regarded as a paradigm of good practice and continuous improvement over 15 years as encapsulated in the School’s Quality Enhancement strategy that aims to continuously and systematically improve the operation of courses and the learning environment.
- It informs the School’s Learning and Teaching Strategy which states that the self- motivated, self-reflective student learner be put at the heart of the learning experience and increases awareness of the value of creativity in education.
• The ADinEd Programme now involves undergraduate students from the Mackintosh School of Architecture and GSA is currently developing a strategy for formal engagement of Architecture undergraduates.

The ADinEd and PPP projects are reported as being stable and long-term initiatives linked to GSA policies and initiatives in recruitment, admission, retention and the quality of student experience, although discussions as to how both models can be financially embedded are in their early stages. Although both programmes are part of the core activity of GSA, both are funded by the GOALS project until 2008. Institutional support in terms of senior management commitment to widening access in GSA remains very strong.

Institutional development
Since 2001, the GSA has undergone a period of rapid policy development in almost every area of its operation, including learning and teaching, equal opportunities, race relations and admissions, all of which are reported to have been informed by experience, knowledge and understanding gained from widening access initiatives. One of GSA’s major strategic objectives is to ensure that their student community reflects the diversity of society. Both the Artists and Designers in Education and the Portfolio Preparation Programme have informed central policy imperatives and strategic planning in several areas. The core aim of increasing applications from those groups currently under-represented in the student community by 10 per cent per year has been exceeded every year since the implementation of the Portfolio Preparation Programme. More generally, applications from GOALS schools have increased since 2001. GSA “cannot ascribe these increases to anything other than (their) widening participation programme”. The increase in applications is as follows: 2002/03 (52 per cent), 2003/04 (27 per cent) and 2004/05 (20 per cent) and refers to courses at GSA in Art & Design and Architecture only.

Other linked priorities at GSA include the following:
• Completion of a FE/HE development project and establishment of articulation agreements with selected further education colleges in Glasgow.
• Increasing applications from students in state schools by expanding the Portfolio Preparation programme.
• The Wider Access Development Officer is a member of the GSA Race Relations Action Group and intends to undertake research into the factors influencing low application rates from ethnic minority communities.
• Securing scholarships and bursaries for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A further priority is to ensure fair and transparent recruitment and admissions practices and in 2005-6 there will be a review of GSA’s admissions policies and procedures. The Wider Access Development Officer is now a member of the Quality of Learning and Teaching Committee and a quality enhancement strategy for learning and teaching is currently being developed. It will include all aspects of widening participation and will include a policy to which widening participation will make a contribution.

The student support infrastructure is a core component of the GSA approach to promoting effective learning. The one-to-one nature of studio-based learning means that individual needs can be responded to at a local level with referral to central specialist support services where necessary. The
GSA considers this a key element in the identification of learning problems and support of students. These local systems are embedded in the GSA's culture and are highly valued by students and are reflected in high retention and completion rates. In 2001/02 central student support services were reviewed and a new vision agreed. A number of services (including Counselling, Learning Support and Development, Welfare and Careers) were brought together as a unified Student Support Department. The vision for student support services at the GSA is underpinned by an integrated approach in which specialist support staff work in partnership with teaching staff in supporting the "whole" student. The Learning Support and Development Service grew from the need to support dyslexic and disabled students (16 per cent of the student population in 2003/04) and now offers support to all students.

As the numbers of entrants from target groups increase, and following feedback and analysis of a Bridging Summer School and responses of First Year staff, GSA anticipates broader curriculum developments in the future. Data are collected on applications, enrolments and retention of students recruited through GOALS schools, and is compared to various benchmarks. In 2002/03 the proportion of GOALS students in relation to the whole student population (Art & Design/Architecture) was five per cent. Of 49 students enrolled from GOALS schools into Art & Design and Architecture in the period 2001-2004, 40 (82 per cent) are reported as being still in attendance. Of the nine students not in attendance, four are expected to return.

Greater emphasis is now given to enhancing the retention of students from GOALS schools by targeted support, which to date has been conducted on an informal basis by tutors from ADinED and PPP. A strategic priority for 2005/06 is to allocate pastoral care tutors to GOALS students. Evidence gathered from across the sector by GSA suggests that socially and economically disadvantaged students require targeted academic guidance and induction into HE culture. Hence GSA has developed and piloted the aforementioned Bridging Summer School for GOALS students entering Year 1 (and FE students articulating into Year 2). Workshops are linked to their chosen disciplines, to study skills and to IT skills, with the Royal Bank of Scotland providing bursaries; the scheme will be extended in the Summer term of 2005.

A targeted project, The Prato Exchange Project provides an opportunity for GOALS students to study the development of Italian art and design for two weeks in Prato, Italy, alongside Monash University students. It was developed as a consequence of the European Access Network Conference on Student Retention in Prato in 2002. A lecture series provides an art history and theory basis for on-site visits to museums, galleries and architectural sites in Prato and in neighbouring locations including Florence, Pisa, Siena, Lucca, and Arezzo. This project is part of GSA's strategy for retention of its target groups whose experience of foreign travel and cultural visits is often limited. This project is often cited as one of the first international widening access programmes in higher education.

The ADinED scheme has had considerable impact on wider institutional teaching and learning practices. The ADinED module taken by undergraduate students as part of their residency is an accredited course and has led to module-level changes to assessment and evaluation. In the last four years GSA has extended and enhanced the self evaluation system that has always been at centre of ADinED to function as a tool to enable students to understand and work with the many practical, interpersonal and intrapersonal elements that underlie a successful project in a school. Developments are as follows:
- Assessment criteria and the "weighting of marking" are made clearly available to students at the beginning of the course.
- The assessment input from schools has been refined and schools are asked to give a grade to the various elements of the student's performance.
- The students make a brief self-assessment within the same framework as is asked of teachers to enable a clear, comparative analysis of the placement. The extension of the self-evaluation system occurred partly as a result of widening participation activity. The course leader, following their experience of the undergraduate student mentors in GOALS schools, developed the self-evaluation system to reflect these experiences in greater detail.
- Course teaching has undergone a change to accommodate and facilitate the diverse needs of schools.
- Formerly the course was taught entirely through lectures and individual tutorials but now GSA includes practical workshops.

ADinED has promoted a cross-institutional and interdisciplinary approach to learning and teaching both in GSA and with other HEIs in the UK. The process of preparing the student for this experience in widening participation involves a variety of interactive as well as intellectual activities. Informal workshops are particularly popular with the students, which encourages a sense of teamwork and allows cross-disciplinary experiences where students from many departments liaise with, and learn from, each other. This cross-departmental interface is continued through partnership working in GOALS schools. GSA’s strategic aim to improve its provision to meet the needs of society by enhancing employability is met by ADinEd. Key life skills are developed which are applicable in other professional and educational settings. The course provides additional and key information for Personal Development Planning for which an overarching framework is being developed.

**Guy's, King's and St Thomas' School of Medicine, King's College London: Access to Medicine Programme**

**Summary description of the project**

The Guy's, King's and St Thomas' (GKT) School of Medicine is situated in the heart of Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. GKT is a School of King's College, London and was established in 1998 from the merger of three world-famous medical schools. In 2001, when the Access to Medicine Programme (AMP) was first reported as a case study in *Social class and participation* (Woodrow et al, 2002), staff at GKT reported being "acutely aware that our students are being selected from among a very small range of social strata". AMP was the starting point for remedying this problem. At that time data for 1999 served as an illustration of the nature of applicants to GKT. Of the 360 entrants (from a total of 2960 applicants) then admitted to GKT’s five-year first degree programme, 50 per cent were from state schools, four per cent from FE Colleges, and 46 per cent from independent schools (as against a seven per cent participation rate in these schools nationally). The average A-level points of 1999 entrants were 28.5. Twelve per cent were already graduates.

The overall aim of the AMP was to expand entry to the medical profession by students from disadvantaged local communities. It was recognised at GKT that, within the context of a multi-ethnic, socially diverse society, it is important that a proportion of doctors is drawn from under-privileged groups. In 2001 these groups had little opportunity to participate through traditional routes and remained significantly under-represented in the profession. By addressing this problem GKT was
seeking to meet a key challenge of contemporary society and medicine - broadening the ethnic and social mix of the profession and increasing patient access to those who are best placed to understand their problems in their social and cultural context.

The AMP aims to equip participants with the skills and knowledge they will need to join the clinical years of the MBBS course. From a starting point of approximately ten students in the first year of the AMP, the aim was to expand to 50 within five years as it gained momentum, particularly as the initial students became role models for others.

The main features of the programme of widening participation activities in 2001 were as follows:

- **Recruitment**: Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were recruited through close liaison between GKT and its local partner schools and colleges.
- **Selection**: This was to be changed radically by the development of new selection criteria.
- **Pre-joining course**: A four-week summer course provided new AMP entrants with an introduction to the university environment.
- **The six year AMP**: This was designed on the basis of the standard medical degree course with the addition of Access modules to the curriculum, so that the first two years are extended to three. It was planned so that in years four to six, students would be integrated seamlessly with students on standard courses for the Clinical part of the course. The AMP included additional mentoring support and experiential learning designed to raise levels of knowledge, understanding, aptitudes and study skills. Development of appropriate attitudes were to be encouraged throughout, and there would be contact between students and practising clinicians from the outset. More details of the programme structure are found in the previous report, *Social class and participation* (Woodrow et al, 2002). The six-year provision is known as the *Extended Medical Degree Programme* (EMDP).
- **Personal tutoring and student support**: A Professional Skills programme enabled access entrants to address a range of skills related to their effective functioning as students. Dedicated tutoring and mentoring by specially trained tutors provided students with the effective study and self-learning skills necessary for success throughout the course.
- **Assessment and progression**: The Access Modules in each year were primarily formatively assessed with no final examination. In the standard MB BS modules, assessment was identical to that for standard students, with a combination of in-course assessments and end-of-session examinations, and a pass mark of 50 per cent.
- **A parallel outreach programme**: This had already started in collaboration with local education providers. The programme included the early identification of students with potential to study medicine; the raising of aspirations; curriculum enrichment in schools and colleges; ‘science in action’ programmes at the School of Medicine; mentoring and support by medical students; and work experience in a health environment. There was considerable emphasis on activities designed to gain parental support.

The activities and goals of the Access to Medicine Programme are described in the previous report, *Social class and participation* (Woodrow et al, 2002), and are all on-going. Since then the project has expanded its work to cover young people living in ten London boroughs, representing a doubling of its target area.
Project development
The programme continues to target young people attending state schools in certain inner London boroughs, who attain three A-levels, including Chemistry (and preferably Biology) with not less than three C grades. Although the programme will work with any young people attending state schools in these boroughs to raise their aspirations, and their chances of gaining admission to medical school, entry to the EMDP continues to be restricted to those who would not normally meet the standard entrance requirements of the conventional five-year medical degree.

The total intake to the medicine programme in 2004/05 was 360 of which the EMDP represents approximately 10 per cent. Given the demographics of the boroughs in which the programme works, the majority of young people participating in the programme are from minority ethnic groups and from social classes III-V, and provides a quite different profile than that of the overall intake to Medicine.

Developing a transparent and fair process to assess potential EMDP students provided a timely opportunity to revisit selection procedures for the conventional medical course, and also helped to inform discussions about selection of other cohorts of potential medical students at GKT, eg ‘fast track’ graduates. GKT reports that it was “heartened to see that our menu of processes anticipated some of the recommendations of the Schwartz Report.”

Selection for the EMDP is based upon a number of elements and is therefore different from the norm that is applied to applicants to the conventional MB BS course at GKT. Applicants’ A-level predictions must be lower than those offered by students who are admitted to the conventional course. GKT asks for a confidential report from the school in addition to the referee’s report in the UCAS application form. Applicants are also assessed on their performance in a semi-structured interview with two experienced members of staff, one of whom is likely to be drawn from a pool of health care professionals, but need not necessarily be an academic. One impact of the Access to Medicine Project has been to encourage admissions tutors for the conventional five-year medical degree to become more conscious of applicants’ A-level performance, in the context of their sixth form’s performance against national averages, when confirming places each summer. Furthermore, at clearing, applicants from target areas who are holding a place for the conventional MB BS course, but who drop too many grades and therefore lose their place, are assessed for the EMDP.

GKT believes that it is essential to establish a student’s potential to learn, not their opportunity to learn. All EMDP applicants take the Personal Qualities Assessment test, which explores their problem-solving and logical reasoning abilities, and the way they make decisions based on moral judgements. Experience gained using the test has stimulated and informed further discussion within GKT about the use of this type of selection instrument as an adjunct to the UCAS form in selecting medical students. The test screens out a minority of students based on a ‘MAT’ score of ability of no less than 17. Although another component of the test, the NACE, aims to identify individuals with extreme personality traits, no applicant is necessarily ruled out solely on the basis of this test. Data being collected on the relationship between test scores and performance may provide more robust evidence in due course for the potential of these instruments as valid selection instruments, but as yet there is nothing conclusive to report.

In terms of ongoing support, students enrolled on the EMDP are required to attend a week-long pre-joining event to orientate them to the campus and develop their bonds as a group. This includes a
session for parents and guardians, which gives them an opportunity to meet key members of academic staff and better appreciate the rigours of the course and the demands that will be made on their children’s time throughout their studies. Students attend personal review meetings with the Course Director each term (in addition to standard pastoral meetings with their personal tutor). The Course Director also organises weekly drop-in ‘surgeries’ for students who are encountering difficulties with their studies. Individual academic tutorials are also organised, as required, to respond to students’ needs. In addition to the pastoral and tutorial support outlined above, students receive additional sessions to help them develop their academic English, presentation skills and study skills. Students also receive extra academic tutorial sessions to support the curriculum (20 per cent ‘extra’ contact hours in the first year, 15 per cent in the second year, and 5-10 per cent in the third year).

Furthermore, the EMDP Course Director has developed an innovative course module, PANDA, to develop students’ academic English and presentation skills. The Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator is used to help students identify (and diversify) their preferred learning styles, and also to aid team building. Second year EMDP students have the opportunity to undertake a Special Study Module (SSM) in Teaching Skills, through which they have the opportunity to undertake a short teaching placement in a local school. This helps to build their confidence and realise how much they have developed since leaving school. Through the Teaching Skills SSM and the opportunity to participate in the Access to Medicine Project’s broader outreach activities, current EMDP students serve as effective role models for local school students who are considering a career in Medicine.

In addition to the additional academic support outlined above, EMDP students receive personalised timetables, with additional support tutorials and independent study time added in to the ‘white space’ in the students’ stretched three-year timetable. The exams sat by EMDP students at the end of their first year are purely formative, and their first summative exams are taken at the end of their second year. In this way no EMDP student is thrown off the course for academic failure until they have reached the same hurdle that is used to assess students on the conventional five-year degree. This aspect of the EMDP course has been instigated in response to GKT’s experience over the first three years of the course’s existence in that the School found that some students took more than one year to reach their full potential.

Merit prizes (over and above those offered across the Medical School) are awarded to the best performing students in each of the first three years of the EMDP. The prizes are awarded at an annual Celebration of Success evening each summer in front of their parents, peers and former teachers. The prizes and the Celebration of Success act as a major incentive and confidence booster for these students. 87 of the 94 students recruited to the EMDP over the last four years are still registered on the course. Six of the original nine students are now in the fourth year of their studies; two others are still on the course, but have had to repeat a year of their studies. The majority of those students who have left the course on academic grounds either transferred to another health-related degree programme, or have secured employment within the local health service. The EMDP retention rate is slightly lower than that of students on the conventional five-year medical degree programme, but is better than for many other courses that recruit students from similar social backgrounds. The top 30 per cent of students on the EMDP regularly perform alongside the top quartile of students across the School of Medicine.
The EMDP is considered to be sustainable in the long-term. Funding for the additional student numbers on the programme has come from HEFCE, but it is also reliant on external funding for outreach activity, the majority of which initially came from the Government Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund. All funds for the outreach elements of the Programme’s work still come from external sources, although it is no longer over-reliant on a single source of funding. The future of the full range of outreach activities is dependent on the project either securing new grant funding from April 2007 (when the main external grant runs out) or being mainstreamed by the College. The best prospects for sustainability may lie in the Access to Medicine Programme becoming part of the main Widening Participation Unit, within which the core aspects of the provision would be facilitated.

More generally, the AMP now has wide-ranging influence and contributes to the work of the local sub-regional Aimhigher Partnership (Aspire) and also to the pan-London health professions education thematic partnership (The Advice Clinic). The project has also helped initiate a joint website (www.uni4u.org.uk) with the London Nursing Initiative and colleagues involved in widening participation work at St George’s Hospital Medical School and the Royal Veterinary College, to provide a one-stop shop for information on health and medical widening participation activities in London. It is hoped, in time, that the other London Medical Schools will join this initiative. Imperial and Queen Mary have both indicated that they intend to do so.

Institutional development
At the time of the publication of the previous study, *Social class and participation* (Woodrow et al, 2002), only the King’s Schools of Medicine and Nursing were undertaking significant widening participation work at the College. The College now has a dedicated Widening Participation (WP) Unit, with activity taking place in each of the ten academic schools. The AMP has acted as an inspiration for an increased commitment to widening participation across the College with other Schools and Departments replicating elements of the activities. At a policy level, the overall College WP strategy initially focused on a number of initiatives which provided access to the professions. An Access to Law programme was developed, to complement the Access to Medicine Project. More generally the work of the AMP has informed the design and development of the WP Unit’s programme of activities and events, and membership of the AMP’s management group by a representative of the WP Unit aids synergy and co-ordination between the two initiatives. The WP Unit has itself:

- Developed close links with schools and colleges across London, including those in neighbouring boroughs;
- Involved teachers and other related professionals in the design and development of the College’s broader WP programme;
- Introduced a mentoring scheme; and
- Forged links with Learning and Skills Councils, Local Education Authorities, Aimhigher and local Education Business Partnerships.

**University of Newcastle upon Tyne: The PARTNERS Programme**

**Summary description of the project**

The PARTNERS programme aims to provide a supported entry route into higher education for identified students from disadvantaged backgrounds by collaborating with local schools and FE colleges to provide an integrated range of activities. Activities focus mainly on school years 12 and 13 (or FE college equivalent), and are linked to the ‘Students into Schools’ project. In designing the
PARTNERS programme, Newcastle used the first Universities UK research report ‘From Elitism to Inclusion: Good Practice in Widening Access’ (Woodrow et al 1998) as a guide to contemporary good practice.

After completing five full years of operation. PARTNERS continues to represent a major element in the University’s widening participation strategy, is integrated into the University systems and processes and has developed considerably in scope and number since it began. The Programme now involves all academic schools across the University, formal partnership agreements with local schools and colleges and range of activities tailored to the needs of students and schools/colleges.

Project development
The programme is now an established part of the widening participation strategy which in turn forms part of the University’s student recruitment strategy. It is this relationship that has been fundamental to embedding the activity and ensuring its long-term sustainability. The result is that all faculties and academic schools are involved in PARTNERS, and most are involved in associated widening participation activities, including:

- Development and delivery of the Assessed Summer School curriculum
- Participation in the Students into Schools Programme
- Support for the Higher Education Summer Schools, Master Classes and other pre-entry activities
- Ongoing work to admit, teach and retain students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The main strategies involve a co-ordinated programme of awareness-raising and developmental activities, leading to the PARTNERS Programme in years 11, 12 and 13. The programme includes the following:

- **Parents**: Working with parents of pupils from all age groups is seen as a priority, and awareness-raising information sessions are included throughout the programme.
- **Years 7-11**: A range of awareness-raising activities including student tutoring (for academic credit), ACE Weeks Excellence in Cities Master Classes, a PARTNERS Student Guide to Student Life event, and two summer schools for Year 11 pupils.
- **Year 12**: Involves more directly targeted activities which include student shadowing, advice and guidance on HE choices and UCAS procedures, and a three day residential Summer School in June.
- **Year 13**: This builds upon many of the Year 12 activities, with additional visits and talks in schools and colleges, subject-specific student shadowing, study skills development, and advice on issues such as student finance. Students formally apply to the PARTNERS Programme at the same time as they complete their UCAS form. If they are accepted onto the programme on the basis of clearly defined criteria, and are given a PARTNERS Offer, then the offer they receive will be a slightly lower offer than the ‘normal’ University offer, and includes successful completion of an Assessed Summer School. Students complete the Assessed Summer School in July.
- **The Assessed Summer School**: This two-week non-residential course is at the heart of the admissions and entry process for students participating in the PARTNERS programme. It aims to enable students to demonstrate their academic potential for success at the University. The Summer School involves up to 40 hours of contact time and approximately 50 additional hours of independent study time. It is based on two strands: The Academic Subject strand and the Higher Education Skills strand. The curriculum for the Academic Subject strand is approved as part of the
University’s academic quality mechanisms, and forms the basis of the evidence for assessment. The student must successfully complete the Assessed Summer School (marked on a pass/fail basis) and meet the terms of their reduced grade offer, in order to enter into the University.

Institutional development
The project has been disseminated within the institution and more broadly, and others have taken up this good practice. This has been particularly important within the institution. In the five years since the Programme began, the University has seen a real culture shift in its attitude towards widening participation. Partly as a result of this, and the way in which the Programme’s systems and procedures have been integrated internally, PARTNERS is now an established activity that has been embedded into normal University practice. All academic schools are now involved in the Programme and all but three degree programmes are involved for 2005 entry. The three degree programmes not involved in the Programme for 2005 entry are Psychology, Speech and Language Sciences, and Business Accounting and Finance (in partnership with Price Waterhouse Coopers). Psychology will be involved for 2006 entry. The remaining two programmes are restricted by the demands of professional bodies, and negotiation is ongoing.

There has been considerable interest in the PARTNERS Programme from colleagues in universities across the UK who are keen to replicate some of or the entire Programme. University staff have delivered sessions to a range of audiences at seminars, conferences and other universities throughout the UK.

The development of the Widening Participation Strategy at Newcastle has received strong support from University senior management including the Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Teaching and Learning. As a result, a ‘joined-up’ programme of widening participation and outreach activities, building upon the foundations provided by existing University projects and services, has been developed. The key elements of the Widening Participation Strategy are: raising aspirations; raising attainment; pre-entry and admissions-related activities and retention and success. The management structure relating to widening participation activity in the University, particularly the close involvement of the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, has meant that good practice has informed institutional policy making across all areas. For example, in 2004 a successful bid to HEFCE secured £7.5 million to upgrade teaching and student facilities, particularly the creation of three ‘social learning spaces’ aimed particularly at addressing the study space needs of an increasing number of students living at home.

Other student services across the University have provided support for the Widening Participation/Student Recruitment Strategy, often by developing and extending the services they offer. For example, in December 2004 the University Library received its third Charter Mark award for excellence; a widening participation scheme enabling teachers/tutors in PARTNERS schools and colleges to access Library resources was central to this success. The Accommodation Office have set up a pilot ‘Home Affiliation Scheme’ to support students living at home by giving them access to the facilities available in halls of residence. Newcastle University Careers Service has delivered sessions during the pre-entry summer schools to raise students’ awareness of the University’s success in graduate employability, the services available through the Careers Service and to encourage students to access the service as soon as they enter the University.
Newcastle is now in the process of considering the further development of the Widening Participation Strategy developed initially for the period 2001 to 2004. Development will take place in the context of the key national agendas (the Schwartz review, OFFA requirements and the impact of top-up fees) and on the basis of experience gained in widening participation since 1999. The Strategy is likely to confirm and build upon the priorities identified in its initial Widening Participation Statement.

Considerable progress has been made University-wide to develop a system that provides admissions staff with contextual information on applicants to the University, including those who apply through the PARTNERS Programme. This system provides socio-economic information about candidates and enables selectors to set students’ academic achievements in context. Entry through PARTNERS is now not considered a ‘special arrangement’ but is seen as an established route into the University.

Overall UCAS applications from students in participating schools have increased by approximately 60 per cent (2003 entry compared with 1999) and applications from young North East students from low participation neighbourhoods have increased by 62 per cent (1999 to 2003). Applications from young North East students whose postcode of domicile indicates that they are from social classes 3 and 4 have increased by 71 per cent (1999 to 2003). The progress of PARTNERS students is closely monitored throughout their courses and vocational destinations after graduation are also recorded. Retention rates and employment rates are comparable with those from the whole student population.

In a small number of cases PARTNERS students have been the top students in their year, some have graduated with first class honours and many have won awards and prizes.

Since 2003, money to support the PARTNERS Programme has been allocated as part of the HEFCE core funding allocation. Where the University works as part of a number of regional or national initiatives (Aimhigher, Single Programme initiatives, Life Long Learning Networks, HEFCE/ESF Summer Schools; National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth) funding is still very much project-based.

PARTNERS will continue to be a vital element of the Newcastle’s Widening Participation Strategy which, in turn, forms part of the broader University Student Recruitment Strategy. Relationships developed with schools and colleges in the process of implementing the PARTNERS Programme have proved beneficial to the University in overall recruitment terms and these positive side effects have helped to secure its long-term future.

In the future it is likely that there will be pro-active awareness-raising and targeting of key cohorts both within and outside the North East region, including extension of the PARTNERS Programme to other regions in the North of England.

Since the programme began the criteria for acceptance onto the PARTNERS programme have been refined to ensure that the focus remains on those students for whom the Programme was originally intended ie, young people in state schools or colleges who are from socio-economic groups III, IV and V, low participation neighbourhoods, and those recommended for inclusion by schools and colleges on the basis of other personal disadvantage factors.

There has been an emphasis on making sure that the approach is coherent, consistent and reaching the identified audience. In the future the PARTNERS Programme is likely to be extended to focus on
geographical areas which have a high black and minority ethnic population in order to encourage more qualified young people from these groups to apply to the University.

**Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication: Widening Participation in Broadcasting Education and Employment**

**Summary description of the project**

A project designed originally to provide a route into higher education courses in broadcasting at Ravensbourne through which students from disadvantaged backgrounds can be supported as they progress through a package of academic activities and a wide ranging support system to encourage retention. The package is organised between Ravensbourne College, Youth Culture Television (YCTV) and the broadcasting industry and includes taster programmes, subject specialist teaching, bridging courses, a student mentoring scheme and video conferencing interface with local studios. Despite the end of HEFCE project funding the influence of this work is still felt at Ravensbourne. The activities are now embedded into a range of summer activities that the College offers in Media and related subjects. YCTV is now one of a number of organisations involved in widening participation at Ravensbourne. There have also been fundamental management changes in the College as result of this project.

**Project development**

The Broadcasting Education project is now embedded into a range of summer activities that the College offers in Media and other subjects. Ravensbourne College still works with large numbers of 17+ students from Year 10 onwards but a whole course is no longer offered to YCTV exclusively. Every year Ravensbourne takes four to six students onto courses through YCTV. The College visits YCTV and gives talks as well as offering student ambassadors who are ex-YCTV students to help complete UCAS forms and generally encourage application.

The Media course is now open to colleges who offer National Diplomas in media but whose students would not otherwise gain entry to the College. In particular Tower Hamlets College and Bromley College send students to Ravensbourne for this course. The last day of the course contains an interview for the College should students wish to apply. A number of schools from widening participation areas are also included in this course offer. Finally a number of other community groups also send students including the Stephen Lawrence Trust and the Black and Minority Ethnic Television (BMETV) Foundation. This particular media course is now two weeks in duration and offers technical media knowledge on the College kit to enable the institution to test students’ ability to learn but mainly to convince students of the possibilities of further study. The College offers to pay fares for students to come on this course and, in the case of Tower Hamlets College, has even provided a free bus to bring students. Similar courses are offered in four other subjects and Ravensbourne also offers a ‘bite size’ menu of activities. These are one-day workshops to raise aspirations and enthuse non-traditional learners.

Finally the College offers free one-day training to the influencers of this ‘hard to reach’ potential student population. This includes training on specialist kit and IT software training. This is part of a drive to inform teachers, careers advisors and community groups about the potential of careers in creative industries.
Institutional development

Most widening participation work in this College is funded from HEFCE Widening Participation Uplift funds which the College does relatively well from having a high number of students living in poorer postcodes. It also benefits from three regional sources of Aimhigher grants. The movement towards a completely regional agenda is going to be difficult for this small college if they are to be forced to offer courses to suit local schools only. Ravensbourne is a specialist vocational college which needs to retain strong links to a number of industries located across Northern Kent and South London.

The College reviewed and improved its entire admissions policy and process in September 2004. This reflects not only experience gained in individual projects and recommendations in the Schwartz Report but also the College core aim of widening participation. All interviewing staff have received training on fair admissions and the College offers a booklet to all applicants with advice and guidance for a successful application to the College.

A post of Director of Diversity and Progression has been created on the Senior Management Team to embed all widening participation work centrally. This now includes the Equal Opportunities policy and actions, the Race Relations policy and actions and latterly the Disability policy. The College is currently revalidating many of its programmes and differentiation is seen as a central theme for the revalidation, the College having recognised the need to focus learning to suit a wide audience as a result of the broadcasting education work. The Diversity Office manages five academic link tutors. These are academics who spend a part of their time going out to schools, colleges and community groups to contact potential applicants. The office also manages sixty student ambassadors who offer a raft of activities in schools and colleges such as film clubs and fashion events.

This College is a very small institution of 960 students and has advantages of scale that enable it to support students individually and to adopt a very personal approach thus reducing drop out. The Director of Diversity said “we are school sized and use the language of community”. However, this small scale also means that staffing ratios do not provide the College with the capacity to carry out in depth monitoring and evaluation of the activities and no statistical information was available.

These centralising developments have not resulted in any changes to the target group. Young people from low-income backgrounds and who may have suffered from social exclusion are still the focus of the widening participation work at Ravensbourne.

The College maintains strong links with industry and is encouraged by Skill Set to train a diverse audience of learners. Because the media industry is largely self employed and still dominated by white males, the College sponsored a conference last year in London by Black/Minority Ethnic TV which brought together stakeholders to discuss issues around race and employability in the Media industry. Many black and minority ethnic practitioners told salutary tales of rejection and patronisation by the media establishment. Most were working as small independent operators on the fringes of mainstream media.

This college is an example of how project work can influence an institution by creating a critical mass of enthusiasm and expertise that has evolved into changes in management structure and college policies. Despite cessation of funding the work at Ravensbourne College has been continued using
other sources of support and the institution has fundamentally altered its approach to student recruitment, marketing and support.

University of Southampton: Widening Access into the Medical Profession

Summary description of the project

At time of the previous study, Social class and participation (Woodrow et al, 2002), the University of Southampton, a research-led Russell Group university, was described as having “little track record of working with local schools, industries, communities and organisations”. Student recruitment to the University did not reflect the make-up of its local population and although the University had expanded its student numbers, this had not made “any significant impact on its social class profile”. In 1997, through a merger of the University’s former Department of Adult Continuing Education and La Sainte Union College of Higher Education, New College was established as a new teaching-led Faculty of the University, with an explicit mission to spearhead the University’s strategy to widen access and lifelong learning. Its brief was to widen participation not only through the programmes it developed as a Faculty, but also by promoting widening participation activity throughout the University.

The School of Medicine had had a long tradition of seeking to widen access, but had seen little change in the admission of students from lower socio-economic groups. It recognised that entrance procedures can be a major barrier to widening access, but also that this perception may encourage exclusion by self-selection among potential applicants from under-represented groups. The University’s Centre for Research in Education Marketing (CREM) had recently undertaken a pilot study, ‘An Analysis of Perceptions of Medicine as a Career’. This reviewed the reactions of pupils of different ages and from different social backgrounds and the extent to which perceptions influence career ambition. The CREM report was being used to inform strategies for recruiting students from social classes III, IV and V to the Medical School.

The target group for the Widening Access into the Medical Profession project was defined as ‘primarily pre-18 year olds, from social classes III, IV and V who have been identified by their schools and colleges as not yet having realised their full potential’. The schools were initially selected by their local authorities in terms of low education achievement, staying-on rate and applications to university. Screening criteria devised by the project team at New College were used by schools and FE colleges to decide eligibility. Applicants had normally to fulfil two of these criteria to be eligible. The project had its own outreach worker, based at New College, who worked with schools and Partnership College outreach workers to identify potential students in schools and colleges, using the agreed screening criteria.

A new Access Pathway had been developed for students from the target group. This programme was a joint New College/School of Medicine initiative with implementation initially in New College, and there was joint curriculum development. This was to operate as follows:

- Liaison with local schools to identify and interest potential students from the target group.
- Screening and selection to identify students for admission to the scheme.
- These students would undertake a programme at their local FE college (one of the five linked colleges in the scheme) which was part of the college’s normal educational provision with a view to meeting the entry requirements for a Level 0 Medicine year at New College.
• Successful students would then proceed to the Level 0 Medicine year at New College.
• The New College programme included academic modules, work placements and key skills development which prepare students for admission to the BM Degree, while familiarising them with the University’s learning environment.
• Students who satisfactorily completed the Level 0 Medicine were to be guaranteed entry to the BM Degree of the School of Medicine. The pathway also offered exit routes to other courses in New College, and other faculties, including Biological Science.
• Students would receive additional support, development and mentoring right through from their FE college to entry to the Medical School.

The project has continued and been implemented, and the University has developed and successfully validated their Year 0 Widening Access to Medicine programme. However, there have been some organisational changes since 2001. Following a major reorganisation within the University in 2003, which resulted in a reduction in the number of faculties, the work of New College was integrated into the new faculties.

**Project development**
The Widening Access to Medicine Programme is now formally part of the School of Medicine. Students now enter a six-year programme, the BM6, which includes a Year 0. They are registered students of the School of Medicine and are now taught on the same campus as all other medical students. This has very much facilitated their integration into the Medical School from the start and given huge credibility to the programme, which is deemed as being very successful.

The first cohort of students entered the University at New College in October 2002. Of these original 18 students, 16 entered Year 1 of the BM course in October 2003. All successfully passed their primary examinations at the end of Year 1 and are now in Year 2 of the BM course. The second cohort of 19 students is currently in Year 1 of the BM programme and the third cohort of 29 students started their Year 0 programme in October 2004. The University reports being “delighted with their success”.

The first two years were a pilot and students fully entered the Medical School from New College via UCAS at the end of their Year 0. Students now apply and enter directly to the Medical School, via UCAS for a six-year BM Programme (with a Year 0 known as BM6). The total entry to Year 1 of the BM is currently 240, of whom the BM6 cohort is 30.

