



**HELOA NW & NI, December 2023**

Session Notes – Thursday 7th December 2023



**Institutions in attendance**

Edge Hill University (10)

Future U (6)

Greater Manchester Higher (2)

Lancaster University (9)

Liverpool Hope University (3)

Manchester Metropolitan University (8)

UCEN Manchester (1)

University of Bolton (2)

University of Central Lancashire (3)

University of Chester (5)

University of Cumbria (1)

University of Liverpool (7)

University of Manchester (6)

University of Salford (8)

Other (1)

**Total attendees: 72**

The session notes below were written and compiled by a variety of reporters, therefore some formatting differences may be present.

1. Pre and Post 16 Audience Insights from Unifrog
2. Student Finance Update
3. Understanding and Addressing Loneliness
4. Zero Gravity: HELOA’s official Partner for Social Mobility
5. Teachers & Advisors Q&A Panel

# Pre and Post 16 Audience Insights from Unifrog

# Background

Unifrog markets itself as a user-friendly platform that helps students make the best choices, and submit the strongest applications, and as ‘the’ place for students to do their research and make decisions. It shows undergraduate courses available via a live feed from UCAS. To find out more visit <https://www.unifrog.org/about>.

## Market Share

Currently Unifrog works with over 2500 schools and colleges within the UK, and 60% of all state schools in England. In the North West Unifrog operates within half of all schools and colleges at 51%, dropping to 14% in Northern Ireland. In both areas the majority is state schools.

# Unifrog Insights

## 1. Where is student demand coming from

Slides 1.1 to 1.4 show graphics of regional shortlisting behaviour.

Graphic on slide 1.1 shows distribution of UK students shortlisting universities in the North West, of which 35% are from London or South East. 30% of students from the North West are shortlisting local universities. When looking at the proportion of disadvantaged students, the North West has the largest proportion of disadvantaged (IMD 1-3) students in the UK and outside of the North West and N Ireland, it is advantaged students who are more likely to consider NW universities.

## 2. What factors are important to local students

Slides 2.1 to 2.2 show a breakdown of factors that influence shortlisting choices, for both NW based students and students based outside of the NW who are shortlisting NW choices. Typically, location is more important to NW based students than those from outside the NW, whose most important factor is Russell Group.

Changes seen in importance factors (from 2023 students compared to 2024 students);

* Study abroad has become more important, possibly a post-covid effect
* Graduate success moved down
* Prestige factor; top third ranking is now more important than Guardian & QS
* Distance remains the most important factor for NW students
* NOTE: no comparisons are provided against pre-covid factors which was discussed as a negative as we may be seeing changes returning to ‘normal’ rather than significant new changes.

## 3. When do students interested in the North West do their research

Graphic showing panning window of NW students compared to rest of UK. Unifrog data shows that students interested in NW planned slightly later in the year for a shorter time compared to the rest of the UK.

## 4. What subjects are most popular among students from the North West

Social sciences are the most popular subject for NW students and students interested in studying in NW, followed by subjects allied to medicine.

## 5. What subjects are most popular among students interested in the North West

Similar to students based in the North West.

## 6. Change in the most popular subjects in the North West

The top 3 most popular subjects remain static but CAH04 psychology has dropped in popularity from 4th to 9th place.

## 7. What are the most popular categories of Know-how guides?

Compared to other areas, NW students favour similar top 10 categories. UK Universities are the most popular guides, followed by the world of work and exploring careers.

The UK apprenticeships guide is becoming more popular with NW students compared to other areas.

## 8. How are student aspirations changing?

Aspiration is at its lowest in 6 cycles.

There is a 9% aspiration gap in the 2024 cycle between disadvantaged and advantaged students, which is the widest gap yet, there are a number of factors estimated to be associated with this trend.

The proportion of NW students shortlisting 1 aspirational course is 12% less than the rest of the UK, showing the gap is even bigger in NW region.

# Becoming a Unifrog Partner

Unifrog invites you to contact Jess if you or your institution wishes to find out more.

