

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

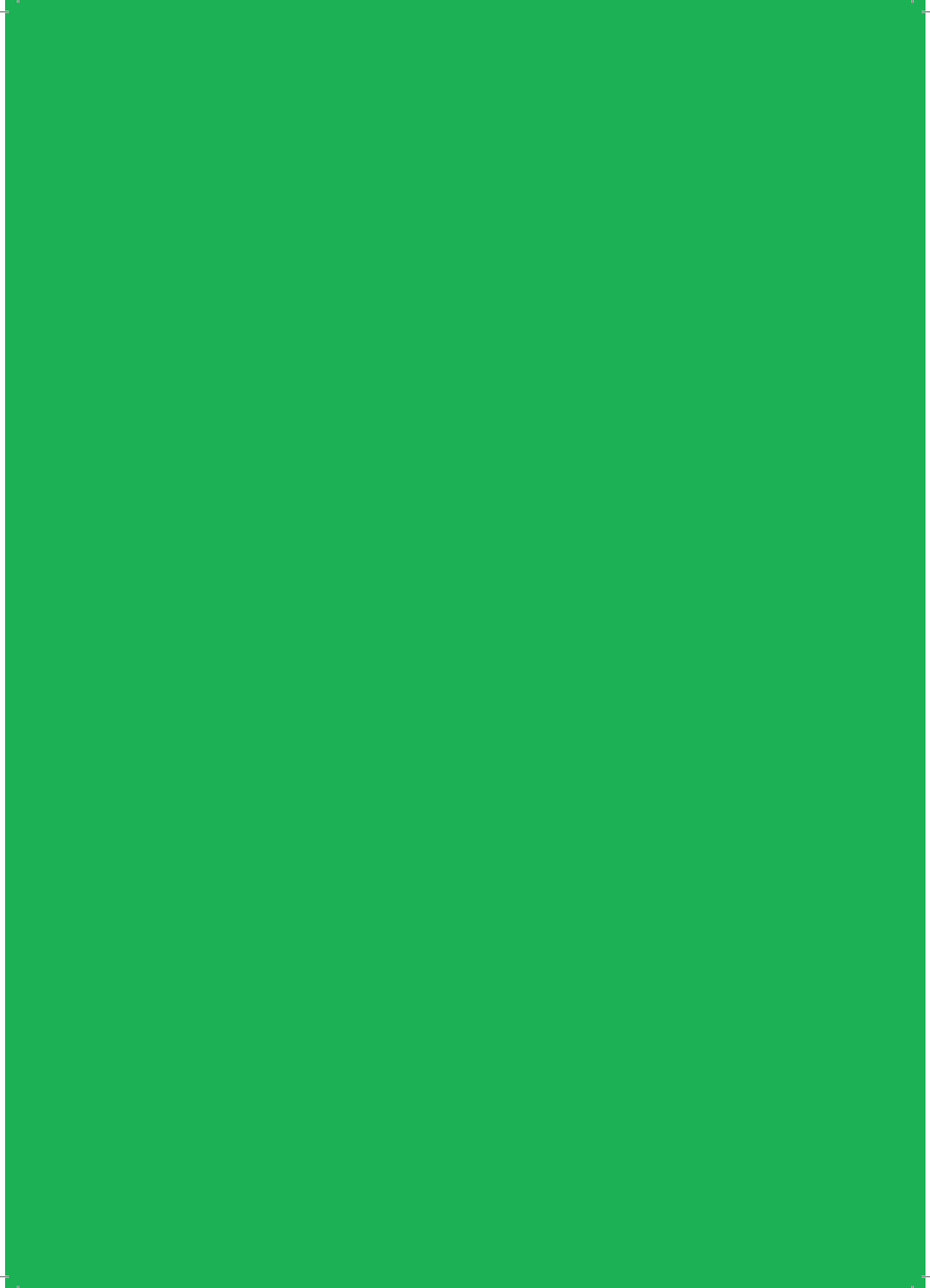
All Access AUB 2022

Evaluation Report

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01

Introduction

Executive Summary

This report is a mixed-method evaluation of the 2022 All Access AUB programme, which is designed to support entry to creative higher education through a residential summer school, portfolio review and exhibition of participants work. The premise for the programme was to develop skills and confidence for young people from underrepresented backgrounds to gain access to higher education generally and support for progression to AUB specifically.

17 young people participated in the programme: 11 in two or more activities and 4 in the full programme to date.

At the start of the residential Summer School there was a mix of feelings between anticipation, nerves and anxiety contrasted with **enthusiasm, excitement, and curiosity**. Over the week these shifted to feelings of **confidence, tiredness, happiness, and sadness to leave**.

Using a range of methods such as **journals, interviews, surveys, and observations** allowed the evaluation to gain a holistic picture of these experiences which is detailed in the report in relation to the objectives of the programme.

Fewer participants engaged in the follow up activities related to portfolio development and the exhibition, but those who did, benefitted from this support. In particular, the exhibition had a positive impact upon the likelihood of the participants applying to AUB, their confidence in their abilities and their families' perceptions of AUB and careers in the Arts more generally. However, many participants did not attend this part of the programme due to logistical issues so consideration should be given to how to increase retention across the programme.

17

Young people participated in the programme.

11

Young people participated in two or more activities.

4

Young people took part in the full programme of activities.

Main observations

Key findings

- Across the board the participants felt that All access AUB offered them something different. They described how different it was to their experiences of being told what to do in school or college and offered them a real taste of what art school might be like.
- **Challenge and doing something out of their comfort zone, especially on a conceptual level was a common theme across the evaluation. This is evidence of a well-planned and effective programme of work that offered a good balance of support and challenge.**
- The residential summer school was inclusive, and participants reported that they felt able to fully be themselves, something which several mentioned was not always the case in other educational settings. Participants saw themselves at AUB and overall felt positive about the experience.
- There were some feelings from participants that they were not stretched as technically as they expected. However, the programme was representative of an arts foundation course so this may be down to expectations as opposed to the suitability of the content.
- Those who took part in the portfolio reviews developed skills and understanding that will support application to arts course however at the point of this report it is hard to judge how successfully this will convert to offers and enrolments at AUB and beyond.
- **For some participants and their families, the programme had a profound impact, changing parental perceptions to enable arts to be a future possibility where it had not been before. The exhibition for some parents played a significant role in this.**



Key Recommendations

- The small group size was valued but equally the viability for small cohorts is limited so it may be worth considering two parallel strands to balance scale and intimacy. This would also address the fact that students interested in writing felt they were not fully catered for.
- Belonging and seeing themselves at AUB was a concern for many of the students. For some participants more unstructured time might have helped create more opportunities for this.
- The participants valued the pace and challenge conceptually of the summer school, but some felt they did not develop practical skills beyond those they came with. It may be worth considering how to address this in the programme or more clearly setting expectations of what will be offered.
- To develop the quality of the reflections and understanding of students, more support, focus and time should be given to the reflective journals.
- Those who attended all elements really benefitted in terms of confidence and skills. Consideration should be given to how to encourage participation in the portfolio reviews though emphasising their importance more during the residential stage of the programme.
- Participation in the exhibition may have been limited due to the timing or geographic location of some participants. Considering the timing for the exhibition or offering an online alternative to ensure those who might be more geographically dispersed may be more likely to engage in this.
- Whilst all the students came from key target groups, consider how to increase care experienced, estranged and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman, or Boater community participants.
- Ensure participants are tracked through application, offer and enrolment to higher education to see how the short-term outcomes translate into higher education progression.

