



Student  
Wellbeing  
Centre



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

WQW

SUMMER SCHOOL

20TH - 22ND JULY 2022

EVALUATION REPORT





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# BACKGROUND

The Wellbeing Orientation Welcome, or WOW Summer School held by the Student Wellbeing Team at the University of Lincoln, has recently completed its eighth successful year. When looking at the complexity of issues that many of the students who access the Student Wellbeing Centre face, some have anxieties about initially beginning university and study. Alongside this, anxieties might also be around social interaction and friendship groups, independent living, ways in which they will study, getting around and familiarity with the campus. This can, at times, lead to students feeling overwhelmed and on occasion, some students have chosen to leave University.

The Student Wellbeing Team offer the summer school to many prospective students who access support through the team, all of which may experience anxieties about beginning university study, such as those on the autism spectrum, those with a diagnosis of mental health or those who are leaving care. WOW is provided to ease any anxieties students may have about the changes that lie ahead and the transition into university life. In previous years, the summer school has only been open to those who have been able to provide medical evidence of a diagnosed medical condition or disability. However, at the conclusion of the 2020 summer school, we realised that many applicants who would have benefitted from attending the summer school, missed out as they did not have a formal diagnosis. As a result of this, the decision was made to open up applications to those without a formal diagnosis. As such, we have been able to offer even more places to prospective students.

Initially, invitations to WOW were sent to those who had declared Autism/ASD or a mental health condition on their UCAS application. Once their WOW applications had been sent in, if necessary, Student Wellbeing contacted applicants and had conversations with them to identify their needs, and offer them a place where appropriate. (Appendix I – sample application form).





# WOW 2022

For WOW 2022, we were able to offer 97 places to prospective students. In total, there were 146 applications that were made for WOW 2022. During WOW, students are given a 3 day, 2 night stay on campus. This year, students were provided a room within Cygnet Wharf accommodation, one of the most central of the student accommodations on campus, living with other WOW attendees for the duration of the residential. This has proven to give students the ability to engage socially with their peers and it is hoped, as in previous years, build strong relationships that will last through to enrolment and beyond. A comprehensive programme of workshops, teaching sessions and social events are offered, to give prospective students a taste of university life.



As WOW 2022 had grown in size again, the decision was made to make some changes to the sessions offered with some further changes to the timetable. We felt it was appropriate to adjust the timetable to better suit running an event with larger numbers and to also offer the attendees more choice, wherever possible.



## EXAMPLE OF SESSIONS OFFERED:

- Welcome and Icebreaker activity session
- A choice of taster lectures to attend
- A walking tour of Lincoln Castle walls
- Jump Inc trampoline park
- Campus tour, including a short trip into the city centre
- A Support and Opportunities Fair, attended by departments across the university
- Meet the Team session
- Student Wellbeing Centre Quiz
- Library Tour
- Drop-in

## SUPPORT THROUGHOUT WOW



Should students have needed support during their time at WOW, we offered drop-in appointments for them, to recreate the way they will access support once they begin at university.

A total of 10 students accessed this service across the 3 days.

Any students under 18 at the time of WOW needed to have an agreement signed by a parent or guardian before they were allowed to stay. During WOW 2022, 4 under 18's attended.

As in previous years, Student Ambassadors were employed to assist staff during WOW. 5 ambassadors joined us for WOW 2022, 3 of whom had attended WOW previously.



# WOW PARTICIPANTS

In the academic year 21/22, contact with prospective students was made very early on, from October the previous year. This ensured that a good dialogue and communication was set up well in advance with both students and their families, to answer queries and reassure in the lead up to WOW 2022. The WOW Guide and options form were sent around 1 month ahead of the summer school to enable attendees to choose which activity they would like to take part in, as well as food choices for meal times.

88 attendees arrived and registered on the first day of WOW. One participant decided they were unable to take part in WOW shortly after arriving, and a further 2 left during the summer school. A total of 85 students completed the WOW Summer School programme.

Arrivals were held centrally on campus, and attendees were given a 1 hour timeslot to arrive and unpack before the programme started. For arrivals, we had help from the accommodation team who oversaw the allocation of keys for students, as well as WOW ambassadors to help with any questions attendees or parents had, and taking attendees from their accommodation to the Minerva Building ahead of the first session starting.

Emails, information, maps and correspondence were sent to all attendees, informing them of what to expect, what would be provided, FAQ's and numbers to contact if needed. (WOW Guide – Appendix iii)





# REPORT AND EVALUATION

To help evaluate WOW 2022, all attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire which asked them about their experience at the summer school. This included asking which sessions they found beneficial, which ones they enjoyed most, rating their feelings around anxiety and managing change, as well as offering them a chance to say what else they thought could have been included or would have been beneficial to them. We also ask them to sum up the summer school in 3 words, and ask if they would recommend WOW to others.

