

# The Lancaster Success Programme (LSP): a triangulated approach to evaluation

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# Session Outline

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- Introduction.
- Background: what is the LSP?
- Evaluation methodology and methods.
- Discussion of results.
- Conclusion.

# Session Aims

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- To provide an overview of the LSP and how its pilot year was evaluated;
- to seek feedback on the evaluation approach and methods.

# Background: what is the LSP?

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# What is the LSP?

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- A targeted support programme for students from widening participation (WP) backgrounds.
- Pilot year aims:
  - to improve the retention of target students.
- Pilot year outcomes:
  - to enhance the pre-arrival experience;
  - to enhance the student experience;
  - to empower LSP students to identify their strengths;
  - to assist LSP students to feel part of a community.

# Core elements of the LSP: pre-arrival

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Prepare for Lancaster (PfL): on campus taster day in September.



Tailored pre-arrival communications and materials.

# Core elements of the LSP: post-arrival



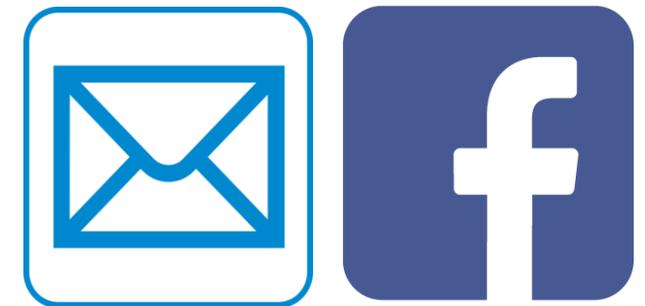
One-to-one personal development sessions, run using a coaching informed approach.



Workshops, group events and representation through the Student Advocates.



Access to an enrichment fund to support with personal development and on course costs



LSP Newsletter and an online community (student only Facebook Group and student-staff Teams group).

# Targeting and cohort composition

Department	Number of students on the LSP	Entry qualifications	WP criteria
Law School	25	One or more non-A level qualification (students can have done only non-A level qualifications or a mix of A-levels and non-A levels).	One or more (to qualify as WP a student needs to have a residence status of UK, EU or Islands).
School of Computing & Communications (SCC)	23		
LUMS UG Office	7		
Marketing	2		
Politics, Philosophy & Religion (PPR)	1 (referred in by Learning Dev.)		
Engineering	3	Non-A level qualifications only.	
Sports & Exercise Science (S&ES)	7	No entry qualification requirements.	

# Evaluation methodology and methods

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# Evaluation methodology

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- Mixed methods.
- Triangulation.
- Some links to Kirkpatrick – impact over time.
- OfS guidance (*Using Standards of Evidence to Evaluate Impact of Outreach*).
  - Logic chain.
  - Timeline.

# Evaluation methods

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- Surveys – start of programme, end of year (annually).
- Focus group.
- Student/informal feedback.
- Student Advocate feedback.
- Staff feedback.
- Student Ambassador feedback.
- One-to-one uptake.
- Newsletters and social media engagement.
- Enrichment fund spend.
- Retention rates.
- [In the future, attainment rates and progression rates].

# Evaluation timeline

		Pilot year: academic year 2019/20												
Evaluation method #	Evaluation method name	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20
1	Suveys	■	■									■	■	
2	Focus groups							■						
3	Student feedback		■	■				■			■			
4	Student Advocate feedback								■			■		
5	Staff feedback		■							■			■	
6	Student Ambassador feedback		■								■			
7	One-to-one uptake					■			■				■	■
8	Newsletter and social media engagement					■			■				■	■
9	Enrichment fund					■			■				■	■
10	Retention rates					■				■			■	■

# Discussion of results

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# Outcomes and aim

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- Outcome 1 (to enhance the pre-arrival experience): **achieved.**
- Outcome 2 (to enhance the student experience): **mostly achieved.**
- Outcome 3 (to empower students to identify their strengths): **achieved.**
- Outcome 4 (to assist students to feel part of a community): **partially achieved.**
- Aim (to improve retention rates): **achieved - cannot establish causation but can say LSP played a role in enhancing retention rates.**

# Outcome 1: to enhance pre-arrival experience

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# Outcome 1: to enhance pre-arrival experience

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- ‘head start’ over other students.
- ‘Allowed me to get a feel of the university before arriving which helped to make me feel less anxious about the move to university’.
- ‘Prepare for Lancaster day in September (big bonus)’.

Note – 45% of original cohort attended day.

