Universify Education

Impact Report 2016

www.universifyeducation.com

Foreword

I'm delighted that Somerville College was able to host an access summer school in 2016 that brought together such a diverse range of students from various parts of the UK. In doing so, it was our hope that we would help to stimulate and inspire young people who do not come from a background of privilege to aspire to the best academic performances they could achieve, in school and later at university. We also hoped to persuade young people to aim for high demand universities, including possibly Oxford, when they might not have done so before. The summer school is designed to be the first step in a prolonged engagement. This impact report shows that with this initial engagement we have made significant progress towards those goals. Encouragingly, the effects have continued beyond the end of the residential school. In addition, it was a pleasure to spend time with a remarkable group of young people, bubbling with energy and showing remarkable talent and intelligence. I do hope that we will see at least some of them at Somerville, not just for the continuation of the programme but as applicants and eventually students.

Steve Rayner, Senior Tutor, Somerville College

I'm really impressed with Universify - both with the programme's impact and with the team's commitment to measuring their outcomes and learning from the results. Universify have used a combination of robust quantitative scales and explorative qualitative questions to understand the difference that the summer-school experience makes to young people. The data shows that the model has great potential, and I look forward to seeing how the programme and its impact develops over time.

Ellie Harries, Independent Impact Evaluator

Executive Summary

Our vision

Universify is a charity committed to educational equality. Our vision is a university system open to anyone with academic potential regardless of their background.

Our work starts earlier in a student's journey. We inspire more Year 10 students from non-selective state schools to strive for, apply to, and be accepted at highly selective universities. There is growing evidence highlighting the importance of Year 10 as a crucial age suggesting more long-term, considered engagement can have a greater influence on students' trajectories.[1] We have a long-term commitment to experiment, measure what works and share our findings with the sector to build the case for earlier intervention.

Ultimately, we want universities to draw strength from greater diversity and more students from non-traditional university backgrounds to feel empowered and excited about their future education.

Our Programme

Our first cohort of 41 Universify students has embarked on a year-long programme starting with an intensive week-long summer residential course (held at Somerville College, Oxford University) before monthly academic coaching leading to an Easter revision course. Academic sessions are delivered by academics and undergraduate volunteers provide student welfare support and ongoing coaching.

Initial research shows Universify transformed students' likelihood to apply to highly selective universities, like Oxford. Student surveys demonstrated a 78% increase in students 'very likely' to apply to a highly selective university and a 90% decrease in students 'not very likely' to apply. We changed students' perceptions of university life: students replaced ideas of university as 'busy' and 'stressful' with the idea that it was a place of 'independence' and 'learning'.

What is distinctive about our work

By targeting students pre-GCSEs we aim to alter the trajectory of those who either aren't considering university or who have high potential but are currently underachieving. We use a longer runway than typical outreach interventions to boost attainment at GCSE. Our work aims to equip students with the grades, motivation and knowledge of the system to stand the best chance of making a successful application.

Universify starts earlier to expand the pool of students who both want to apply to highly selective universities and who have the grades to do so. This complements existing provision for Year 11-12 students which has improved application success rates.[2]

We are committed to measuring our impact, and engaged an independent evaluator to design our impact measurement strategy as built into the delivery of our programme.

Our story so far

Universify was founded in 2016 by the Directors of Oxford Summer Courses, a BAC-accredited provider of short academic courses. Universify combines Oxford Summer Courses's expertise of running summer schools with Somerville College's desire to serve link regions and target schools better. Universify sought the help of education charities alongside Oxford University's Widening Access and Participation Team to design the course and recruited 41 Year 10 students from Somerville's network.

Our future

We will link Universify to existing evidence-based interventions for Year 11-12 students so that our initial impact continues over the long term. We offer this report in the spirit of collaboration.

In 2017 we will host 120 students across 3 Oxford colleges before taking Universify to other universities throughout the country. Expanding Universify will enable us to achieve our vision by working with more students.

[1] For example careers' talks delivered to 14-15 year olds saw them receive a wage premium by the age of 26, suggesting that by 16-17 the high pressure of examinations limits the long-terms career insights as their focus lies with their short-term academic demands: Elnaz T. Kashefpakdel & Christian Percy 'Career education that works: an economic analysis using the British Cohort Study', Journal of Education and Work (2016), p. 16.

[2] Both Oxford University's UNIQ summer school programme and the Sutton Trust summer school programme target Year 12 students and have shown improved application success rates. Oxford Thinking campaign website, https://www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/ereport/uniq [accessed 11th November 2016], 'The impact of the Sutton Trust's Summer Schools on subsequent higher education participation: a report to the Sutton Trust'http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/full-summer-school-report-final-draft.pdf [accessed 11th November 2016]

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Students enjoy the icebreakers on arrivals day of Course 2

- Open to everyone but while also focusing with those who require support and equipping everyone to reach for the stars even those who feel excluded.
#SWAMP
2
STARS
- Gives independence and confidence whilst in University.

