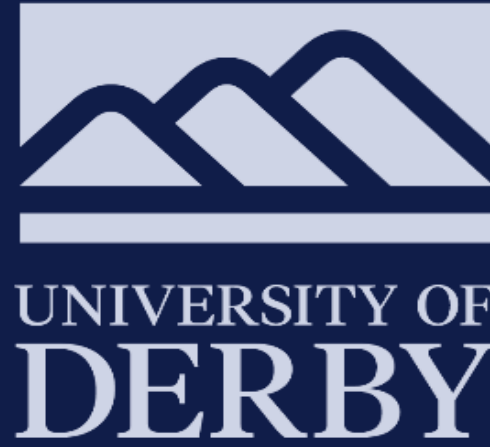


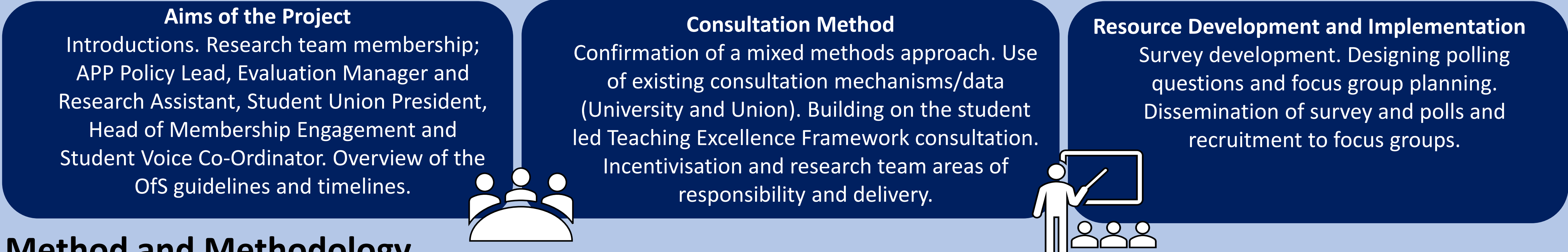
Access and Participation Plan (APP) Student Consultation: Collaboration and co-creation when accessing student voice

Access and Participation Policy, Research and Evaluation team



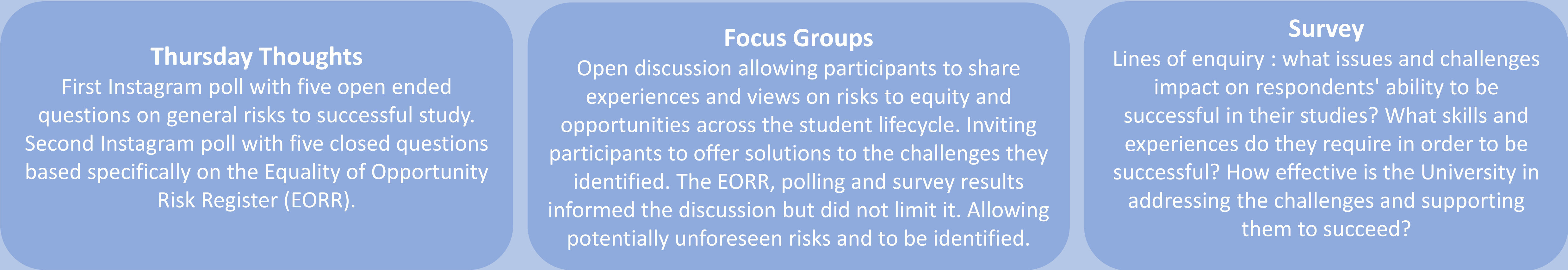
The Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation (APP) regulatory guidance (2023:45) states that a ‘credible plan is one that has been developed, in consultation with students, and in collaboration with the student’s union and the wider student body.’ In response, the University of Derby (a wave 1 APP provider) conducted a participatory three-month mixed methods student consultation project, led by the Union of Students. The overall aim of the project was to identify the risks to equity perceived by and experienced by our own students. To fully inform the development of the plan, the consultation looked beyond the identified risks and explored proposed solutions to the challenges faced by the participants.