The programme still operates to clear socio-economic screening criteria, which all applicants must meet, these. These criteria have been subject to minor modification since 2001 and now read as follows:
• First generation applicant to HE;
• Parents, guardian or self in receipt of a means tested benefit;
• Living in supported accommodation, or independently of financial support apart from state provision;
• Eligible to receive EMA (Education Maintenance Award) or similar grant; and
• Resident in an area with postcode which falls within the lowest 20 per cent of the IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) or a member of a travelling family.

There are minimum academic requirements for entry, which are five GCSEs and four A/S levels at grade B, including Chemistry and Biology or vocational equivalents. The absolute minimum is 200 UCAS points.

Initially access to BM6 was piloted with five local and one London FE college that supplied potential applications for Year 0. This has been extended to between ten and 15 targeted local schools and colleges, though links are much more widespread and less formal than other institutions. After the pilot phase the scheme was immediately extended to entry from all geographical areas as students applied for entry via UCAS. The actual nature of the target group is essentially the same, but is geographically wider spread. The BM6 Liaison Officer helps students individually with their applications, acting as a ‘pre-course personal tutor’. Like all Medical Schools, the emphasis in Southampton is on selecting rather than recruiting. All BM6 students are interviewed, and panels include lay persons. Selectors are trained and made aware of the differences amongst applicants that may require to be taken into account. The Admissions process is monitored and controlled by the School’s Medical Selection Committee (as are all programmes in the School of Medicine). BM6 admissions have influenced the selection and interview procedures for the mature non-graduate applicants to the BM5 programme.

The entire BM6 cohort meets socio-economic screening criteria. Whereas during the pilot phase there were 20 ring-fenced places, there are now 30 in Year 1 which is the maximum that can be currently accommodated. Applications have increased hugely, particularly since entry via UCAS; as of February 2005 there were 220 applications for 30 places in 2005/06. By comparison there were only 110 applications for BM6 in 2004.

Upon entry, all School of Medicine students receive common induction with the objective that they all feel equally integrated and valued as full members of the School. However the Year 0 students of BM6 have their own programme where they receive additional academic and pastoral support. According to the School, “they seem to thrive” and “it is really important that they feel accepted in the School and meet and live with other medical students”. They are guaranteed University accommodation for the first two years to facilitate this.

The group are taught together for Year 0 by staff that have experience of widening access students. Students receive considerable individual and small group support and are given a lot of regular feedback on performance. To encourage motivation the curriculum is geared towards the needs of medicine and students are given hands on practical insight into their future careers. Students are only taught on three days to facilitate ‘earn & learn’. When Year 0 BM6 students progress to Year 1 there is ongoing communication and support from BM6 tutors, all of whom work within the medical school and are involved with Year 1 teaching and tutorials. Once students have entered Year 1 no other special provision is made for students as the School feels that “students are now fully able to take part in the programme alongside their colleagues”.

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7 See http://www.som.soton.ac.uk/prospectus/undergrad/wamp/screening/default.asp
The School reports that students are highly successful and that progression rates are high. It suggests that students benefit from a specially designed academic programme, which ensures they have obtained the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to successfully undertake the early years of the BM programme. Students receive support in numeracy, key skills, information retrieval and information technology, which is specifically related to the BM curriculum. Students are ‘socialised’ into the medical profession. For example, they experience a range of health care placements from week 2 of BM6, may join all medical student teams and societies, and have clinicians as personal tutors. The modes of assessment and many of the assessment regulations in Year 0 mirror those used throughout the other years of the BM programme. The pass mark of 50 per cent for Year 0 is the same as the rest of the teaching years in the Medical School. The rationale essentially of Year 0 is that students will not only be academically well equipped but also have an advantage over students entering the Year 1 directly. Namely they will have already been in the University and Medical School for a year and will be familiar with all the systems, and adaptations to University life that all students have to make in their first year.

The School is closely monitoring this initiative and student progress is tracked throughout the rest of their BM programme. It is considered too early to provide substantial data, though as yet numbers progressing beyond Year 0 are ‘encouraging’. Once the BM 6 students enter Year 1 of the BM programme retention has been as good as for other students entering the programme.

The Medical School also started in 2004/05 a four-year graduate entry programme, which is also part of its widening access strategy. Hence it now has a portfolio of three undergraduate BM programmes:

- BM5 – the traditional five-year programme;
- BM4 – the four year graduate entry programme; and
- BM6 – the six year programme, widening access with Year 0.

Now that the BM6 provision is embedded within the Medical School as part of their programme portfolio, and now that all staff and students are part of the School, the University comments that ‘it could be considered as being very stable.' BM6 is viewed as a core activity of the School of Medicine and part of its strategy for medical student expansion and so is funded accordingly. The University says, however, that “a change of government may alter the agenda and top-up fees may impact on our recruitment”.

Institutional development

The decision of the University to develop foundation degrees (FDs) followed the initiative to develop a Widening Access to Medicine programme. The first FD developed followed a successful bid for a prototype FD in Health and Social Care. The Health Care Innovation Unit, established by the University in 2003, also encompasses the philosophy of widening access to all health care professions. Many of the people involved in the development of FDs have been involved in the Widening Access programme, and hence there has been a common mindset in the establishment of FDs.

The practice of the Faculty of Medicine Health and Life Sciences is key to the University's widening participation strategy, and the practice of that strategy is reported to be 'most reflected' in that Faculty. Its wider effects on university practice in widening participation is described as 'mixed', though it is always acknowledged as an example of very successful best practice. The programme was included
From the margins to the mainstream. Universities UK / SCOP

(with a range of student case studies from the programme) as an example of good practice in the Department of Health’s Report, Medical Schools: Delivering the Doctors of the Future. The School has advised a range of staff and other departments of their strategies and programme.

Within the institution and the local Workforce Development Confederation the programme is continually referred to as an example of good practice. A ‘Celebration Day’ was held at the end of the first year of running the Year 0 at which University, NHS and local dignitaries were represented. This was particularly well received as it featured students describing what the programme had meant to them. Many internal university publications have featured the programme at some stage, and it is particularly heralded by the Development Office (for alumni) which has identified the Widening Access to Medicine project the most popular project for alumni to donate to. All students receive a £1,000 bursary a year from this source.

The project is key to a range of school/college activities such as the FE2HE, a local Southampton scheme consisting of a week-long residential summer school. It enables 50 students a year to have a taster in all the health professions of the University such as physiotherapy, audiology, podiatry, nursing and occupational therapy. These students are selected on the basis of widening access criteria, and being on track for entry to a health-related HE course through pre-existing A-level subject choices (or vocational equivalent). With the existence of a dedicated 0.5 BM6 Outreach Officer, the Medical School is linked via the central WP Unit not only to FE2HE, but additionally to Aimhigher work in Health and Social Care, Open Days and school visits as part of a co-ordinated programme in health care disciplines.

University of Ulster: Step-Up to Science
Summary description of the project
Step-Up to Science was set up to widen participation in science by providing learning opportunities to young people in schools who historically have low attainment levels and low expectations of their educational abilities.

The project involved the formation of partnerships with local schools which traditionally had poor rates of progression to higher education. Selected young people from these schools engaged in a wide range of science-based activities with University staff, aimed at raising their educational aspirations and raising their performance in science-based subjects in order to enable them to enter and be successful in higher education. On-going support takes the form of Summer School provision, induction to ease the transition to University, mentoring and work placements.

The Project targeted disadvantaged young people in deprived areas of Londonderry, in particular those from social classes Illm-V living in families with little or no parental experience of higher education, limited income and/or where circumstances are not conducive to study.

The project is currently in its fifth year of operation and continues to achieve outstanding levels of success in relation to:
• improvement in pupil’s academic performance and psychological disposition;

• progression to higher education; and
• retention and success at university.

Project development
To date almost 200 students have successfully completed the programme with almost one third of students obtaining three ‘A’ grades in the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) in Science. 98 per cent of students have progressed to university, many to high demand courses such as Physiotherapy, Radiography, Molecular Biosciences, Forensic Science and Law.

The project has developed from a Faculty of Science based initiative to a central University programme. The programme is integral to the University’s Widening Participation Strategy and their outreach activity. The University has recently established the Department of Access and Educational Partnership, which is headed by the Director of the Step-Up Programme, to take forward the University’s widening participation agenda and the further expansion of Step-Up in other academic disciplines and geographical areas within Northern Ireland.

Best practices emerging from the programme, particularly in relation to the support of non-traditional students, are being adopted within other faculties and include pre-entry induction, closer contact with students, revision of teaching, learning and assessment methods, student mentoring and a systematic review of entry qualifications.

In terms of uptake within other institutions, the lessons learned through Step-Up are being widely disseminated through conference presentations and research publications. As a result it is clear that a number of institutions are moving towards an interventionist approach to widening participation. The programme Director has advised institutions across the UK, Eire and the USA on ways in which this can be achieved.

The programme has also successfully linked with, and been supported by, a number of central departments and faculties, which include Student Support Services, the Careers Department, Students Union, Staff Development Unit, Physical Support Services, Department of Educational Services and all five Faculties.

The programme is viewed internally and externally as the flagship of the University’s approach to widening participation. The Department of Access and Educational Partnerships has responsibility not only for the University’s outreach strategy and activity but also for student recruitment and admissions policy and activity.

Institutional development
The Step-Up programme is prominent within the University’s Widening Participation Strategy which in turn is closely linked to the Teaching and Learning Strategy. The University now clearly recognises that, while it performs highly against national widening participation benchmarks, there are still some sections of the Northern Ireland population that are under-represented in higher education. The University’s Mission Statement, Teaching and Learning Strategy and Widening Participation Strategy clearly reflect its commitment to intervene to ensure that under-represented groups participate and are successful. Step-Up is a specific response to the under-representation of social classes IV and V
and has been designed and operates to attract young people who would not be persuaded to participate in higher education by aspiration raising activities alone.

The programme from its inception has had a highly structured approach to the targeting of both schools and young people to ensure the selection of those who most deserve to benefit from higher education. Analysis of the data on students who have participated or who are currently participating in the programme reveals that:

- 75 per cent have parents who are long-term unemployed;
- 94 per cent live in rented accommodation;
- 30 per cent come from single parent families;
- 98 per cent of parents who are in employment are unskilled or semi-skilled;
- 11 single teenage mothers have progressed through the programme;
- None have parents who have had experience of higher education; and
- 98 per cent of young people on entry to the programme expressed no desire to participate in higher education.

This analysis suggests that the targeting and recruitment process is successfully reaching those who are most deserving.

Additional tariff points can be earned through completion of assignments during the tutoring stage and at the Summer School. These points can be used for entry to any course irrespective of the course requirements or the demand for places. As a result Step-Up students have progressed to a wide range of high demand courses having achieved the necessary tariff points, for example in Physiotherapy and Radiography.

Increasingly students, particularly non-traditional students, are presenting themselves to universities with non-standard qualifications. This has certainly been the case with Step-Up students who complete AVCE qualifications. The emergence of Step-Up students has prompted a comprehensive review of admission policies and procedures across the institution to ensure that students with qualifications other than A-levels have an equal chance of gaining entry to the University. The review has led to the development of a qualification equivalence table thereby ensuring that there is a consistent and fair approach to admissions.

97 per cent of students of those students who have participated in the Step-Up programme have successfully progressed to universities across the United Kingdom. 75 per cent of students in any year normally progress to the University of Ulster, mostly to science or related courses.

The success of the programme through ongoing and systematic internal and external evaluation has been conclusively demonstrated. The project, however, remains funded on a year-by-year basis, which makes it increasingly difficult to attract and retain experienced project staff. The uncertainty over long term funding is an issue and mainstreaming of the Step-Up programme is a priority for the institution.

The Step-Up programme, as part of its original strategy and overall design, has very specific support mechanisms in place to ensure that students who progress to university are more likely to be successful. These include:
• **Pre-Entry Intervention Phase:** During the two-year programme young people experience university teaching and assessment methods, and are assisted and supported to develop subject specific knowledge and general transferable skills which prepares them for university life. They also receive ongoing career guidance and course information to allow them to make informed course and career choices.

• **Induction Phase:** All Step-Up students who are progressing to university undertake a three-day induction programme. Topics covered include time management skills, study skills, course specific and transferable skills and money management skills. Students who are progressing to the University of Ulster undertake an additional induction day where they are given an opportunity to become more familiar with the University campus they have chosen and to see the academic and recreational facilities that are available.

• **Mentoring Phase:** Each Step-Up student who progresses to the University of Ulster is assigned a postgraduate mentor who has previously successfully completed the undergraduate course on which they are enrolled, who provides both academic and pastoral advice and guidance on an ongoing basis. Mentors are required to meet with their students at least once per month and to maintain a record of these meetings and action points agreed. The postgraduate mentors are closely linked to the Step-Up project team who in turn link closely with the student’s Adviser of Studies and Student Support Services.

While the pace of change has been relatively slow in relation to teaching and learning practices there are signs that progress is being made. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning leads an annual University review of first year teaching and assessment strategies to ensure that non-traditional students are not disadvantaged by the qualifications that they hold on entry to the University. A number of seminars, organised by the University’s Staff Development Unit, have been held for academic and support staff around the theme of student diversity (academic, social and cultural).

The Step-Up programme has been specifically designed to ensure that students are adequately prepared for success in science related courses at undergraduate level. University, school and industry staff work closely together to ensure that the pre-university curriculum is an appropriate preparation for university. As a result the Step-Up pre-entry curriculum is constantly adapted. For example, in response to differences between the AVCE curriculum specification and first year undergraduate chemistry modules, a Chemistry Summer School has been introduced specifically for Step-Up students who are progressing to science courses with a significant chemistry component. This is delivered collaboratively by University and school staff.

The specific lessons learned from the Step-Up programme are disseminated, particularly within the science faculties, to assist academic staff to better understand the different skills base of individual students arising from the qualification route that they have followed.

The programme has been subject to ongoing and rigorous evaluation since its inception including:

• **Scientific External Examiner:** who moderates the students work in terms of the academic quality across students and academic years. This assessor determines the additional tariff points that should be allocated for assignments completed during the Scientific Investigation week and the Residential Summer School.
• **External Moderator:** who conducts an on-going evaluation and has access to the extensive monitoring and tracking information, the participating young people, Step-Up undergraduates, postgraduates, University staff, school staff and industrial partners. The External Moderator has recently produced a comprehensive report on the programme, with some recommendations for improvement which are being implemented.

• **Independent Researchers:** who conduct an ongoing evaluation of the impact of the Step-Up programme on all students who have participated in it.

The performance of the Step-Up students, both pre-entry and post-entry, is also monitored closely by the project team. In addition the University of Ulster also centrally monitors the performance of Step-Up students who have progressed to the institution, and compares their outcomes with the overall student body to gauge their level of success.

The design and development of the Step-Up programme has been influenced by the research activity of the Step-Up Director and has recently led to the establishment of the Centre for Widening Participation Research at the University of Ulster. Ongoing research within the Centre has helped in the modification and improvement of all widening participation initiatives at the University. The work has also helped to inform approaches to teaching and learning strategies, particularly in relation to non-traditional students.

When Step-Up was introduced it was unique as an interventionist programme which sought to boost student performance, aspirations and expectations. There was a clear realisation that this was best achieved through a partnership approach using expertise across many stakeholders. In addition there was an appreciation that students needed to have on-going support while at university to ensure degree level success.

The current retention rate across three student cohorts is 94 per cent, which compares to 82.5 per cent, across the University. The programme will have its first graduates from university in June 2005. Early indications, based on performance to date, are that students have performed exceptionally well across a wide range of subject areas with degree classifications ranging from 2:2 to first class.

The Step-Up programme is still dependent upon core funding from Government but is also supported in kind by the University in terms of the use of facilities, some general consumables and a contribution towards the project team’s salary costs. In addition to Government and University funding, the programme has also attracted almost £200,000 since 2001 from a variety of external sources. The initiative has seen a significant improvement in funding over the past two years, largely from the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, charitable organisations and from the University. This has allowed the project, for the first time, to expand the intake of students to 70 compared to the original intake of 60 students per year. The success of the programme is such that there are usually over 200 applications for entry each year.
The programme is now located within the Department of Access and Educational Partnerships (within the Teaching and Learning portfolio). The Step-Up Director has close contact with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning who represents the interests of the programme at all the influential decision making committees of the University, including the Planning Committee, Strategic Planning Group, Teaching and Learning Committee, Council and Senate. The Director of the Step-Up programme is a member of the Widening Participation Committee, The Student Support Committee and the Access Working Group.
4.4 2005 case studies

The University of Wales, Bangor: Talent Opportunities Programme

Brief description of the project
The Talent Opportunities Programme (TOP) aims to widen participation into higher education by raising the aspirations and awareness of higher education of pupils from lower socio-economic groups. TOP involves a three year programme of wide-ranging activities for secondary school pupils in low participation neighbourhoods across North Wales. It currently operates in eight schools and involves over 1,200 pupils. The programme targets pupils in Years 9 to 11, with the potential to progress to higher education, in areas where there is little or no family history of a university education.

Local and institutional context
The University of Wales, Bangor was founded in 1884 and has a long history of widening participation. The institution’s widening access strategy is focused on improving access for non-standard entrants to higher education. It has evolved over the last decade and particularly since 1997 when the focus of widening participation locally and nationally moved towards enhancing the participation of a more diverse student population. Widening participation is a central concern for the University, and various activities which support the strategy have been pulled together and reprioritised. It was in recognition of the need to build upon the work being done with schools and pupils in low participation neighbourhoods that TOP was introduced. The University hosts and takes a leading role in the North Wales Reaching Higher, Reaching Wider Consortium, which has been the focus of activity in relation to widening access and participation across the region.

The University of Wales, Bangor is located in North Wales, in a predominantly rural area. A number of wards in the region have been identified as having socially-disadvantaged or deprived communities under the Welsh Assembly Government’s Communities First Programme. The rural location of the University presents a challenge for widening participation in terms of its level of postcode premium funding received from the higher education funding council for Wales (HEFCW). In North Wales there are pockets of acute disadvantage that are demarcated within more affluent areas by the oversimplification of boundaries set for postcode funding. Consequently, the level of funding is relatively low in comparison to the number of areas of lower socio-economic status and low participation.

The University tends to draw students from other rural parts of the UK, and this raises a challenge regarding the aim of attracting a more diverse student body, including students from ethnic backgrounds. To make advances with this element of the strategy, the University recognises the need to consider targeting schools in more urban areas of England.

The widening access strategy predominantly targets disadvantaged areas and communities. There are two key ways in which the access objectives of the University are overseen:

- Access and social inclusion task group – this includes representatives from across the University including the Academic Registry, Student Recruitment Unit, Department of Lifelong Learning, Student Services, Careers Centre and academic departments. The success of this group is attributed to the involvement of all staff involved in access across the University as well as
academic representatives who can ensure that access is also fundamental to the work of departments.

- Community University of North Wales – the University plays a lead role in the North Wales Community University and the Reaching Higher, Reaching Wider Consortium. The Consortium is chaired by the Head of the Department of Lifelong Learning and this helps to maximise the integration of institutional and regional widening participation activity.

The University has recently streamlined management and decision making structures by forming a small number of task groups reporting to a University Executive. The access and social inclusion task group is one of these groups, and is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for this area.

As well as the TOP scheme, there are other widening access initiatives. For example, the Department for Lifelong Learning executes a targeted programme of activities in schools through the Reaching Wider partnership. In addition, a lifelong learning bus has been commissioned to act as a mobile outreach facility targeted at Community First areas, rural and Welsh medium communities in North Wales, through a partnership between the University, the Welsh Language Board and the BBC. There are also activities targeted at parents and adult learners in the community to offer them a taste of higher education.

The University of Wales, Bangor offers a comprehensive package of post-entry support for students in collaboration between Student Services and the Careers and Opportunities Centre. The University operates a number of schemes to support students who are at University including a peer-guide scheme. The peer-guide system offers first-year students social, personal and academic support in their first term at the University. The scheme has been running for 12 years and annually recruits and trains over 350 second-year student volunteers through departments.

**Detailed project description**

The Talent Opportunity Programme started in 1998 as a pilot project in response to the University’s recognition of the need to expand the widening participation strategy to further build upon work with schools in disadvantaged areas in the locality. The programme was devised as a progressive scheme, rather than one-off activities, and has expanded considerably since it started. When it began, two secondary schools were involved. There are currently eight schools participating in the programme and there are plans for another two schools to join from September 2005. This expansion has been made possible because the programme has become centrally funded using HEFCW premium funds, upon being written into the University widening access strategy.

TOP offers a range of activities to participating secondary schools, tailored to the needs and interests of year groups 9, 10 and 11 and delivered in Welsh or English, as required. The majority of the activities are undertaken in schools. Participating schools are able to select from activities including:

- Presentations – TOP, post-16 choices, university life, careers, finance;
- Workshops – ‘Aiming for a College Education’, study skills (time management, revision, coping with stress), finances;
- Attendance at parents’ evening;
- Subject-specific lectures;
- University day visit/residential; and
• Work experience opportunities – accommodating pupils in University departments where they would need graduate employment.

The University also offers particular pupils an early guaranteed conditional offer in Year 11, and a scholarship of £1,000 to pupils who take up a place at the University of Wales, Bangor, both of which act as a motivational incentive to encourage pupils to progress to higher education. There are activities involving parents, in recognition of the low levels of family higher education participation. Participating pupils receive regular letters through the programme, sent to their home address, outlining the activities they will be involved in. At the start of the scheme, pupils are required to fill out a questionnaire covering details about their family background, personal preferences and attitudes towards higher education. TOP has recently launched as a membership ‘club’ for participating pupils, for which they receive a membership pack and access, in due course, to an interactive website.

A number of students (15 to 20) from the University are recruited to work on the TOP programme. They accompany a member of University staff on school visits where they act as facilitators, discussing their experiences of university life as well as exploring the similarities and differences between school and university. They are also involved as guides during the visits to the University. In conjunction with the education department, students studying for a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) deliver study skills workshops. Schools regard the student involvement to be a valuable part of the programme, whilst students believe it to be useful experience and an opportunity to supplement their income. Several students have previous experience of mentoring or talking to school pupils through other Bangor University schemes.

The Talent Opportunities Programme is targeted at Year 9 to 11 pupils in secondary schools within disadvantaged communities and low participation areas in North Wales. It seeks to work in half of the most deprived wards of North Wales. The programme has been targeted at pupils studying at pre-GCSE level, to help inform their decision making and in order to build upon the previous activities and expertise of the University. It is open to pupils who are deemed capable of progressing beyond GCSE level, and potentially to university, and is particularly keen to harness pupils who do not have the support system or the motivation to go onto university. Many of the pupils it targets come from families with no history of going on to university. Most of the schools targeted by the programme are also in bilingual/Welsh speaking areas, in line with the Welsh Assembly Government’s aim of increasing higher education participation rates amongst Welsh speakers.

TOP seeks to raise the awareness, aspirations and motivation of the pupils it targets. Participating schools and pupils benefit from a programme that is responsive since the programme can be tailored to suit their individual needs and requests. The flexibility of the programme allows schools to be involved at their own chosen level.

The programme relies upon the involvement of certain departments across the University, particularly for the pupils’ University visits. Departments are targeted that can capture the pupils’ interest and run hands-on, interactive workshops. As demand increases, there may be a need to manage departmental concerns about the level of commitment. It is recognised that more can be done to influence and inform departments about the importance of widening participation work run centrally.
The programme works in collaboration with schools, relying heavily on the help and support of school staff. As such the University has worked to establish good links and relationships with the participating schools. Schools report that activities are well organised, well managed and are planned well in advance, all of which contribute to their year on year involvement in the programme. The programme is also run with the co-operation of the local education authorities and local careers company. The University is keen to ensure that organisations are aware of TOP activities to avoid duplication and confusion.

Initially, TOP was launched as a pilot scheme funded for two years through HEFCW. It received other project funding for an additional two years. Subsequently it was funded by the University centrally through their widening participation premium funds. The University regard that central funding has contributed to the development of the programme.

Participating pupils are being tracked and monitored by the University. All participating pupils are given a questionnaire to fill in when they start to enable the University to monitor the pupils’ family background and ensure they are targeting the right group of pupils. Additionally, a rudimentary tracking system has been instigated by the University to track students as they reach higher education entry stage. The first cohort of TOP pupils reached this stage in September 2003 and individuals were contacted by letter. 39 per cent reported progressing to higher education and 12.5 per cent to full time employment or training. A further four per cent reported continuing in further education. The remaining 43 per cent were not contactable. There are currently no formal procedures in place to monitor the progression and achievement of previous TOP pupils once they enter University, but this is under consideration.

Developments
There are plans to develop the programme to work with two additional schools in the next academic year, with hopes for further development in more schools throughout North Wales. It is recognised that this would depend upon staffing and the ongoing commitment of departments. Expansion may involve altering the programme, which in turn may reduce the contact the University has with schools. A recent development has been to carry out activities for Year 12 pupils including a student shadowing opportunity and lengthened University visit in the form of a summer school. The University is keen to offer pupils different learning experiences and maintain their engagement with the pupils.

The University has recently introduced a pupil membership club which aims to encourage pupils to identify with the programme and engage with it outside of the current activities. There are proposals to develop a website, to allow open access for participating pupils and enable them to enter their own material. The University recognises that the website would need to be developed further if the planned programme expansion results in less contact across a greater number of schools. Both the University and participating schools welcome the potential involvement of previous TOP pupils as student employees now that the first two cohorts of TOP pupils have reached higher education entry and believe this will strengthen the scheme in the future.

Strengths and areas for future development
There is clear evidence that this programme is opening up opportunities in higher education to talented young people who, without the scheme, would not have gone on to university. One of the strengths of the Talent Opportunities Programme is the nature of the relationships developed with
schools. The University has recognised that such programmes should not be imposed on schools. Rather they need mutual respect and to be developed with schools and tailored to their individual needs. The University has worked hard to build relationships with schools, which has required that they show schools an ongoing commitment to the programme. The University has embraced the need for different levels of involvement, ensuring that the young people and parents are a part of the programme. TOP is believed to have further benefited from ‘champions’ within schools, who believe in the work and are committed to its ongoing success.

The University believe that other universities can benefit from their experience of working with schools and pupils in either dual language and/or rural areas and through their understanding of the potential barriers these issue engender, including the reluctance of young people to think beyond the confines of their local area. The need for an attitudinal change takes time and thus the University acknowledges that this has required a demonstrable show of commitment to the programme over a number of years.

The programme currently targets pupils who are identified by the school, and through achievement scores, as capable of progressing to University. In the future the University, in collaboration with partner schools, wants to ensure that able pupils in lower ability classes also have the opportunity to progress and engage with the programme. This would be a welcome development.

**Edge Hill College of Higher Education: Promoting Teaching as a Profession for members of minority ethnic communities**

**Brief description of the project**

The project aims to raise aspirations and promote teaching as a profession for ethnic minority students. It makes a range of presentations to schools, colleges and community groups. Taster events are held at Edge Hill and other partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In addition a mentor programme is ongoing and students receive advice and guidance on career planning. Students are also supported through the UCAS application process through a programme of ‘mock’ application forms and ‘mock’ interviews. Equivalency tests are available through this programme for students who do not have the required GCSE qualifications. It targets minority ethnic students, particularly those from Asian and Black communities, as they are currently under-represented in the teaching profession.

**Local and institutional context**

Edge Hill is the largest college in the general college & HE sector and the third largest provider overall with significant vocational provision, offering a wide range of programmes and foundation degrees. It has over 13,000 students and one of the highest proportions of students from social classes III-M-V, low participation neighbourhoods and state schools in the country. It is the UK’s largest trainer of Secondary teachers with contractual partnerships with over 700 schools and colleges. Edge Hill hopes to have gained both Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and university status in the next three years. It is currently accredited by Lancaster University.

Edge Hill has a strong commitment to and track record of widening participation. It has had a long history, since its establishment 114 years ago, of removing barriers and widening access to education. This ethos has created an institutional culture that is responsive to change which in turn
creates a platform for implementing its widening participation strategies. One area where it specifically wishes to improve is in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) recruitment. There are no HEFCE benchmarks for BME recruitment so the Institution has adopted the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) target of 7.4 per cent by Autumn 2006. It has already made significant progress towards this target from just below 4 per cent in 2002 to 5.2 per cent in 2004.

Edge Hill, in Ormskirk, Lancashire, in the NW of England, is at the heart of a catchment area of 1.25m people, covering Southport, Formby, North Liverpool, Knowsley, St Helens, Wigan, Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire, but within its immediate vicinity the population of ethnic minorities is low. To increase the number of ethnic minority students, it has extended its recruitment into areas with higher proportions of ethnic minority communities. To expand its ethnic base, Edge Hill is working with LEAs to identify schools with higher ethnic minority populations, with HEIs to provide summer schools and outreach activities, and with the Association of Muslim Schools in UK. It has also worked with Connexions and the Liverpool ethnic minority and traveller service.

The widening participation strategy at Edge Hill is monitored by a Sub-group of the Equality, Widening Access and Student Support committee (EWASSC), on the impact of institutional policies such as Admissions, and widening participation initiatives. Edge Hill embraces the Student Life Cycle model, which recognises that intervention and support is necessary at all points of interaction, from pre-entry, application, induction and through the first crucial months of undergraduate study and beyond. Particular attention is given to pre-entry support for groups from areas of historically low rates of HE participation, and to students diagnosed as ‘at risk’ from an early stage.

All Modular Undergraduate programmes have a reflective learning strategy in place in Personal Development Plans (PDP) in level 1 and many have now extended this to levels 2 and 3. Strong emphasis is placed on the development of Key Skills; employability skills and work experience/placement experience for all students. Its long term strategy is to provide quality learning opportunities for students, continuing professional development for staff; continued development of the learning infrastructure; the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching; the provision of a research and development focus into the potential offered by new technologies.

Learning Services and Student Services work closely with Academic Departments. All subjects in Humanities, Management, Social and Applied Science operate the Personal Tutor system, some are integrated some are stand-alone. The Personal Tutors are integral to the delivery of PDPs. It maintains training and work opportunities for Edge Hill students in Widening Participation and continues to employ large numbers of students to work as mentors/ambassadors. Student workers undertake Institutional Diversity Training as part of overall training programme.

The development of appropriate assessment techniques and effective feedback to students, the provision of academic guidance for students and the reduction of drop out rates on specific programmes are important components of the Institution’s Teaching, Learning and Development Strategy. It has been drafted to incorporate compulsory staff development for staff new to HE and for existing staff, a menu of key events related to QME of Teaching and Learning.

Widening access is facilitated through creative entry routes such as ‘Fastrack’, ‘Fastforward’, Edge Hill revision programmes and entry tests for GCSE Equivalency in Mathematics, English and Science,
offering a Primary Initial Teacher Training Programme (particularly suited to adults from access courses where they cannot meet a specific A Level subject requirement), specialising in children’s development and learning and the development of foundation degrees for Classroom Assistants with a clear pathway to ITT Status Programmes.

Over 85 per cent of the degrees at Edge Hill are vocational and prepare students for professions and are in high demand. All qualifications in the national qualifications framework are equally recognised. But they recognise the need to further inform employers about vocational pathways.

Edge Hill continues to review its marketing strategy to promote part-time study. Through its foundation degrees the percentage of mature students with no previous HE and from LPNs has increased from four per cent to seven per cent. A number of outreach centres across the North West deliver foundation degrees for Classroom Assistants. Edge Hill also piloted Fast Forward – a Web CT Access courses for those in employment with NVQ Level 2 & 3 qualifications, as that tends to be attractive to students from low socio economic groups. The pilot ran with ten students, nine of whom have completed. Three new cohorts were recruited (ten in each) of which 23 are moving towards a foundation degree, the others towards a first degree.

Mail shots are used to target all first year students to ensure that students access support provision. The ‘Staying the Course’ campaign uses poster and leaflet to raise awareness of student support and is now embedded in year round activities within Student Services. The leaflet entitled ‘A First Year’s Guide to Making Yourself More Employable’ and improving employability skills was developed and distributed in the Modular Programme. Contact is made by the Careers Service with all new entrants to identify those most in need of Career Planning and support for employment.

Staff development and Continuing Professional Development opportunities for teaching and learning support staff continues to be developed in response to identified staff development needs. All staff are effectively inducted into the institution and their department. Some examples are staff development for advice and guidance staff on Curriculum 2000, student finance, and the new 14 to19 Curriculum, institutional awareness raising on the implications of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and Race Relations Act. Now all new staff induction includes SENDA, RRA, EO and Student Support. Diversity Briefings are compulsory for all staff. Training for Fastrack tutors is provided on identifying and supporting students with specific learning difficulties is now embedded in the training programme.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the institution’s widening participation work are carried across the subject areas in terms of applications, offers, acceptances and retention of various groups. This is linked to Equality Impact Assessment and the Race Equality Action Plan and has led to the commissioning of Perception Research with Minority Ethnic Groups. Student satisfaction surveys are undertaken. Evaluation reports on all modules/programmes are against a set of ‘fitness for purpose’ statements. Review of subject areas is against national and sector benchmarks of widening participation, recruitment and retention. Trends in students’ achievement are monitored via refined statistics which identify achievement of different groups of students on different programmes.

**Detailed project description**

The project is one response to the TTA call for the need to recruit more teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project aims to tackle the under-representation of people from minority ethnic
groups within the teaching profession and to raise awareness of the career options available in teaching. It is built on a series of previous projects going as far back as the 1987 Access to Primary Teaching (APT) that gradually evolved into Access to Primary Teaching for Asians and Blacks (APTAB) in 2001. It works through the Partnerships Team and the Minority Ethnic Recruitment and Retention Project in the Faculty of Education to promote Edge Hill as an ITT provider. According to the latest TTA figures it recruited 55 ITT trainees from a minority ethnic background in 2004. This was 5.4 per cent of those who declared their ethnicity. TTA have confirmed the Institution’s target for 2005-06 as 88 new entrants (7.4 per cent of its intake), which is higher than the 7.2 per cent institutional average.

Edge Hill is also working together with St Martin’s College and North West LEAs on ‘Inspire’, a one-week programme during which participants will take part in ‘taster sessions’ within a school and receive the support of an appropriate teacher mentor. Participants will also benefit from assistance on how best to present themselves in the application and interview process for teacher training courses.

Edge Hill continues to develop outreach work with Careers Departments in NW HEIs which do not provide ITT, in order to attract more minority ethnic and male trainees on Primary ITT programmes at Edge Hill. It has renewed links with Lancaster University and Salford University Careers Departments in relation to minority ethnic recruitment, mentoring scheme and Tasters, where there is no available progression to ITT for students.