Our aims and purpose

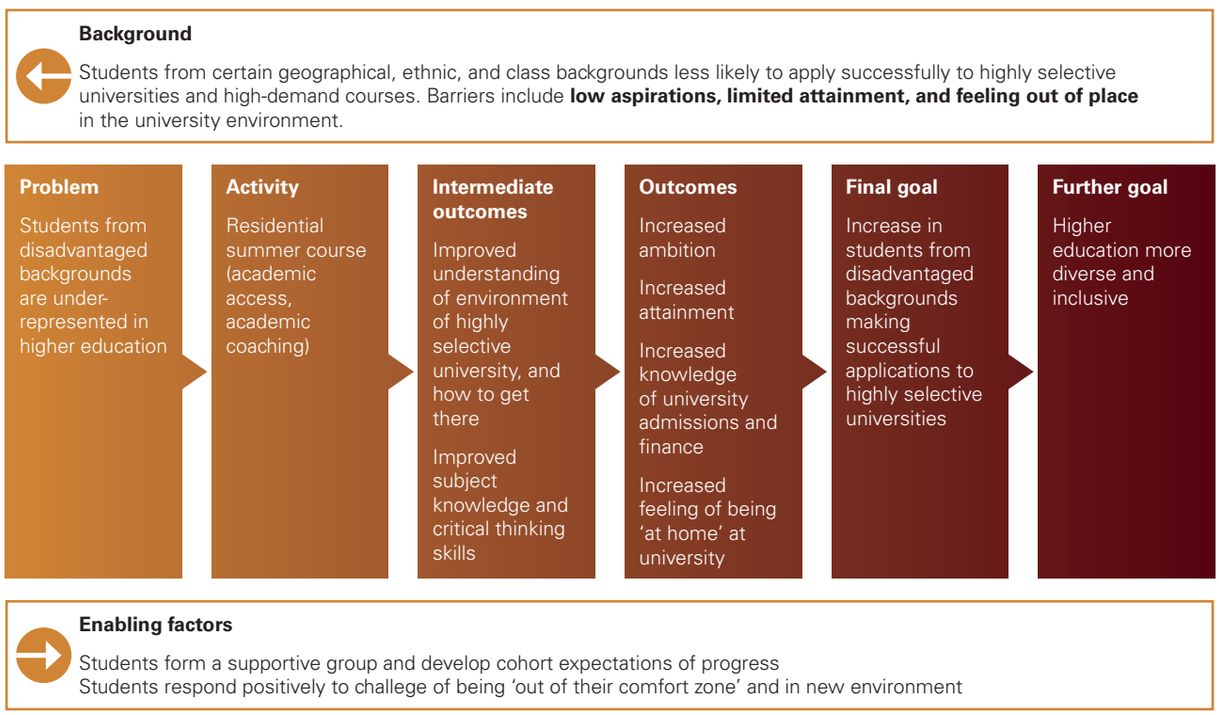
Our vision

Universify Education is a charity committed to countering educational inequality. We aim to increase access to universities for lower-income students.

The problem that we are ultimately trying to tackle is the under-representation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education, particularly at highly selective universities. Our vision is a higher education system which is more diverse and inclusive. A large body of research suggests that diversity within education institutions provides significant benefits, such as creating relational discontinuities key to cognitive growth and engendering a richer educational environment, with a greater breadth of ideas.[3] Research has shown an increased level of critical analysis of decisions and alternatives among groups containing minority viewpoints. Minority viewpoints were found to provide multiple perspectives and unconsidered alternatives.[4]

In order to achieve this, we want students from disadvantaged backgrounds to develop an increased likelihood of progression to a highly selective university.[5]

Students from certain geographical, ethnic and financial backgrounds are less likely to apply successfully to highly selective universities and high-demand courses. Barriers include low aspirations, limited attainment, and feeling out of place in a university environment.[6]



[3] Gurin, Patricia, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin. "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes." Harvard Educational Review 72 (2002), p. 330; 'Benefits and Challenges of Diversity in Academic Settings', http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/ (20th October 2016); Brief of General Motors Corporation as amicus curiae in support of defendants, Gratz v. Bollinger. et al ., 122 F.Supp .2d 811 (2000)

[4] Nemeth, Charlan Jeanne. "Dissent, Group Process, and Creativity: The Contribution of Minority Influence." Advances in Group Process 2 (1985): 57-74; Schulz-Hardt, et al. "Group Decision Making in Hidden Profile Situations: Dissent as a Facilitator for Decision Quality." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 91 (2006): 1080-1093; Sommers, Samuel R. "On Racial Diversity and Group Decision Making: Identifying Multiple Effects of Racial Composition on Jury Deliberations." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 90 (2006): 597-612; Antonio, Anthony Lising et al. "Effects of Racial Diversity on Complex Thinking in College Students." Psychological Science 15 (2004): 507-510.

[5] A benefit of addressing educational inequality is the impact on economic inequality. Universities UK policy and analysis report has recently revealed that eighteen-year-olds from the most advantaged groups are 2.4 times more likely to enter university than their disadvantaged peers, and 6.3 times more likely to attend one of the most selective institutions in the UK. Furthermore after graduating from university, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to go into professional jobs, and if they do they are likely to be paid less. http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2016/working-in-partnership-executive-summary.pdf?utm_content=buffer7e9e1&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=UUK

[6] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/poor-arent-making-inroads-into-elite-universities/2011256.article accessed 25th october 2016

Our intervention model

We designed our intervention model around a residential, week-long small-group summer course in order to address these barriers. Students were selected by teachers and then applications were reviewed by Universify. We provided teachers with a student eligibility criteria asking them to find students who matched as many of the following student criteria as possible:

- In Year 10 in the academic year 2015-16
- Have the potential to do sufficiently well in their GCSEs to make a viable application to a high-demand university (6 or more B grades (in the old system); 6 or more subjects at 6 points (in the new system))
- Are in danger of falling short of their potential – based on the teacher's assessment of student's potential and likely trajectory
- Are unsure of whether to apply to a high demand university – based on a conversation between the teacher and the student
- Show an interest in attending a 6-day summer course in Oxford in August
- Have faced disadvantage – assessed in the first instance by school's knowledge of student's circumstances

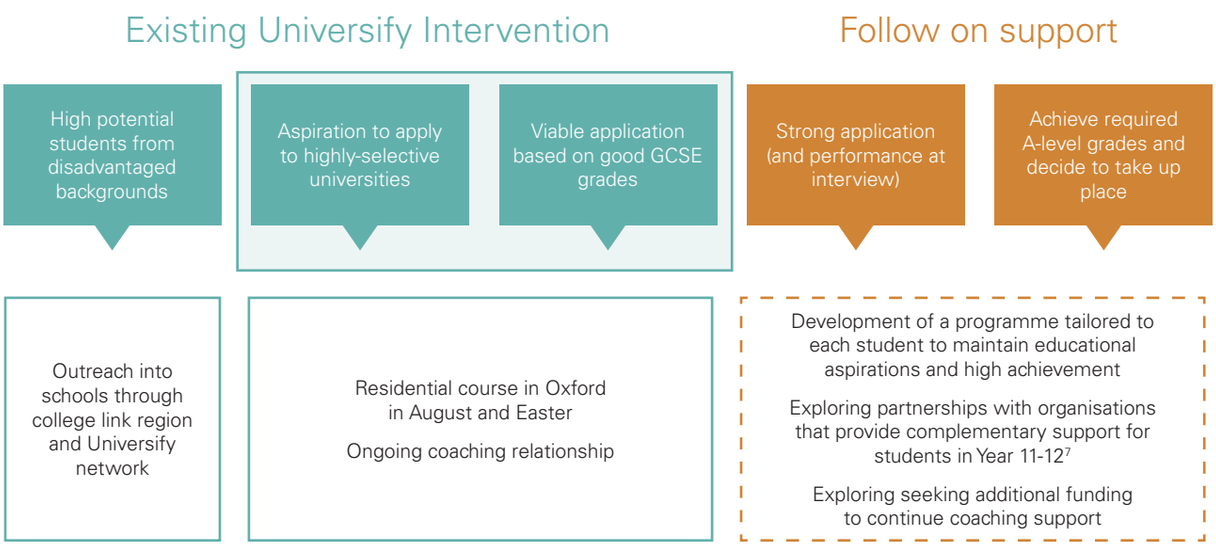
As students had to opt-in we might expect students to have higher than average motivation – we controlled for this by using a pre/post survey to measure impact and control for these factors that would distinguish our cohort from the general national cohort.

The summer course model allows for the delivery of intensive, university-style academic content and enables students to gain an accurate understanding of what university life and study is like. We developed our model through extensive consultations with sector experts, and by investigating current research on university access. In addition, we drew on the founders' background in running a successful, British Accreditation Council-accredited private summer course, Oxford Summer Courses, which informed course design and delivery.