## Outcome 2: to enhance the student experience

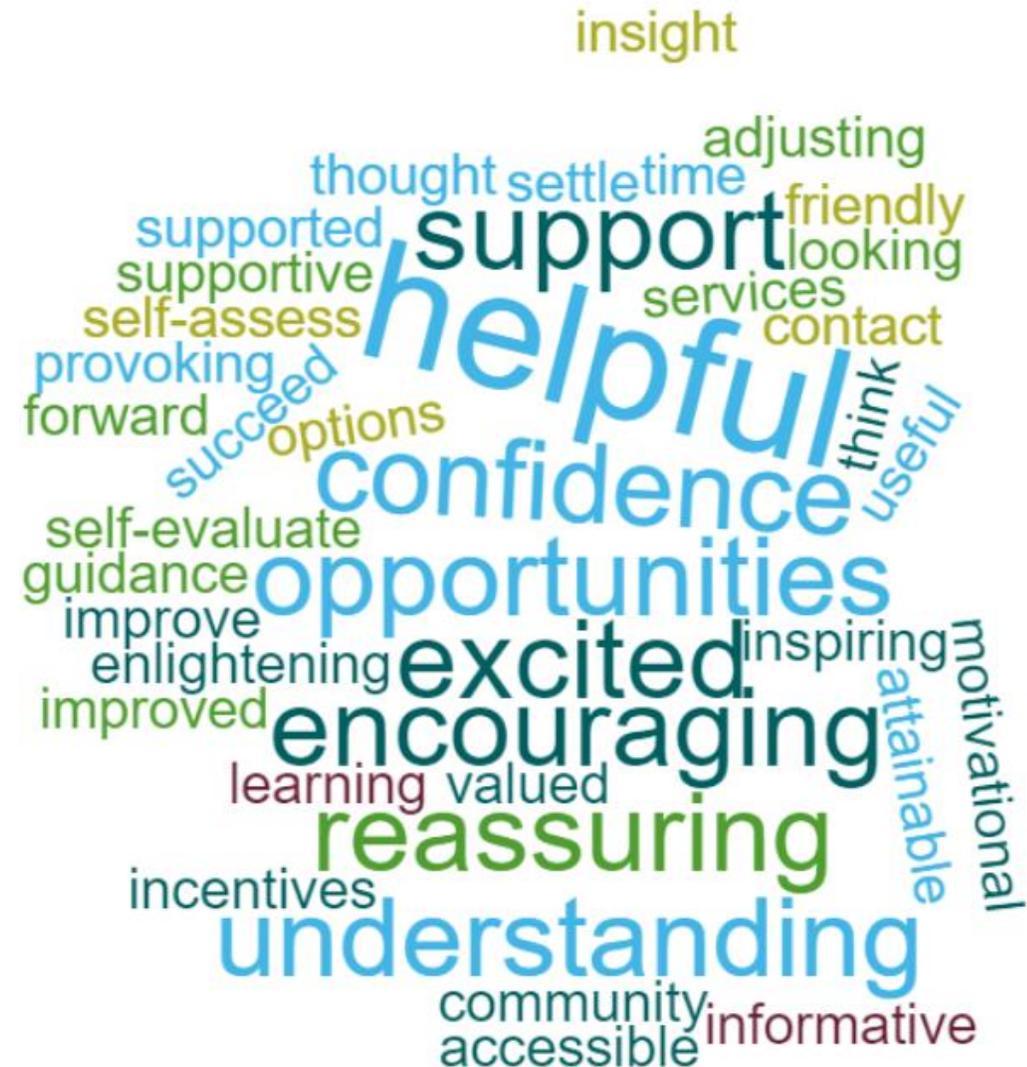
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*Students reported that the LSP:*

