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Cardiff University Outreach
Annual Report 2021

Design – LimegreenTangerine
We are proud to be an institution which recognises the benefits that a diverse student community can bring. We have the 2nd highest number of students from low participation areas in the Russell group (HESA 2018/19).

Through our Civic Mission, we are committed to promoting equality and social cohesion. In 2019 we were the UK's highest ranked University in Stonewall’s list of LGBT+ employers and as of 2020, Cardiff University is within their overall Top 10 for UK employers.

Our successful School Governors scheme sees 56 members of staff working in collaboration with Schools in our local communities offering knowledge and expertise from a broad range of disciplines. Achievements such as these, demonstrate the kind of institution we are proud to be; one that supports Welsh Government priorities relating to tackling poverty, educational attainment, social mobility, the Welsh language and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our Widening Participation (WP) strategy 2020-2025 is reflective of our aspirations. Our vision is founded on our values and commitment to supporting and celebrating diversity, creating an open and inclusive community, and putting students at the heart of what we do.

Our Widening Participation 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 experiences.
4. To nurture and encourage confident and successful futures for all.

This annual review reflects upon the last year, the successes of preestablished projects that have adapted to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and explores how we fit our work to the aims of our WP Strategy 2020-2025.

Our vision is founded on our values and commitment to supporting and celebrating diversity, creating an open and inclusive community, and putting students at the heart of what we do.
Adapting to an online world – Impact of COVID 19

Scott McKenzie,
Head of Widening Participation & Outreach

We believe that every person deserves access to a higher education (HE), regardless of their background. Widening participation focuses on supporting students from parts of the community which are traditionally underrepresented in higher education and helping them to realise their aspirations as they progress through University.

This year has seen significant challenges for HE and an impact on some of the most vulnerable in our society. Our relationships and work with Schools have been adapted throughout the academic year as we responded to the continually changing situation. Our team has changed its ways of working and delivery to ensure we continued to support the most vulnerable in society and students most adversely affected by the pandemic.

In addition to highlighting our flagship projects, this annual review will look at how our team has approached and responded to the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic.

Gwyl eCampws Festival
Once we moved online the first priority was deciding what to run in place of our usual residential summer schools. The Gwyl eCampws Festival was created.

Rather than attempting to replicate our traditional summer schools into an online format, the festival was treated as a new programme using the NERUPI framework, helping us to place students, pedagogy and evaluation at the centre of our planning. The summer festival mainly ran through Aula, the Learning Experience Platform for Higher Education, which saw over 380,000 interactions across the festival.

1 NERUPI is a partnership of over 60 higher education organisations working together to create a new approach to evaluation using a praxis-based framework. Website - http://www.nerupi.co.uk/
Outcomes of the festival

One form of evaluation from the festival was a pre- and post-survey to assess attitude changes.

94% FELT THEY HAD THE ACADEMIC ABILITY TO SUCCEED AT UNIVERSITY (76% PRE-EVENT)

87% FELT THEY COULD COPE WITH THE LEVEL OF STUDY REQUIRED (71% PRE-EVENT)

94% WERE AWARE OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (70% PRE-EVENT)

84% FELT CONFIDENT IN ACCESSING THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ONLY 45% PRE-EVENT)

81% FELT CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO SUBMIT A STRONG UNIVERSITY APPLICATION (32% PRE-EVENT)

89% WERE AWARE OF THE ACADEMIC AND INFORMATION SERVICES (51% PRE-EVENT)

89% FELT CONFIDENT IN ACCESSING ACADEMIC AND INFORMATION SERVICES (ONLY 43% PRE-EVENT)

78% FELT CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO NAVIGATE UCAS (43% PRE-EVENT)

93% FELT THEY WERE WELCOME AT UNIVERSITY (68% PRE-EVENT)

97% FELT THEY WOULD FIT IN WITH OTHERS (75% PRE-EVENT)

The 5 strands of the Festival were:

**Step-Up** – Our flagship project Step-up for 16-17 year olds from South East Wales was our largest cohort. The project was designed to develop research skills, alongside more social and informative sessions to engage young people with University and support their UCAS applications. For further information see page 10.

