Social Engagement by London’s Higher Education Institutions
Contents

Executive Summary 3
Introduction 5
Higher Education in London 6
Baseline Study of Social Engagement Activities and Perceptions 7
Conclusions and Recommendations 10
Examples of Social Engagement by London’s HEIs 11

Technical reports and other resources can be downloaded from www.londonhigher.ac.uk/silh.html.

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Executive Summary

This London Higher project provides an initial baseline study of social engagement by London's higher education (HE) sector. Quantitative surveys and qualitative group discussions were carried out to assess awareness and perceptions of social engagement by higher education institutions (HEIs) in London.

KEY FACTS ON LONDON'S UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

- Over 40 HEIs provide a unique concentration and diversity of institutions generating knowledge transfer and innovation for London
- Academic resources closely allied with important employment sectors especially science, healthcare, the creative industries and business
- 41% of "home" students are from BAME groups cf. 12% in the rest of the UK
- 100,000 part-time students make up 35% of London's student population
- Collectively generate £8 billion p.a. in goods and services
- Contribute 4% of London's GDP
- Employ 94,000 people (57,000 non-academic)
- Produce 56,000 skilled graduates annually with 80% staying in London or the South East
- Attract over 90,000 international students who contribute £1.5 billion to the UK economy

Quantitative online survey

An online survey conducted in October 2008 found:

1. Active but uneven evidence of engagement in a wide range of activities: 10% of London's population were estimated to utilise services provided by a university or HE college and use was dominated by young, childless, working adults from higher socioeconomic groups (ABC1). Knowledge of facilities or services was largely by "word of mouth".

2. More than 1 in 2 of respondents viewed the role of HEIs as:
   - producers of knowledge through research
   - centres of lifelong learning (biased towards social groups ABC1 and older people over 60)
   - providers of training for employment

How do universities benefit society?

PDF Downloadable at www.londonhigher.ac.uk/silh
3. More than 1 in 7 of respondents viewed the benefits of HEIs as:
   - sources of information (e.g. libraries)
   - preparing young people for work
   - helping equal opportunities (e.g. courses for disabled students)
   - supplying facilities (e.g. sports grounds, museums, performance venues)
   - contributing to local jobs
   - enabling different ethnic groups to interact

Online survey conducted by YouGov plc in October 2008 with a sample size of 1,576 Londoners.

Qualitative group discussions
Conclusions from focus group interviews carried out in March 2009 were:
1. Greatest benefits of higher education perceived to be for students, employers and business professionals
2. Three types of HEIs were differentiated:
   - research focused (international with local impact)
   - course focused (diverse student body with positive spin-offs for local community)
   - locally-focused (rooted in local community making HE accessible to all)
3. The London Difference:
   - “outer” London: HEIs are locally- and community-focused, accessible, multi-ethnic universities with a visible presence that benefits the area, e.g. by part-time courses and better amenities
   - “inner” London: research-focused institutions that are part of international academic networks but also contributing to London’s artistic and cultural scene

4. Diverse views on the short- and long-term benefits of universities and HE colleges:
   - produce a more skilled workforce
   - enhance London’s reputation
   - raise aspirations of Londoners
   - help develop a multicultural society

Qualitative discussion groups were conducted by Ipsos MORI in March 2009 with 65 members of the public in 10 sets of interviews.

Conclusions
London’s universities and HE colleges are largely seen as autonomous bodies. There is little awareness of the scale of public funding provided to the HE sector or that many of the services and facilities used by local communities are directly or indirectly provided by HEIs.

“Universities as institutions offering more than education” is a view held by few people in London.

Widening opportunities
There is considerable potential to increase awareness of the contributions universities and HE colleges are making to communities across London, with the added aim of promoting London’s HE sector as open and flexible.

Communication strategies need to increase awareness and provide better information at local and pan-London levels. For example, HEIs could advertise other services during events such as public lectures and exhibitions.

This report recommends tailored communications should be developed for:
- Families, the unemployed and C2DE social groups – currently the least likely to use HE services but would like to find out more;
- Older people and disabled people – interested in HE and opportunities could be promoted by HEIs in partnership with local authorities;
- Parents of ethnic minority school children – demographic projections indicate there will be large increases in London’s BAME population by 2026*.

“In societies where education is of a high standard the whole society benefits from that standard”

“The physical presence of a university could raise aspirations in the area”

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London has the most diverse group of universities and higher education (HE) colleges in the United Kingdom with over 40 publicly funded higher education institutions (HEIs). This concentration of academic resources, knowledge transfer and innovation is closely allied with important employment sectors in London especially in science, healthcare, the creative industries and business.

