Annual Report on
Widening Participation and Outreach (WP&O)
2013–14
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6 Conclusion
The University of Surrey is a research intensive University that has made and continues to make a substantial investment in the widening participation agenda. The University has a significant involvement in raising the aspiration and attainment of young people under-represented in Higher Education (HE) and, through its core WP and Outreach programme, provides a range of on and off campus interventions. Our aim is to minimise barriers and support progression to and participation in higher education for those who are capable of benefitting from the experience.

This report provides an overview of some of the successes of the Department’s Widening Participation and Outreach work and the collaborative partnerships that are developing between schools, colleges and the University. It provides a review of our progress to date in meeting the outcomes and milestones set out in our Access Agreement and the approach being taken in order to ensure that we deliver a sustained, coherent programme of activities and events to raise the aspirations and attainment levels of those currently under-represented in higher education.

We aim to provide a high quality, focussed approach to outreach activity to ensure that students from any background are able to access university and do not face any barriers to progression. To ensure that the Department is strategic in its work, a fundamental review of its activity and the methodology by which it is evaluated has been undertaken.
What is widening participation?

Universities recognise that a number of students with the ability to progress to higher education still do not do so. There are many perceived barriers to progression. Sometimes these are simply not recognising the benefits to future earnings and improved social mobility.

The Department of Widening Participation and Outreach (WP&O) at the University of Surrey delivers an important dimension of the University’s work in raising aspirations and attainment for students from a range of backgrounds, particularly those from groups currently under-represented in HE.

The Department has recently formed a Schools Consortium, the core of which consists of local Surrey state maintained schools. The Department provides a sustained, coherent programme of intervention and activities and to track our work with these students to monitor the impact of the activities we are running.

A WP student is a term used to describe students at State schools and colleges between the ages of 10 and 19 who are under-represented in higher education, for example:

- from non-professional households (NS-SEC groups 4-7)
- from low income households
- from low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs – defined as quintiles 1 & 2 in HEFCE’s Polar3 classification)
- from families which have no parental history of HE participation
- looked after children/care leavers
- from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups
- classified as having a disability
- students who are Young Carers
- classified as Gifted and Talented (G&T) and also being in one of the above groups

The Department provides a sustained, coherent programme of intervention and activities and to track our work with these students to monitor the impact of the activities.
Advisory Group
To support the collaborative partnership between the University and the Surrey Schools Consortium, an Advisory Group has been established with representation from a number of Consortium schools. The group is chaired by the Head of Widening Participation and Outreach and meets at least three times a year. It seeks to ensure the programme of events and activities being developed and delivered meets the needs of the students and schools across the Consortium.

Evidencing the value of widening participation and outreach activities
The Surrey Schools Consortium endeavours to provide a coherent, sustained programme of aspiration and attainment raising activities that can be evaluated on a long term basis.

Advice and Guidance (IAG). Both OFFA and HEFCE have an expectation that institutions will not only monitor the numbers of students engaged in activities, but move to a position where the outcomes of the intervention are the focus of evaluation. The key question at the end of each activity must be: has it achieved the outcomes that were intended and have there been unintended consequences. The emphasis is that evaluation of activities should inform the institution’s own strategies and enable the continuous improvement in outreach activities.

The University of Surrey has adopted an outcome based approach for the planning and evaluation of the programme of activities. Meaningful and measurable outcomes have been agreed for key target groups which include; school students, student ambassadors, teachers and parents/carers. All these outcomes have been mapped against the range of activities to be delivered to ensure that the programme successfully achieves the agreed objectives which then form the basis for any evaluation. The evaluation data is reported on against the intended outcomes for the intervention which allows the activity to be reviewed and modified as required.

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Programme of activities

A coherent programme of aspiration and attainment raising activities at each stage of students’ education from Key Stage 2, up to and including Key Stage 5, has been developed. Students are offered opportunities to work with student ambassadors and academics both at the University and within their own schools. All activities delivered to Consortium schools form part of a complementary programme of activities through each stage of students’ education. The University is working closely with Consortium schools to track the progress of these students and to determine the impact of the programme, particularly in raising attainment.

