Widening Participation and Outreach Yearbook 2016-17
Welcome to our Yearbook

September 2016-July 2017

We are delighted to present our third annual report on widening participation at Queen Mary University of London. This provides a summary of our work in 2016-17, including the projects we have delivered, our target demographic and our highlights over the year.

The Widening Participation team works with young people, from 10-18 years old, from under-represented groups that are statistically less likely to consider higher education. Our work focuses on dispelling assumptions, building aspirations and providing insight and first-hand experience of university, helping students to make informed choices about higher education. We also offer initiatives to support transition of students from school or college to QMUL, offering support across the whole student life-cycle.

QMUL’s five-year Strategic Plan makes it clear that widening participation is at the heart of the College’s vision and ambitions, with emphasis on continuing to serve our local communities. Our work aligns with QMUL’s ethos that “we celebrate the diversity of our student body and aspire to be recognised as a prime destination for high-achieving students from lower participation backgrounds”, with our activities supporting this aspiration.

This academic year has been an exciting and rewarding one, with the team implementing a range of new initiatives, including Boys, Books and Blogging; Pathways to Coding; Youth Forum and Experience University Week: Languages. We hope you enjoy reading the summaries of our most significant outreach activities, and the impact they have had on attendees.

With best wishes,

The Widening Participation team

“I really enjoyed the whole experience and the reassurance that it brought to me. I feel very motivated to pursue university”

Year 11 student, Experience Health Sciences Summer School
In 2016-17 we worked with...

- 6298 Young people
- 169 Schools and colleges

In 148 activities of varying intensity

Which took place predominately at QMUL or in schools
Individual monitoring data was collected from 1409 young people who attended our most intensive activities. This helps us take a closer look at who we’re engaging in widening participation activities.
POLAR Quintile

Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile

Gender

From these Year groups
Target schools and boroughs

We work with priority schools, from eleven Boroughs, which we have identified as having a high number of students who would benefit from our work. In addition, many of our projects take applications from individual students, and the majority of these are open pan-London. This map shows the location of schools we worked with in 2016-17, the darkest areas on the map reflect the areas we worked with most intensively. Our data based targeting strategy has been successfully implemented, we attended meetings with priority schools to foster even stronger relationships and continued to develop our schools contact list, which now contains details for over 500 teachers.

Areas supported:

Key target boroughs:
1. Barking & Dagenham
2. Enfield
3. Greenwich
4. Hackney
5. Haringey
6. Havering
7. Newham
8. Redbridge
9. Thurrock
10. Tower Hamlets
11. Waltham Forest
A year in photos
Pre-16 activities

Primary School engagement
Our in-class Year 5 workshops and Year 6 campus visit days continued to be highly successful this year, inspiring children to make the connection between what they are currently learning in school and where it can take them in the future. This year saw the launch of a brand new Year 5 Experience University Week, delivered in collaboration with City University of London and focused on languages. Students spent time at both universities learning about the evolution of language, speech and language therapy and French.

“I liked the classes and working as a team.”

Primary Summer School

Bridge the Gap
The programme aims to increase students’ awareness of medicine and dentistry as a career pathway and support them on their journey towards these professions. This is a long-term project with three stages – Year 6, Years 8–9 and 10–13.

This year saw students from the first cohort of students complete the programme after starting Bridge the Gap with us in Year 9. Seventy five percent of these students received offers to study dentistry or medicine and are due to start university in September 2017.

“It's important to mention that Bridge the Gap has helped me a lot to make that step to university. I think early on, since the fact that we started in Year 9, it gave us a taste of university and an introduction to university. I think that was really good and helpful for me because I think from early on you really need to know whether you're going to university so that you can build it up.”

Year 12 student reflecting on Bridge the Gap during the final event.

In 2016-17, the programme continued to grow, delivering more sessions and engaging more students than in any year previously. The addition of Sir John Cass and George Mitchell schools to the programme took the number of students involved to 335!