**Introduction**

London is different from the rest of the UK: the capital is a highly diverse city in social, ethnic and cultural terms. Because of the large choice of higher education opportunities in London, it is easier to match tertiary learning with different lifestyles.

This is reflected in the large number of part-time students comprising 35% of 312,000 UK students in London. Also, 41% of UK students in London are from a Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic (BAME) group, while only 12% of HE students in the rest of the UK are from a BAME group.

While the core mission of universities and HE colleges is the provision of high quality teaching, learning, research and knowledge transfer, there has been a long standing ‘extramural’, or community-based, tradition in higher education especially on political, cultural, economic and social issues.

In recent years HEIs have realised there is a need to define a social agenda and to map how relevant activities operate across different universities and HE colleges. However, there is a broader question which is why should HEIs in London be involved in social engagement?

Several reasons can be put forward. First, because the HE sector is funded to do this; public funding is provided to universities and HE colleges through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for activities outside of teaching and research (“third stream”). During 2009/10, HEFCE will allocate £1.500 million to London's HEIs, of which £12 million is for widening participation and £35 million to support knowledge exchange for economic and social benefits through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF).

Second, HEIs are repositories of academic knowledge and applied research, again largely publicly funded, which can make important contributions in areas such as science, healthcare, arts and design, social services, education, sustainability, urban regeneration and retraining to improve employment prospects.

Third, universities and HE colleges act as “neutral” facilitators where academic expertise can be combined with regional and local partners to produce innovative strategies, contributing to many flagship government policies designed to enhance social cohesion and economic competitiveness.

Fourth, universities and HE colleges in London will help the capital city face numerous economic and social challenges by drawing on their collective expertise across a diverse range of disciplines in the sciences and humanities.

Articulating and delivering social engagement in London is more complex than in other UK regions due to the large number of HEIs and their different local, national and international priorities in terms of institutional mission, strategic objectives and experiences.

The complex social and political environment in London, as a capital city, also shapes a more diffuse set of relationships and partnerships between HEIs, regional development agencies, local authorities, public bodies and voluntary organisations.

This report provides a small input to the formulation of a social agenda for London’s HE sector by bringing together key findings and recommendations from a baseline study of social engagement by London’s universities and HE colleges.
Higher Education in London

London’s universities and higher education (HE) colleges provide a wealth of research, teaching and knowledge transfer to London’s economy and society.

Collectively, higher education in London:
• Generates c. £11 billion each year in goods and services, of which £8 billion is in the London region, and £1 billion in export earnings;
• Contributes c. 1 per cent of UK GDP and 4 per cent of London’s GDP;
• Provides a first class education for 400,000 students;
• Employs 37,000 academic and 57,000 non-academic staff;
• Wins 25 per cent of all UK research funding;
• Attracts over 90,000 international students from more than 200 countries who contribute £1.5 billion to the UK economy;
• Produces over 56,000 skilled graduates annually with 80% staying in London or the South East for employment.

Social engagement by higher education in London:
• Employs 1,300 staff specifically for business and community partnerships;
• Involves local community programmes and partnerships;
• Offers extramural courses for the public and deliver 700,000 learner days in continuing professional education and continuing education courses;
• Organises public events, such as free exhibitions at galleries and museums and public lectures, attended by nearly three million people;
• Arranges school-based activities with 55,000 to 75,000 London pupils each year, such as campus visits and two week summer schools;
• Provides help to small business start-ups through entrepreneurship training, provision of legal advice and the use of on-campus “incubator” facilities.
Baseline Study of Social Engagement Activities and Perceptions

The study found that London’s universities and HE colleges carry out work with social and community benefits which is largely unrecognised by the general public. There was recognition of certain aspects of social engagement by London’s HEIs but little awareness of the complete range of activities.

Project outline
The project comprised three phases of research:
• “mapping” HE-community interactions in London;
• online survey conducted by YouGov;
• discussion groups managed by Ipsos MORI.

The main findings are presented here but technical reports on each of the three research phases, along with additional information and resources, can be downloaded from www.londonhigher.ac.uk/silh.html.

Mapping HE – community interactions
Informal semi-structured interviews were carried out by London Higher at 14 HEIs representing a range of institutions in terms of strategic mission, size and geographical location. The aim was to obtain an overview of social or community outreach activities.