Jess Wells

HE Partnerships Manager

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# Questions

**Q: Interesting how cost is factoring 10th as a factor for choosing**

A: previously this factor has shown a 200%+ increase in use, but this perhaps is lack of awareness of cost or location is factoring into this.

**Q: Can you split data by personal characteristics?**

A: Yes, please approach Unifrog to discuss.

**Q: Has the close to home trend changed much compared to post-pandemic?**

A: Data not on hand but Unifrog can share this, please contact.

**Q: Planning window shorter for NW students, it does not feel this way in schools/colleges as many are students not meeting their internal deadlines, interesting to see comparison pre-covid**.

A: We are also looking at this data, keep in mind Unifrog is a pre-application tool not an application tool, measurement is taken from when the Unifrog account is ‘locked’ but it may be that research/PS writing continues beyond this.

General theme amongst questions shows interest in pre-pandemic comparisons.

# 2. Student Finance – Stephen Jones

· From 2025/26, **Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)** will begin;

o Students apply for loan worth 4 years of education - £37,000 in todays tuition fees

o Can be used towards a wide range of courses, modules, degrees and qualifications.

o Maintenance support also available to students undertaking levels 4-6 study.

o Students manage their LLE funding via SF website to keep track of their study and balance of loan left to spend.

o See weblinks on presentation slides

· **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)**

o Students don’t tick relevant boxes for fear of prejudice and thinking they wont be offered a place at University

o Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) only received by 29% of those in HE declaring a disability.

o Progression rate for pupils within SEN ranged from 20.8% for pupils receiving extra or different help in schools to 8.4% for pupils with a care plan.

o Maximum allowance is £26,291 in 2023/24

o Students can have a variety of conditions to qualify, such as long term physical health, mental health, learning disabilities or difficulties

o Can be used towards travel costs, allowances, specialist equipment

o Doesn’t have to be repaid and in addition to usual Student Finance package -apply through a separate application

o Not affected by household income

o Focused on meeting the specific needs of each individual student

· **Applying for DSA**

o Apply online or paper forms (online preferred)

o Medical evidence is needed and uploaded online– diagnostic report, letter from GP, SF disability evidence form

o Assessed by Students Loan Company – appointment with assessor and recommendations are made

o DSA 1 letter – confirms eligibility for DSA

o DSA 2 letter – conforms what students are getting and when (a very chunky letter which can put students off

o Students need to provide receipts and upload to Student Finance system for any spends

**Q: Military family support?**

A: No unfortunately no specific student finance support for military families at the moment

**Q: Can students claim support if circumstances change mid course?**

A: Yes, it can work with new or ongoing conditions e.g. some conditions can take a long time to confirm diagnosis. If condition arrives at University, students can then apply for funding.

**Q: Do support apply for DSA at same time as usual SF?**

A: Yes, the earlier the better as DSA process takes longer

**Q: Do students pick their own laptops?**

A: DSA can provide suitable laptop equipment or students can choose their own – but there must be proof of quality and/or be able to take the specialist programmes needed for that student

**Q: How will a future general election affect DSA, LLE and Student Finance?**

A: Don’t know as yet

**Q: Can you suggest anything different to promote filling in SF applications?**

A: no creative suggestions but focus on what if scenarios…what does it cover, what are the negatives of not having finance in place at starting point of course

# 3. Understanding and Addressing Loneliness

**What does loneliness mean to you?**

Answers the speaker suggested the audience may have been thinking:

* Sadness
* Isolation
* Noone to share things with

It’s based on personal experience and people’s feelings about their connections, so there is no one solution. Needs based support is key.

Isolation and loneliness are separate. Isolation is observable behaviour, whereas loneliness is not obvious. Isolation can be a risk towards loneliness but not automatically a cause.

Quality of connections is important over quantity.

**Different types of loneliness-**

Social- dissatisfaction with quality of connection

Emotional- may feel like an outsider and that they don’t belong

Existential- May be trauma impacted- disconnect, feeling of separation.

**Difference between chronic and short-lived loneliness.**

It’s a normal human emotion and can be helpful when short-lived as a sign that something isn’t quite right, and to make a change.

However, when chronic, long-lasting and severe – a greater issue.