Working in partnership with Somerville College, Oxford, we designed a pilot programme for two groups of 20 students at Somerville in August 2016, when student rooms were standing vacant. Schools were targeted in areas with low uptake of higher education, and in Somerville College's link areas, particularly Stoke-on-Trent.

Also core to the intervention is the three-day residential Easter course, which will focus on exam and revision skills and aim to boost attainment in students' forthcoming GCSE exams. The final aspect of the intervention is the ongoing academic coaching from current undergraduates. We engaged an external life-coaching organisation, Coachbright, to help deliver the training for Universify volunteers, who staffed the course.

The Easter residential will be held at Somerville in Easter 2017, and the academic coaching is ongoing via online video link up.



[7] Such as UNIQ (the University of Oxford outreach programme for Year 12 students), the Sutton Trust Summer School and IntoUniversity.

We decided to focus on **increasing educational aspirations**, as research suggests that students from disadvantaged backgrounds apply for universities or courses that are lower demand (and lower quality) than they are capable of attending given their attainment, known as 'undermatching'. This leads to higher drop-out rates, harming students and universities.[8] The main reason for undermatching is that students did not apply to the university they were capable of attending, rather than that they applied but were not admitted.[9]

We also focused on **attainment**, as there is a limited pool of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve GCSE grades which enable application to highly selective universities, such as the University of Oxford.[10]

Universify also aimed to **familiarise students with university**, since the idea of 'university' and associated application processes can be intimidating to students who are first-generation applicants. This is particularly pronounced for students from ethnic minority backgrounds and can lead to poor performance at interview or a decision not to apply at all.[11]

We are also committed to **rigorous impact measurement and reporting**. We measured students' ambition and soft skills using before and after questionnaires, and will compare data recorded on GCSE predictions with attainment in August 2017. In the long term, we will collect and report on university applications and progression to university among Universify students. We formalised our model in a theory of change: a model of why our activities should lead to the results we want to achieve.

Our aims

2015/16 is the first year we have run our programme and this means that gathering impact data on young peoples' outcomes and evaluating the model are key. We wanted to gather robust impact data on our immediate outcomes (students' soft skills), to deliver the programme successfully, and to assess whether students and other stakeholders were engaged and satisfied with the model.

In addition, this information will be used to update our intervention model over time so that it improves its impact; and also to forge links with other complementary interventions for students in Year 11-12.

Photo taken by Rea Sachdeva, student on Course 1

Photo taken by Rea Sachdeva, student on Course 1

[8] Paul Tough, 'Who Gets to Graduate?', New York Times Magazine, 15 May 2014.

[9] College Board Advocacy and Policy Centre, Overview of Undermatch Analyses and Research, the 3 main reasons students undermatched were: (i) did not apply (61%); (ii) apply but not admitted (8%); (iii) admitted but did not enrol (31%). Source http://www.edpartnerships.org/sites/default/files/events/2013/07/%23106%20Student%20Undermatching.pdf

[10] Institute for Fiscal Studies, 'Widening Partiipation in Higher Education: Analysis using Linked Administrative Data' (2010)

[11] https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/black-and-ethnic-minority-students-miss-out-university-finds-report

Our activities

Our summer 2016 programme

In August 2016 we prototyped our summer course programme. We ran a week-long residential programme for 41 students at Somerville College, Oxford. The course was entirely free for students, and included accommodation and meals on-site at Somerville, all cultural and social events, and travel costs.

Headline figures

We offered 44 students a place on Universify, predicting around a 10% attrition rate. 41 students attended the programme, and we had a 99% attendance rate at all classes and activities.

For the 41 students who attended the pilot, we delivered:

615
hours of academic content

370
hours of group work

40
hours of 1-1 face-to-face academic coaching

Our students

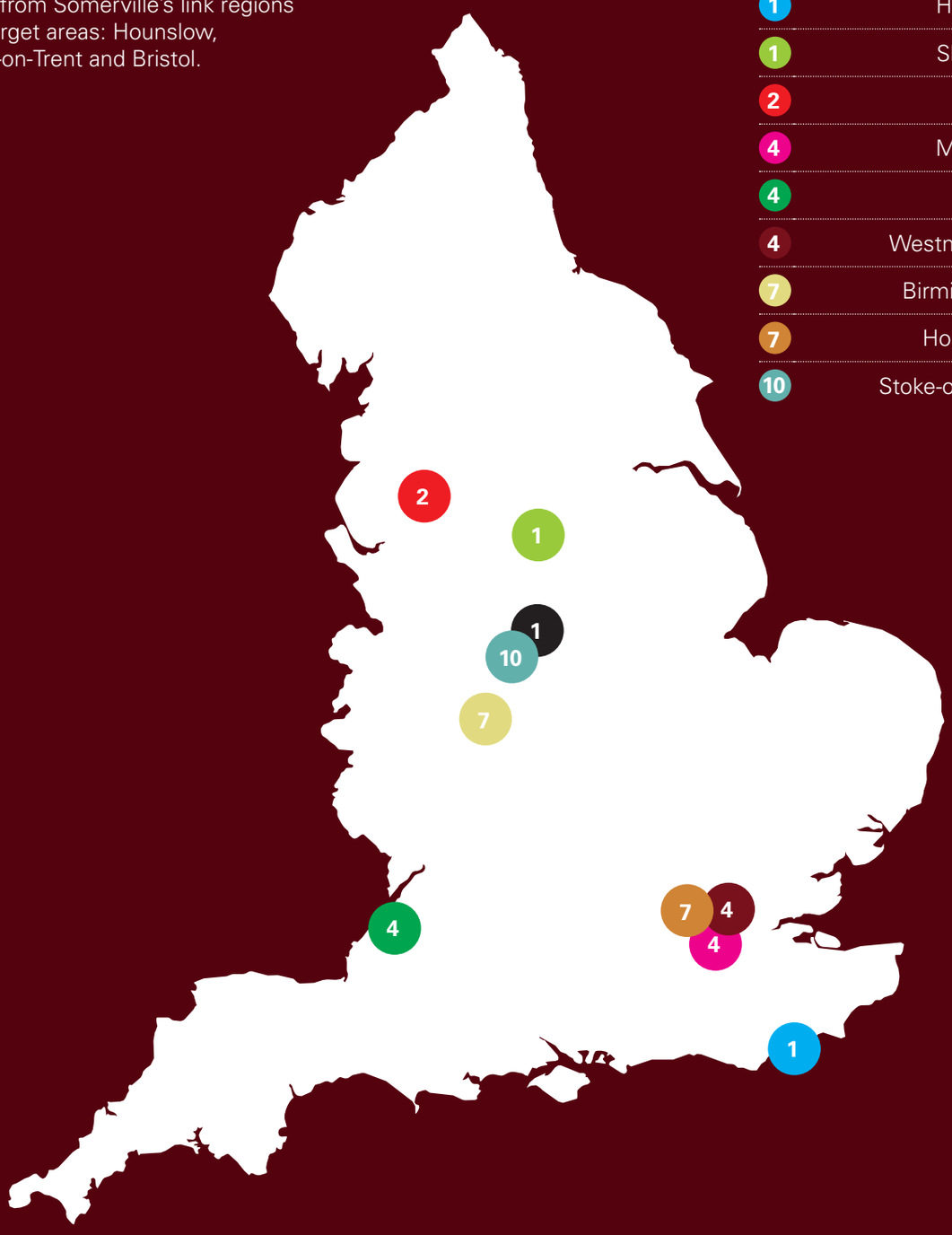
Our students were all aged 14 and 15, and were shortly moving into Year 11, and all attended non-selective state schools.

