

NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

Name of project and institution

Mature Access Pathway, University of Exeter

Brief Description

Barriers and challenges persist for mature students accessing and succeeding at university. A key initiative addressing this is the Mature Access Project (MAP), a collaborative effort between the University of Exeter and regional further education (FE) colleges. The project has supported over 140 mature students on their journey to higher education through workshops, talks, online sessions, and on-campus activities. This pathway has not only increased progression to higher education for this cohort but also emphasises continued support for students while they are at university, aiming to enhance their success and progression. Next year, the program will be expanded to include Yeovil College, in addition to Exeter College and Truro and Penwith College.

Why has this project been nominated

The Mature Access Pathway is a collaborative project between regional FE colleges and the University of Exeter. It works together with the colleges to support all students on Access to HE courses with their transition from FE to HE. It allows students to experience what university life is like and polish their study skills (aligned with the ungraded elements of the Access to HE courses) through workshops, talks, and on-campus activities. There is also access to academic staff, mentors, and current undergraduate students who have given information, advice, and guidance they need. It addresses the issues around access to university for mature students and was built with input from FE college staff, Access to HE accreditors and university level mature students. It also continues to support students once they enrol at the university, with enhanced study skills and careers support. The project has been successfully rolled out with key civic partners, Exeter College and Truro and Penwith college, and has yielded an impressive number of additional applications to Exeter that wouldn't have ordinarily happened, complete with a contextual offer which, for Exeter, is a new and deserving achievement. See articles linked below for insight into the impact of this project for students. Next year we are adding a new partner -Yeovil college- to the scheme in 2024-25.

How long has the project been running

2 years

Number of participants for each year of the project's operation

82 (year 1) 145 (year 2)

More details

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/students/wp-support/supportfor/maturestudents/>