Growth mindset workshops
New for 2016-17, these 1 hour interactive workshops were delivered in schools and introduced students to the concept of growth mindset and how this approach can be applied to their school life. Excellent feedback was received and we look forward to building on this area of work in future years.
Visit days

Our campus visit programme is designed to provide an insight into university, with age-appropriate interactive activities including a campus tour and the opportunity to have questions answered by QMUL students. They are tailored specifically for Year 8 students with a focus on decision making. Students have been extremely engaged, contributing some fantastic ideas. We have started to develop new activities which will see the first part of the day becoming even more interactive and quick-paced, developing greater knowledge of university and the benefits of Higher Education while still considering the impact of our decisions and alternative options. Lunch in Mucci’s was a huge success, so students will continue to dine in our on-campus restaurant in 2017-18. The visit to Centre of the Cell will also continue.

“The day was excellent, students were very engaged and they finished the day with a clear understanding that university is an option for all students regardless of their family circumstance”
Teacher

Boys, books and blogging

It is now broadly considered that the demographic of white working class boys are the least likely group to go to university. In addition, significant research has indicated that there is a growing gap in literacy levels between boys and girls. With this in mind we developed and trialled a new programme focused on increasing the enjoyment of reading and worked with nine Year 10 boys from Eastbury Community School in Barking.

This seven week programme included frank discussions about the benefits of reading and time management. Each week we met for a one hour session to read one of two books: the Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time or Tuesdays with Morrie. The boys had dedicated time to read and every couple of weeks they wrote blogs about their experiences. These blogs can be viewed from our webpages: www.qmul.ac.uk/wp

During the final week of the project the boys were taken to see The Curious Incident at the theatre. They also attended QMUL Mile End Campus for a follow up event and visit in February 2017. All of the boys read more than they had originally envisaged and their attitudes towards reading did change, some more significantly than others. The results have proven very interesting and are being used to further develop the programme for next year, including collaboration with Hachette publishers.

“[Michelle told us] 'you have to read to a certain page', I tried to read to certain pages, but I got higher, by accident...I was hooked in and on one of my blogs I talk about people getting hooked onto the book really easily.”

Year 10 student
Year 9 Humanities Summer School

We were delighted that so many academic schools supported us in the delivery of this project. The five-day programme included practical sessions introducing students to a wide range of Humanities degree subjects including; English, Drama, History, Geography, Law and Politics. The highlight of the week was a trip to the Royal Courts of Justice.

“I liked going to Royal Courts and learning new things”
*Year 9 Humanities Summer School student*

Year 11 Experience Health Sciences Residential Summer School

Our successful collaboration with the University of Warwick on the Experience Health Sciences summer school continued with 28 Year 11 students from East London and Warwickshire experiencing life at QMUL and the University of Warwick. Over the course of the week the students took part in a range of health-related sessions, such as learning how to deliver a baby and taking blood from a patient.

“I enjoyed the practical work the most such as the Dentistry session and the day in the hospital. I enjoyed everything. It was all amazing. I know for certain now that I will definitely pursue a career in Medicine - the Summer School has confirmed it for me”
*Year 11 student*
Post-16 activities

Year 12 Medicine and Dentistry Summer School
Two summer schools were delivered, both aiming to give students an idea of what studying Medicine and Dentistry is like, through exposure to current students, advice and guidance sessions, and practical workshops which provide hands on experience. The summer school was well received by those who attended, and the addition of more follow-up events for participating students enabled the work from the summer schools to be sustained throughout the year.

“I particularly enjoyed learning about the alternatives towards medicine. I have also enjoyed doing the clinical sessions such as learning how to do suturing.”
Year 12 student

Year 12 Engineering Spring School
This Spring School offers students the opportunity to experience university-style teaching and project work incorporating a variety of engineering subjects. The aim is to inform students about the career opportunities available from the fields of engineering and to experience first-hand what these subjects and university in general are all about by working with current students and academic staff from the School of Engineering and Materials Science and the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science.

This year the programme ran for 5 days rather than 4 to accommodate additional sessions in presentation skills and a visit to the Science Museum. We were pleased that the proportion of applications from female students increased from 19% to 31%, and the proportion of female participants increased from 21% to 48%.