An overarching goal of the strategy is to ensure that everyone with the potential to benefit from higher education has an equal opportunity to do so regardless of background, age, ethnicity, disability or gender. The three aims of the strategy are:

- To support and encourage improvements in the number and/or proportions of students from low income and other under-represented groups
- To reduce as far as practicable the barriers for students from low income and other under-represented groups by ensuring that institutions continue to invest in outreach and financial support
- To support and encourage equality of opportunity through the provision of clear and accessible financial information for students, their parents/carers and advisers

**Teachers professional development**

To complement the range of activities provided for students a series of events for teachers and advisers is being delivered to support the development of knowledge and expertise in their subject areas as well as enhance their professional development. The programme seeks to enable the sharing of good practice among Consortium schools. It also enables teachers and University of Surrey academics to engage in discussions about the curriculum and the transition from secondary school to higher education, therefore benefitting both the access and retention of WP students.

**Activity outcomes**

For each event or activity a number of specific outcomes have been developed for students and other target groups, for example, teachers, parents/carers, University staff and WP student ambassadors. Outcomes set for each activity are evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure that the outcomes for each specific target group are met.

Key outcomes for student activities aim to:

- Increase rates of progression into higher education (including the University of Surrey)
- Increases rates of application to higher education
- Increase GCSE attainment levels

Activities are therefore aimed at providing knowledge about higher education:

- Understanding what opportunities are available in HE
- Understanding the application process for HE
- Understanding all aspects of student finance
- Knowledge of academic, financial and pastoral support available at universities
- Understanding the variety of career and educational pathways and employment opportunities
- Understanding how to make informed decisions about future educational pathways
- Increased breadth and depth of subject knowledge
- Increased knowledge of learning styles and transferable skills

Using an outcome based approach we are able to evaluate the success of activities. To understand the longer term behavioural impact of involvement in activities, more in depth evaluation of larger scale activities will take place. In addition, a longitudinal evaluation will be carried out with a sub-sample of those students and their parents/carers for whom we have complete demographic information and associated school data. The sub-sample will be selected from schools within the Advisory Group and consent for participation in the longitudinal evaluation sought from parents.
Information, advice and guidance (IAG) activity map

HE related IAG days provide students with advice, guidance and information about what university is and what it has to offer. The map below provides examples of what is offered at various stages of their education and the outcomes we aim to achieve at each stage. For example, a key outcome for activities with Year 9 students is that they understand the variety of career pathways and employment opportunities open to them.
WP&O activities 2013/14

During the last year the Department has been involved in the design and delivery of a wide range of activities and events, and have worked with a large number of beneficiaries from a variety of different target groups. These have included:

- A total of 5826 students have been involved in outreach activities with the University from Years 6–13.
- Students from 103 different schools have attended events delivered by the department.
- We have worked with 45 Surrey Consortium schools; 23 of whom have been involved in 4 or more different activities.
- Delivered 6 Teachers’ Professional Development (TPD) sessions, with 98 teachers attending.
- 276 parents/carers attended activities both on and off campus.

5826
STUDENTS INVOLVED IN OUTREACH ACTIVITIES WITH THE UNIVERSITY FROM YEARS 6–13

276
PARENTS/CARERS ATTENDED ACTIVITIES BOTH ON AND OFF CAMPUS
It was a very high standard and I was able to learn lots and now know the career I want and have a better understanding as to how to get there. It has also motivated me to work harder.

One Health YPU student

The WP&O Department organised four Young Persons University (YPUs) programmes during July 2014 which provided students from schools across the UK with an opportunity to get a taste of university education and the social opportunities available at university.

A total of 90 students took part in YPUs in Engineering; Business, Hospitality & Tourism and Law; Nursing & Midwifery and One Health. Each of the YPU programmes included a variety of subject specific lectures, seminars and workshops and an opportunity to learn different skills, including giving presentations, team building skills and group project work.