**Discovery** – Our project for young people 14+ with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) piloted a new method of digital engagement for our team.

The project delivered a programme of activities through Minecraft, creating a virtual social learning environment to teach young people with ASC about University life. To complement the project a podcast was also created. For further information see page 8.

**Insights** – Our Insights project was aimed at Cardiff University offer-holders from WP backgrounds and was designed to develop essential skills for University life through an enterprise challenge. The project aims to support transition into University.

**Sutton Trust** – Our Sutton Trust project aimed at 16-17 year olds UK-wide and in collaboration with Sutton Trust aimed to offer tailored activities to support students interested in studying medicine, alongside more social and informative sessions.

**Carers** – Our young carers project was delivered by our First Campus team and was aimed at young carers 16+ to support them to progress to University.
New initiatives trialled due to the pandemic

With additional funding from HEFCW we were able to introduce other schemes to support our learners, including:

**Digital Capability Scheme**
To combat digital exclusion the team set up the digital capability scheme with a fast-track route created for WP students. In the first three months of the scheme, we successfully delivered 246 laptops and seven 4G dongles + 12 month unlimited data to current students who needed access to the correct technology for their courses.

**Wellbeing packs**
To support Care Leavers and Estranged students during the Coronavirus, we began making phone calls to these groups to check in on their general welfare, and to ask if we could support them in any way. We were aware that the lockdown in Wales may have resulted in some of our more vulnerable students staying on campus, alone, over the Christmas period, so in January we sent out 150 wellbeing packs to care leavers, estranged students and the Step-Up cohort who had joined us that academic year. We hope these groups know that the Cardiff University community are thinking of them and would urge them to contact the Student Support Team if they need any assistance.

**Lead Ambassadors**
We introduced a more coordinated Lead Ambassador element to our Student Ambassador Scheme to ensure our projects reflected our student cohort and concentrated on peer-to-peer interaction.

**Additional funds to develop a Transition Team**
Four new transition roles have been created to support the transition of WP students into University over the next 2 years. The team will work closely with Student Support and Wellbeing to create a coordinated approach to support those who have faced educational disruption due to the pandemic and our more vulnerable students while they settle into University life.
Engage and Inspire

Our engage and inspire projects aim to raise awareness and confidence in groups and communities that do not traditionally attend Higher Education. This can be seen through our pre-16 projects, in particular the projects run by our partners. We also work with adults to support their access back into Higher Education.

Live Local Learn Local (LLLL)

Our Live Local Learn Local courses are designed to engage parents, mature students and people not in education, employment or training. They can create a pathway to a full degree programme or be stepping stones for re-entering employment. The project delivers free 10-credit level 3 (broadly equivalent to A-level) modules in Communities First areas around Cardiff and the South Wales Valleys, where participation in higher education is currently low.

This group have proved that it is possible to bond online because they have bonded brilliantly. They have all said they love the online, but they do wish they could meet one another and meet me.

– Rhiannon Morgan, LLLL tutor, Child Psychology Course

Moving LLLL online in response to the COVID pandemic

Once the University moved online due to the pandemic so too did the community-based projects. Our First Campus team, who run the project in partnership with the Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) team at Cardiff University, began to research next steps.

In September 2020 a scoping exercise with the tutors on LLLL took place to identify:

• The courses they could offer
• Their ability to offer face-to-face or online provision
• Their availability to deliver courses during lockdown
• Access to wifi/technology needed to deliver

This was followed by a survey of community partners to understand how they were operating during the pandemic and whether there was an appetite for face-to-face or online courses.

At that stage we didn’t know whether things would return to normal from October half term or if we would be operating under lockdown restrictions for a longer period.

