



AllAccessAUB

2024-25 EVALUATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a mixed-method evaluation of the 2024-2025 All Access AUB programme. Its purpose is to discuss the findings of the evaluative data gathered during the course of the programme, how the programme has met the outcomes set out in the progression framework and theory of change, and how the programme can be improved for future cohorts where outcomes have not been met successfully. The All Access AUB programme is designed to support entry to creative higher education through a residential summer school, portfolio support, exhibition of participants' work, a celebration event, and a transition to creative HE day. The aim is to facilitate skill development and confidence building for young people from underrepresented backgrounds to access higher education, and support progression to AUB specifically. 32 young people participated in the 2024-2025 programme.

Upon commencement of the programme, at the beginning of the summer residential, a mixture of emotions and responses were felt, varying from nerves and anxiety, excitement, curiosity, and feeling welcome and safe. Over the course of the residential, feelings evolved into those of happiness, friendship, pride and a sadness to leave. Using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods such as journals, interviews, surveys and observations, the evaluation takes a holistic approach to examining these experiences which are detailed in the report in relation to the outcomes of the programme. Fewer participants engaged in the follow up activities related to portfolio support, the celebration event, and transition to creative HE day, but those who did benefitted greatly from this. In particular, the celebration event had a positive impact upon participants' confidence in their abilities, as well as their families' level of support for their decision to study a creative degree, and at AUB specifically, and their perceptions of careers in the creative industries. However, as many participants did not attend subsequent parts of the programme, it remains a challenge to ensure as many participants as possible are engaging with and benefiting from All Access AUB as a whole.

KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, participants felt like AUB was an inclusive, welcoming and safe space they belonged to and were able to fully express themselves in. All participants reported positive feelings associated with the campus, halls of residence, and general university spaces. Participants saw themselves at AUB and, overall, felt very positive about the experience.
- Participants were particularly complimentary about the university staff on the summer residential and were grateful for their support, guidance and advice, and for making them feel so comfortable and welcome at AUB.
- Challenge, learning new skills and techniques and exploring their passions and interests were common themes across the evaluation, as well as participants showing evidence that they were able to think more deeply about art and their practice. However, not all participants enjoyed all the practical workshop activities.
- Some evidence suggests that the programme was instrumental in the development of participants' soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving and staying positive in challenging situations. However, some participants didn't always identify this in themselves and found it hard to articulate, suggesting not all were fully aware of the extent to which they were improving on these skills alongside their practical art skills.
- Many participants explained how the programme, the summer residential in particular, had a profound impact on their social skills and their development of close friendships, social bonds and a creative community. The connections made provided both immediate social support and potential long-term networking opportunities.
- Participants communicated that the programme made them feel more prepared and committed to their educational and career goals and effectively bridged the gap between participants' aspirations and the practical steps needed to achieve them. For some participants, the experience solidified their existing plans for pursuing HE, and for those who were previously uncertain about their educational path, it gave them clarity and confidence to make informed decisions about their future.

- Those who took part in the portfolio reviews developed skills and understanding that supported application to arts courses at HE. 41% participants on the programme made a successful application to study an undergraduate or Foundation course at AUB, with 25% accepting their place.
- Evidence suggests that the programme helped increase some parents' confidence in supporting them in making an application to creative HE, and more specifically, helped them feel more comfortable with their young person studying at AUB as they know they will be safe, valued and cared for. The exhibition and celebration event for some parents/carers played a significant role in this.
- There was very small uptake for the transition to creative HE day, therefore, while there was overall positive feedback on the day from both All Access AUB participants and other contextual offer holders, the day lacked real measurable impact for most participants. However, for those who did attend, it proved to be a very worthwhile and enjoyable day, providing reassurance and excitement about studying at AUB.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Additional methods of communication and advertisement should be explored to increase the number of eligible participants who apply to the scheme, in particular, care experienced and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman, Boater community participants.
- Overall, participants enjoyed the summer residential workshops and felt adequately challenged, but some found some of the activities less enjoyable. Tutors and residential staff should take this opportunity to discuss the development of soft skills such as staying positive and problem solving when discussing this with participants.
- To further develop the quality of reflections recorded in the journals, additional probing questions should be added as part of the pre and post survey to encourage participants to think more deeply about the scores they're giving and why, particularly those related to soft skills.
- Take up for subsequent parts of the programme after the summer

residential remains relatively low. Consideration should be given to how to promote all interventions to participants, parents/carers and teachers to ensure the programme is having the maximum possible benefit.

- Feedback surveys for the 1-1 portfolio support sessions and transition to creative HE day were poorly responded to, therefore consideration should be given to how to increase engagement with these.
- Monitoring and tracking of applications to AUB should be maintained to fully evaluate the programme's long-term effectiveness.

BACKGROUND

All Access AUB began in 2022 and was developed as a programme of activity to support entry into creative Higher Education from underrepresented groups. This evaluation report is for the 2024-2025 cohort. As part of All Access AUB, participants:

- Take part in a fully funded summer residential, 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.
- Are invited, alongside friends, family and supporters, to attend a celebration event and view the exhibition 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.
- Are given extra consideration at the point of admission to AUB, which, if an offer is made, will be a reduced, contextual offer of up to two grades.
- Receive support from a dedicated Progression Mentor through the AUB application process and beyond.

In three years, the programme has grown, and continues to grow, as more schools, colleges, teachers and students become aware of it and its impact. Each year improvements are made to address the needs of the young people and the desired outcomes of the programme, both short and long term.

In the first year (2022) there were 32 applications converting to 17 participants. This

increased to 51 applications in 2024, converting to 32 participants.

Table 1: Numbers of applications converting to participants each year so far

Year of programme	Applications	Participants
2022-23	32	17
2023-24	39	32
2024-25	51	32*

*40 applicants were offered places but 8 didn't attend the residential on the day.

PARTICIPANTS

32 participants attended the summer residential. This is taken as the total population participating in the All Access AUB programme 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 or care experienced background.