From 53 interviews conducted between March and August 2008, a third of 46 HEI-community interactions were classified as involving children and young people, especially through schools outreach activities, followed by provision of facilities for physical and mental wellbeing (arts venues, sports, libraries), community cohesion (e.g. health clinics, legal advice, work with faith leaders), knowledge transfer and sustainability issues. There were few specific activities involving older people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people</td>
<td>inward/outward visits with schools and colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ambassadors/mentoring/researchers in residence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workshops/masterclasses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>out of hours clubs/club work clubs/Saturday clubs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subject or course ‘taster sessions’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exhibitions/lectures/tournaments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>summer schools</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sports outreach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>application support events</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specialised support/medicine, healthcare</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specialised support/drama, music</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work experience projects</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specific learning disabilities (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hard to reach groups (BAME, no tradition of HE, young offenders)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge transfer
not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Student modules/courses on entrepreneurship
CPD/short courses/vocational updates
consultancy and advisory services for local businesses
facilities for small business start-ups

Elderly/retired groups

student placements with companies

student placements with companies

student modules/courses on entrepreneurship
CPD/short courses/vocational updates
consultancy and advisory services for local businesses
facilities for small business start-ups

Arts and cultural events

theatre/music/film clubs

targeted lifelong learning courses

partnerships with local galleries/theatres/museums

recitals/performances/exhibitions in local venues

Library & information sources

use of HE facilities for performances/exhibitions

access by public, 6th form and/or FE students

access by local businesses

Library loans available to general public

Sports facilities for public

outdoor sports grounds

indoor gyms

Sports injury clinics

Community cohesion

local events sponsored by HEI

student-led community radio stations

work with faith groups

work with minority groups

urban regeneration (e.g. courses, outreach, projects)

health clinic drop-in centre/community medicine

legal advice centres/madhouses

Student/Staff volunteering

student volunteering (student union-led or individual)

staff volunteering

Sustainability and green issues

green community projects and campaigns

green building/maintenance plans (e.g. carbon footprint reduction)

stocking of sustainable materials

gardening clubs

Community/urban design

PDF Downloadable at www.londonhigher.ac.uk/silh
Quantitative online survey
YouGov plc ran an online opinion poll in October 2008 with a sample of 1,576 respondents in London weighted by factors such as age, gender, socioeconomic class and ethnicity. Major findings were:
1. Active but uneven evidence of engagement in a wide range of activities: 10% of London's population were estimated to utilise services provided by a university or HE college and use was dominated by young, childless, working adults from higher socioeconomic groups (ABC1). Knowledge of facilities or services was largely by "word of mouth".

2. More than 1 in 2 of respondents viewed the role of HEIs as:
   • producers of knowledge through research
   • centres of lifelong learning (biased towards social groups ABC1 and older people over 60)
   • providers of training for employment

3. More than 1 in 7 of respondents viewed the benefits of HEIs as:
   • sources of information (e.g. libraries)
   • preparing young people for work
   • helping equal opportunities (e.g. courses for disabled students)
   • supplying facilities (e.g. sports grounds, museums, performance venues)
   • contributing to local jobs
   • enabling different ethnic groups to interact

Qualitative discussion groups
Ten sets of in-depth interviews were conducted in March 2009 with 65 members of the public by Ipsos MORI. Groups were selected by factors such as age, HE experience and socioeconomic class. Overall conclusions were:
1. Greatest benefits of higher education perceived to be for students, employers and business professionals

2. Three types of HEIs were differentiated:
   • research focused (international with local impact)
   • course focused (diverse student body with positive spin-offs for local community)
   • locally-focused (rooted in local community making HE accessible to all)

3. The London Difference:
   • "outer" London: HEIs are locally- and community-focused, accessible, multi-ethnic universities with a visible presence that benefits the area, e.g. by part-time courses and better amenities
   • "inner" London: research-focused institutions that are part of international academic networks but also contributing to London's artistic and cultural scene

4. Diverse views on the short- and long-term benefits of universities and HE colleges:
   • produce a more skilled workforce
   • enhance London's reputation
   • raise aspirations of Londoners
   • help develop a multicultural society

Key demographic drivers for the use of higher education services and facilities
Four statistically significant factors were found to affect the use of the university facilities and services. In this diagram, the number against each factor shows its relative importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Use of University Facilities or Services</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC1 Social class 0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Older people, families and those not in full time employment and from social classes C2DE are statistically less likely to use a university service. Age is the strongest determinant of usage.

Summary of focus group views on the purposes of HE institutions
Across all audiences, little consensus about what Universities are supposed to do (whether London's Universities, or any Universities)

"They're just businesses"
A significant minority in each group argue Universities are purely run as businesses and should have no social remit

"They should provide services to local community"
A minority opinion

"They enrich society"
Some feel that Universities do help instigate social change, largely through education - but also believed that there is no way of measuring this impact

"Their role is to educate people"
For the vast majority, education was seen to be the main focus of Universities and in most groups, there was also an argument that Universities should have no social role beyond this

Without a consensus on what the social contribution of a University should be, all participants found it hard to agree on how to judge the effectiveness of that social contribution.
Conclusions and Recommendations

London's universities and HE colleges are largely seen as autonomous bodies. There is currently little awareness of the scale of public funding provided to the HE sector or that many of the services and facilities used by local communities are directly or indirectly provided by HEIs.

