

NEON Awards 2024 Nominations

Category

NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Progression) Award

Name of project and institution

Student Research Experience Placements, University of Leeds

Brief Description

Student Research Experience Placements (REPs), developed by the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence (LITE) in collaboration with the Educational Engagement team, offer students a unique opportunity to work as professional colleagues alongside staff. These supervised placements involve independent research and aim to enhance students' skills and confidence. Projects often align with the Access and Student Success Strategy, focusing on aspects of the student experience through the lens of under-represented groups. Since their launch in 2021, REPs have produced tangible outputs, supported retention, and encouraged postgraduate study.

Why has this project been nominated

Our Research Experience Placements (REPs) strategically target under-represented students, aiming to bridge gaps and create equitable opportunities. These placements offer a unique and transformative experience for students during the summer break. With the support of dedicated staff, participants complete independent research, honing critical skills that will support the completion of undergraduate degrees and provide invaluable insight into the world of postgraduate study, which some may not have considered before. In this symbiotic exchange, students gain knowledge, skills, and confidence, while the academic community benefits from fresh perspectives and enriched teaching and learning environments. The impact is tangible, echoing far beyond the summer months. Recognizing that certain barriers—such as placement types, timing, and experience criteria—can hinder student participation, we've established a framework that empowers students to actively shape research relevant to their lived experiences. Through these placements, supervisors collaborate closely with students, fostering knowledge and understanding. The REPs strategically align with the goals of our Access and Student Success Strategy. Consequently, we actively encourage students from under-represented groups to apply. Their unique perspectives and lived experiences enrich the research process, making their contributions invaluable. Together, we bridge gaps, break down barriers, and create a more inclusive academic landscape.

How long has the project been running

Since 2021

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

2021: 9 student participants, 9 different projects 2022: 15 student participants, 14 different projects 2023: 15 student participants, 15 different projects 2024: 16 student participants, 14 different projects (currently recruiting) Total: 55 student participants, 52 different projects

More details

<https://teachingexcellence.leeds.ac.uk/research/student-research-experience-placements/>