Graph 1: Percentage of participants on the All Access AUB programme and their eligibility criteria

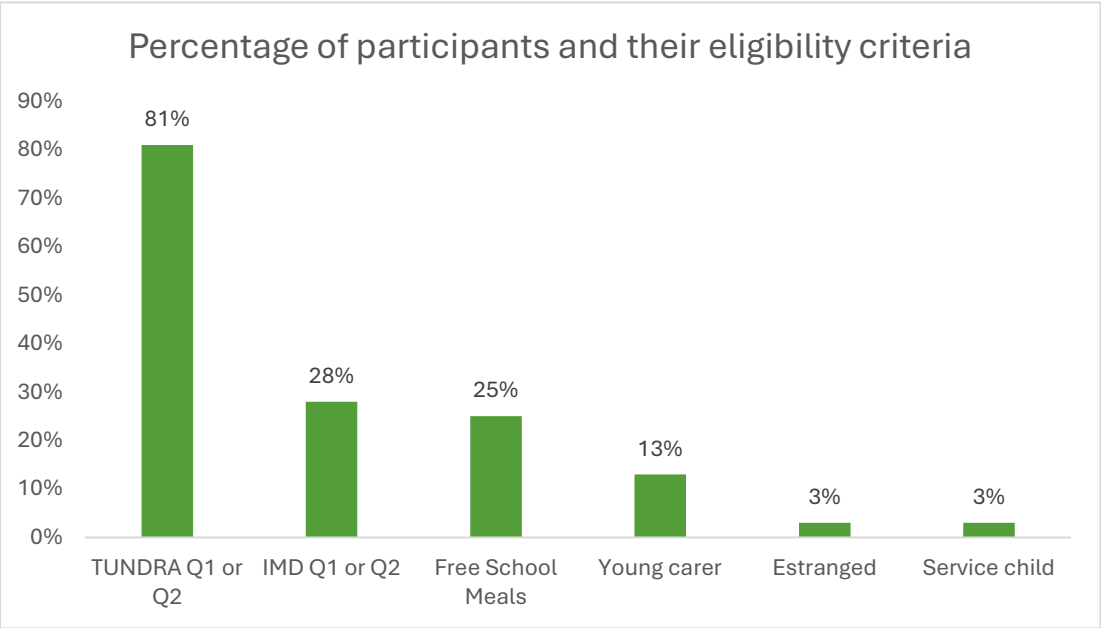


Table 2: Participants' attendance at all programme activities and interventions

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APPLICATIONS AND ENROLMENTS TO AUB

Out of the 32 participants in the 2024-25 cohort, 11 (34%) made applications to at least one undergraduate degree at AUB, which increases to 13 (41%) to include applications to Foundation. All participants received at least one offer. At the time of writing, five (16%) firmly accepted their offer to study an undergraduate degree at AUB, with three (9%) having firmly accepted an offer to study Foundation, totaling eight (25%) participants, which provides a reliable indication of how many will enroll to AUB in September 2025.

These numbers are down slightly from the previous year where 17 (53%) participants applied to an undergraduate degree at AUB, 15 (47%) received offers and, equaling this year, five (16%) enrolled, with a further four enrolling on Foundation.

Table 3: All Access AUB undergraduate applications, offers and enrolments.

Year of programme	Applied (%)	Received offer (%)	Accepted offer as firm choice (%)	Enrolled (%)
2022-23	35%	29%	0%	0%
2023-24	50%	44%	16%	16%
2024-25	34%	34%	17%	n/a

Table 4: All Access AUB undergraduate and Foundation applications, offers and enrolments.

Year of programme	Applied (%)	Received offer (%)	Accepted offer as firm choice (%)	Enrolled (%)
2022-23	35%	29%	0%	0%
2023-24	59%	56%	28%	28%
2024-25	44%	44%	25%	n/a

In addition to the above data, it is noteworthy that of the four participants who enrolled onto Foundation in 2024, three (75%) have accepted an undergraduate offer at AUB for 2025 entry.

EVALUATIVE DATA

TOOLS MOBILISED

A mixed methodology approach was taken which included semi-structured interviews with participants and parents/carers, pre and post event surveys and reflective journals where participants were encouraged to respond to questions and prompts freely and creatively, as well as in a more structured manner. A feedback wall was also utilized, as well as a focus group.

SUMMER RESIDENTIAL

The primary purpose of the summer residential was to:

Increase the confidence of All Access AUB participants in their creative abilities and develop their expectations towards progression to Arts University Bournemouth.

There are eight desired outcomes of the summer residential which, for the purposes of this evaluative report, have been divided into three areas:

- Skills and competencies
- Responses to being at AUB and in an HE setting
- Decision making and motivation to progress to HE

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Outcome 1: Participants have conducted a deeper exploration of their artistic passions and interests and wish to pursue those interests in creative higher education.

Outcome 2: Experimentation with new artistic resources, methods and techniques and motivation to continue doing so in creative HE.

Outcome 6: Participants have developed and demonstrated skills such as problem-solving, staying positive and communication through reflecting on their work with peers and academic staff.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Participants described how they were encouraged to try new artistic mediums and techniques that they had not previously explored. This experimentation often led to the discovery of new interests or the realisation of areas they did not enjoy, which was valuable for their personal and artistic growth. The freedom to explore different artistic mediums and the encouragement to try new things were particularly appreciated. This exploration helped participants identify their strengths and interests within the creative arts and contributed to a more well-rounded understanding of what pursuing higher education in the creative arts entails and helped solidify participants' future plans. The environment at AUB and the interactions with staff, ambassadors, and peers served as a significant source of inspiration. Participants reflected that they would leave the program feeling motivated to pursue their creative goals with renewed energy and determination, with some even identifying specific areas of study or career paths they wished to explore further. The hands-on projects and exposure to various creative disciplines gave participants a taste of what studying and working in the creative arts would entail. This practical experience was crucial in helping them understand what skills they needed to develop further and how to navigate the demands of their chosen field.

Participants reflected:

"Being able to explore different artistic mediums and figure out what I like and don't like has been really valuable."

"Trying new things like lino cutting, even though I didn't enjoy it, taught me to stay positive and keep experimenting."

