

TEF Year Two provider submission

Provider Context

The University of East Anglia (UEA) is strongly committed to teaching excellence and the provision of a first rate learning environment. We are proud of the extremely high satisfaction levels expressed by our students and the positive outcomes made possible by their time at UEA. The quality of our students' experience is matched by our strong record in all three UK league tables measuring educational quality. Our TEF metrics reflect our commitment to a high quality experience for all students. We achieved two positive flags (for teaching and academic support – full-time) and came extremely close to a third positive flag (for non-continuation – full-time). As our core metrics show, some 93.6% of our undergraduate (UG) students are full-time (FT) students. Over 30% of our FT UG students are also on Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body accredited courses¹.

Our success is the result of carefully-planned strategic developments in learning and teaching, combined with research-informed management which is rooted in systematic data collection and analysis. Together, these pillars of our management approach provide an excellent experience and support successful outcomes for all of our students. We are particularly proud of the way in which our strategic planning has enabled a significant narrowing of the gap in outcomes for disadvantaged students and our strong performance is reflected across our split metrics.

As an institution that is committed to the value of learning and teaching we take a strongly evaluative approach to course development, review and delivery. A key focus is the collection and analysis of data to inform our understanding of student needs and institutional performance and to monitor the effectiveness of new initiatives. UEA's Business Intelligence Unit (BIU) includes a dedicated expert team of market research and management information analysts who design, implement, analyse and report on a full range of strategic student experience research projects.

Our data analysis, combined with our established academic values, prompted the strategic development of a New Academic Model (NAM), agreed in 2011, and the resultant Bachelors and Integrated Masters (BIM) Regulations for new students were introduced in 2013/14. These new regulations represented a wide-ranging group of reforms that: ensured coherence at the level of the course; set high expectations for students; and significantly enhanced the quality of feedback to students. The reforms have been a marked success in terms of deepening student academic engagement, evidenced by improved student academic performance, reduced non-completion rates, and improved student satisfaction with feedback on assessments.

A second major strategic initiative was the Student Staff Ratio (SSR) initiative - a strategic investment in additional academic staff between 2008/09 and 2013/14, which improved UEA's SSR from 18:1 to 13.7:1. The decision to invest heavily in additional academic staff was informed by management information and benchmarking exercises which indicated that such an investment could significantly improve our performance in key areas. While student numbers increased by 24.0% over the period 2007/08 to 2013/14, academic staffing increased much more markedly by 400 FTE a 64% increase on 2007/08 staffing levels. This significant investment amounts to an additional £19.35m per annum for academic staffing equating to £1,427 per student. Increasing the numbers of academic staff has had multiple benefits for students: improved ratios allow for swifter turnaround on assessment and feedback; the time available for advisees has increased; and the range of expertise feeding into course development has expanded.

UEA is the only mainstream English University to have ranked in the top 5 of the National Student Survey (NSS) every single year since the survey's inception in 2005. We have been consistently in the top 10% of all UK providers in terms of NSS outcomes and as a university that is committed to

¹ UEA statistics on BIU webpages

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UKPRN: 10007789

an excellent student experience the student opinions expressed in the NSS are of critical importance to us as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The University works very closely with our Students' Union and the Undergraduate Education Officer has contributed a summary of the student perspective of UEA's performance in relation to the TEF:

There is a strong culture of partnership between the University and its Students' Union, with regular liaison complemented by formal committee membership for students and students' representatives across the University structures (with some notable exceptions). We continue to appreciate the scope of access and representation for students and their representatives embedded in the structures. As well as ad hoc reports, we compile a wide ranging Student Experience Report (SER) on an annual basis, bringing together key recommendations arising from our own research on the student experience with data from the NSS, PTES, PRES and other University studies. This year the report makes 36 recommendations across six categories, highlighting the most important concerns of students in a way that seeks to work in partnership with University management to improve students' overall experience. The Union recognises and highlights in our reports that the quality of teaching at the University continues to be regarded highly by students across the range of provision. One example of the partnership work is outcomes from previous Student Experience Reports. University management responded to students' concerns around the promptness of returning coursework and has made considerable gains in this area. It is in course organisation and management, some other aspects of assessment and feedback and some aspects of mental health and careers support where we are currently pressing for further improvements. We have raised concerns about the medium term management of expansion within the University and its impact upon the student academic experience. We would also like the University to put more resource into supporting student representation. We expect all these issues to be addressed in the University's response to the SU SER due in the Spring.²

UEA's Core Metrics

As a University that has a well-established commitment to providing a world-class student experience we were not surprised that our performance in relation to teaching quality and academic support significantly exceeded the benchmark. UEA has also invested significant effort in ensuring high levels of student retention and we only missed the boundary for a green flag for non-continuation by the narrowest of margins (0.16 standard deviations). We achieved a non-continuation rate three-year average of 4.5%, and were extremely close to scoring 1.96 standard deviations above our sector benchmark for full-time students.

There is an inherent time-lag in the non-continuation metric, which is based on data from academic years 2011/12 to 2013/14. Internally-derived data based on the TEF specification, and using a rolling three-year average, shows that UEA's non-continuation rate has improved considerably in recent years. Moreover, our most recent data on First Year drop-out show further improvement that indicates we are continuing to perform significantly above sector norms in this area of assessment. For 2015/16, this stands at 4% and the three-year average for 2013/14 to 2015/16 stands at 4.2%.

The split metrics highlight mature and BME non-continuation as areas where UEA performed marginally below its sector benchmark. This is an area where we have already made significant improvements. UEA data highlights that non-continuation has reduced for both sub-groups since the years used in TEF2. For mature students, non-continuation has improved year-on-year from 9.2% in 2011/12 to 5.8% in 2015/16. For BME students the pattern has been slightly less consistent across the 5 years but non-continuation has shown a net improvement. We have been working hard to ensure that our induction and transitions support, as well as the non-academic support provided by Student Services, is effective for all students, demonstrated by the improving trend in these relatively lower performing splits.

