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Higher Education Engagement with Schools and colleges

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Overview of presentation

Launch of two UUK Reports

1. Higher education engagement with schools and colleges: Partnership Development

2. Academies and trusts schools: where do universities fit in?

Engaging with schools and colleges is nothing new

- Universities have been engaging with schools and colleges over many years...
- Established strong and enduring partnerships
- Government priority to develop a word class education system
- Development of the National Council for Educational Excellence, July 2007. Members include leaders in business, HE, schools and colleges working together to act as advocates and champions to transform expectations for the education system and advise Government on strategy

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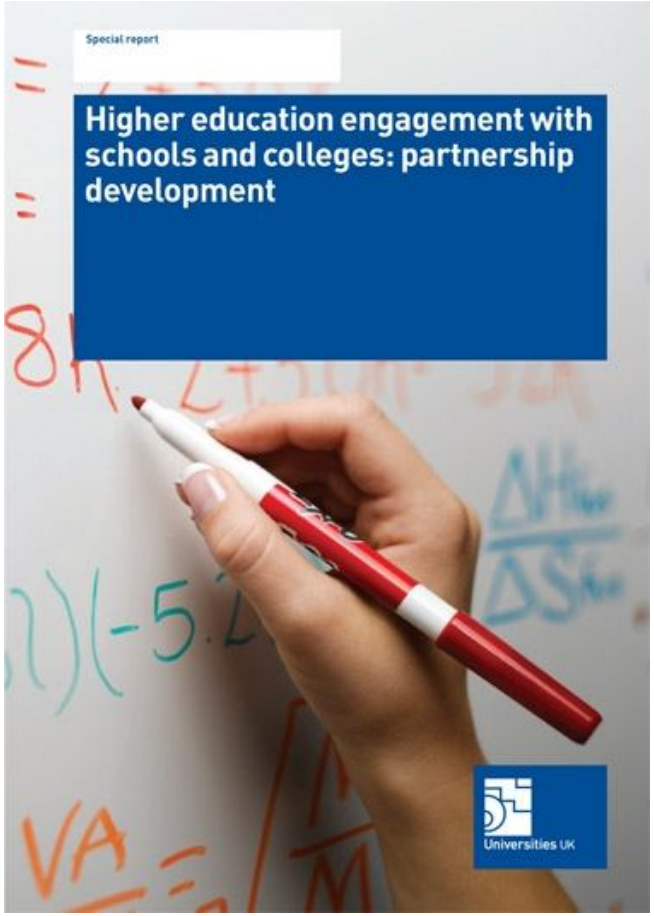
Partnership Engagement



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Partnership Development

- Report is an updated version of the evidence submitted to the NCEE on partnership engagement, what worked well and what did not work so well
- Excellent response rate: every university in England responded
- Variety of activities reflecting a range in the purpose of engagement
- Consensus around effective interventions
- Reflections for enhancing partnership development and facilitating cross-sector collaboration

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Health warnings

- The report only represents a snapshot of activities
- It is not intended to be a good practice guide
- No reference to the Delivery Partnership Reforms
- No reference to the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme

Typology of engagement

- Widening participation; aspirations, attainment, access and higher education awareness
- Student progression and transition to higher education
- Curriculum and Continuing Professional Development for staff
- Other partnerships – including links with academies and trusts

Widening Participation: Aspirations, Attainment, Access, and HE Awareness

- Campus visits and taster days
- Mentoring and e-mentoring
- Student ambassadors
- Master classes
- Summer schools and HE related residential experiences
- Other activities in schools (conferences, study days, presentations, revision days etc)

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Examples

- **Anglia Ruskin University**: offers three one day subject specific programmes.
- **The University of Birmingham;** trains undergraduates to work as school and college mentors providing face-to-face support for organising school work, motivating and acting as role models
- **University of Leicester:** organises master classes across a range of subjects
- **Birkbeck College**: participated in a summer school with the University of East London and University of Essex in the low participation areas of Thurrock and Basildon
- **Liverpool John Moores University**: working with the Education Business Partnership Liverpool Compact, staff volunteers go into primary schools to act as reading partners

