

NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Progression) Award

Name of project and institution

Student Inclusion Consultant scheme, Northumbria University

Brief Description

Every year, current Northumbria University students from underrepresented groups are offered flexible, paid opportunities to enhance the student experience by working as Student Inclusion Consultants (SIC). Our lived experience is used to identify and address barriers to access, success and progression, as well as to ensure the student experience is accessible and inclusive for all students. Examples of underrepresented student groups who are employed as SICs include commuter students, student carers, disabled students, and mature students.

Why has this project been nominated

Northumbria University is delivering something unique in the field of inclusive education. Every year, current students from underrepresented groups are offered flexible, paid opportunities to enhance the student experience by working as Student Inclusion Consultants. Their lived experience is used to identify and address barriers to access, success and progression, as well as to ensure the student experience is accessible and inclusive for all students. The scheme is funded by the University's Access and Participation Plan (APP) and has, to date, provided students with over 2,000 hours of paid work and professional skills development. The scheme is based on the principles of students as co-creators, working with university staff on a wide-reaching range of projects. In practice this can include researching and producing reports, presenting at conferences and designing and delivering training to staff and peers. The key thread to all of this is their lived experience and the elevation of underrepresented student voice. I have nominated this project to provide recognition of the impact that our former and current Student Inclusion Consultants have made to ensuring an inclusive student experience for all.

How long has the project been running

Initially piloted in April 2020, a team of SICs is now recruited on a cyclical basis from our student body. The scheme has demonstrated its sustainability through senior staff support which has seen it develop into a business-as-usual practice, suggesting the beginning of a 'culture shift' in the way Northumbria works with students on strategic priorities. This is supported by the increasing numbers of staff and students engaging

across the breadth and depth of the University, highlighting how positively this has been received by stakeholders.

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

2020 – 2021 (pilot) - 31 x Student Inclusion Consultants 2021- 2022 – 16 x Student Inclusion Consultants 2022 – 2023 – 15 x Student Inclusion Consultants 2023 – 2024 - 20 x Student Inclusion Consultants

More details

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/support-for-students/student-inclusion-and-success/student-inclusion-consultants/#:~:text=Our%20SICs%20work%20closely%20with,and%20enhance%20the%20student%20experience.&text=There%20are%20four%20main%20wo>