London's HEIs need to consider a collective approach on explaining social engagement activities and emphasise they are "porous" institutions.

Communication strategies need to increase awareness and provide better information at local and pan-London levels. For example, HE institutions could advertise other services during events such as public lectures and exhibitions.

Universities and HE colleges should look at ways to make access easier, particularly for groups such as older people, families and low income households.

Tailored communications are required for:
- Families, the unemployed and C2DE social groups - currently the least likely to use HE services but would like to find out more;
- Older people and disabled people - interested in HE and institutions could work in partnership with local authorities to promote opportunities;
- Parents of ethnic minority school children - demographic projections indicate there will be large increases in London's BAME population by 2026*.

Parallel coordinated studies are required to devise methods for measurement and evaluation of the impacts of HE-social engagement activities in London.

Implications for London's Universities and HE Colleges

London's HEIs need to consider coordination and management of their third stream activities including:
1. improved internal communication to raise awareness among staff and students of the range of social and community engagement activities in which they can be involved;
2. provision of dedicated internet web pages, which can also be viewed by the public, with centralised information relevant to local engagement including research projects and teaching modules;
3. improved collaboration with the further education (FE) sector to improve progression from FE to HE, as even a relatively modest increase in information, advice and guidance services could provide significant benefits.

Examples of Social Engagement by London’s HEIs

London's universities and HE colleges carry out a wide range of activities aimed to benefit the public. Some of these are highlighted below as general case studies.

School and FE college liaison, and widening participation

Activities include after hours and homework clubs, provision for gifted and talented pupils, campus visits, taster days, student ambassador schemes, “shadowing” HE students, workshops supporting progression to HE and summer schools on subjects such as science, medicine, maths, computing, sports, dance, art, design and media or classical languages.

A small number of London HEIs have started work placement schemes. For example pupils from schools in east London can carry out tailored science projects. Benefits for the pupils include practical research experience, increased confidence and improved GCSE grades.

In specialist subjects such as medicine or creative arts and design, projects are underway to increase numbers of students from working class and BAME groups.

New teaching materials have been developed to help students with specific learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia.

For more information on how London’s HEIs are working in partnership with secondary schools go to www.londonhigher.ac.uk/shell.html

Business services

London’s HEIs have enormous resources in innovation and knowledge transfer for commercial, public and third sector organisations.

The range of activities include not just collaborative research but also consultancy and legal advice services, student placements and internships in local firms, entrepreneurship training, local inventors clubs and incubator facilities to help business start-ups.

Courses offered by HEIs cover vocational skills, for example in manufacturing, healthcare or education, as well as personal development to improve confidence and self-esteem, such as communication skills and voice coaching.

For information on a new and dedicated Business Development Unit which aims to increase the engagement between London’s HEIs and employers by supplying higher level skills for employee development visit www.londonhigher.ac.uk/lhbdu.html.
Community cohesion
Academic activities at London HEIs have a social dimension, for example through research projects on open space and local food growing; tailored courses for faith leaders, carers or young offenders; partnerships with third sector and local community organisations, and voluntary work by students and staff.

In addition, London’s HEIs work with local authorities to deliver certain services in areas such as healthcare and education.

Facilities open to the public for physical and mental wellbeing include sports grounds, fitness centres, museums, art galleries, music venues and theatres.
The following higher education institutions are members of London Higher:

Birkbeck, University of London*
Brunel University
City University London
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
Courtauld Institute of Art*
Goldsmiths, University of London*
Guildhall School of Music and Drama
Heythrop College, University of London*
Imperial College London
Institute of Education*
King's College London*
Kingston University London
London Business School*
London Metropolitan University
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*
London South Bank University
Middlesex University
Queen Mary, University of London*
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication
Roehampton University
Rose Bruford College
Royal Academy of Music*
Royal College of Art
Royal College of Music
Royal Holloway, University of London*
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*
St George's, University of London*
St Mary's University College, Twickenham
Thames Valley University
The Central School of Speech & Drama*
The Institute of Cancer Research*
The Open University in London
The Royal Veterinary College*
The School of Pharmacy, University of London*
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance
University of the Arts London
University College London*
University of East London
University of Greenwich
University of London*
University of Westminster

*Colleges of the University of London
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