Background

As previous evaluation and research has highlighted there are associations between summer schools and positive impacts upon confidence and attitudes to higher education. However, the evidence is less clear cut in their impacts upon application and entry to HE (Robinson and Salvestrini, 2020). The randomised control trial that TASO (2022) ran across eight universities found that summer schools did create positive impacts upon self-efficacy, perception of barriers to higher education and fitting in but none of this was statistically significant. They also found impacts upon confidence and ability to succeed. None of these summer schools in the RCT covered creative arts specifically, therefore although this summer school is focused on a specific context and a small number of participants, it is well placed to offer insights into the value of summer schools in the context of specialist arts institutions.

A significant difference between a large multifacility university and a specialist institution is one of scale. AUB had 3,340 full time equivalent students (3,210 undergraduate and 125 postgraduate) in 2020/21. This is at least half the size of any HEI in the TASO study with The University of Leeds being ten times larger. This means the summer school experience in a large HEI is likely to be very different to at AUB.

This size of the institution also means that the possible summer school intake is likely to be significantly smaller and be tailored to the experience of living and studying at a small specialist. Therefore, running large scale RCTs not a viable option, however it is important to understand if and how a summer school programme can impact upon issues relating to access to the creative arts. Given the scale of a summer school in this context though, there is the opportunity for some in-depth qualitative evidence to better understand the experiences of the participants which is the focus of this evaluation.

Previous explorations of barriers to the art school (Carlile 2010 cited in Hayton et al, 2015) highlight that skills and confidence to engage in critical discussions, time and resources for portfolio development, skills in applications, presentations and interviews, and accurate information are all important. Issues of adequate preparation and knowledge of HE options have been highlighted in related creative fields (Harrison, 2010). These overlay with more general student concerns of fees and funding. In designing the programme therefore, it was important that the programmes addressed these key issues, which the initial progression framework did.

About the All Access AUB programme

All Access AUB was developed as a programme of activity to support entry to creative Higher Education from underrepresented groups (AUB, 2022).

As stated by AUB, the content of the programme allowed all participants to:

- Take part in a fully funded residential summer school, exploring, and experimenting with different mediums to build a strong portfolio of work.
- Have their work included as part of an industry-standard art exhibition at AUB's TheGallery.
- Be invited, alongside friends and family, to an exclusive private view of their work.
- Receive one-to-one support from expert artists and designers in the development of their portfolio.
- Attend a 'transition to creative HE' event in their second year of Sixth Form or College.
- Be given extra consideration at the point of admission to AUB, including a reduced offer of up to two grades.
- Support from a dedicated progression mentor through the AUB application process and beyond.



02

Evaluation

Evaluation scope

This evaluation covers the summer school, portfolio reviews and the exhibition and the extent to which they addressed the aims in the Progression framework. It should be noted that a later transition day is planned to complete the All Access AUB programme, but this is not covered in the evaluation.

Furthermore, at the time of writing there was no data on applications, offers or enrolments to support whether the longer-term outcomes were met and it will be important for AUB to track this.



Evaluation methodology

Given the length and intensity of the project combined with the small number of participants involved, a mixed-methods approach was used focusing more heavily upon qualitative methods.

For the summer school itself, there were opportunities for both embedded and more traditional methods as follows:

- 1** Pre and post survey data was captured using Mentimeter. This included closed questions relating to expectations, knowledge, and confidence. They were supplemented by short answer text responses about feelings and expectations (see Appendix). There were 17 responses to all questions the pre-summer school quiz and between 13-15 responses to the post quiz depending on the question.
- 2** During day three of the summer school, five students and two academic staff were interviewed by the lead evaluator to get a deeper understanding of their experiences. The questions were focused on the objectives in the progression framework.
- 3** Observations were made of the practical sessions and the more informal evening activities by the researcher to triangulate with the other data.
- 4** All participants in the summer school were asked to reflect individually within their sketchbooks and these reflections were analysed for evidence relating to the project's objectives.
- 5** Daily opportunities were provided within the flats to record reflections into Flipgrid. These were either done collectively or individually depending upon preference.
- 6** Following the portfolio reviews, at the exhibition interviews were conducted with one participant, three parents and one member of academic staff to explore the impact the overall project had had from their perspectives.
- 7** A survey was conducted with all participants from the summer school (response rate 9/17). Four responses were received from those who attended the exhibition and five who did not.

The value of integrating Flipgrid vlogs

Where these were done individually, there were some interesting reflections which often went beyond the written comments in the journals. This was therefore a valuable way to give those students a chance to share things. When they were done as a group though, especially with the limited time the comments were quite superficial in general and did not add much to the evaluation. This is important to consider for future evaluations. Potentially giving some examples of the depth or type of responses might be valuable.

Using journals for reflection

The value of these was mixed with some of the comments only being cursory, and as a primary source of evidence, they often lacked depth. For many participants, they spent more time writing out the prompt questions than answering them which was often done with single words. However, it might have been possible these would have been more in-depth if there was a more explicit focus upon completing these. Despite this, the journals allowed for triangulation of the observations and interviews.

In future projects there might be scope here for an increased emphasis on the value of the journals both for gaining richer evaluative data but also for consolidation of student learning. This might help address some misconceptions about what learning means in this context. It may also help students to see more visibly the skills they are developing around collaboration, confidence, and experimentation.



Participants

Within the programme there were 17 participants for the residential summer school. This is taken as the total population participating in All Access AUB as this was the most intensive element.

All the participants met one or more of the targeting criteria. It should be noted though that no participants declared a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman or Boater, care experienced or estranged background which are also AUB targets.

88%

Of participants have a current home postcode that shows they live in an area with low levels of progression to Higher Education (postcodes within the lowest 2 POLAR4 quintiles).

35%

Of participants consider themselves to be from Asian, Black, or other ethnically diverse backgrounds.

59%

Of participants Have received Free School Meals at any point during your secondary school studies.

6%

Of participants have a parent who has served, or is currently serving, in the armed forces.

6%

Of participants have been a carer.