**Health impacts of loneliness**

**1-Feelings:** A person may experience fear, sadness, helplessness, feelings of being abandoned.

**2- Behaviour:** They may feel withdrawn, reluctant to share and seek support.

It may be a challenge to the individual to maintain self-care.

**3-Psychological**:- loss of self-confidence, sensitivity to social rejection and read more into situations, increasing stress levels.

**4-Physical:** decreased memory, high blood pressure, weakened immunity- impact of stress.

**Understanding and Addressing Loneliness (notes supporting the slides that will be shared)**

At risk groups- Characteristics- protected, more marginalised, and disadvantaged in society, and multiple and intersecting identities at higher risk.

Structural risks- stigma, comparisons to ‘ideal norm’, causing a gap between expectation and reality.

Psychological- how people internalise and can self- blame around loneliness.

16-29 more chronically lonely than over 70s group.

Those with a physical or mental health diagnosis are over 3x more likely to be chronically lonely than those without.

92% of the 18-24 year old group are reporting loneliness.

**Government action**

The strategy ‘[A connected society: A Strategy for tackling loneliness- laying the foundations for change](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-connected-society-a-strategy-for-tackling-loneliness)’ was published in October 2018- and a Minister lead on Loneliness was created in 2018. It’s a public health concern, and the Loneliness Commission was set up because of and in the name of the former MP Jo Cox and her personal experience of student loneliness. (Read more about Jo’s work on the Age UK website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/jo-cox-commission/>**)**

**Tackling Loneliness Hub**

[**https://tacklinglonelinesshub.org/**](https://tacklinglonelinesshub.org/)

A place to share best practice and offering free events to collaborate.

**Campaigns:**

[**https://lonelynotalone.org/**](https://lonelynotalone.org/)-cocreated with young people

[**https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/**](https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/)

Power of collective action.

Questions**-**

**Is it chronic or short-lived loneliness for the statistic about 18-24 year olds? Answer:** more research is needed for youth loneliness as there is an evidence gap.

**Is there any impact to progression, is loneliness a barrier to people going to university? Answer:** No direct evidence, but ways it can manifest are lack of self esteem, so may impact this.

# 4. Zero gravity: HELOA’s official partner for Social Mobility

**What is the network advantage?**

The intangible advantage obtained through access to a broad professional network. Buying into the network that education opportunities provide.

50,000 students from social-mobile/WP backgrounds achieve top GCSEs, yet only 1in3 make it to a highly selective uni.

State school students more often than not do not have access to same opportunities as private-school counterparts.

Students not having connections or support to help them access university. Further on down the line, missing connections for getting into specific careers.

Students having less application support – don’t have a network around them

Community effect – not having people around them to build confidence

Imposter syndrome

Economic worries – giving up space at uni due to cost of living

Career network – not recognising network opportunities

**What is zero gravity?**

Mission to propel high potential, low-opportunity talent into top universities and world class careers through teaching. Top class university suitable for that student.

Breaking down access to opportunities.

IMPACT: 8000 students from low-opportunity backgrounds into high selective universities, including 800+ to Oxbridge.

Zero gravity members 39% more likely to get a place at a top uni vs comparable applicants

20,000+ students into universities and careers by 2025

£1.5 mil scholarships deployed to 421 scholars. (£1000 scholarship per year of university)

Process begins at post-16 age. Identify socially mobile talent. (partnered with 20% state schools in UK). Students identified by GCSE performances.

Students given pre-entry application support. Linked to a mentor at the university of their choice to receive application support.

Once at university, upgrade profile – can become a mentor to other students and access careers guidance, mentoring etc.

After graduating, transition account – we get careers mentors

A combination of being a mentor and being mentored – 360 degree mentoring

Why has zero gravity partnered with HELOA?

Isolated impact from unis/schools. Building up HE strategy. Working more collaboratively across networks. Supporting HELOA members with wider sector updates, such as network advantage, trends from WP members and industry updates.

