How to Build a Widening Access Curriculum

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The Access Service   12/01/2024

Curriculum Redesign Leads

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Overview

1. The Access Development Project
2. Understanding the barriers to our underrepresented groups
3. Access Sheffield offer
4. Building our curriculum
5. Outcomes
6. The role of quality assurance
7. Engaging our stakeholders
8. Q&A

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Testing testing…

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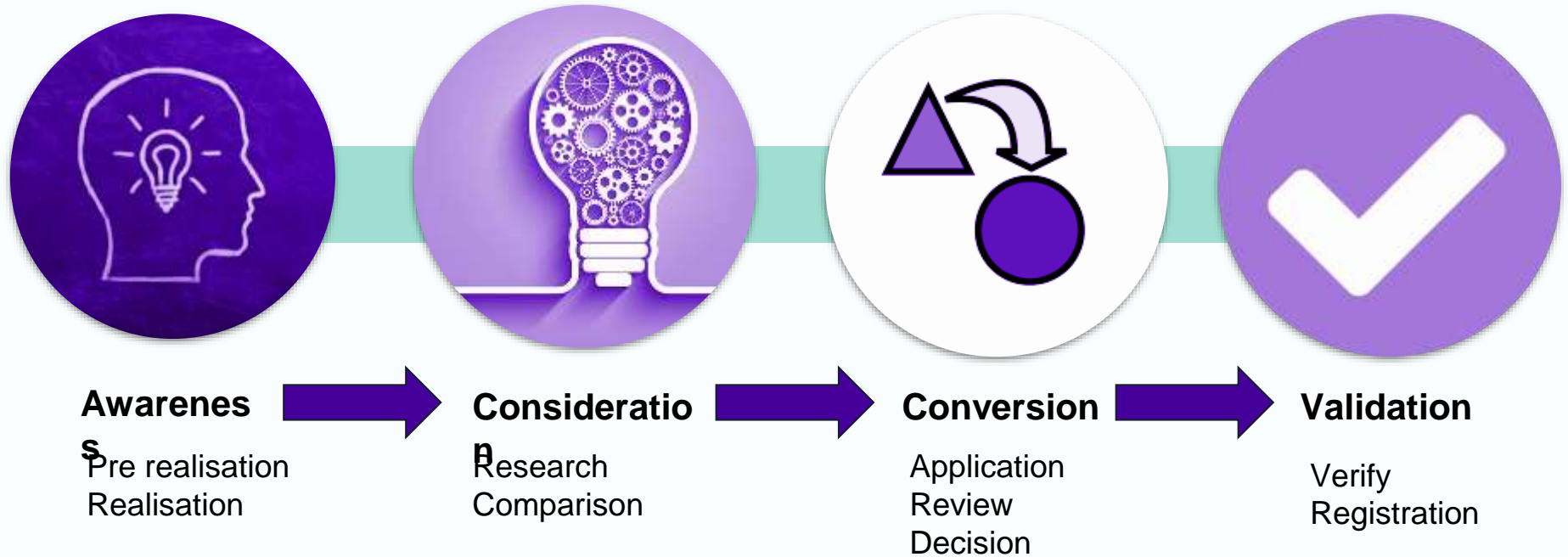# The Access Development Project

Access Development Project

We are increasing the number of students registering to study at the University of Sheffield from groups underrepresented in HE, who have the potential to attain and benefit from one of our degrees in line with our Access and Participation Plan and the University's current Vision.

Strategy	Groups and targets	Evaluation and reporting	Activity Redesign
Systems and processes	Partners, Donor, External Collaborators	Faculty, SRMA and Internal stakeholders	Student Journey

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Defining the Student Journey

Awarenes s → **Consideratio n** → **Conversion** → **Validation**

Awarenes s
Pre realisation
Realisation

Consideratio n
Research
Comparison

Conversion
Application
Review
Decision

Validation
Verify
Registration

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Defining our Target Groups

- OfS LPN group (TUNDRA)
- Free school meals
- Ethnicity (WWCB + BAME groups)
- Care leavers
- Care experienced
- Young carers
- Estranged
- Refugees
- Disabled students*
- Mature students*
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman, Boater*
- Children from military families*

Understanding the barriers faced by our underrepresented groups

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Informing our offer and curriculum

What are the main barriers to our underrepresented groups progressing to higher education?