For the interventions following the residential summer school, attendance was lower. Eight attended the portfolio reviews and seven attended the exhibition however out of these, only four participants attended all three activities.

This report was prepared before the final intervention of a transition day therefore it is not possible to report on this attendance data.

Effectiveness of provision

This evaluation report will combine the respective elements of the evaluation to evaluate the extent to which each element of the programme met the objectives and outcomes set out in the Progression framework. Where appropriate these may be combined as some outcomes and objectives cover the same substantive issue. It will take each of the activities in turn, the residential summer school, portfolio reviews and the exhibition.



03

Summer school objectives and outcomes

The primary purpose of the summer school aimed to: Increase the confidence of All Access AUB participants in their creative abilities, develop their expectations toward progression to Arts University Bournemouth.



Exploring artistic interests and processes

Several of the key outcomes and objectives relate to artistic interests and processes. The purpose articulated by AUB was to offer an authentic foundation course experience for the participants.

Objective

Provide students with space to deeply explore their artistic interests and passions, contributing to their motivation to continue to study creative arts subjects at level 4.

The premise of the summer school described by the academic staff was to mimic the type and range of activities that students would be likely to encounter on an art foundation. This meant there were a range of activities, primarily focused on fine art techniques like drawing, printmaking, and collage. Across their journals, participants mentioned that they had improved skills such as printmaking and collage. Some of these were things they had not done before. One student highlighted that they had done:

“ Lots of things I wouldn’t have access to at home or at school.”

In a widening participation context this is important as not only is the summer school offering a chance to try new things but to evidence skills and techniques in a portfolio, that they might not have been able to do otherwise. For some students, their college courses were narrowly focused, so the summer school provided a chance to challenge themselves:

“ We do digital stuff. I've done a lot of non-digital stuff like at home, but I love being challenged into doing like printmaking and collages.”

For others, it was about pushing themselves in new directions:

“ I've not turned something from 2D into 3D, ever. So yeah, that was challenging. Again, something new.”

The introduction of 3D seemed a new skill for many of the participants but one that was both valued and highlighted as least enjoyable. Enjoyment and value of learning a new skill of course need to be balanced but through this pushing out of their comfort zone that students mentioned and there was also a sense that participants were understanding what it might be like to be a creative student at university. What was evident within the journals and through observation was the way in which participants changed their perception of what is important in the studio:

“ I feel like I've learned to let go, and [that] art doesn't always need to be meaningful. It can just be.”

Getting to experience the difference between teachers and lecturers also seemed to be valued:

“ The way they speak so freely. I don't feel like it's like a teacher sort of thing where I don't feel like I'm being told to do something. I feel like it's more, you can do this. You can also do this.”

In contrast one participant highlighted the fact that not being told what to do was a challenge:

“ School wise, for summer, we're supposed to be starting homework, we're supposed to be starting a brand new project. So, I think a lot of the things today would be very good to just like improvise off of, to find ideas or see what works. And having no idea what you're doing, but being like, okay, it's fine, it'll be fine, something will come out of it. And that's okay.”

What was particularly notable was that during the exhibition interview and from talking informally to participants, they felt with hindsight that this challenge had really helped them to grow. This was reflected in the way they were now approaching their school and college coursework.

“I've learned to let go, and that art doesn't always need to be meaningful. It can just be.”

Objective

To provide students with the creative facilities for them to express themselves and experiment with new and exciting techniques, resources, and methods, contributing to their understanding of kinds of experiences they may have studying a creative arts degree at university.



Outcome

Participants have experimented with new artistic resources, methods, and techniques.

As highlighted above, the ability to experiment with new techniques, especially conceptually was very evident. For example, one student highlighted that:

“ Conceptually, yes, I have learned new stuff. But in practical things I already know how to like fold stick glue stuff together.”

This student had done lots of printmaking and collage before which was not the case for many of the other participants. However, this notion of not feeling they had learned practical skills recurred in some journals with one participant requesting more practical over conceptual sessions.

In contrast, based on the evaluator’s observations during day three, the authenticity of the sessions reflected a foundation year in an art school through the emphasis upon experimentation, trying new things and working within creative constraints. In talking to the participants informally, this was often very different to their experiences of working in school or college. It could therefore be questioned if the issue here was a lack of novel technical skills or that the expectations of the participants were mismatched to the experiences that were authentic to a foundation year. This is worthy of further consideration for future iterations of All Access AUB.

That said, whilst some participants mentioned having used some of the techniques before, such as collage, this way of doing things in most cases offered novelty and excitement as demonstrated in the following student interviews:

“ There's the learning of the printmaking [but] the biggest skill [was] to be open minded. Be ready to try a new thing. Because I'm not much of a fine artist. I like things to make sense. And it's all abstract, then open minded and having a bit of fun.”

“ I've done a lot of collage work [on the summer school]. And I don't, I don't usually do that sort of stuff. And it was nice to push myself to get some stuff done, because I did struggle with it. And figuring out what I was going to do like, writer's block... it was quite fun. The process.”

“ My favourite part of the artist stuff was the abstract printmaking. I found that fun and I stepped out of my comfort zone a little bit as well, which was quite fun because I don't usually do abstract pieces of artwork. So doing this has opened and new thing that I can do which is exciting and I'll definitely try that for when I get home.”

Increased levels of artistic freedom were a theme that came up in numerous journals. This is important and was contrasted with their experience of the focus upon refined final outcomes in the school or college settings.

“ Experimenting and being fine there was no plan.”

“ Trusting my instincts and not being worried about the outcome.”

When these comments are considered in relation to how students talked about their school and college experiences, which were often focused upon refined outcomes, this demonstrates a valuable element of the summer school and something that participants would have found harder to evidence in their portfolios without the summer school.

It is also important to reflect upon the fact that whilst some students highlighted not having learned much yet their reflections emphasised having become more free and less precious, so there is a possible conflation of learning something new and trying novel processes. Again, this mismatch might be understanding the importance of what they were doing as opposed to the activities themselves.

