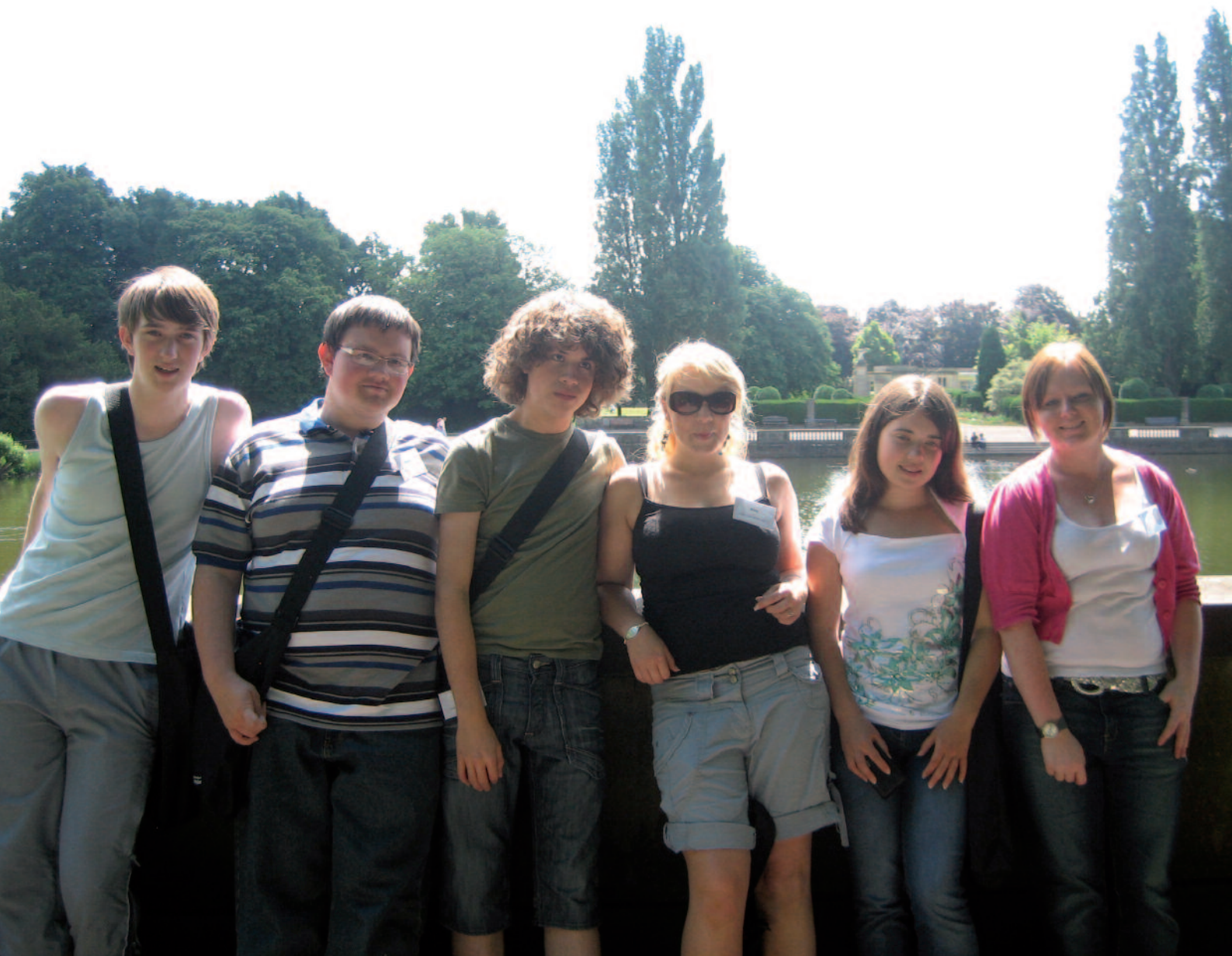




The University of
Nottingham

Impact Report for the Sutton Trust

1998-2010



Front Cover: Students from the English, American and Film Studies Strand,
Sutton Trust Summer School 2009

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Foreword: Thanks from the Vice-Chancellor

I am delighted to introduce this report on the impact of funding from the Sutton Trust in supporting The University of Nottingham's commitment to widening participation. Having taught on a Sutton Trust Summer school myself, I have seen their value and impact at first hand.

The Sutton Trust and The University of Nottingham have worked together successfully since 1998 on the Sutton Trust Summer Schools and, more recently, on the Academic Enrichment Programme. Today these are our single most productive programmes in terms of resulting enrolments of under-represented students. To date, 1,268 young people have benefited from Summer Schools at Nottingham. Of these, we have been delighted subsequently to welcome 180 as undergraduates. We estimate that several hundred more have progressed successfully to other research-led universities.

The Sutton Trust Summer School Programme and Academic Enrichment Programme are a significant part of our University's strategy to increase its intake of high achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds. We also see these programmes as part of our wider contribution to the lives of these young people, to improving their chances of reaching their full potential. I am proud that so many of the University's academic staff contribute generously to Summer Schools – and that many of them return, year after year, to participate. This is testament to both the value of the programmes and the commitment they engender in our staff.

I am very grateful to Sir Peter Lampl and the Sutton Trust for introducing Summer Schools to The University of Nottingham. This was the catalyst for our broader widening participation programme. I would also like to thank the Trust most warmly for its generous financial support over the years. I hope that this report helps to illustrate the impact of the Trust's foresight and generosity.



Professor David Greenaway
Vice-Chancellor, University of Nottingham

Introduction

The Sutton Trust launched the Sutton Trust Summer School Programme at the University of Nottingham in 1998, a year after the Programme started at the University of Oxford. Since then, nearly 1,000 young people from under-represented backgrounds have participated in the Sutton Trust Summer School Programme at The University of Nottingham. More recently, nearly 300 young people have participated in the Academic Enrichment Programme, funded jointly by the Sutton Trust and the Goldman Sachs Foundation. Through academic sessions, personal development sessions and social activities, participants in both Programmes explore the university experience in depth and develop the skills to progress to the country's leading universities. On average 17% of participants have subsequently enrolled at the University of Nottingham and many more have gone on to other Russell Group universities.

