

# Widening Participation

CARDIFF  
UNIVERSITY  
PRIFYSGOL  
CAERDYD

Annual Report 2024



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# Foreword

Cardiff University's mission is to co-create and share new knowledge, to deliver a better world for future generations.

We do this by offering an excellent educational experience for students of all backgrounds. 'Our future, together', our university-wide strategy that charts our course to 2035, outlines our determination to offer flexible, lifelong learning to our students that gives them choices, agency and a voice; and to help people from all backgrounds transform their lives.

We support students from widening participation backgrounds along every step in their student journey; from inspiring people of all backgrounds to consider university as an achievable option, to nurturing confident and successful futures for all our students. In 2023-24, we worked with adult learners, care-experienced individuals and young carers, refugees and asylum seekers, to name but a few.

Our Widening Participation Strategy 2020-2025 highlights the power of education to transform lives and asserts that educational and economic disadvantage should not be barriers to students achieving their full academic potential, and gaining access to meaningful and fulfilling careers.



## The strategy has four main aims:

- 1** To **engage and inspire** people of all generations to consider higher education as a realistic and achievable option.
- 2** To **attract and recruit** students with academic potential, regardless of background or personal experiences.
- 3** To enable a **successful transition** to university and foster an excellent and supportive student experience.
- 4** To nurture and encourage **confident and successful futures** for all.

This annual review of widening participation at Cardiff University reflects upon the last year, and showcases and celebrates the progress teams across the university have made in making Cardiff University a place of learning for all.

## Nicola Innes

Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience

# Engage and inspire

Our engage and inspire projects encourage under-represented groups to aspire to higher education.

At Cardiff University, we believe in the power of education to transform lives. Through our work we strive to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, are inspired to apply to university and study, succeed and thrive in higher education and beyond.

The Widening Participation Team delivers projects throughout the year, with a variety of groups, to inspire and support progression to university.

## Working with schools

Our work with primary and secondary schools in the local community offers engaging educational opportunities for pupils, inspiring young people through the research and expertise within the university. Initiatives, including the Higher Education Roadshow and 'Space Academy', have worked with over 10,000 students to encourage them consider the benefits of higher education.

### Primary School Programme

Cardiff University's Primary School Programme is delivered in partnership with Cardiff Council's **Passport to the City** initiative. The project delivers opportunities for children to study subjects aligned to the Curriculum in Wales, while learning new skills and raising their aspirations.

**In 2023-24 we hosted more than 15 campus sessions, involving 12 academic schools, eight primary schools and over 450 learners.**



“By optimising use of the city’s resources and the fantastic opportunities available through our partnership with Cardiff University and others, we are able to engage with children and young people through a wonderfully diverse range of provision, some of which they might not usually be able to access.”

Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader of Cardiff Council and Cabinet Member for Education

“Our children and their families had a fantastic time at the graduation ceremony. Their involvement and participation has raised aspirations for our families and given them a real sense of purpose and achievement. We are so very grateful to the University for giving our children these fantastic experiences and to Cardiff Council for funding our transport to participate.”

Nicky Prichard, Headteacher at St Mary the Virgin Church in Wales Primary School

## Supporting schools

### School Governor Network

The School Governor Network supports university staff to become school governors. School governors use their skills and expertise to support the leadership and management of schools and to improve educational attainment and wellbeing for the next generation.

**“Because I don’t have children, I can be neutral in decision-making, which some other governors may struggle with when making tough decisions on things like the budget or staffing. It’s mutually beneficial to the governing body and the University when sharing and developing skills and knowledge.”**

Ruth Williams-Sharp, Cardiff University School Governor Network member

**Over 120 staff are now members of the School Governor Network, an increase of 25% on last year.**

**“Support from the School Governor Scheme was absolutely key in helping me make the decision to apply. They supported me on a one-to-one basis to help me understand the commitment involved and answer any questions that I had. The University’s policy on civic duties and the fact that it is recognised and can be included in our PDR was a real benefit to me. It helped me to feel supported in taking on the role.”**

Ali Carter, School Governor Network member

### School Governor Small Grant Scheme

In 2023-24, schools where Cardiff University staff serve as school governors were able to apply to receive £500 for activities that would benefit pupils with WP characteristics. The scheme funded initiatives that supported: school leadership and management, wellbeing, the new curriculum for Wales, recovery from educational disruption, closing the attainment gap, development of new skills, support for career aspirations, and teaching and learning.