“I gained a deeper understanding of what engineering entails and more engineering options that I could apply for in university. I now know my way around the Queen Mary campus and am considering it as an option for university”
Year 12 student
Alternatives to Medicine
Based on school feedback that there was a gap in the market for activities informing students about alternatives to medicine we delivered 15 in-school presentations covering these areas of study throughout 2016-17. These were delivered in-school by our fantastic WP Student Ambassadors who could talk first-hand about their experience and inform students about a range of options open to them.

Year 12 Undergraduate Shadowing Scheme
This programme offers the opportunity for young people to experience a full day as an undergraduate student. In 2016-17 we extended the eligibility for this programme to include: disabled students, students who are young carers and students who are estranged from their families in addition to young people who currently live in local authority care. The days continue to gain extremely positive feedback from all participants, their social workers, families, academics and the ambassadors who take part. From 2017-18 students who participate in the Undergraduate Shadowing Scheme will be strongly encouraged to visit QMUL for a second time to work with a member of the WP team on their university research and application.

Pathways to Coding
Delivered in collaboration with the Sutton Trust, this brand new programme supported 50 Year 12 students interested in computer science. The programme constitutes a mix of sessions including both an academic and a careers focus, incorporating talks from industry figures and academics. In Year 1 we delivered a launch event, 3 code clubs, an industry day at Salesforce, a residential Hackathon Summer School and a university day. In year 2 each student will receive an e-mentor to support them in making decisions about university.

“I learnt new things and am now confident about what taking a course in computer science involves and the different career paths it can open me to”
Year 12 student
Year 12 Steps to Success
Step to Success is a 5 week coaching programme offering Year 12 students the opportunity for one-to-one discussions with a trained Coach aiming to enhance their skills, knowledge or academic work. Coaches work with students to identify achievable goals, helping them to learn and apply strategies to enable successful study, whilst also encouraging students to think and talk about higher education. The programme was able to engage significantly more students in 2016-17 than initially planned, with 42 participants across three school sixth forms.

“I feel more prepared for university life. And I feel more organised about action I need to take for my future career”
Year 12 student

Engaging parents
Recognising that parents are key influencers, this year we approached a number of schools to allow us to participate in their Year 9 options pathways parent’s evenings. Depending on the school, we were either offered a stall or had the opportunity to deliver a presentation to the parents.

Work with outside organisations
Collaboration with outside organisations increased in 2016-17. Local IntoUniversity centres were supported through medicine workshops delivered during their health themed holiday programmes and the Access Project was supported with UKCAT preparation. Finally, our involvement in the Royal College of General Practitioners GP Work Experience Project enabled some of our Year 12 Bridge the Gap students who were having difficulty finding work experience gain valuable experience for their UCAS application. We hope to build on these collaborations during 2017-18.
Youth Forum

New for 2016-17, the WP Youth Forum took place on Mile End campus between October 2016 and March 2017, with Year 12 students participating in monthly two-hour meetings facilitated by QMUL WP staff and Student Ambassadors. Each meeting focused on a different topic area, for instance reviewing our publicity and activities. This project allowed us to gain insight into the wants and needs of young people from WP backgrounds with regard to HE information, advice and guidance, whilst giving young people a voice and sense of agency in outreach initiatives targeted at them.

“The Youth Forum was like no other enrichment opportunity... we were in a group rather than being alone, and we were able to discuss things collectively and give constructive criticism to each other.”

Year 12 student
Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS)

Taking the student lifecycle approach, we support students not only pre-entry, but also as they progress into QMUL ensuring students are given the support they need to thrive and succeed. PASS has run strongly across QMUL this year. PASS activities are documented in a twice-yearly newsletter, back copies of which are always available on the PASS web page, www.qmul.ac.uk/pass. The mentoring sessions run by students, for students, are always at the scheme’s core but other highlights this year included two PASS mentors attending the PASS/PAL national conference in Bournemouth in November. Our mentors celebrated the end of the mentoring year with the annual Certificate Ceremony in March, one PASS alumni returned as part of the event to give encouragement and advice from the world of work and further study.