19 students (46%) were boys and 22 (54%) were girls.

25 of 41 students came from Somerville College's link regions[12] or target areas: the West Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent, Hounslow and Bristol.

[12] Each college at the University of Oxford has specific parts of the country with which it attempts to develop relationships and open access to the university, 'known as link regions'.

Our students came from all over the country.[13] 25 of our 41 students came from Somerville's link regions and target areas: Hounslow, Stoke-on-Trent and Bristol.



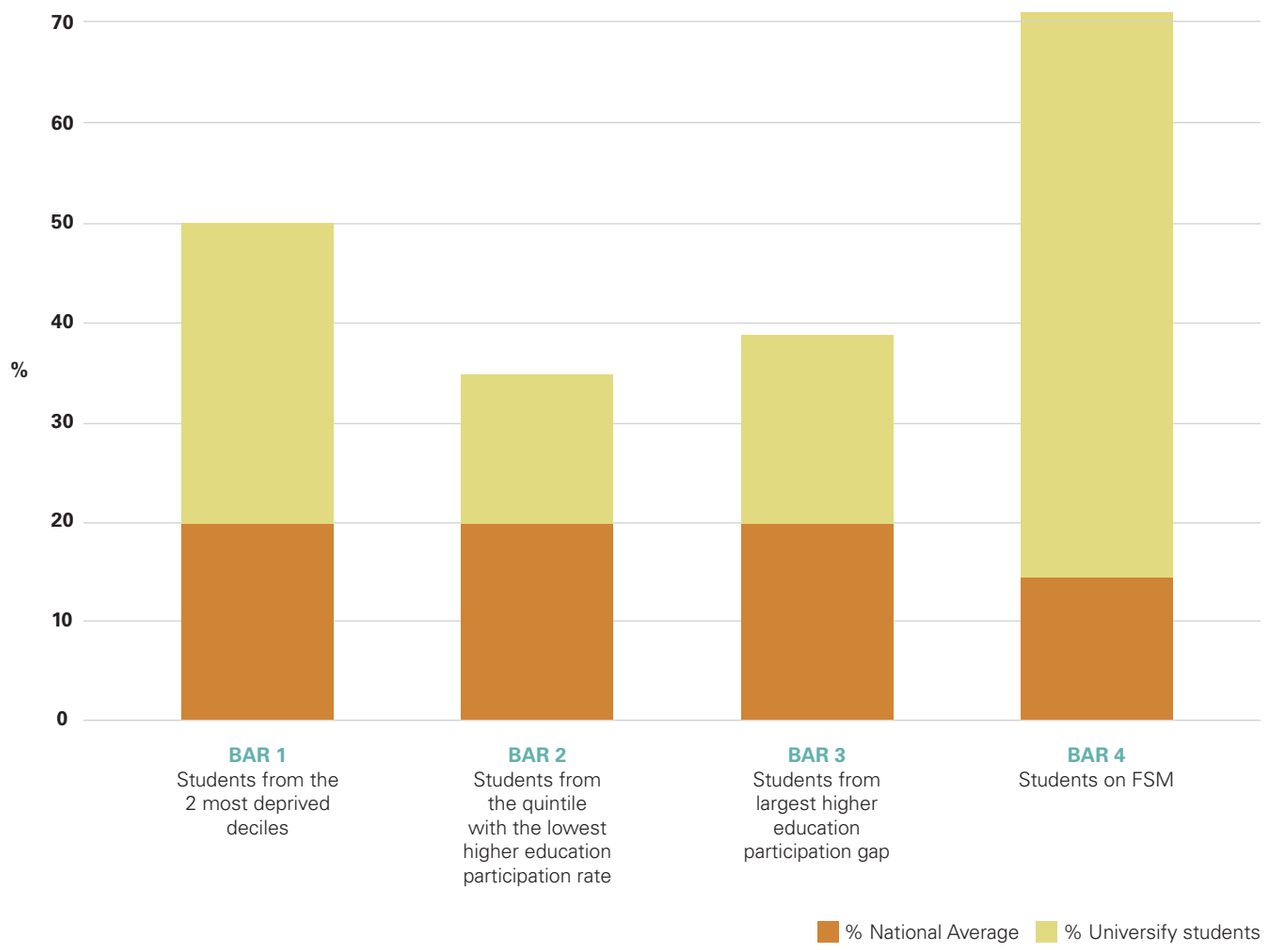
[13] The schools students came from were:
Brimingham: Ark Boutlon Academy, Ark Kings Academy, St Albans Academy
Bolton: Essa Academy
Bristol: Fairfield Academy, Redland Green School
Derby: Ormiston Ilkeston Enterprise Academy Hounslow
Hastings: Ark William Parker
Hounslow: Cranford Community College, Heston Community School, The Heathland School
Mitcham: St Mark's Church of England Academy
Sheffield: Notre Dame High School
Stoke-on-Trent: Haywood Academy, Moorside High School, Ormiston Horizon Academy
Westminster: Westminster Academy

50% of our students came from the two most deprived deciles postcode (as bar 1 shows below), according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, with 60% coming from the three most deprived deciles. In other words, half our students came from the poorest 20% of neighbourhoods.[14] This is important as it shows we have been able to reach students from less well-off backgrounds at non-selective state schools – exactly the kind of students who are least likely to reach highly selective universities.

34% of our students came from the quintile of local authorities with the lowest higher education participation rates of those aged 18 between 2005 and 2009 (POLAR3) (as bar 2 shows below), while 39% came from the quintile with the largest higher education participation 'gap', where HEFCE calculates that higher education participation is lower than expected (see bar 3 below).[15]

Of the 38 students for whom we have information (out of 41), 27 (71%) have been eligible for free school meals at some point in the last six years (pupil premium students[16]). In addition, we also had at least one student who had previously been in care and at least one who was themselves a young carer, although we did not systematically collect this information or select students on this basis.