These are the bare facts. This report aims to present a fuller picture of the Programmes and of their wider effect on the lives of the young people involved, on the University itself and on the relationship between the University and local schools and colleges.



Professor Greenaway presents the Summer School Team with a Dearing Award in 2008

Programme design

The academic sessions aim to inspire the participants about a subject and reflect material, activities and approaches used in undergraduate study.



A student on the Mathematical Routes strand, Sutton Trust Summer School 2009

Academic sessions

Participants follow one academic strand for the week. Each academic strand includes several broadly related subject areas, for example English is combined with American and Film Studies, and Veterinary Medicine with Biosciences, so that participants experience a range of HE study options for their particular qualifications. The academic sessions aim to inspire the participants about a subject and reflect material, activities and approaches used in undergraduate study. Sessions usually include lectures, seminars, practical or laboratory activities and group work. For example, the Medicine and Health Sciences strand includes a morning on the Children's Ward led by a doctor and nurse (in order to give two perspectives

of the same patients), a morning in the physiotherapy labs at City Hospital performing gait analysis and leg muscle testing, as well as practicals in suturing and in interviewing patients. The Law and Politics strand includes lectures and seminars on topics such as the 'Law of murder', as well as debates and research activities on subjects such as 'Improving voter engagement'. Academic sessions are organised and delivered by academic colleagues in participating Schools and Departments. Some lab sessions are supported by postgraduate students. Summer School Student Ambassadors attend all sessions to manage the group and facilitate group work and discussion.

We have designed the Summer School programmes to present a balanced view of university life and facilitate personal development. A typical day includes:

- Academic sessions 9.30am – 1.00pm
- Non-academic HE-related sessions (for example on careers) in the afternoon
- Personal development activities (for example foreign films and salsa dancing) in the evening.

There are also daily tutor group sessions in which participants reflect on their experiences and work on a group project.

Non-academic sessions

The non-academic activities are carefully selected and scheduled to stimulate and challenge students over the course of the week. The Cultural Evening (language classes, cultural activities and foreign films) promotes the acquisition of new skills and highlights the international opportunities offered by universities and particularly Nottingham. The Students' Union afternoon, led by Student Ambassadors involved in Junior Common Rooms and Student Community Action, builds teamwork and leadership skills and increases awareness of volunteering and other opportunities. Activities such as circus skills, drumming and salsa dancing, some of which are led by Ambassadors, help build confidence to try new activities and work in both small and large groups.

Group projects

Combining the academic and non-academic aspects of the Summer School is the group project. Each tutor group must demonstrate what it has gained from the programme. Groups may do this by delivering a presentation or creating a website, podcast or news report. The task requires participants to divide up tasks and allocate roles. Since participants do not know one another at the beginning of the Summer School, many of them find the group project very challenging. Successful completion is rewarding and increases their confidence.

Post-Summer School support

The Sutton Trust Summer School at The University of Nottingham is followed by e-mentoring, revision resources and a reunion event in spring. The Academic Enrichment Programme also offers these activities and augments them with additional face-to-face activities, made practicable by the Programme's regional focus. Our Summer School graduates automatically receive an additional bursary of £1,000 per year if they enrol at Nottingham. This is on top of any other bursaries, so a typical Summer School student is likely to receive at least £2,000 a year from the University plus the Government grant. Summer School bursaries for all our Summer School graduates at Nottingham amount to £630,000.



Participants during training in e-mentoring, Sutton Trust Summer School 2009

Participants' views



Students on the Medicine and Health Sciences Strand, Sutton Trust Summer School 2009

Widening participation staff routinely seek feedback on various aspects of Summer Schools from participants. This is carried out via informal methods (such as emails and conversations), as well as formal evaluation forms and the reflective diaries each participant is required to keep.

Participants' feedback is consistently high, with words such as 'amazing' and 'awesome' appearing frequently! Many participants comment that academic sessions help to confirm what they would like to pursue as a degree course. They appreciate the broader support provided and recognise the overall increase in their confidence and change in their attitudes. The following statements are a representative selection.

"Keep doing it – it has made me try to work harder so I can finally go to uni."

"I think the best insight to university life was the chance to speak to the Ambassadors, you can't really get as much perspective from reading prospectuses, it kind of brings it to life!"

"I certainly still want to do Geography and I think the session made me want to study it even more and even apply to Nottingham. I love how diverse the subject is..."

"The best thing was meeting other people like me with the same future goals. I never could have imagined meeting people that all shared similar interests and senses of humour..."

"It was a fabulous week. I've learnt so much! The academic sessions were interesting, before the Summer School I didn't even know what computer science and engineering were!"

"The Summer School opened my eyes to all the opportunities."

"I think Nottingham has given me that driving force to want to do better."



Students on the Mathematical Routes strand, Sutton Trust Summer School 2009

Participants look back



“Without having taken part in the Sutton Trust Summer School it is highly doubtful I would have applied to University.”

LILITH DONOVAN – History 2009

After attending the Sutton Trust Summer School in 2004, Lilith enrolled to study History at Nottingham in 2006, graduating in 2009 with a 2:1. Lilith is currently completing her teacher training at the University of Cambridge.

“In the Spring of 2004 I was lucky enough to be successful in my application for the Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Nottingham. I initially applied because I wanted to find out what it would be like to study History at degree level. Having researched the programme and having found out it was completely cost free and meant I would meet students from across the country while attending taster lessons, I jumped at the chance.

Before Summer School began I hoped to find out more about university life and living away from home, as well as about

the academic side of being at university. By the end of Summer School I had experienced a week of History classes, top tips for finances and UCAS forms and lived with 100 other people. To say this helped me to make a decision on whether or not I would go to university is a vast understatement; it effectively ensured that I would. It highlighted to me that History was the subject for me and living away from home with like-minded people was the way to go. Summer School highlighted to me what a brilliant university Nottingham is, both academically and socially.

Having current Student Ambassadors to support me pastorally made me feel at ease and it was easy to ask questions about anything. More than anything, Summer School was fun.