We were concerned about recruitment and engagement online, and so we trialed a pilot programme of four courses offered to our most engaged community partners.

The courses selected were:

• Starting and Running a Successful Business
• Child’s Play
• Understanding Childhood
• Public Services Interpreting

The decision was partly dictated by requests from venues for courses. We limited courses to 8 learners as this would allow everyone to be visible on a zoom call and would ensure it was a manageable number of learners for the tutor.

As zoom only provides a live ‘meeting’ space, tutors were asked to create workbooks that could be printed and sent to learners prior to the online course.

Our usual face-to-face courses comprise of 9 x 2 hour sessions. We added 2 further sessions to the course in order to include introductions and technical testing and an extra catch-up session in case of technical disruptions throughout the course.

The online courses have been a tremendous success. Three courses have now completed with a further seven courses either in progress or scheduled over the next three months.
The Discovery Project is a bespoke programme designed specifically for 14–19 year olds with autism spectrum condition (ASC). In 2019/20 the project consisted of a taster day, a fortnightly mentoring project and a summer school.

Following the pandemic lockdown in 2020 the programme quickly moved online and continued to engage with these young people.

**Summer Festival**

The Discovery project continued online and became part of the Gwyl eCampws Festival run by the Widening Participation & Outreach team. The project had the highest continuing engagement of all the festivals with the initial 24 students invited continuing to the end.

The learners on the Discovery summer festival were encouraged to engage with the festival through both synchronous (zoom calls) and asynchronous learning (Aula education platform), as well as using Minecraft to explore and create their own University experience. What would usually be a stay on campus at University Halls to experience the social and life skills of becoming a student was reflected in the use of Minecraft as the learners created their own University campus and halls where they were virtually staying, working together to storyboard the student journey including:

- Moving into halls
- Meeting flatmates
- Sports & Societies
- Student Support
- The learning environment
- Graduation

**Podcast**

During the summer festival last year, our team piloted a podcast as another way of engaging young people who have ASC with Higher Education. Due to the popularity of the podcast, this year our team aim to record 10 sessions with topics inviting various guests to discuss what it is to be a learner with ASC, and access to Higher Education.

**2020/21**

Our continued online project launched in March and takes place fortnightly with a group of 26 actively engaged ASC young people. Sessions are led by our student ambassadors and can be about HE, choices around courses, or the social side of HE. We’re also ensuring our sessions are learner-led so the participants on the programme have a level of ownership to be able to discuss issues or worries in a safe and welcome forum.

We now also run Minecraft socials monthly with 14 young people engaging with this.

Our hope is that we continue to engage these learners alongside developing our summer festival this year.

**The future of Discovery**

The pandemic has encouraged us to explore different ways of engagement and in particular has had a positive impact on our Discovery participants through the use of Minecraft and the anonymity being online can give. Once we can return to face-to-face delivery there will be a blended learning approach for this project.

We are also exploring our relationships and engagements with parents to ensure they are involved in the development and improvement of the project.

Through the madness of 2020, Discovery was the anchor that my child needed

– Parent of a Discovery participant

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**Kyle Eldridge**

Having attended the Discovery and Step-Up projects, Kyle is now studying for a degree at the University of South Wales - one of our Reaching Wider partner institutions. Kyle regularly supports our outreach programmes as a lead student ambassador, offering peer support to younger aspiring students. Click the image above to hear from Kyle.

[WATCH THE CASE STUDY >]
First Campus
First Campus is a Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) funded Reaching Wider project. Reaching Wider was established in 2002 by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. First Campus exists to widen access to higher education by tackling barriers to entry, progression and success in higher education. Through collaboration, First Campus delivers a series of activities for a wide cross-section of school students and adult learners. Activities complement the curriculum, enrich studies, and encourage participation. First Campus work with priority schools with the intention of working with young people whose postcode falls in the bottom two quintiles of the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. They also have a focus of working with adult learners and some of our more vulnerable young people (carers and care experienced).