(sample Questionnaire – Appendix ii). These questionnaires provide us with both quantitative and qualitative data.



## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The 2022 WOW summer school welcomed the highest number of students in the last 7 years. The attendees who joined us for WOW once again engaged and were involved in all aspects of the programme. The team were able to watch them flourish over the duration of the programme and form new friendships.

Students who attended WOW were asked, after attending the programme, how confident they felt about managing change. The WOW students scored an average of 4.83. They were also asked, after attending WOW, how anxious they felt about starting at university. For this question, the WOW students scored an average of 5.48.\*

\*The scale for this was 1-10, with 1 being not anxious / confident in managing change, and 10 being very anxious / unconfident (WOW 2022 Feedback – Appendix iv)



## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The questionnaires given to students on their final day provided us with some very positive comments, including –

‘I’m amazed by how much each WOW member / staff care. I’ve never felt so supported and cared for. Thank you.’

‘A very helpful and brilliant experience. Making friends was good in a low anxiety environment.’

‘I am much less nervous about freshers week now that I know the layout of the campus and made some friends. It was good to get to know the city too. I have a better idea of what uni life will be like’

‘Really helpful and would highly recommend going. I feel a lot more confident and less worried about coming in September. All the staff were so lovely and supportive’

‘Great experience, made me feel more comfortable and confident meeting new people’

‘Fantastic experience, accommodating, made to feel welcome.’

‘Definitely a life-changing experience, and helpful in allowing me to experience uni life in full



# LESSONS LEARNED

The Student Wellbeing Team always view each WOW Summer School as an opportunity to learn, develop, adapt and expand the programme. A vital part of the process is for the team as a whole, to reflect on what went well and what didn't, in order that future summer schools can be changed to offer a better experience. This involves not only taking into account the feedback received from attendees but also a discussion between team members.

Dates for the 2023 WOW Summer School have already been confirmed and planning has already started taking place with accommodation already secured. A number of considerations have already been discussed:

- Arrivals process – with the increase in numbers again for the 2022 event, we worked hard to ensure the arrivals process was as smooth as possible. However, a consideration for next year may be to work closely with the accommodation team to allow more members of the Student Wellbeing Team to hand out keys, so that the process is made quicker. We found that attendees were often waiting around for long periods for their key as there was only one member of staff from accommodation handing out the keys. It would also be advisable to ensure that attendees are informed on arrival that, in order to lock their rooms in Cygnet Wharf, they need to use their key and that it doesn't lock automatically when closed.
- Catering venues – This year, we had great difficulty in securing external catering venues that would be happy to be paid via invoice, rather than via a card payment on the day of the booking. This does seem to be an issue more with chain restaurants, rather than independent places but this is also a consideration for next year when looking at venues.
- Colour Groups – Again, due to the increase in numbers this year, we used colour groups to help separate attendees for specific sessions. It may be worth considering for next year, how these groups are gathered when all in once place. For example, once arrivals has been completed and all attendees are together in one place, separating them into their colour groups to support them in moving to their next session is quite challenging and can be an overwhelming process for the attendees.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- Meet the Academic Session – This year, this session was organised into the four colleges, to help with organisation. Attendees were matched with their academic member of staff within a very quick time period, which we were very pleased with. In terms of improvements, we believe that ensuring the rooms booked for this part of the session, are big enough for academics, attendees and Student Wellbeing staff to fit in comfortably, as it can be quite overwhelming and we found this particularly with the larger of the colleges (College of Social Science). We also believe it would be beneficial for this session to be moved to the afternoon, to help allow for last minute changes.
- Activities – Activities were very well received this year, in particular, Jump Inc. However, the Digital Media Workshop received some negative feedback (both from Student Wellbeing Staff and attendees). This involved the Digital Life staff not really supporting/engaging with the attendees, not explaining the session appropriately and the weighting of the session on filming/editing (meaning not all got a chance to edit).
- Timings – We had some feedback from attendees who were allocated the Jump Inc activity, that they didn't have enough time to get back from that activity and to change clothes etc before their allocated mealtime. We are also aware now that Jump Inc do not have air conditioning, so on a hot day, it can be uncomfortable for anyone attending. It may be useful for next year to look at timings for this, if Jump Inc is used as an activity choice.





## LESSONS LEARNED

- WOW Student Ambassadors – WOW Ambassadors are an essential part of delivering the summer school and are of great help when attendees are feeling anxious as they can offer a shared experience. However, this year, we did experience some issues with one particular ambassador, who found it difficult to stick to the boundaries of what had been previously explained to them and this meant they had to be challenged by staff on a number of occasions. Although this has not happened to this degree before, it may be worth considering for future WOW summer schools, what preparation is given to WOW student ambassadors.
- Feedback Forms – The feedback gained from the summer school is always an integral part of evaluation and planning for future years. However, we do feel that the feedback in its current form can be very confusing for attendees and would benefit from being re-visited to change the format. It can also make the results of that feedback, harder to understand and use.