Providing funded opportunities for HELOA members to scale their outreach

**Regional updates**

15K + membersacross 1700 schools and 115+ universities

700 partner schools in the UK

885 students from NW signed up to ZG

11 in NI

477 undergraduates

Subject ambitions: Medicine, law, computer science, dentistry, economics – top 5

Wanting to add more social listening within the community – using trends and analysis to help HELOA members supporting students

Topics of discussion from members:

- **Computer science** (most common phrase used – over 500 occurences on platform. Inline with 10% increase in applications to CS from 22 – 23)

- **Personal statement** – hardest part of application process. Going to mentors for support.

- **Problem solving –** finding it hard to articulate hard skills in PS

- **Work experience**

**Access and outreach opportunities**

HELOA members/university staff can sign up for university partner portal – share zero gravity with students and additional resources (QR code in slides)

**University opportunities**

Onboard WP undergraduates to become mentors, take advantage of opportunities on the programme. Universities can track engagement and how the portal is being used to feed into APP.

Mentor matching – all goes through platform, safeguarding barriers put in place – student verified through .ac.uk email. Platform blocks ability to share personal contact details.

Mentoring is voluntary – approx. 1 hour a week. No payment.

Unis promoting to current students who haven’t been involved from a school level – opportunities for mentors from both backgrounds. Higher-mobility – can become a mentor but not access career mentoring. Low-mobility uni student can mentor and access careers guidance.

Mentors and mentees matched on university and subject basis. Subject is non-negotiable, secondary match would specific university or similar if specific isn’t available.

Masterclasses on specific subject support and general wider support. Issues with subject areas where there are more mentees/mentors in a particular subject than mentors/mentees – finding ways to supplement.

# 5. Teacher and Advisors Q&A Panel

**Panellists:**

* John Morrison, Aquinas College (Careers Leader)
* Faye Mawdesley, Cardinal Newman College Preston (Careers Manager)
* Catherine Garstang, Runshaw College (Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Team Leader)
* Lee Jackson, Xaverian College (Careers Consultant)