**10 schools were awarded funding to deliver projects, with 176 pupils and 63 teachers benefiting.**



## Inspiring through research

A small grants scheme was run where researchers were challenged to use their subject knowledge and research skills to engage and inspire the next generation, through a small grant to support activities for KS3 and KS4 pupils.

**Five projects were awarded small grants and engaged with over 1,500 primary school pupils.**

**“It has inspired 12 of the 13 students in attendance into wanting to attend university...this impact is great!”**

Head of Year, Porth Community School

Space Academy Cardiff received funding for ‘Mission2Mars’, a programme supporting pupils to learn more about space travel and Mars colonisation.

**“I have met people with all types of careers and stories which...made me more confident about STEM subjects.”**

Space Academy participant

**“Two children in my class went to Space Academy, and they haven’t stopped talking about it since they got back, they absolutely loved it!”**

Teacher, Cathays High School

## Higher Education Roadshow

In 2023-24 the HE Roadshow visited 52 schools across Wales, providing information about higher education, the benefits associated with further study, and the importance of working hard at school.

**A new topic was developed, Building Resilience and Managing your Mental Health, and was delivered 34 times.**

**Over 10,000 students engaged**

- 181 talks/workshops
- 30 campus visits

**90% of teachers would recommend the HE Roadshow.**

**“[The sessions were] informative and delivered in way that engaged all students.”**

Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi

**“[The sessions were] helpful and adaptable to my purpose, which was to inspire pupils unlikely to think about university to think about it.”**

Ysgol Greenhill

# Priority groups

Our programmes for priority groups empower participants by providing positive university experiences, practical skill-building activities, and give essential support around applying and attending higher education. Our programmes are tailored to support groups we believe have additional barriers into university such as care experienced (including adopted), estranged, carers, mature learners and those with military experience.



## Confident Futures

Working with care experienced young people (including adoptees), those estranged from family, and young carers; Confident Futures aims to provide participants with positive experiences of higher education and to increase confidence in their ability to progress to university.

Confident Futures offers talks at schools and in the community, visits to Cardiff University campus, and training for professionals on supporting care experienced young people into university.

In addition to hosting our own events, activities have been developed in collaboration with The Fostering Network, The Carers Trust and the Trussel Trust. These collaborations strengthen our connections across the care experienced and young carers community.

**“Very positive feedback from the pupils and it has certainly taken away any fears they previously held about uni.”**

Teacher, Stanwell School

## Discovery

Discovery provides autistic young people with insight into university and the skills they need to thrive there. Masterclasses and a residential summer school increase participants’ understanding of higher education and its benefits, whilst equipping them with valuable skills for the future.

### Discovery Masterclasses

Our young people met across five weeks to socialise and, in a safe environment, explore concerns around progression onto higher education through workshops designed to develop skills and confidence.

**90% of project participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were thinking about going to university in the future.**

**“I got to meet more people like me and so I made new friends. Came for the pizza, stayed for the people and fun, informative sessions.”**

Discovery Participant

Alongside supporting students, Discovery provides information and advice sessions for parents, carers and guardians to help them support their young people.

**“It was a wonderful experience to attend as a parent, I have had a lot of support from the project and by meeting other parents, which has been invaluable.”**

Parent of Discovery participant

### Discovery Summer School

In July, we welcomed 20 autistic young people on to our summer residential. Our participants lived in halls of residence to explore some of the practical skills needed to be a student including living with others, budgeting, shopping, cooking and the social side of university life.

## Reaching Wider

The South-East Wales Reaching Wider Partnership is a collaboration between teams at the University of South Wales, Cardiff Metropolitan University and Cardiff University. The Partnership raises educational aspirations for adults and young people in Wales through various programmes, including a Welsh for Employability event.

Cardiff University focus on the communities of Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly.

**In 2023-24, 1,146 learners engaged with Reaching Wider across the South Wales partnership.**

### Welsh for Employability

These sessions demonstrated how Welsh language skills enhance employability, through a combination of in-school workshops and a university campus visit.

**Over 300 pupils took part in the campus visit.**

**73% of attendees agreed that using the Welsh language will help them find a job in the future.**

“I have learnt that knowing Welsh will bring me so many opportunities in the future and going to university is worth it.”

Reaching Wider participant

“One of our learners, who has been very disengaged with school recently, was telling his peers soooo enthusiastically about how Welsh can make you “more employable” because of new laws and “more job opportunities” and he cannot wait to learn more in Year 10. It was really lovely to listen in to.”