Without having taken part in the Sutton Trust Summer School it is highly doubtful I would have applied to university, and

if I had I am certain I would have lived at home for financial considerations. The experience taught me that university is about a whole experience which allows you to grow into an independent person.

I believe that being accepted onto Summer School gave me the opportunity to be able to attend university, and therefore go on to be where I am today. It was not only a brilliant week to be remembered, but also something that helped shape my future.”

Louise attended the Sutton Trust Summer School in 2006. She is currently in her third year of Veterinary Medicine and Science at The University of Nottingham.

“Having always wanted to be a Vet, university was the natural progression for me after A levels. However, as the first in my family to consider university and the first in my school to apply to Vet School, I felt confused and daunted by the whole prospect.

Consequently, when I heard about the Sutton Trust Summer School which offers a free ‘try before you buy’ experience of university and advice on everything from UCAS to loans, I jumped at the opportunity to attend. I can honestly say that the

experience exceeded all of my expectations; not only did I leave with the knowledge and insight I had hoped to gain, I also made some great friends and had such fun! Even as a generally quiet and shy individual, I really felt that I came out of my shell during the week and left with the confidence to start university for real without any worries!

The Summer School also confirmed that Vet Medicine was the right course for me and that Nottingham was certainly my top choice. Having experienced first-hand living at university and studying my chosen course, I had more drive than ever to achieve those grades and make sure that I succeeded! Through the Summer School, I also gained an impressive addition to my CV and contacts that were of invaluable assistance with my UCAS application.

It is my genuine belief in the programme’s ability to prepare students for higher education and in the first-hand experience that have inspired me to work as a Student Ambassador for the Summer Schools every year since I started university.

I hope that I can help other students to have as great a week as I did and really make the most of this fantastic opportunity that the Sutton Trust offers.

To sum up the Summer School experience, I would simply ask what better way there is to find out everything you could need to know about university than a free, one-week taster of all aspects of university life?”



“The Summer School also confirmed that Vet Medicine was the right course for me and that Nottingham was certainly my top choice.”

LOUISE RICHARDSON – Veterinary Medicine and Science Student

Participants look back



“The Sutton Trust was invaluable to me by confirming that university was the correct direction for me. It helped to set me up for the ‘big wide world.’”

THOMAS WOOD – Biochemistry 2008

Thomas attended the Sutton Trust Summer School in 2004. He enrolled in Biochemistry at Nottingham and graduated with a 1st in 2008. Tom is currently working as a Financial Analyst for Citi Group.

“My initial reason for applying to the Sutton Trust Summer School Programme at Nottingham was that I didn’t really have any insight into what university was like and whether it was the correct route for me to follow. As a result I felt the best way to try and work this out, was to go and experience as close to the real thing as possible. What better way to do this than spending a week there? There was a balance of academic sessions, career/application enhancement and social sessions/time. At the time I was very unsure as to whether I would fit into the social scene at university.

I feel now looking back on the Summer School, that I definitely achieved my aims, and there were no questions left in my mind

once I returned. It had completely confirmed to me that university was the correct and best route for me.

The programme was great fun, both from the academic side – learning new things, carrying out investigations with equipment your school never had – and the social side of meeting people, having fun and doing weird things you had never thought about trying before (circus skills comes to mind!) I guess the thing that has ultimately stayed with me from the programme was the friends I made.

Five years on and despite graduating, I am still in contact with a number of my fellow participants/students and meet up with them on a regular basis. I believe this also helped when starting at Nottingham, as I already knew a couple of people from the program who were starting at the same time, which helped us settle in more quickly.

After having such an enjoyable time at Nottingham and spending a week there, it was easy to pick my first choice university, predominately influenced both by having

a great time and also enjoying the surroundings, but most importantly feeling comfortable there. Whilst studying at Nottingham the Sutton Trust has helped me in several ways, the obvious one being the financial support through grants, which is always welcome at University!

Perhaps more importantly, the program helped me develop more confidence (having lived there before it was nice to know where things were and what to expect) and feel welcome at university, but it has also helped me in other more indirect ways. It made me aware of the Student Ambassador scheme, which allowed me to develop as a person, expand my friendship basis again and also complete the circle and help out on the Summer School, alongside other people who had been previous participants with me.

The Sutton Trust was invaluable to me by confirming that university was the correct direction for me. It helped me feel more comfortable and as a result expand as a person, helping to set me up for the ‘big wide world’, while meeting brilliant people on the way.”

After attending the Sutton Trust Summer School in 2007, Elorm enrolled in Politics at The University of Nottingham. He is now in his second year.

“I attended the Summer School in 2007 and it was a great experience. Back home where I grew up, people (including myself!) were a bit sceptical about attending such things.

In year 12, I had heard a lot about University and I was sure I wanted to go, but I had no clue what to expect. I thought going to a Summer School, just over a year before I planned to enrol as an undergraduate, would give me the valuable experience I

needed. I hoped I would get a clearer picture of what university life would be like. By the end of the week I knew what a university campus looked like, I got a taster of how seminars were held, and got to learn about the social aspect of university.

I thought the programme was excellent. I must say, I loved the fact that I came on the Summer School knowing nobody, but by the end of the week, we all knew each other’s names!

I was on the Law and Politics strand of the Summer School. And at this stage in my life I was very much certain that I was going to read a Law degree. However, learning

how politics was taught at degree level changed my mind very much. By the end of the week I knew I wanted to study politics, and although it sounds a cliché, it is probably one of the best decisions I’ve made in my life.

The Summer School also offered me detailed help on finance and accommodation. Of course this advice is available in many places, but the fact that I got first-hand advice from actual students proved indispensable.

The Summer School experience is an opportunity that anyone should snatch with both hands.”

“I attended the Summer School in 2007 and it was a great experience. Back home where I grew up, people (including myself!) were a bit sceptical about attending such things.”

ELORM HALIGAH – Politics Student



Participants look back



“After my week at Nottingham University, my horizons had been blown wide open.”