² Statement from Union of UEA Students' Undergraduate Education Officer

Our data set for part-time students was too small to generate metrics in most areas, because the University's UG provision is overwhelmingly full-time. One exception to this is the part-time non-continuation rate, where we have a negative flag. This apparent under-performance is overwhelmingly confined to one School (Health Sciences). Importantly, a number of students in this School were registered on full awards, but always intended to complete only a certain number of modules as part of their professional development as nurses. Our reading of this flag is that it may well be a matter of an inappropriate mode of registration rather than a lack of support leading to a change of intention. Work has been undertaken in recent years with the School around the structuring of part-time enrolments and as a result of this intervention the School saw a significant improvement in retention for this category of student, rising from 92.5% Year 1 completion in 2014/15 to 94.5% in 2015/16.

The University outperformed the benchmark levels for employment for all categories of student and sub-groups. However, our performance in the highly skilled employment metric dipped in the final year of recorded data. Performance in this metric is inevitably affected to some extent by regional employment prospects. The University has been an active member of the Local Enterprise Partnership and is playing its part in stimulating our region's economic development. In addition, we have invested over £3m in employability activities since 2012, which will have a positive impact on the highly skilled employment prospects for our students. We are rightly proud that our performance in relation to both employment and highly skilled employment is above benchmark in relation to categories of student that are defined as disadvantaged in the TEF metrics. This reflects our institutional commitments to positive outcomes for all students and the work that we have undertaken to support students who might face particular challenges when seeking employment. This commitment was recognised in our 2015 QAA Higher Education Review report, which commended the University for its approach to employability.

Teaching Quality

Student engagement (TQ1)

The University's analysis of a range of management information indicates that its teaching provides effective stimulation, challenge and contact time that encourages students to engage and actively commit to their studies. Our commitment to a world-class learning experience is reflected in our performance on the relevant metrics as well as other external measures of teaching quality, elements of which are drawn on by the TEF metrics. The New Academic Model (NAM) was specifically designed to strengthen student academic engagement. The BIM Regulations that give effect to the NAM are structured so as to avoid grade inflation in terms of awards being made with insufficient supporting credit. In addition, they significantly shift the emphasis from summative to formative assessment, which ensures students are provided with more effective learning support and feed-forward advice from academic staff. The BIM Regulations embody the approach and objectives outlined in UEA's Learning & Teaching Strategy³ providing strengthened support for induction and transition and a rigorous approach to progression requirements. The impact of the NAM has been to improve learning behaviours for all students and subsequently increase the proportion of students achieving Good Honours.

Improved student academic engagement, coupled with the intensification of teaching through additional academic staffing, has resulted in UEA's Good Honours proportion improving steadily over the past 5 years from 72.5% of students achieving Good Honours in 2012 to 86.6% in 2016. Among other initiatives we have introduced a new academic advising structure focused on the provision of both feedback and feed-forward to support students' progress. The University regularly generates and analyses detailed data on the engagement behaviours of categories and sub-categories of

³ UEA Learning & Teaching Strategy 2014-19

students⁴. This information is then used to help shape our policies and development plans to support positive student outcomes. As an example of the impact of such data analysis, we found that 62% of students who engaged in greater than 11 hours of independent study were also involved in some form of peer assisted learning. When combined with the knowledge that independent study has a positive impact on learning outcomes this provided an evidential base in support of the University's continuing investment (circa £100k p.a.) in an institutional Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme.

A founding principle of UEA was a commitment to small-group teaching and a belief in the importance of students working together still informs our institutional approach to learning and teaching today. The University's commitment to pedagogically appropriate teaching that engages students in mutual dialogue extends across all four Faculties. In Science, for example, students have regular laboratory sessions where they work in small groups of two or three, with teaching support, on a particular problem. In Arts and Humanities, where discursive approaches to seminar learning are key to curriculum design and delivery, the average seminar size for second and third year students is 16 and 12 respectively. In our medical degree, students regularly engage in problem-based learning sessions in facilitated groups of 10 students. We regularly collect data on the extent to which students work with each other and the results of our 2016 Student Experience Survey are set out in Fig. 1. This survey of all non-final year undergraduates is carried out annually.

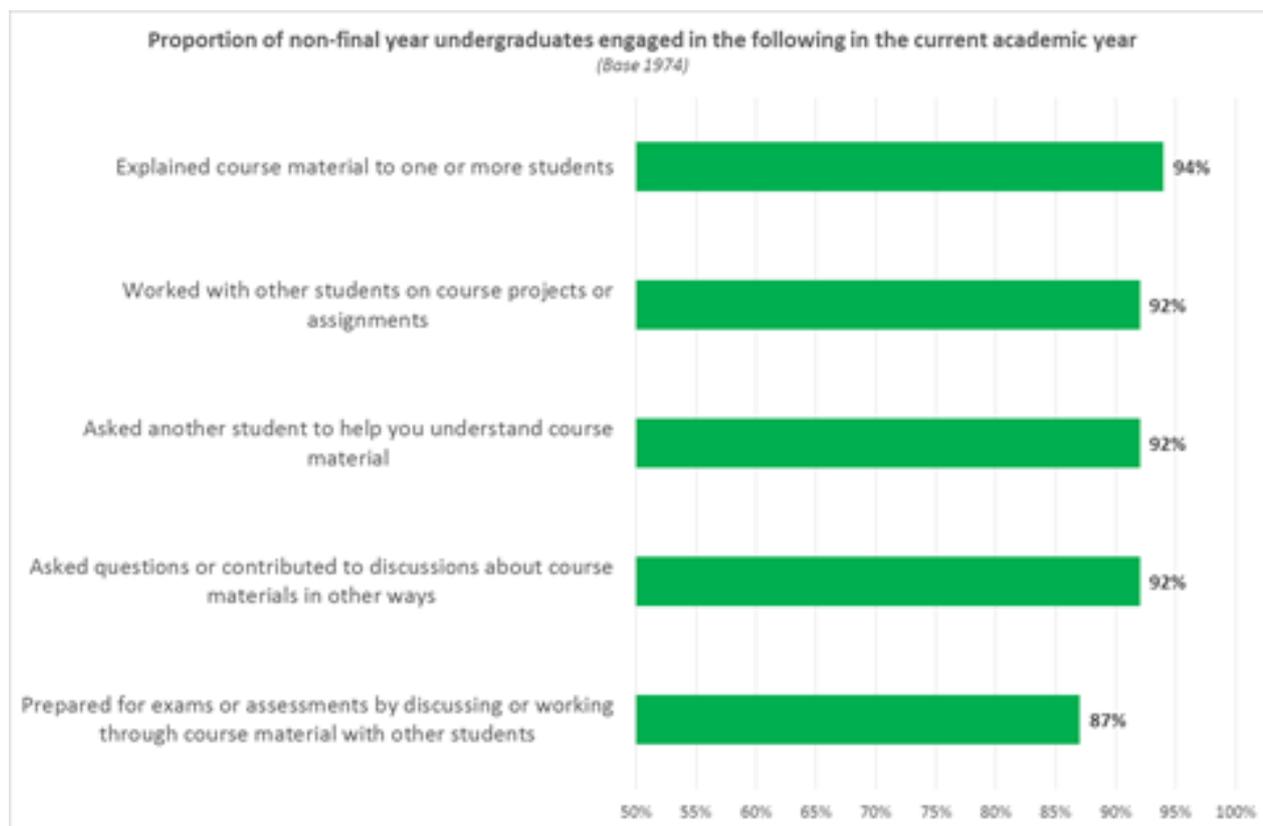
The results of the 2016 survey found that the proportion of students stating that they had worked with fellow students on projects or assignments was satisfyingly high at 92%, with over one in ten, and often as high as one in five, reporting doing so very often. Most commonly undertaken (carried out often or very often by over half of respondents) was work with other students on course projects or assignments. Students are also encouraged to engage in peer working through working towards achievement of the UEA Award. The UEA Award is an interdisciplinary programme of activity, with 900 students currently registered, that develops a range of transferable skills and provides significant employability benefits. Employers are involved in both the design of elements of the Award and in the assessment of students.

