

## 1 Situation

Underrepresented student groups can face unintentional barriers to success and progression which means engaging with a university careers service is especially crucial because it can significantly enhance academic retention, career opportunities and employability. As students typically focus on academic studies, they may not actively seek out careers support, therefore, raising awareness is important so that they can develop the skills/knowledge needed to succeed post-graduation. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to work to supplement their living costs rather than gain graduate level experiences; they also cite a lack of opportunity to network with professionals as a barrier to moving forward with their career planning (HEPI). Research by Cibyl (Belong demonstrates that students want more accessible, on-campus roles. The Student Mental Health Study (Cibyl) highlights the negative impact of financial concerns, and the knock-on effects can include changing career plans and feeling unprepared. This scheme creates paid opportunities, on campus, to embed student voices and foster peer-to-peer support; raise awareness of our careers and employability provision; and improve the success and progression of students from underrepresented groups.

## 2 Aims

To reduce inequalities in student outcomes by embedding student voice, raising awareness and co-creating solutions from underrepresented backgrounds and viewpoint, through paid work experience. Specifically aiming to address Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

## 7 Inputs

## 5 Activities

## 6 Outputs

## 3 Outcomes

## 4 Impact

### Process

### Impact

- 2 paid student career advocates
- (16 hours x 30 weeks)
- 10 paid student career advocates to work on outreach, minimum of 10-20 hours over 20 weeks.
- Cost: £18,211.20
- Cost: £1,897 - £3,794.
- Total Cost: £20,108.20 - £22,005.20

- To reduce costs the leadership, administration and onboarding of roles will be absorbed into roles within the CP team.
- 2 x 16 hours paid advocates will coordinate outreach activity of 'outreach advocate team', meet regularly with lead in CP team to review activity and outputs.
- All advocates to receive training and support to ensure clear understanding of role, and outputs required, and support to achieve outputs.

- 10+ underrepresented students in paid, flexible work experience with professional CPD and training provided.
- 2+ training sessions delivered to staff and the SU representatives.
- 3+ skills sessions offered to Advocates to reflect on their experiences and how to harness for future employment opportunities; out-duction and reflection session; and priority places offered on IGNITE 2025 programme.
- Survey/Data projects to embed student voice from disadvantaged groups.
- Peer-to-peer support at: 2 x Fairs; 2 x Congregation and 1 x Careers Fest (support graduate offer related to progression targets.
- 10+ outreach events and support at EDI activity inc. Black History Month activity.

- Reduce cost pressures and impact of cost-of-living challenges.
- Improve sense of belonging by building relationships with peers, staff and gaining and understanding of career support.
- Improve employability skills and career confidence
- Improve engagement and understanding of careers support particularly for disadvantaged students.
- Embed student voice and peer-to-peer support within careers activities, encourage engagement from students from disadvantaged group through aligned activity.

- Increased continuation, attainment and completion.
- Increase in progression rates to highly skills employment (Graduate Outcomes).
- Inclusive careers support.

## 8 Rationale & Assumptions

Rationale: Relevant work experience is an important element in achieving positive graduate outcomes but difficult to navigate without previous work experience. Students respond positively to peer-to-peer support and students raising awareness has a positive impact on engagement which ultimately will improve success and progression.

Assumptions: Underrepresented students are interested in contributing to improving inclusivity in careers support. Underrepresented students will want to access paid roles. Flexible contracts are the most appropriate way of supporting students to engage in this activity. Training is effective and staff have clarity re-role/purpose. That co-creation and embedding student voice will have a positive impact on success and progression.