Our students are from groups less likely to access higher education



[14] Postcode analysis using Acorn data shows that 6 students demonstrated 2 deprivation indicators, 3 demonstrated 11 indicators and 14 all deprivation indicators. In our 2017 Impact Report we will refine our methodology and look at the best way of presenting student disadvantage.

[15] http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/

[16] Pupil premium students are those who have been eligible for free school meals in the past six years. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2015-to-2016-allocations/pupil-premium-2015-to-2016-conditions-of-grant#eligibility (31st October, 2016)

Our impact

This section gives an overview of the impact of our 2016 summer programme. More information on how we collected and analysed our impact data is given in the next section, 'Our evidence'.

Aspirations to education

At the end of the summer course 88%of our students reported that they were 'very likely' or 'fairly likely' to apply to a highly selective university like Oxford.

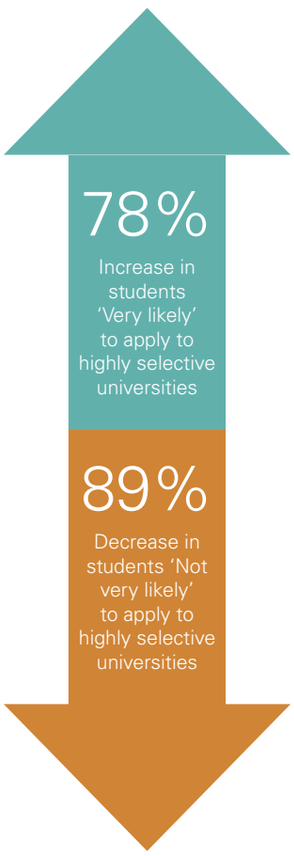
20 of the 33 students who we have data for reported at the end of the course that they were more likely to apply to a highly selective university. We saw a 78% percent increase in those students 'very likely' to apply, and only 1 student at the end of the course said they were not likely to apply.

We saw an 89% reduction in students either not very likely or not at all likely to apply.

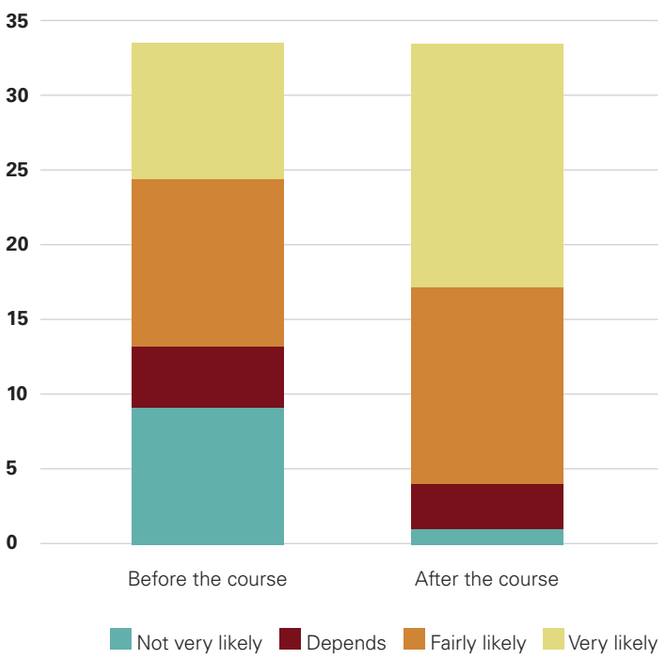
As aspirations to education is a key outcome for Universify, we can break down the results further. Of the 20 students who became more likely to apply, nine students moved up one category, seven students moved up two categories, and four students moved up three categories. In other words, there were four students who arrived at the programme reporting that they were 'not very likely' to apply to a highly selective university and left saying that they were 'very likely'.

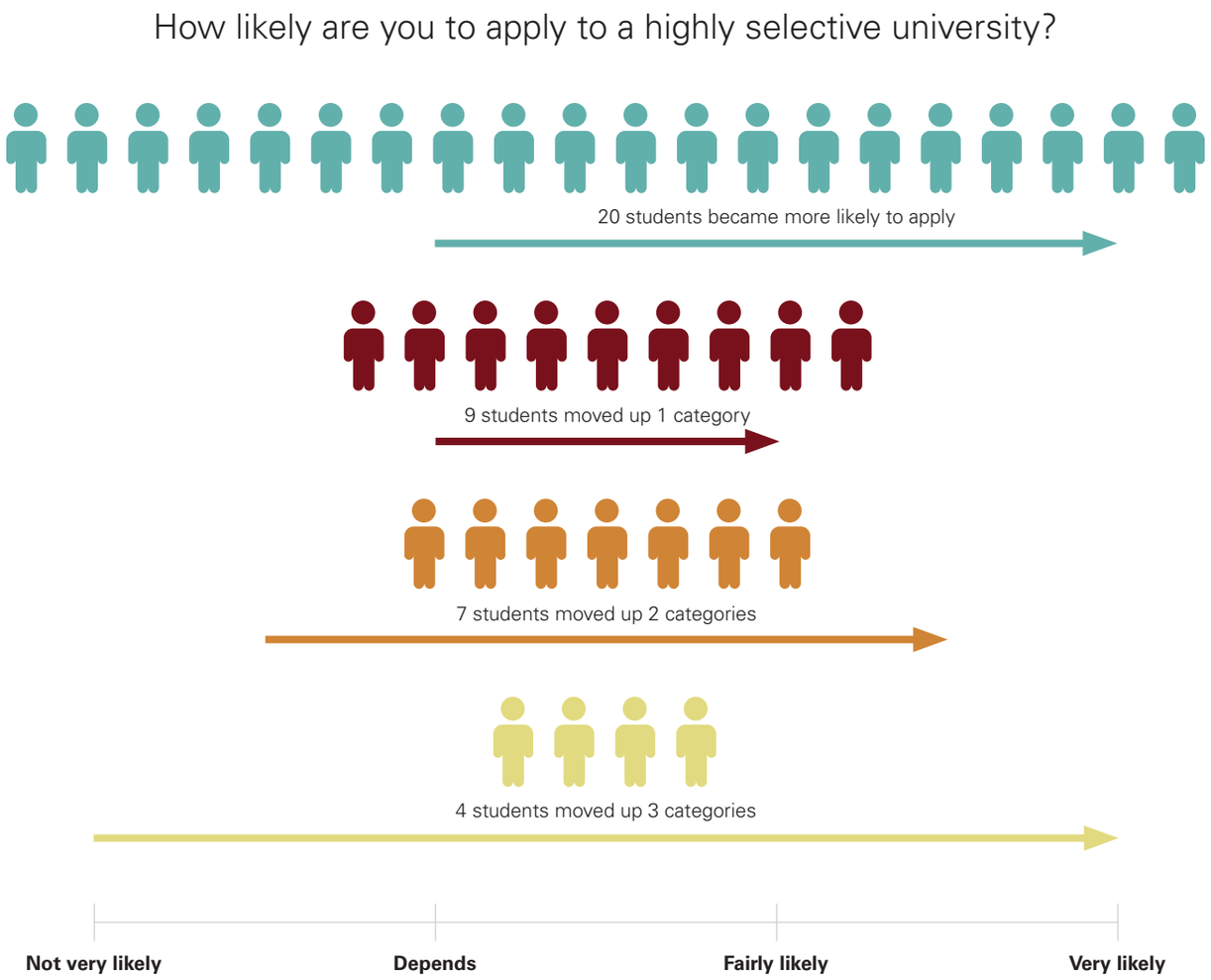
'One of the best experiences for me. I look forward to seeing everyone again next year. It has encouraged me to work harder and ensure I achieve what I want to achieve. Thank you for a fantastic opportunity.'