To reach out to minority ethnic groups Edge Hill distributes high quality publicity materials to schools, careers guidance and community groups in areas with high minority ethnic populations within the NW. Representative trainees, Non-Qualified Trainees (NQTs) and practising teachers are invited to showcase their stories and celebrate their successes. The current issue of ‘Edgeways’ features the first Asian Muslim female head in the area.

The project runs a series of road shows, presentations and conferences at selected sites within the NW targeting particularly Year 11 to 13 pupils and parents and Access students from minority ethnic backgrounds. This work is done through the Partnerships Team. Contact has been made with community groups and invitations received to be present at Muslim Community NW Hub events. It has also worked with Asian Sound (Radio Station), on a number of events. Specific events have been held in association with the Muslim Hub network. Ten schools and ten colleges have been targeted for specific outreach activities during 2004/5, associated with this project.

It continues to develop the use of extended taster and mentoring schemes for applicants and prospective applicants from MEGs. A minority ethnic mentoring scheme has been developed using ex-Edge Hill ITT trainees from MEGs to act as mentors on Taster courses and to support those in their first few years of teaching. A database of existing Minority Ethnic trainees has been developed. The focus for 2004/05 is on showcasing their stories and celebrating their successes. Prospective trainees have been identified to take on this role. 22 schools and four mentees have been recruited in the Autumn term 2004.

Additional induction and pre-course support for applicants and trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is an ongoing and continuous process for all staff. The minority ethnic mentoring scheme will be used to aid retention. Drop-in clinics have been established to provide informal
support and to allow trainees to discuss their concerns in confidence. Support in relation to the use of Standard written and spoken English for those whom English is an additional language is available. The Minority Ethnic Recruitment and Retention Officer is available for individual support and guidance.

A monitoring and tracking system for tracking applicant-trainee-teacher progression is currently being developed by the Minority Ethnic Recruitment Officer.

Staff development sessions are delivered for:
- Providing advisory sessions, support with applications and interview techniques for candidates from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Providing guidance for colleagues visiting Muslim schools (e.g. cultural awareness staff development sessions).
- Providing race awareness training for all staff involved in ITT programmes to ensure full commitment to widening participation, equality of access and opportunity.

**Strengths and Challenges**

The project has received TTA funding for three years 2002 to 2005. A report has to be submitted to the TTA every year and the achievements are measured against the targets set in the action plan. There is no guarantee that the TTA will continue to fund the project after this period.

The particular strengths of the Project are:

- The outreach strand of the project in working with the Association of Muslim Schools (AMSUK) and communities is a positive signal that Edge Hill is addressing its institutional ethnic minority profile. It has identified 25 independent Muslim schools in Lancashire and 25 in Greater Manchester area for outreach activities.
- Many of its activities are tapped into Aimhigher initiatives in Lancashire and Merseyside to maximise its impact in terms of ethnic minority participation.
- Using staff from ethnic minority backgrounds (albeit one at the time of writing) to provide guidance on cultural awareness for colleagues visiting Muslim schools, and giving race awareness training for staff.

As the population of BME students within the Institution increases any specific support needs will have to be addressed. The Institution is currently conducting research with current BME students to identify any specific issues that may require attention.

**Liverpool Hope University: Black Science Summer School and Stepping Stones Residential Project**

**Brief description of the projects**

The Black Science Summer School is designed to increase the number of Afro-Caribbean young people progressing to higher education in science subjects, medicine and pharmacy. The project provides a five-day residential experience of university which aims to raise aspirations regarding progression to higher education, increase knowledge of higher education and improve skills
in the physical sciences. The project targets Year 11 pupils from Afro-Caribbean backgrounds and participants are recruited from throughout the UK.

The Stepping Stones Residential Project is designed to increase the number of young people with disabilities/special needs progressing to higher education. The project provides a three-day residential experience of university which aims to increase knowledge about, and raise aspirations regarding, progression to further or higher education. The project targets young people with disabilities/special needs who attend Years 10 to 12 in local schools.

**Local and institutional context**

One of the key strategic goals in Liverpool Hope's Corporate Plan 2004 to 2008 is to continue providing opportunities to enter and succeed in higher education for groups traditionally excluded. Ultimate responsibility for widening participation lies with the Dean of Widening Participation who reports directly to the Rector. The Dean of Widening Participation is also Dean of Arts and the Community and Dean of the Network of Hope.

Liverpool Hope's widening participation strategy is delivered via the recently created Centre for Widening Participation. Prior to the creation of the Centre, widening participation activities were essentially located within a single Deanery and the responsibility of a small number of key, and enthusiastic, staff. The creation of the Centre, however, has raised the institutional profile of widening participation and given widening participation activities a central role throughout the institution. The thrust of the widening participation strategy is to engage everyone, academic as well as support staff, and to deliver an integrated approach to widening participation activities. Widening participation staff have been integrated into the College Committee structure and sit on key committees such as the Student Retention Committee. Key staff also represent Liverpool Hope on a wide range of external bodies.

The Black Science Summer School and Stepping Stones Residential Project are part of a suite of widening participation activities managed by the Centre for Widening Participation. There are two broad strands to these activities which target young people between the ages of 14-19. One strand provides widening participation activities for those who anticipate following an ‘academic orientated’ educational route and the other targets those who anticipate following a ‘work orientated’ route. All activities aim to raise awareness, aspiration and achievement through an on-going and coherent range of interventions for local young people over the latter years of their schooling. The range and scope of activities undertaken depends largely on funding availability and, as yet, post-code analysis and league tables have made little explicit impact on directing the institution's widening participation activities. Liverpool Hope’s Access Agreement indicates that the College plans to spend 36 per cent of its additional income on bursaries and the balance on a range of outreach activities.

At Liverpool Hope widening participation and teaching and learning strategies are closely intertwined. Recent actions have included moving away from semesterised modular degree provision as evidence suggested it did not work as well with Hope’s students. The academic year is now structured on year-long modules, thus giving more time to teach, more time to build up relationships between students and staff and more time to give feedback on performance. Liverpool Hope has adopted the practice of making teaching and learning support available to all students (and making some elements of support
compulsory in first year) rather than identifying and targeting widening participation students as in need of special provision.

Academic support is epitomised at Liverpool Hope in the establishment of a Writing Centre and the introduction of a generic module into all first year programmes of study. The Writing Centre is a facility which is available to all students and provides support with all aspects of academic writing. A module based on the principles of Personal Development Planning has been designed to provide students with a structured learning experience which will improve their writing skills, assist with their career planning and help them become autonomous learners. It is closely integrated with personal tutoring provision.

Pastoral support is provided through a personal tutoring system. All students are allocated a Personal Tutor whom they initially meet on a weekly basis and with whom they follow a structured programme of self-reflection and career planning. This is compulsory for all first year students, regardless of social or educational background. In years 2 and 3, students keep the same personal tutor, with whom they can discuss academic or personal problems. All staff are eligible to become Personal Tutors, including academics, library staff and staff from learning and teaching support. Thus, rather than being seen as purely an academic responsibility, the provision of Personal Tutor support embraces the whole College and engenders a culture of support for all students among all staff.

Widening participation permeates all areas of Liverpool Hope provision; hence there is no specific targeting in ‘high demand’ or selective subjects. The University works closely with local schools and FE colleges and has an open access policy in operation, hence vocational qualifications are considered for entry. The ‘Network of Hope’ is a distinctive partnership between Liverpool Hope and Church Sixth Form Colleges in the North West of England which delivers higher education to communities in Blackburn, Bury and Wigan where there is little other provision. The Network of Hope is a major strand of the University’s part-time provision. In partner locations students can attend evening classes on a full-time or part-time basis. The Network of Hope involves over 1000 students, the majority of whom are mature women with young families. In one location 24 per cent are Asian. There is some part-time provision on campus. However, as there are very few evening classes, student numbers are restricted by the practicalities of daytime timetables, number of classes per week and work and family commitments.

There are no scheduled classes between 12 and 1pm on Tuesdays when the University holds a ‘Foundation Hour’, which is an open meeting for all staff and students. This provides a platform for the discussion and dissemination of issues felt to be of widespread interest or importance. Widening participation staff are regularly invited to lead these meetings. In addition, the Rector gives several talks each year to all staff, at which he emphasises the importance of widening participation and its core role within the institution’s strategic mission. The University also resources “Hope Virtually Daily”, an internal internet page for announcements and breaking news. This regularly features widening participation activities. This virtual newsletter is also displayed prominently on a large screen in the reception area of each building.

All Deans contribute to the staff induction programme for new members of staff. The Dean of Arts and Community uses this opportunity to refer to widening participation and its relationship to the institutional Mission and Corporate Plan. Thus all staff are kept informed of widening participation.
activities and issues, and, as staff are involved in personal tutoring, they are regularly in contact with the student body.

Although all projects delivered by the Centre for Widening Participation are fully evaluated, a systematic programme of tracking and monitoring is not in place. The effects of widening participation activities undertaken cannot readily be assessed in terms of new student enrolments. Liverpool Hope largely recruits locally and monitors its overall recruitment against HEFCE Performance Indicators. The University consistently over performs against benchmarks with regard to students from state schools, from socio-economic classes IV to VII and from low participation neighbourhoods.

**Detailed project descriptions**

The Black Science Summer School targets Afro-Caribbean young people in schools throughout the UK. This target group was chosen because of the low levels of recruitment of black young people to the sciences, and in particular to professions such as medicine and pharmacy. The main barriers faced by these young people are a lack of educational achievement in school, a lack of professional role models to follow and a lack of aspiration to progress to higher education. This Project provides an environment in which black culture is shared and is itself the focus of attention.

Participants in the Black Science Summer School engage in a five-day residential experience of university life. The objectives of the project are to give Afro-Caribbean young people a realistic experience of higher education and to encourage them to think of higher education as an option for them. Participants follow a wide range of academic activities based around the themes of forensic science, psychology and genetics. They attend lectures, work on laboratory projects, participate in academic debates and learn about being a student, funding in higher education and possible career paths within science. There is also an extensive social programme including sports, discos and Indian head massage. Throughout the period they are encouraged to acknowledge and learn more about their black origins and the importance of blacks in the history and development of Liverpool. The academic programme is designed to increase attainment and interest in science-based subjects and the social programme helps them appreciate the wider aspects of university life. Black professionals and black student mentors play a key role in delivery and support, thereby exposing participants to appropriate role models. The responsibility they have to assume for their own personal care during the residential helps develop their independence.

Disabled young people in local special schools can apply to attend the Stepping Stones Residential Project. Teachers identify young people for whom it is a realistic prospect to consider progression to further or higher education. Many barriers are faced by these young people, including a lack of educational achievement, low self-esteem and a lack of aspiration, as well as the need for practical provision to be put in place to help them cope with their individual disabilities.

Participants in the Stepping Stones Residential Project engage in a three-day residential experience of university life. They follow a wide range of activities based around the themes of either sport or drama. They also attend lectures in psychology and sociology, work on IT projects (for example using digital cameras to record their campus experiences) and participate in discussions about university life. There is also an extensive social programme including films and a disco. Throughout the period students learn about being a university student and have the opportunity to discuss progression routes to further and higher education and possible career paths. They are also challenged to
acknowledge and learn more about themselves and to try out new experiences. For many participants this is the first time they have been away from home and they gain much in terms of developing confidence and independence.

The Black Science Summer School has been running since 1999 whereas the Stepping Stones Residential Project was initiated in 2002. Each project is managed by its own Project Officer, who is located in the Centre for Widening Participation. Academic input is provided by staff from appropriate departments across the College.

Project reports are not routinely submitted to internal Committees but the projects report via the University’s annual report to HEFCE. However, widening participation staff have the opportunity to disseminate their experiences and findings via the Foundation Hour seminars and through Hope Virtually Daily. There is currently no systematic programme of staff development linked to either of these initiatives.

A wide range of partners are involved in the development and delivery of these projects. The Black Science Summer School engages with the local police force, a range of local professional bodies, the Catholic Association for Racial Justice, Liverpool John Moores University and schools nationwide. Schools explicitly help with recruitment to the projects and the other partners provide staff to participate in various activities. The Stepping Stones Residential Project relies on partnerships with local special schools, through the local authority Aimhigher Coordinator. The strength of all these partnerships relies heavily on the personal contacts built up and sustained by the Project Officers. This can potentially become a drawback when there are changes in key personnel.

The Black Science Summer School was initially funded from a number of sources including contributions from Liverpool Hope and the Catholic Association for Racial Justice. Now the project is part of the Year 11 Specialist National Summer School Programme which is funded by HEFCE. Funding for 50 participant places is secure until 2006. The Stepping Stones Residential Project was originally planned in conjunction with Excellence Challenge Liverpool, which provided start-up funding. Funding is now also drawn from Aimhigher and the North West Disability Arts Forum. The project provides funding for 30 young people. There are no costs to participants on either project. The costs of travel, accommodation and all social activities are covered by project funds.

Prior to becoming a HEFCE-funded project, the Black Science Summer School produced annual reports to enhance quality, satisfy funders and to encourage new funders to become involved in the project. HEFCE now require an annual report and end-of-project evaluation forms are filled in by participants. However, there is no tracking of how many participants go on to become students, nor their retention or success. It is acknowledged that it would be unlikely that large numbers of Black Science Summer School participants would enter Liverpool Hope as the College does not offer medicine or pharmacy and has few science courses on offer. The Black Science Summer School was set up as an altruistic project, with no short or medium term benefit to Liverpool Hope. However, it has always been seen as helping the College fulfil its Mission. The recent introduction of forensics as a major theme in the programme may lead to more participants progressing to Liverpool Hope.

An Annual Report is produced for the Stepping Stones Residential Project which includes recommendations for further development, feedback from participating young people gathered at the
beginning and the end of the three-day period, and evaluation forms completed by their school teachers.

Feedback from participants in both projects is extremely positive. Among Black Science Summer School participants the experience was seen as beneficial in helping them to reach the decision to apply for university. Targeting young black people was regarded by participants as an important aspect of the provision and the opportunity to engage with black professionals and black student mentors was also important.

Among Stepping Stone Residential Project participants, the opportunity to be independent from family/carers was seen as important, and even small things, like having responsibility for looking after the key to their student bedroom, was a major undertaking for some of these young people. Although the participants were not yet at the stage of leaving school, the experience did make them consider further or higher education as a future option.

**Planned project developments**
The long-term future of both the Black Science Summer School and the Stepping Stones Residential Project is unclear due to uncertainties about funding. While Liverpool Hope would wish to retain and develop these projects, it is becoming more strategic in how it operates and, although widening participation is a major strength, it may be that widening participation and marketing/recruitment are required to work more closely together in future. This may mean that projects which do not lead to student enrolments could become vulnerable if external funding is withdrawn.

The residential dimension, which is central to many Liverpool Hope widening participation initiatives, could inform other institutions and partnerships. This approach allows bespoke provision to be developed for specific target groups. Participants are, therefore, exposed to staff and student mentors with whom they can identify, they can learn in subject areas of particular interest and have the opportunity to experience the student lifestyle away from their familiar home environment.

**Strengths and challenges**
Liverpool Hope adopts a useful model for much of its widening participation activity. The model is to provide residential experiences (which range in length from two to five days depending on the target group and subject area) for young people with the potential to progress to higher education. This provides an opportunity for them to become fully involved in finding out about higher education and to experience university life over a brief period of time. For the Black Science Summer School and the Stepping Stones Residential Project, in particular, this enables a team of appropriate role models (both staff and student mentors) to engage with the participants.

In order for such activities to have a secure future, issues of funding and staffing need to be resolved. Liverpool Hope is becoming more strategic in its approach to widening participation and seeks closer liaison between widening participation staff and those involved in marketing and recruitment. Hence, widening participation activities geared to raising awareness and aspirations may be required to subsequently deliver students to Liverpool Hope if these projects are to be secure.

**Loughborough University: Women into Engineering**
**Brief description of the project**
The aim of the Women into Engineering project is two-fold: firstly, to encourage more females into engineering degrees; and secondly, to support the retention of female engineering students.

The Women into Engineering project involves a variety of outreach activities undertaken in local schools to encourage females to study engineering. These include e-mentoring; two-day visit; summer school; and design challenge event. Female students enrolled upon any type of engineering course at the University, at whatever level, are entitled to become a member of a network group, convened to offer them support, guidance and encouragement whilst studying for their degree.

The project targets female students in an attempt to address the under-representation of women enrolled upon engineering courses and undertaking engineering careers. It targets local schools close to the University, particularly in Leicestershire but also from across the East Midlands. The schools it targets are situated in areas of low participation, where there is low progression to higher education. Furthermore, pupils are selected on the basis of their socio-economic class and lack of family experience of higher education.

**Local and institutional context**

Loughborough University is a research led, medium-sized institution. It has one large campus and the majority of students study full-time and live on, or close to, campus.

The University campus is located on the edge of Loughborough Town which has a relatively small local population of only 50,000. The small town location of Loughborough provides a challenge for widening participation. This is because the University is often passed over as a choice for those students in large cities nearby, such as Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, who plan to live at home while they attend university. The University faces a number of additional widening participation challenges. Within Leicestershire there are a number of schools with low-participation and first generation higher education backgrounds, which are particularly targeted by the institution.

The University’s widening participation strategy was first developed in 2001 and then revised for the 2004/05 and 2005/06 academic years. It outlines their belief that “all students with the potential to benefit from a university education should be able to access this, regardless of their background”. There are two main strands to the widening participation strategy. The first involves raising awareness and aspirations, aimed at bringing students into the institution in the first place. The strategy document provides details of the University’s involvement in outreach activities and Aimhigher within the East Midlands region. The second strand is aimed at retaining its students.

The University identifies its key target groups in its widening participation strategy. These include students who are first generation entrants to higher education, students from low progression schools, students from lower social economic backgrounds, mature students, and minority ethnic groups (the local Bangladeshi community for example). They also target based on gender at subject level and the Women into Engineering project is an example of this.

The University is aware of the need to give increased focus to its widening participation agenda and has targeted the issue for attention, particularly over the past 18 months. It has invested in an infrastructure for widening participation and, as a result, there are currently five people employed to carry out widening participation work including a Widening Participation Manager, two Widening
Participation Officers, a clerical assistant and a part-time assistant who focuses on the Science Summer School. The team is located within the Admissions and Student Recruitment department within the Academic Registry.

The University supports access and success for young people from lower socio-economic groups through a wide range of widening participation activities, including mentoring, master classes, student shadowing, and taster sessions. Since the appointment of a widening participation officer, the widening participation activities have been developed further and the University has begun to work with younger pupils, reflecting the regional priorities. The developments include putting on more flexible, tailored visits in response to requests from local schools; attempts to engage families through family higher education evenings; and enhancing the involvement of University students in outreach work.

Widening participation funding is largely devolved to the different faculties and departments and around 80 per cent of widening participation funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is used to address issues regarding student support and retention. The recently formed widening participation team provides the link between the widening participation initiatives that happen within the different faculties and departments.

The University is committed to excellence in learning and teaching for all students whatever their background and recognises that learning and teaching delivery has to suit the needs of the institution’s student base. Teaching and learning approaches are modified as appropriate so that the students recruited are given the opportunity to succeed.

An overwhelming majority of students at the University study full-time. Of those studying part-time, the majority are industry-based postgraduates. The University has attempted to encourage part-time students by setting up specific courses so that modules are delivered in week-long blocks. It is also increasing the number of online, distance learning modules and providing support mechanisms via the web.

The University has procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the institution’s widening participation work. There is a monitoring forum in place, consisting of internal and external representatives, as well as an internal widening participation Cross-University Group. The University monitors HEFCE and UCAS datasets to understand the profile of entrants.

**Detailed project description**

The Women into Engineering project has been operational for two years, and originated from a similar scheme run by Bradford College. The broad aim of the project is to encourage more women into engineering. More specifically, it seeks to encourage women to study at a higher level and also remain in the industry upon graduation. It also has a secondary goal to encourage women to study at Loughborough University.

The project has an outreach element, working primarily with schools in Leicestershire but also those in East Midlands. The activities on offer to schools include:
• **E-mentoring** – current female engineering students mentor girls in Year 8 and 9 throughout the year. It currently involves four schools across the county. The students meet the girls three times per year in addition to correspondence by email;

• **Women into Science and Engineering (WISE)** – a two-day visit to the University for Year 9 female students to gain an experience of engineering;

• **Schools Design Challenge** – an annual competition, offering local schools the opportunity to put forward a team of pupils (to include at least one female member) to be involved in a design challenge. Schools are provided with funding from the University. The school teams work with University students to generate their design, and attend a finale event, where they compete against other teams;

• **‘Engineering Spirit’** – involving students from local schools for full-day and half-day visits;

• **‘Girls Take Over Engineering’ Summer School** – a two-day residential event for Year 10 female pupils from across Leicestershire, to give them the opportunity to experience what it means to study engineering.

The activities are designed to provide pupils with a real insight into the engineering industry and the career potential it offers, thereby ‘demystifying’ the industry. All female students enrolled on an engineering course are contacted at the beginning of each year and are asked to get involved in outreach work. The project targets female pupils, particularly those from ethnic minorities, in recognition of the need to address the under-representation of women in engineering courses and engineering-related careers. On the whole, it is the schools who select the pupils to take part in the widening participation activities.

Upon entry, the project also has a support element for female students on engineering programmes at the University. A network group has been convened to discuss issues of interest to female engineers. The group is considered useful to engineering female students, who appreciate the social aspect of the group. The topics that the group discuss include career pathways and interview skills. In addition, the engineering department has a number of strategies in place to support all students post-entry. There is an engineering student support desk, available resources, organised workshops for engineering students and a Mathematics Education Centre. All engineering students are diagnostically tested in their first week to gauge their maths skills the Maths Education Centre draws up a support plan for any students identified as being ‘at risk’ as a result. In addition, a maths bridging module is offered in the first semester to students who are weaker at maths.

The project works with a number of external organisations, particularly with local schools and colleges. Widening participation staff are responsive to schools, and often visit them at the schools’ request. They also seek to involve parents of school pupils in their activities. One way this is done is by organising a family evening, targeted at families of pupils who have spent time on campus as part of a university experience visit, to find out more about the University. The project also links with Leicester City Local Education Authority and SETPOINT Leicestershire. The University is involved with outreach activities through Leicestershire’s Aimhigher initiative, to which it commits some of its widening participation funding. It undertakes the role of Banker for the East Midlands Aimhigher region and employs a dedicated Widening Participation Officer to develop links with, and arrange activities for, local schools under the Aimhigher banner. The Engineering Faculty hosts the national Engineering Subject Centre and the Maths Education Centre has recently won funding as a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). The project benefits from access to such facilities.
The project is funded using the University’s premium allocation from HEFCE. The widening participation funds are devolved to faculties based on the number of students in each of their departments. The faculties use their allocations in different ways. The engineering departments pooled their funding allocation to focus on encouraging more women into engineering. The money has been used to appoint a project manager for the Women into Engineering project.

The University has procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the project’s effectiveness. The outreach element of the project, targeting female pupils aged 14-16, has only been in operation for two years and as such it is not yet possible to establish the impact of the project upon the admissions of female pupils to engineering or to Loughborough University. Project staff collect details of the students who partake in outreach activities and track their ongoing contact with the University. Specific activities are also evaluated through student satisfaction questionnaires. The high demand for places is seen as a further indicator of success. The University has specific tracking procedures for female engineering students registered on University programmes. They record the success of female students on the course and their routes into employment, as well as their personal experiences, the latter of which are used to advise prospective and current students.

The University recognises the difficulties of proving that interventions have had a causal effect and also of tracking secondary pupils who are some time away from entering the University. It intends to collaborate with schools, the local education authority and Connexions to enhance the validity of the data.

Planned project developments
Since its conception, the project has grown from the involvement of twenty female engineering students to fifty currently. The project manager is responsible for the day to day running of the project and believes it to be manageable at its current size. There are currently no plans to increase the number of students and schools involved.

It is anticipated that the Access Agreements will help turn the focus back onto the University. It is hoped that overall improved funding will secure permanency for current staff, which in turn will assist in embedding of widening participation work within the University.

Strengths and challenges
The project benefits from having established good working relationships with schools in the area. The pupils benefit from an extended mentoring programme, operating for a two-year period, which provides pupils with the opportunity to build relationships with students and explore topics of interest to them. University engineering students report that the outreach activities alter participating pupils’ perceptions of engineering as a career due to the opportunity to overcome stereotypical depictions of the industry and inform pupils of the advantage of engineering as a career choice. The project also benefits from the commitment of University students who volunteer their time to support the work of the department and also the engineering industry in general.

The project is contained within the engineering faculty, to address the under-representation of women on engineering courses and in related careers. There is a challenge to encourage other University departments to benefit from their experiences. This could usefully be done through staff development,
to enable the University to achieve their aspiration to have a greater focus on staff development in the future. The project size represents a further challenge since there is a limit to the number of students who can benefit from taking part. Currently schools select the pupils who take part in widening participation activities and, as a result, a number of pupils do not participate who could benefit from the opportunity.

The project depends heavily on the goodwill of female students currently studying engineering at the University. It may be considered problematic that female students have greater demands upon their time than their male colleagues. Female students report the difficulty of participation activities being scheduled at the same time as sporting events at the University, precluding them from taking part. It may be equally problematic that female students are offered career-enhancing opportunities, such as mentoring that their male colleagues do not have the opportunity to participate in.

Open University: Understanding and Increasing Diversity: Developing the Young Applicants in School Scheme (YASS) project

Brief description of the project

The Understanding and Increasing Diversity: Developing the Young Applicants in School Scheme (YASS) project aims to encourage people from ethnic minorities to study with the Open University (OU). Its main remit is to raise awareness of the OU and part-time study generally through the use of a strategy that developed and incorporated an existing OU scheme, YASS. The scheme is aimed at ‘Gifted and Talented’ students, mainly in schools with above average academic attainment, and allows school students in Years 12 and 13 to undertake OU courses alongside their A/S levels. Targeting towards minority ethnic groups is consistent with the University’s overall widening participation strategy, the driving force for the East Midlands’ activities in the field. In its Widening Participation Mapping Project, the Open University has mapped enquiries and registrations against a range of indicators including ethnic background, and has found that one of the worst performing areas is the Midlands.

Local and institutional context

Since its establishment in 1971, the OU has put widening participation to the forefront of its policies. It has historically focused on providing distance learning opportunities for adult entrants and has an open access policy. Younger learners are the biggest growing cohort of new students and in 2002 the proportion of entrants under 21 years old was 3.6 per cent compared to 2.0 per cent in 1999.

The University’s Strategic Plan for the ten-year period (2002 to 2012) included the objective “to increase the successful participation of adults with low previous educational qualifications, those from lower socio-economic groups and from Black and Asian communities and those with disabilities”. An Advisory Group (which has been meeting regularly since 1999) produced the draft of the OU’s Widening Participation Strategy for 2001 to 2004. Drafts of the strategy were considered at all the key boards and committees of the University, including Student Policy Board, Equal Opportunities Committee, Strategic Planning and Resources Committee, Academic Board and Senate. The subsequent 2003 to 2006 WP strategy built on the earlier strategy taking into account feedback from HEFCE and taking cognisance of wider developments in the HE sector. The OU strategy is informed

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9 This is published at [http://www3.open.ac.uk/widening-participation/](http://www3.open.ac.uk/widening-participation/) where a revised strategy for 2003 to 2006 is also found.
not only by HEFCE widening participation strategy, but also that of SHEFC which funds the Open University in Scotland (which has its own strategy).

Primary responsibility for the delivery of the Widening Participation Strategy rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students) who is also responsible for the Race Equality Strategy, the Disabled Students’ Strategy and improving retention. A Widening Participation Committee, which includes representatives from Students, Disabled Student Services, Tutors, Marketing and Sales Development Group, Regional and Schools and Faculties, reports to the Student Policy Board. In 1999, the University set up a Centre for Widening Participation under the aegis of the School of Health and Social Welfare. This Centre initially worked with six faculties to develop a series of ‘Openings’ courses and gained funding to enable these to provide incentives and preparation for targeted widening participation recruitment. It works collaboratively with other units to achieve the goals and targets set out in the widening participation strategy of the University.

The OU has a set of three ‘middle-tier’ strategies that support its institutional strategic plan: the Learning and Teaching Strategy; the Curriculum and Awards Strategy; and the Student Support Strategy. Each has links to widening participation policy and strategy. In the OU's Learning and Teaching Strategy for 2004 to 2008, objective 5 is concerned with integrating middle tier strategies in order that the University can inter alia 'meet the Government's priorities for HE'. Thus there is a strong arm of widening participation activity that has focused on the development of curricula, such as that of the Openings Programme, that will attract a more diverse intake. There is also an aim to develop 'learning journeys' in which potential students are encouraged to make the transition from broadcast television programmes to online support and links to short courses. By 2007 it is expected that all courses will be available in online mode, which is seen as potentially providing significant further opportunities to widen participation.

The widening participation aim of the Learning and Teaching Strategy also manifests itself in other actions. Improving retention is addressed through “managing open entry, establishing key relationships and interventions with students, producing and presenting courses suited to students' needs, and tracking student progress”. Furthermore, there is a particular goal to meet the specific support requirements of students with special needs at the level of each course team. Links between the Widening Participation Strategy and the Curriculum and Awards Strategy relates to a particular objective that focuses on preparing 'hard to reach' learners for HE. Another priority linked to widening participation is to increase the diversity and inclusiveness of courses and thereby widen their appeal to black and ethnic minority students.

Widening participation is promoted to all areas of undergraduate study and there is no particular targeting to high demand areas. Given that there is an open access policy there is no particular steer towards students with vocational qualifications, although adults with work experience are a specific target group. Pre-eminently within the UK university system the OU has a particular role in supporting students in remote and rural areas. The targeting of students in rural areas is the prime concern of one OU region and the second greatest concern of another. It has participated in widening participation projects concerned with students in such areas within the East and West Midlands and in Scotland. It has, however, not identified a suitable performance indicator for ‘remoteness’ and considers this a less significant factor than previous educational qualifications, ethnicity and disability in participation. The OU has put into place a number of measures to support students who are
currently disadvantaged, including allocating resource each year for fee waivers, textbooks and access to PCs for the financially disadvantaged (in addition to funds made available by Government through Access Funds, Fee Waiver Scheme and access to Student Loans). In order that students can be supported to succeed in their studies the OU has sought to implement the 38 recommendations of its Student Retention Project, which reported in June 2001.

The widening participation programme has created an intranet website of good practice, project evaluations, and information about regional and national strategies and actions. This is accessible to all staff. Induction materials for all new staff include reference to the strategic aim that relates to widening participation. Associate Lecturers are provided with the 'Open Teaching' toolkit that covers issues pertaining to diversity and equality. There is an acknowledgement that there is scope to improve staff development for all categories of staff.

The Open University undertakes systematic research and evaluation into student recruitment, the student experience, demographic characteristics and the performance of its students. This work is undertaken by the University’s Institute of Educational Technology, which undertakes annual student surveys, collates data and produces regular reports published internally on the internet and on paper to inform practice and planning. Regional Centres and practitioners in faculties and schools also evaluate practice initiatives. Targets are set against HEFC(E) benchmarks for both young entrants (under 21) and mature entrants (over 21) with no previous HE experience, and from low participation neighbourhoods. These institutional targets have been set for the proportion of new undergraduate students with one A-level or less ('low or lowish PEQs'), for minority ethnic students and for disabled students. These targets are to maintain the proportion of new undergraduate entrants with one A-level or less at 41 per cent; to increase the diversity of the intake, specifically to have increased the percentage of new Asian undergraduate students to 3.0 per cent by 2004 (which was achieved), and by 2006 to have increased the total minority ethnic population of new undergraduates to 11 per cent; and to increase the proportion of disabled undergraduate students from 5.7 per cent in 2003 to 7.0 per cent in 2006. Targets have been monitored and revised, and progress is published in an annual report. In the widening participation strategy for 2003 to 2006 one additional target with respect to prisoners was identified. Data on retention rates for new undergraduate students for target groups shows that the performance of students with low previous qualifications who have taken an ‘Openings’ course is better on subsequent level 1 courses by comparison to those who have not taken such a course.

**Detailed project description**

Within the UK the Open University has 13 Regional Centres; each region has an actual and potential student population with a different demographic profile, and the widening participation strategy for each region focuses on particular aspects of the issue and may do so with different approaches. The designation of special focus for regions is intended so that regions can set up innovative projects to increase recruitment or retention of students in the targeted categories. There are, additionally, particular and specific strategies for the OU in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Each regional centre since 2003 has completed a ‘Widening Participation Planning and Reporting Template’, data from which is built into future strategy development. This has allowed the setting of targets at institutional level and created the means to respond to the needs of different regions. The particular regional case study for this report, the YASS project, is one of a suite of activities in the field of widening
participation that are linked to the six principle aims and objectives (not detailed here) of the widening participation strategy.

YASS was a pre-existing scheme dating from 1999/2000 that has allowed sixth formers to experience HE study whilst at school and had been used previously with pupils who had achieved above average (by national standards) GCSE scores. The project was funded through an internal allocation of HEFC(E) widening participation funds by the OU following a joint bid by five regions. The Open University in the East Midlands was allocated £11,000 over two years and decided to develop a separate scheme based on YASS that was aimed primarily at ethnic minority students in less academic areas/schools of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The scheme was this region’s particular response to the OU's widening participation strategy. It was initiated in 2003 within one school and was then extended to three others. Students were allowed to follow conventional short science courses (10 CAT points) over a 25-week period (starting in May/June in the first year of sixth form) using OU course material, accompanied by online and telephone support. The flexibility of these courses allows students to fit in their OU study along side that of the A/S modules. Students are able to choose from a range of courses, and more often than not pupils from a given cohort choose one of a number of different programmes. Bursaries are made available to students and to one teacher at each school, although it has been concluded that such bursaries are no longer needed since schools have abundant sources of finance from other sources, particularly Aimhigher.

The obvious benefit of the programme is that it is targeting students in a group that is under-represented in the region. More specifically OU staff perceive that participation in the scheme has a number of additional benefits. Firstly, in personal statements made on UCAS application forms, it allows students to identity themselves as 'different', an advantage for students from families not possessing the cultural capital that can make a difference when applying to highly selective courses. Secondly, it aids the development of early career aspirations, especially when the course chosen is highly vocational (e.g. Wildlife Photography). Thirdly, it develops interest in the subject and, finally, it develops improved learning skills, such as being willing to ask questions, decision-making and time utilisation, and independence as a learner. The project is not about widening participation to the OU itself, but improving prospects of participants to gain access to HE generally.