Objective

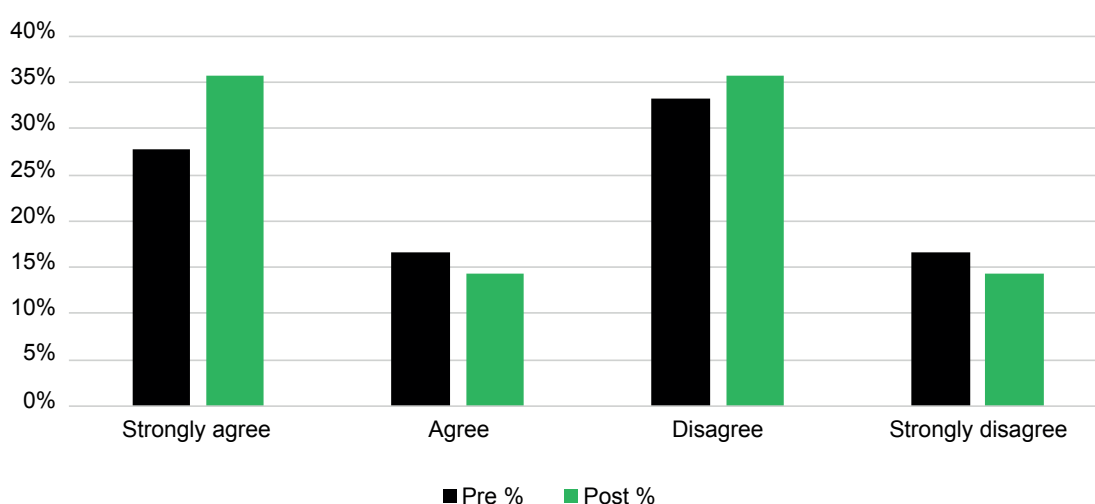
Participants have opportunity to improve skills such as problem-solving and communication through presenting their work to peers and academic staff.

Outcome

Participants have developed skills such as problem-solving and communication through the presentation of their work.

Both the objectives and outcomes here relate to skills. Based on the quantitative pre and post summer school data there appears to be little difference in students' self-assessment of these skills pre and post summer school.

Poll: I am confident in my skills such as problem solving, presenting and communication



However, in their journals and through talking to the participants a slightly more positive picture is presented:

“ Definitely talking to people that’s improved a lot since being here, and collaboration, allowing people to influence my work and not being so like, this is what I’m doing. That’s not going to change. I was also not feeling so hurt by criticism, like I can be told that looks like this. And that’s okay. It doesn’t mean that it’s wrong. ”

A student at the exhibition was keen to explain how the summer school had enabled him to develop collaboration skills:

“ I think it’s really helped me actually realize that collaboration is something that I should be doing. And if I’m struggling alone, it is an option. And it’s not frowned upon. ”

This collaboration was mentioned in several journals where participants had reflected that collaboration was hard and enjoyable but also that this was a skill the participants wanted to develop. Therefore, the fact that they do not feel more confident in collaboration could be tempered with the fact they were actively reflecting upon this and wanting to address it.

The parents and academic tutor spoken to at the exhibition also felt that confidence and ability to discuss their work had increased. It is therefore important not just to consider participants self-reports but the feedback of the adults around them which seem to suggest these skills were developed effectively.

**“The biggest skill
was to be open
minded. Be ready
to try a new thing.”**



Outcome

Through participation in the summer school, attendees have conducted a deeper exploration of their artistic passions and interests and wish to pursue those interests in Higher Education.

Many of the participants came with expectations for higher education. 82% of participants reported they were planning to progress to HE before All Access AUB. A typical response was that:

“ I was pretty sure that university was probably right for me. But I was sort of on the fence of doing a tattoo apprenticeship and going to uni for like illustration or something. Mostly came here just to know if I wanted to go to uni. And then now I'm going to decide whether I want to go to Bournemouth or somewhere else. ”

Similarly, many were unsure exactly which path to take, and it seemed in general very few had considered the importance of a foundation course to help hone their skills and specialist interests:

“ Josh really helped me get to know what a foundation year was. I previously had no intent of doing a foundation year at all and now I'm super interested in doing one, especially in illustrating. I think that that would be fun even though I'm a creative writer, I think illustration and creative writing goes really well together, so if I can get an insight of what it is and how I can start, you know designing and drawing. I think it would be really beneficial, so thank you. ”

Furthermore, for other participants it helped them rule out options they had been considering, something which is equally important to ensure retention once students enter higher education.

“ Today has cemented my belief that I really don't like fine art and would rather be doing something more design/graphic/digital based. ”

Therefore, overall, this outcome was met. However, one participant who did not engage beyond the summer school was interested in creative writing which did not really fit with the summer school, and they felt they had not had the chance to explore this adequately. It is important for future All Access AUB programmes to consider how to cater for similar students. This might be through making the programme more explicit up front or by providing a separate stream focused on other subject areas.



Studying at AUB

The remaining objectives and outcomes for the residential part of the programme can be grouped under a heading of studying at AUB and giving participants the chance to understand this.

Outcome

Participants have gained a deeper understanding of the experience they may have studying a creative arts degree at Arts University Bournemouth.

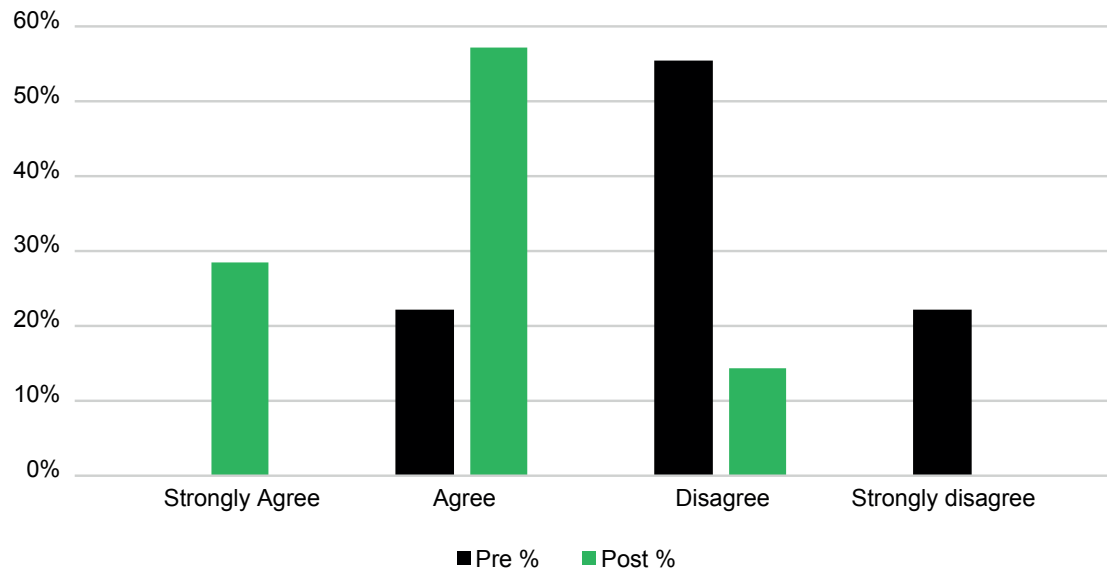
There was clear evidence within the data that the experience had deepened the participants understanding of AUB, especially where they also attended the portfolio reviews and exhibition. This was deeper than gaining information but a more “hot knowledge” of what it would be like to study at AUB.