STEPHANIE HANNABUS – Nursing 2009 and Medicine Student

Stephanie attended the Sutton Trust Summer School in 2004. She enrolled on the Masters of Nursing at Nottingham in 2005 and graduated in 2009 with a 2:1. Currently a nurse at the Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham, Stephanie will return to the University of Nottingham in autumn 2010 to study Graduate Entry Medicine.

“I applied to attend the Sutton Trust Summer School in order to gain an insight into university life. Being the first in my family to potentially go, and not knowing anyone that had previously been to university, I had no idea what to expect or if it was for me.

Not only did the Summer School provide the insight I was after, it made me determined to overcome doubts I had and apply for university. Attending the Summer School made me realise that gaining a university education – and at one of the top universities – was not only possible, but there was also lots of help and support for me. After my week at Nottingham University, my horizons had been blown wide open.

During the Summer School I was thrown into a group of people from all over the country; daunting at first however the program was so well organised and facilitated by both the managers and the Ambassadors that I had made friends by the end of the first day (two of whom I am still really close to). During the whole week we were all made to feel welcome and wanted at the University – it made me realise that attaining a university education was an option for everyone and that I would fit in; fitting in being one of my biggest worries!

Being the first in my family to even think about university I personally had no one who I could have asked about their first-hand experiences of University; for this reason I personally felt that the Ambassadors played a huge part in the overall success and impact of the week. Being able to talk to current university students throughout the week, in a relaxed setting, meant that we had time to ask as many questions as we wanted, as we thought of them – not something you can get at open days. The Summer School not only made university suddenly appear accessible, but it provided an invaluable source of help, support and

advice. I also want to highlight that the Summer Schools provide an excellent opportunity for current university students.

I worked as an Ambassador on the Summer Schools throughout my years at Nottingham, and have met some of my best friends and formed some amazing memories from doing so. Working as an Ambassador provided an extra dimension to my time at university, again facilitating getting the most out of the university experience, developing new skills and, in turn, increasing my employability.

Attending the Sutton Trust Summer School has undoubtedly had a positive and lasting impact on my life so far, and I am sure, my future. It broke down the psychological, social and financial barriers that I had perceived to be between myself and higher education. Subsequently all the doors and experiences university has to offer have opened up to me. As a result of experiencing things I never thought I would or could do, I now believe that anything in life is possible, you just have to be brave enough to go for it and overcome your initial doubts!”

Impact and success: facts and figures about participants

The comments above attest to the enthusiasm with which young people participate in the programmes funded by the Sutton Trust and to the impact on their attitudes. To what extent do their experiences influence their subsequent choices and behaviour?

UCAS data for the 2007 cohort (data for more recent cohorts are not yet available) indicate that Sutton Trust Summer Schools at the University of Nottingham are meeting their principal aim of encouraging bright students from under-represented backgrounds to progress to leading universities.

- 80 of the 87 attendees of the 2007 Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Nottingham applied to university the following autumn.
- 73 of these 80 students applied to a Russell Group university. They made a total of 226 applications to Russell Group universities.
- The students received 144 offers from a Russell Group university and accepted 60 of these as firm or insurance choices.
- 40 of these students enrolled at a Russell Group university.

A range of additional data, collected annually by staff in the Widening Participation Team at Nottingham, provide quantitative evidence of broader successes, from the point of participants’ starting the Summer School through to their degree outcomes at Nottingham.

80 of the 87 attendees of the 2007 Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Nottingham applied to University the following autumn.

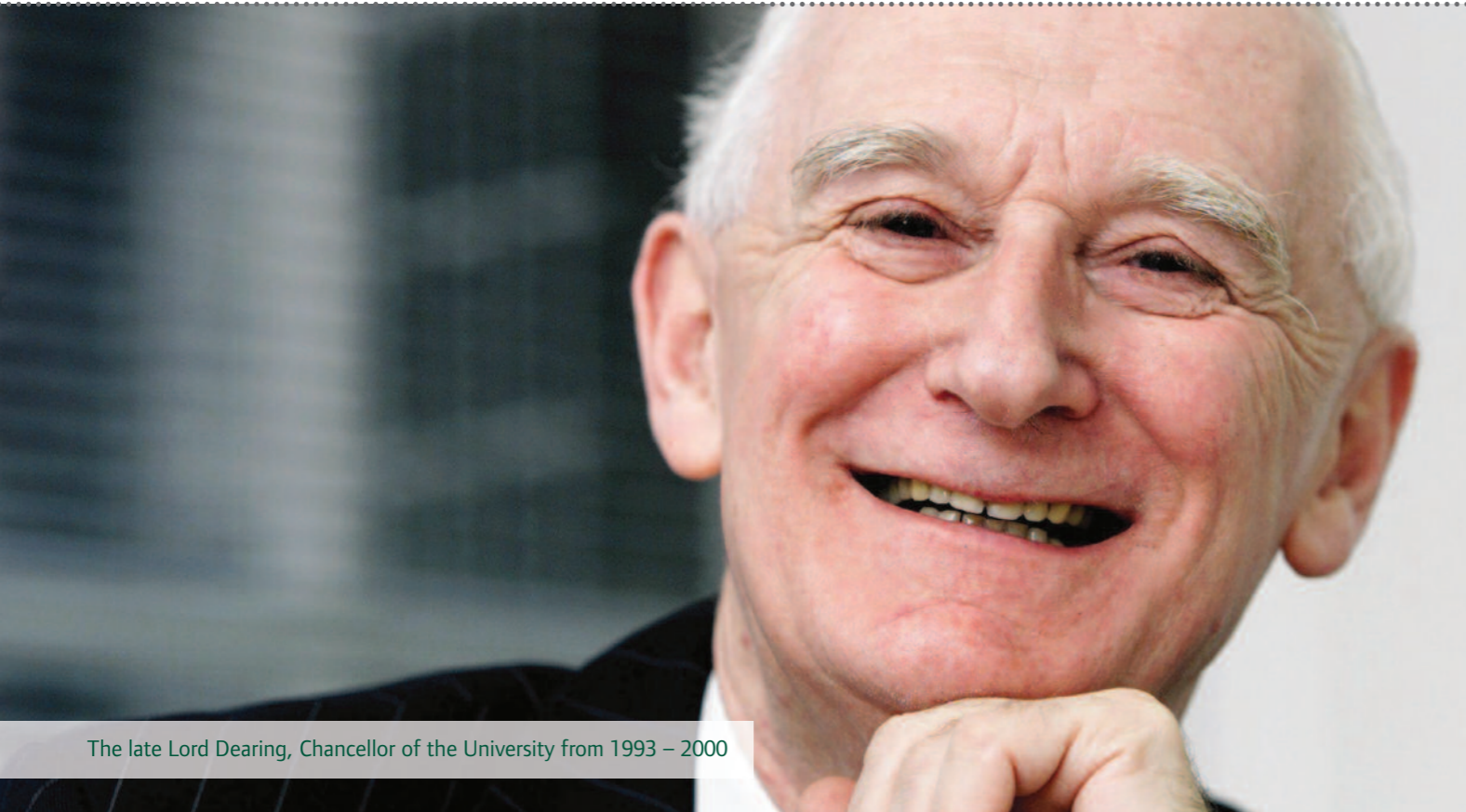
78% of our Summer School participants enrolling at Nottingham achieve 2:1s or firsts, slightly above the University average.