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Student Progression and transition to HE

- Special entry pathways
- Gifted and talented students
- Information, Advice and Guidance and facilitating transfer to HE

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Examples - IAG

- **The University of Bristol:** Offers UCAS Masterclasses, student life sessions and information on student funding to all schools and colleges in the locality. A teachers and careers advisers' event was also run for the first time this year.
- **London School of Economics and Political Science:** HE advisers' conference…brings together those who deliver advice and guidance in schools with admissions professionals within LSE. The day centres on the university application process and what universities are looking for in the personal statement and teachers' reference. The day is aimed specifically at teachers and advisers from non-selective schools where there may not be a strong history of sending students to the most competitive HEIs. The Conference looks at the applications process from a Russell Group point of view – competition for places, A level subject combinations – to give advisers a view from 'the other side'.
- **The University of Oxford:** FE College Access Scheme offers interview training for Oxford to applicants who are from FE and Sixth Form Colleges.

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Curriculum and staff development

- Curriculum enrichment and support
- HE contribution to the 14-19 Agenda in England
- Initial Teacher Training
- CPD for teachers
- Research on raising attainment

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Examples - Curriculum enrichment and support

- **Open University:** The Young Applicants in Schools and Colleges scheme [offers] HE modules in schools….It provides a real experience of HE, not just a taste…The courses studied offer both breadth and depth to the school curriculum.
- **Liverpool John Moores University:** LJMU's Astrophysics Research Unit is committed to advancing public understanding of science and donates a proportion of its observational time for use by UK schools. Over 500 schools are currently members of the ARI's National Schools' Observatory, giving thousands of primary and secondary school pupils access to their own, high quality astronomical images and a range of related resources.
- **Middlesex University:** provides specialist student support in target subject lessons in around 30 schools across north London – in sciences, maths…modern languages and (extensively) in sport (including coaching and refereeing).

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Partnerships

- Engagement with networks and specific groups
- Membership of governing bodies and relationships with Academies and Trusts
- Engagement with local communities
- Engagement with business

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Examples

- **Southampton Solent University:** played a role in formation of the Southampton Education trust. Brings together both of the City's universities, three main providers of further education, key stakeholders in private sector, the public sector and voluntary sector
- **University of Westminster:** work with local authorities and feeder institutions to develop a clear strategy for engagement on a cluster school basis and a bilateral basis with Post 16 providers
- **University of Cambridge** work with a number of partners such as University of Oxford, Aimhigher, Eastern region universities to raise aspirations and encourage young and adult learners to participate in further and higher education
- **Nottingham Trent University:** Staff governor support scheme – encouragement, support and recognition for staff becoming school governors

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What works?

- Strategic approach, embedded in structure of HEI and schools and led from the top
- Clear aims and benefits to partners
- Commitment of time and resources
- Targeted approach
- Focussed events
- Well-timed interventions
- Sustained engagements (with sustained funding)
- Good communications
- Use of academic role models
- Student ambassadors/ mentors
- Master classes
- Evidence of success

Reflections and conclusions

- Report demonstrates a wide spectrum of engagement with variations in the purposes of engagement
- Importance of having a continuum of experiences and interventions
- Drawing on the list of exemplars: a number of suggestions for enhancing partnership development and cross sector collaboration are suggested
- Many already underway