Student, Course 2



How likely are you to apply to a highly selective university?





Self-efficacy

We saw a large increase in students' feelings of self-efficacy. This increase, as reported by an independently validated psychological scale, was statistically significant. This suggests that students as a group left the programme feeling more in control of their future and more autonomous.

Changing perceptions of university

Universify changed students' perceptions of what studying at university is like, as measured by surveying students for a single word they most associated with "university".

Crucially, students shifted their ways of describing and understanding the challenge that university offers. Students arriving at Universify thought university life would be 'busy', 'hard' or 'stressful'; at the end of the course these ideas had completely disappeared and been replaced with an understanding that university is 'challenging' and requires 'perseverance' and 'dedication'. None of these last three ideas existed at the start of the course.[17]

In general, students arrived with the idea that university life is busy and stressful, but by the end of the week-long intervention their minds had changed. Furthermore, when students arrived they did not think that university life was centred on independence and learning, but by the end of the residential, they did.

[17] http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/the-journey-to-employment/

Also, students changed their understanding of the personal characteristics needed to succeed in university education: ideas around 'intelligence', or being 'smart' or 'ambitious', completely fell away and were replaced by an emphasis on 'passion' or 'growth' that was absent at the start of the course.

Finally, there was a subtle but perhaps critical shift in the language students used to describe university learning. At the start of the course, students associated university study with the 'academic', but this notion was substituted by the idea that university learning is 'educational' or 'enlightening' (which students had not brought with them to the course).

'Universify took two able but underachieving Year 10s and morphed them into young people who are now excited about the future, who want to go to university, who want to succeed.'

Sue Smith, lead teacher, St Albans

Student engagement

In order for Universify to have a sustained impact on the lives of young people, we need our courses to be engaging and enjoyable. Student feedback reported:

- 100% of students enjoyed their time at Universify and would recommend Universify to a friend;
- 100% of students found the coaching sessions useful and were looking forward to their next coaching session; and,
- More than 90% of students found the group work 'engaging', 'useful', 'thought-provoking', or 'inspiring'; less than 10% of students found the group work 'confusing', 'unnecessary' or 'boring'.

'Probably last year I wouldn't have even thought about going or coming to university….It's really, really shown me the bright side to it…One of the best weeks I've had in my life.'

Ben Meir, Haywood Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

100%
of students enjoyed the course and would recommend it to a friend

100%
found the coaching sessions useful and are looking forward to the next one

90%+
found the group work 'Engaging', 'Thought-provoking', and 'Inspiring'

Student case studies

"Educational. Engaging. Vital.

A few words I'd use to describe my time at Oxford University as part of Universify. I am honoured and proud to have been able to participate in such an amazing programme with such excellent, enthusiastic and committed staff and volunteers. The course as a whole I found to be a real eye opener into life after high school. It encouraged me to think deeply and perceptively about my future, degrees I would like to study and the careers I'd like to look into. Each day consisted of breakfast and morning announcements, a 3 hour seminar taster (with breaks) on a different course each day, group projects and admissions talks, sports such as rounders, croquet, football and Frisbee, tours, museum and Oxford college visits and some quizzes. This variety of activities throughout the week acted not only as a catalyst for mental and physical stimulation but also challenged us in new areas, built on previously developed skills and caused us to develop strong and reliable friendships and relationships that we continue to successfully maintain.

Everyone in the group agrees we were extremely fortunate to participate in such a great opportunity that has caused us to mature into more insightful students and build not only a strong set of friendships but a sense of family and community where everyone aspires and is welcomed. The staff help promote and support this ethos acting more like siblings (the less annoying kind) and close friends rather than dreaded parents…

In conclusion it's an excellent opportunity that I ultimately owe my form tutor the gratitude for introducing and encouraging me to attend and if you're able to, me and my peers would recommend it to you without a doubt!"

Francis Adam, Universify Student, Notre Dame High School Sheffield

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Somerville College, and I am eagerly awaiting returning there this Easter.

Of the plethora of sessions the course offered, my favorites were moral philosophy and English literature. However, I found all lessons extremely stimulating, interesting and an insightful look into what college/university will be like. In addition to this, being able to explore outside of the college during free-time, and planned activities such as punting, sports and cinema trips, allowed us all to familiarise ourselves with our surroundings and see what student life would be like- as well as creating a fun, relaxed atmosphere. I would highly recommend the course to any student given the opportunity to apply, and would definitely say it was the highlight of my academic year."

Emily Wolstenholme, Universify Student, The Co-operative Academy of Stoke-on-Trent

"To speak the truth about Universify, it was one of the most incredible weeks of my life. There is so much to enjoy when you are immersed in such a dedicated, enthusiastic, and supportive environment. The idea of living at an Oxford college for a week intimidated me at first, as I thought that I wouldn't be able to work in such a prestigious place which I believed (wrongly) was only for the "posh". Views like this are so far from the truth, I don't think I would have been able to believe the truth without experiencing it for myself. My initial ideas about Oxford have gone completely topside; throughout the whole week, I felt so comfortable and welcome. My favourite subject by far was Philosophy. Never having studied the subject before, I was very interested in finding out about it. It definitely grabbed my attention and I developed a passion for it, which makes me very keen to study it further. To summarise, the whole week was a blast. It was so well balanced between learning and having fun, and I wouldn't change it in any way apart from having another week. The coaching is the best I've experienced, despite having had some coaching previously. I have really benefited from the coaching at Universify. I honestly had the time of my life at Oxford for the Universify summer school, and have met genuine, lifelong friends, I really am excited to see where we all go from here."

Danny Pham, Universify Student, The Heathland School, Hounslow

Universify students busy working on their group project: designing their own university.

Our evidence

This section provides more information on how we collected and analysed our data. A summary of our impact is given in the previous section, 'Our impact'.

In order to collect robust impact data, we hired an experienced independent impact evaluator to support in the design of our measurement framework and our data analysis.

Our main data collection was through a student questionnaire administered at the start and the end of the programme to enable before and after comparison.