Trio Sci Cymru
We are working with over 3,100 key stage 3 school students across the South Wales Valleys as part of a major Welsh Government and EU initiative to boost take-up of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Over three years, Trio Sci Cymru students have the opportunity to take part in three different programmes which take the University’s cutting-edge research across Pharmacy, Chemistry and Astrophysics direct to the classroom.

Trio Sci Cymru is led by the Welsh Government’s National Science Academy, in collaboration with Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor universities.

As for the virtual workshops my feedback is that they were very well planned and organised; the sessions were well ‘chunked’ leading to excellent pace; the interactive element was very well received by pupils to increase engagement throughout the session; and pupil feedback was that they enjoyed the session and would like to do more.

– Craig Hughes, Science teacher at St Cenydd School, Caerphilly

Higher Education Roadshow
A collaborative project with Cardiff Metropolitan University, the Higher Education Roadshow offers a variety of aspiration-raising talks and workshops to school students in years 9-11 in schools throughout Wales, it mainly targets areas where there are low progression rates to higher education, and focuses on helping students to reach their potential, as well as demystifying the University experience through overcoming common misconceptions.

2019/20 Pre Covid

- 85 VISITS
- 131 TALKS
- 18,000 STUDENTS ENGAGED
Through Attract and Recruit we mainly work with post-16 students to support them in gaining the skills and understanding to achieve in HE. We do this through some of our flagship projects and those that are tailored to bespoke groups who need additional support.

**Step-Up**

Step-Up to Uni is a free two-year academic programme of activities, events and masterclasses giving college and sixth form students from under-represented groups the opportunity to learn about University and gain additional academic skills and knowledge to reach their potential at University. Masterclasses are delivered by trained PhD tutors and the streams are aligned to the Welsh curriculum and include:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology Open Days

Joining the scheme gives learners exclusive access to apply for the Step Up Summer School, a week-long residential programme culminating in an academic conference led by the learners themselves. The aim of the conference is to foster academic research skills by creating conference posters and delivering presentations, whilst also developing soft skills such as team work, communication and self-confidence.

**Studnets Engaged with the Masterclass Programme in 2019/20**

- 282 students engaged with the masterclass programme in 2019/20
- 68.2% increase in student engagement in the new programme
- 9-14 hours of teaching time per student
- Over 110 previous Step-Up participants enrolled at Cardiff University in September 2020
- 119 Year 12 students attended the Step-Up Online Festival in 2020
- 104 actively engaged with our online platform Aula

**Luthfan Nessa**

Luthfan was a member of the Step-Up programme before successful gaining a place at Cardiff University to study Medicine. She has worked with the team for many years as a student ambassador and is now approaching the end of her Medical degree. Click the image above to hear from Luthfan.

[WATCH THE CASE STUDY >]
An important part of our work with Step-Up is peer to peer engagement and so we employed student ambassadors to develop student-led talks based on what students felt young people needed to know about Uni and in particular on reflection of the last year. Some examples of student led talks are:

- Day in the life of…..our student ambassadors provided a sneak preview into what it’s like studying their chosen subject. Subjects included Medicine, Law, Psychology, English, Healthcare and many many more….
- Student Life
- Importance of choosing the right course for you
- Budgeting and money tips
- Student support and wellbeing
- Online study and remote learning: effects of the pandemic
- Study tips

Engagement has been good and the feedback on the talks that took place has been positive. To date almost 500 year 12 and 13s have signed up to the webinar series.

The team will continue to run the year 12 Step-Up summer school as part of the festival for this year while we’re still online. Similar to our Discovery Project, adapting to online has had its difficulties, but has also been an opportunity for the team to trial online engagement. This means that once we can offer the masterclasses face-to-face this can be enhanced with an online element. This also means we are less restricted by geography and can offer an online project across Wales and the UK.

