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# **SMILES is a peer led and staff supervised mentorship**

## **University of East London/Sport School**

- Many of our students are practical learners, often struggling to adjust to HE expectations. This leads to a high attrition rate.
- Our SSR is one of the worst in the University roughly 42:1, which impacts individual attention and support so readily needed by our student cohorts.

## **Scheme aim and objectives:**

SMILES was developed to address these issues by using students as partners and co-creators of their learning experience.

- Increase Social Inclusion & Integration within the university.
- Develop academic skills (e.g. independent learning) to make them successful students.
- Enhance and develop transferable skills.
- Develop communities of collaborative and co-created practices.
- Create links between UEL students and employability

## How SMILES fits with wider research

- Not only does a mentor increase mentees productivity, but it is suggested, this relationship can enhance progress within the system and serve as a signal of capability (Kirchmeyer, 2005)
- Students who were assigned a peer mentor reported feeling significantly more integrated into the campus and more connected to the community (Yomtov *et al.*, 2017)
- Increased Social Inclusion & Integration (Heirdfield *et al.*, 2008; Glaser *et al.*, 2006)
- Transition period- 1st year (Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Sanchez *et al.*, 2006; Andrews & Robin Clark, 2011; Drew *et al.*, 2000)
- Support strategies (McInnis *et al.* 2000)
- Confidence and Leadership (Fox and Stevenson, 2006)
- Flourishing student academic and holistic development (Vailes 2017)

# SMILES Organisation and Structure

Marketing/video  
Outreach/Events

PASS

Mental Wealth

Research/  
Work placement

Professional Development

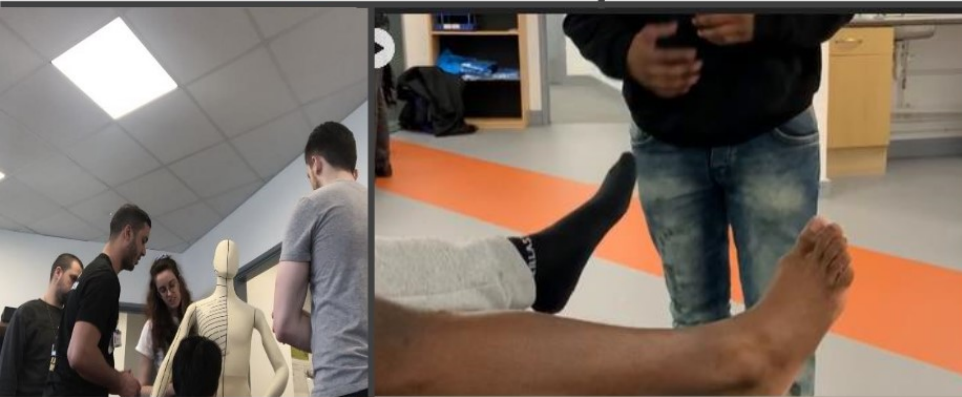
Enterprise

- SMILES mentors work individually, in groups, and within specific settings, to provide additional support for students.
- SMILES mentors on completion of their mentoring, which spans an academic year, are eligible for an **nationally accredited mentorship award**. This award is a kitemark sought after by employers.