The project is operationalised in a series of stages that complement, as far as possible, the needs of the school and of students, as follows:

• Contact is made by a project worker to a school or college to gauge initial interest.
• Information events are held with school staff, parents and students to brief them on the parameters of the course.
• Further meetings are held with students so that they are fully informed of the content of the programme and key dates.
• A programme starts in May
• Visits by the project worker take place in June/July to the school in which dates for telephone and email support are organised.
• An assessment workshop is held in September/October. Assessment is both formative and summative and is organised so that two-thirds of the assessment can be completed after taking two-thirds of the course.
Each school is quite different with respect to how arrangements work, but key to the relationship between the OU and the school is the Head of the sixth form as a point of liaison. In two of the schools teachers took courses alongside the students, which provided good motivation for them. The project has been small in scale and has run for only two years in four schools within which 34 students registered for courses. It is therefore difficult to generalise as to the effectiveness of the programme. It has certainly been demonstrated that students outside the 'gifted and talented' category can utilise short courses in science successfully. Students have been surveyed, via a questionnaire, and interviewed, and although a full analysis of data has yet to be completed, it is reported that participants have had a positive experience of the course. There will be monitoring of how the students taking the programme process through the well-established links with schools.

Planned project developments
This particular project will not be continuing, simply because YASS is already being used in an increasing number of schools beyond the original remit of being directed towards the 'gifted and talented'. In short YASS has become mainstream and Aimhigher is using YASS extensively. There thus isn't a need to focus on minority ethnic groups in a targeted fashion. YASS thus will be used to raise awareness amongst ethnic minority groups albeit in a less directed way, and will also reach more rural and white working-class students in the three countries adjacent to the Regional Centre, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire. The project certainly crosses the school/university boundary is a positive way, and could be a lesson to other universities on how to integrate school and university studies to aid transition. It is quite concrete, and rather than simply raise awareness it challenges school students to engage in new fields and new areas of learning.

Strengths and challenges
The Open University contains a vast reservoir of learning materials that have historically been used more widely that simply within its own courses. This particular project and YASS more generally shows how short-courses in Science can be used to augment the school curriculum and to stimulate sixth form students, often in areas of study that would not have been possible at school. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the experience is not something that only a particular subset of the school population can benefit from. Engagement in this resource-based form of study may simulate the development of the greater independence necessary to thrive in HE, and it certainly introduces school students to a range of transferable learning skills. Few young people under 21 consider taking part-time distance programmes at degree level although, as indicated earlier, numbers entering the OU from this age group are increasing. Part-time study, in tandem with work, may however become an increasing attractive option for some school-leavers, and there may be advantages to introducing this form of study at school level. It is likely that the existence of an alternative and cheaper option of undertaking HE could, if marketed appropriately, encourage some parts of the target population for widening participation to consider such an alternative. This might be particularly attractive if such study was actively linked through credit transfer systems to face-to-face study in other institutions.

University of Bristol: Subject Enrichment Days
Brief description of the project
The main aim of Subject Enrichment Days is to raise the aspirations and achievements of students in Key Stages 4 and 5 by extending their level of study of a subject, offering them access to facilities not normally available in their school or college and giving them an insight into the stimulus they could
expect to enjoy if they pursued the subject in HE. The specific aims are to: a) broaden the students’ knowledge and understanding of a key aspect of the subject syllabus/curriculum, b) help raise students’ subject performance, motivation and application, to study; and c) encourage participation in HE by students who might otherwise not regard it as an option. Subject enrichments days target certain minority ethnic groups, particularly Afro-Caribbean men, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, and students currently not in mainstream education (i.e. those in Pupil Referral Units).

Local and institutional context
The seed of the University’s Widening Participation Strategy was first sown in 1992 when it carried out a research project Barriers to Access for Non-Traditional Black Students at Bristol. Its 1999 Participation Strategy set out to: a) increase applicants from students from under-represented groups; b) put in place an admissions system to enable admissions tutors to identify and make offers to applicants from under-represented groups; and c) ensure that students from under-represented groups are given the support they need to achieve relevant learning outcomes. Its progress was reviewed and updated in 2001, with The Way Forward, which set out plans for moving towards the HEFCE benchmark for participation by groups currently under-represented in higher education. The University’s 2004-2009 Widening Participation Strategy, Quality through Diversity, again demonstrates its determination to do so.

In order to fulfil the strategic aims of its widening participation policy, the University will, among other things: a) work on changing the University’s culture; b) continue to monitor the composition of its student body and assess its progress in improving participation by widening participation students; c) increase its emphasis on and continue its commitment to participating in school and college aspiration-and-attainment raising activity; d) identify and seek to address barriers to entry to the University; e) operate a fair and transparent admissions process; f) develop and promote a broader and more flexible range of routes for entry to the University; g) support students to be independent learners and enable them to access support services matched to their needs and experience.

The University is located in Bristol in the South West of England. There are no Sixth Form schools in Bristol and it is the second worst performing Local Education Authority in the country. This has a direct impact on education attainment because there is no natural progression from GCSE to post-16 education, thus rendering the next step onto HE more difficult. The University is an active member of a sub-regional consortium including further education colleges, the Universities of Gloucestershire, the West of England and Bath and Bath Spa University College working together on widening participation. The sub-regional and regional activity focuses on students from aged13 to 30. This enables school pupils, college students and mature students in the northern part of SW England (Bristol, Gloucester, North Somerset and parts of Wiltshire) to access a variety of interventions and initiatives.

Broadly, the University’s widening participation activities involve Subject Enrichment Days, Mentoring and Tutoring, Mature Student Induction Days, and Summer School (Sutton Trust and National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth). The Law Enrichment Programme is one of the University’s many Subject Enrichment Days.

Student support is structured in terms of the life cycle of the student from school through to university and out into employment or post-graduate study. The focus is in increasing their knowledge at subject
level to enable them to cope with their study programme. Development in generic skills in the curriculum is considered important not just for WP students but also for all students. A good career advice service is seen as crucial for WP students because they lack the kind of career network that traditional students often have and, unlike traditional students, their families cannot advise. A peer mentoring scheme is being develop for all students in general and WP students in particular. The student ambassador scheme, which involves many WP students, has been a good way for them to know the University and feel more confident in themselves.

The University is reluctant to 'label' WP students for fear of stigmatising them. It feels that WP students would not have liked to be treated differently or deemed to need more help just because of their backgrounds. The University therefore ensures that support provisions are advertised generally and that there are mechanisms in place to give students the kind of support they want, if and when they want it. The onus is, therefore, on the students to make use of the services.

There is no additional staff development programme as the University believes that its WP work is now well embedded within the institution. Each faculty has a WP representative responsible for the faculty’s WP work and is on the committee of the WP Strategy Group. Development in WP work is regularly disseminated to staff through publications, information events and lunch time seminars. Sessions have been organised on ‘mature students’ and ‘the needs of black and minority ethnic students’.

The initial suspicion about WP and tension between widening participation and maintaining standards have gradually disappeared and in the last few years there is a much greater acceptance of WP. Getting academics involved with summer schools and Subject Enrichment Days has made them realise that there is a lot to be gained academically and socially for the University, and that diversity is the best way to get the best students. In the History department the track record in recruiting WP students has been outstanding. This has been rewarded with the strong academic performance by this group of students which in turn has helped to counter the ‘WP = lowering standards’ argument.

**Detailed project description**

Subject Enrichment Days are tailored towards the curriculum and designed to complement the subject students are studying in school. For example, the Medical Ethics Subject Enrichment Day that was attended by 30 students in Key Stage 4 complemented the Philosophy and Religious Studies AS and A2 curriculum. Target groups are students who have been identified as having potential to get five A-C grades in GCSE but have no parental experience of HE, particularly from low participation neighbourhoods. Students come to the University for a day to take part in lectures, seminars and work with academics and undergraduates. Another benefit is access to materials and laboratory facilities that they would not have in school, particularly in Science subjects.

The Law Enrichment Programme took place in January and February 2004 and was designed for students at a local Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) at the Meriton Centre for young mothers. The Centre functions as a non-residential school cum nursery for young women aged between 13-22 including those who have babies or who are pregnant. Most of them have under-achieved at school but have decided to come back to post-16 education to have another go at it. At the Centre they have the opportunity to study and have childcare provided on site. From the WP viewpoint, the subject enrichment day would certainly help in building their self-esteem and confidence. The decision to offer
Law rather than giving the students merely an overall view of the university experience was because it was a subject they could relate to, would have an opinion of, and could engage in.

The Law Enrichment Day was planned very closely with the Meriton Centre. The Centre has received ‘Care to Learn’ funding to run post-16 courses for students. The Head of Meriton is on the Excellence in Cities management group, has a good understanding of WP initiatives, and is aware of the University’s WP work. It is a good example of a project that cuts across geographical barriers because the Meriton Centre does not have a catchment area. Young people from across the city are referred to its Pupil Referral Unit when they become pregnant, giving it a very wide geographical span.

The content of the programme was developed in consultation with teachers and students in the PRU and in partnership between the University’s WP Office and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. The programme aimed to: a) broaden the students’ knowledge and understanding of Law, the way in which it is studied at HE level, and to understand the social, moral and ethical context in which it operates; b) help raise students’ subject performance, motivation and application to study; c) provide an insight into the realities of academic and social life at University; and d) encourage participation in HE amongst students who might otherwise have not considered it an option.

Law Enrichment Programme targeted young mothers aged between 16-21 years. All of the students came from low participation neighbourhoods, were part of the Aimhigher cohort and had no parental experience of HE. They had transferred from school to the PRU in the later stages of their pregnancies and had remained there after the birth of their children. All those who attended the programme were studying for FE qualifications.

The Law Enrichment Programme ran for three weeks. The first week was more general, exploring what it was like to be a student at a university, attending induction session, using some of the University facilities, visiting student residences, doing a tour of the. The following two weeks focused on the academic aspect, examining the Sexual Offences Bill, issues of domestic violence, euthanasia, the death penalty and the legal rights of young people. Academics in the department of Law, Social Policy and the Centre for Ethics in Medicine led the sessions with students taking part in undergraduate style lectures and seminars. It was the first time that the students had worked in that way which was very different from classroom-based learning. The session on domestic violence was particularly poignant because many of the women had experienced it. Two student ambassadors from WP backgrounds also worked with the students over the course of the three weeks. This was important as it provided them with role models from similar backgrounds whom they could relate to.

For the Meriton project an ‘end of programme’ evaluation was carried out with some very positive feedback on what the programme delivered and the immediate impact it had on the students. After completion of the programme the students were confident enough to feel that they had the right to go to university. The teacher at the Meriton Centre said that although the students were confident within their own world, they were not really confident when it came to mixing with undergraduates so it was very important that doors were opened not closed: “The impact of the programme has been immeasurable”. It is hoped that it will develop into a long-term project and will be offered again either to the same group of students doing a different programme or to a new cohort.
Tracking is a little easier with Meriton students because of the close relationship with the centre and because of the particular nature of the project. The Connexions worker also keeps in contact with them and reports back. However, it is too soon to say whether the first cohort will progress to university, be it Bristol or elsewhere.

**Planned project developments**

In terms of future WP development the University would like to focus more on subject-specific, instead of generic, outreach work. So far enrichment days for Law, Medicine, Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Engineering have been developed. Talks have started with the Arts Faculty for Philosophy and Modern Languages. The move towards subject enrichment is also in response to schools which have identified it as important for raising attainment level.

The University would also like to set up Compact links with local schools through their outreach work, to make the children realise not only that university is for them but the University of Bristol is for them, and that they have the potential to achieve the grades. It believes that through this route it can get more students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study at the University. Another area the University is considering is to develop Foundation Years in local colleges to facilitate local student transition to higher education. This is in anticipation of a likely upsurge in students choosing to study locally as a result of the introduction of variable fees. Both developments have the potential to open up access to the University for WP students and help widen the University’s student base, fulfilling its *Quality through Diversity* mission.

**Strengths and challenges**

The University’s commitment to WP is clearly stated in its *Quality through Diversity* strategy and in practice it is heading in the right direction. It has put in place a new admissions policy to ensure fairness and transparency. Training sessions are provided for admissions tutors to update them on WP policies, the University’s policies on alternative offers, what information to look for on UCAS form, and what account to take of educational disadvantage. It has appointed a new Director of Flexible Learning to look at alternative routes to HE for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and who is also responsible for diversity support for students with specific needs. The University has run ‘good practice and information’ events for its staff throughout the year and is actively involved in the further development of the Russell Group WP Association.

However, being a ‘selecting’ University with high entry requirements the University faces three main challenges in WP: a) to convince academic staff that WP does not mean lowering standards, that quality can go hand in hand with diversity; b) to do away with the perception that Bristol is an elitist institution, with a privileged student profile similar to that of Oxford and Cambridge and therefore not a university of choice for disadvantaged groups; c) to improve the socio-economic makeup of its students, which has not shifted despite its success in recruiting students from state schools.
University of Edinburgh: Pathways to the Professions: Opening the doors to Law Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Brief Description of the Project

The Pathways to the Professions project's main objective is to encourage the progression of school pupils from under-represented social groups into Law, Medicine and, more recently (May 2004), Veterinary Medicine. It raises awareness of opportunities to study in Law, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at a higher education level across the Scottish higher education sector but specifically in relation to the University of Edinburgh. Since its inception in 2001 the programme has supported over a thousand school pupils in an outreach programme of activities aimed at increasing awareness of, and access to, professional courses.

This programme addresses the needs of students from 46 secondary schools in the Edinburgh and the Lothians region. All students are eligible to register and Pathways Plus students who receive specific targeted support will normally be those who attend state schools. More specific support is additionally provided to those: whose parents/carers have not studied at HE/degree levels; and students undertaking an appropriate range of subjects at Standard Grade Credit Level (Scotland).

The Pathways programme targets schools with low progression rates to HE and students who would not normally consider Law, Medicine or Veterinary Medicine as achievable options for study at university levels or as achievable vocational pathways.

Local and Institutional context

The University of Edinburgh is a Russell Group institution and ranks in the top three UK Universities for Medicine. Edinburgh’s Widening Participation (WP) Strategy aims to achieve greater diversity amongst its students by “increasing the proportion of students from under-represented groups admitted to and successfully completing an undergraduate programme of study consistent with the maintenance of high standards of admission and progression” (Widening Participation Strategy 2005).

This strategy includes four inter-related strands: recruitment, admissions, retention and support. The University networks and collaborates extensively across Scotland and the UK to fulfil its widening participation aims and objectives. Equality of opportunity and widening participation are explicitly referred to in the University’s Strategic Plan (www.ed.ac.uk/annual review/raising aspirations.html).

Each University of Edinburgh College and School has been called upon to develop a strategy to meet the widening participation targets agreed by senior managers. All Heads of Colleges and Heads of Schools have a widening participation remit attached to their wider academic and managerial responsibilities. The three Colleges and 21 Schools have designated ‘Equality and Diversity Coordinators’. The School of Law employs its own Widening Participation Officer who is a qualified Solicitor. The Director of Admissions in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine is a member of the Pathways Steering Group.

The main challenge, as a part of this project’s remit, is to positively affect the total number of young people from the lower socio-economic groups who apply and are accepted to study Law, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at a higher education level. The Pathways to the Professions programme at Edinburgh is a continuation and expansion of earlier WP work undertaken by the institution. Widening participation programmes such as the Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) and Part-time Access Courses have been core funded by the University for the last 12 years. Currently, the University is involved in several widening participation initiatives:
• Primary and Early-Secondary Years Initiative: working with Primary P6 pupils and Secondary S1 and S2 pupils.
• LEAPS: a collaborative partnership with other HEI’s and the four local authorities in Edinburgh and the Lothians to promote higher education amongst socio-economically disadvantaged young people.
• Widening Participation Easter School: a one-week residential targeting second year pupils in two state schools serving areas of disadvantage in Fife and Midlothian.
• Working on Health Access Programme (WHAP): a national initiative with all five medical schools in Scotland.
• Fife Wider Access Programme (FWAP): a collaboration with Fife Council, FE Colleges in Fife and other HEI’s in Edinburgh, Fife, Stirling and Tayside to raise awareness of higher education amongst non-traditional students.
• Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP): a collaboration between FE and HE to develop access courses to address the needs of mature students.

Detailed project description
The Pathways to the Professions programme was initiated in 2001 as the result of a successful bid to the Sutton Trust. This funding enabled the University to appoint a project officer, located within Student Recruitment and Admissions to develop the project through links between the state schools in the Lothians/Edinburgh area, the University’s academic departments and the professional bodies themselves. The main objective was to increase the number of applicants from under-represented groups to undergraduate courses at Edinburgh in the professional areas of Medicine and Law. The project team, which is located within Student Recruitment and Admissions, have subsequently developed the programme to target Medicine, Law and Veterinary Medicine. From the outset a steering group was established to oversee the project. This steering group is chaired by the Vice-Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and includes: the Manager of Widening Participation (Edinburgh); the Director for Admissions in Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (Edinburgh); the Assistant Director of the Legal Practice Unit, School of Law (Edinburgh); and also representatives from: the Sutton Trust; the British Medical Association (Scotland); the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh; the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; the Law Society of Scotland; the Faculty of Advocates; the British Veterinary Association; Careers Scotland; City of Edinburgh Council; East Lothian Council; Midlothian Council; and West Lothian Council.

It should be noted, that whilst the Sutton Trust funding for the project ended in February 2005, the University has embedded the project and staff into the Widening Participation team based within Student Recruitment and Admissions. The Pathways programme is also partially funded via the Brightside Trust and its mentoring activities for Law students receives financial support from the Henry Drucker Memorial Fund. In addition, the University has demonstrated its commitment to widening participation by ring-fencing the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council’s widening participation premium funding for widening participation activities across the institution. Overall, the project’s primary objective is stated as being “to ensure that over a reasonable time frame there is a progressive increase in the number of applications and numbers of students admitted to Law and Medicine (and more recently Veterinary Medicine) from state schools and under-represented socio-economic groups” (Report to Sutton Trust November 2002:2.5).
The programme is targeted towards school pupils at the S4 level who attend state schools. Thus, all pupils at the 46 partner schools in the Edinburgh and Lothians region are eligible to participate in the scheme. However, to be registered as ‘Pathways Plus’ students they must meet the criteria “students will normally be: students who attend a state school … those whose parents or carers have not previously attended University; students doing an appropriate range of subjects at Standard Grade credit level” (Report to Steering Group November 2004). The appropriate range of subjects were described as English, Maths, a Foreign Language and in the case of those interested in applying to Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, at least two Science subjects at Standard Grade.

This target group was chosen as the result of the knowledge that generally, young people from state schools and lower social class groups are under-represented in higher education and particularly so in Medicine and Law. Moreover, the recent publication of the Calman Report on Basic Medical Education in Scotland (2004) and pressure exerted by the BMA and the Scottish Executive has obviously highlighted the inequities in social class participation in Medicine in higher education. Respondents were clearly aware of these facts and such evaluation of the ‘professions’ is liberally sprinkled throughout the reports of the Widening Participation team and especially so in the strategic documents, which were produced by the Pathways team. The direction which the project has taken since 2001 is the direct result of a knowledgeable project team which draws upon good practice elsewhere in Scotland and the UK and keeps apace of the research and political information flow. In this respect it is clear that up-to-date information and data is actively sought out, both inside the University and externally, by the project team. This positive approach to widening participation is further enhanced by robust networking and partnerships with the secondary, further and higher education sectors across Scotland and further afield.

The particular barriers to participation in the professions are identified within the Pathways strategic document. In essence, it is shown that suitably qualified pupils from state schools have historically applied to Medicine and Law in far smaller numbers than is to be expected. Furthermore, participation in these professions is overwhelmingly by young people from social classes I and II. Overall, the project aims to address the barrier(s) of low aspirations to study Medicine, Law and Veterinary Medicine by young people from social classes III, IV and V and, more generally, of those pupils who attend state schools.

All students in the participating schools can register with the project and can attend careers events. Those students who are the first in their family to undertake higher education (University) are described as ‘Pathways Plus’ students. These students have an opportunity to undertake higher revision courses, work observation and avail themselves of individual guidance. The participating schools are grouped 1 to 3 depending upon their progression rates to higher education. Subsequently, there are: 14 Group 1 schools with less than 19 per cent progression rate to HE; nine Group 2 schools which have 19 to 25 per cent progression rates to HE; 23 Group 3 schools which have progression rates of 25 per cent and above. Currently at Edinburgh there are: 46 ‘Pathways’ students studying Law of which 28 are ‘Pathways Plus’ with nine from Group 1 schools, ten from Group 2 schools and 27 from Group 3 schools; 24 ‘Pathways’ students studying Medicine, 13 of which are ‘Pathways Plus’ with 3 from Group 1 schools, four from Group 2 schools and 17 from Group 3 schools; five ‘Pathways’ students studying Veterinary Medicine, three of which are ‘Pathways Plus’ with one from Group 1 schools, one from Group 2 schools and three from Group 3 schools.
The project offers a range of pre-entry activities and guidance for ‘Pathways’ students generally and additional support for ‘Pathways Plus’ students specifically. ‘Pathways’ students can benefit from: information on course and extra-curricular requirements from school year S4 onwards; guidance on relevant work experience opportunities; attendance at ‘So you want to be a Lawyer/Doctor/Vet’ careers days; Pathways open day activities; and access to Summer Programmes in Science, Humanities and the Social Sciences organised by the University.

‘Pathways Plus’ students benefit additionally from: one-to-one pre-application guidance for prospective students and their families; work observation and career exploration programmes in Law and Medicine; the opportunity to meet current undergraduates; on-campus science activities; visits to see the legal profession at work, eg Courts; undergraduate mentoring (if applying to Edinburgh) based in schools and on-campus; and higher revision support courses in Chemistry and Biology.

Post-entry, every student at Edinburgh is allocated a Director of Studies who assumes responsibility for their pastoral welfare. In addition the University has extended its ‘M Power’ mentoring scheme to include ‘Pathways Plus’ students at the S6 stage of their schooling, through their decision-making period and then for their first academic year, ‘Pathways Plus’ students are paired with undergraduates in the same subject area. There is a structured programme of meetings, study skills sessions and other associated events. From year two onwards, mentees can become mentors on the same programme.

The Pathways to the Professions programme is closely monitored from inception at registration in S4 and continues throughout the project. All student details are held on a database, as is their attendance record at all events. There is continuous monitoring of those who registered and this is also done in relation to those participants who apply to Edinburgh and other HEIs to study Law, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. At Edinburgh the project team works in close liaison with admissions officers to gauge applications and acceptances to the University in these particular subject areas. The project also monitors numbers accepted at other HEIs in Law, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

Student progress tracking, as undergraduates at Edinburgh, was initiated in 2003 and an annual tracking report is to be published each autumn. From the Tracking Report to the Steering Group, November 2004, it is apparent that detailed monitoring and tracking is taking place for all ‘Pathways’ students and that ‘Pathways Plus’ students are dealt with separately. The tracking report as of November 2004 provides a detailed analysis of all ‘Pathways’ students and their destinations in HE. For Edinburgh this report disaggregates total student numbers by identifying how many enter Edinburgh to what subject Departments, how many enter Law, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and separates those who do into ‘Pathways’ and ‘Pathways Plus’ categories. Moreover, as a part of this tracking process the project team carefully monitors the dropout rate. At October 2004, of the 50 Pathways students who matriculated in October 2003, 47 were proceeding to year two, one student was repeating year one and two students failed to matriculate for their second year. This gives a student dropout rate of 4 per cent compared to the University of Edinburgh’s average of 6.8 per cent. However, to date the project does not monitor across social class. Therefore, whilst there are indications that the project is reaching out to under-represented groups via its targeting of schools with ‘low progression to HE rates’ there is no hard evidence to confirm the social class origins of those ‘Pathways’ and ‘Pathways Plus’ students entering Law, Medicine or Veterinary Medicine.
Planned project developments

- Expand the range of science revision opportunities via the Brightside Trust funding.
- Work in collaboration with the Law Society of Scotland, and the WP Officer in the Law School to develop a web-based portal for school-students interested in Law.
- Develop a foundation year in Medicine that has ring-fenced places for local students participating in the Pathways project.
- Greater emphasis on collaboration with Further Education Colleges, where an increasing number of 16-18 year olds are studying for their Scottish Highers.

Strengths and challenges

- Embedded project firmly located within the infrastructure and strategy of the institution.
- Admissions strand for Pathways plus students.
- Extensive networking and collaboration nationally across Scotland.
- Robust networking with schools, other HEIs, local government and other key players in WP across its region.
- Active involvement and commitment secured across the key professional bodies in Medicine and Law.
- Commitment and participation by senior managers at Edinburgh.
- Effective student support both at the school and higher education level.

The main challenge for the project is the social class profiling of ‘Pathways’ and ‘Pathways Plus’ students to actually show participation by pupils from the lower social economic groups.

University of Glasgow: Working in Health Access Programme (WHAP)

Brief description of the project

The Widening Access to Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and the Health Professions (WHAP) initiative is a collaboration between the Scottish medical schools (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St. Andrews), the Scottish veterinary schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow and Stirling University’s Institute of Education. It is managed by the lead partner, University of Glasgow. Begun in 2002 as a research project on the use of psychometrics in admissions at Glasgow, WHAP became a widening access project in 2003 aimed at raising awareness of the career possibilities in medicine, veterinary medicine and the health professions for young people in lower socio economic groups and exploring the usefulness of psychometric testing in the area of medical student admissions.

It is targeted at young people from schools with participation rates in higher education of less than the Scottish average of 32 per cent. Set in a variety of Scottish urban and rural locations, WHAP involves collaboration across all partner institutions. This very large project, now involving 70 schools and 3000 young people to date, combines a ‘what’s involved in health care’ programme and an exploration of the use of psychometric testing to identify candidates suitable for a career in healthcare. Participating local authorities are asked to provide details of schools with less than the 32 per cent Scottish average rates of transfer to higher education. The project team then works in those schools with third year (14yrs) pupils who are likely to gain five Standard Grades at Credit level.
WHAP was developed to interest young people in healthcare, particularly medicine and veterinary medicine, and to influence the appropriate supply of professionals in the field across Scotland. Concern over a possible future mismatch between demand for health services and supply of health professionals in specific areas of expertise and in some geographical locations is at the heart of the rationale for this initiative. The under representation of poorer socio-economic groups in successful medical admissions, coupled with concern over the selection procedures used in admissions, also produced a determination on behalf of the project partnership to provide equality of opportunity for young people interested in a career in healthcare. Parallel projects looking at new methods of selecting medical students are also underway.

Local and institutional context
This case study originated in Glasgow and now covers most of Scotland taking in all the Scottish medical and veterinary schools in a variety of rural and urban settings. The full partnership consists of Glasgow, Dundee, St. Andrews, Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities’ Medical Schools; Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities’ Schools of Veterinary Medicine; Glasgow and Dundee Universities’ Schools of Dentistry; and Stirling University Institute of Education.

Vital support that has enabled the project to contact target schools has also been forthcoming from local authorities. Scotland has a diversity of social environments from isolated island communities to densely populated conurbations and WHAP now covers eighteen of the thirty-two local authority areas. This range of geographical contexts provides challenges for the effective operation of widening participation activities. The problem of distance is partially offset by robust and regular communication with schools.

Detailed project description
WHAP aims to improve the depth of knowledge of young people in schools with low progression rates about the field of healthcare and to increase the recruitment of suitable candidates for the health professions. The origin of the initiative is in the work of WHAP Chairman, Professor Mary Anne Lumsden, with patients in deprived areas of London and Scotland where she was in contact with people whom she considered could have contributed to the health professions if they were offered the opportunity. Hearing years later, as Associate Dean of Admissions in Glasgow, about work by David Powys in the University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, that tested students’ personality, moral and ethical approaches and cognitive ability as measures of suitability for the medical profession, the beginnings of a project in Scotland grew. The rationale for this project has been summarised by Professor Lumsden as follows:

- Concerns over the future shortage of health professionals;
- Concerns over the distribution of health workers in Scotland;
- An interest in the possibility of recruiting individuals from socio-economic groups who may suffer disadvantage in selection for training;
- A desire to create interest from individuals from communities which may suffer disadvantage in the provision of healthcare services; and
- An interest in the use of measures other than those presently used for determining suitability for such a career.

Initially WHAP was run as an admissions project in which all medical students in Glasgow were tested using psychometrics to gauge their suitability for health professions. This resulted in Glasgow looking
for more funding to work with schools at preadmission level and so, encouraged by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council to rework the project and give it a widening access dimension in partnership with the other medical schools in Scotland, WHAP was then fully developed into an initiative with two aims. In addition to the research element there is now an exposure programme that gives young people experiential information about working in the health services. The objectives resulting from these aims are:

- To initiate awareness raising in Scottish schools in a diverse range of environments with a progression to higher education rate of less than 32 per cent.
- To test the use of psychometric procedures as a means of identifying aptitude for healthcare professions.
- To develop a portfolio of widening participation methods that can be rolled out to all appropriate schools in Scotland.
- To work collaboratively with local education authorities, schools and parents in order to develop, test and research the initiative.
- To present a summary conference in 2005 involving all partners.

The project works with school staff, parents and pupils in order to raise awareness of a career in healthcare and of the qualifications necessary for such a career. The Project Coordinator is based at the University of Glasgow along with one of the Schools Project Officers (SPO). The other four SPOs work out of the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee and St. Andrews. The Project Development Officer is based at the University of Stirling with the remit of monitoring project research and evaluation. Governance of the project is in the care of the Management Group drawn from the collaborating institutions. An Advisory Committee, consisting of eminent persons able to lend experience and advice to the project, is also attached to WHAP.

Through a key member of staff in each school, the project manager and development workers work with teachers to develop programmes illustrating the choices, the requirements and the rewards of a career in healthcare. Pupils are offered opportunities to visit healthcare establishments and meet professionals in medicine, veterinary medicine, nursing and specialist health disciplines.

Events in the exposure programme include a wide variety of activities all of which can’t be reproduced in this brief case study. A list of events for 2004/5 up to February in one partner institution, St. Andrews, gives a flavour of the programme partners can build from the menu of core and optional features that make up the WHAP approach to programme building. They included:

- Six Medical School Visits on campus attended by ten schools. The day included either a tour of the university or a student life workshop and three interactive, medically oriented workshops in the afternoon.
- Nursing Workshops in school. Ten of the 11 Fife schools have had a workshop led by a fellow of the Stirling University Nursing Department.
- Subject Choice Workshops introducing young people to the research skills required for higher education application to help the development of informed choices.
- Tours of Easterbush Vet Centre/ Hospitals. Eight schools participated, sending their young people who were interested in a career with animals.
A Hospital Health Professionals Event. Eight of the 11 eligible schools took part in this day attending workshops that included medicine, physiotherapy occupational therapy and dietetics.

Several research tools have been put in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the work over the two pilot years. These include: pupil and parental attitudinal questionnaires; visit day evaluation forms; follow-up questionnaires; and teacher evaluations of WHAP activities.

Although not originally built into the project proposal, it was felt important to gather this data to provide valuable insights into the participants' experience of WHAP. In addition it is considered that it will fulfil an important function in the overall evaluation of project activities and put the mechanisms in place for a longitudinal study. The information comprises the largest dataset of widening participation activities in Scotland to date. Using these tools, the University Of Stirling Institute Of Education, who hold the evaluation function in this project, have gathered substantial amounts of qualitative and quantitative data.

SPSS databases have been set up to process the quantitative data gathered. All pupils have been allocated unique individual identifier codes to ensure confidentiality of response. These codes were also used in the psychometric testing at the beginning of the project. To date this data has been processed manually but, using the latest technology available, the evaluation team have designed the last two questionnaires in optically scalable format to facilitate processing. The team also aim to conduct some analysis of pupils' Standard Grade results after the summer of 2005.

WHAP is taking place along side a project that aims to study the possible role of psychometric testing in admission to Medicine. It has been funded by a £225,000 Strategic Change Grant from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council and £80,000 from NHS Education Scotland in 2003. In addition £31,550 was received from the Scottish Executive Learning Development and Careers Division. The Brightside Trust contributed £7,500, which was then matched by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Planned project developments
In collaboration with funders, project partners are currently engaged in the process of designing the next stage of WHAP using feedback and intelligence gathered by the project team. This will result in applications for further funding to continue the project beyond the pilot phase of 2003 to 2005.

The project currently focuses on healthcare but the aim in the future is to move towards taking in the whole gamut of associate health professions (AHPs), and to extend the collaboration between individual universities to include Further Education (FE). Plans may also include other Scottish universities not presently included as partners but who have courses in the area of AHPs.

Strengths and challenges
This case study describes an exciting opportunity for the examination of attributes necessary for effective health service professionals that is at a very early stage of development. Strong features include:

- It has the cooperation of all the medical schools in Scotland and support from the Scottish Executive.
- An able team and effective management enable the project to have impact across a wide range of communities and institutions.
• A framework of evaluation structures has been built in from the beginning.

It is not clear presently whether the research tools employed will contribute to improved profiles of performance in AHPs because the project is at the very beginning of a long experimental process. Because the work is at such an early stage it is not possible to produce any evidence of success yet. The use of psychometric testing is being done in an ethical way and the team plan to present resulting profiles of the student body very carefully. However, during the research team visit there was evidence of an understandable anxiety on the part of the school students who await their results or some kind of feedback on their performance. Despite reassurances of the broad range of performance results in the language test, they were aware of just how far across the vocabulary range they had achieved recognition of words and so had some knowledge of their own performance. Testing for professional aptitude in parallel with attempting to widen access are two processes not necessarily in harmony with each other in this project.

As members of the team and some school staff pointed out, the guideline of using schools with progression to HE at 32 per cent or less will not rule out a proportion of social classes 1 and 2 being present in the participant sample. Areas for future development could include a clear and exact examination of the social class of the young people put forward for the scheme and the inclusion of young people from alternative curriculum schemes or who are taking Highers in the FE system.

University of Huddersfield: Design Your Future and Maths Bridging Course

Brief description of the projects

The ‘Design Your Future’ project is run through the School of Art and Design at the University of Huddersfield to promote design education courses and careers, build student confidence and attract students from lower socio-economic groups into higher education (HE). The project involves a number of activities conducted in the University and in community settings including an annual five-day summer school, community projects conducted in local museums and galleries, aspiration raising activities, and entry to higher education creative activities.