Impact of the COVID Pandemic

Our masterclasses in 2020 were cancelled when we moved to online learning. We did, however, still run the Step-up summer school online as part of the Gŵyl eCampws Festival. The Step-Up part of the summer festival saw 119 learners initially engage with us. The learner outcomes for the online summer festival were similar to those within face-to-face delivery; learners worked in groups to research and present posters as part of the final conference and celebration.

Due to the closure of Schools and the unpredictability of lockdown in the academic year 2020/21 it was decided not to try and develop the masterclasses online. Instead a new webinar series Discover Cardiff was created, offering 48 sessions across 3 months to year 12 and 13 students including:

- Note taking
- Managing your time
- The Students’ Union
- Making the most out of Higher Education – Careers
- Dedicated sessions for carers, care experienced and young people with Autism Spectrum Condition
- Health & Wellbeing
- A Parent and Guardian’s Guide to University
- Introduction to HE
- UCAS and applying to University
- Alternative routes to Medicine – African Caribbean Medical Association
- Options after year 13 – Careers service

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- Introduction to HE
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- Options after year 13 – Careers service
Access to Professions

Access to Professions is committed to improving access to Medicine, Dentistry, Healthcare subjects, Law and Journalism, and has a number of programmes delivered through academic schools which aim to meet this agenda. In 2019 we partnered with the Sutton Trust and the Jonathan Schofield Trust to deliver a programme of activities for sixth form and college students. We are also in our second year of offering flexible study routes into Healthcare subjects for adult learners. Each of our programmes form part of a suite of mid to long-term interventions offering supported progression routes into the professions.

Contextual Admissions

It is important to us that our admissions system is as fair as possible so we have introduced a Contextual Admissions system to ensure absolute parity for those from socially or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Contextual admissions is a term used by Cardiff University, and more generally in the sector, relating to the use of additional information as part of the admissions process. The system allows us to provide context for an individual applicant’s performance and achievement. Our system is based around an applicant’s likelihood of attending University, and uses the following indicators:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) household gross annual earnings
- Welsh and English indexes of multiple deprivation
- Welsh and English high school sixth form performance data
- Welsh and English free school meal rates
- In-care UCAS flag
- Refugee/asylum seeker indicator

Drawing on these indicators helps us to better understand an individual applicant’s potential to succeed and to overcome any disadvantage.

Undergraduate

Applying for university and college degree courses

2021 entry

Apply now for 2021 entry.
Get your UCAS Hub. Your place to discover your options and research your future.

2022 entry

Applications for 2022 entry open in May 2021 but you can start your research now with the UCAS Hub!

Whether you want to compare courses or apprenticeships, or get your head round the personal statement, the UCAS Hub has it covered.

Hub and Hub Live events

What’s this?
Pathways

As part of our support for adult education our Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) department provide part time courses in the evening and at weekends.

Our pathways programme is an alternative to A-level and 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.

I am profoundly grateful to the pathway especially Jan Stephens for her advice, support and encouragement and of course the wonderful team of tutors who prepared us for what was to come in the degree course. The pathway course is a huge inspiration to those who want to further their education. I never thought I was capable of achieving such success until the course showed me my real potential!

— Simba Chabarika graduated from the School of Law and Politics in 2019. He started his degree after completing the Pathway.

Open Days

The University hosts four open days each year – an effective way to raise awareness and encourage progression to University. Visiting us gives learners the chance to explore the campuses and facilities, meet our students and staff, and ask questions. The Widening Participation Team runs an event alongside the main undergraduate open days to support the learners we work with to ensure they have a positive experience. We also offer additional higher education talks, tailored advice and support for applications. Open Days have been online over the last academic year.