- 100% of Programme participants complete the week-long Summer Schools.
- 80% of the 2007 cohort of participants, 94% of the 2008 cohort of participants and 96% of the 2009 cohort of participants, completed the year-long Academic Enrichment Programme (excellent results for a long-term programme).

- Over the last three years of the Sutton Trust Summer School Programme and two years of the Academic Enrichment Programme, 59% of participants subsequently applied to the University of Nottingham.
- 71% of those applicants received offers from Nottingham and half of offer-holders accepted the offers.
- 17% of our Summer School participants enrol at Nottingham as undergraduates.
- 78% of our Summer School participants enrolling at Nottingham achieve 2:1s or firsts, slightly above the University average.

These offer and enrolment rates for progression to The University of Nottingham are slightly lower than in some previous years, when up to 31% of our Summer School participants enrolled at Nottingham. We attribute this to two factors: first, we have become more accurate in selecting participants who are truly from under-represented backgrounds. UCAS data indicate that the 2009 Sutton Trust Summer School Programme at Nottingham was attended by a very high proportion of students meeting all the personal criteria – the highest across all the Sutton Trust Summer Schools. Secondly, we note that our attendees are applying in increasing numbers for highly competitive courses such as Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. We are delighted that some of them are indeed successful, but accept that not all will be.

Lord Dearing Award: recognising Summer School achievements



The late Lord Dearing, Chancellor of the University from 1993 – 2000

In 2008 the University of Nottingham selected Brandee Percival and other colleagues in the Widening Participation Team for a Dearing Award in recognition of their ongoing achievements in managing Summer Schools.

Since 1999 the Dearing Award Scheme has recognised the outstanding achievements of University of Nottingham staff in enhancing the student learning experience. A Dearing Award is highly valued within the University and acknowledges the world-class input of staff in creating a student learning environment which is, on the one hand, supportive and nurturing, but on the other, is challenging, creative and innovative.

Dr Martin Luck (Biosciences) wrote the following recommendation for a Dearing Award:

“The nomination is to recognise the Widening Participation Team’s outstanding achievement in running the Widening Participation and Academic Enrichment events sponsored by Sutton Trust and Goldman Sachs. These events are remarkable for their ability to enthuse and inspire potential university applicants. Over several years, the Team has consistently found a way of presenting university life so that it appears accessible, fun and achievable by all irrespective of financial, family, cultural or educational background.

The colleagues nominated for the award have been involved in running or organising taster sessions for the events, based in our Schools. Several of us have also had the privilege of attending the Celebration Dinners held at the end of each event. Our experience tells us that the Widening Participation Team create an outstandingly friendly and inclusive atmosphere in which participants feel secure, confident and individually valued. As a result, the

participants are always highly motivated, responsive and exciting to work with. We also understand that there is an impressive success rate in terms of overall university applications and applications to Nottingham, and that about a quarter of participants eventually take up places at Nottingham.

We feel that this remarkable achievement reflects the exceptional personal enthusiasm and commitment of the members of the Widening Participation Team. Their work therefore deserves recognition by the University in the form of a Lord Dearing Award.”

This nomination was supplemented by references from academic members of staff within the School of Bioscience and the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science. In being selected for a Lord Dearing Award, the Widening Participation Team became one of the few non-academic winners since the Award’s inception.

Views of University of Nottingham staff

Over 50 academic staff may be involved in each Sutton Trust Summer School. They give generously of their time and are committed to the aims of the programme.

Many of them contribute on an annual basis. Evaluation forms completed by academic contributors indicate that almost all of them judge the reception of their sessions to be excellent or good, and many are impressed by the academic calibre of participants. They are also very satisfied with the organisation of the Summer Schools.

“This has been a pleasure – as always – and I appreciate the efforts of the Widening Participation team. The students I taught were bright and articulate and I would love to teach them again.”

“Just to pass on that I thought the group I saw this morning were really good – very motivated, keen and engaged with the process really well. I thoroughly enjoyed the session.”

“I was surprised by how much I enjoyed the session myself.”

“All of our contributing academic staff had a great time and said that the students were fantastic. Apart from anything else, this sort of positive experience makes it easier for me to get people to do it again next year!”

“The students came up with views and suggestions that final year students would not be able to match in incisiveness and cogency.”

“The Student Ambassadors were brilliant and helped to make it a really lovely morning for all!”

“I very much enjoyed my session yesterday for the Sutton Trust. They were an extremely bright and responsive group who I think got something out of the session. It’s clearly a very worthwhile project and I’ll be happy to help out again.”

“Just to let you know that the group of students I had in my session this morning were perhaps the best group of students I’ve ever had. Never before have I had so much enthusiasm and interest in a class.”