Reaching Wider school teacher



## Working with parents

### Cardiff Parent Power

We partner with The Brilliant Club on Cardiff Parent Power, a project which empowers parents and carers without first-hand experience of higher education, to support their children. Members develop community organising skills and gain knowledge of higher education, whilst initiating independent campaigns that benefit their community.

“[I joined Cardiff Parent Power because] I have a 14-year-old child who is nearing university age and I have no clue, so mainly to educate myself first and then educate my children, starting with my 14-year-old.”

Cardiff Parent Power member

In 2023-24, Cardiff Parent Power contributed to The Big Conversation and proposed changes to the university’s prospectus and communication of their contextual admissions policy.

# Attract and recruit

Our attract and recruit projects focus on young people aged 16 and above, to support them to progress to higher education.

## Step Up to University Masterclasses

The Step Up masterclasses welcomed over 200 young people from widening participation backgrounds onto campus for six masterclasses; building subject knowledge and fostering the skills needed to thrive at university. With sessions designed and led by Cardiff University PhD students, Step Up allows participants to build knowledge and share their ideas in an inspiring environment.



**32% increase in participants reporting  
“I know what studying at university would be like.”**

A diverse range of subjects are offered to reflect participants' interests. While those passionate about Languages, Literacy, and Communication delved into Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Beyoncé's Lemonade, participants interested in Science, Technology, and Maths were problem solving their way out of an escape room.

**“We were constantly engaged and thoroughly informed, equipping us with the knowledge to be prepared for university.”**

Step Up masterclass participant



## Step Up to University Summer School

Over 75 participants took part in a three-day residential summer school providing further insight into university life.

**Evaluation showed a statistically significant increase in participants' knowledge of how to apply for their chosen degree, and self-confidence in their ability to submit a strong university application.**

**“We got a tour of the library, and had a case-based study session, which was so cool. We had the opportunity to use our own knowledge of science to find out what was wrong with the patient! Very engaging and interactive.”**

Step Up Summer School participant



# Sutton Trust partnership



## Sutton Trust Medicine and Dentistry Summer School

77 pupils from across the UK took part in a four-day residential summer school. Participants practised medicine and dentistry multiple mini interview skills (MMIs), undertook clinical skills sessions, and collaborated on case-based learning, alongside attending information sessions on accommodation, student finance, and societies.

**24% increase in participants strongly believing that they will get a place if they apply to university.**

“I really enjoyed making friends as well as taking part in the MMIs even though that was what I was scared for at the start, it just showed me how well I could do and how I could improve.”

Medicine summer school participant

## Pathways to Law and Engineering

Pathways to Law and Pathways to Engineering are run in partnership with the **Sutton Trust**, a social mobility charity, for Year 12 and 13 students from widening participation backgrounds. Participants experience academic workshops, attend work placements and insight days with industry leaders, and enjoy a summer residential conference.

Activities are designed in collaboration with the School of Law and Politics, and the School of Engineering. We provide information and guidance on university life, as well as an insight into what studying law or engineering would really be like, helping individuals prepare for, and gain entry to, university.

**Participants' confidence in navigating UCAS increased by 51%.**

Leading industry organisations provided 25 work placements and insight days for Pathways participants, including, British Airways and Eversheds Sutherland.

“One thing I realised from participating in the prior sessions is that I need to develop my oral communication skills. However, after today's session I feel more confident in being able to improve that.”

Pathways to Law participant



## Open Days

Cardiff University hosts four undergraduate Open Days each year, allowing prospective students to explore the campuses and facilities, meet our students and staff, and ask questions.

At these Open Days, the Widening Participation Team works with Together at Cardiff to host dedicated support sessions for attendees from priority groups. Staff and student ambassadors are available to assist with specific queries or to help plan their day, all in a quiet and supportive environment. We also offer a mature learner drop-in session.



## Contextual admissions

For prospective students applying to Cardiff University, our contextual admissions policy considers their background and personal circumstances. This approach gives opportunities to those who might have faced challenges in their education, aiming to create a more diverse student body.

Cardiff University updated its contextual admissions policy for 2024 entry.

**We use information provided by UCAS about applicants to determine their eligibility for a contextual offer, including:**

- care experience
- parenting responsibilities
- free school meals data
- asylum seeker status
- estrangement

Contextual applicants may receive, a 1 or 2 grade lower offer, a guaranteed interview or audition, and/or extra points or additional consideration in the scoring process.

## Pathways to a Degree

Lifelong Learning (LEARN) provide part time courses in the evening and at weekends. The Pathways to a Degree programme is an alternative to A-levels and other access qualifications, as it is taught and assessed in similar ways to first year undergraduate courses. This means that learners will gain first-hand experience of studying at degree level in a higher education environment.