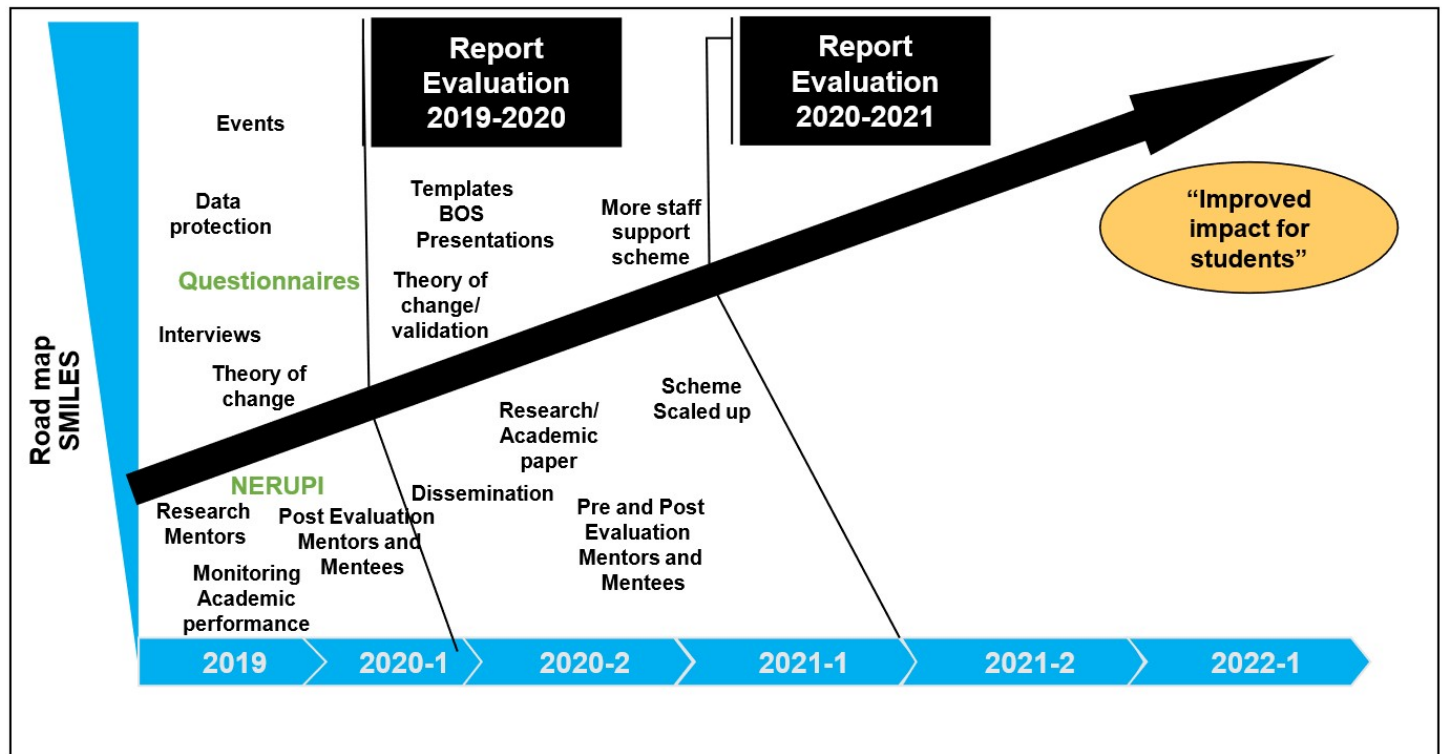
2019/2020

62 Mentors working with  
200 students across Sports  
Programmes

Lead Mentors



## SMILES evaluation Road Map: evolving process

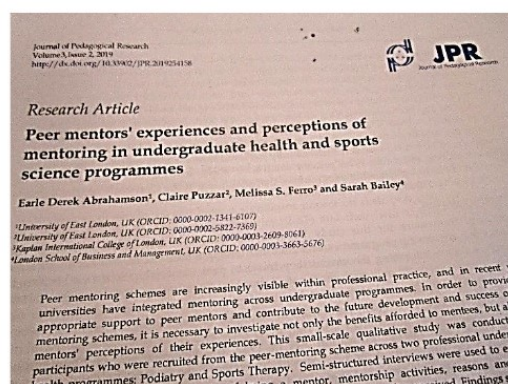
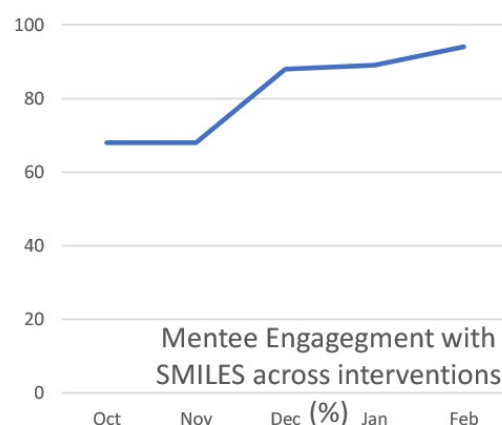