1. **How are your applications going, are students focused on the equal consideration deadline? Have you seen a change in the number of students applying to university this year?**
   1. Runshaw – Down on applications by around 300, students don’t really take much notice of the deadlines.
   2. Newman – Roughly the same numbers in the system (1,700) with 500 being sent off as of now – pretty much on par with last year.
   3. Aquinas – Down on applications, some students still not sure whether they want to go to university yet, expect a flurry in January.
   4. Xaverian – deadline was 5th November, around 1,000 applications in already from c.1,400 students, expecting about another 250 – happy with how things are going. Lots of interest in other routes now (i.e. apprenticeships) and students are paying attention to media hype.
2. **Has there been increased interest in degree apprenticeships, could that explain a downward trend in applications in places?**
   1. Runshaw – some students using university as the back-up option, now – not primary route. Start looking at university when they realise how hard apprenticeships route can be.
   2. Xaverian – we encourage students to apply to both, UCAS deadlines lend themselves to applying to university first and then apprenticeships in the new year. It’s usually parents convincing students to do apprenticeships.
   3. Aquinas – students who don’t go on open days struggle to narrow down choices and parents still not sure on how to help their students.
   4. Cardinal Newman – lots of students don’t initially look at university but then end up applying when they realise how competitive apprenticeships are.
3. **What are the biggest student concerns about going to university?**
   1. Xaverian – personal statements are a difficulty; we really appreciate universities coming in to advise about personal statements and doing 1-1 sessions. Having multiple people giving the message makes it stick so careers team + universities + other influencers. Universities could do more to tell students it’s not about the name of the degree i.e. I like doing Biology but don’t want to be a Biologist – talk about the features and modules of a course, and the benefits and alumni of these courses.
   2. Newman – uncertainty of investing in the degree when they don’t really know what they want to do after university. They’d like opportunities to go out and explore the world a bit more before making the decision. Costs are also a main concern for students. We tell students to ask universities about their destination data of their graduates.
   3. Runshaw – finance and the thought of the ‘debt’; parents and other influencers also compound this worry. Careers Teams work hard to correct these misconceptions.
   4. Aquinas – need consistency on course information pages. Students can be lazy and not worry about deadlines – be clearer about when universities are going to be making offers to push students to submit applications.
4. **What information are students wanting about universities other than things like destination data?**
   1. Xaverian – what can I do with a specific degree, where does it put me in the world? Also justify the expense of going to university – Xaverian students increasingly looking at commutable distances from campus to save on money – tell students about the commuting practicality i.e. bus times, distance from college.
   2. Aquinas – show how skills will be developed and confidence increased. Courses that offer Years in Industry and Study Abroad years, talk more about those and the tangible benefits of these.
   3. Newman – show them there are those support services available on campus i.e. moving from a small college campus to a huge university campus, can I still find the student support office(s)?
5. **How could we as HEIs better support prospective Medicine students in picking their 5th choice?**
   1. Newman – a lot will pick Biomedical Sciences, so we let them know about the Allied Health Professions and what comes with studying Medicine such as transferable skills etc., how competitive postgraduate Medicine is. Focus on why they chose to study Medicine in the first place (wanting to work with people, clinical skills etc.)
   2. Xaverian – would be interesting to know how many students accept their 5th choice? I assume not many. There are usually key stakeholders in that student’s life pushing them towards Medicine – once you explore why they want to do the course, it usually falls apart and it’s not THEM wanting to do Medicine.
6. **What sort of social platforms do students engage with the most?**
   1. Aquinas – Snapchat and Instagram.
   2. Xaverian – from a survey I recently saw, most students didn’t want to get their information on a university social media. Advertise where they’ll be I.e. bus/transport advertisements!
   3. Newman – Agrees about social media. Students question the validity of some sources but trust university webpages
7. **Is there a preference for online or physical visit days, and are there considerations when it comes to actually visiting?**
   1. Runshaw – a lot of students work on Saturdays and can’t get to Open Days. Virtual Open Days can really help this.
   2. Newman – students get authorised absence for weekday Open Days.
   3. Xaverian – online stuff is great for WP students who can’t afford to visit ALL of them. Limiting factor is that some students will pick some universities and stick to that small group, instead of looking at universities that they weren’t considering.
   4. Aquinas – anything virtual for parents/supporters is brilliant – raises profile of going to university. Students will tend to go to a limited set of open days for multiple reasons including lack of time and funding issues.
8. **What are the barriers in working with HEIs, is there not a lot of diversity of sessions etc.?**
   1. Aquinas – wellbeing activities would be great, helping with stress, preparing academically, revision & study skills. Colleges want to help develop skills. Good to know who in the team(s) to go to.
   2. Runshaw – we get bombarded by universities offering the same thing, so we end up choosing ones that are popular with the students but we can’t have everyone in.
   3. Newman – it’s a problem for us to find time to have lots of activities with loads of universities. Careers fair is the only event in the academic year any university can attend. They would love to have someone coming in every week but the staffing just doesn’t work. Pre-recorded content for careers curriculum guidance would be really valuable, still endorsed/marketed by the University of course, especially subject-specific content and info for parents. Live content won’t be received well as students would struggle to watch it when it’s being broadcasted.
   4. Xaverian – there are different layers of commitment i.e. do you want just to speak with the students generally or do a specialised session? Unless you have a really good guest speaker or it’s around Clinical, you may struggle to get anyone coming. We have to demonstrate we’re working towards Gatsby and widening participation – we consult with the students about this but we would want to push working with universities. We also want to stand on our own too, we believe what we do should be part of a curriculum.
9. **What format of support could HEIs offer?**