"The practical experience in different creative disciplines has helped me understand what skills I need to work on."

Participants comments and reflections suggest that they had conducted a deeper exploration of their creative interests and became more aware of mediums, methods and techniques they enjoyed and did not enjoy. Participants used this as motivation to continue to pursue their interests at HE, now they had gained more clarity on where their passions lie. This evidence suggests that outcomes one and two were met.

Many participants noted significant improvements in their communication skills. Whether it was directing others in a project or simply engaging in conversations with peers and staff, the experience forced them out of their comfort zones. Participants also developed better time management skills, especially in a structured environment

with set deadlines. Problem-solving was another area where participants felt they had grown, often in creative or artistic contexts. For those who identified as shy or introverted, the residential was particularly beneficial in helping them engage more confidently with others. For many participants, the residential challenged them to engage more openly with others, which was a significant step outside their comfort zones. Particularly for those who identified as shy or introverted, this experience was transformative in helping them build confidence in social settings.

Furthermore, participants gained a deeper understanding of how collaboration can enhance the creative process. Working with others allowed them to see different perspectives, share ideas, and create more dynamic and diverse work. While collaboration was largely seen as beneficial, some participants noted the challenges of working in a team, such as differing opinions or the need for strong communication. However, these challenges were also seen as valuable learning experiences that helped them develop better teamwork skills. Many participants recognized that being around other creative individuals fuelled their own creativity. The energy and ideas exchanged during group work often led to more innovative outcomes than they might have achieved working alone.

Participants commented:

"I've definitely improved my communication skills, especially when it comes to directing people and expressing my ideas."

"I've learned that collaboration isn't always easy, but it's essential for creating diverse and dynamic work."

Such data from the interviews suggests that the residential was instrumental in developing essential soft skills among participants, particularly communication, time management, and problem-solving. It also reinforced the importance of collaboration and teamwork in the creative arts. Participants not only learned how to work effectively with others but also experienced firsthand the benefits of creative synergy, where the collective input of a group led to richer, more innovative work. Therefore, it suggests that outcome six was met.

PRE AND POST EVENT SURVEYS

When participants were asked on the pre-event survey, on a scale of one to five, to rate how confident they are in four skills, the mode for three out of the four skills (communication with others, presenting your ideas and work and staying positive in

challenging situations) was three, with problem solving having a mode of four. This indicates that, overall, most participants felt somewhat confident in all four areas prior to the residential, but many were unsure and overall lacked confidence in their skills. When asked the same question on the post-event survey, the skills with a mode of three in the pre-event survey, now had a mode of four. The mode for problem solving remained at four for the post-event survey. Whilst the increase in most mode scores is pleasing, especially after such a short amount of time, it does indicate that the residential didn't have a significant impact on the development and improvement in skills and that this is an area that should be considered when planning future residencies and activities. Indeed, it may be that participants did develop their skills but weren't aware of the development or were unable to demonstrate it. Interestingly, some participants reported lower levels of confidence in certain skills at the end of the residential, for example, one participant scored presenting your ideas and work a five at the start of the residential, and a three at the end. This may simply be how they were feeling at the time they completed the survey, or it may indicate that participants have truly reflected on their soft skills and have identified areas for development that they weren't previously aware of.

FREE RESPONSES IN THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

It was clear from the responses in the reflective journals that students were able to explore their passions and interests and develop a clearer idea of what they enjoy the most and what they don't find as enjoyable. Many students reported that lots of the techniques, such as lino printing and cutting, were new to them, and that they wanted to continue to develop these skills after the residential. Participants on the Media stream mostly noted they had learnt about shutter speed and how to use image editing software. Interestingly, the life drawing session in the Art & Design stream divided participants with some really enjoying it, and others reporting they found it challenging and weren't motivated to continue to practice it. However, those that didn't enjoy it, did appreciate how it had made them stay positive and persevere with a task. This was true for many participants who reflected that they had to stay positive when they found a task challenging or weren't happy with their outcome.

Many participants shared that they had developed their social and communication skills when interacting with peers and staff and were proud of themselves for being out of their comfort zone and meeting new people. Some reflected how they improved their confidence to speak up and ask for help and guidance when they needed it.

A few students reflected on a deeper level and were able to articulate this well in their journal. For example, one participant wrote:

“I think one skill I have struggled with has been articulating what my artwork means to other people and having the confidence to muster up the right words so that the journey of the piece isn’t so confusing to others. I think this skill is essential as an artist.”

Another student explained:

“In the final workshop we selected the pieces that we wanted to submit to the gallery exhibition. This was interesting as I have never thought about my work in this way before, but this is an important skill to have as an artist.”

RESPONSES TO BEING AT AUB AND IN AN HE SETTING

Outcome 3: A deeper understanding of the experience participants may have studying at AUB.

Outcome 4: Familiarity with AUB and seeing it as a space that participants belong to and feel comfortable in.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Participants appreciated the supportive and inclusive environment at AUB, which made them feel more comfortable and secure in their decision to pursue higher education in the arts. The opportunity to meet and interact with like-minded individuals was highlighted as a valuable aspect of the experience. Participants appreciated the sense of community and the chance to build connections with peers who share similar interests. Experiencing university life, including living in halls and navigating campus facilities, was another highlight. This exposure helped participants feel more prepared for what to expect in higher education.

A strong theme throughout the responses was the development of friendships with fellow participants. Many expressed how they bonded with others over shared interests and experiences, leading to meaningful connections that they planned to maintain after the program. Participants frequently mentioned the supportive nature of the staff and ambassadors at AUB. The staff were approachable, encouraging, and provided valuable guidance, making participants feel more at ease and supported during the program. Some participants recognized the long-term value of the connections they made, both with peers and staff. They saw these relationships as potential future

professional networks that could support them as they move forward in their careers. The connections participants made during the residential experience were significant, providing both immediate social support and potential long-term networking opportunities. These relationships contributed to a positive experience overall and helped participants feel more integrated into the creative community.

Participants noted that the experience made them more familiar with the layout, resources, and daily life at AUB, which contributed to a sense of readiness for university. Knowing what to expect helped reduce anxiety and increased their confidence in transitioning to higher education.