Do students experience different barriers at different points in the student journey?

Do certain target groups experience some barriers more than others?

What interventions will we need for specific target groups?

What barriers are we and are we not addressing through our existing offer?

What interventions do we need to address barriers?

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Your thoughts…

Horizon Scanning

Assumptive ❌ underpinned by a Practice → Offer ✓

robust evidence base

- Dedicated horizon scanning groups centred around our target groups
- Creation of an evidence bank and research templates for each group
- Monthly team away days featuring "spotlights" on findings
- Development of problem statements, underpinned by research

"Students do not have access to regular support to talk about their aspiration to HE"

Horizon Scanning - Evidence Bank

#	Source (URL or link to file in evidence bank)	Date Accessed	Key Findings	Summarised Problem Statement/s	Stage of Student Journey	
			1. Those from the most deprived areas were less likely to be awarded a first or upper second class degree (irrespective of whether or not the individual's parents held higher education qualifications) 2. There is little disparity in the degree outcomes of those from the most deprived deciles by family background.		UG - Awareness	☐
			We cannot rule out the possibility that a 'neigbourhood effect' exists which leads to those from the most deprived areas being unable to fulfil their abilities regardless of their household conditions.		UG - Consideration	☐
			The evidence presented here therefore suggests that we should not dismiss the potential value of area-based measures in widening participation activity. The post discusses the case for and against- HESA's developing area-based measure of		UG - Conversion	☐
1	https://www.hesa.ac.uk/insight/10-10-2023/location-location-location-place-based-measures-widening-participation	12/10/23 (ET)	deprivation that seeks to address some of the known limitations of the Indices of Deprivation, such as the fact that they are not UK-wide and do not effectively capture deprivation in rural spots. Research constructed using Census data on the qualifications and occupations of residents in areas that generally consist of less than 500 individuals.	IN4: A student feels they do not have consistent academic support in their education due to their circumstances and/or background	UG - Validation PG	☐ ☑

Problem Statement Analysis

Problem Statements were themed and RAG rated across the student journey to understand:

1) The most common barriers across our underrepresented groups
2) At what point in the student journey these barriers are most common

Statement	Tally	Awareness	Consideration	Conversion	Validation
Students do not have access to regular support to talk about their aspiration to HE	11	11	8	3	3
Some students have difficulties accessing uni open days due to financial or transport constraints	7		7	5	5
Some students feel they are unsupported during their application process to University.	6	1	6	4	3

