



WOW Transitional Summer School 2017

Evaluation Report

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Background to WOW –

The Wellbeing Orientation Welcome, or WOW Summer School held by the Student Wellbeing Team at the University of Lincoln, has recently completed its successful third year.

When looking at the complexity of issues that many of the students who access the Student Wellbeing Centre face, students have anxieties about either initially beginning University or when beginning study, around a range of areas, such as social interaction, ways in which they will study, getting around, familiarity with the campus, etc. This in turn, can at times lead to students feeling overwhelmed and on occasion, withdrawing from University altogether. The Student Wellbeing Team wished to offer this to many prospective students who would be accessing support through the Team, but all of which, may experience anxieties about beginning University study, such as those with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, mental health, sensory or physical impairments. WOW's aim therefore is to ease any anxieties those students may have about the transition into University life.

In 2017, WOW provided 31 free places to prospective students, accessing support from the Student Wellbeing Team, for a 3 day, 2 night stay on campus. Students were provided a room within the University Halls of Residence, living with other students for the duration of the residential. This has proven to give them the ability to engage socially with their peers and it is hoped, as in previous years, built strong relationships that would last through to enrolment and beyond.



It is understood that this may be the first time that some students have lived away from home, lived with others, or cooked and cleaned for themselves independently. Some students may have concerns about the potential learning environments, ways in which they will study, social interactions and all the forthcoming changes that becoming a full time University student can bring.

A comprehensive programme of workshops, debates, teaching sessions and social events were offered, to hopefully give prospective students a flavour of what lies ahead. Sessions included:

- Bus tour of the City
- Icebreaker activity session
- Taster sessions from academics in different learning environments
- A trip to Lincoln Bowl
- A meal out at the Students' Union
- Advice and guidance on fees, funding and budgeting
- A talk from the Students' Union team
- A talk from the Careers and Employability Team
- Library Tour
- Pet therapy
- One to One meeting with a Wellbeing Advisor

As a part of the WOW residential, Student Wellbeing staff are on site 24/7, to help and support students as needed. Any student under 18 at the time of WOW would stay on campus after signing an agreement by a parent or guardian. During WOW 2017, one student attended who was under 18 at the time, who stayed on campus for the duration of the School.

Student Ambassadors are employed to assist staff during WOW. Our aim was to recruit Ambassadors who had previously attended WOW and this year, all 5 were previous attendees, which proved very helpful in their understanding of both the students needs and their thoughts and feelings about attending the School.

Applications include a brief questionnaire, to establish the main cause of anxieties and concerns that students may have ahead of enrolling at University and the main strategies that they use to 'cope' with change, as part of their diagnosed condition.

(Copy of Application Form – Appendix i)



2017 WOW	Day 1 – Wednesday	Day 2 – Thursday	Day 3 – Friday
8am		<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Breakfast</i>
9am	Arrival (between 9 – 9.30am) / key collection 10.00am: Parents Workshop (<i>Stephen Langton Lecture Theatre</i>) Collect Sample Student Cards (SSC) Student workshop (LPAC) (10.15-30am)	Meeting with an academic from your School (9.45am for) 10am start – 11.15am (<i>Coop Lecture Theatre</i>)	One to One with Advisors Pet Therapy / Garden Therapy Sessions Colleagues from the Health Centre (WH 002 / 003)
10.45am	<i>Coffee break (LPAC)</i>		<i>Coffee break (Enterprise)</i>
11am	Icebreaker session (LPAC)	Coffee break (11.15am) Library Tour (GCW Library) 11.30 am – 1.00pm	Talk from the Careers Service / Your feedback about WOW (UL110)
12pm	<i>Lunch</i>		<i>Goodbyes and return keys. We'll see you in September!</i>
1pm	Short SU Talk (<i>The Platform</i>) (coaches coming at 1.30pm for Bowling)	<i>Lunch (1.00pm – 2.00pm)</i>	
2pm	Bowling (<i>Lincoln Bowl in Washingborough, Coaches to collect at 1.30pm, leave at 3.30pm</i>)	(2.15 – 3pm) Taster Workshop (UL103 UL104) (3.10 – 4.15) Taster Seminar/Lecture (<i>Coop Lecture Theatre</i>)	
4pm	Break (as part of return from Lincoln Bowl)		
5pm	Dinner at Tower Bars (served at 5.15pm) (pre-ordered food from menu)	Coffee break (4.15pm) Advice talk (4.30pm – 5.00pm) (<i>Coop Lecture Theatre</i>)	
6.30pm	City Tour bus		
		Free time/Knight tour	



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A programme of events was put together, following previous successful events held during other WOW events. These included sessions with academics, tour of the City, meeting the Students Union and opportunities available, chance to go out for a meal together, budgeting, funding and finance.