Wherever possible, we drew on independently-validated psychological scales to measure 'soft' outcomes, such as an increase in self-esteem or self-efficacy. In particular, we drew on Inspiring Impact's JET Framework, which brings together a number of key measures of young people's skills and personal traits.[18]

We had a good response rate to the student questionnaire, with 37 students (90%) completing all questions in the questionnaire.

Our impact measurement is designed to measure both where the model is working and where it needs to be improved. The purpose is to keep our model functioning effectively, improve where possible and learn which aspects of the model are the key components. We are undertaking this measurement, analysis and reporting in the spirit of learning rather than a box-ticking exercise for future funders.

Aspirations to education

We used the Department for Education's Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) survey's five-question Educational Aspirations module and the one-question University and Higher Education module to measure students' aspirations to education.[19] The change was not statistically significant. Although the scale was validated it did not offer the specificity we needed as it focused on educational aspirations prior to higher education, and did not ask about university choice. We therefore drafted an additional question, 'How likely do you think you are to apply to a highly selective university, like the University of Oxford?', with responses on a five-point Likert scale from 'very likely' to 'not at all likely'. The results of this question are reported above. As we roll out the programme to more students and collect more data, our results are more likely to be statistically significant.

'The positive effects of Universify on my four students are remarkable.'

Sally Turner, lead teacher, St Mark's Church of England Academy, Mitcham

Self-efficacy and self-esteem

To measure students' self-efficacy we used the Individual Protective Factors index, Self Efficacy sub-scale, which is a seven-item, four-point scale.[20] The results of this question are reported above. We also measured students' self-esteem using the Single Item Self-Esteem Scale (a shorter version of the widely-used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale).[21] The increase in students' self-esteem was not statistically significant. We can conclude that perhaps self-esteem is more likely to increase as a consequence of the longer-term coaching relationship rather than directly as a consequence of the summer course, which may become apparent when we measure self-efficacy again at Easter.

'Incredibly inspirational opportunity that didn't just stop with the residential, it's ongoing.'

Sam Harrison, lead teacher, The Co-operative Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

[18] http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/the-journey-to-employment/
[19] https://www.education.gov.uk/ilsype/workspaces/public/wiki/Questionnaires
[20] Dahlberg LL, Toal SB, Swahn M, Behrens CB. Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools, 2nd ed., Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2005.
[21] Robins, R. W., Hendin, H. M., & Trzesniewski, K. H. (2001). Measuring Global Self- Esteem: Construct Validation of a Single-Item Measure and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 27, 151-161: http://fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/stories/pdf/selfmeasures/Self_Measures_for_Self-Esteem_SINGLE-ITEM_SELF-ESTEEM.pdf

Perceptions of university

To measure students' perceptions of university, we included on the student questionnaire the question 'What one word do you most associate with the idea of studying at university?' We then collated the responses and analysed the data with respect to three key questions:

- What associations did students gain?
- What associations did students lose?
- What were the four most common types of association before and after the course?

As reported above, students gained associations of independence and learning, and lost associations of busyness and stress.

In terms of the most common associations, at the start of the course the single most common association was that university life was 'busy' (3 responses before, 0 after) while at the end of the course the notion of 'independence' (1 response before, 4 after) was most common. Grouping together similar concepts, the most common types of association before the course were, in order:

- generally positive ideas (such as 'exciting' or 'inspiring'),
- the personal characteristics of university students (like 'smart' or 'ambitious'),
- the link between university study and future prospects ('opportunity' or 'beneficial'), and
- university life is 'busy' (or 'eventful' or 'stressful').

At the end of the course, we found the following ordering:

- generally positive associations (such as 'awesome'),
- personal characteristics (like 'intelligence' or 'passion'),
- the link between university study and the future ('beginnings'), and
- the joint fourth most common groups of associations at the end of the course were ideas of 'independence' and university being 'educational'.

Therefore, a core set of associations was constant: students thought of university as, in the broadest terms, a generally positive thing, related to their future prospects, and requiring a set of personal characteristics both before and after the course. However, as explained above, the language they used and the connotations of their choices changed in important and promising ways.

'Universify's residential is a brilliant idea, which has had an immense impact on the students who took part. They returned buzzing with excitement and totally in awe of Oxford University... When I asked the students what could have been done to improve the experience, they replied - nothing! Which says it all.'

Malla Barghav, lead teacher, Ark Academy Boulton, Birmingham

Students embarking on their first experience of punting

'I'd have applied to a university closer to me but it's really broadened my horizons.'

Taylor Whitehead, Ormiston Horizon Academy, Stoke-on-Trent

What we learnt

At the core of Universify's mission is the desire to learn from what we do, and to improve by gathering feedback from students and other stakeholders. This is particularly important given that summer 2016 was our pilot year.

To this end, we collected student feedback on:

- the course in general, including facilities, logistics, staff and coaching sessions,
- the academic content of the course,
- the group work, and
- individual activities.

In addition, we collected staff feedback, particularly around workload, opportunities for improvement, and course logistics. We also called teachers to allow them to feed back on the selection process and the logistics prior to the course, as well as the impact on students once they had returned to school. Finally, we conducted a rigorous internal post-course review, a practice we will continue each year and which enabled us to fine-tune our academic timetable and staff rota. We are committed to continuous improvement – learning how to adapt and improve our model.

'I found the teaching very useful from a professional perspective; I found conversing with the students to be a very humbling, challenging, and an ultimately rewarding experience; and lastly I was very convinced by the model and aspirations of Universify as a whole.'

Christopher Thomas, Critical Thinking tutor

Our activities

In general student and staff feedback was very positive, particularly around enjoyment and coaching. The most commented-upon highlights were the new experiences—academic and activities, coaching, and meeting new people—and staff on the whole were rated by students as excellent. However, the feedback did point to ways in which we could adjust and improve the summer course.

The academic feedback suggested that the courses were appropriately pitched, with almost all students reporting the level of work as 'just right'. There were a few cases where the content was reported as too difficult, notably the Mathematics and the Communist Manifesto critical thinking classes. Mathematics was potentially pitched too high, and in the future we will offer two classes for different Mathematics ability levels; the Communist Manifesto was pitched as deliberately challenging and from staff observation of the class it could not have been clearer or better explained. In general, academic feedback needs to be treated with more caution than other feedback, since the course was intended to stretch students. Nevertheless, we have identified the following areas for improvement:

- shorter and more diverse range of classes;
- more breaks in academic work; and,
- more new subjects, with more non-GCSE classes such as Sociology, Anthropology, Medicine, Law, and Psychology all to be foregrounded.

'The course offered a well-rounded insight into what student life is like... The drive and motivation of the children who attended is infectious—it has had a really positive effect on my work life so far this term.'

Saskia Campbell, Universify volunteer

The activities were rated highly, with punting the most popular. The least popular activities were football and rounders. Taken together, this suggests that students enjoyed active time, but not necessarily sports, and so in the future we will make sports optional and offer alternative activities (e.g. visiting Modern Art Oxford) in the same time slot. We aim to offer students access to cultural opportunities that are not on offer in their home towns and are not available outside Oxford.