This analysis enabled us take a research based approach to rebuilding our service delivery model and make recommendations on the barriers which should be addressed at each stage of the student journey.
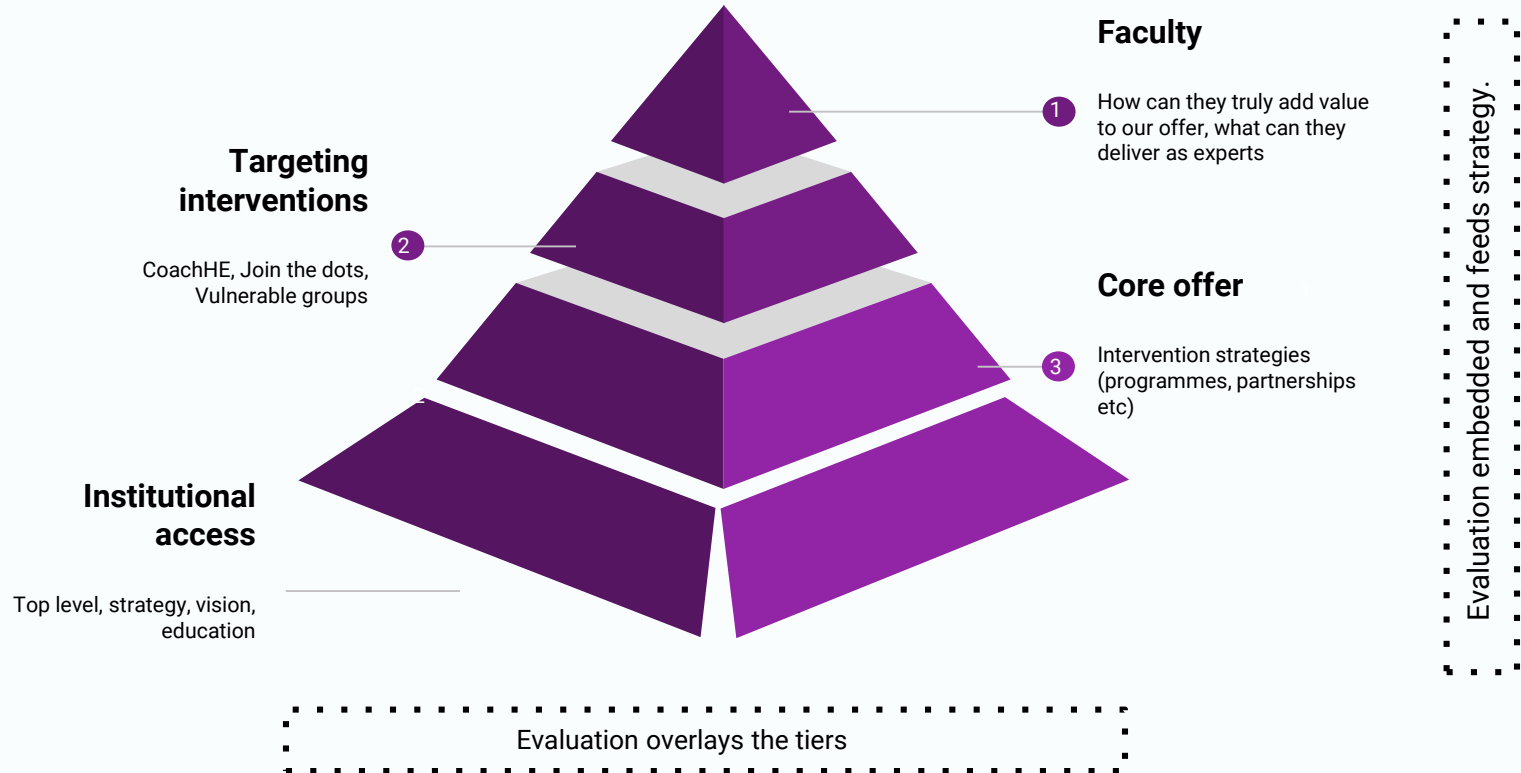
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Access Sheffield Offer

Access at Sheffield….

-   What even is access?

-   Access is a shared responsibility

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Faculty

1   How can they truly add value to our offer, what can they deliver as experts

Targeting interventions

2   CoachHE, Join the dots, Vulnerable groups

Core offer

3   Intervention strategies (programmes, partnerships etc)

Institutional access

Top level, strategy, vision, education

Evaluation embedded and feeds strategy.

Evaluation overlays the tiers

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Building our curriculum

Core Offer Problem Statements

- Immediate Network

- Sense of Belonging

- Academic Confidence

- Information, Advice and Guidance

	Consideration/Conversion (Application, review & decision)
	Post 16
	Y12 Summer School
Immediate network	IN1: Students do not have access to regular support to talk about their aspiration to HE
	IN3: Some students feel they are unsupported during their application process to University
	IN4: A student feels they do not have consistent academic support in their education due to their circumstances and/or background
	IN5: Students do not have the time out of school to focus on school studies/HE research and exploration/extra-curriculars
	IN7: Students require additional signposting to find information relevant to their status/ circumstances and their supporters lack this knowledge

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Identifying gaps in the existing curriculum

Activity Code	Year group	Month of delivery	Stage of student journey	Intervention	Activity	Problem Statements (3 max)	In person/ virtual	Resources	Activity description
ST5.1					Arrival Activities	IN1, IN5, SB2	In Person		- (Coaches at 12:30 and 1:15pm) - Arrival buffet - stand? - Optional tour of SU prior to session starti talks and/or activities prior to session starting
ST6					Welcome to campus (30 mins)	IN5, SB1	In Person		- Welcome to Sheffield, overview of city and surro - Video tour? - Welcome to TUOS, overview of university - Student ambassadors to share why they chose : what they like about the city
ST7					Campus tour (1 hour)	IN5, SB1, SB2	In Person		- Standard tour
ST8					Activity within project groups/settling in time/meet flat mates (90 minutes)	SB3	In Person		- Participants to meet SA in kitchen before dinner - Get materials for the week - hoodie etc. - Go down for dinner together
ST9	12	July	Conversion	Sutton Trust Summer School Day 2	Social activity - Task Master (120 minutes)	SB1, SB3, SB5	In Person	Taskmaster challenge	- Creativity 4 and Teamwork 4 - Students complete a series of tasks in groups to