The YPUs allow students to experience the independence of university life by staying away from home in university accommodation for three nights. During the week students are encouraged to mix with those on other programmes through group project work and social activities. This year’s social activities included climbing at Surrey Sports Park, a visit to see Twelfth Night at Guildford Castle and an evening at Gravity Force Trampoline Park in Camberley.

Year 10 students

Year 10 students were given a taste of the work of archaeologists and anthropologists and information about the opportunities available to study these subjects in higher education. Sessions involved a forensic archaeology excavation where students documented a variety of artefacts in addition to learning how to profile skeletal remains and identify fingerprint and other evidence. The day was supported by Surrey Heritage Centre who provided artefacts for the extraction and documentation for research by students.

I have found this week incredibly valuable, both for an experience of my course and of the University of Surrey.

Engineering YPU student

Year 12 students

To provide students with an insight into studying Chemistry at university, Year 12 students spent a day on campus with staff from the Chemistry Department. Aims of the day were to help students’ understanding of the variety of courses available at university and progression routes to University. The day consisted of practical activities, a tour of the Chemistry Department, lectures on energy materials and medicinal chemistry and two practical lab sessions. The event provided students with an opportunity to experience aspects of chemistry that they would not normally cover during their A-level studies.

It was a very high standard and I was able to learn lots and now know the career I want and have a better understanding as to how to get there. It has also motivated me to work harder.

One Health YPU student

95% of students said they had gained information about Chemistry courses available at University

94% of students felt confident that they knew what skills are required to study Chemistry at University

The WP&O Department piloted a Literacy Project with 12 Year 7 students at a local secondary school for six weeks between May and July 2014. Four student ambassadors worked on a weekly basis with students who were identified by the school as needing additional literacy support. Support included listening to students read, leading discussions about current news and assisting teaching staff.

The Literacy Coordinator at the school was very impressed with the professional and capable way the ambassadors worked with the students.

100% of students who attended the YPU said that it had helped their understanding of the variety of courses offered at University
**SURREY SKILLS FAIR**

Over 2000 Year 9 students from 36 schools across Surrey attended this event in February 2014. Surrey Skills Fair is one of the WP&O Department’s largest single events. The Skills Fair is a two day event held at Surrey Sports Park for Year 9 students who are about to choose their GCSE options. Students are given the opportunity to find out about a range of industries, career options and courses provided at colleges and universities.

A total of 48 exhibitors attended the event including, IBM, Procter & Gamble, Eagle Radio and Surrey Satellite Technology as well as a number of further and higher education providers, including Brooklands College and Royal Holloway University.

There was an opportunity for a number of students to take part in short careers sessions which raised awareness of the importance of participation in further and higher education in order to broaden future career options. Feedback from this session was very positive and the session will be made available to a larger number of students at the next Surrey Skills Fair in February 2015.

I really enjoyed today as it introduced me to a new world of jobs I never knew existed so now I have changed my mind on what I want to do because before I didn’t have a clue.

Surrey Skills Fair student

**YEAR 8 INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION WEEK**

Year 8 students

The first Introduction to Higher Education Week was held at the end of the spring term for students in Year 8. The event was designed to provide students with an introduction to higher education by bringing them onto the University campus and providing them with subject specific knowledge. Activities during the week included a Junior Business Game where students had the opportunity to run a business for a day, as well as a Drama workshop and a session on Creative Writing where students explored their creativity and developed their own story. Throughout the week students also created a Memory Book which encouraged them to reflect on the activities they had participated in.

Students worked together with those from other schools and had the opportunity to develop their teamworking and communication skills to help build their self-confidence. The week culminated with a graduation ceremony which was attended by 120 parents/carers and other family members. Each student was presented with a graduation certificate by the University’s Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, Professor Andrea Dlaska.

The success of the event has led to two Year 8 weeks being planned for 2014/15.

80% of students agreed that the skills fair had helped them to plan their future career.

72% of students stated that the event would help them to make their GCSE choices.

90% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt ‘better prepared’ for their exams.