UEA's PAL scheme has impacted positively on participants in various ways. Three annual evaluation reports produced since the start of the scheme in 2013 have shown that the vast majority of PAL mentees, mentors and officers think that PAL has improved their overall student experience. The latest of these reports (2015) reveals that 76% of mentees 'would recommend PAL to students starting next year', with a similar proportion (77%) citing 'improved knowledge, understanding and skills' as one of the benefits gained from peer learning. The positive impact of PAL on other participants was also considerable with 94% of mentors and 100% of officers who responded stating that they had 'benefitted from' PAL and that it would help them in future. A January 2016 study, which focused on the impact on UEA students' academic performance showed that attending PAL sessions has a positive effect on academic outcomes including a reduced level of drop-out. This quantitative analysis is supported by the qualitative accounts of mentees, one, for instance, stating: *"I wouldn't have been able to get through my first term without PAL! The mentors were amazing!"*

Overall, the NSS consistently shows that students report extremely high levels of satisfaction with their teaching at UEA. In terms of the teaching theme overall, the level of satisfaction has been in the range 90-92% in each of the last ten years. More specifically, on NSS Question 3 ("the course is intellectually stimulating"), the level of satisfaction has been in the range 89-93% in each of the last ten years and has been 92% or 93% in five of those years. The high level of satisfaction is driven by our excellent academic staff: at least 93% of students have stated that academic staff are good at explaining material in each year the NSS has been run and, since 2011, at least 92% of NSS respondents have stated that staff are enthusiastic about their teaching.

⁴ BIU Engagement Survey data summary

Fig.1. ⁵



Valuing teaching (TQ2)

The recognition of the value of high quality teaching within the University has a number of impacts that are directly beneficial to students. For example, academic staff who are devoted to teaching and scholarship are able to focus their energies on the development of curricula that are genuinely innovative and to share this best practice through our annual Learning and Teaching Days. Promotion criteria that recognise the importance of teaching help ensure that all staff are engaged with the development and delivery of high quality learning experiences for our students. To this end, the University regularly reviews criteria specifically to recognise teaching achievement. In keeping with our ethos of working in partnership with students, the Students' Union also organises an annual teaching excellence award scheme in which student voice is the sole determiner of success.

Strategic changes in the mix and volume of academic staff has had a significant impact on the student experience. The effect of increasing the student-facing academic staff resource (through increasing academic staff numbers) by 88%, over the period 2007/08 to 2013/14 has allowed us to deliver our commitment to building personalised learning relationships with students⁶. This is reflected in our performance in the NSS. In addition, it allowed the creation of core teaching teams focused on ensuring a high quality learning experience for students. Increased teaching staff also supported our strategic aim to significantly improve turnaround time for coursework return. It generated a significant volume of student-facing staff whose membership of academic communities with strong research standing supported the design of research-based, scholarship-informed curricula. UEA had a small number of staff on Academic Teaching and Scholarship (ATS) contracts prior to 2008/09, but as part of the SSR initiative, the number increased significantly. The total

⁵ Summary data extracted from 2016 Student Experience Survey

⁶ This calculation assumes 40% of Academic Teaching and Research (ATR) staff time and 70% of Academic Teaching and Scholarship (ATS) staff time is student-facing

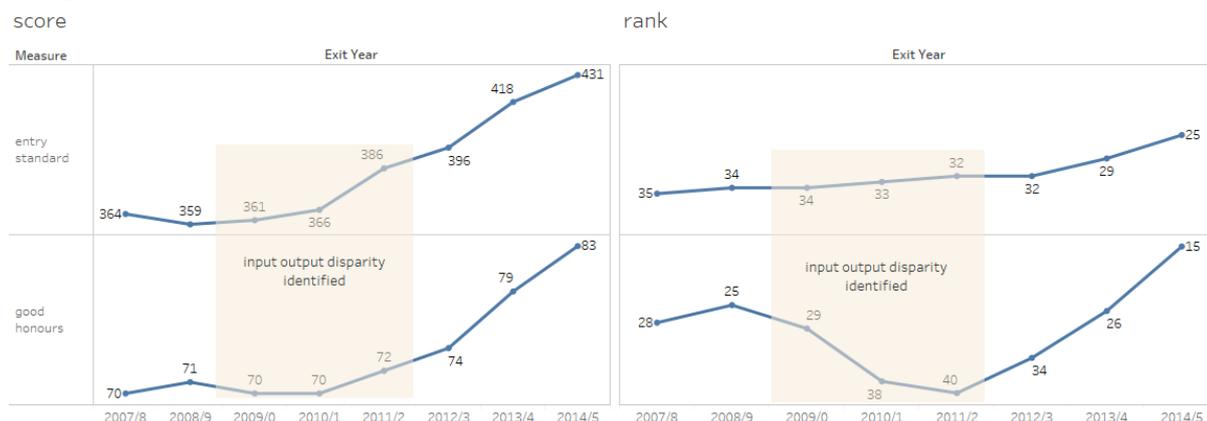
number of ATS staff increased from 86 in 2007/08 to over 330 in 2013/14 such that there are significant cohorts of ATS staff across all four faculties (Arts and Humanities – 70 FTE; Medicine and Health Sciences – 96 FTE; Science – 32 FTE; Social Sciences – 107 FTE).

