

Building Effective Partnerships Award

Able to demonstrate effective collaboration with one or more organisations, with the ultimate aim of demonstrable benefits for the service's stakeholders.

Give an overview of your nomination to set the scene and provide context – if shortlisted, this description will be used for marketing purposes (250 words maximum). (248 words)

As a partnership of seven universities (Leeds Beckett, Swansea, Middlesex, Queen Mary University of London, Greenwich, Aston, and Edge Hill) with a high percentage of students from lower-socio-economic backgrounds, we are acutely aware of the need for innovation in social mobility to remove barriers which restrict progression and ambition of our students.

Our unique seven-week RE:Action 24/7 programme, developed with partners Enterprise Rent-a-Car, TG Consulting, and 40 students, provides training on truly inspirational themes, such as 'Accepting who you are and harnessing your diversity' and 'Cultivating a winning mindset and building resilience'. This is a ground-breaking approach to social mobility in high education.

With a mix of talks from aspirational and representative figures, workshops and reflection sessions, employer-led Q&As and access to a wealth of resources, the programme promotes a sense of belonging, increased confidence, and access to equality of opportunity for over 3,000 students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Our partnership has provided students with a development programme different to anything they have previously taken part in. The programme provides students with access to individuals (some like them, some not), who have shared a lived experience. This has helped to provide reassurance, break down barriers and create a sense of belonging in the participants, who are then encouraged to apply each week's theme to themselves through our dedicated training and reflective sessions.

The RE:Action 24/7 programme has demonstrated effective collaboration to provide meaningful and important benefits to young people who are striving for more than their background dictates.

Summarise your nomination – if shortlisted, this description will be used for marketing purposes (50 words maximum). (50 words)

Our partnership of seven UK universities activated, RE:Action 24/7 a unique programme for 3,000 students from lower-socio-economic backgrounds. With access to inspiring role models, empowering training, and reflection sessions, we provided tangible benefits to young people in higher education and increased their overall confidence by 143%

Effective collaboration and partnership, whether working within the group, service or across the sector (200 words max) **198 words**

Working together, our collaboration launched an innovative, seven-week training programme to combat sociocultural bias and socio-economic disadvantages within higher education. It has been delivered to 3,000 students across the UK.

The programme combines inspirational speakers (including Roman Kemp, Alex Scott, Harry Aikines-Aryeetey and more) with themed expert-led workshops developed with student input. Each week culminates with sessions from Enterprise employees on how their diverse backgrounds impact their employment.

Alone, each institution was unable to develop the innovative content and expertise to engage students, encourage belonging and promote growth in confidence.

“Our career advisors had seen that work was needed on social mobility, but until the partnership, nothing had captured the imagination of our young people.”

Person 1, Job Title, University Name

“Pulling together RE:Action 24/7 alone wouldn’t have been possible. By collaborating, our students have access to people, resources, and expertise they wouldn’t have dreamed of, to help them harness their diversity for the wider world.”

Person 2, Job Title, University Name

Each institution played a role in programme enrolment, with higher numbers of sign-ups than previous attempts [each partner institution was allocated 300 places, with many far exceeding 600 sign ups], illustrating that RE:Action 24/7 is a much-needed solution for individual offerings.

Positive outcomes/impact for stakeholders and/or higher education careers and employability sector (including stakeholder feedback, e.g., quotes) (200 words max) **191 words**

Since the programme, partner institutions have reported higher levels of student engagement and ambition for employment.

- 271% increase in students feeling more connected with each other
- 240% increase in feeling more connected to their university experience.
- 113% increase in students who are certain they can achieve career goals.

“Since the programme our students are 350% clearer on what it takes to achieve their career goals.”

Person 3, Job title, University name

Our young people demonstrated the most positive outcomes with the following increases recorded at completion;

- An increase of 258% in overall feelings of belonging

- An increase of 143% in overall feelings of confidence
- An increase of 171% in career aspirations

“I really liked the presence of successful celebrities talking about their past life and journey. This has made me feel more hopeful about my future.”

Student, Middlesex University London

Our partnership has worked in collaboration to establish this programme to do the right thing for our society and the individuals within it beyond our individual University targets. We are working together to achieve a step-change in the industry and support our students to go beyond what their backgrounds may dictate.

Demonstrable evidence of creating value to the organisation and/or sector that extends beyond expected timescales, initial aims, and objectives (200 words). (194 words)

The partnership initially planned the programme as a one-off trial; however, the success has meant that it is now planned to run again for a new cohort, and extend the training with new topics, themes, and speakers for the current cohort.

The aim is to embed the programme into the student lifecycle with a continuous focus on helping young people build confidence, career aspirations and a sense of belonging.

“It has been an amazing six weeks and I think it is a programme which should be recommended to everyone”

Student, Edge Hill University

This collaborative programme will have a positive impact on many more students and with 3,000 enrolments, there is an obvious need for training of this nature. Together, we can influence real change within the Higher Education sector for students from lower-socio-economic backgrounds.

Introducing the programme to more institutions and employer delivery partners will promote the need for higher education institutes to embrace the diversity within their student body and harness this, resulting in increased engagement with career advisors and employment prospects.

“We’re looking to impact the masses, not just a few, to build an active community.”

Tonia Galati, Founder TG Consulting

Demonstrable innovation in order to achieve better outcomes or make better use of resources (200 words and 2 points maximum). (197 words)

The partnership recognises the need for innovation in social mobility for higher education. The programme is the first to develop bespoke training in collaboration with students, to ensure themes are tailored to fit their needs and diverse backgrounds.

By using combined networks, we’ve found truly inspirational people to share their stories giving students unprecedented access, to ask questions and relate their experiences with

others. The platform was purpose-built for the programme and while participants received a 'tailored' experience, they also had an opportunity to come together during reflection sessions to champion and support each other to achieve successes week on week.

"Over 50% of our students are from lower-socio-economic, black or minority ethnic backgrounds, so providing access to speakers who represent them, such as Harry Aikines-Aryeetey feels particularly inspirational."

University of Greenwich

Utilising delivery partner Enterprise allows students to hear from 'normal' people who use their diversity to better their progression and encourages reflection on how they can do the same.

"Ending with people sharing their real work experiences in relation to the weekly theme, I felt provided a complete picture and helped me think about what I can do better."

Student, Queen Mary University of London

Raising the profile and confidence of higher education careers and employability professionals (200 words and 2 points maximum). (131 words)

By building an effective partnership, our institutions have significantly raised the profile and confidence of higher education careers and employability professionals internally.

Prior to the programme, students were disengaged in the activities around social mobility which had been tried at individual institutions. Working together to develop the program in line with the social mobility action plan outlined by the Department of Education, RE:Action 24/7 has meant engagement has significantly increased (240% increase in students feeling more connected to their university experience).

This has prompted an increase in confidence from students on the programme, that their institution and its careers professionals care about their future, regardless of background.

We're working as a collaboration of institutions to do the right thing for our society and individuals, to instigate necessary change within the industry.