A second project at Huddersfield University is the ‘Maths Bridging Course’. This course is intended to facilitate entry to HE courses with a substantial or required maths element, including engineering, computing, education and mathematics. The course runs for seven weeks over the summer. It is intended for students who have insufficient qualifications or confidence in maths to meet the standard entry requirements, as well as those who wish to improve their mathematical skills. Students enrol on the course free of charge and are provided with access to a structured computer package, IT facilities and tutor support. They work through the programme at their own rate and are assessed at intervals. Students benefit from a flexible work schedule and can work at home as required. Successful completion of the course enables participants to meet the standard mathematics entry requirement to enable them to enrol on a degree course.

Both projects are targeted at students from lower socio-economic groups in the local area. The Design Your Future project specifically targets non-A-level students and low achievers to build their confidence and help bridge the gap into design education courses and careers. Similarly, the Maths Bridging Course supports students with mathematics difficulties who want to progress to a course requiring a standard mathematical entry requirement.
Local and institutional context

The University of Huddersfield is a post-1992 university, whose focus is primarily on learning and teaching rather than research. Its main campus is located in Huddersfield town centre and around 70 per cent of the students who enrol at the University are from within the Yorkshire and Humberside region. The local nature of the University’s student intake means that the institution focuses a great deal of attention on building partnerships and associations with local schools and further education colleges. This emphasis is identifiable within its Widening Participation (WP) Strategy as an area for even further development in the future. Despite its town centre location, the University encounters difficulties with the recruitment of students from the local Bangladeshi community. A project has been initiated to set up an education centre in Oldham and take the University’s courses to the community. This initiative is underpinned by the University’s belief that ‘taking education to students will become as important as bringing students to education’ (2003 to 2007 Strategic Plan).

The University of Huddersfield targets young people from low participation neighbourhoods (which tend to be mainly ethnic minority students), lower social economic groups, those from state schools and those without A-level qualifications (including mature students and those with no previous experience of higher education). The University has a track record of exceeding virtually all of the benchmarks set by HEFCE for recruiting these target groups. In addition, each individual school at the University identifies its own target groups for recruitment. In the case of the School of Computing and Mathematics, female students have been targeted in the past and those who fall below the required entry standard in maths are its current target students.

The University has a well-developed widening participation strategy, which was first published in 2001. The strategy sets out a student lifecycle approach, and incorporates a menu of activities, from those designed to raise aspirations through to those ensuring that those students who are recruited go on to successfully graduate with enhanced employment prospects. A significant focus of the strategy is on issues such as student retention and the co-ordination and communication of all the widening participation activities taking place across the institution. The University is interested in further developing its strategy by now pursuing widening participation down to subject level, particularly with respect to student retention.

In addition to the University’s widening participation strategy, each school has its own action plan. Key to the success of the University’s approach to widening participation was the appointment of a Head of Widening Participation, created in 2002, who co-ordinates the school action plans, shares good practice, and identifies opportunities for staff development. The overall direction of widening participation is governed by the Dean of each school and the Head of Widening Participation works in partnership with them to move things forward and encourage innovation and synergy. Most of the funding for widening participation activities comes from the University’s HEFCE allocation. This money is devolved down to schools to fund activities at school level. The University is successful in obtaining additional funding from a variety of other sources including Aimhigher, Neighbourhood Renewal and Kirklees Working Partnership funds, which funds outreach careers guidance work for vocational paths into higher education.

The University has a long history of success in recruiting non-traditional students, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds, ethnic minorities and mature students. It has a flexible approach to entry requirements, and this helps to ensure that targeted students are able to access ‘high demand’ courses. The University has always welcomed students with vocational qualifications and also offers a
number of foundation degrees. It has a large number of part-time students and supports access to HE by adopting a flexible approach to accommodate part-time students wherever possible.

The University of Huddersfield has built up a reputation as an institution that provides a high level of support to students. Each school has an academic skills support team and all students have access to a personal tutor. There is currently an increased focus on support during the first semester to address the issue of dropouts. A number of initiatives have been introduced to address issues around student retention including learning innovation, attendance monitoring, and the development of an engagement and assessment strategy. Specific additional support is also in place for students with disabilities. Exit interviews with students who dropped out of the University highlighted financial problems as being a major contributor to them leaving early. This discovery led to a central finance office being set up to give one-stop assistance to students and this has successfully reduced the numbers of early leavers who give financial difficulties as a reason for leaving.

The University has monitoring and evaluation procedures in place to monitor the impact of their widening participation activity and is able to monitor those students who have been involved in WP activities. Tracking has been poor in the past and is a new focus of attention, a major objective being to gain evidence of what’s working. Tracking is via a ‘student record’ which holds socio-economic/ethnicity data and which can be drilled down to school and module level. This data has only recently become available for analysis so it is too early for the institution to draw any firm conclusions.

**Detailed project description: Design Your Future**

The Design Your Future programme encompasses several aims. Primarily, it seeks to raise pupil aspirations and their awareness of opportunities that are available in art and design education and careers. The programme introduces young people to the higher education environment, builds the confidence, knowledge and skills of young people, helps them gain a better understanding of art and design and supports them in their career choices. The Design your Future project is specifically targeted at young people (aged 14 to 17) from lower socio-economic groups, low participation areas and those with no family background in HE. It also supports the access of non-A level students and low achievers to higher education.

The Design Your Future programme has been developed by the School of Art and Design, as part of its endeavours to strengthen its links with community groups, schools, colleges, agencies and organisations. It is funded through monies from the European Social Fund (ESF), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and supported by Yorkshire Universities. The programme centres on a creative summer school, in which pupils from local schools have an opportunity to take part in ‘hands on’ practical workshops – on, for example, fashion, weaving, paper chair making, felting and multimedia – and undertake visits to local museums. In addition, pupils receive information about the University and about the application process and graduate employment opportunities. The University organise additional activities, which are run in house and in community settings. These include promoting art and design workshops in schools (felt making, knitting, multimedia textiles, tapestry weaving, batik, and painting), working with artists, exhibiting in art galleries, co-curating at local galleries and running school tours of public exhibitions. The School of Art and Design also runs teacher in-service training days, and a ‘Handling Transitions’ pre-induction day introduction at the University for students who have accepted offers of a place on an art and design course.
Key to the success of this programme is the Head of External Affairs, who is employed by the School of Art and Design. The post holder takes charge of business innovation, widening participation, placement and employability and secures funding to support these activities. They work closely with the Associate Dean, as well as the University’s publicity, marketing and recruitment department. This helps to draw together departments from across the institution to coordinate and support widening participation activity.

The activities which make up the Design Your Future programme involve professional artists and designers and provide volunteering opportunities for existing art and design students. In 2004, approximately a third of second year University art and design students were involved in volunteering. This provides the students with valuable development opportunities and work experience. The experience gained by student volunteers can lead to enhanced employment opportunities upon graduation and provide the chance to network with working artists and the people within the industry who support and fund artists.

Detailed project description: Maths Bridging Course
The Maths Bridging Course aims to widen access to courses with a substantial mathematical requirement. It is a seven-week course that runs during the summer months. The course is open to University applicants who have not met the qualifying maths criteria to obtain entry to courses and therefore would otherwise not get onto the course of their choice. It is also open to students who feel they could benefit from additional mathematical input and those wishing to improve their mathematical awareness. The course began in 1998 and has consistently attracted high numbers of participants. It is advertised widely to prospective students, as well as being posted to local schools. The majority of participants are in the 18 to 19 age group, who have not achieved the required GCSE score to register on their course of choice. These include students registered for courses in engineering, computing and mathematics as well as education and nursing.

The course is offered free of charge, despite costing the University £8,000 per annum. The University believe that the gains (in terms of admissions and the retention of students who have had exposure to the material) outweigh the costs involved. Course participants are provided with access to a tutor between the hours of nine to five, computer facilities, and the appropriate CALMAT software and assessment materials. CALMAT is a software suite developed by staff at Glasgow Caledonian University. It contains expository material, tutor activities, a management information system to monitor student effort and assessment measures. Students work through the material at their own pace and take direct responsibility for their own learning and attendance. Students can purchase an off-site licence of the software to enable them to work through the course at home.

Developments
The University plans to continue the Design Your Future programme. It is hoped that the number of local schools invited to take part will be expanded in the future to offer the opportunity to a greater number of students. The University intend taking account of pupils’ views about the usefulness of University information lectures.

Since the Maths Bridging Course was first introduced seven years ago, it has become a well-publicised resource that is used by a broader range of students in disciplines outside of the maths-based programmes. This gradual expansion of the course’s reach is set to continue and will build
further on a recent extension of the University’s facilities to sixth-form students who would like the opportunity to develop or brush up their mathematical skills beyond GCSE level.

**Strengths and areas for development: Design Your Future**
One of the greatest strengths of the Design Your Future programme is the way that the activities combine the benefits of participation for both prospective and existing students. The pupils targeted through the programme benefit by being given a first hand, practical, insight into the art and design opportunities available in higher education and the career paths that can follow. The summer school is regarded as being particularly effective at building pupils’ confidence. This is attributed to the fact that the young people are treated like adults, become more independent and take on more responsibility over the course of the week. This approach also means that the young people are given a very realistic view of what studying at HE level is like. The involvement of existing students in the programme also means that prospective students are able to see the development opportunities that will be open to them if they choose to study the same degree.

The University students who volunteer on the programme get the chance to network and learn from people in the industries they may be interested in working in upon graduation. They also get a chance to run workshops, giving them opportunities to trial teaching as a career. Given that there are such strong benefits for current students who have been involved with the programme, students could benefit further from the formal accreditation of their time. This would encourage more students to get involved and acknowledge the value of student involvement to the programme.

**Strengths and areas for development: Maths Bridging Course**
A key benefit of the computer aided learning package (CALMAT) that forms the basis of the Maths Bridging Course is its flexibility. Students study at their own pace, tackling as many maths problems as they feel necessary before moving on to the next module, with a tutor on-hand for assistance as required. Students who are on the Maths Bridging Course as a pre-requisite for entry to a degree course gain valuable study skills. They also have the opportunity to find out whether university is really for them before the academic term starts. The course has a high success rate of 80 per cent. This helps illustrate its effectiveness as a programme and also gives strong encouragement to students who are considering whether or not to join the course.

The programme’s flexibility and the self-directed nature of the students’ learning can result in a lack of social interaction between the students who study on-campus. This can be exacerbated for students who chose to study the course at home. For the disadvantaged young people, who are the main target group of the course, any element of socialising that could be introduced into the course would provide further assistance in building student confidence and aid their successful transition into higher education.

**University of Hull: HEAdFurther**
**Brief description of the project**
The HEAdFurther project aims to raise the educational aspirations and achievements of young people, aged 14 to 16, who are in the public care system in Hull. The project links University students with the young people in care through a mentoring scheme and bespoke events, designed to raise their educational aspirations and achievements. Emphasis is placed on encouraging young people to
participate in education and training with the aim of improving overall life chances, regardless of academic ability (Publicity booklet, 2004).

The one-to-one mentoring scheme involves students from the University of Hull providing long-term support to young people in care to help them through their learning course during their school years. The scheme encourages the young people to consider their learning options and overcome barriers to learning. The bespoke events centre on a week-long themed summer school, which involves academic and practical workshops. The summer school aims to make learning fun and encourage young people to look to their future learning needs.

The project specifically targets young people who are in the public care system because of concerns about their educational achievements and aspirations. There is recognition that these young people may need extra encouragement and support to raise their aspirations.

Local and institutional context
The University of Hull has approximately 15,000 students and describes itself as a ‘research-led’ University, with a strong regional commitment. It is located in the Humber Region in East Yorkshire. The University is the predominant provider of higher education in East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire. It has undergone a number of changes in recent years following mergers with colleges in the region, including the North Riding College, Scarborough. There has been a rapid growth in professional and vocational subjects as well as work-based learning and part-time study.

Widening participation is a central concern of the University. In the widening participation strategy, the area around the University is described as one of ‘acute social exclusion and low educational aspirations’. It further describes the low higher education participation rates across Hull, coupled with low educational attainment at school level. GCSE results place Hull at the bottom of school league tables, well below national norms. The University has an ongoing issue with the recruitment of undergraduate students due to the sparse nature of the population in the surrounding area.

Over the last seven to eight years, the University of Hull has worked to develop a broad strategic alliance with the City Council in an endeavour to address the educational under-achievement of young people across the city. It actively collaborates with the local further education sector in the development of new pathways and progression routes, in an endeavour to be responsive to its local and regional learners. The forthcoming changes arising from the move of the University of Lincoln more or less entirely away from Hull will increase the demand for HE provision at the University of Hull and local FE colleges, and will require a greater focus on vocational programmes and part-time study. To meet the challenges faced by the City, the University of Hull, along with its FE partners, have developed a corporate widening participation strategy, aiming to coordinate the efforts of all institutions in the FE/HE consortium. The strategy focuses on bringing together initiatives that aim to raise the participation, aspiration and achievement of people in the City involving targeted action and evaluation.

The University’s own widening participation strategy links with the City’s corporate strategy. It includes objectives and measures at each stage of the student life cycle designed to raise aspirations, encourage student recruitment, and promote student retention and support student employability. The University has a widening participation committee with responsibility for the implementation of the
strategy. It also has a central office, the Learning Partnerships Office, to oversee its implementation. It has a team of four staff who have training in youth and social work. Additionally, the University outlines an aim for all staff to be aware, have influence and commit to delivering the widening participation strategy.

The University specifically targets young people from lower socio-economic groups through various aspiration-raising outreach activities, coordinated centrally through the Learning Partnerships Office. An HE Adventure programme of activities is offered to schools, including:

- **You, Me and University** (involving 256 pupils and 16 parents to date) – targeted at primary school pupils and their parents and offering an opportunity for a day visit to the University. Parents are involved as a high number of families in Hull have no previous experience of HE. This is designed as an introduction to a relationship with the University.
- **Small Bite of University Life** (involving 1,750 pupils to date) – targeted at pupils in Year 7 and 8 and involving a two hour visit from University students into school. The students discuss learning styles and university life and involve pupils in creating a university prospectus. The task is designed to show a match between pupils’ hopes and the reality of university life.
- **Aiming for a College Education** (ACE – involving 4,269 pupils to date) – targeted at pupils in Years 9 and 10 across Yorkshire and involving a one day visit to the University. Pupils get an opportunity to work through various activities aimed at addressing potential misconceptions about university life.
- **Study Skills** – a new project targeted at pupils in Years 10 and 11 offering support for exams and revision.
- **Scix** – targeted at 11 to 17 year olds. A Saturday Club to raise the profile of science subjects, and achievements in science.
- **C21** – a media team of HE Adventure pupils who produce videos, and magazines to promote science in local schools.
- **Wyke Transition** – LSC funded project to provide seamless transition from primary school to HE. Aims to inform and equip pupils for the various transitions in education.

The outreach programme is designed to be a coordinated approach, ensuring that the activities build upon one another yet revisit particular issues at specific points in the pupils’ education.

Student support at the University of Hull is addressed through integrated student services. There are a number of facilities to which students can turn for support including a study advice service; personal supervisors; peer support mentoring and mature students’ advisory centre. Further support is available to students through a general welfare service and support groups run through the Student Union. Individuals are also directed towards particular services through the peer mentoring scheme. Notably, support services at the University are not tailored to specific target groups, who may come with additional support requirements. HEAdFurther is currently working with Student Services to highlight the particular issues that students from a public care background face.

Staff within the Learning Partnerships Office recognise the need to monitor and track student participation in the various outreach activities and are currently targeting this issue for further attention. Currently there are no procedures in place to identify which activities and events a given pupil has participated in, making it difficult for them to assess the long-term impact of various
interventions. The University uses some of its WP funding to underpin data analysis and the identification of issues. It does so by funding such projects within departments, and by driving the analysis of data through the Learning Partnerships Office and the Strategic Development Unit. Some widening participation funds have been allocated to ‘seed-fund’ departmental widening participation projects. A member of staff is charged with stimulating project ideas in discussion with academic departments. The University further distributes an amount of money to departments to support post-admissions work. Whilst the money is not ‘ring-fenced’, the Learning Partnerships Office asks departments to report annually on the ways in which they have promoted retention.

**Detailed project description**

HEAdFurther aims to raise the educational aspiration and achievement of young people aged 14-16, residing in (or at risk of residing in) the public care system in Hull. It offers those young people an opportunity to have sustained access to a student mentor at the University whilst still at school, as well as the opportunity to participate in bespoke events run by the University. The emphasis of the project is to provide educational support for young people in care. The project was initiated in 2002, having acquired project funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). It is coordinated by the Learning Partnerships Office, situated within the Institute for Learning. Young people are referred to the project through the various project partners, who also promote the project through their service.

HEAdFurther involves two core elements – a mentoring scheme and customised events and activities.

- **The mentoring scheme** involves a one-to-one pairing of a young person with a student studying at the University of Hull. They are matched according to the particular needs and interests of the young person and capability and interests of the student. The mentor maintains regular contact with the young person through email and mobile telephone access. They also meet face-to-face in a venue and at a regularity to suit the young person. Student mentors provide pastoral and academic support by helping the young people to consider educational choices and options, develop interview skills, and by supporting them through difficulties encountered in school. Mentors are recruited by the Learning Partnerships Office. They receive training and are paid a nominal sum of £10 plus expenses for each mentoring session. Students studying for a social work degree are encouraged to apply and benefit from receiving remuneration and accreditation for the hours worked on the project. The mentors in turn receive supervision from the project manager and allocated social worker.

- **There are customised events and activities** organised through HEAdFurther for the young people it targets. The focus of the activities is a week-long summer school involving a number of hands-on, practical activities designed to fulfil educational objectives whilst capturing the young people’s interests and attention. In the past, the activities have included mapping their astrological chart, a fashion show, cookery school, museum visits and essay writing master classes. The week culminates in a graduation for those pupils who successfully complete the week. Throughout the summer school, the young person’s individual student mentor is on hand to guide them through any difficulties. There are additional events organised including a Christmas and Easter social.

The young people involved in HEAdFurther also take part in other WP programmes such as study skills support, which helps ensure that they have an ongoing relationship with the University. The project has come to be seen as part of the wider programme of activities (i.e. HE Adventure project) targeting young people who have no background of HE in their families.
The target group of the project is young people aged 14 to 16 who are either in public care or at risk of being in care. The young people who take part in the project are identified by either social services or the local education authority as being those most likely to benefit from support ‘designed to encourage further engagement with the learning process’ (ESF proposal, 2002). The project is targeted at this group of young people because of concerns about their educational aspirations and achievement, both nationally and locally. The proposal submitted to ESF highlighted that in 2001 Ofsted reported that many children in public care ‘(up to 75 per cent) would leave school with no qualifications’. The project is also premised on a concern that people lower their expectations for young people in care resulting in a focus on lowering the standard of achievement for this group, rather than attempting to remove the barriers to their achievement. This project endeavours to help redress this balance.

The University has worked to establish close links with external organisations including Social Services, the Young People Support Service (YPSS), the Local Education Authority, Connexions, Barnardo’s and designated teachers in schools. The partners are all represented on a steering group for the project. There are regular meetings at which they discuss recent referrals to the project, monitor existing mentor pairings and discuss planned activities. To ensure that the partnership works effectively, a partnership agreement is drawn up between the partner organisation and the University. This outlines the aims and objectives of the partnership, the individual and collective responsibilities of individual partners and the evaluation of partnership strategy. In this way, it has been possible to monitor partners’ involvement against agreed principles and outline the key responsibilities for new partnership organisations in advance of them committing to the project. Each partner has a role in helping to manage and develop the HEAdFurther project. There are additional responsibilities to disseminate and publicise the project amongst staff and young people; refer young people to the project; and provide guidance on the educational needs and issues of the young people involved. The project is referred to within the City of Hull’s strategy for raising the achievement of children in public care and care leavers (2004/05), illustrating a wider corporate commitment to the project.

The project was initiated following the acquisition of project funding through the European Social Fund (ESF). In obtaining ESF funding, the University was required to prove that their intervention would be directed at a diverse target group. The nature of the project funding sets it apart from other WP activities which are funded centrally.

The project is monitored through a pupil aspiration questionnaire, interviews with the young people and ongoing monitoring of their personal development plans. The project is required to submit progress reports to the funding body bi-annually during the period of funding and provide quantitative evidence of its effectiveness. A tracking system is held by Connexions, and the University is currently working collaboratively with them to share data on 5000-6000 pupils per annum.

**Developments**

There are plans to develop this project by extending the scheme to support young people beyond the age of 16, through sixth form and on to University. These developments are welcomed as the young people who have been involved in the project from the start approach 16 and clearly require ongoing support, particularly to address their lack of family support. The acquisition of additional project funding will ensure the young people continue to have support until the first year of university, thus
helping to prevent drop out. The project will also be expanded to take young people from across the Humber region.

**Strengths and areas for development**

One of the strengths of HEAdFurther is its close links with external partner organisations. The project also benefits from collaborations within the University for the recruitment of student mentors. Another strength of the project is the chance for young people to build up a strong relationship through sustained contact with the student mentor. The project benefits from being individually tailored to the young person’s needs and interests.

Since the start of the project, other universities have started to look at targeting this group. HEAdFurther has the benefit of being two years ahead of similar interventions and is currently writing guidance and actively disseminating the project to support other universities.

In its current form, HEAdFurther is limited in its ability to involve more young people in the scheme. There are several issues that appear to affect its growth potential. It depends greatly on the quality of the relationship between the young person and student mentor, which requires careful monitoring and supervision. It likewise depends upon the time and commitment of staff in the Learning Partnerships Office. To that extent, the project is labour intensive and heavily dependent upon the project manager. The University may need to guard against this to ensure the sustainability of the project, should key staff move on to other employment in the future.

The project may benefit from being further linked to other outreach activities run by the University. It originated through project funds and, despite attempts to link it to other activities, appears to have remained a separate entity. The project is open to a small number of young people across the city of Hull. Whilst it is recognised that the needs of these young people are unique and need to be addressed systematically, a significant amount of staff time is invested in the organisation and running of events that might benefit a wider group of young people. Doing so would provide an opportunity for young people in care to mix with a greater cross section of young people.

**West of Scotland Wider Access Forum (now known as the West Forum): Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools (GOALS)**

**Brief description of the project**

GOALS is a collaborative project, involving seven HEIs in the West of Scotland and local authority partners. It aims to increase participation in HE in both HEIs and FE colleges from schools with traditionally low participation rates. The programme therefore targets schools with low rates of participation in higher education. The primary focus is young people from lower socio-economic groups throughout the West of Scotland, including rural communities and ethnic minorities. There are fifteen activity strands for school pupils aged from eleven to eighteen years. In Scotland these school years run from Primary 6 (P6) to Secondary 6 (S6). Activities for younger pupils are aimed at demystification of HE and awareness raising. Subsequent activities seek to increase motivation and provide information about HE. Older pupils are prepared for entry and transition into HE, through skill development and a realistic insight into what will be expected of them.

**Local and institutional context**
The West Forum consists of all the HEIs in the region: an ancient university, a 1960's university, two post-1992 universities, two specialist institutions and an HE college plus 20 Further Education Colleges and various associate members. Each HEI has its own approach to widening participation, but each contributes to and benefits from the GOALS activities.

The West of Scotland is an area of contrasts with a large urban conurbation containing some of the worst deprivation in Western Europe and rural areas remote from centres of higher education. The region has very low rates of participation in HE, particularly for young people from families who have no tradition of HE; indeed Glasgow City has the worst participation rates in Scotland. The challenge is to raise the awareness, motivation and skills of these young people and their families throughout school so as to assist progression into higher education.

**Detailed project description**

GOALS co-ordinates a range of activities, delivered by HE academic and administrative staff and HE ‘LINKS’ students (undergraduate and postgraduate), to school pupils aged from 11 to 18, to increase their awareness, information, motivation and skills to enter higher education with the aim of improving the HE participation rate in the region.

The Vice- Principals and Access Co-ordinators of the HEIs took a strategic decision to target social inclusion by addressing the low rates of participation in HE in the region. Each institution had existing projects in this area, but the local education authorities, and particularly Glasgow City Council, were concerned about overlap and gaps in the provision, creating inequity. A co-ordinated partnership approach overcomes this and new activities were developed and a continuum of provision was established. The project was further developed in response to SHEFC’s Strand 3 Regional Wider Access Forum funding stream in 2000. The project was reviewed after four years, and then extended for a further four years. The project is hoping to extend into a third phase.

The project aims to: create a coherent structure to work with schools to widen participation by starting early and involving primary feeder schools to secondary schools with HE participation rates in the lowest quartile across the whole of the West of Scotland and addressing issues facing both rural and urban communities. The project currently involves 43 secondary schools, plus their 250 primary feeders, and approximately 48,000 young people have the opportunity to participate in the programme each year.

In the second phase (2004 to 08) the project is running the following activities:

- **LINKS Primary Programme (P6 and P7):** a range of activities, including a campus visit, a webpage builder project and creative and artistic opportunities to raise awareness about higher education. From 2005 all P7 pupils will have a campus visit.
- **Drama Workshops (S1):** encourage pupils to consider their future educational and career paths through role-play and discussions with staff and HE students.
- **Education 2 Employment Challenge (S2):** this activity was delivered to 17 schools in 2004-05 with a view to expansion to all from 2005-06 and assists pupils to make informed decisions about options choices by thinking about other decision making processes.
- **Campus Day (S3):** this provides pupils with an opportunity to experience the academic and social elements of university life on an ordinary day.
• Summer Academy (S3/S4): this is a two week programme of education challenges, guided by student mentors.
• University Experience (S4): this allows pupils to experience university life while studying a chosen subject for a week at one of two university campuses during the October half-term break. A new pilot will test out other forms of delivery after June 2006.
• Portfolio Preparation (S3-S6): workshops to support young people in the preparation of their portfolios for application to art school.
• Top-Up (S5 and S6): this offers pupils a “mini higher education experience”. It is a twelve week programme that assists pupils to acquire skills and information to prepare them for the transition into HE.
• Steps 4 Life (S5/S6): a pilot with three schools for pupils needing extra support to stay at school post 16 and consider progressing to HE, it offers guidance and one to one support with HE mentors.
• Other optional activities include: LINKS workshops for each secondary year group; sessions to assist pupils to complete their UCAS forms; participation in parents evenings and options nights depending on requests from the schools.

Each activity is co-ordinated by one specific HEI. LINK students are recruited from across the seven HEIs. They are trained to undertake specific activities, and are paid for doing so. Over 1,000 have been employed since 2000.

Activities for younger pupils are available to whole year groups, but subsequently they are targeted towards young people who have the potential to go to HE, but who lack the motivation or achievement to progress. This is anticipated to be pupils not in bands 1 or 2 at Standard Grade, but rather in 3 or 4. (Standard Grades are taken at the end of S4 at 16 like GCSEs.) However, schools undertake the selection process. GOALS staff endeavour to work with school teachers regarding selection issues, and over time the project team has observed improved selection by the schools.

The primary focus of the project is on increasing participation in higher education by students from the target groups, rather than targeting specific institutions or disciplines. Each of the participating HEIs has a range of its own access initiatives, co-ordinated by the Access Co-ordinators, who also support the implementation of the GOALS activities. The majority of outreach work in schools is undertaken via GOALS. This avoids duplication and provides coherence for schools.

Pupils are supported to progress to higher education through a variety of routes, but there is no data available about progression through vocational pathways. Pupils who enter employment and then participate in HE on a part-time basis, or who subsequently progress to HE, are not captured by current monitoring systems. However, investigation is ongoing into how best to do this in the future.

GOALS seeks to prepare pupils for entry into higher education, and to smooth the transition, but GOALS activities do not extend into undergraduate level in the HEIs. This was a deliberate policy from the start so as not to label or stigmatising pupils once they had entered HE. The Top Up programme supports learning skills development and familiarises students with the expectations of higher education. Support for students in HE is provided by the individual institutions and is not directly influenced by GOALS, although some HEIs offer ‘buddying’ provision to these students. The increased numbers of students from lower socio-economic groups can impact positively on
institutions; research shows that Top Up pupils fare better in their first year of study in comparison to non Top Up pupils from comparator schools.

Each HEI has a Wider Access Co-ordinator. They are responsible for the GOALS activities of their institution in most cases, plus other institutional widening participation work. This helps to promote coherence between the collaborative regional activities and institutional interventions.

One of the distinguishing features of the GOALS project is that it is a collaboration between all the HEIs in the West of Scotland, and involves local education authorities in the region. Glasgow City Education Authority was instrumental in the early stages of the project, and the HEI Vice-Principal and Access staff worked together to bring the other LEAs on board. The LEAs are very active in the project. They provide a significant proportion of the funding and, in discussion with Access staff, they identify the schools in their areas that they want to participate in the programme and promote it to them. They also contribute to steering groups and other meetings.

The project receives funding from the Scottish Funding Councils, and each of the local education authorities contributes a flat rate based on the number of secondary school clusters taking part. Each of the HEIs supports the project in kind through senior management time, the Wider Access Co-ordinator, other staff and the provision of office space and other resources. The project was reviewed in 2003/4 by SHEFC, and its funding was increased by 50 per cent for each of the next four years to July 2008.

Monitoring and evaluation are key concerns of the GOALS project, although they are mindful to keep expenditure in this area to a low level and not to divert it away from activities with young people. They face an inherent tension (common to many widening participation activities): it is a long-term task, but they need to demonstrate effectiveness within a comparatively short-time frame.

They are moving from autonomous evaluation of the different activity strands to a ‘holistic’ approach, which is intended to provide systematic data across the programme of activities. This is based on ‘core questions’ which are appropriate for the whole project and the individual elements, and these are embedded into the evaluation questionnaires used by the different activities. This process has been facilitated by a Forum Evaluation Steering Group and the appointment, in November 2004, of a Forum Evaluator funded through the Forum not GOALS.

The evaluation strategy is focused on outcomes, and is centred around four types of indicators – the four A’s – aspiration, attainment, application and admissions, but it combines quantitative data with qualitative research. A key task has been to identify what data exists which can be used for secondary analysis and information from the Scottish Executive, UCAS and the local education authorities is utilised. However, the project team is keen that this quantitative data is not used in isolation. Year on year comparisons on HE participation mask issues such as falling school roles, and do not adequately demonstrate the work taking place with younger pupils. Although comparisons between GOALS schools and non-GOALS schools have been used effectively, this may not involve comparing like with like. Thus, the quantitative data is complemented by analysis of the information from the core questions, and via a secondary analysis of the evaluation data collected by the different activity teams.
The information on progression to HE and other “hard” data is the most valued by the funding partners, who want to know whether GOALS is having an impact so as to inform financial decisions. More qualitative “good news stories” have also been used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the interventions. The evaluation information is also used constructively by the project’s Management Group in consultation with partners, to develop the project and to reduce or remove some activities and develop others. The process of learning is facilitated by the strong collaboration within the project and the commitment from these senior managers. It is hoped that, in the future, this may be informed by a more qualitatively-oriented longitudinal research programme.

The retention and success of GOALS students once in HE is not comprehensively monitored, as this is not the focus of the initiative. Each institution is responsible for monitoring and evaluating its own widening participation work. Evaluation work is generally made available to the project. One institution compared the first year success of GOALS’ students with the rest of the cohort and results have been very positive. This HEI continues to do this on an annual basis. Another tracked students through a specific exercise.

**Planned project developments**
The GOALS project has recently entered its second four-year stage. The project has had the comparative luxury of having had time to establish structures, processes and activities which are effective. It plans to continue along this pathway for the next four years, all the time improving practices and collecting data to inform the proposed third phase.

**Strengths and challenges**
The GOALS project has achieved an effective collaboration between the seven HEIs in the region, involving at various times thirteen local education authorities. This is attributable in part to the key role played by the senior managers and Access staff in the early stages of the initiative and now. This collaborative approach avoids duplication and gaps in the provision offered to schools with low rates of progression to HE. This co-ordinated approach for all work with schools could be replicated by other areas. It has also provided a relatively stable financial base, but this in turn requires the project to provide strong evidence of effectiveness.

The project team has created a thoughtful and pragmatic approach to evaluation, which is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of different activities and HEIs, but which also provides core data to the central evaluator, the project management team and the funding bodies. It makes appropriate use of existing statistical data and qualitative data to explore the underlying issues. This is a potential model for other widening participation initiatives, especially those of a collaborative nature.

The project works with LEAs to target schools with low rates of participation. The selection of the individual students to benefit is undertaken by the schools. This leaves room for teachers’ motivations and biases to be exercised. But, through on-going dialogue with teaching staff, the selection appears to be improving.

It is unfortunate there is no provision for any continuation of support once the pupils have entered HE. The GOALS project aims to assist student success through preparation for transition, but they have no means of providing a safety net. Supporting student success in HE is the responsibility of individual HEIs. A Strand 4 bid in 1999 to implement a retention initiative across the GOALS HEIs was
rejected by SHEFC, as it was felt this should be done on an institutional basis (and the HEIs are complying with this). A simple strategy, such as facilitating a GOALS students’ network, may offer a low-cost way of providing on-going support. The GOALS project has, however, tapped into these students by using them as ‘LINK students’ and thus role models to other young people in the West of Scotland. Use of GOALS funds for HE students would have to be agreed with funding partners who, up to now, have preferred that funds are used to support school pupils.

There is also potential to support LINK students to gain more than financial rewards from participating in the GOALS activities. For example, developing a collaborative accreditation system.
5. Delivering practice: Activities to widen participation

Summary

Types of widening participation activities:
- The research survey identified that the higher education sector is engaged in activities to widen participation in four broad areas: pre-entry; access; retention and success; and enhancing employability.
- 87 per cent of activities are focused on pre-entry and access.
- The most common activities are school outreach, university visits, qualifying summer schools, bridging programmes and additional access support.
- Many activities utilise existing HE students, however approaches regarding reward and recognition for their involvement vary widely.

Targeting:
- All of the initiatives submitted to the study had at least one clearly defined target group.
- The primary target group for the majority of activities can be broadly defined as ‘social class’.
- The sector’s use of target groups has improved (in spite of the inherent practical difficulties of a targeted approach), but significant problems remain, particularly when targeting schools rather than individuals.
- Targeting of students within HE is not widespread. Finding non-stigmatising ways to support these students, who enter HE as a result of targeted outreach, remains a challenge for the sector. There are, however, examples of good practice identified in this study.