Our decision to increase the number of teaching-focused staff was based on a number of positive factors that our management research indicated would be generated by such a move. The University emphasises parity of esteem between research and teaching, and between research- and teaching-oriented staff. ATS staff are able to progress through all academic grades from Lecturer through to Chair. There are currently 19 ATS Professors across all four of UEA's Faculties and a number of ATS staff are in senior leadership positions.

Rigour and stretch (TQ3)

Our recent reforms have deepened student engagement, strengthened rigour and stretch, and so led to improved student academic outcomes without any grade inflation. We understand grade inflation to mean excessive improvements in student outcomes which are not the result of improvements in students' engagement and attainment. Our analysis of data between 2007/08 and 2009/10 identified an issue with the proportion of our students achieving Good Honours. We were awarding fewer Good Honours outcomes than might reasonably be expected based on capability at the point of entry. This disparity is demonstrated in Fig. 2 below.

Fig. 2
 League table performance – input output disparity



The New Academic Model created a framework in which teaching and engagement have improved. The comprehensive reforms have ensured that course design, development standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential. The impact of the new regulations has resulted in a greater proportion of students achieving Good Honours. At the same time, the BIM Regulations contain a number of safeguards to prevent grade inflation⁷. For example, we operate consistent exam board regulations across all courses, with very limited discretion for exam boards. The increase in teaching staff has allowed greater individual support and academic guidance from core teaching teams. This, in turn, ensures our students have the best chance of achieving their full potential. Our algorithmic approach to classification and tighter progression rules also prevent the expansion of the Good Honours marks boundary and ensures that all students awarded Good Honours outcomes have demonstrated the appropriate academic competencies.

Over the last seven years the University has seen a continuous gradual improvement in Good Honours outcomes (Fig. 3). The main cause of this change has been a movement out of the 2ii classification into the 2i classification, which has been driven by a number of improvements from increased engagement, a greater focus on formative assessment, and investing in the development

⁷ University's published BIM regulations

of our Learning Enhancement Team (LET) provision. Sector benchmarking (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide) shows how in 2011/12, we were ranked 32nd for the quality of our student intake, yet only 40th in Good Honours, for example. However, since then UEA's Good Honours performance has moved from significantly below our expected benchmark (based on entry tariff and SSR) to in line with benchmarks, supporting the view that this improvement reflects genuine changes in student performance.

Fig 3

Institutional Good Honours Time Series



While the graph above shows performance across the institution, it is a reflection of our strategic approach that the mean rate of improvement for all students has been met or exceeded by the rate of improvement for disadvantaged groups within UEA. This evidences our strategic intent to ensure the inclusivity of our improvements to teaching and learning support such that all students benefit from changes in the delivery of our taught courses. The effectiveness of this strategic approach is evidenced in Fig 4 on page 14. The gap in performance is being closed consistently across most profile groups between 2011/2 and 2015/6.

For UEA students, technology is a fully integrated part of their learning and content delivered through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which supports their individual learning. We use Blackboard and the student record system (via eVision) to provide a range of online support to all students through these websites, which include online tutorials, help sheets and presentations. The provision of high quality 'self-service' materials that can be accessed at the student's convenience complements timetabled face-to-face academic contact hours. The University invested in a new post of Academic Director of Learning & Teaching Enhancement in 2014 to help exploit the opportunities presented by new learning technologies. We are also adopting the latest tools to optimise our analysis of management information to drive forward effective evaluation and improvements.

In 2013 UEA was the first UK HEI to offer a MOOC in collaboration with FutureLearn and we played a pivotal role in establishing FutureLearn as the world's third largest MOOC provider. MOOCs are now part of business-as-usual at UEA. We offer courses in the area of professional development and to support students in transition into UEA. In October 2014, UEA opened its Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning to house our team of learning technologists and digital designers who provide extensive support to academics in developing a range of blended learning.

Feedback (TQ4)

The University is committed to the value of feedback as a key element in the success of a student's journey towards 'graduate-ness'. The New Academic Model incorporates a requirement to increase the volume of formative assessment, recognising that 'feed forward' as preparation for summative assessment is critical for student success. We also introduced examination feedback in all Schools in October 2012 in response to student requests and to provide effective feed-forward for progressing students and those students referred to reassessment.

In 2014/15 we launched our enhanced approach to managing and monitoring feedback to students on their assessments. This initiative was introduced in response to management information that highlighted the performance benefits arising from a more timely return of feedback, and in response to discussions with our Students' Union. As a result, our compliance with return-time targets increased from 79% to 94% and internal measures of student satisfaction (among non-final year students) increased by 10 percentage points. External measures of quality also reflect the effectiveness of our closely targeted approach to improving the student experience. UEA's score for the Assessment and Feedback theme in NSS 2016 improved in rank by 17 places and scores improved on 3 of the questions on this theme. Particularly positive is the 2016 improvement in UEA's score for Q7 on promptness which improved in rank by 45 places. Provision of feedback is crucial to developing students' learning and will have played a part in the students' improving Good Honours outcomes.

As part of our ongoing dialogue with students we regularly liaise with the Students' Union over innovations students would most like to see. The SU were very keen to see the introduction of the NUS Benchmarking Toolkit for Assessment and Feedback so this was incorporated into the University's Senate Guidance on Assessment and Feedback⁸ in June 2015. Other initiatives, such as the introduction of examination feedback, have arisen from combining SU survey data, with our own management information and focus-group outputs to determine which innovations are most likely to improve student performance, progress and satisfaction.