60 pathways learners went on to join Cardiff University for their undergraduate degrees
Highlight on our Academic Schools

As well as the centrally run projects, there are many initiatives across the University which are working towards the civic mission agenda. Although we can’t list them all we would like to highlight a few:

**CAER Heritage Hidden Hillfort**

**School of History, Archaeology and Religion**

CAER Heritage (CAER) was established in 2011 and is a collaboration between Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), Cardiff University, local schools, residents, community groups and many others. The project focuses upon the research of one of the most impressive, but under-appreciated heritage sites in Wales, Caerau Hillfort. This nationally important site is surrounded by the west Cardiff suburbs of Caerau and Ely, vibrant communities full of talent but which are facing serious social and economic challenges.

In 2019 CAER launched the Hidden Hillfort Project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Moondance Foundation, First Campus, Cardiff Archaeological Society, Cardiff Council, National Museum Wales and Cardiff University with the vision:

‘To make Caerau Hillfort a unique and unforgettable place for visitors by making the best of its physical location, natural beauty, archaeological heritage and social history.

Working alongside local people as co-creators, co-researchers and co-curators, we will develop an accessible, sensory, indoor and outdoor experience at a site that can be appreciated by everyone who visits as a place of opportunity, creativity, fun and learning.’

In 2020 the project was recognised in the Council for British Archaeology/Marsh Awards, winning the Best Community Archaeology Project with paid support category.
Adapting during the Pandemic

Adapting its existing 2020 plans for lockdown, the award-winning CAER Hidden Hillfort Project responding to the evolving COVID-19 conditions by devising both the Big Dig and Cupboard Archaeology and its Heritage-focussed Food Parcel scheme to make a significant social and research impact despite the difficulties of the pandemic.

In the Big Dig, community members did their own archaeological mini-digs in back gardens to tell the wider story of the area, putting the hillfort overlooking their homes into context. All ages of the community unearthed their own finds supported by specially created expert instructions, identified by professional archaeologists from Cardiff and Lincoln University.

Yet more community members excavated the buried objects in their own homes for Cupboard Archaeology, to reflect on the stories behind the objects, posting biographies, so those without outdoor spaces could participate too.

And finally the heritage of the site inspired historic recipes for Heritage Food Parcels, delivered safely to participants in the wake of the rise of food poverty and foodbanks nationally.

The project reached more than 130 individuals in 39 households, and 30 year-five pupils from one local school with its archaeology focused activities. It reached a further 25 households with heritage food parcels every two weeks.

It was a wonderful activity to do in place of formal history lessons during lockdown. We took advantage of the time working on the dig to discuss historical themes. The kids wanted to hear about coal which led to conversations about Welsh history.

– Local community member, Ely
School of Modern Languages

Funded by the Welsh Government, the MFL Student Mentoring Project aims to encourage young people to see the value of languages to their lives as citizens of Wales and the World. This is one of the four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022. We do this by training University students from across our 5 partner universities, to become language mentors to secondary school pupils in Years 8 and 9. Their role is to inspire an intrinsic love and motivation for language learning and interculturality, inspiring the next generation see the personal and professional value of seeing things from multiple perspectives.

External evaluation shows that between 40-50% of mentored pupils opt to study a GCSE language on an annual basis. This is against a national average of 18% of Year 11 pupils being entered for a GCSE Modern Foreign Language in 2018 (Welsh Government 2018). Mentored pupils are generally students who have indicated a disinterest in languages prior to mentoring, making this attitude change all the more significant.

The project has scaled to work with over 100 secondary schools in Wales demonstrating that scale and impact have been managed effectively.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic the project has sought to react as usefully as possible to support the challenging circumstances learners and teachers have found themselves in. Through the summer of 2020, the project team mobilised to digitise the project and have successfully delivered three streams of work in the academic year 2020-2021:

**The Year 8/9 Online Mentoring Programme**

- Mentoring sessions were delivered synchronously and asynchronously in the autumn and spring terms in blocks of six sessions. The project was delivered online via the Welsh Government online learning platform, Hwb.
- This year, 67 schools participated in online mentoring, of which 28 were new and 19 are in geographically harder to reach areas meaning that online mentoring is the only option for participation.
- **115 mentors from across five partner universities successfully completed online training over the September 2020 and January 2021 training.** All training was delivered by a highly-expert in-house team.
- In total, 32 mentors completed unit 1 of a **specially-designed, internationally-recognised accreditation** to boost their professional development skills.
- We developed additional partnerships with UWTSD, Seren, First Campus and Colegau Cymru.
- Learners and teachers are enthusiastic about the experience and the use of digital platforms has helped keep the sessions interactive and engaging.