   1. Whole panel – lots of varieties of format, please, that’s key. Need more subject-specific information.
   2. Newman – want content to fit into curriculum of subject areas, quick resources that they can deliver to students in class times.
   3. Aquinas – there’s such a focus on skills development by Ofsted, anything to develop this and put students in a line of sight of their next steps.
   4. Xaverian – teachers have a lot on their plate and can’t get on top of labour market information, they’re so influential to students. Pre-recorded labour market information for teachers to watch. Teacher CPD on demand!
10. **What format of skills mentoring/guidance would work best? Weekly, termly, virtual etc.?**
    1. Aquinas – offer different options for students, what works best for them. Something where the student can take control but offer it as a contractual format.
    2. Newman and Runshaw – not used Mentoring before so can’t comment but sure students would be interested. Flexibility is key.
    3. Newman – open up opportunities to students who aren’t WP – they need support still but don’t meet those WP criteria to get support.
    4. Xaverian – toolkit or gamify content for students to use, collect the segments and complete this guidance course. Different modules to complete etc.
11. **What is one of the most impactful things HEIs could work together on to help careers teams?**
    1. Xaverian – regional collaboration of promoting higher education, regardless of your HEI. Have a unified approach.
    2. Whole panel – students don’t know how UCAS points work.
    3. Newman – young people will only engage when they’re ready to engage, hard to know when it’s best to approach them. Families may also struggle to engage i.e. out of 2,400 Y12s, we only had around 200 families attend our guidance tutorials.
    4. Aquinas – examples that students can work backwards from; what options can come from a particular degree? Consider the “line of sight” and target everyone around the student with core messages.
    5. Runshaw additional comment- I think it would be really useful if universities could highlight exactly what students are getting for their £9250 per year. Many courses have quite a low number of teaching hours so it is important to inform potential customers (and their parents/carers) about what additional services are available to them and how their fees are being utilised. For example, state of the art facilities, careers service, counselling and wellbeing support, work placement opportunities. Finance is certainly one of the main factors when students are deciding whether or not to apply for university and so it is important for universities to demonstrate they are using student tuition fees appropriately and for the benefit of all students
12. **When HEIs come into college, do you have an expectation to have them back again or do you shop about a bit?**
    1. Whole panel – bit of both, but expectation to return but like to have a good mix.
    2. Runshaw – based on student interest/destinations really.
    3. Runshaw & Newman – Want to shop around but typically based on popular universities for that year.
    4. Aquinas – a stable careers programme is essential for Gatsby so having HEIs coming in again is brilliant.
13. **If HEIs can’t attend due to illness for example, what could suffice instead?**
    1. Xaverian – just look at booking back in another time.
    2. Aquinas – pre-recorded content.
14. **Would it be valuable to use application and conversion data during planning meetings between careers teams and HEIs?**
    1. Whole panel – yes! We need to have context and statistics to back it up with teachers and senior leadership teams. Also helps with networking knowing the data on the ground.
15. **When would it be good to have teacher meetings?**
    1. Xaverian – around the holidays and planning for the new year. Towards the start of the calendar year.
    2. Aquinas – summer is great, after Easter.
    3. Runshaw & Newman – Any time from April-end of summer.
16. **Are university newsletters useful? What info is more useful?**
    1. Whole panel – yes they’re really appreciated! Easier to forward on the better, best to be written as if directed at students, so careers teams can send them on to students straight away. Think of the content. Can it be added into Team easily or does it have to be converted by college staff, which would take more time to promote
    2. Aquinas – short as possible too to keep student attention spans.
17. **New UCAS Reference system? How are you finding it?**
    1. Runshaw – not clear how much information universities want in their references i.e. UCL wanted loads.
    2. Newman – new format is much better; it’s going to save loads of emails to universities on extenuating circumstances. Section 3 is a lot more challenging though. Everything will settle down after this first year of introduction.
    3. Panel asked if it’s worked better for universities – Lancaster reported references don’t really matter to their admissions departments.
18. **What large-scale exhibitions do you tend to visit, do you bring students or do students go on their own?**
    1. Aquinas – we don’t go to exhibitions, hard to transport them with the college and won’t convince students to go to make sure the college won’t be empty.
    2. Newman – one coach of students will go to UKUS Manchester in September, don’t do trips to UCAS but students can attend. We don’t do any specific preparation for the exhibitions but we let the students know about the benefits of going to the exhibitions.
    3. Runshaw – used to take all of Y12 to Manchester UCAS but not anymore. Now we just advertise it to students and they can attend themselves. Good to have apprenticeships and careers guidance now.
    4. Xaverian – we advertise the opportunities, allow authorised absences to go to Manchester UCAS Fair. They’re really good as there’s a great buzz about the exhibitions, lots of positive comments come back from the students who went.
19. **When would be the best time for a regional Teachers & Advisers Conference, would it be valuable?**
    1. Whole panel – yes, a collective regional one would be best, hard to get to loads of them. Subject-specific info is useful, updates from UCAS, personal statements guidance also really useful, advertisements of new courses. Early summer is the best time to run conferences.
20. **What sort of lead time would you like when it comes to advertising academic sessions? What formats?**
    1. Aquinas – virtual would be best. A calendar of events early as possible would be really good.
    2. Newman – definitely information earlier on when the subject taster sessions are, as early as possible in the academic year. Yr 12 taster days during the summer highly popular.
21. **Newsletters and updates – would once a month be useful or just sending it over piecemeal?**
22. Aquinas – we send updates out weekly so whenever you want to send it over, please do.
23. Xaverian – readers struggle with big blocks of information. We track how many people access our bulletin – of over 3,000 students, around 700 access it.
24. Runshaw – as and when.
25. Newman – LJMU have a really good newsletter. Just send me information for the students. Students don’t read emails, they get too many! We use Teams.

