

## NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

### Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Outreach) Award

### Name of project and institution

Pathway Opportunity Programme, Queen's University Belfast

### Brief Description

The Pathway Opportunity Programme, now in its 8th year has been designed to support and encourage 300 students (per year) from Widening Participation backgrounds in Northern Ireland to apply and successfully enter Queen's University Belfast, or other universities in Northern Ireland, GB or Ireland. The year-long programme, that takes place in the middle of their A-Level years at school, consists of six 1-day on campus events and a 5-day residential summer school focused on developing awareness/knowledge/preparedness for Higher Education and on exposing students to university coursework of one of 13 specific subject area Pathways.

### Why has this project been nominated

The Pathway Opportunity Programme has taken a starring role in Queen's University Belfast's Widening Participation Programme and has made a huge impact on students' knowledge and awareness of Higher Education since it started in 2017. Encompassing a year-long programme of day events and including a 5-day summer school, the Pathway Programme has encouraged and supported over 1000 sixth form students to consider Higher Education. The overall success of the programme is evidenced by the fact that over 50% of those Pathway Students have commenced studies at Queen's in a variety of courses across the entire campus and a further 25% have commenced Higher Education at other universities in Northern Ireland, GB and the Republic of Ireland. During their year 13 and 14 (equivalent to year 12 and 13 in GB) the 300 Pathway students partake in six 1-day events on campus along with a 5-day residential summer school with the focus split between two areas: The first area is developing an awareness/knowledge/preparedness for Higher Education in general and Queen's in particular. The second area is exposing students to university coursework/laboratories/lecture halls/etc. of a specific subject area Pathway such as the Business Pathway, the Law Pathway, the Computer Science Pathway, etc. The effectiveness of the programme is clear in over 50% of Pathway Students successfully commencing studies at Queen's (plus a further 25% commencing HE studies elsewhere). The effectiveness has also been demonstrated by pre and post survey's that clearly show an increase in their knowledge and preparedness for university.

### How long has the project been running

8 years

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

300

More details

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wpu/Post16Programmes/PathwayOpportunityProgramme/>