Support is also provided to prepare and submit degree applications, and to prepare for degree interviews when the time comes.

**381 Pathways students have progressed to undergraduate study at Cardiff University since the Pathways programmes began.**

**The 2023-24 Pathways to a Degree programmes supported a diverse range of students:**

- 57% living in postcodes with high relative deprivation
- 48% from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups
- 17% with refugee or asylum seeker status
- 30% had a disclosed disability

# Aspire

As part of our commitment as a **University of Sanctuary**, the Aspire programme supports sanctuary seekers with access to specialist Information, Advice, and Guidance, signposts bespoke services and opportunities (such as scholarships and financial aid) and creates a sense of belonging.

## Aspire Open Day

We welcomed 25 sanctuary seekers onto campus for a bespoke Open Day. Talks focused on sanctuary seekers' perspectives on lifelong learning, admissions, student finance and scholarships, alongside more than 20 stalls from organisations such as Oasis and the Welsh Refugee Council.

**96% of participants would recommend the Open Day to other sanctuary seekers.**

*"[My favourite part of the Open Day was] the kindness of the people and I was also able to find answers to all my questions."*

Aspire Open Day attendee

## Aspire Summer School

The Aspire Summer School welcomed 33 sanctuary seekers onto campus for eight days of English language classes, delivered by the English Language Programmes team, and short courses delivered by Lifelong Learning. Participants experienced university life and built a supportive community.

**The number of participants who could envision themselves studying at a UK university increased by 11%, bringing the total to 92% of participants.**

*"This course was incredibly important and useful for me. After each lesson, I felt strength and confidence. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone involved for this opportunity."*

Aspire Summer School participant

**There were 33 participants from 18 different countries, creating a diverse international community.**



## Aspire IELTS Scholarship

IELTS is an English Language proficiency test which is necessary for admission to many university courses, presenting a barrier to many sanctuary seekers.

In 2023-24, the Aspire IELTS Scholarship provided cost of living support, access to laptops, and payment for an IELTS Academic exam for eight sanctuary seekers.

*"I'm looking forward to reaching out to my goals and being able to create lots of memories in my university life."*

Veronika – IELTS Scholarship recipient

Veronika is now studying at Cardiff University after successfully passing the IELTS exam.



## Aspire Pathway Award Scholarship

6 scholarships are available to asylum seekers to complete a Pathways to a Degree programme.

**3 recipients from 2023-24 have gone on to study at Cardiff University.**

*"We are thrilled to be able to provide learning opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers living in Wales. The ASPIRE Pathways Scholarships provide a unique opportunity to support these individuals onto undergraduate courses at Cardiff University, which has proven to be very successful."*

Sara Jones, Co-ordinating Lecturer, Lifelong Learning



# Academic schools spotlight

## Mentoring



### MFL Mentoring

MFL Mentoring is a Welsh Government funded project that encourages young people to see the value and benefits that languages can bring to their lives. University students are trained to become language and culture mentors to work with learners in Years 8 and 9 who have previously indicated that they are disinclined towards languages. They inspire a love for language learning and intercultural curiosity.

**Since 2015, MFL Mentoring has worked with 172 secondary schools across Wales, approximately 20,000 learners and around 800 university students.**

In 2023-24, 36% of mentees opted to study a GCSE language, compared to a national average of 10%.

**"I enjoyed the experience in general and learning interesting facts about different languages as it's improved my mindset on how I view different cultures."**

MFL mentee

**"I want to express my gratitude for the meaningful experiences and opportunities I have had while being part of the project. It has been a valuable journey, and I'm thankful for the chance to contribute to such a worthwhile endeavour."**

MFL mentor

**"All of our mentors this year were professional and were excellent role models. The support offered by the whole team is excellent. Thank you for all your hard work!"**

Teacher

**In 2024-25, the project will be working with 114 secondary schools, reaching approximately 56% of all secondary schools in Wales.**



Ariennir gan  
Lywodraeth Cymru  
Funded by  
Welsh Government



## Love Reading Mentoring

**Love Reading** is a Welsh-Government funded project that motivates and inspires primary school learners to embrace the power of reading. In 2023-24, the project empowered and upskilled university students to deliver 6 targeted, engaging and fun mentoring sessions to learners in years 5 and 6.

**Over 140 learners from 12 primary schools.**

“The mentees seemed really excited about the project. They were particularly eager to name their reading friends and talk about the books they are reading at the moment in school. Mostly they were excited to learn more about me and my time at university.”

