

# The transition to a New Beginning in HE for Mature Students

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David Murray

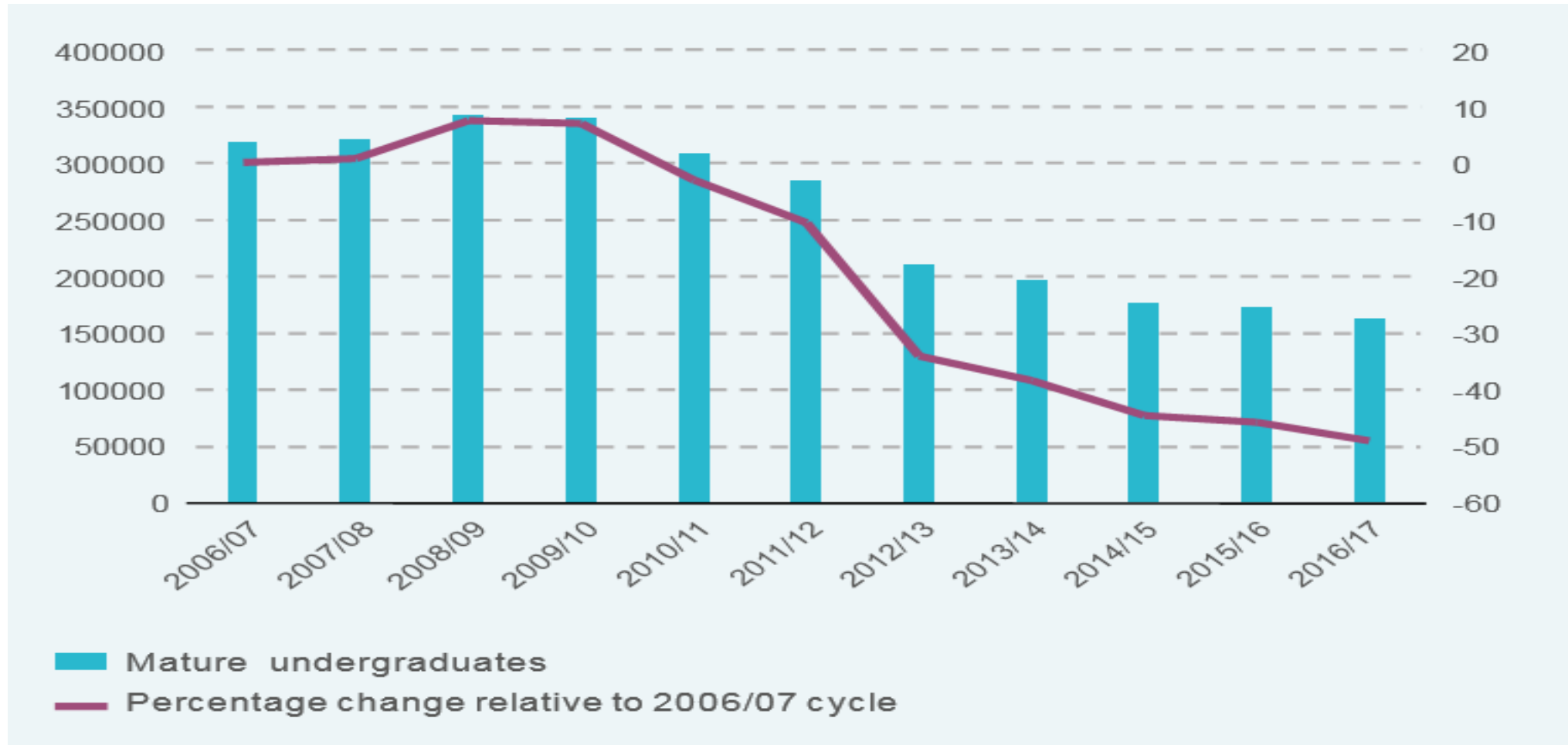
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# Mature Student Entrants (UG): National overview



- MillionPlus, 2018, p. 22.

# Mature Students by age: Percentage change



- 60% of Students at UEL are mature
- The average age of the current cohort of New Beginnings students is 30
- students aged 70 have successfully completed the New Beginnings course and earned access to UEL

• MillionPlus, 2018, p. 20.