## FUTURE PLANS

The Student Wellbeing Team are already making plans and dates have been secured for the 2023 WOW Summer School. The team plan to offer an increase in available places, to help as many applicants to the University of Lincoln as we are able to.

The team will be able to utilise what we have learned from running the event with a larger number of attendees than ever before and use that information to make necessary changes where needed, so that the summer school runs as smoothly and is as successful, as possible.

As always, enrolled students who attend WOW have their attendance monitored, so we can see their engagement with their studies. Previous WOW attendees have engaged better in their courses, measured against the University average.

### **Attendance averages:**

2021 attendees had an attendance average of **72.68%**

The university had an overall average of **65.82%**

The university disability average attendance was **61.27%**.





# APPENDICIES

## **Appendix i**

Sample application Form

## **Appendix ii**

Sample questionnaire

## **Appendix iii**

WOW Guide

## **Appendix iv**

WOW 2022 Feedback

Report compiled by:

**Megan McAuliffe** – Mental Health & Wellbeing Advisor

**Tom Larken** - Student Wellbeing Education Officer

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# **APPENDIX I**

## SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM



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## **APPENDIX II**

### SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

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# **APPENDIX III**

## WOW 2022 GUIDE

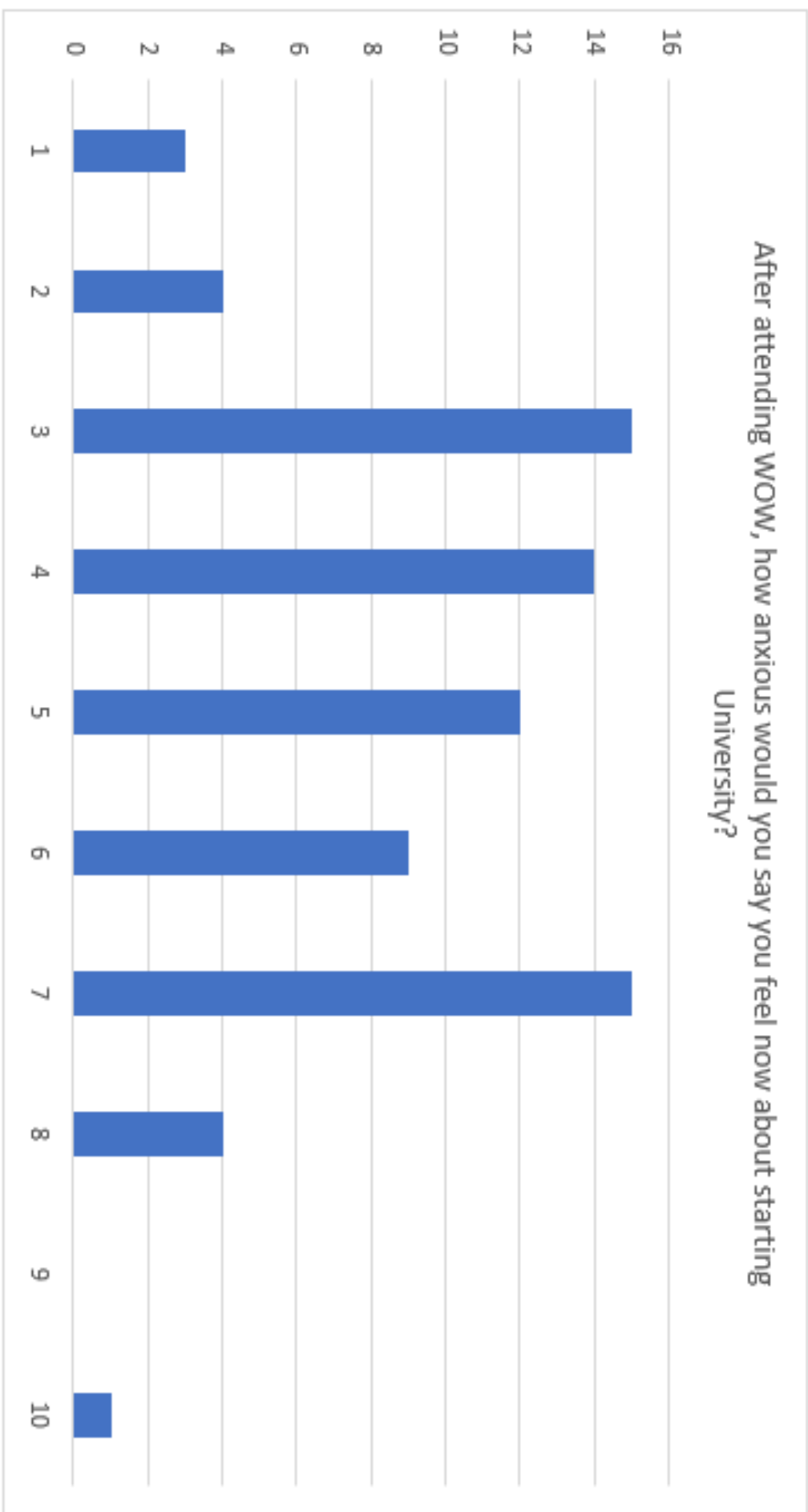


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## **APPENDIX IV**

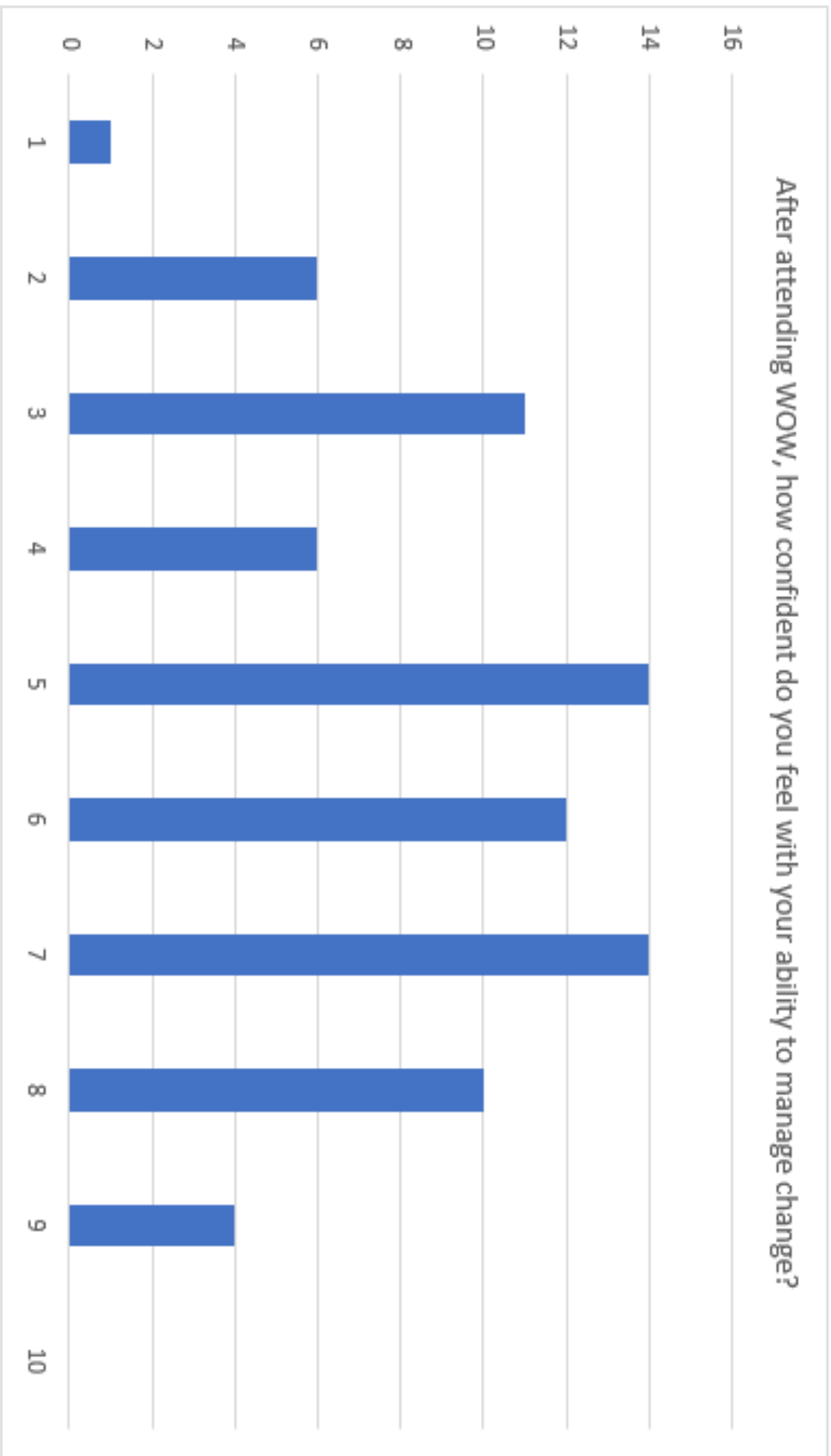
WOW 2022 FEEDBACK

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