Participants shared:

"Being in a creative environment has shown me how positive it is to study in, and it reinforced my belief that this is where I want to be."

"I've made some great friends here, and we've bonded over our shared interests in art and design."

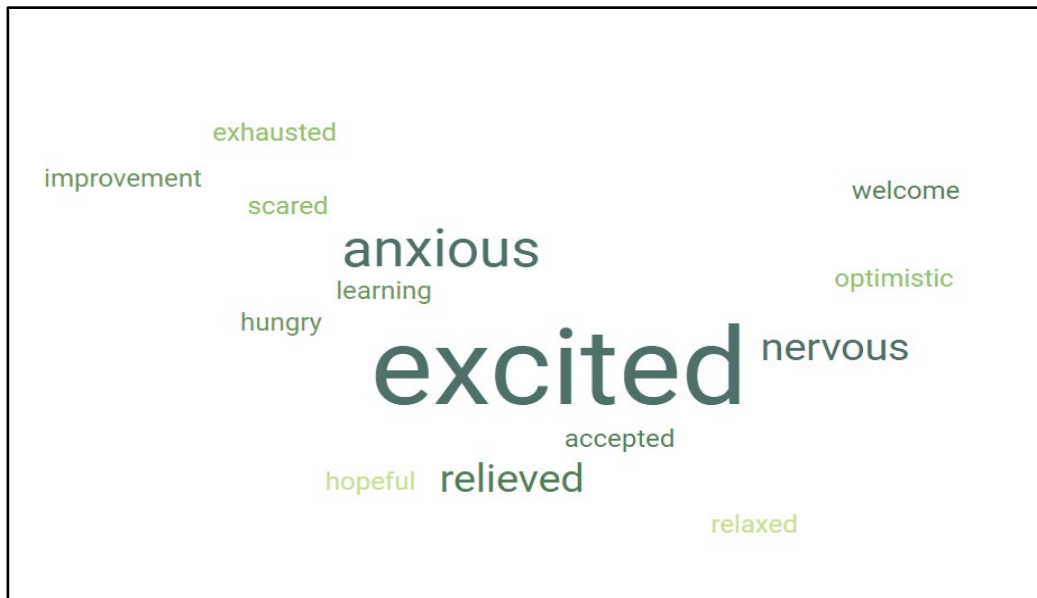
"The staff have been really supportive, and I feel like I can talk to them about anything, which has made me feel more comfortable."

Feedback from the students during the interviews suggests that participants had an overwhelmingly positive experience of what it's like to study at AUB and, in making valuable connections with staff and friendships with like-minded peers, see it as a space they belong to and feel comfortable in. Therefore, it suggests that outcomes three and four have been met.

PRE AND POST EVENT SURVEYS

The first question of the pre-event survey was: *'Write down two or three words that describe how you're feeling now you've arrived at AUB'*. The results are summarised in the word cloud below:

Image 1: Word cloud representing responses to the pre-event survey question 'Write down two or three words that describe how you're feeling now you've arrived at AUB'



It is clear from this data that many students felt positive feelings of excitement when they arrived at AUB. Other positive emotions shared were 'optimistic', 'welcome' and 'relaxed'. This indicates that participants felt comfortable at AUB almost immediately. There were some participants who felt understandably nervous and anxious, however, when compared with emotions reported in the post-event survey, these feelings had subsided and were replaced with feelings of positivity and excitement, for example, participants reported feeling 'confident', 'inspired' and 'fulfilled'. The results of the first question of the post-event survey which was 'Write down two or three words that describe how you're feeling now you're about to go home' are summarised in the word cloud below:

Image 2: Word cloud representing responses to the post-event survey question 'Write down two or three words that describe how you're feeling now you're about to go home'



The feelings of sadness and disappointment reported by many participants are assumed to be due to the residential finishing and them not wanting to leave yet. This was also confirmed by the students themselves explaining this in the reflective journal.

There were participants who reported that they will miss the friends they made suggesting that, not only did they feel comfortable in the space, but that they also felt like they belonged.

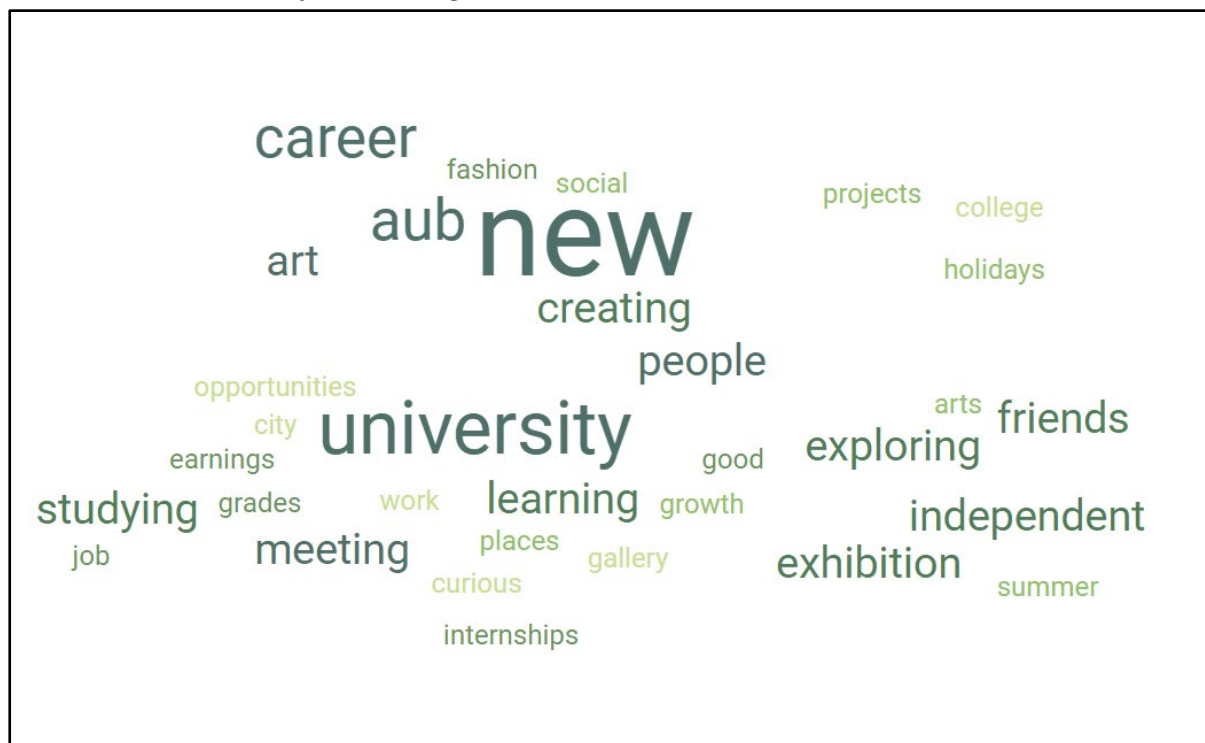
When participants were asked to give two or three words on what they were looking forward to on the residential, responses varied from '*exploring*', to '*clarity*'. The most common responses were related to meeting new people and making new friends, as well as developing and learning new skills. A summary of the responses can be found in the word cloud below:

Image 3: Word cloud representing responses to the pre-event survey question 'Write down two or three words that describe what you're looking forward to on the residential'



The corresponding question on the post-event survey was: 'Write down two or three words that describe what you're looking forward to now and in the future'. Responses were varied and all positive, with most of them relating to university and including comments around careers, creating art and seeing the exhibition of their work in the gallery at AUB. These comments suggest that participants enjoyed their experience of university life and intend to continue to engage with the programme after the residential - returning to AUB for the exhibition or on an undergraduate course.

Image 4: Word cloud representing responses to the post-event survey question 'Write down two or three words that describe what you're looking forward to now and in the future'



When participants were asked on the pre-event survey, on a scale of one to five, what extent to which they agreed with the statement '*I know what to expect if I study a creative degree at AUB*', the most common response was three. This increased to four on the post event survey. For the statement, '*I know a lot about AUB already*' the most common response was three on the pre-event survey, rising to four on the post event survey. Both questions indicate that participants' understanding of the experience they may have of studying at AUB was good and had improved over the course of the residential.

When participants were asked on the pre-event survey, on a scale of one to five, what extent to which they agreed with the statement '*I feel happy and comfortable at AUB*', the response was bimodal, with three and four being the joint most common responses, increasing to a single mode of four on the post-event survey. This positively reflects how comfortable participants felt at AUB from the start of the residential, and this only grew after spending more time there. For the statement, '*There are people here who are just like me*', the most common response was four on the pre-event and post-event survey. Interestingly, a few participants scored this question lower than their score of the question before ('*I feel happy and comfortable at AUB*'), suggesting that participants don't necessarily need to feel similar to their peers to feel happy and comfortable in an environment. Overall, both questions on the survey indicate that

most participants had developed a sense of familiarity with AUB and did see it as a space they felt that they belonged to.

FREE RESPONSES IN THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

When participants were asked to respond to questions and prompts relating to how they feel being at AUB, there was overwhelmingly positive feedback with many participants reporting how welcoming, community focussed and accepting AUB is, including the staff and the overall environment. For many participants, this sense of belonging was further solidified by being on the programme with like-minded peers and creatives who all had something in common. Because of this, participants could see the value in attending a specialist institution such as AUB as they would be surrounded by familiarity and peers with shared interests and values from day one.

One student shared:

“I feel fully free to be myself here, the staff are very kind and welcoming, and my peers are great to have convos with, and I find that I have things in common with them.”

Another commented that:

“AUB is by far the most accepting educational space I have experienced.”

Specific feedback in the journals regarding participants’ understanding of what it would be like to study at AUB was somewhat limited, however, by reflecting on the new skills and techniques they had been exposed to, as well as a good appreciation of the welcoming and inclusive nature of the campus and staff, it can be assumed that the residential did provide participants with a good understanding of this.

Comments included:

“It is a great local option, and main option, with a great diversity, students of all ages and backgrounds who I can meet and network with.”

“I have learnt that there are a lot of different options here to study – there is literally something for everyone. The staff all seem really supportive and want to actively help students to achieve what they want.”

DECISION MAKING AND MOTIVATION TO PROGRESS TO HE

Outcome 5: Developing relationships between participants and AUB staff where participants feel supported and trusting of the adults they receive information and advice from.

Outcome 7: Confidence in making decisions about education choices.

Outcome 8: Participants feel HE is for them and are motivated to research creative HE further.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Many participants reported a boost in their confidence regarding educational decisions. This was largely attributed to being in a creative environment, meeting new people and gaining firsthand experience of what studying at AUB would be like.

For some participants, the experience solidified their existing plans, and they felt more certain about their choices to pursue a degree in the creative arts. Participants from distant locations, e.g. Lancashire, mentioned that the experience reduced their worries about being far from home, particularly around concerns of making new friends and feeling isolated. Participants who were previously uncertain about their educational path reported that the residential gave them the clarity and confidence needed to make informed decisions about their future. The environment at AUB and the interactions with staff, ambassadors, and peers served as a significant source of inspiration. Participants left the residential feeling motivated to pursue their creative goals with renewed energy and determination, with some even identifying specific areas of study or career paths they wished to explore further. The experience also made participants more aware of the various resources available to them, such as financial aid, bursaries, and other support systems, which alleviated concerns about the feasibility of pursuing a creative education.

The hands-on exposure to a university setting helped them visualise their future more clearly, leading to increased confidence in their educational choices. The positive environment, combined with the exposure to university life and creative disciplines, helped many participants feel more prepared and committed to their educational and career goals. The program effectively bridged the gap between their aspirations and the practical steps needed to achieve them.

Participants reflected:

"The experience has made me more certain about pursuing a degree in the creative arts and has given me the confidence to apply to universities far from home."

"It's given me clarity about what I want to do in the future and has inspired me to push forward with my creative ambitions."