“Every PASS session I attend has always been useful, and without it I would have really struggled”
PASS student

Transition Events

In August we ran the new transition activity for students from our target schools due to start at QMUL in September, Marys Got Mail. Connections were made and current students from their own subject area were on hand to answer queries and help participants build their understanding of being a student at QMUL.
WP Student Ambassadors

Each year we employ over 50 current QMUL students to work for us as student ambassadors. Their role is to promote higher education through imparting their own knowledge to students, parents and teachers. They act as motivators – encouraging other young people to consider higher education; sharing the challenges and successes they have faced. Here are our very happy ambassadors celebrating their awards at the annual WP Ambassador Awards evening.

In autumn 2017 ambassadors - both new and current - will participate in a Widening Participation workshop to increase their knowledge of the work that we do and understand the important role that they play in this. The workshop is an opportunity for ambassadors to strengthen their team working skills, share best practice and contribute to the development of Widening Participation at QMUL. The workshop will be followed by a meal at Nandos – an opportunity for ambassadors to socialise and get to know each other better.

Partner schools

QMUL has a long-term relationship with two key partner schools: St Paul’s Way Trust School in Tower Hamlets and the Drapers’ Academy in Havering. We have continued to develop long-term outreach programmes with these schools, and now enhance this activity by focusing primary work on their feeder schools. Students at these schools will have access to a series of initiatives that build engagement with QMUL and higher education in general.

St Paul’s Way Trust School

QMUL has taken on the role of lead sponsor of the Multi-Academy Trust that includes St Paul’s Way, and senior members of staff chair the governing body and Multi-Academy Trust Board. A broad programme of academic and governance support is being provided in a long-term relationship between the school and QMUL. A number of activities took place in 2016-17 including support at Year 9 Pathways Event with 500 pupils, parents and teachers attending

Drapers’ Academy

A comprehensive information, advice and guidance programme was delivered to all students in years 7–12. This work introduced higher education, covering key information on budgeting and getting into university along with the opportunities available. The sessions are designed to progressively build knowledge and understanding through a series of interactions each year.
Meet the team...

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Lucy Trotman
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Widening Participation and Outreach in numbers...

6298 young people worked with compared with 5281 in 2015-16

4566 students seen via HE information talks

128 parents engaged

857 students attended a campus visits

334 students attended taster days

204 students attended a summer school

25 activities delivered for Bridge the Gap students

50 PASS mentors trained providing peer support to help QMUL students thrive

46 WP student ambassadors employed

270 Primary School students engaged

148 activities delivered

169 schools and colleges worked with

8 Summer Schools delivered
“During the week, the visit to the pathology museum was very interesting and opened my mind to deeper aspects of medicine which for me was important as I love to constantly be learning about new things especially to do medicine. The student ambassadors (the highlight of the week!) were really friendly and so welcoming they were really helpful and answered all our questions as many times as we asked them and also provided us with personal experiences which I believe for me was important because it gives me a realistic view of the whole application and journey to medicine. The talks on the admission, ukcat, and other aspects of medicine was extremely useful and compact and easy to follow. The whole week gave me confidence and a better understanding of my journey to medicine. Also the PBL and group presentation proved to be engaging and gave an opportunity to get involved and learn and develop skills. Thank you Michelle and Ali for this opportunity!”

Year 12 Medicine & Dentistry Summer School
Thank you

Widening participation is an institution-wide responsibility involving not only the Widening Participation and Outreach team but also academic schools and institutes, professional services and external partners. Without the collaboration and support of our colleagues our work would not be as successful. We would especially like to thank:

- Key contacts from our partner schools that support us by advertising our programmes and completing supporting statements for students that apply
- Academic colleagues that support our initiatives by delivering subject-based activities
- Support staff including portering and catering that help to make our days run smoothly

Thank you for your help and support, and we look forward to working with you all again in 2017-18.

Get in touch with us at wp-enquiries@qmul.ac.uk or @QMULWP