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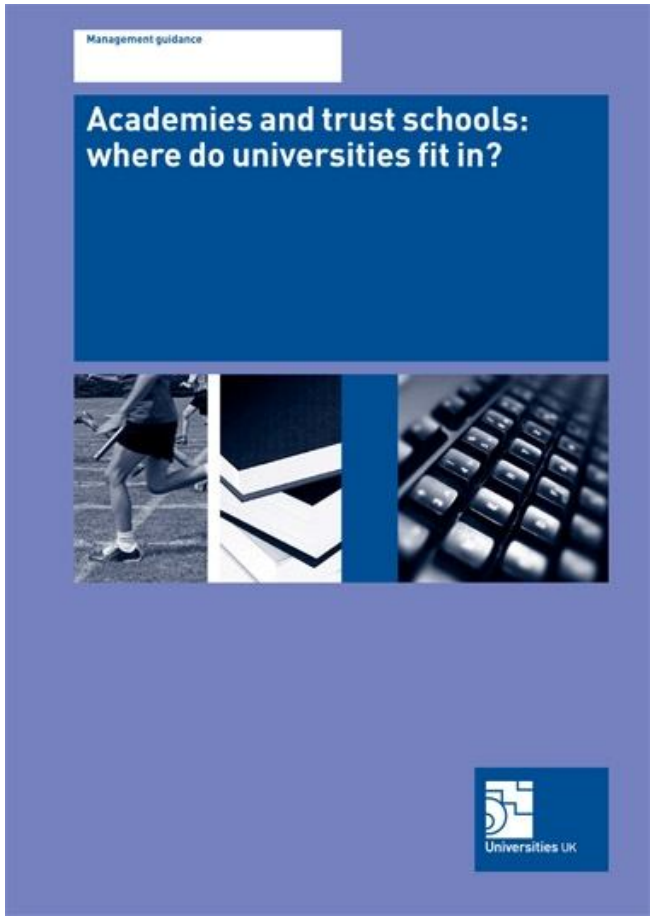
Academies and Trusts: where do Universities fit in?



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Overview of Report

- Provides practical information on engaging with academies and trusts, drawn from experience of participating universities
- Academies and trusts: the legal context
- Options for engagement ranging from the formal to the informal
- Logistics of setting up academies and trusts
- Benefits and challenges for universities
- Checklist to support engagement

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Academies and Trusts 2

- The report complements the helpful publication provided by DCSF: *Academies, trusts, and higher education: prospectus, 2007*
- UUK's 2008 survey demonstrates the sector's interest in this area – although probably underestimated the involvement
- Currently there are 48 universities committed to being a sponsor or educational partner of an academy
- 216 trust schools involving 75 university partners
- The report does not focus on the educational effectiveness of academies

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Options for universities

- Lead sponsorship
  - *Example: Barnfield College – invested £2M in two academies. College felt that they had the capacity to turn around two failing schools*
- Co-sponsorship
  - *Example: University of West of England sponsoring the City Academy Bristol ; University of Liverpool sponsoring North Liverpool Academy, Nottingham University Samworth Academy and Red House Academy /Leighton Group with University of Sunderland*
- Partnership : short of sponsorship
- Education partner: *University of Wolverhampton*

Benefits for universities engaged with academies

- Supporting the raising of school attainment levels – critical to encouraging widening participation in HE
- Opportunity to input into curriculum development
- Support for CPD of teaching and professional staff in an academy
- Involvement in the governance and management of an academy
- Student recruitment
- Access to new funding sources, and greater influence in the marketplace for goods and services arising from increased purchasing power
- Offer teaching opportunities or research about the academy movement
- Strengthening of a institution's ability to respond to changes in 14-19 education

Benefits for engaging with trust schools

- Supporting the raising of school attainment levels – critical to encouraging widening participation in HE
- Enables universities to partners schools with other bodies such as local authorities, businesses and charities without significant investment of resources
- Involvement in leading educational development
- Student recruitment
- Acquire insights in the setting and monitoring institutional strategy

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Challenges for higher education

- Amount of management time required
- Sometimes academy proposals are controversial
- Skilful relationship management required across a number of partners
- Practical issues
- Relationship between the academy and university once the academy is established
- Some schools involved in a trust proposal may be educationally weak
- Some local authorities may be ambivalent in their support for trust schools

Checklist for universities

- Principles for engagement
- Strategic fit
- Geographical proximity and fit
- External stakeholders' views
- Internal stakeholders' views
- Resource implications

Implementation issues

- Staffing
- Land and buildings

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Copies of both reports have been sent to all universities and will be available on the UUK website, www.UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

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