“ I can look at like the websites online. But I don't really know what I'm setting myself up for if that makes sense. So, you can read what the courses are about, or what you're going to do in the courses. But it's hard to imagine yourself doing them? Unless you're like in a classroom? Kind of doing it. ”



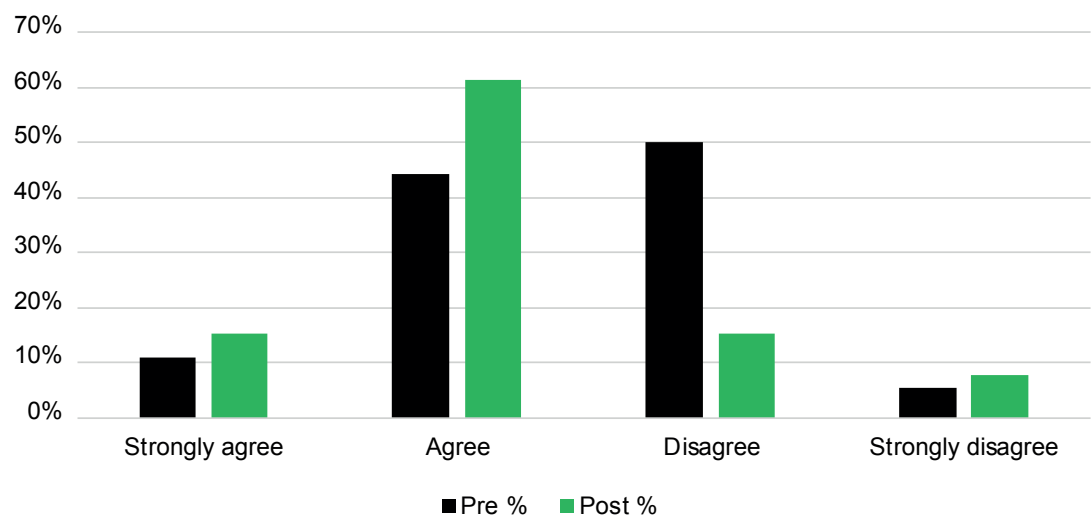
It was also evident from the pre and post survey data that on the whole participants increased their knowledge about AUB. Whilst knowing a lot is somewhat subjective question it was positive to see no one strongly disagreeing after the residential experience. For this who still felt they did not know a lot, hopefully the relationships formed with staff and following activities would allow them to address this where they wanted to.

Poll: I know a lot about AUB



In a related question, the post survey showed a positive trend related to the increase in knowledge following the summer school for most participants. The small cohort sizes mean that the number strongly disagreeing (n=1) had not changed even though the graph shows a slight change. One participant in their journal mentioned it not being about creative writing so that might reflect their experience.

Poll: I know what to expect if I study a creative degree at AUB



Outcome

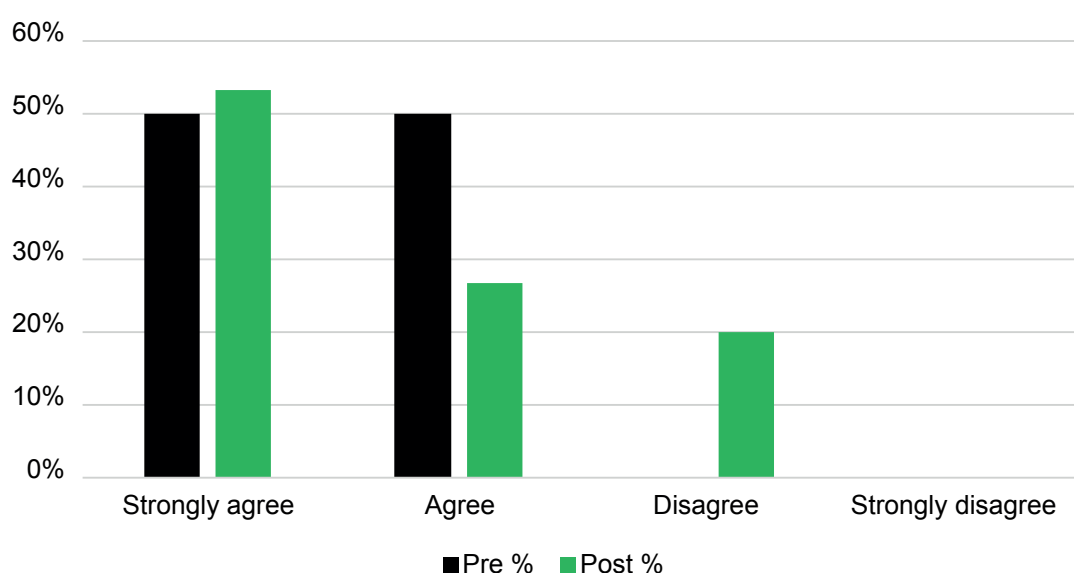
Participants are familiar with Arts University Bournemouth and see it as a space that they belong to.

From observing and interviewing the participants, they seemed to feel like AUB would be a place they would belong.

“I'd definitely consider it when looking for a university is really nice here and also being here, already it gives off that little kick.”

However, one of the more negative findings for AUB to reflect upon was that two participants disagreed with the statement of feeling happy and comfortable at AUB. Whilst on the surface this seems negative, in terms of a formative experience allowing them to realise AUB was not for them could also be seen as a valuable feature of the summer school.

Poll: I feel happy and comfortable here at AUB

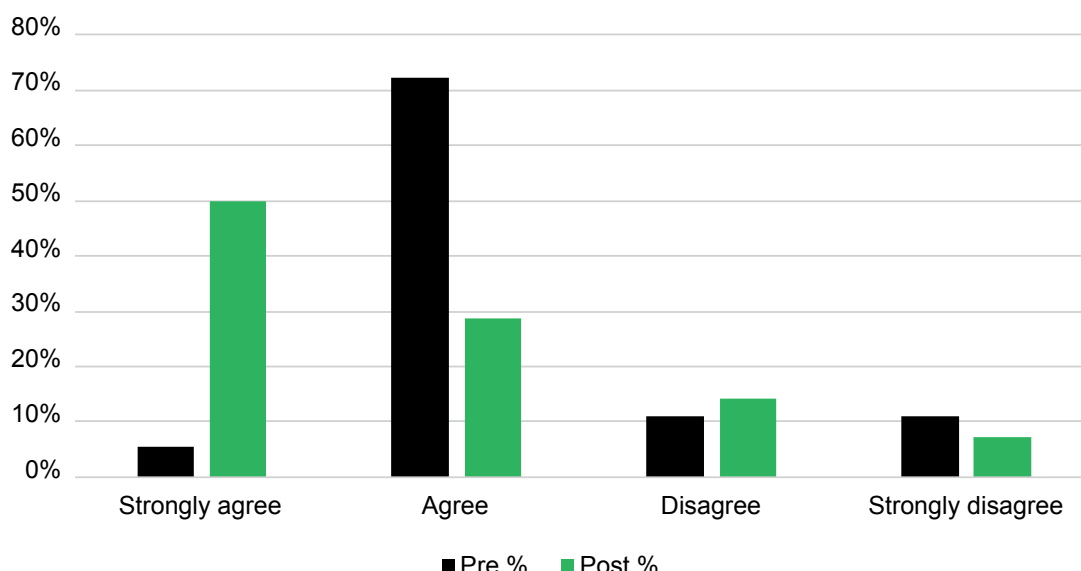


One of the factors that might influence belonging is feeling that there are people like them in the institution.

