



AN OVERVIEW OF THE NEON – 'SUPPORTING BTEC STUDENTS' WORKING GROUP

Dr Alex Blower (University of Portsmouth), Chris Bayes (Lancaster University), Rebecca Foster (University of East Anglia) & Rebecca Sykes (University of Leeds)

SRHE Conference – 19th November 2020

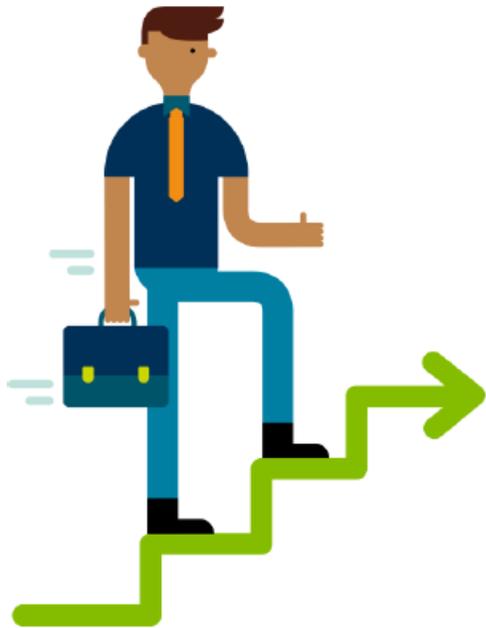
INTRODUCTION

- Why we are focusing on ‘Supporting BTEC students’
- The story so far – Work of the group to date
- Overview of our guiding principles for ‘Supporting BTEC students’
- Q&A

WHY BTEC STUDENTS?

Number of BTEC students progressing to university

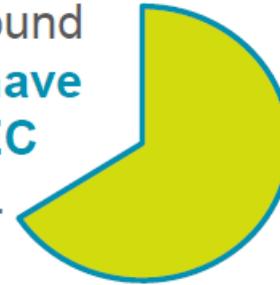
The number of students progressing to university with a BTEC increased from 13.3% in 2008 to **24.3% in 2015**



Today, around **1 in 4** students enter university having taken a BTEC National



Of those, around **two-thirds** have taken a BTEC on its own...



...while **one-third** have taken a BTEC alongside A levels



Each year, around **100,000 students** enter university with a BTEC National





**NEON'S 'SUPPORTING BTEC
STUDENTS' WORKING GROUP
- THE STORY SO FAR**

ESTABLISHING THE GROUP

September 2018 – Initial meeting in London – Input from around 30 HEIs – Around 70 attendees

January 2019 – ToR established and decision made for Group to focus on two specific work streams

March 2019 – Sub groups established – Sub group one (IntoUniversity & University of Leeds) – Development of IAG resources to support learners and young people

Sub group two (Lancaster University & NERUPI) – Mapping of activity to support BTEC students across Student Lifecycle

PROGRESS TO 'GUIDING PRINCIPLES' PUBLICATION

- Working Group formed two sub groups, The plan was for **Sub Group One** to look at developing resources to provide clear and transparent IAG for BTEC students and their teachers & **Sub Group Two** looking at mapping existing support for BTEC students in order to understand what really works.
- We put out two calls for details of provision supporting BTEC learners across the lifecycle to NEON members – Response rate wasn't great initially – Responses affirmed our thinking with respect to 'Guiding Principles'
- As we progressed, our focus shifted and we decided to Developed a set of 'guiding principles' as follows:
 - Championing fair admissions practices for BTEC students – Alex
 - Conducting meaningful outreach activity with BTEC students in schools and colleges – Rebecca F
 - Supporting the transition and student success of BTEC students at university – Becca
 - Understanding the needs of BTEC students through engagement with research – Chris

PROGRESS OF GROUP TO DATE – SINCE LOCKDOWN

‘REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL - 1,2,3...’

- Held two well attended meetings involving new members and engaging guest speakers
- Used the pandemic as an opportunity to push ahead with our publication
- Identified next steps for our work beyond the publication – Focus on FECs and L2/L3 progression

‘ERASE/REWIND’

- Work on supporting resources was abandoned in favour of guiding principles
- Call for practitioner based research has been answered - Small sample
- Mapping of existing cross-sector activity supporting BTEC learners is ongoing

OVERVIEW OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Fair Admissions Practice

- BTEC learners should not have to do additional searching regarding Admissions criteria
- Give BTECs the same profile as A Level entry criteria
- If BTECs are not accepted, this should be clear
- Uniformity in Admissions practices

Making Outreach accessible and meaningful

- Recognise the nuanced needs of BTEC learners: learning style, identity and learning environment
- Use inclusive language when interacting with BTEC learners
- Making the 'offer' meaningful, both for students and provide CPD for FE teaching staff

Guiding Principles

Supporting the Transition and Success

- Use principles of 'Identify', 'Evaluate', 'Share' and 'Embed' to enable BTEC students can succeed:

IDENTIFY – Data Analytics and Student Voice to be understand issues

EVALUATE – Share successes, and best practices , make changes

SHARE – Cross-team working. Develop a whole-institution approach

EMBED – Embed findings of research, develop inclusive curriculum

Connecting Research and Practice

- Lack of effective knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers active within WVP
- By engaging with research, practitioners can develop more impactful practice
- Whole-institution approach crucial to tackling complex issues faced by discreet groups of students

QUESTIONS FOR YOU

- What are your thoughts on the work of the group to date? Are we covering things related to BTEC agenda which you'd expect? Is there anything we are missing?
- How can we work to ensure the future of the BTEC qualification?
- Is there anything else you would like the NEON Working Group to focus on?

ANY QUESTIONS?

Email – c.bayes@lancaster.ac.uk