Widening participation and the student lifecycle:
- Widening participation interventions are being delivered throughout the student lifecycle including aspiration and awareness raising; improving attainment; application support and amended admissions procedures; HE preparation and transition; induction and social integration; learning, teaching and curriculum development; student support; and employability and progression.
- Important developments include: working with pupils in primary schools, the greater involvement of parents/carers, initiatives to promote improved access to selective institutions and disciplines, and a greater focus on the transition phase and the first year experience in recognition of the importance of retention alongside wider access.
- Areas identified for improvement include: a broadening of success measures and recognition of attainment in schools, increased vocational routes into HE and easier progression from vocational programmes into honours degrees, improved access to financial support information, and earlier integration of high quality careers education into the student lifecycle.

Coherence and complementarity:
- There has been a shift away from stand-alone activities and one-off projects towards co-ordinated widening participation programmes.
- Collaborative partnerships are emerging between student services, widening participation units, academic departments and external partners.
- There are examples of institutions striving to integrate widening participation at an institutional level, but these need to be extended.

5.1 Introduction
This section of the report discusses the range of activities the sector is engaged in to widen participation, issues related to targeting interventions, and the ways in which students are being supported throughout the student lifecycle. It concludes with a list of key issues to consider in relation to delivering widening participation in practice.

5.2 The sector's engagement in different types of widening participation activities
HEIs are engaged in a range of activities which have been categorised into four areas: pre-entry, access to higher education, retention and success, and enhancing employability. Details of these activities are provided in the appendix.

A large proportion (64 per cent) of the widening participation interventions are aimed at pre-entry and nearly a quarter are focused on access. Very few examples centre on retention and success (6 per cent) or employability (7 per cent). This can be seen in chart 5.1 below. In summary, there is a far greater emphasis on outreach as opposed to ‘in-reach’ (Murphy et al 2002).

Chart 5.1.

![Chart 5.1: Types of Intervention](image)

The largest proportion of pre-entry activities are school outreach initiatives and university visits or open days, both accounting for 41 per cent of the examples submitted. Popular access activities are qualifying summer schools (22 examples), bridging programmes (13 examples) and additional support (12 examples). Together these three activities accounted for more than 75 per cent of access interventions.
Numerically, the retention and success activities represented the lowest category with 16 examples submitted. 50 per cent of those examples focused on learning and teaching and/or curriculum developments.

In terms of enhancing employability the majority of examples involved careers education and/or guidance with 15 examples (representing 83 per cent of activity in that category). The remaining examples in that category involved work experience activities and these accounted for just three examples.

The breakdown of intervention types is shown in chart 5.2.

**Chart 5.2.**

5.3 Student involvement in widening participation activities
A common feature of widening participation activities is the involvement of existing HE students. However, students receive different types, and amounts, of recognition and reward. Students may gain skills and personal development, payment, accreditation, and/or tokens of appreciation.

**Student volunteers**
Involvement in widening participation activities provides students with valuable work experience and the opportunity to develop skills. Institutional representatives report that students are keen to take on extra-curricular activities that enhance their employability. Voluntary schemes tend to attract those students who can afford not to undertake paid employment. Students from lower socio-economic groups are likely to be the least likely to participate in widening participation activities on a voluntary basis, but have the most relevant personal experience (Austin and Hatt, 2005). Student payment for participating in widening participation activities varies significantly. This study found students who are paid per session and others are paid per hour. Some are paid the minimum wage whilst others receive more. Some students receive nothing. Noticeably, the situation is not always clear-cut, with several universities operating both volunteering and paid schemes.

Some HEIs are attempting to ensure a match between the students they recruit and the job. For example, at the University of Hull social work students participate as mentors on the project to the benefit of their career and the young people involved on the project. At the University of Wales, Bangor and University of Huddersfield, students studying for a teaching qualification are involved in school based outreach activities. Loughborough University draws upon the enthusiasm and experience of students registered on engineering courses to encourage young women to consider a career in engineering. At Edge Hill, they use ex-initial teacher trainees from minority ethnic groups to act as mentors on taster courses and those in their first few years of teaching.

Paying for student time has financial implications for widening participation activities, and may threaten sustainability. At the University of Wales, Bangor, the survival of its peer guide scheme over 12 years is attributable to the involvement of student volunteers. Other universities who have organised similar schemes, but who have paid students, have not been able to sustain their programmes.

**Accreditation**
An alternative approach to payment is the accreditation of contributions to widening participation activities. One representative at the peer evaluation seminar for this study reported that accredited modules are good ‘because [they] provide students with choice’, allowing more students the opportunity to participate without having to sacrifice employment time. But systems and structures in some HEIs make it difficult to accredit participation in these activities.

**Awards and presentations**
Other forms of recognition and reward for participating students include awards and presents. At the University of Loughborough, mentors receive a gift in appreciation of their time. Another university is awarding prizes to student volunteers who have ‘put in over and above what’s expected of them’.
5.4 Targeting

The targeting of widening participation interventions has improved since the previous two studies (Woodrow et al 1998; Woodrow et al 2002). All of the 142 examples submitted to this study have at least one clearly defined target group. Target groups include ‘class’ (broadly defined), religious and ethnic diversity, disability, gender and other specific groups. 115 of the 141 submitted examples target working class students as their primary target group. Some interventions are also targeted at specific age groups. The breakdown of target groups is shown in Chart 5.3 below, and Chart 5.4 shows age-specific targeting. (Some interventions target more than one group and/or age group).

Chart 5.3: Targeting of initiatives submitted to the study

Class
Ethnic and religious minorities
Disabled students
Gender
Young people in care
Other

Chart 5.4: Age-based targeting of initiatives submitted to the study

Primary
Secondary
Further Education
Mature
Undergraduates

Class

In the examples submitted, definitions of lower socio-economic group are not well defined and vague notions are utilised. 129 (91 per cent) of the submitted examples use the concept of “lower socio-
economic groups”, 21 (15 per cent) explicitly target first generation entrants, 11 (8 per cent) target people from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN) and eight (6 per cent) target people with low incomes.

**Targeting schools and colleges as a proxy**

Careful selection of partner schools and colleges is frequently used in the absence of data on the socio-economic status of pupils. For example, the HE participation rate may be used, or the proportion of pupils attaining five GSCEs or more. But this approach does not ensure that all pupils who could benefit are included, or that pupils who would progress to HE anyway do not consolidate their advantage. For example, the University of Bristol has successfully increased participation by students from state schools (from 54 per cent in 1999/2000 to 60 per cent in 2004/5), but this has not resulted in a corresponding increase in students from lower socio-economic groups.

**Selecting amongst pupils**

Targeting ‘low participation schools’ often requires further selection of the pupils. The majority of projects leave the selection of students to the schools or colleges. Selection procedures tend to be imprecise and schools use their own strategies of selection, which may meet their own needs (Thomas and Slack 1999). One project manager commented: “That’s an area that we’re not in control of. We have to hope that the schools select the right pupils”. An alternative approach is to use the predicted or actual grades of pupils, but this does not ensure that students are from lower socio-economic groups either.

The use of ‘champion teachers’ who understand, support and promote widening access activities has been used by some initiatives, for example the University of Bangor’s Talent Opportunities Programme. However, teachers can have an outdated view of HE or low expectations of certain types of students, and this suggests the need for further staff development.

**Other under-represented groups**

Several projects include additional targeting, eg young people who have been excluded from mainstream education, teenage parents, looked after young people, homeless people and (ex)offenders. These groups are under-represented in HE and may be easier to identify. But the number of students involved are comparatively low, and the projects, as a consequence, tend to be small and, although beneficial to the individuals involved, they have limited impact on the overall number of students from under-represented groups entering HE.

Attention is also being paid to other categories, such as under-represented ethnic minorities and young people with disabilities (see chart 5.3 above). This approach shows growing awareness of the “multiple and compounding disadvantages” (Ferrier and Heagney, 2001) that some potential students face.

**Targeting students in HE**

Once students have entered higher education there is more ambivalence with regard to targeting those from under-represented groups.

Institutions are concerned about labelling and stigmatising students by providing them with targeted support. The University of Dundee has taken this view, but recent research has indicated that its
former Access Summer School students do face a number of specific issues, and these are being addressed by Alumni activities. This offers a positive way of reaching these students. Other institutions feel that all their students benefit from new interventions. For example, at Liverpool Hope University the new Writing Centre is oversubscribed.

Many institutions (and partnerships) rely on the support strategies provided for all students. For example, one case study reported that: “if we get it right for our access to Birmingham students, we should be getting it right for all our students”. Similarly, the University of Bristol does not want to single out widening participation students for support, and advertises its support services widely, but the onus is on students to make use of the services.

Approaches to targeting students in HE
A number of HEIs in our study do identify and target students once they have entered HE, but this is undertaken in different ways.

Identification pre-entry and provision of segregated support. The most overt approach is the identification of students prior to entry and the provision of segregated learning, teaching and support. This approach is used by the access to medical school projects: King’s and Southampton teach their ‘widening participation’ students as separate groups (they receive an additional year of tuition), and provide special support activities for these students (such as the PANDA module at King’s, which develops students’ academic English and presentation skills). This approach has worked well, ensured high rates of retention, and subsequently students have integrated with five-year degree students and achieved comparable results.

Identification pre-entry and targeting for additional support post-entry. A second approach is to identify the students prior to entry, and target them for additional support. For example, Nottingham Trent University has introduced retention strategies to benefit all undergraduates, but in certain cases has directly targeted students from non-traditional backgrounds. This approach is uncommon, although there is no evidence to suggest that students would find such an approach unwelcome.

Identifying ‘at risk’ students post-entry and targeting them for additional support. The most predominant approach to targeting is to identify ‘at risk’ students post-entry. For example the University of Glamorgan does not label students from specific routes or backgrounds as in need of support, but they can be identified as ‘at risk’ by academic and support staff, and then be targeted for support. Similarly, Canterbury Christ Church University follows up any students who are identified as ‘cause for care and concern’ as a consequence of its student attendance policy procedures. Edge Hill College of Higher Education also monitors students’ attendance and follows them up if necessary.

Self-identification and referral for additional support. The final approach is self-identification. Many HEIs offer academic and pastoral support services for students to access themselves. Previous research however has indicated that some students lack the confidence to access support (Dodgson and Bolam 2002).
5.5 Widening participation and the student lifecycle

The student lifecycle is a widely used approach to widening participation and supporting student success in the UK (Layer et al 2002, HEFCE 2003). “This model describes the student experience and covers a range of activities from aspiration raising, pre-entry activities, admission, first semester/term, moving through the course and employment” (Action on Access 2003, p7). It is used here to structure the following discussion about alternative ways in which the HE sector is widening participation.

Aspiration raising and the provision of information

Activities aimed at raising the levels of aspiration and motivation amongst the target group by providing them with an insight into what HE is like, what can be achieved by it and how they might progress to it. The majority of the new examples of practice submitted to this study include outreach work designed to raise aspirations and provide students with more information about educational opportunities.

The main approaches used are: student mentors, ambassadors and role models delivering activities in schools, campus visits and taster sessions and summer schools, usually with a residential element. There are many examples of these activities in both the updated and new case studies.

Working with younger children

There is evidence that HEIs are working with younger pupils, particularly in primary schools. For example, the University of Bradford Academy launched the Bradford Children’s University three years ago to work with primary school pupils, their parents/carers and teachers across Yorkshire. Similarly, the Hull Children’s University brings key stage 2 pupils to a “grown up university”. Nottingham Trent University’s progression partnership has expanded the number of primary schools it works with from 11 to 30, and has concentrated its activities in five areas to support children into secondary school, and provide continuity into secondary school programmes. The Glasgow School of Art has developed the Artists and Designers in Education project (ADinED), which focuses its delivery exclusively on 65 primary schools:

“It was clear that the benefits of a student art outreach project not only placed early ideas and skills and enthusiasms in young pupils and teachers, it also demystified the experience and understanding of a higher education institution at this early stage of educational development. It became increasingly apparent that teachers also benefited through the development of creative skills, ideas and understandings. Therefore it was agreed that with intervention at this early stage in primary school the student input would have maximum impact, not only to support the widening participation strategy of the Glasgow School of Art – but also the GOALS project”.

This move towards working with younger pupils recognises the fact that it is possible to predict the qualifications of individuals at age 16 and their chances of staying on in education simply from what is known about them at birth (Gorard and Rees 2002). This suggests that the widening participation agenda may also need to engage at the pre-school level (Feinstein 2003).
Greater targeting of outreach
Outreach work is becoming more targeted, especially with older pupils, although this is not unproblematic (as is discussed above). There is recognition that potential students need more intensive engagement and support, and this can only be given to a limited number. For example, the GOALS project works with all pupils in upper primary and lower secondary in selected schools, but at S3/4 greater selectivity is necessary.

Involving parents
The outreach initiatives show significant involvement of parents. Four key types of parental involvement can be identified: awareness raising, reassuring, informing and engaging.

- Some outreach programmes involve awareness raising activities aimed at parents (e.g. University of Newcastle). This helps parents, as well as young people, to see HE as a possibility.
- Other schemes seek to reassure parents that their children will be well cared for in higher education, for example, by letting them see accommodation and other facilities and providing reassurance about student finance and debt.
- Another approach is to teach non-graduate parents what they and their children should expect from higher education, and vice versa, thus seeking to compensate for the cultural capital that parents who have been to HE themselves possess.
- A final strategy recruits parents directly in the education process by seeking to raise their own educational achievement. The University of Bradford sees this as a major success of their work with minority ethnic communities, and the University of Bangor actively seeks to recruit parents to HE.

Improving attainment
Activities with school and college students directly to assist them to enhance their achievements, either at level 2 (GCSE or equivalent) or at level 3 (i.e. entry to HE qualifications). Significantly increasing participation by young people in HE can only be achieved by improving school attainment. As one project manager commented, “…there’s only so much point in raising awareness in HE unless you also do something about attainment”. Achievements at level 3 are based almost entirely on staying-on rates in schools and colleges, in turn based almost entirely on level 2 qualifications, and so on (see Gorard and Smith 2004).

Four approaches to improving attainment can be found in the case studies: supplementing; extending; accrediting and alternative routes/qualifications.

- The most straightforward approach (although not the easiest to implement) is to supplement school learning, for example via revision summer schools or Saturday classes. These have a direct impact on achievement, but can be difficult to co-ordinate given the range of both subjects and syllabuses students are engaged in. For example, Bradford’s Junior University provides practical help and support for students studying for GCSEs and A-levels.
- An approach used by both the Open University and the University of Bristol is to extend the school syllabus to stimulate and support students’ learning. The University of Bristol’s Subject Enrichment Days supplement subjects that young people are studying and extend their knowledge. The Law Enrichment Programme is targeted at young mothers from low participation neighbourhoods, who have no family experience of HE, but who are currently studying for FE qualifications. Law was chosen as a subject that these young women could relate to, have an opinion about and engage with. The session on domestic violence was particularly poignant.
because many of the women had direct experience of it. The Open University scheme allows young people to study HE courses alongside their A-level courses. What is striking about both of these examples is that additional, challenging learning has been used effectively with groups not specifically identified as gifted and talented.

- A third approach is to accredit the prior experiences of students in school, and thus improve their tariff scores. This is an approach that the University of Lincoln has adopted and it is now firmly embedded into its admissions procedures. The University of Ulster’s Step-up to Science project also enables students to earn additional tariff points. These approaches provide recognition for widening participation activities and other extra-curricular pursuits.
- Supporting students to achieve an alternative equivalent qualification is a final strategy. For example, the University of Huddersfield offers engineering students the opportunity to undertake an alternative, computer-based maths qualification prior to entry. Other institutions have offered qualifying summer schools (e.g. University of Dundee) or a Foundation Year or similar (e.g. University of Glasgow, Newman College and King’s College and University of Southampton) to provide students with other ways of learning and demonstrating their abilities and potential.

Application and admissions

Sixty one of the 141 examples of practice submitted to the study include elements intended to directly support application and admission to higher education.

Application support

A good example of application support is provided by Glasgow School of Art’s (GSA) Portfolio Preparation Programme (PPP), which assists secondary school pupils from under-represented groups who are studying art and design to prepare a portfolio for entry into HE in the visual arts. This programme is offered to partner schools as part of the GOALS programme. GSA has seen significant increases in the number of pupils applying to art, design and architecture from these schools: in 2002/03 applications increased by 52 per cent, in 2003/04 the increase was a further 27 per cent and in 2004/05, 20 per cent.

The Open University has no admission requirements for its courses. However, it has developed a series of “Openings” courses which are targeted at students who lack the confidence or experience to enter directly into HE. This programme has attracted 20,000 participants, 65 per cent of whom have “low qualifications”. These two examples underline the importance of building students’ confidence in applying to HE, and they both demonstrate significant success, to the benefit of both students and institutions.

Admissions procedures

With regard to admissions procedures institutions have been involved in reviewing their policies, mainstreaming good practice and providing staff training. Some of this activity may have been stimulated by the Schwartz Report (2004) and the surrounding discussion about fair access.

- Ravensbourne College, for example, reviewed and improved its entire admissions policy and process in September 2004. This reflects not only experience gained in individual projects and recommendations in the Schwartz Report but also the College’s core aim of widening participation. All interviewing staff received training on fair admissions and the College offers a booklet to all applicants with advice and guidance for a successful application. Another example
is the University of Bristol where a new admissions policy has been developed, with transparent admissions criteria. Training sessions are provided for admissions tutors to update them on widening participation policies, policies on alternative offers, what to look for on UCAS forms and what account to take of educational disadvantage.

- A significant number of institutions have developed strategies for applications submitted by targeted students. At Glasgow School of Art, GOALS applicants have their UCAS forms stamped and all GOALS applicants receive an interview. The Access to Birmingham scheme allows students from under-represented groups to provide additional information about their circumstances, and these inform subsequent admissions offers, typically one or two grades lower than the standard, published prospectus grades.

A key concern of widening participation staff is to ensure that admission strategies for specific groups of students apply across the board, and not just for some disciplines or institutions (in the case of collaborative initiatives).

- Admissions reform was achieved at the University of Glamorgan in the 1990s: it is centralised and applies to all departments, a 40 point deduction is made on all offers for courses listed in the compact agreement with each school.

- At the University of Newcastle all academic schools are now involved in the Programme and all but three degree programmes are involved for 2005 entry.

- A “positive” LEAPS summer school report is accepted as evidence of a student’s ability to cope with first year HE work: All the partners institutions have signed up to a LEAPS admission pledge.

Compacts
In the first study (Woodrow et al 1998), compacts were an important strategy being employed to facilitate progression from targeted schools into specific HEIs. In this study some HEIs reported that their compact schemes have declined. Meanwhile, other HEIs reported thriving compacts, for example, the University of Bristol which has stated that it is interested in developing such arrangements. This is intended to communicate with local young people that they have the potential to achieve the grades required for admission to Bristol.

Vocational access
The progression rate of students going into HE with two or more A-levels/Highers is approaching 100 per cent, whereas the progression rate for students with vocational qualifications is approximately 50 per cent. Vocational access is therefore an important issue for the HE sector to address in order to achieve its widening participation aspirations.

There is limited evidence of how students with vocational qualifications are being supported into and through HE. Most widening participation initiatives and HEIs believe that they are inclusive of vocational pathways, but they are not specifically targeting these students or supporting their access and success. Comments such as this were typical: “…there’s none of this sort of division, say, looking at a GNVQ and feeling that it is less worthwhile than an A-level; we recognise BTEC qualifications.” Others claim that they encourage pupils along all routes to enter HE, but there is little evidence to support this. There are however some encouraging examples.

- Qualifications equivalence mapping. The University of Ulster has found that increasingly students, particularly non-traditional students, are presenting non-standard qualifications. This
prompted a review of admission policies and procedures across the institution to ensure that students with qualifications other than A-levels have an equal chance of gaining entry. The review resulted in the development of a qualification equivalence table to ensure a consistent and fair approach to admissions.

- **Staff development.** Nottingham Trent University has run admission events to raise awareness of admissions staff about new academic and vocational qualifications.

- **Mainstreaming project work.** Worcester University’s project (as reported in *From Elitism to Inclusion* (Woodrow et al, 1998)) focused on the development of vocational progression routes for young learners. This work has been incorporated into the institution’s general widening participation strategy and the regional Aimhigher initiative and the Lifelong Learning Network will be operating in this area. Newman College’s work-based programme for early years practitioners, which supported many mature women back into education, has been integrated into mainstream activity.

- **New initiatives.** The University of Lincoln is now working with young people in work-based and related learning. The access to medicine work at University of Southampton informed the development of foundation degrees to widen access to the health professions. Liverpool Hope University now offers “Modern Apprentices to Hope”, residential, mentoring and subject support for Merseyside modern apprentices to enter HE.

- **Future plans.** Some institutions have aspirations to develop vocational routes. For example, the University of Hull is keen to develop more vocational routes into HE, and this is being undertaken in partnership with further education colleges, but they see this as benefiting mature students on part-time courses. Similarly, the University of Bristol plans to develop access for mature students and local students through part-time provision, foundation degrees and short modules. The University recognises that the introduction of variable fees may encourage more students to study locally, so they will provide additional support to these students.

**Access to selecting institutions and disciplines**
This study suggests that the sector is working hard to increase access for students from lower socio-economic groups into selecting institutions and disciplines. For example, 28 per cent of the submissions to the sector survey were from Russell Group institutions. Since the publication of the previous report (Woodrow et al 2002) there appear to be a greater number of initiatives addressing access to higher demand disciplines, especially in relation to medicine, which are also developing more sophisticated selection criteria. The projects featured in the earlier report have not only developed and prospered, but they have also influenced further practice within their institutions and more widely.

The innovative work at King’s (Woodrow et al 2002) has had a number of impacts on the institution. Its Access to Law programme has been developed to complement the Access to Medicine Project, and other departments have felt more able to be innovative. The Access to Medicine Project has influenced admissions tutors on the conventional five-year medical degree – they have become more conscious of applicants’ A-level performance, in the context of their sixth form’s performance against national averages, and the experience of using the personal qualities assessment has stimulated and informed further discussion within about the use of this type of selection instrument as an adjunct to the UCAS form in selecting all medical students.
Initiatives addressing access to medicine have developed perhaps the most sophisticated and comprehensive approaches to the selection and recruitment of young people from under-represented groups who have the potential to succeed. One project manager commented “We believe that it is essential to establish a student’s potential to learn, not their opportunity to learn”.

- At King’s selection for the Extended Medical Degree Programme (EMDP) is based on predicted A-level grades lower than would be acceptable for entry to the conventional MB BS course, so a confidential report from the school is requested and applicants are also assessed on their performance in a semi-structured interview. In addition, applicants take the personal qualities assessment test, which explores their problem-solving and logical reasoning abilities, and the way they make decisions based on moral judgements. The staff are analysing the relationship between personal qualities assessment scores and performance, and this may provide more robust evidence in due course for the potential of these instruments as valid selection instruments. At clearing, applicants from the target areas who are holding a place for the conventional MB BS course, but who drop too many grades and therefore lose their place, are assessed for the EMDP. (See Powis et al 2005).

- One of the objectives of WHAP – Working in Health Access Programme – led by the University of Glasgow - is to improve admissions procedures in health care. This includes a research-based exploration of the use of psychometric testing to identify candidates suitable for a career in healthcare (this is similar to the tools used by King’s, but have been developed for younger pupils). It should, however, be noted that all forms of testing meet with concern from some policy makers, practitioners and potential entrants, thus a research-based project is an important aspect of this work. (See Osborne et al 2003).

**Preparation, transition and induction**

Pre- and post-entry activities are aimed at preparing students successfully to make the transition into higher education. Student success is vital, and a crucial part of institutional widening participation strategies is the induction and support available for all students prior to entry and after they have started their degree courses. Research indicates that the majority of students who withdraw from HE do so in the first year (approximately 70 per cent). Preparation, transition and induction are therefore key to supporting students in the early stages. In this study there is evidence of greater emphasis on developing students’ understanding and expectations of HE, and thus preparing them for the transition.

**Approaches used**

- **Transition activities.** Middlesex University, for example, has developed its Compact and Progression Scheme to improve the participation of under-represented groups, and the readiness of those groups for higher education. Similarly, Nottingham Trent University has developed Year 11 Transition activities. The University of Glasgow’s Pre-University Summer School (PUSS) has informed the University’s orientation programme for all students. The specific interventions that institutions are developing are diverse and involve pre- and post-entry activities that centre on providing information and familiarisation with the expectations required of studying at HE level.
• **Pre-entry information provision and skills development.** Canterbury Christ Church University has developed an "orientation website", available before students start their courses to ease their transition into the institution. GOALS offers a twelve week programme, delivered in schools by trained postgraduate students, to prepare students, and the Glasgow School of Art has developed a Bridging Summer School, offering discipline-oriented workshops, study skills and IT skills. The University of Glamorgan has developed an extended model of induction for their compact students. This begins in the sixth form, with two residential conferences, discipline-specific master classes and key skills workshops.

• **Pre-entry HE learning.** In outreach activities there is a tendency for activities to focus on “fun” elements of HE learning, rather than a more realistic approach for which sustained interest is required. This can be contrasted with the Open University’s YASS project, which enables ethnic minority students to follow conventional short science courses (10 CAT points) over a 25 week period during their first year of Sixth Form, using OU material with online and telephone support. This gives students a genuine insight into HE learning.

• **Post-entry induction.** HEIs are focusing attention on developing more effective induction strategies to assist the transition of students from diverse backgrounds into HE and to enhance student retention. The University of Worcester has recently re-focused its retention strategy with an emphasis on induction and study support, and has created a new post of Retention and Achievement Officer responsible for leading this work. Nottingham Trent University has invested widening participation in academic schools to develop a series of pilot initiatives tailored to assist first semester induction in different discipline areas.

International research consistently reports on the importance of the transition period (Osborne 2005), and many institutions are responding to this. The interventions can be either pre- or post-entry, and extend beyond the traditional “welcome week” (Layer et al, 2002, p91). There is also a move towards a more structured experience, which may be accredited. Some activities involve students from targeted initiatives, while other practices have been extended across institutions to benefit all students.

**Learning, teaching and curricular development**

HEIs have been encouraged to develop their learning, teaching and assessment practices and enhance the curriculum to support a diverse student cohort. English HEIs were advised by HEFCE to link their widening participation and learning and teaching strategies. Layer et al 2002 note that HEIs have addressed this, but “in many cases this has been identification of the need to address the issue rather than the production of possible solutions” (p21).

**Approaches used**

There are examples of developments in relation to delivery, assessment, academic support and curriculum contents. The weight of intervention is on the provision of additional learning support, rather than more embedded change.

• **Delivery.** The University of Glamorgan has established a learning and teaching office that responds to learning and teaching needs generated by widening participation, and disseminates approaches across the institution. Worcester University has shifted teaching towards blended learning, a ‘modern classroom’ initiative, independent learning with targeted support, early warning systems, later assessment points and enhanced induction.
• **Assessment.** The University of Glamorgan has identified specific modules with high rates of referral to student support and put strategies in place prior to assessment. Edge Hill College of Higher Education has modified the delivery and assessment of the first year curriculum, including early formative assessment and supportive feedback. Similarly, Glasgow School of Art has made changes to the assessment and evaluation strategy used in the Artists and Designers in Education accredited course as the number of students from GOALS schools who have selected course has increased. These two contrasting approaches place the emphasis for change on either students, or teaching staff.

• **Academic support.** This includes teaching learning skills, analysis of learning needs and styles, e-based support, personal development planning (PDP) and personal tutoring.
  o Many institutions offer learning skills drop in facilities – and report high usage rates.
  o All students benefit if academic support is integrated. At the University of Dundee, the Personal Academic Student Skills (P@SS) teaching, which previously benefited students progressing from the Access Summer School, has now been included in the mainstream teaching programme offered to all undergraduates. All first year students at the University of Middlesex undertake transferable learning skills modules, and students with particular support needs are identified and directed to the appropriate service.
  o Some institutions are working with students to identify different learning styles and preferences; for example, King’s is using the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator to help students identify (and diversify) their preferred learning styles, and also to aid team building.
  o There is an increasing emphasis on the provision of e-based support to develop study skills. This is frequently ‘stand-alone’, but at the University of Lincoln it is integrated into the curriculum for all students. At Huddersfield University e-based maths support is available to all engineering students throughout their course.
  o A number of institutions have integrated academic support through personal development planning (PDP), and with a particular eye on the diversity of their student populations (e.g. Liverpool Hope and Edge Hill); for example: “A purpose-written module, ‘Unique Learning’, designed to provide study skills support and compulsory for all first year students, has recently been replaced with a module based on the principles of Personal Development Planning. This module is not subject specific and is designed to provide students with a structured learning experience which will improve their writing skills, assist with their career planning and help them become autonomous learners. It is closely integrated with Personal Tutoring provision”. (Liverpool Hope).
  o Personal tutoring is of increasing importance and this, along with other research (Layer et al. 2002), suggests that tutoring is being re-introduced in some institutions. Furthermore, personal tutoring is becoming more structured so that both staff and students have a clear understanding about the purpose of sessions. In some institutions the importance of staff-student relations is recognised so students have the same tutor throughout the duration of their study. In other HEIs the value of having staff delivering students’ courses is recognised, and tutors change to reflect this. At Liverpool Hope, for example, “All students are allocated a Personal Tutor who they initially meet on a weekly basis and with whom they follow a structured programme of self-reflection and career planning. This is compulsory for all first year students. In years 2 and 3, students keep the same Personal Tutor, with whom they can discuss academic or personal problems. All staff are eligible to become Personal Tutors, including academics, library staff and staff from learning and teaching support”.

From the margins to the mainstream. Universities UK / SCOP 166
Curriculum development includes the creation of new ‘products’, such as foundation degrees, the introduction of new discipline areas and the development of the existing curriculum. One aspect of curriculum development is to ensure a closer match between pre-entry and post-entry learning. Worcester University, for example, is developing closer linkage with level 3 curriculum in colleges and is looking towards integrating sub-degree (FD and HNC/D) with honours degree schemes to improve progression.

Social integration
Activities designed to enable students to engage with and feel like they belong in the institution. Previous research has indicated that friendships and peer support influence students’ experience in HE and their confidence to seek support (Thomas and Webber 2001 and Thomas 2002).

Approaches used.
Social integration can be promoted through learning and teaching practices, social spaces and accommodation and involvement in social activities. There are some interesting examples relating to social integration from the case study institutions.

• Glasgow School of Art’s Artists and Designers in Education uses informal workshops to develop a sense of teamwork across disciplines and promote inter-disciplinary learning. These have proved popular with students.
• The University of Newcastle upgraded teaching and student facilities and created three ‘social learning spaces’ to provide study space for the increasing number of students living at home. In addition, the accommodation office have set up a pilot ‘Home Affiliation Scheme’ to support students living at home by giving them access to the facilities available in halls of residence. The University of Lincoln also recognises the importance of students’ socialisation to support retention and success, and they try to allocate student residence places tactically to encourage friendships to develop amongst groups of first year students from the same courses.
• The University of Bristol has recognised that the student ambassador scheme involves many widening participation students and that it has become a useful way for them to become more engaged with the University and develop their own friendships and self-confidence, as well as supporting other students.

Student services and support
Most HEIs provide services to support students to succeed in HE. This may include counselling, financial, welfare, disability, health, accommodation and other services.

Approaches used.
As noted above and in previous research (Thomas, et al. 2002) much student support is not targeted as specific groups. Examples of targeted support are discussed above. But widening participation work is informing student support.

• The Centre for Lifelong Learning (CeLL) at the University of Glamorgan has collaborated with Student Services to create a Dyslexia Centre and to expand the Student Finance Centre to include financial counselling for compact students.
• Nottingham Trent University Progression Partnerships team has a joint appointment with student services to employ a student finance officer, who works 50 per cent on outreach and 50 per cent on supporting enrolled students. This provides continuity of support, and helps students to
become familiar both with what is available and the staff prior to entry, thus making them more likely to seek support if they require it.

**Financial support and bursaries**

In England, OFFA will require HEIs to provide additional support to students from low-income groups from 2006 when the introduction of variable fees will take place. Access Agreements submitted by HEIs to OFFA highlight differences between the levels of financial support being offered to students. However, even with modest bursaries some institutions will need to spend a substantial proportion of their projected additional income on student support in light of the number of qualifying students. Bursary schemes will also be introduced in Wales and Northern Ireland to accompany changes in tuition fee systems in these countries from 2006.

**Employability and progression**

Interventions designed to equip students with the skills to progress into employment or further learning on completion of their HE study. US research indicates that students have greater institutional and disciplinary commitment if they perceive their study to have a direct bearing on achieving their career aspirations (Berger and Braxton, 1998). This motivation is likely to be heightened in the context of the introduction of variable tuition fees.

**Approaches used.** Interventions are being integrated into outreach and induction activities.

- The University of Bristol recognises that a good careers advice service is crucial for widening participation students because they lack the career network that traditional students often have, and their families are less able to advise them.
- Newcastle University Careers Service delivers sessions during the pre-entry summer schools to raise students’ awareness of the University’s success in graduate employability and the services available through the Careers Service and to encourage students to access the service as soon as they enter the University.
- Careers information is integral to Pathways to the Professions at University of Edinburgh. This is offered both as outreach activities, and for students attending the University.
- Canterbury Christ Church University includes careers education in induction.

Participation in work placements and extra-curricular activities can be advantageous to graduates in the labour market. However, certain student groups are less able to participate in such activities due to personal or financial constraints, and this may exacerbate the labour market disadvantages they face (Brennan and Shah, 2003). Some of the case study institutions therefore strongly promote work placements for their students to help combat these issues. Edge Hill College of Higher Education, for example, offers work experience or placements to all students, and offers early information to them about employability issues.

**5.6. Coherence and complementarity**

Many of the activities discussed above target a specific group, address a particular range of issues or operate at a specific stage of the student lifecycle. To create wider access and support for all students, policies and approaches need to be linked together throughout the lifecycle model.
From outreach activities to outreach programmes.
There has been a movement away from stand-alone projects towards developing an integrated widening participation programme. For example, the University of Hull and GOALS have both developed integrated programmes of outreach activities. GOALS co-ordinates a range of activities for students, aged from 11 to 18, to increase their awareness, information, motivation and skills to enter higher education. The activities begin in primary school at a general awareness raising level and continue throughout the secondary school years. In the final years they become much more specifically geared to preparing students for HE.

Targeted support throughout the student lifecycle
The University of Ulster has developed a coherent programme of interventions for targeted students throughout the student lifecycle. This includes a series of inter-related strategies from the pre-entry phase, through induction, on-going mentoring and links with student support services.