*Additional Questions*

1. **When is the best time to get students on campus for these taster day sessions? We have run a few from September till now and we are finding it very hard to get bookings and actually get schools on campus. Is this because of the time of the year and if so is there a time of the year that is the best time to get schools / colleges on campus for these taster sessions?**
2. (From an Aquinas teacher) As an A level pure exam subject I think Nov to Feb but a subject with coursework or Jan Vocational exams would say differently - essentially there is no longer a good time for U6 students. L6 students June/July would be best.

(John Morrison) As part of the careers team, it can be difficult to engage students at ‘the right’ times. I think our college curriculum is packed with curriculum based assessments throughout the year, but if you felt it could be useful, we could survey our Heads of Departments/Subjects. Alternatively, we are having more of a push with engagement, which could also be virtual opportunities.

1. Newman - March – June for Y12 would be best. Y12 take time to settle in and the majority are not thinking about progression until Spring of Y12.

1. Runshaw- I think the best time of year may be spring/early summer time as this is when students will be introduced to the idea of UCAS and university as part of the Progress Mentor sessions in college.

1. Xaverian - Yes, Sept-Dec is a little busy and whilst some departments have planned off-site events I would advise to think about spreading some across the calendar. For us, a direct discussion with individual Curriculum Leads would help you as there can be differences. I would say things start to ease from Dec.

1. **How worthwhile would it be to talk to students about postgraduate options?**

a. (From an Aquinas teacher) For a small minority yes, they really don't understand the options and some are interested

(John Morrison) I think yet. We run 2 major events, 1 in March and 1 in June and I feel a session on postgraduate options could be beneficial for a particular cohort of students. Again, this could depend on curriculum/subject areas which a postgraduate may lend itself to more, due to a career attached to required postgraduate study. Therefore subjects, such as Humanities and Social Sciences, may be more inclined to be interested.

b. Newman- I would not put too much emphasis on this to be honest as they find it hard enough to get their head round undergraduate! For the very proactive students they will know about it anyway.

c. Runshaw - This might be something which could be mentioned briefly but most students are mainly concerned with their immediate next step rather than further into the future. Examples of post graduate programmes could be highlighted to illustrate progression ideas – linked to specific job roles eg teaching, law, journalism etc

d. Xaverian - I think for some career subjects (MDV, Engineering, Architecture, Teaching etc) where a post grad is a distinct probability then yes, we have many students looking at these careers.

1. **What type of student finance/budgeting sessions do you do with students to prepare them for higher education?**

a.(John Morrison) I think the budgeting sessions are really useful to help them engage with their financial skills as well as consider the costs of university, potentially away from parental support. The more interactive, the better!

b. Newman – we have SF content in the Y12 tutorial in spring (so they can consider finance alongside their decision making) and touch on it again early in Y13. We do not have external speakers. It is also included in the parents evening talks that careers deliver in Y12

c. Runshaw - The Runshaw College’s Finance and Welfare Officer delivers sessions to Year 13 students within their Progress Mentor groups early in the spring term covering what funding is available, how to apply, paying it back, how to budget etc. She is also available for drop in queries throughout the year if students have any specific queries relating to their own situation. We also have factsheets available for students to take away

d. Xaverian - I think the messages about timeframes are useful to include throughout your publications (hints and tips etc), but certainly more information on financing for students who will not take out traditional methods due to religious reasons. Also, more clarity for students wanting to stay at home and/or funding in general such as bursaries and WP.