Planning



Method and Methodology

Research resources disseminated through Union of Student channels. Part-time officers including ethnic minorities, disabilities, mental health awareness, mature students and LGBTQ+ and society Facebook group pages. Also, flyers, stands in communal spaces, and existing student panels.



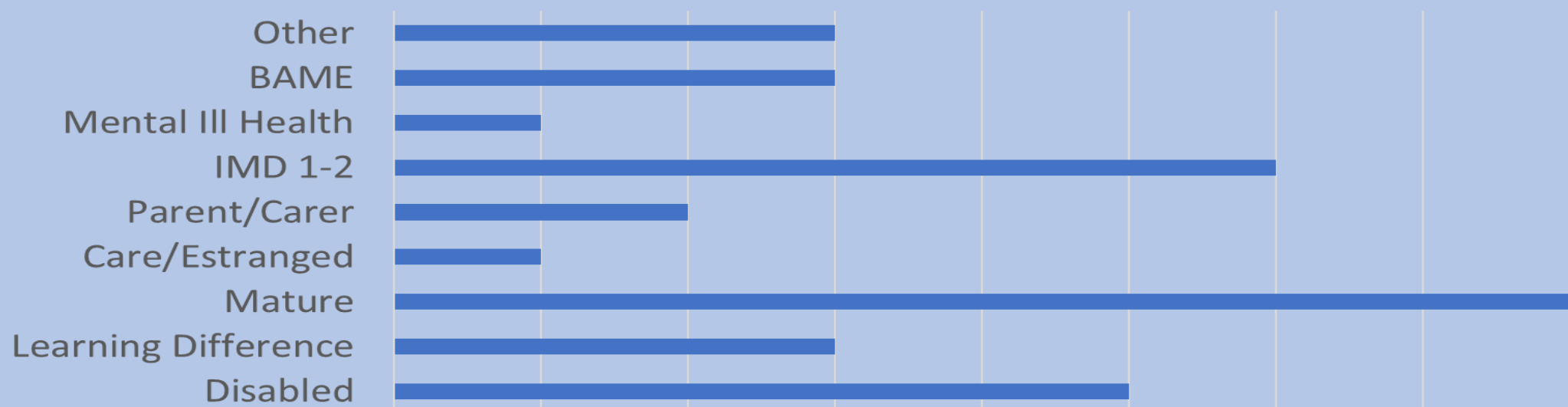
Analysis

Intersectional analysis of survey and focus group findings was conducted.

Findings

Four emerging themes:

- Academic Support** - assessment support and support for students with learning differences.
- Wellbeing Service** - waiting times and frequency of contact.
- Community** - sense of community across programmes.
- Finances** - impact of financial challenges on University experience



Solutions

- Contact guidance - having a place where it is easy to find who to contact in specific situations.
- More awareness amongst academic staff on how to support people who have a disability, learning difference or support plan.
- Specific careers and employment guidance for students with a support plan.

Office for Students (2023). Regulatory Advice 6: How to prepare an access and participation plan. Pg 45.

Challenges

- Lower than anticipated response and recruitment rates due to consultation timelines as dictated by APP submission dates and timing of guidance publication.
- Clashing with assessment periods/end of term.

Reflections and Lessons Learnt

- A valuable exercise which provided important insight for the development of the plan.
- A strong partnership was built with the Union of Students to take forward into future APP projects, consultations and evaluation.
- Mixed methods approach was effective. In particular, using existing Union of Students mechanisms.
- A student led approach to the consultation ensured greater engagement.
- Student led open discussion in the focus groups provided an equitable space for an honest discussion.
- Not limiting the discussions to the EORR and University priority topics was advantageous.
- More collaborative work will take place in this space in future.

Thank you to the University of Bath for sharing their approach to the APP consultation and their resources which helped to form the basis of our focus groups.

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