# Census data from 2011: Highest qualification

- In 2011 there were over 23 million people aged 25-74 in England and Wales without a level 4 qualification
- 3.7 million of which had level 3 qualification/s
- 4.7 million of which had level 2 qualification/s

(ONS, 2014).

# New Beginnings: Access to UEL

10 week  
short course

For mature  
applicants  
without formal  
qualifications

Entry to a  
wide range of  
courses

Focus on skills  
and personal  
development

# New Beginnings: Access to UEL

- [https://twitter.com/UEL\\_News/status/1060943123856195585](https://twitter.com/UEL_News/status/1060943123856195585)



# New Beginnings

“It addresses many of the barriers to access experienced by mature students and has been sustained over many years. Although programmes of this nature exist in many institutions, what sets New Beginnings apart is the evidence of impact on enrolment in university courses and subsequent success” the panel said.

# New Beginnings

What we teach and what students learn

- Confidence
- Independence
- Pro-activity
- Reflection



# New Beginnings: Outcomes

Progress to  
UG study

Progress to  
Level 3

Refer to  
external  
course

Repeat NB

# New Beginnings: Students

‘mature students are more likely than the general student population to be from groups disadvantaged in higher education.’ (OfS, 2018)

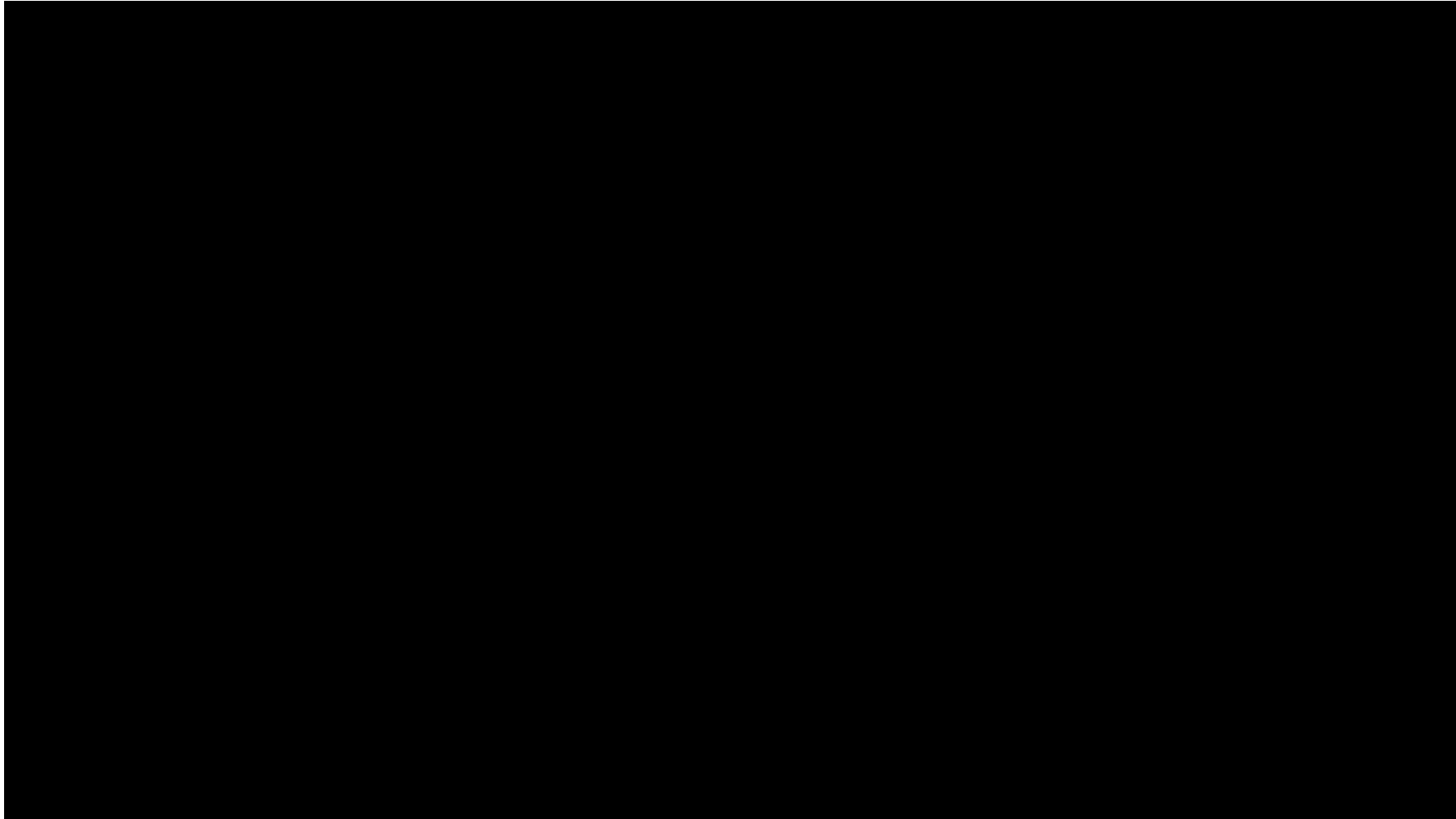
- Parent/Carer
- BAME
- Care experienced
- (dis)Ability/learning differences
- Ex-Military
- People with convictions
- Individual differences