"The mentorship from the staff was incredibly influential in helping me figure out my path and feel more confident in my choices."

Data from the interviews strongly suggests that the participants developed positive relationships amongst their peers and AUB staff, and really valued the support, advice and guidance given by them. Many participants described feeling more confident in their educational choices and ready and motivated to further research HE and AUB. Therefore, suggesting that outcomes five, seven and eight have been met.

FREE RESPONSES IN THE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Many participants noted and praised the support, advice and guidance provided by AUB staff, suggesting they also trust the information they received from them.

When asked to reflect on their next steps and if the residential had affected their choices and decisions, there was a mixed response. Some participants expressed their keenness and determination to go to university and AUB in particular, whereas others shared that the experience hadn't influenced their decision making about HE because they wanted to go to university before the residential and still do. However, some reflected that they weren't sure what course/s they wanted to pursue, and that the experience made them consider alternative courses and options they had been exposed to. Some had still not made up their mind about HE but acknowledged that university was a good option, and they would continue to research and consider it.

For example, participants shared reflections such as:

"It has made me feel more confident and inspired to study Architecture."

“(I feel) excited and hopeful to apply and be accepted for a place at AUB on a Foundation course!”

“Attending this summer residential has confirmed to me that I would like to complete a creative degree at university. Whilst I’m not quite sure what degree it will be, I’m confident that I’m making the right choice for me. I’ll probably study Illustration, Animation or Games Art.”

“Higher Education is definitely something I see value in, but I need to do my research on it.”

“I’m still not sure what I wanna do in the future, but I’ll definitely think about uni more. It’s made me feel more sure about wanting to pursue arts as a future career.”

Overall, most participants felt confident coming out of the experience that HE was or could be for them and were motivated to continue to research HE, in particular, which courses were best for them.

1-1 PORTFOLIO SUPPORT SESSIONS

The primary purpose of the 1-1 portfolio support sessions was to:

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

There are three desired outcomes of the 1-1 portfolio support sessions:

Outcome 1: Participants have an increased level of confidence in the quality of the work which makes up their portfolio.

Outcome 2: Participants have confidently identified suitable pieces of work for inclusion in their portfolio.

Outcome 3: An increased confidence in participants' ability to create a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to creative HE.

PRE AND POST EVENT SURVEYS

It should be noted that responses in the pre and post surveys for the 1-1 portfolio support sessions were very low and therefore it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the intervention.

Outcome 1: Participants have an increased level of confidence in the quality of the work which makes up their portfolio.

When participants were asked the question in the pre-event survey: *'How confident are you about the quality of work that makes up your portfolio?'* 63% replied *slightly confident*, with 38% reporting they felt *quite confident*. When the same question was asked in the post-event survey, 50% replied that they felt *quite confident*, and 50% *very confident*. This suggests that, for those who completed the surveys, the 1-1 portfolio support sessions achieved the outcome of increasing participants' confidence in the quality of work that made up their portfolio.

Outcome 2: Participants have confidently identified suitable pieces of work for inclusion in their portfolio.

When participants were asked the question on the pre-event survey: *'How confident are you about selecting suitable pieces of work to be included in your portfolio?'* 37% reported that they felt *quite confident* or *very confident*, compared to 100% in the post-event survey. When participants were asked the question in the pre-event survey: *'How knowledgeable are you about how many pieces of work need to be included in your portfolio?'* again, only 13% reported that they felt *quite knowledgeable*, compared to 100% in the post event survey reporting they felt *quite confident* or *very confident*.

As such, these findings indicate that the 1-1 portfolio support sessions enabled participants to confidently identify suitable pieces of work for inclusion in their portfolio.

Outcome 3: An increased confidence in participants' ability to create a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to creative HE.

When participants were asked the question on the pre-event survey: *‘How knowledgeable are you about what a strong portfolio for application to a creative course looks like’*, 75% reported they were *not knowledgeable at all* or *slightly knowledgeable*, compared to 100% of participants reporting that they felt *very knowledgeable* about this in the post-event survey.

When participants were asked the question on the pre-event survey: *‘How confident are you about your ability to create a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to a creative course at university’*, 13% replied that they were *quite confident* compared to 80% in the post-event survey.

When asked *‘In your own words, what have you gained from your 1-1 portfolio support sessions?’* participants reported positive outcomes such as:

‘The confidence to display my work in a way that gives my artwork the space it needs to be clear and coherent.’

As such, these findings suggest that the 1-1 portfolio support sessions increased participants’ confidence in their ability to create a portfolio which meets the requirements for successful entry to creative HE.

Whilst there is clear evidence from the data collected that the 1-1 portfolio support sessions achieved all three outcomes, it is important to acknowledge that only five participants completed the post-event survey, where ten completed the pre-event survey. Therefore, this data should be approached with caution due to small and inconsistent sample sizes.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

During interviews carried out at the celebration event, some parents and carers spoke about the 1-1 portfolio support sessions and their impact.

One parent was particularly positive about her daughter’s experiences and said:

‘Now, after your support and the support from the sixth form, yeah, she’s good, and you know, she’s got an unconditional offer from one university, conditional for some others...which shows that the portfolio support you’ve given her and the college is obviously working.’

For participants who were applying to Foundation, it came across that it was generally less beneficial due to the difference in nature between the applications required for Foundation and an undergraduate degree, but that overall, it was useful and described as ‘a good starting point’. Even though it was perhaps not as relevant for one student, they have requested a 1-1 support session next year when they apply for an undergraduate course after their Foundation. This is also evidence that they value the ongoing support that the All Access AUB programme provides.

EXHIBITION AND CELEBRATION EVENT

The primary purpose of the exhibition and celebration event 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).

There are four desired outcomes of the exhibition and celebration:

Outcome 1: Participants have seen their work physically represented in a professionally curated exhibition.

Outcome 2: Participants have increased feelings of familiarity with the University, its buildings and the staff involved in All Access AUB.

Outcome 3: Parents, carers and supporters have an increased knowledge of the University and awareness of the careers and opportunities in the creative industries.