Strong management and leadership of innovation at University level is also reflected by the rapid increase in the take up of e-marking which increased four-fold from 2014-15 to 2015-16. During 2015/16, we further developed the e-marking system to have a fully-automated grades journey from electronic submission, through e-marking and grades automatically entered into our SITS Student Information System. The modules participating in this pilot covered all four Faculties and 6% of student coursework. The pilot proved successful and for 2016/17, significant numbers of staff have adopted the system such that 25% of all coursework will be electronically marked this year.

Learning Environment

Resources (LE1)

UEA endeavours to offer all our students a genuinely world class experience and this requires the enthusiasm and expertise of our teaching staff to be matched with appropriate investment in the infrastructure that supports teaching. We are proud of our approach to both new buildings and refurbishment planning. Our design focus is on pedagogically appropriate spaces and we apply an information-led management approach to determining what mix of learning spaces will be needed. We have made significant investment in providing innovative new learning spaces and in refurbishing existing spaces to support the needs and preferences of our students. In total, since 2013, an additional £38m has been invested in three new buildings all of which provide teaching spaces and innovative environments for learning ranging from fluid room layouts to enterprise start-up pods and open-learning zones. In addition to new-build expenditure, the University is committed to maintaining the quality of existing building stock. A number of specific refurbishment activities have taken place.

⁸ Senate Guidance on Assessment & Feedback (Senate June 2015)

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For example, a total of £9m was invested in the redevelopment of the UEA Law School resulting in an increase in overall student satisfaction from 78% in the 2011 NSS to 97% in 2016.

Appropriate learning resources are recognised as critical to student success and we have invested approximately £1.2m in library refurbishments and improvements to its structural layout since 2010. This, coupled with 24/7 365 days a year opening and sustained investment in library learning resources, has contributed to an improved student experience. In 2015 and 2016, UEA is in the top 10% of all institutions taking part in the NSS for Q16 on library resources. In their NSS feedback, students referenced the extensive library resources, the ease and speed when requesting new material, the variety of individual and group learning spaces, helpfulness of staff, and the Library being open 24/7. In terms of investment in library resources per student FTE, UEA is in the upper quartile of mainstream institutions.⁹

The provision of 24/7 365 day Library access has proved extremely popular. Our data on student footfall in 2015/16 shows that approximately a third of all visits to the Library take place at times that would previously have been out of hours. Late night usage peaks during the revision period and our qualitative surveys of student opinion demonstrate the value of this initiative. Written feedback also indicates that the 24/7 365 day service is particularly valuable for non-traditional students. Reflecting the changing learning needs of students, as well as silent study spaces we now have 21 group rooms in the Library, bookable from 8am until midnight to support students in independent study, group work and the development of research skills. In Summer 2014, after feedback from students, we created six larger rooms to provide additional space for seminar preparation and group learning. Data from 2015-16 shows advanced booking, including time slots in the evening and at weekends, averaging almost 60%, with actual usage often close to capacity.

In terms of the online library provision, the Library moved to a 'digital first' strategy in 2015, looking to purchase electronic versions in preference to print, where available and appropriate. The ability to embed links to digitized readings or specific e-books or e-chapters within online courses, through the Blackboard VLE and our new Reading List software (Talis), is already having an impact on learning. For example, at the Library Forum in January 2016, academics shared that the provision of core reading via the Reading List software "had allowed more time for students to engage with further reading. It was also stated that the provision of core reading resulted in students being better prepared for seminars".¹⁰ At a History Staff Student Liaison Committee, mature students living off-campus reported that they had found online reading lists particularly helpful as they can target their time on the core reading and easily see if it is available online¹¹.

Scholarship, research and professional practice (LE2)

UEA is a research intensive University and is very highly ranked in terms of the quality of its research. In REF 2014, UEA ranked 10th in the UK for the quality of outputs, with 78% of its research outputs graded 3*/4*. UEA's research is highly cited internationally and is ranked 63rd in the world for research citations (Times Higher Education, World Rankings 2016). All Schools of Study made REF submissions and all students are taught by research-active staff in a research intensive environment. ATS staff may also contribute to the research environment, and all are required to engage in scholarship, often involving pedagogical research within (and across) disciplines.

All UG course content is informed by the latest developments in research and scholarship. At an institutional level, the University actively monitors and manages the relationship between research and teaching, and distinguishes between research-led and research-based teaching (following Healey and Jenkins, 2009).¹² The purposeful enhancement of research-based learning and teaching was the focus of the University's 2015 Learning and Teaching Day and has been the subject of

⁹ SCONUL Statistics 2014/15

¹⁰ Extract from Library Forum minutes

¹¹ History SSLC Notes, February 2016

¹² Healey, M. and Jenkins, A. (2009) *Developing Undergraduate Research and Inquiry*. York: HE Academy.

strategic discussions at both the University's Learning & Teaching Committee and its Research Executive during 2015/16.

The activity in our School of Biological Sciences (BIO) provides an illustrative example of UEA's approach to research-based teaching. Throughout our BIO degree programmes the students are exposed to practical techniques and increasingly sophisticated experiments designed to build understanding of the research process. First year (Level 4) students build their technical competence through on-going practical sessions. In their second year (Level 5), students design and conduct their own investigations. Not only does this provide students with an authentic research opportunity, but it also enables them to network with other scientists. In their third year (Level 6), students conduct their own empirical scientific research.

UEA is committed to ensuring a learning environment that reflects the very highest standards of professional practice. With 31% of our students undertaking a professional placement, high quality placement provision is key to ensuring an excellent student experience. For example, UEA manages around 10,000 student placements in both public and private healthcare sectors totalling around 50,000 student weeks with 300 placement hosts each year. Quality management of placements is overseen by rigorous review, University inspections of host organisations and professional body oversight. The real value to students is felt in daily practice, both on campus and in host institutions. This includes effective learning in practice, supported by revolutionary models of practice placement, such as the UEA's Collaborative Learning in Practice model. A 2016 survey of placement providers in the area of nursing indicated that 90% of providers rated UEA students as meeting or exceeding their expectations in terms of performance in achieving placement learning outcomes. In addition, 89% of providers reported feeling that UEA had well prepared the student for their placement.