# New Beginnings students: Challenges

- Lack of confidence
- 1<sup>st</sup> in family to be in HE - lack insider info re practices and jargon
- Time and space
- Institutional understanding & adjustments for life's daily 'chaos'

# New Beginnings students: Bernadette Taylor

Festival for Learning 2018 Senior Adult Learner Award Winner



# New Beginnings: Impact

- 72% of UEL students who came through New Beginnings complete their undergraduate degree with a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1
- The BAME attainment gap is reduced by 10 points

# New Beginnings: Why it works

- Administration of the course and tracking student progress
- The student experience. Students are made to feel as valued part of the university. Students enjoy the same access to events, support services, special events etc.
- University is open. We will remove as many barriers as possible, but we won't take any nonsense
- All information about the course provided to students as early as possible
- Relevant readings and links to materials on Moodle from the start of the course

# New Beginnings: Why it works

- Engaged with the academic Schools and Courses from the start
- Updates about courses and staff, external events of interest
- Academics provide taster lectures
- Academics and support staff attend awards ceremony and keeping warm events
- We learn best when we learn together. Collaborative learning is paramount
- No one starts from zero and no one knows everything

# New Beginnings: Institution-wide engagement

- Academics
  - Admissions
    - Centre for Student Success
      - Disability and Dyslexia Unit
        - The HUB
      - Information, Advice and Guidance Team
    - IT services
    - Library Services
  - SMART
- Student Life and Well-Being



# New Beginnings Students are Successful

because they know:

- how to study
- how to use their strengths
- how to mitigate their weaknesses
- how to identify their needs
- how to find support
- how to get the best out of the university

# Mature Students

## Discussion questions

- What are your experiences of mature learners in your role?
- In what ways do you find that mature students may differ from 'traditional' students?
- How can universities and the HE sector better meet the needs of mature students?

# New Beginnings: Technology Enhanced Learning

## Feedback specific to student engagement with Technology Enhanced Learning

- The use of Padlet for Student Presentations was trialled in November 2017 with a group of approximately 50 students
- 100% of students uploaded a presentation to Padlet
- 79% of students uploaded their presentation before the submission date
- 2 students expressed difficulty in uploading to Padlet - “it was taking a long time.”

# New Beginnings

Student Feedback: what students think works well

- “This course eliminates the fear of studying at university.”
- “This course helped with my confidence issue.”
- “The no pressure presentation was a God-send.”
  
- “I appreciate that we were given the opportunity to express ourselves.”
- “I found it helpful because I learnt specific strategies.”
- “Moodle was great as I could read the slides before the lecture.”
- “Having a schedule helped me to get organised.”