1. **Are you finding that you are doing less visits to universities due to costs?**

a.(From an Aquinas teacher) Yes and the issue of time out of lessons

(John Morrison) Yes and similar response to our teacher. Perhaps this is something we can weave into current curriculum and skill learning?

b. Newman - Not due to costs necessarily (transport costs are often supported by HEI anyway and staffing resource cost is not an issue at Newman), it is due to time! Both careers time and curriculum time. However, all subject areas have to do HE visits as part of the curriculum (and to support Gatsby B’s) so we do arrange them.

c. Runshaw - Yes, we used to offer a couple of visits a year, plus arrange a trip to the Lancashire UCAS Convention. Currently we mainly promote open days, taster days and UCAS conventions for students to attend themselves. The main issue now is not necessarily the transport costs but the staffing of such trips as we are a very small team.

d. Xaverian - Not sure about this, lots of Uni's offer financial support with transport costs etc......I think family finances plays a bigger factor to attendance especially those Uni's far from home.

1. **What is the single most critical knowledge or behaviour your students are lacking when it comes to preparing them effectively for employment?**

a.(From an Aquinas teacher) Many are too passive and don't start researching/doing wider reading/viewing to get ideas early enough. They are less willing to put the time in where there is no clear reward for an activity so miss out on what can be really valuable experiences to help shape their plans for the future

(John Morrison) Critical thinking, research – interactive activities to support our messages regarding being proactive and engaged student would be very helpful, recommended strategies and wellbeing – coping with stress, for example. I also think more can be done regarding motivation, goal setting, but again – it also depends on how they are delivered in engaged and effective ways.

b. Newman - this is hard one to answer because it varies by individual but here are some comments.

Young people think they apply to university for a Degree Apprenticeship (this is because universities advertise it on their websites, and I think it needs to be clearer that they must find employment first!)

They underestimate how competitive the job market is and how prepared they need to be and how important a diverse range of experience and skills examples are for a competitive application.

c. Runshaw - Many students do not realise how challenging it can be to secure a job/apprenticeship due to the limited number of vacancies and fierce competition. This particularly relates to degree apprenticeships with students being quite unrealistic in terms of what is available locally/nationally, how many other people will be applying and how to ensure their application is competitive

d. Xaverian - How the labour market works for people straight out of Uni, how to sell their attributes and skills, how they can use their degree and understanding the value of it for alternative careers. A lack of work or employer experiences.

1. **What sort of information would be useful to share with students about degree apprenticeships?**

a.(From an Aquinas teacher) Examples of the types of options available to them

(John Morrison) – What each university offers, how the programmes work, insights from apprentices, employers and universities, the recruitment process, time scales and an understanding of number of applicants compared to positions. Also an understanding of how the university operates as some may want an employer to be lined up, rather than offering support. Young people may not have the confidence/understanding to do this, but certainly it would be good from an adviser point of view how the apprenticeship programmes work.

b. Newman - As above! Make it clearer they do not apply to UCAS/uni for the DA. (Particularly NHS/health!)

More links to employer vacancies. If a HEI offers a DA subject, can they give some examples of employers that have previously engaged with them. Not suggesting that there would be a vacancy but will give students somewhere to start researching.

c. Runshaw - Types of apprenticeships offered, how are they advertised, do you have actual vacancies or does the applicant need to secure the job themselves then the university provides the training, how do they apply? Are you planning to offer any new apprenticeships in the future? Entry requirements inc qualifications and skills/qualities

d. Xaverian - The processes, help applying for some, having contacts in the industry and may be exposure to employment/apprenticeship market via the Uni contacts. I would also say addressing some of the questions above would tick some of these boxes.

**END.**