Love Reading mentor

“I didn’t used to like reading but Love Reading has made me feel more confident reading and don’t just give up on a book. You need to read more to know more.”

Love Reading mentee



## Physics Mentoring

Physics Mentoring is run by the School of Physics and Astronomy and funded by Welsh Government in partnership with Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea and Wrexham Universities, and the University of South Wales. University students are trained to become physics mentors to enthuse secondary school pupils about physics by exploring its relevance to daily life and the skills they can develop from a post-16 physics qualification.

We believe that physics is relevant to all lives and should be available to all who wish to engage with it.

**Since 2019, 193 mentors have been placed into 73 secondary schools across Wales.**

# Transition and support

Transitioning to university can be difficult for many students. Limited access to support networks, financial worries, and a lack of self-confidence can make the transition more challenging for some students.

Cardiff University's ongoing initiatives, including online inductions, community-building activities, and scholarships for underrepresented groups, aim to provide the necessary support and resources to ensure a smooth and inclusive start for all students.

## Mature Students Induction

An online induction was held at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year, to welcome first year undergraduate mature students to the university. The event was run by the Widening Participation Team and supported by colleagues from the School of History, Archaeology and Religion, and Lifelong Learning.

Attendees were encouraged to celebrate their success in getting to university, to meet one another, and discuss topics that were important to them before their studies began.

We provided a dedicated space for mature students to connect, and to recognise they are not alone at the university.

**89% of attendees found the mature student online induction useful.**

**"To hear people of similar age have the same concerns reassured me, it really took some worries away."**

Mature Student Induction Attendee



## Cowrie Scholarship

Our partnership with The Cowrie Scholarship Foundation, provides Black British students with financial support to pursue an undergraduate degree. In 2024, the first Cowrie Scholarship was awarded at Cardiff University.

**"As a university committed to anti-racism, we are proud to be able to award a scholarship specifically designed with the needs of Black British students in mind."**

Anna Varadi, Widening Participation Manager

# Student Life



## Student Funding and Advice

The Student Funding and Advice Team provide essential pre-entry guidance advice to prospective students and applicants on funding systems.

**Up to 60 one-to-one support sessions were delivered per week, providing information, advice and guidance on student funding, academic issues and housing.**

**225 student cases resolved in 2023-24.**

Student Funding and Advice liaised with the Fees and Residences teams to manage extensions and solve funding issues, alleviating student anxiety and preventing withdrawals from the university.

## Student Mentor Scheme

**Student Mentors** are undergraduates working with first-year students from within their school to offer impartial, informed and up-to-date advice.

**In 2023-24, 1,030 mentoring sessions were offered and 14,000 chat messages were exchanged between 1,309 first year students and the 500 student mentors.**

“My student mentor was lovely and made sure I was getting sessions related to my needs and circumstances each week. I really appreciated all the work she put in!”

First Year Undergraduate Cardiff University Student

## Academic study skills

The Student Life team offer a range of academic study skills classes and online resources to support students.

Classes are available to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, and cover topics such as ‘How to Write a University Essay’, ‘Revision and Exam Tips’, and ‘Note Taking Tips and Techniques’.

**86% of students learnt something new after attending one of the classes.**

“The trainer was excellent in her delivery. She created a happy and comfortable environment for learning. The content of the session was relevant, easily understood and very reflective.”

Delores, Critical Reading and Thinking session attendee

## Together at Cardiff

Together at Cardiff enables a successful transition to university and fosters a supportive student experience through to graduation for students who are care experienced, estranged, military experienced, carers and sanctuary seekers. ‘Cardiff Cafés’ provide a social space with free drinks, snacks and games for all students registered with Together at Cardiff, promoting community and belonging.

“The Together at Cardiff Cafés gives me time and space away from my academic work and gives me a chance to chill. I like that I get to meet more people like me.”

Together at Cardiff Student

**113 Together at Cardiff students graduated in 2023-24.**

## Student Money Support

The Money Support Team provides students with bursaries, scholarships and supports those in financial hardship through the Financial Assistance Programme (hardship fund), as well as providing budgeting advice.

### Bursaries

#### Cardiff University Bursary

The Cardiff University Bursary supports undergraduate students from low-income households. Paid annually to eligible students, the bursary assists with costs related to study.