As part of the Programme of Events, a session is provided by Student Wellbeing colleagues for parents, separately from students, to answer any concerns or queries they may have about students ahead of enrolling or during WOW.

PHOTO

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Questionnaire before and after WOW -

As part of the application to attend the WOW Summer School, prospective students are asked their expectations of WOW, their expectations of University life, along with any coping strategies they currently use to aid them with any difficulties they have due to their diagnosed condition.

Questionnaires were also completed by all attendees on their final day at the WOW Summer School, to ask if it had been beneficial, what sessions they have



enjoyed most and least, if they feel less anxious about starting University, what the Student Wellbeing Team could have done differently and if they would recommend WOW to another student.

(Copy of Questionnaire – Appendix ii)

WOW Participants -

In 2017, contact with prospective students was made from very early on, from October in the previous year. This ensured that a good dialogue and communication was set up well in advance with both students and their parents, to answer queries and reassure in the lead up to WOW 2017.

31 students applied to WOW, 15 female and 16 male students, with one female choosing to live at home locally for the duration. All students arrived and registered on the first day of WOW. Only one student needed to return home, on the second day, after recognising signs of current difficulties she faced. Colleagues assisted the student in making the journey home, contact was made with the family to ensure the student arrived home safely,

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. A WOW Facebook page was also set up this year, to share updates, information and resources as necessary, via a different medium.

(Copy of Information Sheet – Appendix iii)

Results and Outcomes –

The Student Wellbeing Team were once again overwhelmed by the group of students who joined us for WOW and the way in which they flourished over the time of the School. From knowing the individual concerns of the students ahead of them arriving, through meeting and welcoming them, to seeing them slowly overcome their issues to become more socially confident, joining in and making new friends during WOW, was fantastic.

During WOW, a 'selfie' competition was announced, asking students to take selfies around Lincoln as part of the Knights Trail, to be added to Student Wellbeing and WOW social media. A number of students felt confident enough to take part and add their photos to the Student Wellbeing Facebook page, with a duo of students taking selfies with all Knights on the Lincoln trail.



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That duo received a £25 amazon gift voucher each, which was sent out to them in the post.

Questionnaires were given to students on their final day, with some very positive comments received.

Students were asked if they enjoyed the WOW Summer School – all students who attended said they had, with some saying 'very much' and another commenting "I have loved every minute of it".

We asked students if they feel less anxious about starting in September. Comments were received such as "I feel completely different about joining university now, I am not anxious at all and can't wait to return in September" and "definitely feel more comfortable with the staff and feel happy that they are all so approachable and supportive".

All students said that they would recommend WOW to other students.

Other positive comments received included –

"It's really nice to see that the staff genuinely care and are so open and willing to help you with anything they can".

"It was nice, everything was explained well".

"It was a great experience that I would highly recommend".

(Copies of completed Questionnaires – Appendix iv)

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Future Plans –

Students who attended WOW, will be monitored to assess how they are engaging with their studies and to also identify if any concerns arise. Previous WOW attendees have engaged better in their courses, with 2015 attendees having an average attendance rate in their first year of 74.94%, against the University average of 70.57% for 2015 and 2016 attendees having an average attendance rate in their first year of 78.89%, against the University average of 73.39% for 2016.

A Newsletter will be sent to all WOW attendees and their families, as an update and overview of the School, to include recaps, photos and positive comments shared.

Further plans to consider for next year (at this initial planning stage) include –

Advisor / Pet Therapy Session – This session will be scheduled on the morning of the first day of WOW, so that Advisors can meet a smaller groups of students early on, find out about any of their needs or concerns and encourage them to meet the Health Centre early, to address any additional issues they may have.

Photos with application – colleagues noted this may be of help and additionally, could this be utilised in advance for their ID card?

Meal times – it was noted that less staff are needed around meal times, once students are familiar with the process of using vouchers and choosing their meals, less staff would need to be available.

Photos / videos during sessions – better media presence is a certainty for next year, a dedicated role for a member of staff.



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Appendix –

Application Form – Appendix i

Questionnaire – Appendix ii

Information Sheet – Appendix iii

Copies of completed Questionnaires – Appendix iv