Mentoring with 9.1 has been going brilliantly! They have all been incredibly engaged, so much so that we are starting a lunch time languages club in the New Year to continue some of the work they’ve started and pursue their language interests.

– Teacher
The Teacher Resources and School Support Programme

This new stream of work, developed since September 2020, has introduced learners and teachers to new ways of teaching and learning through Genial.ly, Padlet and Planet eStream. The resources provide blended learning opportunities as well as engagement with digital learning methodologies and activities. The resources develop the ‘essence of learning’ at the heart of the Curriculum for Wales 2022, whilst also enabling learners to develop their digital competence.

The Post-16 Languages Recovery Project

In April 2020 the project implemented a 12-week programme of engagement for post-16 learners which young people could engage with from home. The programme recorded over 450 instances of engagement during the period April-July 2020.

Given this success, the project was funded to deliver this again in the autumn and spring terms. During this time the project has delivered ten weeks of live lectures, seminars, languages classes and Q&A sessions. It has also included a weekend conference on ‘decolonising the curriculum’ in December 2020 and a week-long ‘linking languages’ festival in February 2021.

This project has supported the aims of the Curriculum for Wales to promote interdisciplinary, cross-curricular learning and it has worked with post-16 learners in secondary schools and colleges across Wales. The sessions have demonstrated links between international languages and other subject areas such as the humanities, social sciences, sciences, maths and technology. Since September 2020, the project has received over 700 instances of engagement from learners across its events and has reached 50 different schools and colleges.

The programme recorded over 700 instances of engagement between November 2020 - March 2021

Cynnwys

Mwynhewch ddysgu am y ffordd rydym ni’n gweld y byd!

The resources support the ambitions of the Well-being of Futures Generations Act 2015, in particular by providing activities that encourage a globally responsible Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

This element of the project has engaged with 71 schools across Wales to-date.
Transition and Support

Transitioning into university can be difficult for many students, but often the groups and communities we work with can find this a particular challenge, whether it be lack of support network, financial worries or confidence issues. Our work around transition and support aims to reduce barriers for those groups into HE and ensure they feel part of the Cardiff University community.

The Future for Transition

A new transition team is being implemented to combat the impact of COVID-19. This is a collaboration between the WP & Outreach Team and Student Support & Wellbeing working closely together to ensure support from pre-University throughout their time at University, concentrating on vulnerable groups but also those from WP backgrounds that have been involved in pre-University projects with the WP team.

Scholarships and Bursaries

As part of our commitment to ensuring that everyone with the ability to study at Cardiff can do so, we offer the Cardiff Bursary Scheme. It provides additional financial support for students from lower income backgrounds and is in addition to any state-funded maintenance grants and loans. We offer bursaries for care-experienced, carers, armed forces veterans and estranged students, and we also offer a bursary linking to our Step Up to University scheme.

Mature Students

Mature students bring a commitment and enthusiasm to their studies, as well as social and interpersonal skills gathered from various life experiences that enhance the learning experience for everyone. As they come from a wide range of backgrounds, mature students enter with a variety of qualifications and work-related experience and often achieve a better than average degree result. At Open Days we run specific drop-in sessions for mature students. The Live Local Learn Local and Pathways programmes offer flexible routes to studying for a degree. We also run tailored induction events for mature students who are just starting their degree at Cardiff University in collaboration with the Mature Student officer in the Students’ union.
Confident and Successful Futures

Our work doesn’t stop once our learners are in University, we work in collaboration with other teams across the University to ensure we support and build our students ready for the world of work and successful futures.