“It's a combination of the workshops, and the socializing. There's a lot of people I'm not a big people person. So, I didn't speak to people. And I think it's because there's so many people in there also lovely. It's nice to just get out there and be able to feel like I can speak to people. It's yeah, a good sense of community.”

One participant in their journal also reflected that “after seeing the entry requirements (BBB) I think that the uni isn't good”. This is something to consider in the informational sessions as the perceptions based on entry requirements alone can be deep rooted despite entry being primarily determined by portfolios. Therefore, there might be scope to explain this in more detail.

Poll: There are people here who are just like me



In considering if participants felt there were people like them on the summer school, this pre and post survey data allows exploration of the opportunities to get to know people better. However, this is not a clear-cut question however as difference can be as valuable as conformity. The pre and post summer school data showed a shift in students strongly agreeing and this might be evidence of the spaces the summer school created for bonding. Certainly, this position was supported by one of the interviewees who said:

“ When I first arrived at AUB. I was so excited but in a way, I was nervous because. Obviously meeting new people and I was scared that I wouldn't make any friends, but that was the complete opposite when I came here. Everyone was so friendly. So welcoming, even the teachers. ”

A recurring theme from observation, interview and interaction with the students was the value they placed on being able to be themselves. This aligns with one of AUB's strategic aims from their 2020/21 – 2024/25 Access and Participation plan:

“ We aim to create an inclusive learning and teaching environment in which all students, whatever their background, are able to achieve their full potential. ”

Whilst causal impacts can always be closely scrutinised and questioned. After all, human behaviour is complex and decision making is as much affective as it is rational, but for many of the students that choose to study the arts who may have felt unable to fit in in previous education settings this is an extremely pertinent issue and reflects AUB's ethos almost exactly aligning with the student quote:

“ I felt like I could be myself because everyone else was themselves. ”

Nebras Jamali, BA (Hons) Acting, featured in BBC's Our Girl

Therefore, if one of the overarching goals of the summer school was to offer an authentic AUB experience, this seems to be reflected clearly across the evaluation.



Scan the QR code to view AUB's 2020/21 – 2024/25 Access and Participation plan.

Objective

Provide participants with an opportunity to experience student life at AUB. To build a familiarity with a creative university campus as a space in which they belong.

The participants that were spoken to throughout the evaluation felt they had had a good chance to experience student life, however in some cases they felt they wished there was more free time:

“ I really do you wish there was more like free time to sort of just exist in the uni and sort of come to terms with it. Imagine yourself actually living there. Because we only have like an hour of own time during the day. ”

The value of free time recurred in a lot of the data:

“ I think having like having the free time is nice. Because then like, if you want to go off and socialize with like, the other people, you can also if you want to just go and sit like in your room, or like, continue with, like book work. Then it feels like if I had like homework to do and stuff then I could go do that now. ”

From the parental perspective, they all felt the stories their children have recounted of the experience gave a sense that they now knew what life at AUB would be like with one parent expressing her surprise and gratitude at the opportunity this presented:

“ I feel very fortunate to, for her to have that opportunity, when she can be like, in a hotel for almost a week, doesn't have to pay anything. ”

The participants seemed to have gelled well by day three and several that came back for the exhibition were keen to see friends they had made, suggesting the social side of the experience had been valued. One consideration for future All Access AUB programmes is how to maintain this experience with a larger cohort. If similar drop off across activities is likely in further, having a larger summer school cohort would allow for a larger group at the exhibition and more change to build those informal bonds.

“I felt like I could be myself because everyone else was themselves.”



Portfolio tutorials

The addition of the second activity in the programme fills a gap which often exists for underrepresented students, the mismatch between their skills and the knowledge of how to prepare a strong portfolio to gain access to art school.

As such the purpose of the portfolio reviews was stated to:

Build confidence in the ability of All Access AUB students to submit a portfolio that is of sufficient quality to facilitate a successful application to creative Higher Education.

As with the summer school, this report focuses upon the extent to which this was achieved with reference to the outcomes and objectives. One point for AUB to reflect upon is that only half of those on the summer school took advantage of the portfolio reviews. This low uptake could be due to a lack of confidence, interest, or time. Equally it may be that the participants did not understand the value, and this might have been emphasised more during the residential part of the programme.



Objective

Further develop individual relationships with AUB tutors to foster trust and facilitate supportive, critical feedback on student's work.

Throughout All Access AUB, the participants constantly talked of the connections that they had developed with staff. For example, in the post-exhibition survey one participant stated that:

“ I feel very close to a lot of the staff. And I think it's the main thing that makes me really want to go here.”

In speaking to one of the tutors, this feeling was mutual, and Fran emphasised the positive developments they had been able to witness in those participants over time.

Objective

Students receive support in the identification of pieces and curation of a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to creative HE.

This objective is in part reliant on the quality of the student work so cannot be fully evidenced through an evaluation, especially before offers have been received by students. However, from interviewing both participants and staff, it was clear the reviews had positively impacted the curation of portfolios. Fran, the academic tutor explained that:

“ I thought they were really positive, especially the second ones when you chat again, and then it's filtered through what you've said in the conversations. And then they've either taken it or not taken it, and but it's given them something else on their palette, so that they got more choice.”

This was echoed by a participant who explained that following the portfolio reviews, he was including a very different range of work:

“ I didn't even consider having stuff I'm currently working on in my portfolio before.”

This included more process driven and experimental elements as well as refined outcomes and is likely to be more reflective of that which is in the portfolios of students from more advantaged backgrounds who typically gain far greater support in portfolio preparation within their school and home contexts.

Outcome

Participants have an increased level of confidence in the quality of the work which makes up their portfolio.

Confidence has been discussed more generally in this report but in relation to the portfolios, the academic staff felt the students had gained in confidence and whilst the parents were not focused on the portfolios specifically, this echoed their comments about a general increase in the confidence their children had related to talking about their work.

Outcome

Following the tutorial, students can confidently identify suitable pieces of work for inclusion in their portfolio.

Outcome

Participants are confident in their ability to create a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to creative HE.

