

## NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

### Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

### Name of project and institution

Outreach Partnership Programme (OPP), University of Essex

### Brief Description

The Outreach Partnership Programme (OPP) is the University of Essex's progressive, multi-year initiative engaging students from 16 partner schools in activities designed to raise attainment, wider aspirations and provide an experience of higher education.

### Why has this project been nominated

The OPP works with over 2,400 students each year, engaging Yr8-11 students who may face barriers to HE progression in a suite of activities designed to raise attainment, wider aspirations and provide an accessible age-appropriate experience of higher education. OPP schools have a programme of activities to choose from which allows students to engage in initiatives that will most benefit them – from Yr8-10 subject-focussed taster days, assemblies and campus visits to Yr9 Mentoring, Yr10 Summer Sleepover, Book Club and Yr11 Revision Roadshows. The OPP is designed to engage with students across multiple years and activities, enabling a sustained investment in the individual student and fostering their sense of belonging within the HE space. The 3-year project has provided positive evaluation evidence of impact particularly around raising aspiration levels, study confidence and self-efficacy (see Q9). While secondary benefits have included the personal and professional development of current university student staff and the OPP becoming a co-designed programme by the young people we serve. Student feedback, reflections and ideas have informed and directed the OPP we offer today which ensures we keep the individual at the heart of our work. The OPP is an example of how developing strong multi-year school relationships allows for broader access to target students and a deeper whole-school buy-in. Our commitment to long-term outreach is based on the principle that progressive offers at key transition moments in a student's lifecycle will move the needle in terms of their ability, belief, and desire to progress to HE.

### How long has the project been running

3 years (2021 – 2024)

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

2400 students

## More details

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/professional-services/outreach#:~:text=The%20Outreach%20team%20work%20with,come%20from%20low%20income%20households>