Participants taking a break from a group project, Academic Enrichment Programme 2007

Staff case studies



Professor Peter Cartwright:
School of Law

“My experience of the Summer School programme has been entirely positive. I have delivered a session entitled ‘The Law of Murder’ to a number of Summer Schools. My aim was to find a topic to which prospective law students could easily relate, and which raised difficult questions of interpretation and policy. The participants would then get a pretty clear picture of the kinds of issues with which law students would be expected to engage.”

I have been hugely impressed with the enthusiasm and sharpness of many of the participants at the Summer School. One of the great joys has been to see a sea of hands being raised in response to a question and being unable to finish the topic because the discussion has been so full and rigorous. The students typically appear more engaged than our undergraduates!

I wanted my session to inspire prospective law students to become law students. That was my principal objective. I hoped that in, so doing, some of them would apply to Nottingham. If the students were inspired, but decided to study elsewhere (perhaps because it was closer to – or even further away from – home) then I would still have regarded the experience as a success. However, it is particularly pleasing when participants have chosen to come to Nottingham.

My impression is that the Summer School helps to demystify both universities and the study of law. For those who know few people who have studied at university, it is easy for prejudices to emerge and for potential applicants to be discouraged.

I know this from my own experience. The Summer School (I hope) has led a large number of students to realise that they would be very welcome, and very comfortable, in a law school like that at Nottingham.

It is difficult to quantify the wider impact of the Summer School on the School of Law. To the extent that the Summer School has widened participation, this is of benefit to any university which selects a large proportion of students from higher socio-economic groups. Just as recruiting students from a wide range of countries enriches the experience of university for all, so does the recruitment of students from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Initiatives which encourage local students to visit the University have benefits for community relations, but because of the benefit for students of living away from home when studying, it could be argued that those initiatives which bring together students from different parts of the UK are particularly valuable.”



Dr June McCombie:
School of Chemistry

“For the past three years I have participated in the Summer School programme as organiser of and practitioner on two hands-on sessions run in the School of Chemistry (SoC) under the Physical Sciences strand of the Academic Enrichment Programme.”

These sessions have involved (primarily) year 12 students in hands-on experience in our undergraduate teaching laboratories. In broad terms, these laboratory sessions have covered a spectroscopy workshop and a preparative organic chemistry session. The students work in pairs and are supervised by both academic staff and postgraduate students from the SoC. This is in addition to the [Summer School Student] Ambassadors and widening participation staff that are present.

From an academic standpoint within the SoC the objectives are two-fold.

Firstly it is a core objective of the School to encourage all students to retain their enthusiasm for physical sciences by giving access to laboratory facilities and good supervision in hands-on practicals of a type not always found in schools and colleges. Over recent years, our experience with the undergraduate cohort has led us to believe that many schools and colleges lack the necessary funding and staffing levels to enable them to provide a good laboratory experience for students – an experience where the students carry out the experiments and gain both enthusiasm and confidence from doing so.

Whilst our observations are necessarily based on our incoming undergraduate students, the impact of the lack of laboratory facilities on all students leaving secondary education must be to dampen their interest in the physical sciences.

Secondly we wish to smooth the school to university transition for students leaving the schools and colleges who do opt for the university path. Familiarity with the university environment, confidence in laboratory skills, successful completion of activities which form part of the first year undergraduate laboratory class – all these contribute to increased confidence among the Summer School students.

Generally we seem to achieve both of these objectives. Certainly the Summer School students appear to be enthused and interested during the practical sessions that are held. Each session is finished with a summing up to ensure that the learning outcomes have been underlined and in general the students seem well able to grasp these. Anecdotal evidence of the success comes when meeting these students later on UCAS or Open Day visits. Generally they appear to be at ease in interviews and determined to study the physical sciences! Whilst recruitment is definitely NOT an objective from the viewpoint of the SoC it is heartening to see that a number of students do include Nottingham within their list of choices.

There is also an impact of the Summer Schools on the SoC. We are continually reviewing our courses in order to adapt to the changing curriculum at KS4 (and the impact of changes at KS3). In order to fully evaluate the impact of these changes, a close contact with the student body in schools and colleges is desirable. We find that involvement in Summer Schools (in conjunction with other forums such a teacher network group, friends in schools group, teacher fellow input etc.) enables us to have fairly swift feedback on how these changes will affect the skill set and knowledge base of our students-to-be.

One further impact of note is in the renewed enthusiasm that our research students find in working with Summer School students, to the extent that a few have made a decision to consider teaching after the period of their PhD – and certainly a larger number, whilst still engaging on an industrial or academic career path, maintain an interest in outreach activities and find the time to devote to this in subsequent years.”

The Sutton Trust: a catalyst for change



Participants of the 1998 Sutton Trust Summer School with contributing staff and Student Ambassadors.

The first Sutton Trust Summer School at the University of Nottingham was held in 1998. While the University has a long history of facilitating access to higher education for adults, the 1998 Summer School was the first centrally organised widening participation initiative targeting young people.

The official group photograph of that first Summer School is testament to the enthusiasm and support it generated: former Vice-Chancellor Sir Colin Campbell is in the front row and, among the 118 people present, we estimate there to be 30 members of staff. Photographs of subsequent Summer Schools indicate that this enthusiasm and support have been retained over the years.

Sutton Trust Summer Schools and Sir Peter Lampl's personal influence – ahead of Government policy in this area – were the catalyst for the University of Nottingham's involvement in widening participation.

Thanks to Sir Peter's foresight, widening participation became a regular part of the University of Nottingham's activities, with academic staff eager to contribute as part of their normal roles.

The first widening participation appointment followed soon afterwards, with Dr Penelope Griffin joining the University in February 2000. Since then, the Widening Participation Team has grown in terms of staffing, budget and output: today it comprises 13 people and provides over 22,000 opportunities annually for young people and mature learners to learn more about higher education and prepare themselves for progression. Many of the activities we provide today, particularly our large programme of masterclasses, build on the foundations laid by the Sutton Trust Summer Schools.