Post-16 DASSH		
Gap analysis		
Theme	**Statement Y13 - Conversion/ Validation**	**Activity**
Immediate network	IN1: Students do not have access to regular support to talk about their aspiration to HE	
	IN3: Some students feel they are unsupported during their application process to University.	C37, C285, C286, C287, C307, C42
	IN5: Students do not have the time out of school to focus on school studies/HE research and exploration/extra-curriculars	C287, C305
	IN7: Students require additional signposting to find information relevant to their status/ circumstances and their supporters lack this knowledge	

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Building new activities

Programme: Access to Sheffield (Summer School)				Date of delivery: July/August	
Intervention: Summer School Day 3				In person or virtual: In person	

Objectives:
Problem statement objectives
- Students feel confident in their academic ability to progress to university/high tariff universities
- Students know effective study strategies to achieve the grades to get into their university of choice
- Provide consistent academic support for students

Session: Reflective learning session / Note-taking skills evaluation (2 hours)

Activity	Timings	Staff and ambassador roles	Skill builder step	Problem statement/s addressed
Task 1: Summarise the lecture in a couple of paragraphs Students work individually to use their notes to produce a short passage of academic writing based on the taster lecture	15	**Presenter:** • Get an overall consensus of how they found the lecture - easy/hard etc. • Think about how to summarise in academic writing - provide examples	**Teamwork Step 7 - I** contribute to group decision making, whilst recognising the value of others' ideas **Speaking step 8:** I speak engagingly by using visual aids to support my points	AC1: Some students are not confident in their academic ability to progress to university/high tariff universities
Task 2: Group discussion Students discuss in groups how they found the lecture and the note taking style they used. Read	15	Ambassadors to encourage students to listen to each other closely in groups and provide encouragement to students.		AC3: Students don't know effective study strategies to achieve the

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Logic Chains

Problem Statement	SB5: Students are concerned they will not be able to engage with the social aspects of university life because of their circumstances
Activity	Sports Taster and Social
Intermediate outputs	Students feel that they can engage in the social aspects of university life
Long term outcome	Students are confident to pursue HE with the knowledge that they will fit in and integrate into university communities/life
Evaluation	Pre/post evaluation Review registrations to TUoS

- Problem statement: What is the problem you are trying to address
- Intervention: Do you know of any (evidence based) successful ways to address the problem
- Intermediate outputs: What intermediate outputs - short and medium term - are you trying to improve in order to address the problem
- Long-term outcome: What long-term outcome will be improved by improving the intermediate outputs
- Evaluation: What would success look like and how would you measure it?

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The Skills Builder Framework - Skills for Success

Developed by the Essential skills Taskforce:

Review included graduate attributes listed in HEA and QAA, alongside individual frameworks of Aberdeen University, Bath Spa University, Cambridge University, Oxford Brookes, Glasgow University, University of the Arts London, University of West Scotland and University of York

Outcomes: Sutton Trust Summer School

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Sense of Belonging and Immediate Network

Following the summer school, students felt much more confident about meeting new people, socialising and living away from home.

(overlapping text, illegible)

Outcomes: Sutton Trust Summer School

Academic Confidence

Students reported an increase in confidence in their academic ability and the study skills they would require at university.

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↑24%

Information Advice and Guidance

Students had much more awareness about available university courses and felt more confident about making subject choices.

24% increase in student engagement they speak with confidence "The different courses about university of Sheffield which at for me"

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The role of Quality Assurance: Remaining agile and responding to change

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The Role of QA within the Evaluation Strategy

Is our activity fit for purpose? Are we setting appropriate objectives and can we achieve them through our delivery?

Measures impact - did we achieve the objectives we set out to?