As a member of the Norwich Research Park (NRP) and Norwich Research Park Partners LLP, UEA is able to engage with partner institutes in the delivery of our courses. Our partner institutes are the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, and four independent world-class research institutes - the John Innes Centre, the Institute of Food Research and the Earlham Institute (all strategically funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council [BBSRC]) and the Sainsbury Laboratory linked to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Partners provide valuable student placements, internships, summer studentships, and other opportunities for our graduates, as well as scientific, clinical and professional staff who deliver on our courses, and access to world talent through seminar programmes which are open to staff and students.

In particular, UEA makes extensive use of external clinical and professional staff as teaching leaders on our professional programmes, from institutes on the NRP and elsewhere. In addition, the latest developments in professional practice are shared and disseminated through our Centre for Interprofessional Practice. Within the Faculty of Medicine and Health, joint clinical appointments have a powerful impact on the exposure of students to new developments in practice. Further enhancements to the professional learning environment include significant growth in activity with specialist host institutions such as the British Army Medical Corp. As explained above (p.5), on NSS Q3 ('the course is intellectually stimulating'), UEA has typically scored above 90% over the last ten years of the survey.

Personalised learning (LE3)

The University performed well in the non-continuation metric, coming extremely close to achieving a green flag in this area. The importance of retention across the life of the course, as well as minimising drop-out, has been an important aspect of the University's mission for some years and is reflected in our current UEA Plan¹³ and in a number of University initiatives from the institutionally coordinated induction for new students to the introduction of a specific week in the teaching year that affords students the opportunity to learn in new contexts and settings. The University's approach to induction has been to conceptualise the student journey from application through to graduation and

¹³ UEA Plan 2016-20

successful post-graduation employment as a series of transitions each of which require specific support and guidance. The success of the University's approach can be seen in the objective measure of our Good Honours outputs and in the extremely high score we achieve in the metrics for the quality of teaching and academic support.

The BIU run a combination of tracking and benchmarking projects, which enable the University to have a deep understanding of best practice, be vigilant for problem areas, and to learn more about specific issues or groups of students. This ensures that we are able to react to issues in an agile way and ensures on-going teaching quality and student satisfaction. Well-analysed data provided to senior managers triggers the planning of appropriate responses, which are then enacted and subsequently reviewed for their effectiveness by the next round of data analysis. For example, learning from our consistent participation in the NSS and Postgraduate Taught Experience Surveys, coupled with recent new projects such as our Exit Survey with non-completers and a qualitative tracker project following new UG students (including those from Widening Participation backgrounds) through their first year at University, have come together to allow the University to take effective and impactful action around non-continuation.

The University is committed to the importance of an effective academic advising system. To that end, in addition to significantly increasing the number of teaching staff, we have also introduced a new academic advising structure to best support individual students. The new structure prioritises academic support and needs-based advice. Advisors make good use of feedback and feed-forward materials to ensure that their support is targeted to the individual advisee. Our commitment to an appropriately tailored delivery is also supported by LET within Student Services. The University operates an active referral approach such that students who may be struggling with particular aspects of their course or with study skills more generally are referred to LET for additional support and guidance. This model reflects our strong commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for all students and helps to target the resource on those students who have a clearly defined need. The role of our LET team in the improved academic outcomes for students is indicated by data showing that for the period 2008/09 to 2013/14 the percentage of students who engaged with the LET team and achieved Good Honours was 69%. In 2014/15 this proportion increased to 83%. Notably, some 91% of non-final year undergraduate respondents to UEA's 2016 Student Experience Survey who had interacted with our LET tutors reported being satisfied with the support they received.

2016/17 has seen the introduction of a Faculty-specific student induction initiative, 'I Love Humanities', taking a more explicit approach to transition and acculturation within a specific set of disciplinary settings through a series of coordinated events running across a week and available to all students within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The experience will inform developments in other Faculties and focuses on 5 core transitions themes: building relationships and developing support networks; institutional integration; interdisciplinary orientation; study skills and employability. Early reflections on this programme suggest that it provides significant value to students. Among the identified beneficial impacts are: the management of information to avoid early overload for new students; encouraging a sense of belonging at a Faculty level and fostering a comfort with exploring the full range of support available across the institution; reinforcing student confidence in their choices; greater awareness of interdisciplinarity and providing opportunities for students to register for additional opportunities such as employability events.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

Employment and further study (SO1)

The University recognises that the metric for highly skilled employment is below the benchmark, but we are confident that the comprehensive steps being undertaken will significantly improve student prospects in future years. The University has a track record of introducing effective corrective measures to improve performance, using its extensive analysis of management information to determine which measures will trigger the required changes. This approach led to our uplift in Good Honours and non-continuation and is already driving positive change in student employability. This

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is reflected in a commendation on our approach to supporting employability from QAA¹⁴. Generally, careers service users report finding the experience useful with this being particularly high for some of the very active types of engagement with more than 80% of respondents reporting direct communication with an advisor being useful to their skills development¹⁵.

The University has dramatically increased its investment in employability since 2012 by investing approximately £600,000 per year in additional staff and £1.4m in a new Careers Centre (called CareerCentral) in a central location on campus, alongside a new online careers capability providing a significantly enhanced set of resources and opportunities for students. UEA is now seeing significantly improved student engagement with careers services and engagement of senior staff from across the University and has appointed Employability Directors in each School of Study.^{16 17} Engagement by UG students has increased from 38% in Autumn 2014 to 60% in Summer 2016.

Careers services have been made much more visible and accessible. By engaging with the MyCareerCentral portal students can access highly personalised information, resources and job-related events. When normalised to exclude the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, where students are already working with an existing or prospective employer, the proportion of students using CareerCentral is currently 71%, an increase of 11 percentage points on the previous year. Of those respondents who have used CareerCentral in 2016, 89% (up from 85% in 2015) reported being satisfied with their experience.

In 2014 UEA's careers service launched an Employability Development Fund to enable eligible students to apply for a fund of up to £1,000 to help with the costs of undertaking a work experience opportunity or other activity to enhance their employability. In 2015-16 there were 80 applications and £34,000 was committed. The scheme has been successful in allowing Widening Participation students to access opportunities (here and abroad) they otherwise would have had to decline.