Members of the Widening Participation Team actively pursue opportunities to contribute at a local, regional and national level. In 2003-2004 Dr Penelope Griffin was professional consultant to the Schwartz

Review of Admissions to Higher Education and, over the last few years, the University has been the lead partner of the East Midlands Excellence Hub, which coordinates extra-curricular activities for gifted young people, and Advantage Nottinghamshire, a local scheme to help sixth-form students to prepare for higher education. The Team has been honoured with recognition for some of its work – for example, through the Dearing Award. The University received recognition in 2006 for the Certificate in Health Science, a joint initiative with the University of Lincoln to facilitate entry to human and veterinary medicine and other health-related courses, through the Times Higher Widening Participation Award.

The Widening Participation Team at The University of Nottingham is proud to provide national coordination for the Sutton Trust Summer Schools and the Academic Enrichment Programme since autumn 2008. We are honoured to be associated with the Sutton Trust's work and we look forward to continuing to contribute.

Making progress: but there is more to do

A decade ago, the University of Nottingham recruited 10% of its undergraduates from the East Midlands region. By September 2008, that had grown to 26%.

The proportion of students progressing from local schools and colleges has doubled – and of the students progressing from these schools, the proportion from socio-economically deprived postcodes is 51%, more than twice that of the whole intake. The University is delighted that the work prompted by the Sutton Trust Summer Schools is having such a significant impact on our local intake.

Looking at our national intake, there has also been progress. The proportion of low-income students has risen over five percentage points since 2004-5. In recent years, our performance against all three Hefce widening participation indicators

has improved significantly, while the Russell Group average has seen little change. These improvements in the diversity of our intake have been accompanied by an ongoing rise in entry standards.

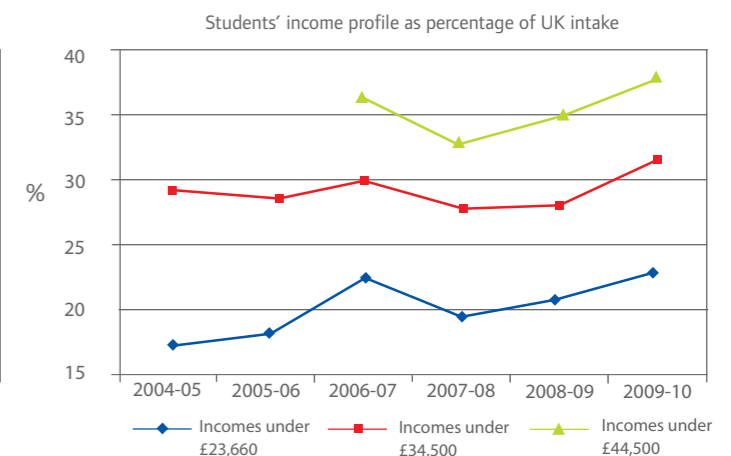
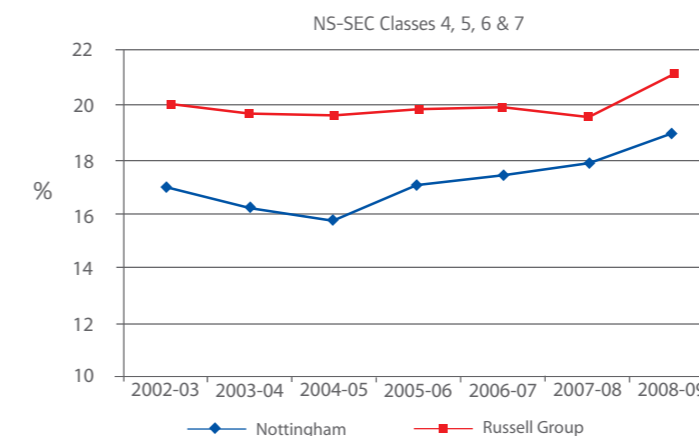
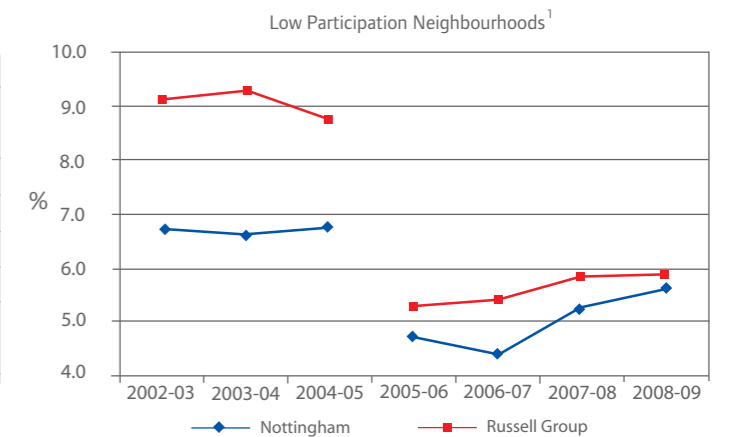
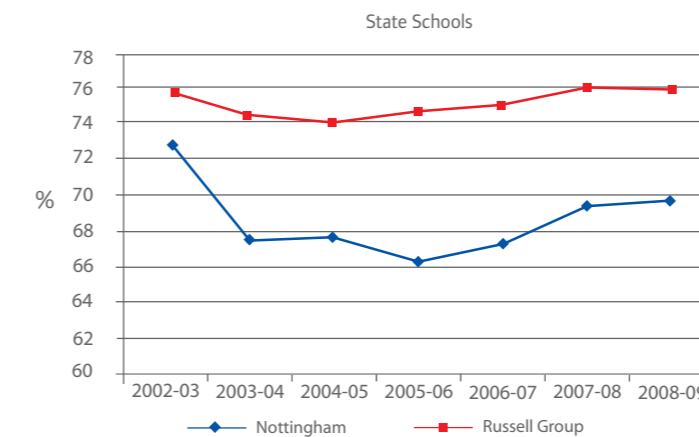
The University welcomes this progress – but is keenly aware that there is much more to do. We have set ourselves the target of raising the proportion of low-income students entering the University to 25% by the 2012 intake. In order to reach this target, we have made a number of changes. These include:

- providing greater clarity about our widening participation admissions policy, which allows for special consideration of widening participation students and in some cases slightly lower offers
- improving the mechanisms to flag up widening participation students in the application process

- setting in place a framework and resources to support outreach work initiated by academic Schools and Departments

Since attainment appears to be a major factor in preventing Summer School participants from progressing to Nottingham and other Russell Group universities, we are considering building on our existing programmes to help raise attainment.