89% of students said that they understood the variety of progression routes into university.

It will definitely help me in the future. This week has also been amazing.

Year 8 student

Gives students something to aspire to; shows them what it’s like.

Resilient Revision student

**AS/A2 REVISION DAYS**

To prepare students for their AS/A2 exams, a variety of revision conferences were held during the summer term. The sessions included AS Psychology, AS Sociology and AQA AS & A2 Biology. Conferences were run by a variety of presenters who had experience of writing revision guides and working as examiners in the relevant subject areas. The sessions were well received by students and there was very positive feedback about the events. As a result of the positive feedback, further revision sessions will be offered in 2015.

72% of students stated that the event would help them to make their GCSE choices.

90% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt ‘better prepared’ for their exams.

Year 11 students

The Resilient Revision Days were developed to provide students with additional revision techniques ahead of their GCSE exams. Students were given an introduction to an online revision tool ‘Get Revising’, together with a session on time management and the opportunity to speak to ambassadors about their higher education experience. In addition, the day provided an opportunity to introduce them to the University and develop their understanding of progression routes and information about student finance.

Resilient Revision student

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### Teachers’ Professional Development (TPD) Events

**TPD Events**

The programme of Professional Development Events for Teachers in the wider Surrey Schools Consortium was launched by the Department in the summer term of 2013 with two pilot events. It has subsequently developed into a full programme of events which combine access to leading edge academic work, inspirational speakers and practical strategies to enhance teaching and learning as well as offering opportunities for peer networking.

The premise is to re-inspire teachers with a love of their subject, discover practical ways to develop their teaching and provide opportunities to meet with peers, academics and other specialists in order to work better with their widening participation students.

**Computing TPD**

The academic year started off with a TPD event entitled ‘The new Computing: Change Consortium was launched by the Department of Veterinary Science with an event had increased their knowledge and understanding of engineering.

**Maths TPD**

Early in the academic year the Department held a TPD event, ‘Motivating Mathematics’. A focus of the event was a session run by an external speaker to provide innovative ways computing can be delivered in the classroom.

**Chemistry TPD**

In November 2013 a TPD ‘Advances in Chemistry’ event was held which gave teachers the opportunity to learn about developments in the field of chemistry with a focus on exploring graphene. The event provided an opportunity for colleagues to discuss the challenges of teaching chemistry at secondary level and hear about exciting resources currently being used by the University in classrooms.

**Production Skills TPD**

This event was held during the summer term in the Ivy Arts Centre at the University of Surrey, and run by the School of Arts and the Guildford School of Acting (GSA) at the University of Surrey. Teachers were given an insight into production skills and the opportunities available for future graduates. Students led a showcase where they exhibited work in their specialist area.

**Business TPD**

This session was held at the end of the summer term and opened with a discussion and debate surrounding what students know and what students do as well as identifying the potential gaps that need bridging between sixth form/college and university teaching and learning. A large part of the session focussed on reflective practice and independent learning.

**Year 6 students**

The Department supported three Transition Summer Schools with a key focus on helping students transition from primary to secondary school. A total of 107 students from 3 Consortium schools took part in the activities which were held during the summer holidays. Student ambassadors supported the events which included a variety of literacy and numeracy activities aimed at developing students confidence in these areas. At the end of the Summer Schools, parents were invited to come and celebrate their children’s achievements.

During the week two schools visited the campus and took part in a numeracy linked mini science fair. They also had the opportunity to explore a variety of sports at Surrey Sports Park including climbing, fencing and rock climbing.

**Year 9 students**

The Dragonfly Day offered female students the opportunity to engage in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). During the day students met with engineers from a range of disciplines and talked to current students about university life and their higher education journey. Throughout the day students were given challenges to complete which demonstrated the relationship between Science and Technology disciplines and engaged them in problem solving and team working.

91% of students agreed or strongly agreed that what they had learnt during the event had helped their understanding of engineering.

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**Year 10 students**

Sixty students from 4 Consortium schools attended the Veterinary Science event. During the day students participated in a Pathology lab and Biosciences practical, together with a lecture on infectious diseases and pathology.