Student Ambassador Scheme (SA)

The Ambassadors work closely with our team, and are also encouraged to socialise amongst themselves to create a sense of belonging to the University community. We actively encourage those from WP backgrounds to apply for our ambassador roles to give peer to peer support but also as a support mechanism and sense of belonging for those WP students too. Our ambassadors work closely with the our team.

Zoe Bannister

Meet Zoe, one of our student ambassadors. Zoe has worked with us on several projects including Discovery and Step-Up.

WATCH THE CASE STUDY >
Careers and Employability Service

At Careers & Employability, in addition to the main service provision for all students, there is specific additional support available to students from underrepresented groups.

GO Wales

Our award winning (NUE awards 2021) GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience Programme is part-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Welsh Government and operates pan-Wales. GO Wales provides support for eligible students to secure work experience opportunities. Due to personal circumstances, some talented students may find it more difficult than others to access valuable work experience opportunities and could therefore be overlooked. GO Wales aims to level the playing field by supporting students to gain flexible and relevant work experience that fits around their schedule and needs.

GO Wales advisers initially meet students to discuss career aims, employability skills, work experience goals, and get to understand students' personal circumstances and commitments. When social distancing restrictions were introduced, the team offered students virtual appointments. These have been very popular, and appointments increased by 152% in 19/20 compared to 18/19.

During 19/20, 61 work experience opportunities were arranged. Where possible, physical work experience opportunities were adapted to virtual work experience to meet social distancing requirements. Virtual work experience was not an option for all opportunities so other forms of employability support were introduced.

Project Officers introduced a new virtual work experience called Meet the Professional. These opportunities have enabled students to question a professional to find out more about a specific career role, recruitment and selection processes and general employability advice without the need to attend an employer’s premises. Students research the career area, the employer and job roles, then prepare questions ahead of meeting the employer. Students can practice their questions with a GO Wales adviser before meeting an employer. Meet the Professional opportunities have proved popular with both students and employers. When social distance requirements are relaxed, we will continue to offer Meet the Professional opportunities alongside physical work experience options.

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Career Confident Programme

Research from Universities UK (2019), highlights three barriers preventing widening participation students from achieving success in the graduate labour market. They lack networks and contacts, low levels of confidence and interview performance. The Career Confident programme has been developed to support students to overcome these barriers and complements the GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience programme. The initial programme was face-to-face with 43 students supported. Over the academic year a structured online support programme has been developed which is now live for 20/21.

The Career Confident programme teaches students all they need to know about entering the job market, it includes sessions on how to develop a CV and LinkedIn profile and how to build a professional network with employers. Students will learn about what employers are looking for and how to present their skills and experiences in applications and at interview. Students will also gain tips on building resilience and what to consider when moving from being a student onto their next steps after University.

Elpida Petrovits

Elpida is a young carer. She lacked the contacts to gain career-specific work experience and, due to her caring commitments, also the time to source it independently.

Elpida has been on the GO Wales programme since early 2020, with regular contact and discussion of the changing work experience situation due to Covid-19.

WATCH CASE STUDY >
Reflections

Whilst it’s been a turbulent year for some of the young people and communities we work with, we are hopeful that the changes we have made to projects will contribute to more sustainable future projects.

Our team adapted quickly to working online and have developed online provision that has proven to engage and continue to follow our NERUPI aims and objectives.

The lockdown has given us time and space to redevelop areas of our work, to focus more on engagement and promoting what we do.

Our approach is now able to offer blended learning opportunities to our learners which means we can reach communities we may not have before. Whilst previously restricted by location, we can now use technology to access them.

As part of our civic mission, we are now also looking into a loaning scheme for digital equipment and access for community groups and individuals to access our online and on-site resources including libraries, computer rooms etc.

Following the pandemic we now have a strong focus on transition and supporting young people into Higher Education over the next couple of years.