

Supporting BTEC student Progression

Research Report: Key Findings

Prepared by LTEC



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

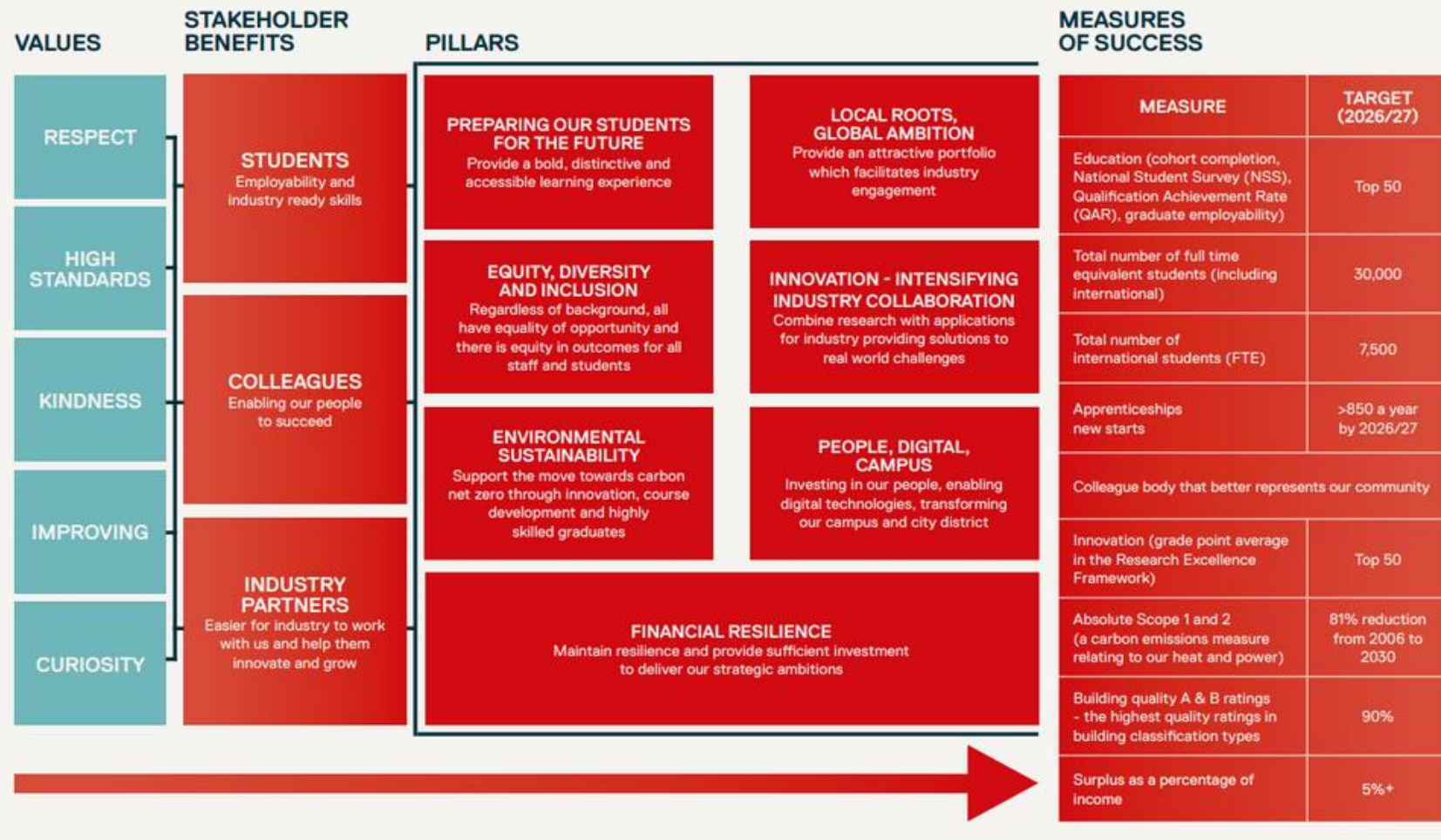
Supporting BTEC student progression Research Project



Introduction

- Sharing insights and best practices from the Enabling Student Success Project
- Brief Overview of the Project and Its Significance
- Focus on creating equitable student journeys

STRATEGY MAP



Project Background

Award Gap Data

- Award gap data for HQE between BTEC & A-Level
- Access and Participation Plan (APP)
- Growth in BTEC as a HE entry route
- Literature around impact of entry on both student outcomes and performance

Preparing our Students for the Future

- Developing skills and knowledge for student success
- University Focus on reducing award gaps
- Linking strategic priorities through ESS

Project Metrics Focus

- Enhancing timely progression metrics
- Passing 'all-modules first time' and completion rates
- Project alignment with UoS goals and strategies
- ESS refresh and focus on academic success

Aims & Objectives

Aim

To explore and capture insightful practice in relation to supporting BTEC student progression between levels of study.