All comments taken from course evaluation forms May 2018 - March 2019

# New Beginnings

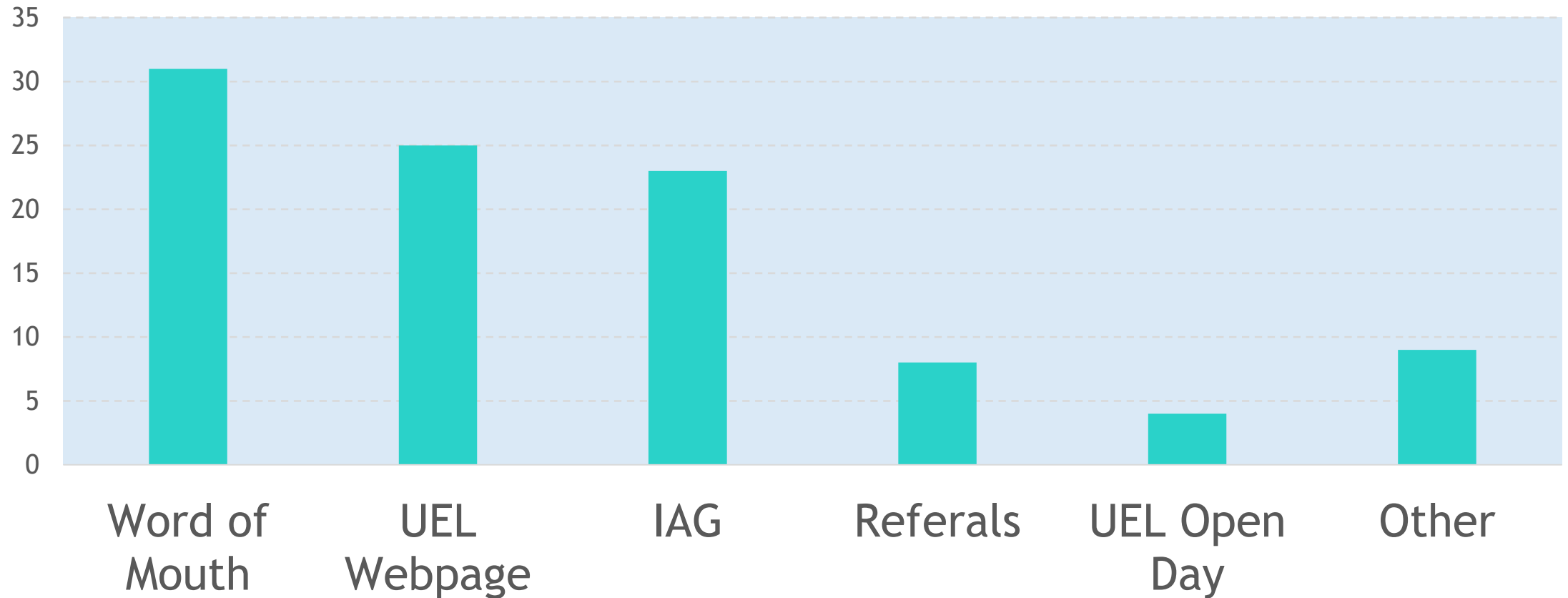
Student Feedback: what students think could be improved

- “Can tutorials be straight after the seminar so I can work more?”
- “Can we start earlier so that I can get more done in the afternoon?”
- “I’m a tad bit annoyed that I didn’t know about the course sooner!”
  
- “I would have liked more on referencing.”
- “Sessions slightly too long, more breaks please.”
- “Moodle is slightly outdated but functional.”

All comments taken from course evaluation forms May 2018 - March 2019

# Engaging Adult Learners with New Beginnings

Method of becoming engaged with New Beginnings (%)





# Any Questions?

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# References

- MillionPlus, The Association for Modern Universities. (2018) *Forgotten Learners: building a system that works for mature students*. London: Available at: [www.millionplus.ac.uk/documents/Forgotten\\_learners\\_building\\_a\\_system\\_that\\_works\\_for\\_mature\\_students.pdf](http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/documents/Forgotten_learners_building_a_system_that_works_for_mature_students.pdf) (Accessed: 12 March 2019).
- Office for National Statistics (2014) *2011 Census: Qualifications and labour market participation in England and Wales*. Available at: [www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/2011censusqualificationsandlabourmarketparticipationinenglandandwales](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/2011censusqualificationsandlabourmarketparticipationinenglandandwales) (Accessed: 19 March 2019).
- Office for Students (2018) *Mature and Part-Time students*. Available at: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3da8f27a-333f-49e7-acb3-841feda54135/topic-briefing\\_mature-students.pdf](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/3da8f27a-333f-49e7-acb3-841feda54135/topic-briefing_mature-students.pdf) (Accessed: 8 May 2019).