UEA is leading one of HEFCE's 12 Learning Gain projects, which focuses on student marks and GPA, self-efficacy assessment and concept inventories. We are working at the frontier of national knowledge on learning gain and are full participants in HEFCE's Learning Gain Network. The UEA project considers measures of students' conceptual understanding and confidence as well as issues with the award of marks as a more traditional and established way of measuring learning gain. The UEA project has already generated new insights into the relationship between self-confidence and educational attainment, which has informed our practice in learning and teaching and will, in turn, impact on the employment outcomes for our students.

Employability and transferable skills (SO2)

UEA is currently ranked seventh out of 160 HEIs for graduate business start-ups, which has been driven by our strategic investment in this area. The University employs a dedicated Student Enterprise Officer to seed and nurture student enterprise activity. Between 2012 and 2016, student involvement in enterprise and entrepreneurship activity has grown significantly as evidenced by both the growth in activities available which are both student and service-led, on and off campus and the number of students progressing to self-employment and business start-up¹⁸. Since 2012, over 1,000 students have engaged with our Student Enterprise Service by attending events, appointments or making applications for funding, and almost 100 UEA Enterprise funding awards have been granted totalling £125,000.

UEA's Enterprise Centre, a £17m project, opened in 2015, provides a focal point for enterprise activities on campus, housing 'Enterprise Central', a space for students to engage with student

¹⁴ QAA HER Report published February 2016

¹⁵ From internal survey data

¹⁶ Doc 0114 SSF Associate Dean Employability Role Description

¹⁷ Doc 0792 School Director of Employability Role Description

¹⁸ <https://www.uea.ac.uk/careers/student-enterprise/business-directory>.

enterprise support and access to managed space in which they can develop their ideas. Within eight months of opening, the Enterprise Centre has 95% occupancy. Building on the success of UEA's entrepreneurial alumni and to further encourage a spirit of enterprise at UEA, the University has launched the UEA Enterprise Fund in 2016. UEA is also a partner in Norwich Research Partners LLP, which oversees development and commercial opportunities for our staff and students.

UEA graduates continue to receive support from the Careers Service for up to three years following the completion of their degree. The most recent LEO data on longitudinal outcomes shows that our students who graduated in 2009 are placed 17th nationally in terms of the likelihood of them being in sustained long term employment¹⁹. This position accords with our own data analysis which shows that 85% of our alumni are engaged in some form of professional employment (using ONS Standard Occupation Codes). While the long-term future for our graduates is extremely positive, UEA is continuing to work hard to further enhance the more immediate employment outcomes for our students, investing more than £2m in service improvements since 2012.

UEA students perform particularly well in student enterprise and subsequent graduate entrepreneurship and self-employment. Recent DLHE survey data show 102 graduate start-up businesses in 2013/14 increasing to 106 in 2014-15. Moreover, the data available from HEBCIS, which includes students who might fall outside the DLHE survey, shows that in 2013/14 there were 128 student start-ups giving UEA a rank of 9th in the UK, while in 2014-15 we improved our ranking to 7th with a total of 115 new start-up businesses.

Positive outcomes for all (SO3)

UEA takes a systematic and strategic approach to data analysis and our information-rich decision-making enables us to effectively monitor our performance against our key objective of ensuring that all our students achieve their potential. The strong focus on information-led strategic decision-making has particularly helped in our drive to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students.

Data are regularly produced by the BIU to identify the pattern of student performance across different demographic categories of student. The data are annually considered by the Widening Participation and Learning and Teaching Committees. Where there are gaps, underlying causes are analysed and action plans are put in place. Historically, the most significant gaps in performance have been between white and BME students, mature and non-mature students and WP and non-WP students. Significant progress has been made in narrowing these gaps in student achievement.

Fig. 4 presents our data on student academic performance by student characteristics, and how this has improved over time. In terms of Good Honours outcomes, the gap between mature students and those admitted aged under 21 has narrowed from 15.2 percentage points in 2011/12 to 6.1 percentage points in 2015/16. The gap between disabled students and those with no disability has also narrowed significantly from 10.0 percentage points in 2011/12 to just 2.1 percentage points in 2015/16. The gap between BME students and white students has narrowed from 28.6 percentage points in 2011/12 to 17.7 percentage points in 2015/16. Perhaps most notably, the gap between Widening Participation students from Polar 1 postcodes compared to non-WP students from Polar 2 to 5 areas has been almost eradicated. In 2011/12, the gap was 10.6 percentage points and by 2015/16 it had narrowed to just 1.5 percentage points. It is our performance in relation to disadvantaged groups that best highlights the effectiveness of our strategic approach. We are deeply committed to providing a positive experience that improves each student's life-chances regardless of disadvantage. The richness of the informational context that we generate enables us to act in targeted and purposeful ways. The effectiveness of those interventions is demonstrated by the rapidly improving outcomes for a range of disadvantaged students. Most importantly, those initiatives will lead to real changes in long term future enjoyed by our students.

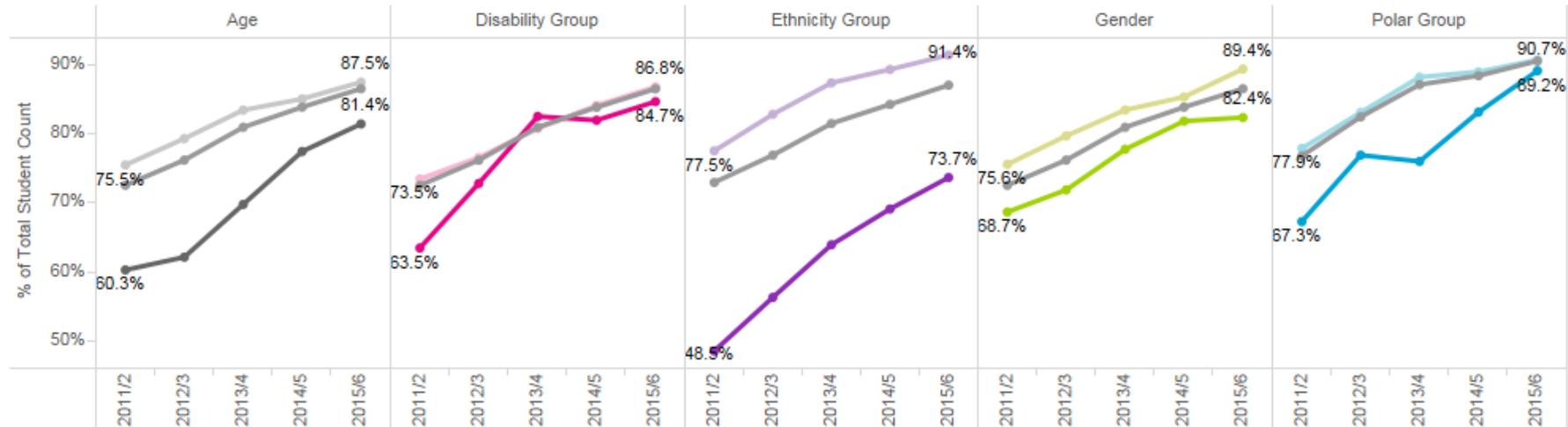
¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/graduate-outcomes-by-degree-subject-and-university>