Objectives

- Create a safe environment for program teams to share ideas, thoughts, and reflections.
- Capture and share best practices to enhance the student experience.
- Generalize findings into a model contributing to wider institutional learning.
- Raise the profile of learning and teaching at Salford by developing a framework to better support practice and enhance student success.



Context Informed Research Design



Institutional Context

- Data dashboard 'pass all module first time'
- A-Level and BTEC gap highlighted
- Module data as an indicator of success
- Balancing challenges and values of entry pathways

Research Design

- Steering group on first-time pass rates
- Advance HE framework mapping
- Scoping of three sub-projects
- 4 phase approach employed

Evaluation Approach

01

Four Phases

- Phase 1: Establishing a dataset to assess progression between A-level/BTEC levels, informing deep dives with program teams.
- Phase 2: Identification of a suitable framework for exploring progression between A-level/BTEC levels.
- Phase 3: Reviewing impactful practices through focus groups and workshops, assessing progression within the learning journey.
- Phase 4: Development of a Salford best practice framework to support progression irrespective of highest qualification on entry (HQE)

02

Data Collection

- Three school based focus groups
- One student based focus group
- Programme Workshops and Action Plans
- Contextual data from relevant literature and best practice
- Relevant dashboard data and internal statistics

03

Data Analysis

- Transcription and analytical notes
- Two stage coding process and a final thematic analysis
- Developing a narrative from contextual data
- Mapping data against strategic and institutional frameworks
- Drawing out best practice

Thematic Overview

Five primary themes have been drawn from the findings emphasising flexibility, inclusivity and value recognition

Supporting Student Confidence

Effective Pedagogical Approaches

Assessment Diversity and Feedback

Creating a Sense of Belonging

Recognition of Diverse Entry Backgrounds



Supporting Student Confidence

Theme Overview

Promote confidence among all students, particularly those with diverse academic backgrounds like BTEC, through early practical engagement, immersive experiences, and treating them as professionals from the start.

Key Takeaways

Early practical engagement, immersive experiences, and treating all students as professionals enhance student confidence.



Effective Pedagogical Approaches

Theme Overview

This theme underscores the importance of diverse teaching methods tailored to students' diverse entry backgrounds

Key Takeaways

Embracing a mix of teaching methodologies and providing clear instructions and support benefits students with diverse entry backgrounds.



Assessment Diversity & Feedback

Theme Overview

Diversity in assessment methods, including written, audio, and video assessments, accommodates students' diverse strengths.

Key Takeaways

Diverse assessment formats, constructive feedback, and involvement in peer review processes help students understand assessment expectations.



Creating a Sense of Belonging

Theme Overview

Establishing a sense of belonging through extracurricular opportunities, diverse communities, and inclusive learning environments is pivotal for student engagement and motivation.

Key Takeaways

Extracurricular opportunities, diverse communities, and an inclusive learning environment foster a sense of belonging and student engagement..



Recognition of Diverse Entry Backgrounds

Theme Overview

Recognising and valuing diverse entry backgrounds, particularly BTEC qualifications, is fundamental. This involves addressing biases, providing staff awareness, and adapting support mechanisms.

Key Takeaways

Acknowledging the unique strengths of BTEC qualifications, addressing biases, and promoting inclusivity can bridge the gap between students with diverse entry qualifications.





Takeaways

- Supporting Student Confidence: Early practical engagement, immersive experiences, and treating all students as professionals enhance student confidence.
- Effective Pedagogical Approaches: Embracing a mix of teaching methodologies and providing clear instructions and support benefits students with diverse entry backgrounds.
- Assessment Diversity and Feedback: Diverse assessment formats, constructive feedback, and involvement in peer review processes help students understand assessment expectations.
- Creating a Sense of Belonging: Extracurricular opportunities, diverse communities, and an inclusive learning environment foster a sense of belonging and student engagement.
- Recognition of Diverse Entry Backgrounds: Acknowledging the unique strengths of BTEC qualifications, addressing biases, and promoting inclusivity can bridge the gap between students with diverse entry qualifications.