We are currently piloting new measures to support students in year 12 who have been accepted on Summer School programmes with their AS examinations. We are also likely to develop additional measures to support local widening participation students in year 12 and 13, for example additional advice on University applications and alternative activities for 'near miss' Summer School applicants. We received over 1000 applications for 200 places and had to turn down many deserving applicants.



¹ The definition of Low Participation Neighbourhoods changed in 2005

Appendix: Management of the Summer School Programmes at the University of Nottingham



Participants of the Academic Enrichment Programme (2007 Cohort) at the Programme 'Graduation Event', Spring 2008

Overall approach

Our Summer Schools aim to enthuse and inspire young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds about the university experience and build their capacity to take full advantage of the opportunities on offer. To be successful, Summer Schools must ensure high quality of:

- programme design
- information and advice for staff
- selection and training of Summer School Ambassadors
- pastoral support
- pre-entry arrangements
- feedback and evaluation.

The Widening Participation Team is responsible for ensuring high quality in all these areas.

Information and advice for staff

The Summer School Manager negotiates with Schools and Departments to agree their broader contribution and the interdisciplinary 'alliance' for each of the five (for the Sutton Trust Summer School, six) academic strands. The Manager provides a detailed written explanation of what colleagues will be required to do by what dates and the support that will be available both in the lead-up to the Summer School and during the School itself. Contributors are made aware of the aims of the Summer School and the academic calibre of participants.

The Summer School Manager then advises academic colleagues on the content and format of individual sessions and on the mix of sessions across the week. This involves subject-specific briefing meetings and training sessions throughout the year for contributors. Up to 50 academic staff may be involved in each Summer School. Contributors are encouraged to select topics that they personally enjoy, as their enthusiasm is essential to success, and to include interactive activities.

Providing pastoral support and encouraging personal development

The Summer School programme is challenging and participants require considerable support to ensure they contribute and benefit. We inform the participants at the start that they would not be on the Summer School if we did not believe they could successfully attend a research-led university. This ethos feeds through the whole programme. Activities within the programme build confidence through providing opportunities to achieve in a range of contexts, while information and guidance help participants to understand the practical steps required to apply this confidence to academic progression. The programme is complemented by three arms of pastoral support.

Tutor groups

Upon arrival, participants are allocated to a tutor group in which they do not know anyone else. This requires them to form new relationships, in the same way they would do when going to university. Though this is challenging at the beginning, students frequently mention this experience as being of great benefit and reassuring for progression to higher education. Each tutor group is led by three Summer School Ambassadors and meets daily. Tutor groups provide the opportunity for participants to raise concerns or discuss how things are going so far. The Ambassadors encourage discussion and reflection.

Summer School Staff and Ambassadors

During the Summer School, Widening Participation Team staff and Summer School Ambassadors are on hand at all times to provide support and resolve student issues and concerns. This can be as simple as taking people to the health centre or as complicated as reassuring parents from diverse backgrounds that their child is safe and will benefit from the programme. This 24-hour supervision and support allows for problems to be identified and addressed quickly. It also demonstrates the University's interest in the young people.

Broader university engagement

Academic sessions are delivered by full-time academic colleagues; having an expert in the field leading a Summer School session is both inspiring academically and shows the participants that they are worthwhile and have potential. Senior management attendance at the end-of-school celebration dinner underlines the University's interest in participants, while the provision of an additional £1,000 annual bursary to participants who subsequently study at Nottingham is proof of our ongoing commitment.

Pre-entry arrangements

Pre-entry support helps participants to feel secure, motivated and able to contribute. Significant advice and guidance is offered to applicants and their teachers to ensure they apply for the best strand for them. This is achieved through a website with application advice, a calendar of events, reports by previous participants and a designated email address and telephone number for participants and their families. Please see:

www.nottingham.ac.uk/suttontrust
www.nottingham.ac.uk/aep

The fact that there are now over 1,000 applications each year for 200 places – for the 2009 and 2010 Programmes – attests to their popularity.

Widening participation staff select participants, balancing academic requirements with widening participation eligibility, and taking into account the mix of the group. Applicants are informed of decisions within two weeks of the application deadline and are thereafter contacted by post at least once a month to build and maintain a relationship. Successful applicants are sent a pack of information including a Participants' Guide with answers to the most common questions and concerns. They are also sent an 'Ambassador leaflet' with words of encouragement and wisdom from the Ambassadors. We obtain details about any special requirements relating to health, disability, diet, religious practice or other matters and make appropriate arrangements in advance. In the run-up to the Summer School, participants are sent a checklist outlining what they should bring and finally they are all telephoned in the week before the Summer School so their questions can be answered and we can tell them how much we are looking forward to meeting them.

Selection and training of Summer School Ambassadors

Selecting the right Summer School Ambassadors is crucial to the success of a Summer School. In addition to seeking a gender balance and students from a range of degree courses, we look for well-rounded students with a variety of experiences (volunteering, study abroad, gap years), who are from similar backgrounds to the participants and who display commitment. We also look for a range of personalities so that participants will be able to relate to at least one Ambassador.

The application process involves a written application, a group 'interview' and a formal individual interview. We treat the process as a proper job to encourage a professional approach by Ambassadors. One day of formal training in advance is complemented by a handbook for ongoing reference. Further training is provided directly before the Summer School: Ambassadors arrive at the venue one day before the participants. This also allows them to assist widening participation staff with preparations and to gel as a team. Selection and training processes help to produce a diverse team (most of whom contradict participants' stereotypes of university students) who are friendly and approachable, and who enjoy being together as well as with the participants. This helps participants to see that they will 'fit in' to university and Nottingham. Ambassadors actively take part in all sessions and are encouraged to share their experiences of university and lead informal activities (such as table tennis and cards) in free periods.



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