Fig 4

Profiling Sub-Group

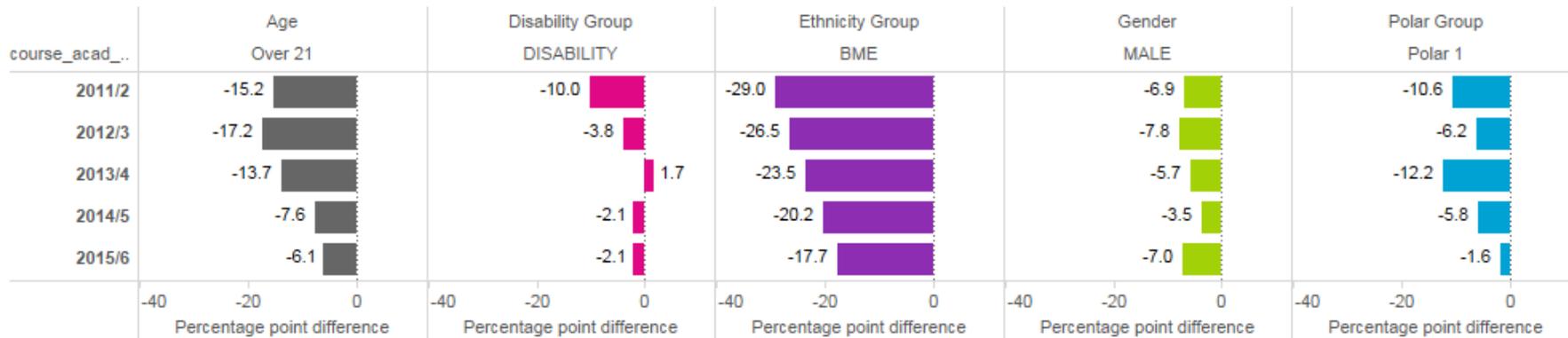


Percentage of Good Honours over time for all students



Charts show percentage of Good Honours over time for Widening Participation and non Widening Participation students in different profiling groups. Grey lines in each chart show the average percentage of Good Honours.

Percentage point difference between WP and non-WP students over time for all students



Charts show percentage point performance gap difference between Widening Participation and non Widening Participation students over time.

There are six key approaches that underpin the success of the University in providing an excellent experience for all students from pre-arrival to post-completion. These are set out below.

First, we have carefully designed and targeted modes of outreach and WP admissions activity, working closely with students, teachers and parents/ carers to ensure that we provide a high quality of pre-arrival support. UEA has a strong commitment to outreach. As well as making school visits we also provide online information help and support for students considering applying to university. In addition, we have developed the UK's first open online course (MOOC) for prospective students. Since 2014, this course has had over 25,000 active participants. Establishing a productive and learning-focused relationship with our students before they even arrive is important to supporting students as they make the transition into higher education.

Second, we provide our students with research-based and coherently structured, progressive courses that ensure effective scaffolding of learning through a series of managed transitions beginning with our expanded Year One induction programme. Courses at UEA are designed to support the development of students as they acquire more independence as higher education learners. The first stages of courses are characterised by closely-planned and taught modules which establish core knowledge and skills early. Building on this through the second year and beyond, many students have the opportunity to ground their knowledge and skills on placements or in time spent at a university abroad. The introduction of School-level Industrial Advisory Boards has helped both with the provision of placements and the embedding of employability within curricula.

Third, we are strongly committed to inclusive practice which supports student learning, achievement and welfare throughout the student journey. At every point, students' needs are considered and additional support and services are available. This inclusive approach underpins our commitment to a high quality student experience for all those capable of achieving excellence in higher education irrespective of students' background or disability. We run a number of Foundation Year courses in Science and a Medical Aspirations Programme in the Norwich Medical School, which have been effective in providing access to University for students who might otherwise not consider higher education. The cumulative effect of measures that support student learning throughout the student journey is a defining factor of our outstanding and inclusive practice.

Fourth, at UEA all students receive formative feedback on their work during their modules to support the development of their learning ahead of summative work. Measures to reduce the time between the submission of work and the return of feedback such as electronic marking have been implemented to make sure the dialogue is effective for all students. Throughout their learning journey, students have access to high quality support provided by the academic advisor system. Advice on learning choices and how they might relate to future plans and success is vital to students in enabling them to achieve their best and this advice is tailored to student need. At the heart of effective student learning is dialogue. This kind of high-quality interaction is facilitated by pedagogically appropriate small-group teaching and through the provision of detailed feedback on student work.

Fifth, we encourage engagement with careers support from the point of arrival. Students complete a survey when first registering at UEA which helps target careers support for them and ensures that contact with this service is embedded early on. The support we provide to students continues well beyond the completion of studies as we actively support our alumni in pursuance of career goals for a number of years after graduation.

Finally, our strong campus identity engenders a powerful sense of community. Our students are encouraged to engage with the University in a number of ways from focus groups to more traditional representation through the SU and this fosters a strong sense of belonging for all our students. The sense of belonging and identity is important to students and many continue to engage with our University and the Norwich Research Park community long after their courses have ended.