Recommendations

These recommendations align with the University of Salford's commitment to enabling student success and reducing award gaps, ultimately ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive in their higher education journey.

- Develop support programs targeted to enhance student confidence while transitioning to higher education.
- Encourage diverse teaching methodologies to accommodate students with varying entry qualifications.
- Foster a culture of inclusive assessment methods and constructive feedback to support all students.
- Invest in extra and intra-curricular activities and community-building initiatives to promote a sense of belonging.
- Provide staff training and awareness programs to value and celebrate diverse entry backgrounds and to assist program teams in awareness and understanding of data.
- Encourage level 4 to be staffed with permanent staff to support transition and where possible designate personal tutors/mentors who have experienced a BTEC route into higher education.
- All Programmes to consider the positioning of professional skills modules to provide specific support at all levels of the learner journey and that personal tutoring be timetabled (blockers – no module code).

Progress 2023 – 2024

- Feb 2023 – Aug 2023 Focus groups/workshops 8 programmes and SU
- Oct 2023 – Analysis of insights gained from FG and other sources
- Nov 2023 – Recommendations approved UTLC
- Dec 2023 – School focus on recommendations lead by ADA's
- Jan 2024 – BTEC Levelness steering group met to discussing tracking
- Feb 2024 – Progress (tracking) report presented to ESEC
- May 2024 – Progress report (tracking) presented to ESEC
- June 2024 – Development of inclusive assessment principles with ADA and SU
- July 2024 – Inclusive assessment and feedback principles approved

Progress

- 113 PMEP actions have been logged, of which 46 have now been closed.
- Each of the School held a wider School workshops/discussion in collaboration with LTEC to implement appropriate recommendations
- Tracking of actions is three fold: PMEP, BTEC levelness steering group and reports to ESEC
- LTEC workshop with ADAs and SU to develop inclusive assessment and feedback principles.
- Aug – Sep the inclusive assessment and feedback principles have been used to support workshops for level 4/5 progression and a separate workshop with programme leaders group.

References

Project Team

Project Lead: Jess Power



Steering Group: Frankie Baines, Eve Blezard, Lauren Beckett, Annette Cooke, Janine Crosbie, John Dermo, Sinead Farry, Timothy France, Nicola Grayson, Nicole Holt, Kiefer Lee, Sara Namvar, Christina Patman, Maggie Scott, Emma Smith, Sheridan Thomas, Calum Thomson, Davina Whitnall, Paul Wilson, Gerard Wood.

APP (2023) Access and Participation Plan 2023, University of Salford (unpublished).

Atherton, G. (Feb 2021) Will abolishing BTECs mean reversing widening access to higher education? NEON report. Available at: [BTEC-report-FINAL.pdf \(educationopportunities.co.uk\)](#).

Dilnot, C. Macmillan, L. and Wyness, G. (2022) Educational choices at 16–19 and university outcomes. Oxford Brooks Business School. Available at: [Nuffield foundation research](#)

Hayward, G. and Hoelscher, M. (2011) The Use of Large-Scale Administrative Data Sets to Monitor Progression from Vocational Education and Training into Higher Education in the UK: Possibilities and Methodological Challenges. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 6(3), pp.316–329.

Huskinson, S., Makenzie, H., Pond, K., and Goodman, R. (2020) What is success? Reflections on assisting BTEC students' transitions into higher education. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*. 6(1) pp. 1–11.

HESA (2021) Non-continuation summary: UK Performance Indicators. The Higher Education Statistics Agency. Available at: [Non-continuation summary: UK Performance Indicators | HESA](#)

Myhill, D., Banerjee, P., Herbert, D., Robinson, C., Kaniadakis, A., Lawson, H., Venner, S., Morris, R., Mackenzie, H., and Kinderkhedra M. (2019) Transforming transitions. A HEFCE Catalyst Project. Available at: [Transforming Transitions](#)

Round, D., Brownless, C. and Rout, A. (2012) The landscape of vocational progression in higher education: understanding the retention and progression of vocational learners through a regional perspective. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 17(1), pp.5–19.

Thomas, L. (2012) 'What works? Student Retention and Success'. Higher Education Academy. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/building-student-engagement-and-belonging-higher-education-time-change-final-report>.

Thomas, L., Hill, M., O' Mahony, J. and Yorke, M. (2017) 'Supporting student success: strategies for institutional change'. What Works? Student Retention & Success programme. Final Report. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Available at: <https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf>.