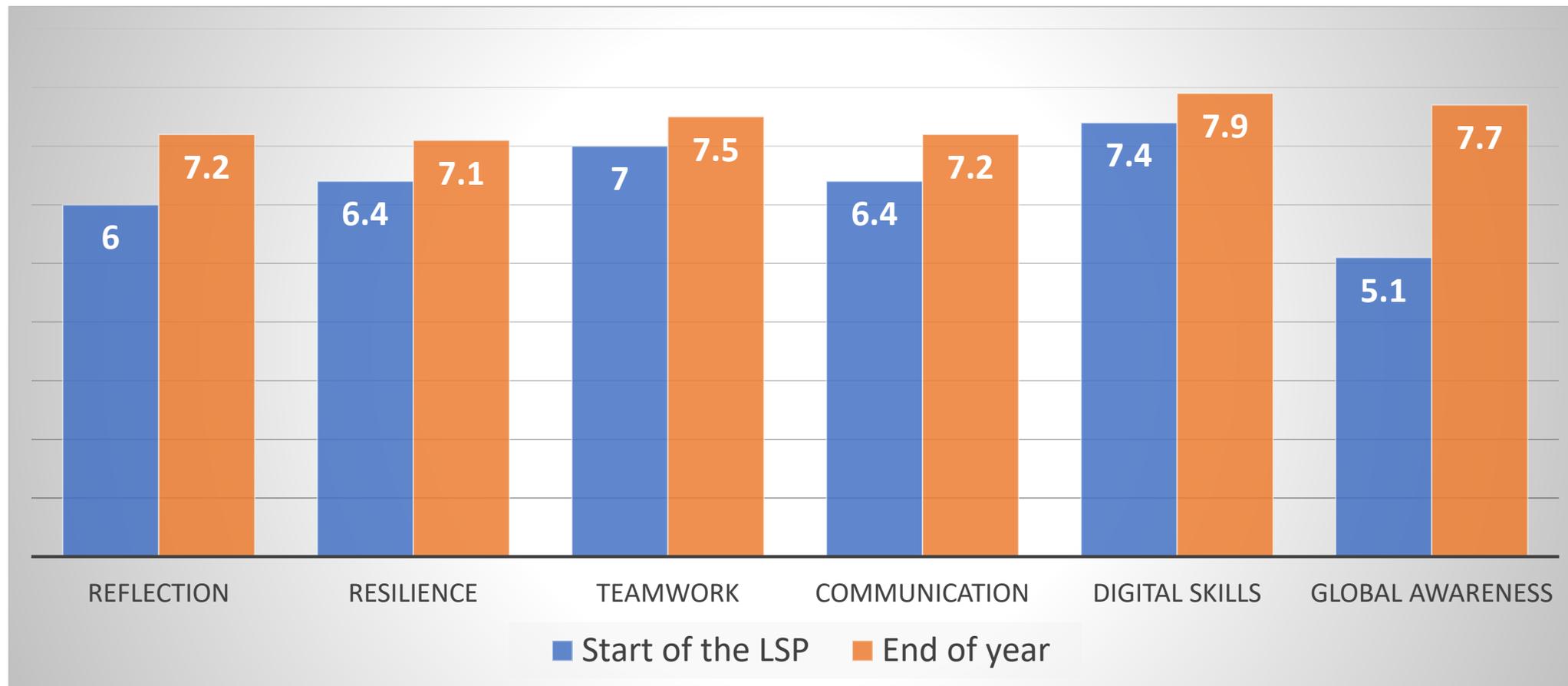
- provided a source of support;
- increased knowledge of University support services;
- increased confidence;
- provided financial assistance;
- and promoted effective study practices.

# Outcome 2: to enhance the student experience

- Word cloud showing student feedback on their experience on the LSP in the pilot year.
- ‘a **safe space** to talk about both **course challenges and university life**’.
- ‘allows **opportunities to address the issues** that I am dealing with and allows a **personalised response** for these issues’.



# Outcome 3: to empower students to identify their strengths



Reported LSP student Graduate Attribute skill levels at start of time on the programme and end of year.

# Outcome 3: to empower students to identify their strengths

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## *Skills development.*

- ‘a **reflective** outlook on myself’.
- ‘improve my **communication** skills’.

## *Goal setting.*

- ‘helped my [sic] **set targets and achieve them**’.
- ‘better **understanding of my targets**, and which order I should arrange them in to **achieve the best result for myself**’.
- Staff: ‘encouraged to think about their short and long-term future in ways they’d probably not considered before’.

# Outcome 4: to assist students to feel part of a community

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- Achieved target of 200+ one-to-ones but clear some students engaged a lot more than others.
- Some students joined part way through the year.
- Some students left the University.
- 65% of students accessed 3+ one-to-ones.

Number of 1-2-1s	Number of students
0	9
1-2	15
3-4	32
5+	12

# Outcome 4: to assist students to feel part of a community

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- 'Lancaster's **best community**'.
- Advocates: 'some participants really wanted to **meet other participants**' and 'next year we should try and **aim to build a stronger community**'.
- Other students expressed similar views.

## *Online community.*

- Consistent engagement with newsletter (47-57% opened it).
- 20% on student-only Facebook group.
- Minimal engagement with Teams group.

# Aim: to improve retention rates

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- Retention rates quite positive.
- Need to be cautious when analysing (small sample size).
- Other factors at Lancaster and external situation (Covid) also affected the rate.
- Comparator group has limitations.

# Aim: to improve retention rates

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‘Being a mature [student], working stupid [hours?] with caring responsibilities has been a challenge to say the least, and **without the financial, academic, emotional support provided by the LSP I wouldn't be able to continue**’.

‘I struggled to find all of the different services I could access at first and was also used to feelint [sic] unsupported at my previous University. Knowing that there is some more support is very helpful and being able to focus on short and longgl [sic] term goals to a successful time at University and **helped me stay in University**’.

# Conclusion

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## *Methodology and methods.*

- Gathered a range of quantitative and qualitative data.
- Used triangulation when possible.

## *Results.*

- Pilot year was a success.
- Achieved two outcomes, mostly achieved one, and partially achieved fourth.
- Contributed to enhancing retention rate.

# Recommendations

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- Continue to embed the LSP into Lancaster University to help it further enhance the student experience.
- Refine the enrichment fund process.
- Develop the role the LSP plays in promoting effective study practices amongst its students.
- Run more workshops and group events, primarily to contribute to developing a sense of community amongst the students.
- Work with Planning and Analytics to update information on the comparator group.