The evidence for this that could be gained within the evaluation was limited but in interviews the participants and a tutor at the exhibition it was felt that this had been achieved in many cases. For example, one participant stated that:

“ I didn't really know how to structure it at all. So, we asked lots of questions about like, what I should put in there what I should structure as how much we should write, and she really helped me consider what was useful and what they'll actually look for. ”

However, the primary measure of success here is likely to be the offers received by these participants to Arts related HE courses in future which is important for AUB to track.



Gallery exhibition and private view

The third element of the programme focused on allowing participants to experience their work in a gallery setting but also offered a chance for parental engagement and the provision of further information on careers.

The stated aim was to:

Develop relationships with All Access AUB participants' wider social network, including parents and supporters. Continue to develop the confidence of participants in their ability to frame study at AUB strongly within their horizons for action (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997).

Somewhat disappointingly, the uptake here was less than half of the initial cohort (7 out of 17 participants) but for those who did attend, they were very positive about the impact it had upon them, suggesting that the aim here had been met.

For all those who attended and completed the survey (n=4) they felt they were more likely to apply to AUB following the exhibition although only half said they were more likely to apply to Higher Education more generally. This could however be that they were already committed to Higher Education progression.

However, further consideration should be given as to how to increase participation. The participants and families who attended mostly lived within a commutable distance to AUB (i.e., from Bournemouth, Portsmouth, and Southampton). Only one participant travelled a long distance, from the midlands. **From the survey, those who did not attend the exhibition cited travel issues, Covid-19 and other commitments as barriers to participation. This could be mitigated for potentially with remote attendance options or setting the date earlier to allow for participants to plan this in ahead of other commitments.** Whilst there was a travel reimbursement, one participant mentioned they felt the process was confusing. It should be considered if this created barriers for those who did not attend as well.

Objective

To provide the opportunity for the students to see their work included as artistic pieces in a professionally curated exhibition through an exclusive private view.

Outcome

Participants see their work physically represented in a professionally curated exhibition.

Attending the event demonstrated the sense of pride that the participants showed in having their work presented in a gallery setting. As one participant outlined in their interview:

“ I've never actually had my work put up on a wall before [...] this feels real, serious and it's great as an artist to be recognised as doing something.”

Seeing one of the less confident participants being told by people they had never met how good their work was also clearly had a positive impact upon her confidence. This was further supported by the interviews with her parents who had a better understanding of her future potential in a field they were unsure about prior to her attending All Access AUB.

What also seemed to be received positively was the explanation by the technicians and curators about how the exhibition was developed to show the importance and weight placed upon this. This offered a real sense that it was a valued part of the gallery's programming.



Objective

To provide the opportunity for parents and supporters of participants to celebrate and support the creative achievement of the participants at a formal event.

For the parents and supporters that attended, the exhibition was highly valued. All the parents that were interviewed could not praise this highly enough:

“ I can't believe for all that you've done for the students to be honest. Coming here today, the lunch, the talks are just unbelievable. I feel like a queen. I think it is good because he's showing them what the future can be. And he's making them more determined, and more confident. ”

One of the touches that was really valued by the parents of one participant was the video showing their daughter working as they could see how happy she looked. They commented that:

“ She looks as if to say she's really proud of herself. ”

So, whilst the attendance at the exhibition was lower than might be ideal, there could be scope for sharing this more widely, also having a similar impact for those who did not attend. **It is worth AUB reflecting on those who did not attend. For the five who completed the survey, a range of issues were described mainly to do with logistics, however those with less supportive parents might have used these to mask more underlying issues which might be worthy of further exploration.**

Objective

To provide the opportunity to explore the campus and facilities at a creative arts university in person.

Of the seven participants that attended the exhibition, six of them and their families took part in the campus tours. The one who opted out came on their own and had already had a tour. It would be worth considering if a virtual tour could be offered to those families who did not attend though.

Outcome

Participants feel more familiar with the university, it's buildings and the staff involved in All Access AUB.

One respondent in the survey highlighted that:

“ Meeting the staff and living there for a short time made me realise how friendly and correct it felt. ”

Equally another stated that:

“ It made me see the university in a different light. One that was there to help all students succeed. ”

Therefore, this suggests that above and beyond the summer school itself, the addition of the exhibition offered a touchpoint for participants to see AUB in a different way and to further develop their impressions of the University.

**“It made me see
the university in a
different light. One
that was there to
help all students
succeed.”**



Outcome

Parents and supporters of participants come to campus and view the participant's work. In turn parents/supporters' knowledge of the university and careers in the creative industries is increased.

All the parents interviewed reflected on how much more confident their children were since the summer school and how they seemed to talk more about their work. This clearly had a positive impact both on the young people and the parents. For example, one parent explained that:

“ Now [her dad] is more positive about her, studying arts, whether before he wanted to be either a doctor, dentist, or scientists or something like that. But now he's more positive about her studying them [...] So it changed a change the dynamics in the family because now he's positive about her choice of studying arts. ”

This ability to show, as opposed to tell the parents why the arts are a possible option for their children should not be underestimated, especially when in the case of this one participant, this allowed for the breaking down of entrenched cultural barriers to creative careers. However, it is important to reflect upon the fact that less than half of the parents of participants in All Access AUB were reached and that those who did not attend might be in even more need of this understanding. Consideration might be made of how to make this information and support available remotely perhaps.

Outcome

Parents feel more confident in supporting participant in making an application to creative Higher Education.

It was hard to fully evidence this but certainly the parents spoken to felt more understanding of the choices and felt their children had a much better understanding of the process:

“ We've never been to university. So, we don't want to feel as if like we're pushing our daughter, she's got to go to university, but we'd be really proud if she did. And because of that, we've done our work, taken her to different universities, and I've been looking at everything, but coming all the way down to Bournemouth and the facilities and everything that you've got an offer on offer here, it's a big bonus compared to other universities. ”

However, there was some uncertainty about the differences between doing a degree and starting with art foundation. Equally, the understanding of finances was more limited, therefore having something in written form would have been helpful. One parent said:

“ I suppose that would be quite useful to have maybe a bit little bit more literature, you know, like just on an email or something just so we can go through. ”

It could be worth considering if this is something to either add to the exhibition or if some printed material to supply to the parents could be created.



04

Recommendations

Overall, the project met many of its stated aims, however there are a few changes that could be made to increase its value and effectiveness.

