



**NEON – ‘SUPPORTING ACCESS, SUCCESS
AND PROGRESSION FOR VOCATIONAL
LEARNERS’ WORKING GROUP**

Online meeting – Tuesday 28th June

INTRODUCTIONS & OUTLINE OF SESSION

Within today's meeting, we will:

- Give an update on our recent session @ NEON's Summer Symposium
- Receive an update from Ria Bhatta (Pearson)
- Have a presentation from James Kewin (Association of Sixth Form Colleges), whose organisation were at the forefront of the #protectstudentchoice campaign
- Discuss next steps for this Group and give you the opportunity to get involved in next steps



INTRODUCTIONS

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- Group is one of NEON's Working Groups - <https://www.educationopportunities.co.uk/programmes/working-groups/supporting-btec-students/>
- Was initially established to support BTEC students across the Student Lifecycle
- Pre-entry > On-course > Progression
- **Becca** – Worked in WP since 2004 both in practitioner and leadership roles. My current remit focuses on Access and Student Success.
- **Chris** – Worked in WP since 2007, held practitioner and leadership roles at various universities. Now working as Programme Manger for SEER
- **Katie** -

THANK YOU!

- **Committee member update**

Would just like to take a moment to offer a massive thanks to Alex and Becky for all of their sterling work on the committee since the inception of the Group!

- **Recruiting new committee members**

We would like to hear from practitioners/members who feel they could offer something to the future direction of the group. More on this later 😊



REFLECTING ON OUR RECENT
SESSION AT NEON'S SUMMER
SYMPOSIUM

REFLECTED ON WHERE WE ARE NOW



REFLECTED ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

1. Fair Admissions Practice

- ▶ BTEC learners, who are often first in their family to attend university, should not have to dig for information or face additional barriers.
- ▶ Feature BTEC qualifications as prominently as A levels in prospectuses and websites, as they are predominantly the second most common qualification used for entrance to higher education.
- ▶ Make entry requirements (eligibility criteria) clear enough to be understood by BTEC learners without the need for them to make further enquiries.
- ▶ If BTEC qualifications are not accepted due to course content, this should be transparently indicated.
- ▶ Uniformity in practice across the sector and across university faculties to allow for a fair, informed choice for BTEC learners.

2. Pre-entry Outreach

- ▶ There are important nuances between BTEC and A level learners such as: curriculum, learning style, learner identity and learning environment.
- ▶ Specific outreach events and resources do not necessarily need to be made for BTEC learners but can be more inclusive through using language that BTEC learners identify with: 'college' in addition to 'school' and Level 3 Year 1/2, in addition to Year 12/13.
- ▶ Colleges do not have whole year assemblies to access all learners for a talk in one go, so a more labour intensive approach of going to course fairs/groups is often required. Presentations can be more tailored (subject-specific) and therefore beneficial with this approach.
- ▶ Working with staff in colleges in a different way can be beneficial as some tutors have come from industry, CPD on the benefits of progression to employment via higher education first and around other themes for these staff members can help.

3. Transition, Attainment and Retention

- ▶ Use the core principles of Identify, Evaluate, Share and Embed to create an environment where BTEC students succeed during their studies and beyond.
- ▶ Identify: Utilise in-house business intelligence to conduct research to understand and inform practice. Through getting student voice into programmes, you can ensure programmes are tailored to student needs.
- ▶ Evaluate: Evaluate success, make changes where needed, share best practice.
- ▶ Share: Collaboration is required across academic staff, student support and professional services and senior management. Challenge misconceptions amongst staff, raise awareness of different needs for different students.
- ▶ Embed: Academic skills improvement pre and post entry, inclusive curriculum content and assessment as well as sign-posting to key support services for BTEC students.

4. Research Led Practice

- ▶ There is an issue in some institutions within the sector around the disconnect between policy, practice and research.
- ▶ The transfer of knowledge between practitioners working with applicants prior to them progressing to higher education, and the academics working with the students on programme is key.
- ▶ Learners progressing to higher education via the BTEC pathway has increased from 13.3% in 2008 to 24.3% in 2015 (Pearson, 2016), that means 1 in 4 learners have studied a BTEC. BTEC learners represent a significant proportion of the undergraduate student intake each year.
- ▶ Some traditional universities have been guilty of reinforcing a deficit model perception of BTEC students. For some degree programmes, BTEC students' prior learning has better prepared them for the progression into higher education.
- ▶ By supporting the development of reflective practitioners across the sector, you can ensure that your staff are able to support today's increasingly diverse student population, regardless of their prior academic background.

**#PROTECT
STUDENT
CHOICE
DON'T SCRAP BTECS**



Future Learn



NEXT STEPS FOR THE WORKING GROUP

UPDATED TOR FOR THE GROUP/FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- We have updated the Terms of Reference for the Group to reflect the implementation of T-Levels and changes to the vocational education landscape.
- [Vocational-Learners-Working-Group-Amended-TOR-November-1.pdf \(educationopportunities.co.uk\)](#)

IDEAS AND DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Within the presentation, we got some great input from attendees around future meetings. We are proposing to host the series of meetings across the next academic year as below:
- September 29th – In-person meeting held at University of Leeds featuring presentation from Catherine Dilnot (Oxford Brookes University) on project based around ‘Educational Choices at 16-19 and Adverse Outcomes at University’ - <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/units/obbs/projects/educational-choices-at-16-19-and-adverse-outcomes/>

IDEAS AND DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- December – Online Working Group meeting
- March – Online Working Group meeting
- June – In-person session at NEON Summer Symposium

- We used some of the contributions from attendees at the meeting to shape the Padlet discussion aspect of today's meeting, looking at the below themes:
- **Stakeholders/Suggestions for future sessions**
- **Themes/Topics**
- **BTECs**
- **T Levels**
- **Other Vocational Quals**

GET INVOLVED!



**The
Working
Group
needs you!**

ANY QUESTIONS?

Email – r.sykes@leeds.ac.uk & chris@appliedinspiration.co