The food received very mixed reviews, with students citing the desire for a wider range of options for vegetarians and halal if possible—or advice beforehand that there will be no halal option provided by the college. Relatedly, we should also attempt to restrict people skipping meals and getting them in town (which occurred at least in part due to the restricted choice).

Staff feedback suggested that we should offer a clearer working structure for staff, and timetable activities that allowed them to use their background and expertise to deliver content.

In operational terms, we learnt that we should make sure that students attend the course they have been offered, and we should also ask schools to book train tickets (as this took up a lot of staff capacity). Within the programme, our plans for growth include a trip to Oxford Brookes to give students an understanding of the environment of a campus university.

Our impact

Our initial results are promising, but the change that Universify wants to bring about will only be realised if Universify students go on to make successful applications to highly selective universities. Therefore, our learning in the first year has centred around operational and programme improvements.

However, in order to improve our impact in future years, we have drafted a set of challenges to ourselves:

- Can we be more selective in our intake, in terms of using free school meals or other indicators of disadvantage without discouraging applications.
- Can we offer students a clearer post-course pathway, through the Easter course to their GCSE exams and A-Level choices?
- Can we offer students more choice within Universify courses, so that they can tailor their programme more to their GCSE choices and A-Level interests?

Universify has the potential to grow, and our plan is to expand in 2016/17 to two more colleges at the University of Oxford.

Course 2 students and volunteers after the end of Course 2 graduation

Costs of providing Universify

Alongside collecting the data to show Universify is achieving impact we want to ensure that the cost of providing our intervention represents a good use of our resources and those of our partners. Piloting Universify was a joint effort and we were grateful for the support of Somerville College, who provided the infrastructure, and Oxford Summer Courses, who had 8 years' experience of working with young people in residential settings. As a result, we were able to keep the unit cost of Universify extremely low at £8,000 for the full intervention across 41 students:

Course costs (Summer & Easter)	Contributed by	Amount[22]
Accommodation for students and staff during course, teaching rooms	Somerville College	Benefit in kind estimated at: £21,000
Meals for students and staff during course	Somerville College donor[23]	Benefit in kind estimated at: £10,000
Intellectual Property, policy creation (safeguarding children) and expertise	Oxford Summer Courses	Benefit in kind estimated at: £15,000
Staff time – course design and Director oversight[24]	Oxford Summer Courses and supporting charities	Benefit in kind estimated at: £12,000
Charity overheads – website, staff time in organisation[25]	Universify	£2,000
Delivery costs (staff recruitment, training, tutors, activities, travel)	Universify	£6,000
Total costs		**£8,000**

We have leveraged benefits in kind of much greater value than the out of pocket expenses borne by Universify. Our partners have committed to continue supporting Universify, providing confidence that we will continue to further leverage partners' benefits to generate social value.

[22] Note: these costs are rounded figures and based on actual August 2016 figures and predicted figures for Easter 2017.
[23] We are thankful for the generous donation. Somerville College is confident that meals will continue to be funded in the future and has a commitment to finding contributors for these costs over the next 3 years.
[24] Oxford Summer Courses is committed to providing Universify with the resources needed to make it an independent and sustainable entity in 3 years.
[25] We expect charity overheads to grow roughly in line with the number of students served by Universify. Whilst the overall percentage of costs (25%) is high, the figure itself is low; the high percentage is a result of being able to leverage resources of other organisations as benefits in kind.

Cost benchmarking

To understand whether this represents good value for money we would ideally compare our cost per outcome achieved to a benchmark figure for similar interventions. As this is the first year we do not have information on progression rates to university for Universify students. Instead, we can calculate what progression rate *would* be required to make Universify a good value for money intervention compared to existing programmes.

Our methodology is to benchmark against the current effectiveness of access activity[26] spending at the University of Oxford, Russell Group Universities in England and for the UK as a whole to provide a comparison. Effectiveness of access activity spending can be calculated by taking the increase in access expenditure and dividing it by the increase in student intake[27] from the lowest progressions areas of the country (polar quintile 1), who start their first degree as a young person at that university.

The unit cost figures in the table below provide a range of estimated costs that universities currently spend in order to get students from the lowest progression areas for Higher Education to successfully take up an undergraduate degree.[28] We should interpret these figures as a range of what might be expected for similar interventions in terms of helping students from low access areas into highly selective universities: from c.£4k per student up to £27k per student at highly selective universities.

University or group	Increase in Access Activity Expenditure (2013-14 to 2014-15)	Increase student intake from Polar Quintile 1 (2013-14 to 2014-15)[29]	Unit cost
University of Oxford	£408,000	15	£27,200
Russell Group Universities in England	£1,972,000	130	£15,200
Universities in the UK	£12,513,000	3,060	£4,100
Source:	**OFFA[30]**	**HESA[31]**	**Calculation[32]**

For Universify to be comparable in terms of value for money, we would require that at least two students from polar quintile 1 attend university because of our intervention, when they wouldn't have done so otherwise.[33] If Universify resulted in an additional student from polar quintile 1 attending the University of Oxford then this could represent a cost saving of up to c.£19k.[34]

Whilst it is still early on in students' journeys, we are cautiously optimistic that we can achieve this given the increase in students' likeliness to apply (20 students became more likely to apply to highly selective universities, 4 students went from 'not very likely' to 'very likely' – see page 13) and given 15 of our 41 students were from polar quintile 1. However, we do not underestimate the work that still needs to be done. It will be crucial to provide the right follow-on support after the end point of our intervention to ensure that the benefits continue. We are currently planning how best to help our students make good on their application intentions after they achieve excellent GCSE results in summer 2017.

[26] Access activity is defined by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) as 'Any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainment among potential applicants from under-represented groups and encouraging them to apply to higher education. This includes outreach directed at young or mature students aspiring to full- or part-time study.' Sources: https://www.offa.org.uk/publications/analysis-data-and-progress-reports/ - Annex B Data tables.
[27] Number of young people who are first full time degree entrants
[28] As a young person who is a first full time degree entrant
[29] 2013-14 data is based upon the POLAR2 methodology, while 2014-15 utilises the latest POLAR3 methodology.
[30] https://www.offa.org.uk/publications/analysis-data-and-progress-reports/ - Annex B Data tables
[31] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/overviews?keyword=588&year=2 Table T1a
[32] Rounded to the nearest hundred
[33] In future Impact Reports we will set out our methodology around calculating expected progression rates based on the weighted polar quintiles of our cohort.
[34] Or, the potential to help reduce the unit cost given that Universify intends to link into existing provision from the University of Oxford's Widening Access and Participation Team.

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Universify is a charity committed to educational equality. Our vision is a university system open to anyone with academic potential regardless of their background.

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