- 1 Targeting – whilst all the participants did meet the key criteria, there are some AUB target groups that were not represented in the cohort. Consideration should be made of how to attract these onto future programmes.
- 2 There were several issues to consider in relation to retention across the programme:
 - Whilst it was only one student, ensuring that the subject content matches the students stated Higher Education goals is important. This might be achieved by offering a carousel of activities or perhaps a parallel stream for students interested in subjects beyond art.
 - Less than half of the students who attended the residential element completed the portfolio reviews and attended the exhibition with only 25% attending all three elements. Consideration should be given as to how to improve this.
 - For geographically remote participants, a hybrid exhibition might increase engagement.
- 3 The evaluation highlighted several key issues surrounding expectations where some participants were less clear that they had learned something new. This could be addressed either by more clearly explaining the rationale for the subject content or including elements that would be distinctly different from post-16 education.
- 4 Participant numbers should be considered and reviewed considering some of the key objectives. Whilst the small group allowed for clear bonds between participants to form, the drop off in numbers by the exhibition suggests that it may be worth considering starting with a larger cohort initially.
- 5 Where journals or vlog reflections were used effectively, they appeared to not only create useful evaluation evidence but to help participants think about their development. Giving a greater focus and priority to this may have impacts not only on the evaluation but on participants understanding of how they have developed over the programme.
- 6 The parents that attended the exhibition clearly benefitted from it, but many did not attend, especially those more geographically distant from AUB. Consideration should be given to how to provide alternative support for those parents or help to mitigate possible barriers.
 - It may be worth revising the guidance and support for reimbursement of travel as this was felt to be confusing.
 - Ensuring the date for the exhibition is outlined from the start may also increase participation. It may be worth avoiding the busy pre-Christmas period to increase attendance.
- 7 To maintain contact with the cohort into HE and ensure destination tacking is conducted to fully evaluate effectiveness. This is particularly important to understand if the objective related to successful portfolio interviews has been achieved.

About the evaluator

Dr Jon Rainford is an independent widening participation consultant and evaluator. He was formerly the widening participation co-ordinator at the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama and is currently an academic at The Open University.

He has over 13 years' experience of working with marginalised groups in education and completed his PhD at Staffordshire University in 2019 which focused on widening participation policy and practice. He has written numerous publications on widening access and has a particular interest in the way technology can be embedded in a post-pandemic world and the role creative methods can play in evaluation.

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Appendix

Mentimeter questions

1. Word cloud – describe how you're feeling right now
2. Word cloud – what comes to mind when you think about studying a creative degree at university?
3. Poll – I know what to expect if I study a creative degree at AUB
4. Poll – How much do you know about AUB?
5. Poll – I feel happy and comfortable at AUB
6. Poll – There are people here who are just like me
7. Poll – How confident are you in your skills such as problem solving or communication?
8. Word cloud – what are you looking forward to?

Pre-post survey data

I know what to expect if I study a creative degree at AUB.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre %	11%	44%	50%	6%
Post %	15%	62%	15%	8%

I know a lot about AUB.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre %	0%	22%	56%	22%
Post %	29%	57%	14%	0%

I feel happy and comfortable here at AUB.

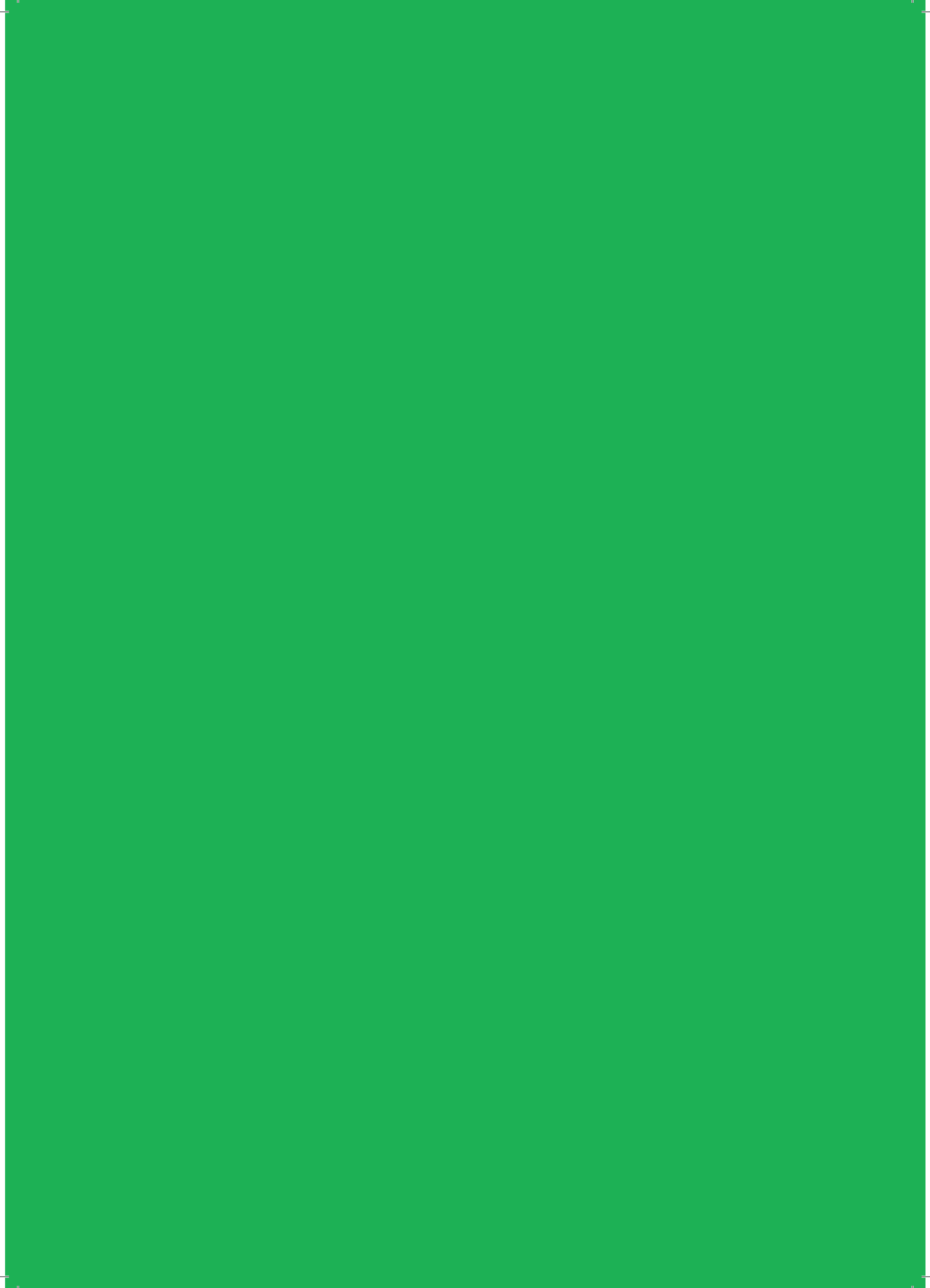
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre %	50%	50%	0%	0%
Post %	53%	27%	20%	0%

There are people here who are just like me.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre %	6%	72%	11%	11%
Post %	50%	29%	14%	7%

I am confident in my skills such as problem solving, presenting and communication.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Pre %	28%	17%	33%	17%
Post %	36%	14%	36%	14%



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