Integrating widening participation throughout the institution.
Some institutions have striven to provide coherent and complementary support for all students throughout the institution. For example: “The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) increasingly recognises the importance of the inter-relatedness of policies and procedures which support learning and teaching of all our students including our target groups. Since 2001, The GSA has undergone a period of rapid policy development in almost every area of its operation, including learning and teaching, equal opportunities, race relations, and admissions, all of which are informed by experience, knowledge and understanding gained from our widening access initiatives”. This aspiration has been addressed by institutions in different ways and the approaches used in bringing about institutional change are discussed in the next chapter.

5.7. Delivering practice: Reflective questions
• Who is the intervention aimed at – is the group clearly defined and how will you identify them?
• If you are relying on schools or colleges to identify students to work with is there a more effective strategy?
• Will you involve primary school pupils and/or parents in outreach work?
• Are you getting students in now, as well as thinking about the future?
• What strategies do you have to support improving attainment in school/college?
• Is vocational access actively promoted and supported, including articulation into degree programmes?
• Are staff knowledgeable and well trained to admit and support students from different routes?
• Do you have pre- and post-entry strategies to support the transition into HE?
• How are you supporting these students within HE?
• How is learning, teaching and assessment being reformed?
• Do you provide academic support in the most appropriate way?
• How has the curriculum been reformed to take account of greater student diversity?
• Have you developed ways of ensuring local students are adequately integrated with their peers?
• How can student services learn from your widening participation work?
• What additional financial information and support is required by students in response to the introduction of top-up fees, deferred payment, maintenance grants and bursaries?
• How can employability information be more integrated into outreach and induction activities?
• How can work placements and other initiatives be used to support students from under-represented groups to be more successful in the labour market?
• Are you involving HE students, and does the reward enable all students (particularly those from under-represented groups) to participate?
• Are your activities taking place throughout the student lifecycle, or only in the early stages?
• Do you have separate projects, or are they integrated horizontally and vertically?
• Has widening participation been integrated throughout your institution?
6. Strategic issues: How widening participation is organised

Summary
This chapter focuses on the different ways in which widening participation activities are organised and managed.

Widening participation policy and purpose:
- Some widening participation activities are intended to increase participation by students from under-represented groups in higher education per se, others are intended to boost recruitment to a particular institution.
- Widening participation requires internal and external collaboration. The majority of HEIs are involved in partnership activities, although there are differences in the levels of integration and the divisions between internal and external activities.
- There is growing recognition of the value of evidence-informed practice in designing widening participation initiatives.

Organisational structures:
- The involvement of senior management is seen by HEIs as key to the success of widening participation strategies. However, there is little consistency across the HE sector regarding the role, status or responsibilities of those undertaking the leadership of widening participation.
- The report identifies differing models of institutional structure within the HE sector: the ‘dispersed organisational structure’ - each faculty and service has responsibility for widening participation in addition to their own core work; the ‘dispersed with centralised co-ordination structure’ – the faculties or schools have responsibility for widening participation, yet are supported by a widening participation specialist to facilitate developments and collaboration across the university; the ‘centralised organisational structure’ – widening participation is coordinated and promoted across the institution by a widening participation centre, and the ‘faculty-based model’ – the locus for widening participation is in a faculty or school.
- External partnerships also differ in structure, which can be summarised as: the ‘hierarchical pyramid’ with the HEI at the top, and external partners and stakeholders feeding into it and supporting the supply chain; the ‘diffused spider’, a collaborative partnership approach whereby the HEIs and key partners have equal status; and the ‘bridge’, another collaborative partnership approach which provides links between the partners from the school sector through to the labour market, but maintains institutional autonomy.

Structural flexibility and change:
- There is increasing evidence of institutions introducing structural change in order to make HE provision more accessible to those students who wish to combine study with other commitments. There are particular developments in the provision of part-time study programmes, e-learning, and more flexible academic timetables.
- Despite these developments there is still scope for further change to increase the flexibility of HE courses to meet the needs of diverse learners.
Towards an integrated approach:
- Institutions are moving towards a more integrated approach to widening participation.
- Widening participation, for some institutions, is becoming a central part of the institutional strategy which impacts upon all areas including communications, staff development and sharing good practice mechanisms.
- Partnerships involving collaboration with external organisations and agencies are now well established in many institutions. These partnerships are seen as being mutually beneficial and can increase the influence of widening participation committees, as well as providing access to sources of external funding.

Sustainability:
- The majority of widening participation initiatives submitted to this study are subsidised by external project funds, which can create problems for long-term sustainability. Staff are often employed on short-term contracts, which can create problems in terms of continuity.
- The move away from project-based initiatives has provided opportunities for learning and development across institutions, particularly where the interventions have been in operation for a number of years.

Monitoring and evaluation:
- Monitoring of project activities is now commonplace, but tracking student progress remains a difficulty.
- Effective evaluation procedures that assess project impact have not been widely used, and this continues to be an area that many institutions have highlighted as requiring further development.

6.1 Introduction
This section examines how widening participation is being implemented. It is concerned with organisational and managerial issues rather than delivery details. The impressive response to the survey for this study confirms that the UK HE sector is committed to widening participation. There were 141 responses in 2005 compared with 58 responses in 1998 when a similar survey was undertaken (From Elitism to Inclusion, 1998). There are differences in the priorities and types of activities undertaken by different segments of the sector, and different organisational structures are emerging.

6.2 Widening participation purpose: Wider benefit or student recruitment
Widening participation can be undertaken for different purposes. Some widening participation activities are intended to increase participation by students from under-represented groups in higher education per se, others are intended to boost recruitment to a particular institution (see Murphy et al 2002).

One research intensive university said: “This activity…is done on a general widening participation basis …the university does not expect to see increases in the intake of students …as a result of programmes like this”. This approach can be contrasted with other institutions that develop their activities to serve the needs of both students and the institution. For example, Canterbury Christ Church University has opened new campuses, bringing HE to people locally in deprived areas with low rates of participation and improving their student recruitment. The former approach does not
directly relate widening participation to admissions, while the latter results in a more integrated relationship.

**Altruism or sustainability**
The more altruistic approaches can create sustainability difficulties if the activity is dependent on external funding streams. When funding ceases there is little incentive for the intervention to be continued. This can be contrasted with the situation at other institutions where an initiative is “stable and long term having involved substantial investment in new campus provision. Specifically, the FD/BA (Hons) in Popular Music and Technology continues to achieve good outcomes in terms of degree attainment” (Canterbury Christ Church).

A similar point is made by the University of Newcastle, where the PARTNERS programme is an established part of the Widening Participation Strategy, which in turn forms part of the Student Recruitment Strategy. It is this relationship that has been fundamental to embedding the activity and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

**Internal or external collaboration**
Widening participation requires collaboration – both within institutions and beyond. Internal collaboration focuses on how HEIs organise widening participation, and external collaboration considers how relations with other partners, both in the HE sector and beyond, are organised. The majority of HEIs are involved in some form of partnership activity with other HEIs in their region. However, some, such as the Glasgow School of Art, have integrated all their widening participation activities, while others have kept divisions between external partnership activities and internal widening participation work.

**Research or funding driven approach**
Widening participation initiatives can be driven by innovative ideas designed to appeal to specific funding sources, but these may not be the most effective means of meeting the needs of prospective students. Alternatively, widening participation can be driven by evidence and organisational learning. There is growing recognition of the value of evidence-informed practice.

- The University of Dundee has striven to create a research culture to inform its work through the appointment of a researcher funded by the Sutton Trust and another funded by the Royal Bank of Scotland.
- The University of Birmingham has an emerging research culture to support widening participation. It is building a team of research active staff in the schools of education and social sciences. The University has also benefited from support from the Sutton Trust to undertake research about widening participation in the further education sector, and about the post-16 learning choices of young people in Birmingham.

### 6.3 Organisational structures

**Leadership**
Institutions refer to the involvement of senior management as being key to the success of their widening participation strategy. It facilitates the decision-making process and promotes a more
integrated approach to widening participation across the institution. The University of Worcester notes the importance of two “senior manager champions”. At the University of Bradford the incorporation of widening participation as a core part of its corporate plan is regarded to have ensured the commitment of senior management and contributed to its long-term stability.

**Who.** There is little consistency in the role and status of those undertaking the leadership of widening participation. Amongst the case studies, the person with overall responsibility for widening participation include pro vice-chancellor, dean, centre director and registrar. Partnerships are strengthened by the involvement of institutional senior managers.

**How.** In some institutions and partnerships senior managers are more ‘hands-on’, for example, in leading the development of the widening participation strategy (e.g. University of Wales, Bangor). In others, widening participation staff report to senior staff.

**What else.** In several case-study institutions, the individual with overall responsibility for widening participation is also accountable for other related policies. At the Open University the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for widening participation also has responsibility for the Race Equality Strategy, Disabled Student Strategy, and improving student retention. In this way, the organisational structures can facilitate the convergence of different aspects of the widening participation agenda.

**Institutional structures**
We have identified two models of organisational structures, and two associated hybrids.

**Dispersed organisational structure.** In this model each faculty and service has responsibility for widening participation in addition to their own core work. This approach seeks to promote the integration of widening participation into all of the institution’s activities. It is, therefore, based on a widening participation for student recruitment model.

This can result in a piecemeal approach, with little or no connection between different activities if it is not effectively managed. The University of Huddersfield has explicitly addressed this problem by creating a hybrid model: “dispersed with centralised co-ordination”. All services and schools have to develop a widening participation strategy; this process is supported by a widening participation specialist who ensures the plans cover the whole student lifecycle, and facilitates the process of sharing good practice between schools and services.

Similar approaches can be seen in other institutions. Initially widening participation activity at the University of Glasgow relied heavily on the corporate Widening Participation Service (WPS). As a way of devolving activity and strengthening commitment both to recruiting and retaining non-traditional students, a hub and spoke model was introduced in 2003 in which the service continued to play a major role and acts as the hub. However, this is now complemented by activity initiated locally by faculty Widening Participation Officers and managed with the support of the WPS. The WPS now works much more closely with the mainstream Student Recruitment and Admissions Service too.

**Centralised organisational structure.** In this model the emphasis is on a “centre for widening participation” that co-ordinates and promotes this issue across the institution. This provides a focus,
but can result in an isolated approach with only the centre for widening participation taking responsibility for this issue.

A number of HEIs have a faculty-based model - the locus for widening participation is co-located in a faculty or school. This shifts it from the centre, and whilst this may bring status to widening participation, as it is connected to an academic faculty rather than being seen as an administrative concern, it may reduce its influence on non-academic services.

**External collaborations**

External collaborations and partnerships have different structures, depending on who is involved and thus their purpose. Woodrow’s analysis (2002) of partnership arrangements is a useful way of categorising and describing external partnership organisation.

**Hierarchical pyramid.** Many of the case studies have external partners who are not in the HE sector – eg schools, colleges, careers services, social services etc. In such cases the structure is usually a hierarchical pyramid (Woodrow, 2002), with the HEI at the top, and others feeding into it and supporting the supply chain.

**Diffused spider.** Partnerships bringing together HEIs tend to avoid the hierarchical pyramid model, opting for a more lateral model. To minimise competition and improve collaboration they tend to focus on widening participation *per se*, rather than recruitment to specific institutions. The GOALS partnership gives parity to each of the HEIs and the local education authorities are also key partners. Although the schools are important they do not appear to have equal partner status. This model most closely resembles the diffused “spider” (Woodrow 2002), linking together the partners to conduct all their outreach work.

**The bridge.** With encouragement and support from the General Medical Council, medicine and health-related disciplines have between working collaboratively across institutions. This is illustrated in this study by the Working in Health Access Programme (WHAP), which is a collaboration of medical and veterinary schools in Scotland. This approach shares features with the “bridge” (Woodrow 2002): it has a long-term goal of improving the supply of healthcare professionals in Scotland, by linking schools at one end with healthcare employment at the other. The autonomy of the HEI is largely preserved and each institution is able to select suitable students for entry into its own programmes.

**6.4 Structural flexibility and change**

There is growing evidence of higher education institutions introducing structural change to increase the appropriateness of their provision for students combining study with other commitments. For example, the University of Bristol is committed to adopting a flexible approach to programme design and delivery, and it has appointed a Director of Flexible Learning to look at alternative routes to HE for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Curriculum reform**

King’s College has made radical changes to its provision by developing a six-year programme (as opposed to the usual five years) to support students from under-represented groups and with poorer academic preparation to successfully complete a medical degree.
Part-time provision
Many HEIs are developing part-time provision. The Open University has traditionally worked with adults, but the largest growing cohort of students is young learners on part-time programmes. In 2002 3.6 per cent of students were under 21, compared with 2.0 per cent in 1999. This suggests a growing interest in part-time study by younger learners, who are staying at home and combining learning with employment. The University of Hull has responded to the challenge of being the only HEI in the area by introducing more vocational programmes and part-time provision, working in collaboration with FE colleges in the area.

E-learning
Institutions are using e-learning to support widening participation, for example Canterbury Christ Church University uses Blackboard virtual learning environment to promote greater flexibility in learning provision. By 2007 the Open University expects that all of its courses will be available online.

Re-structuring the academic timetable
Canterbury Christ Church University, for example, has introduced flexible timetabling to accommodate part-time work/childcare commitments. Hull has introduced a more fixed timetable to enable students to plan around it. The University of Lincoln has reformed the academic year to support student retention by introduction a new semester pattern where student-learning activities recommence immediately following the Christmas and Easter vacations. Formal examinations will not be used as a means of assessment at the end of Semester one; instead students return to structured learning activities (which may include 'in-class' tests). It is expected that this will help to reduce the incidence of students choosing not to return to the university after the Christmas break. Liverpool Hope University has moved away from a semesterised modular programme.

Despite these changes outlined above, there is still scope for further change to provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of diverse learning groups.

6.5 Towards an integrated approach
This section considers how institutions are integrating policies and practice to widen participation across the institution and with external partners.

Integrated policies
Institutions are making connections between widening participation policy and other related strategies. HEIs report a growing recognition of the need to adapt teaching and learning policy to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and improve student retention and success. For example, the University of Bradford addresses student retention as part of its teaching and learning strategy. Liverpool Hope University, for example, regularly reviews its teaching and learning approach to ensure it is appropriate for the changing student population. At the Open University, the learning and teaching strategy, curriculum and awards strategy and student support strategy are all linked to the widening participation strategy.
Factors that facilitate an integrated policy are as follows:

**Leadership.** Ensuring that those leading widening participation are also responsible for the development of other related strategies facilitates linkages between various policies across the institution.

**Staff involvement** across the institution. Those responsible for widening participation within institutions often refer to the difficulty of involving staff across the institution in the work that they do. This can result in staff perceiving widening participation to be the responsibility of a limited number of people, rather than of all staff. HEIs are using different ways to encourage wider staff involvement. For example, at the University of Wales, Bangor, an ‘access and social inclusion’ task group has been formed. It includes representatives from the academic registry, student recruitment, department of lifelong learning, student services, careers centre, as well as the deans of each faculty. This ensures that all those involved in widening participation direct the University’s access objectives. This in turn helps to ensure that widening participation objectives infiltrate all aspects of the student experience.

**Shared responsibility and accountability.** The University of Hull, for example, has a formal reporting procedure in place through a central department. Academic departments receive a proportion of the widening participation premium funds to support student retention and are required to report annually on the ways in which they have spent those funds. This procedure has been implemented to ensure that all departments are addressing the issue of student retention.

**Integration of widening participation activities in institutional policies.** The Junior University project at the University of Bradford, for example, has been integrated into several policies including the corporate plan, the race equality strategy and the teaching and learning strategy.

**Valuing diversity in the mission.** At the University of Bristol, widening participation staff have noticed that an attitude shift has been required amongst academic staff who associate widening participation with lowering standards, and underestimate the link between quality and diversity. Its current widening participation strategy is entitled ‘Quality through Diversity’ (2004-2009) and one of the six principles underpinning it argues for: ‘…a belief in the educational and social benefits, to the University and to our students, of a diverse student population, drawn from all sectors of society’.

**Devolved widening participation responsibilities.** At the University of Edinburgh, each college and school is called upon to develop a strategy to meet the widening participation targets agreed by senior managers. They are focused on achieving the university benchmarks set by the higher education funding council for Scotland (SHEFC). Each head of college or school has a widening participation remit in addition to their wider academic and managerial responsibilities. To this end, the endeavours of each department are targeted towards the same goals and each has a shared responsibility for ensuring that the University meets its benchmark targets.

**Financial incentives.** A number of institutions have provided financial incentives to help staff become more engaged in widening participation. For example, the University of Hull has provided seed funding for departmental widening participation projects, and a member of staff has responsibility for stimulating project ideas in discussion with academic departments. Departments are also allocated a
proportion of the widening participation premium to support student retention. Departments are required to report about their widening access and student retention initiatives annually.

**Good news stories.** Recording the success of these students (e.g. Newcastle, Bristol and many others) can help to persuade staff across the institution that action in support of widening participation is a positive development. Liverpool Hope University has developed intranet pages for announcements and breaking news, which are prominently displayed in the reception of each building. These often feature widening participation activities.

**Widening participation communication strategy.** Nottingham Trent University has developed a comprehensive approach to communicating with staff about widening participation, including:
- Induction talks to all new members of staff;
- Talks at programme leaders’ conferences;
- Staff development events for staff from all academic colleges;
- INTUNE Newsletter published twice a year;
- Friends of College newsletter emailed once a month;
- Articles in staff magazine;
- Sessions delivered through PGCE (HE) programme;
- National conferences (*Forward Thinking*, 2003 and *Students in Classrooms*, 2004).

**In-reach.** Nottingham Trent University has involved staff by creating the Friends of College scheme, which pairs up Progression Partnerships team members with staff within a particular college in the University to promote outreach work. The team members are responsible for liaison with each college, delivering staff development events, promoting new courses and assisting with marketing.

**Staff development.** No interventions submitted to this study specifically focused on staff development supporting the earlier work of Srivastava (2002). At the peer evaluation seminar it was reported that at the Institute of Arts, Cumbria there have been widening participation projects centring on staff development. They argue that ‘projects need to be structured so that something is left behind in the institution when they end’ and that staff development gives the project a better chance of becoming embedded within the institution. Sessions are mandatory for all staff. An example of a project focused on staff development is its Teaching Enhancement and Student Engagement (TEASE) project, which seeks to enhance teaching delivery approaches and promote the integration of e-learning and progress files into the curriculum. The case studies show that staff development is used to improve understanding about and engagement in widening participation.
- **Induction.** An introduction to widening participation issues, mission and strategy during induction training for all new members of staff at Liverpool Hope University.
- **Postgraduate certificate in higher education.** In a number of institutions, including the University of Huddersfield and University of Dundee, widening participation staff contribute to accredited courses for new lecturers.
- **Sharing good practice.** Liverpool Hope University holds a weekly open meeting for all staff and students, as a forum for discussing and disseminating issues of widespread interest and importance, including the sharing of widening participation practice.
- **Continuing professional development.** Institutions also offer development courses for existing staff. At the Open University, courses include diversity training and awareness raising. At Ulster University, courses under the theme of student diversity have been organised by its staff.
development unit. At the University of Dundee, there are courses about the changing nature of student intakes and quality enhancement. At Edge Hill College of Higher Education, staff are offered a range of courses including student finance, curriculum 2000, student support and the implications of recent acts such as Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) and Race Relations (Amended) Act (2000). Edge Hill compels all staff at to attend diversity briefings.

**External partnerships**

External partnerships are a central feature of widening participation in England and Scotland. This involves working collaboratively with other HEIs and also with partners in other sectors. External organisations have a number of different roles, such as:

- Providing access to funding (e.g. GOALS);
- Referring young people or schools to the intervention (e.g. HEAdFurther, Hull; GOALS; Enrichment days, Bristol; Promoting teaching to ethnic minority students, Edge Hill);
- Advising the project through a steering committee (e.g. HEAdFurther, Hull);
- Supporting outreach programmes (e.g. TOP, Bangor);
- Sharing provision (e.g. Enrichment days, Bristol).

Institutions report mutual beneficial effects of collaborating with external agencies. Developing commercial and regional links has helped make widening participation committees more influential and has provided access to sources of external funding. Support from professional bodies has been particularly beneficial in particular subject areas. For example, at the University of Edinburgh Pathways to the Professions project the involvement of professional bodies (including British Medical Association (BMA); Law Society of Scotland; Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh) ensures a combined targeted endeavour to address the issue of the under-representation of applicants on to medical and law courses from lower socio-economic classes. The BMA and Scottish Executive have helped publicise the inequities in social class participation in both medicine and law in higher education. Undoubtedly, such partnerships are mutually beneficial – for the university a high level of support enriches the project and helps to raise its profile, whilst for professional bodies there is reassurance that issues around recruitment to their profession are being addressed.

Liaising with schools can be a challenge for institutions. It is often difficult to communicate with class teachers due to their teaching commitments. Institutions report that the attitude of particular head teachers and class teachers in school to be key success factors. Interventions appear to have benefited from having a designated person with which to liaise. There is a designated person within each of the GOALS schools charged with the responsibility for coordinating GOALS activities. This has helped project staff liaise with a large number of schools. Such an approach relies upon institutions engaging school staff who are committed to widening participation. Staff development programmes designed to promote awareness about widening participation do little to address the continual professional development needs of school staff.

Institutions report concerns about the number of initiatives targeted at schools in disadvantaged areas. This can result in schools being approached by numerous organisations. Reportedly, schools are approached not just by higher education institutions but also by the private sector organisations, such as Ernst and Young and Price Waterhouse and Coopers. A co-ordinated approach to working
with schools helps to avoid competition and duplication. This works well in the South West of Scotland and in Aimhigher partnerships, where all outreach work is co-ordinated.

In some projects a formal contract has been agreed to ensure that partnerships work efficiently and effectively. The HEAdFurther project, at the University of Hull, works in close partnership with different services for young people, and has drawn up a partnership agreement, which outlines the aims and objectives of the partnership as well as the individual and collective responsibilities of the different partners. Both project staff and external partners report that the agreement is beneficial. It helped to agree and communicate objectives in advance, and has supported the monitoring of the project. As a consequence of its involvement, the City of Hull has incorporated the project into its strategic plan for raising the achievement of children in public care and care leavers (2004/05).

6.6 Sustainability
Widening participation has started to move from projects to more embedded activity, but challenges for creating a sustainable approach remain. Key elements of sustainability are finance, staffing and organisational learning.

Financial sustainability
The majority of activities highlighted in this study are subsidised through external project funds. External sources include:

- Additional widening participation funding from the government and HE funding council (e.g. Aimhigher, Excellence Challenge, NHS Education, Scottish Regional Fora, Employment and Learning in and project funding).
- Other HE funding (e.g. JISC and TTA).
- European funding (e.g. European Social Fund and Objective One).
- Local education authorities.
- Professional bodies (e.g. BMA).
- Private sector funding and sponsorship.
- Charitable organisations (e.g. Sutton Trust).

External funding is used to support core activities and to supplement existing work:

- Project activities including travel, events etc.
- Additional staff: several institutions report having appointed additional staff as a result of acquiring external project funding.
- Student involvement: a number of case studies have used funds to pay university students for their involvement in outreach activities.
- Teaching and learning materials: funds are being used to produce teaching and learning resources for use within schools. For example, GOALS students undertaking Top-up activities are provided with a work pack, describing the skills and tasks they will be undertaking at varying stages through the programme.
- Marketing and advertising materials: a number of institutions have used the money for various marketing and advertising products, including leaflets, pens, pencils, notepads, diaries, badges and booklets. These are distributed amongst participating schools and pupils, to serve as an aide memoire and help generate a project identity.
Although the range of funding streams available for widening participation activities appears to have grown since the previous study, external funding can create long-term sustainability problems. This is especially problematic when it is used to fund core activities, or the intervention does not have an exit strategy. For example, using external funding to produce durable resources is more sustainable than using it to deliver activities which are required on an on-going basis.

Incorporating widening participation interventions into institutional strategies has added greater sustainability. For example the University of Wales, Bangor’s Talent Opportunity Programme was originally funded by HEFCW; it is now funded by the institution after it became incorporated into its widening participation strategy. At the University of Bristol, since its new widening participation strategy came into place, staff on short term contracts have been offered permanent contracts. At the University of Birmingham, the widening participation strategy is used to bring together several different activities, which are largely funded through core funding. Institutional funding has been primarily supported by the widening participation premium, and is having positive results.

Staffing sustainability

- **Managers.** Institutions need staff with suitable skills to oversee and manage widening participation. This is often hidden cost, which can impact upon sustainability.
- **Operational staff.** Controls on the recruitment of staff can affect the future development of widening participation work. One participant on the peer evaluation seminar conveyed a feeling of being constrained by low staffing levels in widening participation stating “…we don’t have carte blanche to recruit staff from that [widening participation] money and staffing levels are tightly controlled and if you haven’t got the staff you can only spend so much money.”
- **Short-term contracts.** Project funding can result in the use of short-term contracts for staff. This increases recruitment costs and disrupts delivery as staff are replaced more frequently.
- **Loss of staff capacity and organisational learning.** Short-term contracts can also result in a loss of staff capacity and organisational learning, which cannot be easily replaced. Institutions are attempting to mitigate against such risks by setting up networks to share information and experience amongst staff.

Organisational learning

Institutions have demonstrated that they are learning from and developing their widening participation practice. Learning has taken place within projects and across institutions

Project development. There is evidence from the case studies that widening participation interventions have evolved in a number of ways, thereby bringing about learning and development in the following areas within the project:

- Interventions have expanded to enable the participation of a greater number of schools and pupils.
- Interventions have grown to enable the participation of a wider population of students than those targeted originally.
- Several institutions have expanded the age range being targeted as a result of the success of the initiative.
- Interventions have grown to incorporate an increasing range of subjects.
Institutional development. Projects have evolved in such a way as to contribute to learning and development within the institution. This is particularly evident where interventions have been in operation for a number of years.

- Interventions have expanded to include a greater number of departments across the university. The University of Newcastle’s PARTNERS programme now involves all academic schools. At Nottingham Trent University, activities have been expanded to involve more academics and open up the activities to different subject areas. At King’s College London, other schools and departments have replicated elements of the Access to Medicine Programme (AMP); noticeably taking elements of the project that meet their own needs. At the University of Glasgow, two initiatives (the IT Certificate of Competence and Introduction to the University library), originating from the Pre-University Summer School, are now available to all new students across the campus.
- At some institutions, new programmes have been developed as a consequence of successful interventions. At Glasgow School of Art, a second related project has been developed called Portfolio Preparation Programme, to complement its ADinEd project.
- Since their commencement, interventions have been integrated into departments and services across the institution. At the University of Glasgow, its Pre-University Summer School now links with all sectors across the university and has become an integral part of its widening participation activity. At the Glasgow School of Art, the Artist and Designers in Education project has been integrated into a number of strategies including its quality enhancement strategy, teaching and learning strategy and school objectives. At the University of Manchester, its Targeted Access Scheme is now integral to the new strategic plan.
- Several institutions are introducing procedures to synchronise widening participation activities with related work across the institution. The University of Wales, Bangor have recently streamlined its management and decision making processes by creating task groups and in so doing have ensured that widening participation is addressed within services and departments across the institution. At King’s College London, the Access to Medicine Programme’s (AMP) management group includes representatives of the widening participation unit to ensure synergy and coordination between the two programmes of work. In addition, the AMP project coordinator is also a member of the college’s widening participation task group to help disseminate best practice across the institution. Similarly, at the University of Manchester, the Targeted Access Scheme project officer sits on the admissions advisory group.

**Staff capacity building.** Interventions have contributed towards capacity building of staff involved in the project and also across the institution. For example, LEAPS report that staff have become more adept at identifying eligible young people since the start of the project. At London Metropolitan University, the knowledge and expertise of BEAC project staff has been used by academic and professional services departments across the institution. Knowledge generated in the HEAdFurther project about young people from the looked-after care system at Hull University has been used to inform student support services about their particular learning needs. At the University of Manchester, all admissions staff receive formal training about the Target Access Scheme to ensure that staff across the organisation are consistent in their approach to target access scheme students.

**Students’ learning.** There is evidence amongst the case studies of interventions forming reciprocal relationships with departments to enhance students’ studies. At the University of Hull, the majority of
students recruited as mentors to the HEAdFurther project, targeted at young people from the looked after system, are undertaking a social work degree. The hours committed to the project are accredited towards their course, which requires them to undertake 100 placement hours per year. The young people benefit from having student mentors who understand the system and who are receiving relevant training to address their specific needs. The social work students benefit from accredited youth work experience which gives them a working understanding and insight into the kind of issues they will have to deal with in future employment. At the University of Wales, Bangor and Huddersfield University, collaborations have been formed with the education department. Students registered on the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) at Bangor are recruited to undertake activities on the Talent Opportunity Programme in schools, to the mutual benefit of both the trainee teacher and pupils involved.

**Widening participation research.** A number of institutions undertake research to facilitate their development of widening participation activity. Amongst the case studies, there are examples of significant research activity. For example:

- The University of Bradford was funded by HEFCE to appoint three Excellence Fellows, teachers in school or FE, to conduct action research on topics of mutual interest to the University and the teachers’ organisations. To date research topics have included – ‘The Transition Needs of Students Progressing from FE to HE’; The Impact of Widening Participation Activities on School Pupil Destinations’ and ‘Support and Development for FE Staff Working with Students Aspiring to HE’. The University is currently considering the possibility of establishing a Centre for Community Collaboration, as a hub for research, community engagement and curriculum development.

- At the University of Ulster, a Centre for Widening Participation Research has been established, stemming from research activity by the Step-Up programme director. The Centre carries out research, which is said to have helped improve the Step-Up programme and other widening participation initiatives as well as inform teaching and learning approaches, particularly for non-traditional students.

- At the Open University, systematic research is conducted into student recruitment, the student experience, students’ demographic characteristics and student performance. This work is undertaken by the University’s Institute of Educational Technology, which undertakes annual students’ surveys, collates data and produces a report. The report is published and distributed internally to inform practice and planning.

- There is a lack of research considering the retention and success of students. At the University of Wales, Bangor premium funding was used to investigate the reasons for student withdrawal. This involved analysis of withdrawal statistics, a questionnaire and follow up interviews with students who had dropped out. It was found that many of them came from the local area. As a result, the University will be holding pre-induction activities in the summer and will be writing support packages for students, with the hope of improving the retention of local students.

**6.7 Monitoring and evaluation**

An important theme in the previous two studies has been monitoring and evaluation of widening participation interventions. Effective collection of evidence of impact has not been widespread. In this section of the report monitoring and evaluation are considered in relation to projects, partnerships and institutions.

**Purposes of monitoring and evaluation**
Monitoring is defined here as the routine collection of information about interventions and participants. Evaluation is a broader term which can have multiple purposes. It entails the interpretation and use of information. The data can be collected specifically for the evaluation, or existing information can be utilised. Evaluation can be used to describe and/or to judge interventions. Evaluation research can be used throughout interventions, including: examining the current situation or identifying the baseline; researching alternative courses of action; piloting interventions; exploring people’s perceptions and experiences; measuring impact; planning future activity etc. A useful distinction is between evaluation for learning and evaluation for accountability. The former is used to inform the development of the intervention or strategy, and the latter is used to check that it is performing according to a pre-determined plan.

Monitoring and evaluation of widening participation is primarily needed to inform the development of interventions, to monitor progress and to measure impact. Perhaps the most challenging of these is the measuring and attributing of impact.

**Project monitoring and evaluation**

This section looks at how widening participation projects are monitoring and evaluating their work.

**Developmental evaluation.** There is growing recognition of the value of collecting information about processes to inform the development of interventions. The University of Birmingham notes “There is now a shifting emphasis on the evaluation of activity to make sure what is done is effective and appropriate”. Projects use questionnaires to find out what pupils feel about activities, and they use feedback from other stakeholders, particularly teachers, to gauge their response. It is noticeable in this study that there is increased use of pilot projects and the subsequent rolling out of effective activities. For example, the University of Dundee’s Access Summer School provided the test-bed for the IT induction course, which, after substantial modifications, is now compulsory for all university entrants in their first two weeks of study.

**Monitoring progress and tracking students.** The monitoring of the numbers of students involved in projects is mostly routine. However, this is often not differentiated by different types of student. This is particularly important when projects target schools rather than specific student groups. Without these data it is impossible to know the extent to which the target groups are being reached. The tracking of students remains a difficulty. Discussions at the peer learning and evaluation seminar revealed that people are concerned about the process of checking and “evaluating” students’ backgrounds. It is for this reason that they rely on schools to identify suitable pupils, but the limitations of this approach have been discussed above. There are, however, some examples of how these difficulties have been tackled.

- The University of Newcastle has set up a system to monitor who attends their project: for each pupil accepted onto the PARTNERS project the team receive a written statement from the school using measures such as eligibility for free school meals, parental experience of higher education and post code area. This information forms the basis for classifying and monitoring project participants. When the University of Bangor starts working with Year 9 pupils they are asked to complete a questionnaire. This is analysed by the project team to ensure that a sufficient number of the targeted pupils are involved to be able to run an activity programme. These data form the baseline for further monitoring and evaluation.
• Once initial data are collected it can be difficult to track students beyond participation in specific activities. The GOALS project has tried to map pupils from primary school through to graduation, but it is an expensive process. Furthermore students may simply ignore the questionnaires.

• Two case studies have embraced the tracking challenge. Working in partnership with Careers Scotland, LEAPS track students from the point of entry into HE, through to completion of the first year. The University of Dundee tracks the progress of its Access students. It was acknowledged in the Peer Learning and Evaluation Seminar that monitoring and tracking students is most effective when this role is undertaken by the institution(s) involved, and is integrated into its admissions systems. Dundee University is able to provide information about Access Summer School participants for the last decade (1993 to 2003) in terms of how many students began the Access Summer School; the number of these students that went on to study at the University of Dundee; the number who are still studying there; those who have completed their courses and graduated; and how many of these gained first class honours degrees. This does not however provide information about the progression of students to other HEIs.

**Measuring impact.** There is a fundamental difficulty relating to measuring impact, even if the tracking data are available. There are many reasons contributing to improved rates of progression into and success in HE, and cause and effect is difficult to determine. Furthermore, activities taking place early in the education career cannot be evaluated in terms of the number of young people progressing to HE, particularly in the short term. But, projects operating with older students, and longer-term projects, can compare their impact (in terms of progression) against similar students who have not participated. There is also the potential for greater use of qualitative data.