Outcome 4: Parents, carers and supporters feel more confident in supporting participants in making an application to creative HE.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Outcome 1: Participants have seen their work physically represented in a professionally curated exhibition

By attending the exhibition and celebration event, participants saw their work physically represented in a professionally curated exhibition. If participants and parents/supporters did not attend the celebration event and exhibition in person, they have had the opportunity to see their work in the online, digital exhibition. Parents,

carers and supporters expressed their pleasure and pride in seeing their young people's work up in the exhibition, and the importance of wanting to support them at the event.

One parent explained that their daughter was: *'really excited to show us what she'd done,'* with another describing it as being *'very special'* and how it has *'helped boost (his) self-esteem'*.

Outcome 2: Participants have increased feelings of familiarity with the University, its buildings and the staff involved in All Access AUB

Parents and carers reported that participants felt comfortable being at AUB. One parent was particularly positive about this and explained that:

'She's been really excited to bring us here, I think to kind of show us what she's done and so the whole families come, so that's really, really nice. It feels very comfortable coming back to AUB as well because she's been here and she's come again...it feels like home already.'

Parents, carers and supporters were offered a campus tour during the celebration event, and it was notable that the participants chose to also join in with this opportunity. During the tour, participants asked to be shown the studios of the courses they had applied for or were interested in (e.g. Costume, Textiles and Fashion), which led to increasing feelings of familiarity with the University and its buildings.

This evidence suggests that participants felt very comfortable being back on campus, amongst AUB staff and potential fellow AUB students, and therefore did have increasing feelings of familiarity with AUB and its environment.

Outcome 3: Parents, carers and supporters have an increased knowledge of the University and awareness of the careers and opportunities in the creative industries

It was clear through conversations with parents and carers that they found the talk about AUB and careers in the creative industries interesting and informative. For example, one parent shared:

'I never went to university. I joined the army at 16, so my life was completely different, so seeing the opportunities that she's got, it's just nice...yeah it's good.'

One parent expressed the positive impact it had had on her by attending the celebration event and hearing the talks:

'I hadn't really appreciated.... I knew that AUB was a special place, it's right up there on the ranking boards, but how it is compared to other universities... to hear how it is, the advantages compared to other universities and the opportunities, and the fact that it's on our doorstep...I think I've seen enough to appreciate where he's going to be...I think it's important as a parent that you share with them.'

Another parent, who does already have a good knowledge of careers in the creative industries, explained:

'I think it was quite useful seeing all the potential...the wide variety of career options after Textiles, and it may not be in Textiles, it might be in another creative outlet, so that's quite important for her to see as well.'

This evidence demonstrates that the exhibition and celebration event enabled parents and carers to learn more about the opportunities at AUB for their young person, AUB's unique strengths and merits, and the viability of the creative industries as a successful career option.

One parent also provided constructive feedback that it would be useful for the talk to have included ways in which AUB supports its students in helping them get a job once they graduate.

Outcome 4: Parents, carers and supporters feel more confident in supporting participants in making an application to creative HE.

It was clear that the parents and carers interviewed were very supportive of their young person making an application to creative HE, with one parent in particular stating that they were '*completely supportive*' and '*wherever he wants to go, I'm in support of that*'.

There were further conversations around parents and carers feeling confident in supporting their young person in studying at AUB, but they were generally more focused on the pastoral side of the University and how they would feel about their young person being there, rather than focusing on the type of degree or what they would study. For example, one parent shared:

'It's good for the parents to see somewhere where, in our case, our daughter may

go to and it's kind of reassuring about how she'll be looked after, and how embracing and supportive the atmosphere is.'

This evidence does suggest that the programme has helped increase some parents' confidence in supporting them in making an application to creative HE, but perhaps more so, it's helped them feel confident and comfortable with their young person going to AUB specifically, as they know they will be cared for, and that came across as the most important thing to consider, above what they will study.

FEEDBACK WALL

This year, a feedback wall was piloted at the celebration event as an additional method of gathering data from participants and their parents/carers and supporters. It was set up in a separate room, close to the exhibition, and respondents could visit the feedback wall and add comments when convenient. Respondents were asked to use Post-its to record any comments, feedback or reflections (both positive and opportunities for improvement) in the following areas: the 1-1 portfolio support sessions; the exhibition and celebration event; the programme overall (e.g. it's impact, how it's supported progression to HE, general organisation). Responses were limited, and thought should be given how to encourage more people to engage with it, but positive feedback was received with comments including:

'Amazing programme! Sooo much fun!'

'The summer programme was amazing – my daughter came back inspired, and I think it played a huge role in her decision to go for a creative degree.'

'Great exhibition!'

One participant provided useful feedback regarding the media stream:

'The media stream shouldn't be advertised for animation as the course is just photography! Animation students should be advised to go to art & design, or the media stream should have more options outside of photography!'

This is owing to the fact that when the media stream was first announced and promoted, the tutor wasn't yet in place and so it was unclear what would be covered during the week. Thought should therefore be given to providing students with more detail about the content of the workshops if possible.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the limited data gathered from the feedback wall, especially given that the participants, parents/carers and supporters who attended the celebration event were likely to already have positive views of the programme. However, helpful feedback was given and the positive comments shared do suggest that the programme is effective and impactful in developing participants' ability to frame HE study, and study at AUB, within their horizons for action.

TRANSITION TO CREATIVE TO HE DAY

The primary purpose of the transition to creative HE day event was to:

Provide All Access AUB participants with experiences and information for them to develop the necessary skills for a successful transition into creative Higher Education and life as an undergraduate student.

There are three desired outcomes of the transition to creative HE day:

Outcome 1: Participants understand the expectations of them in relation to their first year at AUB as an undergraduate student.

Outcome 2: Participants are familiar with the additional academic and pastoral support offered by AUB and are confident they would know who to speak to if they wanted to access it.

Outcome 3: Participants are aware of the extra-curricular opportunities offered at AUB and understand how engagement in opportunities supports their personal and professional development.

FOCUS GROUP

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a small focus group of three All Access AUB students who attended the Transition to Creative HE Day. Feedback about the day was overall very positive, with some helpful ideas for additions to the day also suggested.