# Researching mentors

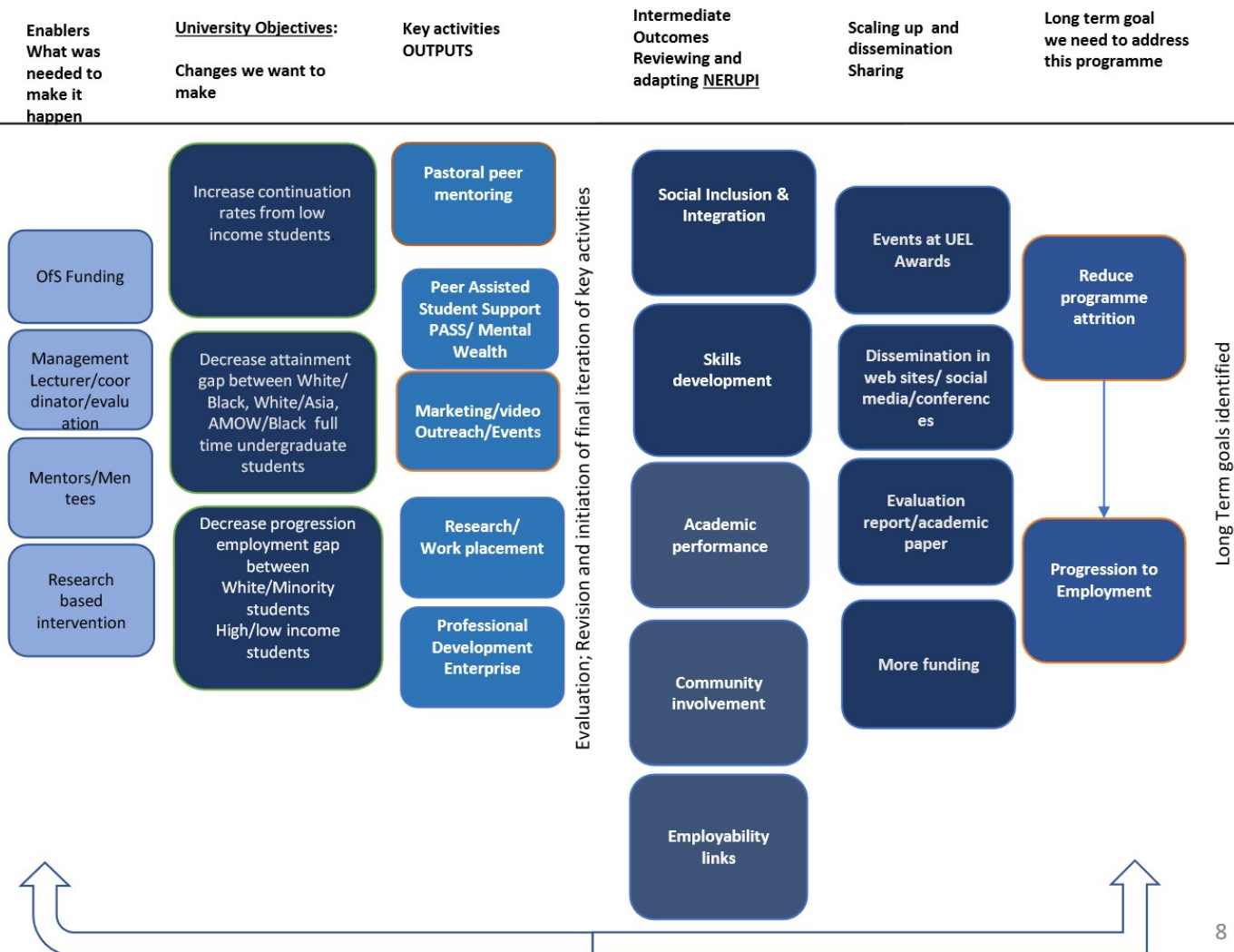
## Key findings:

1. Constructive and Destructive friction exists between how mentors perceive their role and the strategies and skills they use during the mentorship experiences.
2. Integration of formal and informal mentoring
3. Matching mentor with mentee creates an inclusive synergy
4. Understand the mentor and mentee journey, recognising how students interact and develop communities of practice



Abrahamson, E., Puzzar, C., Ferro, M. S. and Bailey, S. (2019).

Peer mentors' experiences and perceptions of mentoring in undergraduate health and sports science programmes. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*. 3 (2), pp. 21-37.





# NERUPI framework

Expected outcomes	NERUPI
Social Inclusion Integration/Belonging	BECOME: Develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenge of university life and graduate progression
Skills Development & academic performance	PRACTICE: Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment and successful graduate progression UNDERSTAND: Develop students' understanding by contextualising subject knowledge
Community involvement & Employability links	CHOOSE: Develop students' capacity to navigate higher education and graduate employment sectors and make informed choices

## Results so far

The scheme was adequately targeted and reached disadvantaged and under-represented students.

**Monitoring:**

Mentees: 55/99 BME students, 69/99 mature learners (over 25) and 54/99 Female.  
Mentors: 17/25 BME students, 14/25 mature learners (over 25) and 15/25 Female.

The scheme is relevant for students from Level 3-5 (mentees) and Level 5-6 (mentors).

**Outcomes**

- **Increased social inclusion and integration.**  
Mentors perceived their role as essential to helping others achieve a sense of belongingness and academic success, even when it meant being a different kind of mentor than what they had experienced.  
(Abrahamson et al, (2019).
- **Employability links:**  
48% of the level 6 secured employment in graduate positions including medical practices including the NHS, schools, leisure club management, coaching, and postgraduate studentships for masters and PhD study.  
Destination of Higher Education Report
- **Academic performance**  
Mentors and mentees improved their attainment by 15.86% compared with students who did not engage in the mentorship scheme.  
Programme evaluation and monitoring data

## SMILES Lead Mentors

### As a Mentee:

I think that really helped me because I was one step ahead of other students that weren't mentored [...] I was aware how to find journals and articles, books that were needed for my course [...] tips and tricks of how to study better, how to manage my time efficiently...

*Lead mentor 2018/19*

### As a Mentor:

We took the tutorials to another level [...] to have them weekly for students in order to learn and develop their anatomy understanding. we also, me and [Daniel] made life model anatomy, where we involved the students to help us develop the student model

*Lead mentor 2018/19*

**SMILES enabled me to develop confidence in my ability to interact with students, support their academic and professional development and allow them to flourish**

***Lead Mentor  
2019/2020***



Thank you for listening

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