• LEAPS have supplemented tracking students by interviewing 1,200 widening participation students to help with developing an understanding of the impact of the project.

• Canterbury Christ Church University collects attitudinal data pre- and post-intervention to track attitudinal changes on cultural and parental influencers.

• WHAP has introduced large-scale research tools to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of its work over the two pilot years. These include: pupil and parental attitudinal questionnaires; visit day evaluation forms (pupils); pupil follow-up questionnaires and teacher evaluations of WHAP activities. The first two tools were designed to capture data on pupil and parental attitudes to, and perceptions of, higher education generally and the health care professions in particular. All participants were provided with freepost envelopes and the response rate so far has been encouragingly high. All pupils were allocated unique individual identifier codes to ensure confidentiality of response. These codes were also used in the psychometric testing at the beginning of the project. The pupil follow up questionnaires and teacher evaluations have yet to be distributed. These will be sent out at a later stage to provide pupils and teachers with the best possible opportunity to participate in activities and to reflect on the full WHAP experience.

**Institutional monitoring and evaluation of widening participation**

Institutions as well as projects need to learn more about the impact of their widening participation work. HEIs are monitoring and evaluating their work in a number of ways. For example:

• Some HEIs have put in place institutional tracking models, for example, the University of Dundee and the University of Bangor.

• Institutions have used target setting to encourage widening participation and to inform their progress. Targets can relate to the access of specific target groups (e.g. the Open University and
the University of Bristol), or student retention. Canterbury Christ Church University is committed to a one per cent year on year improvement in retention. To assist this all programmes must provide an annual programme quality monitoring report that includes a focus on retention, and actions in response to student attrition.

- Some institutions have harnessed their internal research capacity to inform their widening participation work. The University of Hull commissions research and data analysis from within the University. The Open University undertakes systematic research and evaluation into student recruitment, the student experience and the demographic characteristics and the performance of its students.

Implications for monitoring and evaluation

- Greater external accountability has increased the level of both institutional and project monitoring.
- Process-oriented evaluation is being undertaken in projects, although the extent to which the lessons learnt are being implemented is not always clear.
- There is a dearth of reliable information about the impact of different widening participation strategies. It is difficult to track students who do not enter a specific institution, or a regional HEI, or if they do not progress directly to HE. This difficulty is especially acute for vocational routes into HE, as students may progress through employment, and many choose part-time study where less data are collected.

Drawing on the research evidence and the discussions at the peer learning and evaluation seminar, a number of reasons for limited monitoring and evaluation have been identified, including:

- Tracking and impact measurement are difficult, and staff often do not have the skills or knowledge to implement suitable systems. This is compounded by the lack of uniformity of data, such as class, and furthermore different postcode software packages include different breakdowns.
- There is a reluctance to collect information about the backgrounds of students.
- Short-term projects have very limited funding for monitoring and evaluation. This can be coupled with a reluctance to spend money on this function, rather than on delivering activities.
- There are concerns about data protection issues. Some schools and institutions are wary about releasing data required.

The research participants identified ways in which some of the difficulties of monitoring and evaluation could be addressed:

- Better UCAS data, for example, including details of participation in widening participation activities (beyond summer schools).
- A centralised monitoring system, based on unique student identifiers and integrating school and local education authorities records, UCAS data, individual learner records and HESA data.
- Greater use and acceptance of qualitative data in terms of demonstrating the impact of interventions.
- Research capacity should be built into each project together with additional funding for this purpose.

6.8 Organising and managing widening participation: Reflective questions

- Are widening participation activities related to institutional mission, in particular are there opportunities for students to progress into your institution?
- Do you seek to change the institution (‘in-reach’) as well as students (outreach)?
• Are widening participation projects informed by research or driven by funding opportunities?
• How is senior management involved in widening participation?
• Do you have the most appropriate institutional and partnership structures to support widening participation?
• Do you have sufficient structural flexibility to meet the needs of a diverse student body, including part-time provision, distance learning and an accommodating timetable?
• What strategies do you have in place to ensure integrated policy making?
• How do staff across the institution learn about widening participation and become involved in delivering it?
• Which external partners are you collaborating with and why? What are the challenges to this working better?
• Is your widening participation financially sustainable?
• Do your staff arrangements facilitate continuing widening participation work?
• In what ways have you learnt from previous widening participation activities?
• Do your widening participation interventions include evaluation, monitoring and student tracking and impact measurement?
7. Conclusions, implications and recommendations

7.1 Progress in the HE sector

This research is in a unique position to review the progress of the HE sector in widening participation over the last seven years by comparing findings from the first and second Universities UK/SCOP reports with the new data collected. Revisiting the existing case studies is a particularly powerful way to assess the sector’s development.

This study demonstrates commitment to widening access and student success across the sector.
- There was a very high rate of response to the sector survey, even though time was limited.
- Examples were submitted by all types of HEI.
- The 34 case studies provide a wide range of examples of good practice, targeting different student groups to access a range of institutional and disciplinary types across the UK.
- This study demonstrates that widening participation is starting is bringing about institutional development and change, with examples from across the sector.
- Institutions and partnerships have responded positively to the 1998 and 2002 recommendations.

Progress against the 1998 and 2002 recommendations

Table 7.1 Sector’s progress in addressing specific recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeting</th>
<th>Progress against 1998 recommendations</th>
<th>Progress against 2002 recommendations</th>
<th>Recommendations in 2005</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since 1998, it has become necessary to extend the focus on young people from lower socio-economic groups to include mature and part time learners. There is evident progress towards targeting areas of deprivation or low achievement (via postcode data). The sector has moved beyond the proposal to target pupils from 14+, to target primary school pupils and parents.</td>
<td>Since 2002, there are an increased number of interventions addressing access to selecting disciplines (the focus of 2002 study). The sector is moving beyond using postcode data to target potential students. More careful targeting of under-represented groups is recommended in 2005.</td>
<td>The study focuses on young people from lower socio-economic groups, and could usefully be extended. It is recommended to avoid using schools as proxy for social class. The challenge for the sector to find non-stigmatising ways of targeting potential students as well as those within HE.</td>
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<td>Institutions have embraced the recommendation that they locate WP initiatives within their strategic approach. Institutions are showing signs of developing an ethos of diversity and inclusion rather than selective</td>
<td>Institutions have made progress in developing teaching and assessment strategies to maximise student retention. HEIs could go further to ensure that student support services are made visible to prospective</td>
<td>There is a need for greater integration of institutional policies. HEIs are challenged to publicise WP and engage all their staff.</td>
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<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>There is evidence that HEIs have heeded advice to provide greater clarity to partners in advance about an intervention's purpose, costs and benefits.</td>
<td>HEIs acknowledge that ensuring partnership expectations are clear and understood is laudable, yet there are varying practices amongst HEIs in doing so.</td>
<td>HEIs have found it beneficial to enlist the support and involvement of professional bodies for WP activity.</td>
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<td>Admissions</td>
<td>HEIs are showing an increasing commitment to accept applications from access students, as recommended in 1998. There are still HEIs who need to ensure entry-route opportunities are available across the institution.</td>
<td>HEIs are increasingly engaging with professional bodies to reduce the qualifications barriers to professions.</td>
<td>There is an ongoing need for HEIs to broaden the recognition of students’ potential on the basis of their previous progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Institutions are monitoring the socio-economic profile of applicants and entrants. Some institutions are also doing so for participants on access activities as a matter of routine. Institutions have made progress in evaluating the effectiveness of access strategies. Progress towards tracking the progression of participants from school to college, higher education and beyond is limited.</td>
<td>Several institutions have procedures in place to monitor the progress of access students. There is some evidence that institutions have instigated changes in their practice as a result of their monitoring procedures.</td>
<td>There is a continued need for HEIs to evaluate the impact of WP activities, upon student access and retention. There is a need to ensure long-term monitoring and tracking students into and through HE. There is a need for the link between WP and academic research to be enhanced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resourcing</td>
<td>HEIs have embraced the advice to exploit opportunities for further funding for WP from public and private sources. There are variations in attempts to mainstream access developments to maximise resource use.</td>
<td>There is little progress in improving upon the use of postcode data being used as a basis for WP funding. The increase in the WP premium has been welcomed by HEIs, and led to greater accountability.</td>
<td>More information about the financial implications of HE needs to be made available to students pre-entry. HEIs (in England) have drawn up access agreements to outline their financial support for students from lower socio-economic groups. HEIs need to be aware that relying on the use of external funding sources can mitigate against the sustainability of WP activities.</td>
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Successes
The report identifies the following strengths of the higher education sector across the UK:

Delivery
- Greater awareness of the need to target students as part of widening access initiatives.
- Increased work with primary school pupils, recognising the importance of starting early.
- Greater involvement of parents in widening access initiatives.
- Learning from access initiatives to inform admission reform across the institution.
- Increased number of initiatives addressing access to selecting disciplines, especially medicine.
- More emphasis on developing students' understanding and expectations about HE.
- Greater awareness of the importance of transition and the first year experience, and associated impact on retention and success.
- Increased academic support in all HEIs.
- Some curriculum development, especially in the post-1992 institutions.
- Innovative examples of social integration.
- Good routine monitoring of interventions.
- Increased used of pilots and/or rolling out effective activities.

Strategy
- Institutional commitment to widening participation.
- Increased use of central funding, rather than reliance on project funding.
- Move from isolated outreach activities to outreach programmes.
- Many institutions embrace widening participation as a key aspect of student recruitment and the student experience.
- Good general student services and recognition of importance of support for all students; examples of student services learning from widening participation work.
- Strong support from senior managers in many institutions.
- Learning from previous widening participation projects, to expand projects and influence institutions more broadly.
- Capacity building of staff involved.
- Examples of effective collaboration between HEIs, strategic external links and regional and sub-regional partnerships.
- Increasing research about widening participation and developmental evaluation about interventions.
- Improved institutional monitoring and evaluation of widening participation.

Nationally
- Widening participation premium has been beneficial and has resulted in greater accountability of widening participation activity.
- Support from professional bodies, especially the General Medical Council, has been beneficial.
- Additional funding (e.g. Strategic Change / Reconfiguration funding) have been used to support widening participation.
Challenges and areas for further development
Widening participation projects, partnerships and HEIs still face a number of challenges, and there are areas for further development.

Targeting
- Target groups need to be more clearly defined and focused on those who are under-represented in HE (e.g. not all ethnic minorities are under-represented).
- Avoid using schools as a proxy for socio-economic status, as this alone does not ensure that the intended beneficiaries are identified.
- There is a need to find non-stigmatising ways of targeting students within HE for additional support.

Outreach
- More attention is needed to get under-represented students into HE who are not coming directly from school or college. This includes providing more support for students progressing into HE through vocational routes.
- There is a tendency to focus on the ‘fun’ elements of HE experience/learning, which often does not prepare students adequately for the realities of HE.

Within higher education
- There is a focus on outreach and access interventions. A more balanced approach, involving widening participation activities throughout the student lifecycle is required. This requires ‘in-reach’ as well as outreach activities.
- More information about progression (careers and further study) in the early stages of engagement is required.
- Greater learning, teaching and curriculum development are required. Academic support tends to be added on rather than integrated, and this ought to be reviewed.
- Clear and detailed information for students (and their parents/ carers) about changes to student finance from 2006 is required.
- Enable all HE students, particularly those from ‘non-traditional’ backgrounds, to participate in widening participation activities by reviewing methods of recognition and reward.

Institutional commitment
- Reduce reliance on external funding, which can be detrimental to institutional development and creates sustainability problems.
- Ensure the widening participation premium is used for widening participation activities throughout the student lifecycle.

Organisational structure
- Widening participation is most effective when it is closely linked to student recruitment.
- Greater integration of institutional policies is still required.
- Improved communication about widening participation would contribute to more effective staff participation across the institution.
- There is a need to offer more opportunities for alternative modes, times and places of study.
- Links between widening participation and academic research could usefully be strengthened.
Staffing

- Avoid loss of staff expertise when contracts end and staff move on.
- Involve more staff across the institution in widening participation.
- More staff development to support widening participation across the institution.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Develop more sophisticated and longer-term monitoring and tracking of students’ progress into and through HE.
- Improve learning from project monitoring and evaluation studies.
- Extend the evaluation of the impact of widening participation initiatives.

7.2 Implications

In summary, the HE sector in the UK has made good progress towards effective widening participation, but there is still more to be done. Individual widening participation projects are generally well planned, managed and implemented. Many of the challenges lie at the institutional, regional and national levels, in which the policy context is crucial. To trace out the implications of these research findings for the sector, it is necessary to return to the widening participation and higher education policy developments across the UK to identify the opportunities and challenges policy changes will create, and the areas where policy and/or funding council inputs could be beneficial.

Reaching the missing students

The participation rate in higher education for young students with two or more A-levels or Highers is approaching 100 per cent. Widening participation activities must therefore reach beyond these students if it is to be effective and to reach the Government’s targets.

Targeting. In this and the previous reports targeting has been identified as problematic. More sophisticated and effective targeting of students who would not otherwise progress to HE is required. Widening participation policy often does not clarify its target audience, and there is confusion between increasing and widening participation. Schools need to be more aware of the realities of HE to support the process of targeting access students. Targeting needs to move beyond young people in school and college, and reach those who are in employment or inactive.

Improving attainment in school. Efforts need to be focused on raising level 2 qualification rates, as the majority of students with five or more GCSEs or equivalent continue in post-16 education. HEIs need to build on current partnerships with schools to achieve this.

Vocational qualifications and routes. Vocational qualifications and routes into HE are underdeveloped, and thus many students may have less opportunities for progression. In England the 14 to 19 White Paper aims to improve the parity of academic and vocational qualifications. Lifelong Learning Networks will support vocational routes into HE, but institutions need to be much more proactive in this area in terms of promoting these routes and providing appropriate support for students. This is likely to involve curricula reform and pedagogical development. Policy levers to encourage institutional acceptance of vocational parity ought to be considered.

Part-time and distance learning. Part-time and distance learning opportunities support a more diverse range of students to access HE. Evidence from this study shows that young students are
opting for part-time pathways now in greater numbers; this trend was not discernible in 2000. More flexible provision can also support the retention and success of students. Increased support for part-time learners and for institutional provision has recently been announced by the DFES in England.

**Older learners.** The widening participation debate has been focused on younger learners in line with Government policy and funding initiatives. As this study shows, there is an emphasis on younger students, rather than those in work (of any age). Many older learners will want to enter HE through vocational routes and/or onto vocationally relevant programmes, many however will not. Widening participation activities need to be more targeted at the work place, at parents, at those involved in community and informal learning, and those not in paid employment.

**Supporting students to succeed.** The study suggests that the sector is prioritising pre-entry and access initiatives at the expense of interventions once students have entered HE. In addition to widening access to increase interest and applications to HE, students need to be supported throughout the student lifecycle to ensure that can succeed throughout their degree studies and beyond.

**Combining outreach with widening participation throughout the student lifecycle.** The study has identified a stronger focus on outreach activities than targeted support for students in higher education and institutional development. Aimhigher partnerships (in England) and access fora (in Scotland), for example, have focused much of their widening participation activity on outreach work. A more balanced approach is required to combine outreach activity and support for non-traditional students after they have entered higher education.

**Institutional change.** To support students to succeed throughout the lifecycle some degree of institutional change may be required. This requires a more widespread recognition of the benefits of widening participation for all students and all HEIs. The widening participation premium has been increased and is part of mainstream institutional funding, which should facilitate some aspects of institutional change. In some cases this has been used for widening participation, but in others it has not. Policy makers need to find alternative ways of encouraging institutional development to support the needs of all students within a diverse system.

**Gauging the effectiveness of widening participation**
The research has identified flaws in the data sets which are available, thus making it difficult to know what the current situation is, and to track changes. This is coupled with a lack of impact evaluation. Without better data and research there is a danger that widening participation interventions may have limited or unknown impact.

**National data.** The data sources available are limited and do not facilitate tracking and the attributing of causal linkages. UCAS data only records applicants and acceptances for full-time students. It is not possible to relate UCAS data about level 2 and 3 qualifications, as students do not have unique identifiers. It is also difficult to relate UCAS data to HESA data about progression within HE. This problem is further complicated as students who study in the FE sector may be included in LSC rather than HESA data (depending on institutional funding arrangements). HESA data often contains insufficient information about student characteristics to explore widening participation issues in detail. HE data sets need to be compared against the population as a whole in order to extract a more
detailed picture about the impact of widening participation activities. Currently, the only data available
to do this is census data, which is only collected every ten years.

**Impact evaluation.** The lack of available data hinders the evaluation of widening participation
projects, especially when students are progressing to more than one HEI. There is a distinct lack of
impact evaluation by either projects or institutions. The Aimhigher evaluation in England has not
addressed this problem. Appropriate methods of evaluating impact need to be developed, either for
the sector as a whole, or to identify the most effective ways of widening participation.

### 7.3 Recommendations

The higher education sector should celebrate its success in widening participation, compared with
seven years ago, and compared to many other countries. There is, however, room for further
development, and it is in this spirit the following recommendations are made.

**Widening participation practitioners**

1. Review target groups to ensure they are (a) under-represented, (b) clearly defined and (c) can be
   identified.
2. Look for a balance between long-term widening participation strategies and increasing the
   number of under-represented students entering HE now, including working with primary schools
   and parents, and improving attainment at GCSE level or equivalent.
3. Review the contents of outreach and induction activities to include more information about
   vocational routes into HE, changes to student finance, and careers education.
4. Include current HE students in widening participation activities and review the methods of
   recognition and reward to ensure all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, can
   participate.
5. Develop more sophisticated and longer-term monitoring and tracking of students’ progress into
   and through HE, and collaborate with researchers and other practitioners to develop ways to
   evaluate the impact of widening participation initiatives.

**Higher education institutions**

1. Ensure widening participation work is benefiting institutions as well as the students and that there
   is an equal balance between outreach activity and action within the institution. This could include
   developing links between widening participation and student recruitment and admissions and
   involving staff from across the institution, including the students’ union.
2. Look for ways to build widening participation objectives into other institutional strategies, policies
   and developments to enable all staff to participate. This could include developing learning,
   teaching and curricula that respond to, and benefit from, greater student diversity and staff
   development across the institution.
3. Consider introducing greater flexibility to offer alternative modes of study. Develop policy, practice
   and programmes to support access to higher education for students with vocational qualifications.
4. Find effective ways of ensuring all students benefit from the additional support they require.
5. Ensure the widening participation premium is used to support widening participation explicitly and
   increase the sustainability of interventions.
6. Look for ways to further support staff to deliver widening participation, by aiming to move to
   permanent contracts and recognising their skills to avoid the loss of expertise.
Support bodies
(including the Higher Education Academy, Sector Skills Council Lifelong Learning UK, national widening participation co-ordination team, Office for Fair Access, Quality Assurance Agency).
1. Identify and promote the advantages of widening participation and support and encourage HEIs to change institutional policies and practices to enable them to benefit from a more diverse student body. This should include promoting a student lifecycle approach to widening participation.
2. Promote and support the development of vocational qualifications and routes into and through HE.
3. Recognise the skills of staff involved in widening participation and student support and develop the widening participation knowledge and capacity of staff in schools and colleges.

Policy makers and funding councils
1. Identify and clarify all under-represented groups; provide definitions and share existing information to underpin policy development.
2. Promote the parity of vocational qualifications, encourage higher education institutions to develop vocational routes into and through higher education, and provide on-going support to students on these pathways.
3. Promote widening participation throughout the student lifecycle and find policy incentives to support HEIs to do this.
4. Review the implications for widening participation of institutional and student funding for part-time study.
5. Review whether the widening participation premium is sufficient to meet the full costs of embedding widening participation within higher education institutions.
6. Instigate and support the development of tools to measure the impact of widening participation.
7. Improve the quality of data available to inform widening participation. Consider the value of student identifiers that enable tracking from school through HE and beyond and/or a single database of all school leavers which is compatible with UCAS and HESA data. Try to avoid changing categories as this makes longitudinal analysis difficult.

Future research
1. Commission similar studies in the future (eg, 2008) to add to this longitudinal review of the sector’s response to widening participation and to identify emerging good practice. This should be extended to include the further education sector, and to include older students and other categories of under-represented groups.
2. Develop methodologies and tools for evaluating the impact of widening participation at the level of interventions, programmes, institutions and partnerships.
Appendix 1: Research Methods

Contextual information
This study builds on the two previous reports, through reflection and additional exploration and taking account of recent policy developments. It focuses on an institution-wide approach to widening participation. It thereby considers the ways in which institutions and partnerships have endeavoured to embed their widening participation practices throughout educational organisations. It therefore considers the types of interventions and the groups targeted throughout the student lifecycle to improve both access to HE and success within it.

The methods chosen for this study were to enable the research team to consider institutional widening participation development from two interrelated dimensions:

- **Internal collaboration** – the approach (and degree to which) institutions are bringing together people within and across the organisation to address widening participation and dealing with diverse priorities, values and agendas;
- **External collaboration** – the approach (and degree to which) institutions are working in partnership with a range of organisations and institutions to address widening participation and dealing with diverse priorities, values and agendas.

The study applied a mixed method approach, including:

- Statistical review.
- Evaluation of 23 previous case studies;
- Sector-wide survey of practice;
- Examination of new examples of practice throughout the UK;
- Peer learning and evaluation seminar.

Statistical analysis
The data was obtained from UCAS. It contains information on all full-time applicants to higher education for the years 2000 to 2004. The data sets were provided as Microsoft Excel Pivot Tables and transformed into SPSS files to aid analysis. Due to the categorical nature of the data, much of the analysis is descriptive. The datasets contained information on socio-economic status, ethnicity, age band, gender, disability, region of domicile and whether or not the applicant was accepted to HE and at which level (degree, HND or foundation). It also contained variables relating to the type of institution(s) applied to (Russell Group, Pre- or Post-1992 and HE College) and where accepted. In addition the subject line and group applied for and accepted to, allows an examination of how participation may also impact upon subject choice. The final variables related to previous educational experience in terms of tariff score if applicable, best qualification and type of school attended. In the course of the analysis some of these variables were manipulated to allow analysis for example of: those from low or high socio-economic status groups; those with low or high tariff scores; and also by specific groups of subjects.

Socio-economic status. This section will review how the data relating to participation in higher education has changed over time and the implications this has for comparative research. Information about participation by socio-economic status has been provided to the project by UCAS for the years 2000 to 2004. UCAS uses the Standard Occupational Classification 2000, which replaced the
Standard Occupational Classification 1990 used up to and including 2001 entry. UCAS assigns Socio-economic status based on an applicant's parental occupation (or the occupation of the person contributing the highest income to the household if the applicant is aged 21 years or over). This has been used to standardise classification and allow comparison not only across years but can also be compared with a recent snapshot from Regional Trends (2003) on the working age population.

**Institutional type.** To further track the participation of different socio-economic groups in higher education, institutions have been categorised by the project team to reflect commonly recognised classifications. These are a) Russell Group institutions, b) Pre-1992 institutions, c) Post-1992 institutions and d) HE Colleges. This allows an analysis of both those who apply to each institutional type and those who are accepted. Again changes over time, if any, will be examined.

**Ethnicity.** In relation to ethnicity, the classification used by UCAS varies depending on year of entry analysed. The classification used in 2000 was refined in 2001 and further refined in 2003 and 2004. With each change, further refinements were made and categories for both 'ethnic minority' and for 'white' were expanded. This means that only rough comparisons across years can be attempted. In addition, none of the schema used match exactly that in the 2001 Census which again impacts on the ability to compare applicants and entrants to higher education with their respective shares of the working age population in the United Kingdom. However it does allow a more detailed comparison of differences in participation within the ethnic minority population for later years.

**Disability.** The classification schema for Disability has also been refined for the years 2003 and 2004. This refinement however does allow a reasonably accurate comparison over time with the category ‘Learning Disabilities’ and ‘Autistic Disorder’ of pre-2003 equating roughly to ‘Dyslexia’ and ‘Unseen Disability’ used from 2003 onwards.

**Subject line and subject group.** The data relating to the specific subject area and the broader subject grouping applied to, and if successful accepted to, has also changed. Where applicants apply to more than one Subject area, the Subject group or line listed most frequently on the application form is counted. If an applicant has made equal applications to different subjects they are recorded as having no preferred subject. UCAS subject classifications now employ the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS). JACS, introduced for 2002 entry, replaces UCAS' Standard Classification of Academic Subjects (SCAS), which was used up to and including 2001 entry. However, although direct comparisons cannot be directly applied, some comparative analysis is possible. In the case of the variables Subject Line and Subject Group accepted this indicates applicants have obtained an ‘unconditional firm at confirmation’ offer.

**Best qualification.** Up to 2001 entry, applicants were categorised according to their best qualification. This was a classification derived from a UCAS rank order of qualifications. For those applicants with more than one type of qualification, only the highest was recorded. This schema however provided at best a broad-brush approach to classification in that it only provided limited details on qualification and in the case of applicants with Scottish Highers said nothing about either the number or grade achieved and in the case of GNVQ and BTEC/SCOTVEC qualifications neglected to specify the level. Although from 2002 the tariff score (UCAS, 2002) is used UCAS have provided a proxy form of ‘Best Qualification’. This is also problematic. A couple of examples will illustrate similar concerns as expressed above in relation to the earlier schema. The awards of Higher
National Certificate and Higher National Diploma are classified together despite the different level they designate. Reflecting the concerns above concerning number and grade of school qualifications, the new classification lumps together combinations of GCE and VCE ‘A’ and ‘AS’ levels, Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers and various GNVQs. This results overall in a rather blunt instrument for differentiating between previous qualifications.

**Tariff score.** The UCAS Tariff establishes agreed equivalences between different types of qualifications, and reports achievement for entry to higher education in a numerical format which corresponds to tariff scores of between 0 and >540. This allows comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement. Full details of tariff scores and how they are awarded are available on the UCAS website (2005).

**School type.** According to information supplied by UCAS, an applicant’s school type is currently only recorded if the application form they filled in was collected from the school or college they attended. If an applicant was not currently attending school/college at the time of application then their school will not be recorded meaning they will have a school type value of ‘unknown’. The ‘unknown’ group also includes some applicants from miscellaneous agencies, such as careers offices. As with tariff scores this information is only available for home students.

**Applications and acceptance.** As mentioned previously, data is included which reports not only whether they were accepted to higher education *per se*, but also the level at which the applicants were accepted (degree level, HND level and Foundation degree level). In addition, information about which type of institution they applied to and the type of institution to which they were accepted is included.

**Review of previous case studies**
The study has reviewed the 23 case studies from the previous two studies, focusing on evaluating the on-going effectiveness and embedding of these initiatives. Institutions involved in the previous studies were contacted by telephone and sent a questionnaire, distributed by email. Subsequently, telephone interviews were conducted with key contacts (e.g. project manager and/or senior manager) about the issues outlined above. Institutions were requested to provide supporting information (reports, research, data etc), and in addition, institutional websites, and where possible widening participation strategies (or similar) have been reviewed for evidence of embedding practice and subsequent institutional change.

**Sector-wide survey of practice**
Higher education institutions and partnerships across the UK were provided with an opportunity to nominate themselves (or others) as potential examples of practice in relation to widening participation. A survey was distributed by Universities UK to all Vice-Chancellors and by Standing Conference of Principals to all Principals. Information about the survey was also posted on a number of practitioner lists. The survey was distributed by email and consisted of a pro forma asking for specific details, and in particular evidence of success in relation to institution type, geographical regions and disciplines which are particularly resistant to change, and in relation to part-time study and vocational qualifications.
A total of 141 examples of practice were returned by the sector, indicative of the level of interest in the study and level of commitment to widening participation in the sector.

**Directory of practice.** These examples have been collated by the Higher Education Academy, where an electronic searchable directory has been developed. Each of the examples returned by the sector has been entered as an individual record, irrespective of whether they were chosen as a case study for this study. Each record includes institutional name, contact details, name of example, intervention type(s), group(s) targeted, and a brief description of the example. The Directory benefits from trouble-free editing. Institutions will be called upon to update their entries on a regular basis, thereby ensuring that institutions are responsible for ensuring that their records are kept up to date. The directory of widening participation practice is hosted by the Higher Education Academy and can be found at: [www.heacademy.ac.uk/wpdirectory.htm](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/wpdirectory.htm)

**Examination of new examples of practice**
A total of 11 new case studies were chosen by the research team for more in-depth analysis. The criteria used for the selection of case studies were drawn up after the examples had been submitted. Case studies were selected on the basis of the following criteria:
- Young students from lower socio-economic groups (as targeted for this study)
- Interventions to support access into or success in higher education
- Larger project size;
- Distinct from previous case studies; and
- Evidence of effectiveness.

In addition, the overall selection needed to include:
- Diverse target groups;
- Range of intervention type;
- Mix of higher education institutions;
- Geographical area (representation from throughout the UK); and
- Institutional case studies and regional or sub-regional partnerships.

One to two day research visits to each of the case studies were arranged. These involved the collection and analysis of key documents, observation and interviews with key staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The exact nature of the research visits differed across each case study, as the team depended upon the institution for the formation of the programme. The team sought to be flexible in their approach to maximise the benefits of the research visits. In each of the case studies, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of the people both within and outside of the organisation. These included:
- HEI senior managers – including Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Directors, Dean of Faculty;
- Programme or project managers;
- Project delivery staff;
- Student volunteers;
- Academic and support staff in the HEI;
- Staff in partner institutions/organisations; and
- Students who have benefited from the initiative.
A range of interview schedules were devised, covering the following broad themes:

- Targeting by post-code;
- Entry to high demand subject areas;
- Post-entry support strategies for retention and completion;
- The effects of recent changes in funding HEIs’ widening participation strategies and in student funding arrangements;
- The relevance of part-time and flexible modes of study and delivery and of modular course structures; and
- The influence of vocational considerations and the relevance of government initiatives.

The team have reviewed a variety of documents including annual reports, minutes of meetings, monitoring, evaluation and research reports and available data. Observations included project activities conducted within schools and university, departmental tours, and other examples of widening participation practice.

Peer learning and evaluation seminar

The research team convened a ‘peer learning and evaluation seminar’. This provided an opportunity for the new case studies to discuss and share their practice with an invited audience from across the HE sector. These included a number of people invited by SCOP and Universities UK, and informants from each of the 141 sector returns, and 23 previous case studies, as well as the research team.

The day included presentations to set the policy and research context of this study, a brief presentation from each of the new case studies, and evaluation workshops centred around four themes:

- Collecting data, tracking students and monitoring widening participation interventions;
- Organisational learning from short-term widening participation projects;
- Success of students from diverse backgrounds in HE; and
- Persuading others: communication and cultural change within the institution.

The evaluation workshops drew upon the findings of the research and offered time for discussion of the key issues. Each workshop was attended by a facilitator and a note taker. Participants were encouraged to share their own experiences and observations as well as question and evaluate practices in relation to their own contexts. The workshop culminated in an end of seminar feedback activity, to share the broad findings from each discussion. The outcomes of this seminar have been fed into this report to provide a more insightful commentary on the strengths and limitations of the new case studies, and broad recommendations for change.
Appendix 2: Types of widening participation interventions

Pre-entry

- **School outreach.** Activities carried out in primary and/or secondary schools to promote widening participation. Examples include presentations; workshops; parents’ evenings; exemplar lectures; homework clubs and mentoring. Topics addressed at school level include post-16 choices, university life, careers, finance, time management, revision, and coping with stress, amongst others.

- **University visits and open days.** An activity or programme of activities carried out at the university, enabling pupils, their families and other potential students to visit the university campus and experience a snapshot of student and university life. Examples include taster sessions, master classes, talks, revision days, summer schools, student shadowing, residential, family events and motivational sessions.

- **Workplace activities.** Activities in the workplace to raise aspirations and provide information to employees. Work placements in a variety of industries and organisations to promote aspiration raising and knowledge of particular careers. Examples include learning reps., provision of information, advice and guidance sessions, work experience and professional shadowing.

- **Community outreach activities.** Activities to promote the university carried out with the local community. Examples include lifelong learning bus, road show, concerts, festivals, and community radio.

Access to HE

- **Qualifying summer school.** A programme of activities, usually run over a number of days, for which students receive a certificate if they complete the activities successfully. The certificate and student performance may be taken as evidence of the students’ ability and used to gain access to higher education in situations where the student does not achieve the standard entry requirements.

- **Bridging programmes.** Courses run by the university to bridge the gap between achievement scores and entry requirements. Successful completion of the course can enable access to HE for students who do not achieve the standard entry requirements.

- **Admission concessions.** Admissions opportunities offered to students with the potential to progress to HE. These opportunities are offered either as an incentive to meet the standard entry requirements or in recognition of social, economic or educational disadvantage coupled with the potential to benefit from HE. Examples include early or pre-conditional offer and compact arrangements.

- **Financial support.** Financial support or equivalent (e.g. a laptop) to encourage and facilitate students to enter in HE, such as bursary or scholarship.

- **Additional support.** Other types of support to assist students to apply for and be admitted to HE, for example pre-application enquiry service, support for writing applications and teacher endorsement or additional reference.

- **Support for vocational routes into HE.** Creation, clarification or information and guidance about entry routes into HE for students with vocational qualifications or experience.
Retention and success in HE

- **Induction and first year experience activities.** Activities designed to ease the transition into HE. Induction programmes (including introduction to the facilities, academic expectations, peers, support services), peer guidance, student mentoring, student ambassadors etc. Activities can take place prior to or upon entry into higher education and may last for the duration of the first year.

- **Learning, teaching and curriculum development.** Activities concerned with the students’ learning experience. Examples include learning style questionnaire, curriculum enrichment opportunities and changing assessment practices.

- **Academic support.** Support designed to improve students learning skills. Such provision includes academic supervision, drop in centres and study skills modules and integration into the core curriculum.

- **Student services.** Provision of a wide range of support services and activities to ensure students are informed and utilise them. Examples include one-stop-shop, e-support, specialist advisers etc.

- **Social integration.** Activities that promote peer relations within the institutions, these may be related to teaching strategies, accommodation arrangements or socialisation opportunities. For example, assigning non-residential students to a hall of residence.

Enhance employability

- **Careers education or guidance.** Activities designed to increase students’ knowledge of potential careers or support to gain employment upon completion of their course. This can integrated to pre-entry activities, induction, personal tutoring, PDP etc. It may include preparing a CV, practising for interview or identifying employability skills gained through HE programme.

- **Work experience.** Opportunities to experience employment in specific field, or to identify and accredit skills gained from part-time employment undertaken whilst studying.
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