91% of students said that the event had increased their knowledge and understanding of veterinary science.

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**DISCOVERING THE WORLD OF VETERINARY SCIENCE**

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**DISCOVERING THE WORLD OF VETERINARY SCIENCE**
Parents/carers play an important role in students’ lives when it comes to making decisions about their education. The WP&O Department has a visible presence in schools at open days, options events and parents’ evenings so that they can answer questions about higher education. Talks are also given in schools to parents/carers about university life and university finance to enable them to support their children.

**FORUM FOR ACCESS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION (FACE) CONFERENCE 2014**

The Forum for Access to Continuing Education (FACE) held their 21st Annual Conference between 2nd-4th July 2014, where three papers were presented: ‘Evidencing the Value of WP Activities’; ‘Maximising Outreach & Impact Through Student Ambassadors’ and ‘Effective School and HEI Partnership Working’.

All three papers demonstrated the work that the University is doing with regard to widening participation and outreach in collaboration with the Surrey Schools Consortium with the support of WP student ambassadors.

**AIMHIGHER COLLABORATIVE UNIVERSITY TASTER DAYS**

The University is part of the Aimhigher London South Network whose membership comprises of 54 schools, 4 further education (FE) colleges and 11 universities in London and the South East in addition to the University of Surrey. As a member of this partnership, WP&O staff and student ambassadors commit to hosting and staffing events commissioned by Aimhigher London South East and attend meetings with schools, FE colleges and HE institutions to support collaborative initiatives. During this year the WP&O department has been involved in taster conferences for a number of age groups.

**PRE-ENTRY DAY**

Mature students
This event seeks to provide mature students with support as they make the transition into HE. The event also provides an opportunity for students to meet and network with new and existing mature students. The event was held at the University of Surrey in SPLASH (Student Personal Learning and Study Hub) and attendees had the opportunity to hear first-hand from current mature students about their experience in higher education. A session was provided on preparing to learn at university as well as an introduction to the library and campus tour. The day concluded with an Information Fair with representation from a variety of departments and the Students’ Union. Incoming students were made aware of the day through the University of Surrey Welcome week website.

I found the whole day extremely helpful and feel less apprehensive about starting university.

Mature student

**COMPACT SCHEMES**

A range of schemes are offered by higher education institutions as part of the outreach strategy to engage with schools and colleges and support students in their ambition to progress to higher education. These schemes are sometimes called Compact schemes.

**In2Surrey**

In2Surrey is a Compact scheme targeted at students in state-funded schools and colleges. The scheme identifies and supports applicants from under-represented groups who have the potential to succeed at university. Whilst the scheme does not guarantee a place at the university, it gives consideration to eligible students who have the potential to succeed, but whose circumstances make it difficult for them to achieve the standard offer for the programme. Students who meet the criteria and have made Surrey their firm choice are made an offer that is one grade below the standard offer and are asked to complete a Learning Module which has two elements:

- An assessed assignment specific to the course applied for, which will be set and marked by university tutors
- A reflective report designed to explore personal learning experiences and progression to higher education

On successful completion of the In2Surrey learning module, applicants will benefit from:

- Access to a point of contact at the University, who can provide advice on the application process and information on the assessed Learning Module
- Access to general advice on life and study at university
- If a Scheme member finally joins the University, they may be entitled to a financial award subject to specific criteria

In 2013/14 the scheme was expanded and over 30 applications were received for the scheme and 10 students enrolled.

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The University has held the Buttle Trust Quality Mark for care leavers since 2007.

Applicants to university who are care leavers often experience a number of difficulties including lack of information and advice at the point of application and difficulty accessing the necessary financial support, problems with accommodation and lack of support.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England stated in 2014 that care leavers are:

“significantly disadvantaged and under-represented in higher education. DfE data shows that around 410 care leavers were in HE in 2012 at the age of 19, which represents 7% of all 19 year old care leavers”

The University has held the Bute Trust Quality Mark for care leavers since 2007 and demonstrates an institutional commitment to those who are in care or leaving care.