Quality Assurance Data	Horizon scanning, peer observation, personal reflection
Evaluation Data	Start/end data, Skills Builder Benchmark, Listening Rooms
Reporting Data	Cost per head/value for money, progression data, registrations

Programme Updates

High Quality Provision
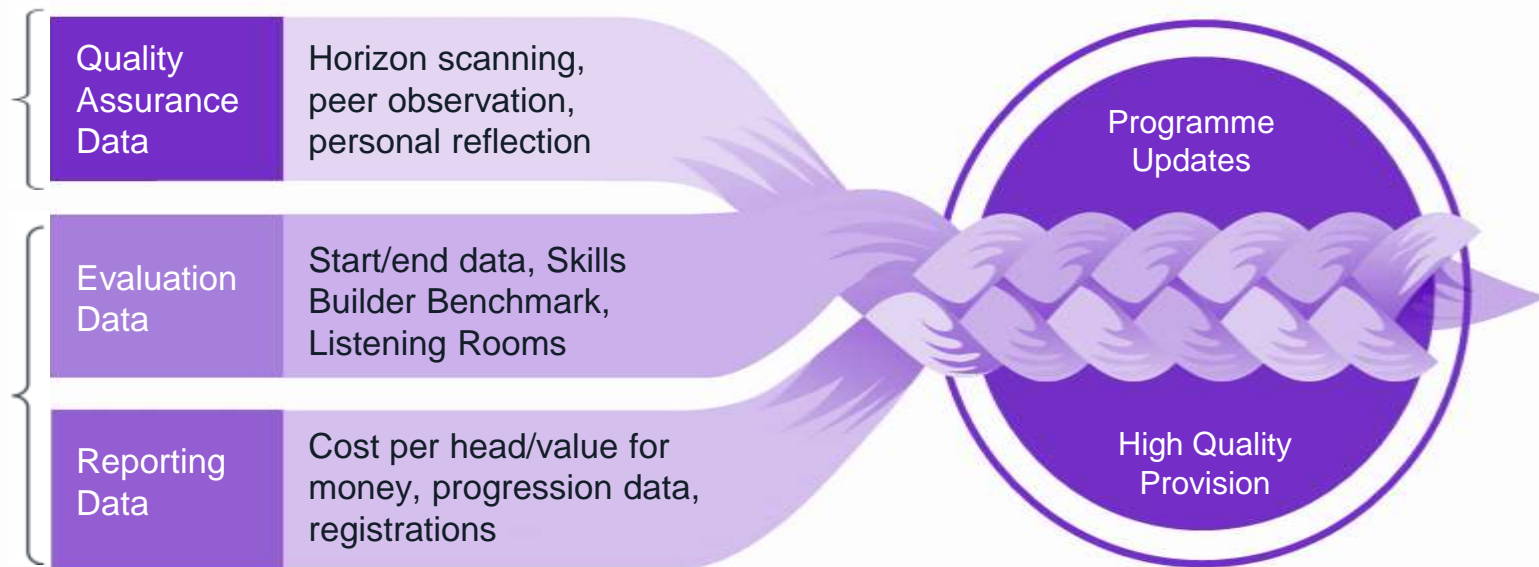
Quality Standards

The practices and principles we are striving to maintain, to ensure we are providing high quality provision which meets the Access Service

Offer and activity development

Presentations and resources

Delivery practice

Quality Assurance Processes

➔ **Horizon Scanning:** UG and PG underrepresented groups and their key influencers
➔ **SRDS reflection and objectives:** creation of objectives to support the delivery of high quality provision which meets the Access Service quality standards and vision
➔ **Peer observation:** deliverers to complete one peer observation per year to collect feedback on session content and delivery
➔ **Update activities and proformas:** yearly updates in line with QA and evaluation data
➔ **Update presentations and resources:** yearly updates in line with QA and evaluation data

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Engaging our Stakeholders

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UK Recruitment

- Embedding Skills Builder

- Impact Level Accreditation

- Access target schools

- Promoting our offer

Faculties and Student Support Services

- Sutton Trust Academic Strands

- Training for facilitators

- Link to Sheffield Graduate Attributes and MySkills

- Transition Support

Any questions?

Over and out! Happy building 🤓