**In 2023-24, over 4,000 students received the Cardiff University Bursary. 87% agreed that the bursary helped them continue their studies, and 47% agreed that the bursary prevented them from dropping out.**

#### Betty Campbell Scholarship

In 2023-24, 10 students received the Betty Campbell Scholarship, which provides up to £1,000 for students studying 20 credits or more through the medium of Welsh.

#### Next Steps Award

The Next Steps Award is provided to students who have completed the Step-Up to University programme and have a household income below £35,000. These students are eligible for an award in their first year of either £1,000 towards their Cardiff University Halls of Residence or a £500 travel bursary.

**16 students received the award in 2023-24.**

#### Widening Participation: Work Experience Bursary

39 students received the Widening Participation Work Experience bursary in 2023-24. Students undertaking a UK-based, work experience placement between 6-12 months were eligible for a bursary of £2,000.

## Financial Assistance Programme Awards (Hardship Fund)

The Financial Assistance Programme helps students with essential living costs, with the average award being £761.

We support students who:

- have an unexpected crisis
- are considering leaving university
- need help to cover study costs
- are running out of money before the end of the term

**1,161 students received an award in 2023-24.**

**Prior to an award, 94% of respondents stated their finances were negatively impacting their mental health compared to 12% after receiving an award.**

## Other Activities

The Money Support Team also provide a daily drop-in service at the Centre for Student Life, and work collaboratively with the Student Union and Widening Participation Team to provide support talks and cost-of-living activities.

## Student Disability Service

Our Student Disability Service supports students throughout their higher education journey, ensuring they have access to advice and guidance as well as adjustments and support needed to assist in their studies.

### Supporting autistic students

The Student Disability Service ran an event for autistic students to support their transition into university. The event took place prior to induction week and included talks on university services, disability support, orientation visits and meetings with academic schools.

**90% of the attendees felt more prepared to start the academic year and more confident finding their way around campus as a result.**

**“The whole thing has been helpful and reassuring and I feel more confident starting uni now.”**

Cardiff University student

**“It was great to be able to meet fellow students with ASC prior to freshers’ week and receive extra information about uni life and support.”**

Cardiff University student





# Confident and successful futures

We ensure students are prepared for the world of work and enhance their employability through initiatives which offer tailored support and opportunities for underrepresented groups.

This includes work experience, coaching, and creating an inclusive environment to help all students succeed.

## Student Futures

Student Futures provides specific support for students from groups who are underrepresented in Higher Education, in addition to their main service for all students.

### Career Confident

Career Confident enhances the employability of students from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Our tailored support includes bespoke work experience, dedicated coaching, funding for training, and referrals to additional services. A flexible approach is used to meet the specific needs of each student, helping to build confidence and achieve positive employment outcomes.

**58% of students supported in 2023-24 engaged with a work experience opportunity.**

**“I gained insight into how employability is seen by employers and what I can do to increase my employability as well as my confidence.”**

Sora, Career Confident Participant

### Additional support

Student Futures have implemented initiatives such as a buddy system at career events, tailored emails to widening participation groups, staff training for supporting diverse students, and partnerships with employers aiming to diversify their workforce. These initiatives create an inclusive and accessible environment for all students.





## Student Ambassador Scheme

Student ambassadors are essential to our programmes, as role models with similar interests and experiences. We actively encourage individuals from widening participation backgrounds to apply for ambassador roles, fostering a sense of belonging for our programme participants.

**Over 160 student ambassador roles created by the Widening Participation Team across all projects in the 2023-24 academic year.**

Being a student ambassador provides current students with the opportunity to build employability skills; including teamwork, communication and leadership.

**“It has been an incredible experience, and I have learned many skills such as confidence in working as part of a new team, public speaking skills, going out of my comfort zone and the importance of compassionate leadership.”**

Uzair, Student Ambassador



# Reflections

The 2023-24 academic year has been a period of impactful initiatives.

Our diverse range of programmes have collectively engaged thousands of learners, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. The success stories and positive feedback from participants, educators, and partners underscore the importance of our work in raising aspirations and providing support to underrepresented groups.

Looking ahead, we are dedicated to building on our achievements through continuous innovation and growth. By fortifying partnerships, enhancing support systems, and launching new initiatives, we aim to extend our reach to more individuals and communities. Our unwavering commitment to inclusivity and educational equity, as outlined in our strategy “Our Future, Together,” will guide our efforts. This strategy emphasises offering an excellent educational experience, generating new knowledge to address global and local challenges, and acting as an anchor institution to deliver cultural, social, economic, and environmental benefits. These principles will ensure that all learners have the opportunity to succeed and thrive in higher education.