The Department is also involved in a number of collaborative activities working with:

- Surrey Virtual School to develop and deliver HE related IAG days to Personal Advisors who provide support to care leavers
- South East Network for Education of Care Leavers to support care leavers into university

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TRAINING OF STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Widening Participation Student Ambassadors
Student ambassadors working for the Department are involved in a wide range of activities:
» Supporting the Surrey Schools Consortium Teachers’ Professional Development events
» Assisting with classroom based attainment and aspiration raising activities both on and off campus
» Leading University campus tours
» Supporting large scale events, such as the Year 12 Young Persons University Programme
» Attending collaborative activities with other universities

In 2014 the Department, in collaboration with the University Staff Development team, developed a training programme for WP student ambassadors. Seventy student ambassadors from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes were recruited to support the activities of the Department. The new programme aims to enable students to improve their existing skills and gain valuable new ones to prepare them for their role as ambassadors and help their progression to postgraduate study and employment.

The interactive day introduced students to a number of key skills to help them take on their role, including facilitation of activities, presenting, and teamwork skills in addition to essential skills training in safeguarding. The training was supplemented through a range of online learning modules in essential legislative areas. Continuing the success of last year’s training programme, the WP&O Department is planning another training day in November 2014 when we hope to increase the number of student ambassadors we work with.

On 23 May 2014 a celebration event took place for WP student ambassadors who had helped with our activities during the year together with University ambassadors working for Student Recruitment and Marketing. The event celebrated the enormous contribution that student ambassadors make to supporting numerous WP&O and marketing events throughout the year.

Out of the participants, 95% felt that the day gave them the skills to run events

Out of the participants, 88% felt that it developed their presentation skills

Out of student ambassadors, 92% said that it developed their teamwork skills

Out of student ambassadors, 92% felt that it helped them identify their personal strengths

Female student
BSc Adult Nursing

I thoroughly enjoy my time as a WP Student Ambassador as it has given me the opportunity to work with many different age groups of young people alongside the lovely WP staff. I feel this role has given me the opportunity to learn new skills that I will be able to apply in my future career. The highlights for me have been the summer school for my faculty as it was hosted for 6th form college students to get an idea of uni life and how great the nursing course is here.

Male student
BSc Maths

Coming from a widening participation background myself, I am privileged to be part of such an amazing team of people, working with other ambassadors who share the same passion as I do ... Hearing about what they enjoy and what they hope to do in the future makes this job worthwhile and when they leave at the end of the day knowing that non-compulsory education – whether it be apprenticeships, higher education etc – is not scary and it is for everyone – no matter what kind of family background they come from – and being the person that has helped the students make that decision, always puts a smile on my face.

Really interesting session using a variety of different learning and training skills.

Postgraduate student, FHMS

95% of the participants felt that the skills to run events

88% felt that it developed their presentation skills

92% of student ambassadors said that it developed their teamwork skills

92% of student ambassadors felt that it helped them identify their personal strengths
Conclusion

This has been the first full year of the new WP&O strategy and our partnership and collaboration with the Surrey Schools Consortium. It has been an exciting, eventful and extremely busy year. We are enormously grateful for all the help, advice and support from schools, teachers and colleagues both within the University, and externally, who have contributed to all of the events and activities that we have held.

The Advisory Group have been instrumental in supporting and guiding us with the development of new activities and processes for collection of student data and the targeting of students who would benefit from attending these events.

We hope that in future years, many more schools and their students will participate in and benefit from the work that we do. As one of the first schools to become involved, Kings College have brought students to a number of activities, including As and A level revision days, the Surrey Skills Fair, a two day Year 10 event introducing students to the university and taken part in the Literacy Project:

“We are delighted at the opportunity we have been able to offer students at Kings via the University of Surrey Schools Consortium. An immersion in higher education experiences at a younger age is resulting in raised aspirations and broadening horizons for so many of our students.”

Head Teacher, Kings School

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