As part of the day, participants were given a tour of the workshops and studios they would be studying in and met with a tutor from their course. This was seen as an extremely beneficial and helpful part of the day, with all participants explaining that meeting with tutors, touring the studios and seeing current undergraduate work was their favourite part of the day. This suggests that participants understand the expectations of them in relation to the level and quality of work they will be required to create as an undergraduate. Participants made comments such as:

'My favourite was seeing all the costumes in the Costume department and all the clothes that the Fashion students had made.'

'It was really nice to meet them and get an idea of what we'll be doing in each term ... the lady we spoke to was really helpful in explaining everything to us and what we'll be doing and showing us current students work. It was really nice to see them making their own patterns, I thought that was really cool.'

Participants also demonstrated further understanding of expectations at undergraduate level by explaining that they recognised the difference between studying at college and studying at university:

'...university is really different from going into college or into a different school 'cos you're jumping into a different life and ... as much as you do get support, you get a lot less support ... and you do have to be on track with yourself, and you have to keep yourself in a certain mindset.'

These comments suggest that outcome one was met and that participants do understand the expectations of them in relation to their first year at AUB as an undergraduate student, but it is unclear as to whether they had this understanding before attending the Transition to Creative HE Day or gained this understanding at the event. However, it is likely that the All Access AUB programme has significantly contributed to their knowledge and awareness in this area.

Participants also shared:

'I feel like I'm really excited to come here ... all day I've kind of been like wow this is what I'm going to be doing, it's not like a maybe or if I get in, it's like I'm going to do this.'

'It feels more real, being able to come and look around ... we went into the Costume department and they were doing presentation and it's nice to see the kind of things we'll be doing when we come, and it's definitely been reinforced to us today that we are coming here, it's not just if we come here, they're very certain that they want us here and that we're welcome and I really like that.'

'It's also nice to meet people who I might end up being here with when I get here, and I like to know that I know how to get places, how to walk around the campus, where everything is, it was just really nice.'

These comments suggest that overall, the Transition to Creative HE day was a very positive experience for the participants. It gave them confidence in and reassurance about coming to study at AUB and equipped them with the necessary knowledge and understanding to make a smooth transition from school/college into creative HE at AUB.

Participants did feedback that they would have also liked to hear more about housing and finance. It remains a challenge to include more information on the day to accommodate everyone's needs, in particular, as finance for example is covered as part of the summer residential. An area of opportunity would be to include more specific information about accommodation and a recap on student finance as part of the budgeting workshop.

Unfortunately, insufficient evidence was gathered from the focus group to be able to say with confidence that outcomes two and three were met. However, as participants received information about academic and pastoral support during that day from AUB staff, we would expect that participants did improve their knowledge in this area. Further, participants received information regarding extra-curricular activities and their benefits from the Students' Union and as part of a student panel, and therefore we also hope that this improved participants' knowledge and awareness of the social and extracurricular activities at AUB.

EXIT SURVEY

Participants were sent an exit survey after the last activity of the programme (the Transition to Creative HE day). Four responses were received. Questions were very general and focused on which events participants had attended and if they didn't attend, why not. General feedback was also asked for.

Reasons for not attending subsequent events and activities after the summer residential included unsuitable timings, not planning on pursuing a creative degree and not planning to go to AUB. One person provided further, general feedback and shared:

‘It is an amazing programme that really helped to define my decisions for university and provided a clear taster for university life.’

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the programme met most of its intended aims and outcomes, however there are a few changes that could be made to increase its value and effectiveness:

- Whilst all the participants did meet the key criteria, there are some AUB target groups who were not represented in the cohort. Consideration should be made of how to attract these onto future programme, e.g. care experienced and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman, or Boater community participants.
- There are several issues to consider in relation to retention across the programme. Just under half of the students who attended the summer residential took part in a portfolio review (44%), with further attrition seen at the celebration event (31% attended). Engagement with the transition to creative HE day was up from 6% to 9%, however the percentage engaging with all four interventions should be improved to ensure the programme is having the maximum possible benefit to the participants. Parents/carers and teachers should continue to be included in communications regarding the activities and events with a particular focus on their benefits and encouraging their young person to engage and attend. It should be considered when the best time is to hold the celebration event and the transition to creative HE day to maximise attendance, but this must be balanced with the priorities and availability of other teams such as TheGallery and course academics.
- To further develop the quality of reflections recorded in the reflective journals, the importance of self-reflection with regards to soft skills should be more explicitly explained to participants, both in the practical workshop sessions and through whole group talks delivered by the programme lead. Additional probing questions should be added in the journal as part of the pre and post survey to encourage participants to

think more deeply about the scores they're giving and why, particularly those related to soft skills.

- Whilst the majority of participants generally reported that they enjoyed the activities in the creative workshops, some did share that they found some tasks and mini projects challenging and less enjoyable, e.g. life drawing. To address this, tutors and residential staff should have conversations with participants about what they did and didn't enjoy and, where an activity wasn't enjoyed as much, encourage thought and reflection on the soft skills they have learned or developed, i.e. staying positive when they didn't enjoy an activity or problem solving when they found something difficult.
- Feedback surveys for the 1-1 portfolio support sessions and transition to creative HE day were poorly responded to, therefore consideration should be given to how to increase engagement with these, in particular, the survey for the transition to creative HE day as, due to low attendance, there tends to be a smaller pool of participants who can complete this. Asking participants to complete the survey before they leave on the day would overcome this.
- The feedback wall was piloted to help gather evaluative data and feedback for the exhibition and celebration event. Whilst this was successful to a point, the questions asked should be reviewed to ensure the feedback given isn't too general and is really focused on the exhibition and celebration event. Thought should also be given for how to encourage more participants and their parents/carers and supporters to contribute.
- Thought should be given on how to continually grow the programme and increase the number of participants who apply. Additional methods of communication and advertisement should be explored.
- Monitoring and tracking of applications and offers to AUB should be maintained to fully evaluate effectiveness. This includes participants who enrol on the Foundation at AUB and go on to enrol to AUB at HE level.

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