

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF APP INTERVENTIONS ON UEL STUDENTS' ACCESS, SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION -AN OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION WORK AT UEL

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## Introduction

Each academic year, the University of East London (UEL) commissions an average of 25 projects through Access and Participation Plan (APP). All funded projects are designed to improve access, success, and progression for underrepresented groups. Projects also ensure attainment gap reduction for underrepresented groups against student groups with better outcomes at UEL. We evaluate these funded projects to showcase intermediate outcomes and the impacts. Our evaluation responds to the OfS call for the HE sector to develop practical assessments to measure their interventions' outcomes and impacts.

## Analysis

Analyses of our interventions are tailored to the aims and objectives of the projects of interest. Civitas Learning impact analysis results show how specific activities affect student continuation data. Projects also use the platform to target students at risk of drop-out. Power BI dashboards help us to measure success (i.e., attainment), individual grade differences for two to three years, project grade attainment figures, continuation rates, and engagement with courses and extracurricular activities for those who participate in interventions via projects. Thematic analysis reveals themes demonstrating student experiences and recommendations on how projects can improve student outcomes or impacts.

## Results

Over 12,005 students engaged with activities across 21 APP projects at UEL during the 2021-2022 academic year. APP project findings demonstrate medium outcomes and impacts that improve students' overall experience, including:

- communication skills
- problem-solving skills
- general admin skills
- digital literacy
- confidence
- presentation skills
- independent learning
- attention to planning
- organising details

## Objective

The purpose of this poster is to detail our evaluation of the impacts of APP interventions at UEL. In doing so, we report our processes and the outcomes of some projects commissioned through our APP.

## Methodology

Evidence-based narrative and empirical evaluation methods were used for the interventions. These methods include:

- Literature reviews
- NERUPI Framework
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Civitas Learning
- Power BI

## Interview Quotes

**Coaching for Success:** I'd never been in a group where I share issues and obviously expressing that in front of my colleagues and friends. It was a big sort of help, obviously when you realize that everyone is going through something.

**Pre-Entry Programme:** It is very academic and helps one to get fully ready for university courses. You have an idea of what to expect when you start your degree courses and the tutors are well-experienced, the teaching went smoothly. You go away with something to reflect on after each class.

**My Feedback:** A Because I had no idea what I was doing. So, I focussed on that erm, the team, I don't know if its separate but they also offer erm, like meetings and things where you can go and have academic training and things like that and that really helped. And now that's not one of the things that's highlighted when my comments come back.

## Conclusion

The findings of interventions show that our APP interventions positively impact access, success and progression of underrepresented groups during the 2020/21 academic year. Although the team is making progress in improving evaluation methods, we are looking for more robust approaches to do empirical research and measure causal relationships between project activities and outcomes for overall students' experiences.

## Related Literature

1.Harrison, N. and Waller, R., 2017. Success and impact in widening participation policy: what works and how do we know? Higher Education Policy, 30(2), pp.141-160.

2.Briggs, A.R.J., Clark, J. & Hall, I. (2012) Buildingbridges: understanding studenttransition to university.

3.Chuaphalakit, K., Inpin, B. & Coffin, P., 2019. A Study of the Quality of Feedback Via the Google Classroom-mediated-Anonymous Online Peer Feedback Activity in a Thai EFL Writing Classroom. International Journal of Progressive Education, 15(5), pp. 103-118.

Figure 1: Civitas Lift of Continuation for Six APP Projects During 2021/22

