

**RCUK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH: SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS
INITIATIVE (SUPI)**

FINAL REPORT - QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

SUPI PROJECT NAME: Inspiring Lives, Creating Futures (QUB)

NAMES OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT: Professor Tom Millar, Paula Moran, Patricia
Hampson

1: THE 'STORY' OF YOUR SUPI PROJECT

a) Please provide a narrative summary that describes the journey your SUPI project has taken from beginning to end and covering all the key developments in between.

The Queen's University Belfast SUPI project was initiated by the then Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Learning, Professor Ellen Douglas Cowie, who assembled a team to put together a competitive bid for funding from RCUK. Professor Tom Millar was involved at this early stage, and became the project lead after Professor Douglas Cowie retired. As the broader intention of the SUPI project was to expose school pupils to different kinds of research at universities, Queen's decided to engage with a younger cohort of students: pupils in Year 9-10, with an age-range of 12-14 years. This decision was made with the intention of encouraging pupils to make more informed decisions about GCSE subject choices, in order to inform A-Level and degree-level choices. Whilst Queen's often undertakes outreach activities with school pupils, it is most often with A-Level pupils; this therefore provided a valuable opportunity for researchers to develop new skills to engage effectively with this age group.

Four central themes were established to showcase the breadth of research activity at Queen's. Researchers from different Schools across the university were grouped together to work collaboratively under each theme. This approach meant that work-load was shared between different research teams, who could each concentrate on developing complementary activities. Projects were developed with the intention of creating activities so that the pupils could experience a number of research areas on the same day, during both visits to Queen's and also when researchers delivered the workshops out in the schools. The four central themes were as follows:

- **Creative Technologies** (Sonic Arts/Electrical Engineering/Aerospace Engineering)
 - Pupils had the chance to try three related activities based on: 1) robotics, 2) virtual reality, and 3) sonic arts. Pupils had the chance to become involved in elements of computer game design and record sounds for use in the game. Research concepts, such as haptic feedback used in robotics and flight simulation, were hidden behind various games and interactive activities.
- **Crossing Borders in the 21st Century** (Modern Languages/Creative Arts)
 - A major activity incorporated drama research, including the performance of a play 'Mojo Mickeybo' written by one of Northern Ireland's leading playwrights, which deals very frankly with religious and cultural divisions within Northern Ireland society.
- **Hands on Your Future** (Physics/Chemistry)
 - This theme was based on research being developed within Queen's aimed at some of the major global challenges – environment, sustainability, health – and the technologies that are being developed to address them.
- **From Discovery to Recovery** (Pharmacy/Medicine/Cancer Research)
 - The activities under this theme allowed pupils to 'become research scientists for the day', to help the researcher to solve a particular problem (e.g., coating a tablet with a gel for slow release of medication)
 - The intention of activities was to 'strip down' science to make it more accessible, interactive and fun, whilst making university less intimidating.

Although the theme involving Physics and Chemistry did engage with pupils in Year 1, a significant pressure resulted due to the resignation of the lead researcher in Chemistry and we decided to appoint a new team. Fortunately, we had also had a request for involvement in the project from the then Head of the School of Law and we were able to create an additional theme from Year 2 onwards, a theme which brought in ESRC research.

- **Societies in Motion** (Law/Sociology)

- Dealing with social issues such as migration. Activities encouraged thinking broadly about government, constitutions, ranking rights etc. through debate – whilst making sure that the content was age appropriate. In one exercise, pupils were asked to ‘Create a new country’, which facilitated a debate around the most important human rights in a society. These activities gently introduced research concepts and social science techniques such as critical analysis, issues of ranking, listening to ideas of others, use of evidence based arguments etc.

In order to engage with the widest possible number of schools, it was decided to work with Area Learning Communities (ALCs) from across Northern Ireland (NI), meaning that pupils from a broad range of range of backgrounds had the opportunity to participate in these projects. There are 30 ALCs in NI, involving 250 schools, comprising all mainstream post-primary schools, special schools with post-primary pupils and further education colleges. The institutions work together to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils and deliver on the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. Since our ALCs each contain schools with a wide range of educational achievement and expectation, a major focus of our approach has been to stress that university is for all and is a realistic expectation for pupils.

In Year 1 we started out with two ALCs, with the long-term aim of working with four, all from beyond Belfast. In Year 2 we added two further ALCs, following requests made after a presentation on SUPI at the University’s annual Head Teachers Forum. Beyond Year 2, some of these connections became problematic. The engagement with ALCs was efficient in that it allowed us to interact with a wide range of schools through liaising with one individual coordinator, typically the Chair or Secretary of the ALC. Unfortunately, it became problematic when the Chair/Secretary changed and we lost contact with some. We replaced ALCs where this occurred such that over the four-year period we have interacted with six ALCs.

In our Year 4 extension, the project was successfully integrated within Queen’s Widening Participation Unit (WPU). This has centralised the administration of the project and has had a number of positive outcomes, including: improving organisational efficiency; allowing researchers to concentrate on the delivery of activities without dealing with logistical issues such as transport etc.; allowing the project to benefit from well-established connections between WPU and various schools in NI, and the expertise of the WPU staff in raising aspirations of pupils that are considered most able but least likely to attend university.

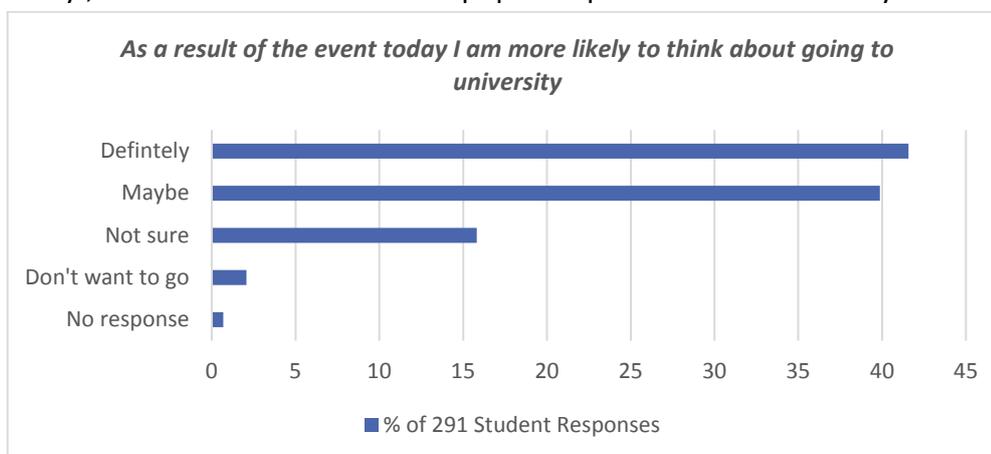
Such has been the success of the project, from both ALC and University perspectives, that Professor Tom Millar has received the endorsement of senior management at Queen’s who have committed to contributing to the continuation of the SUPI model of engagement for the next three years.

a) Please list the key findings from your SUPI project

KEY FINDINGS:

AUDIENCE:

- Selecting to work with the chosen age group of Years 9 and 10 required a bespoke approach, with the intention of informing pupils of their subject choices at a much earlier stage, whilst making connections to future careers in research.
- Due to the age group involved, we provided a tailored introduction to research and the opportunity to perform simple experiments and activities that are designed to complement a broader discussion of research and its uses. In this context, it was important not to take any knowledge content for granted, and to explore innovative ways to communicate complex, interdisciplinary research ideas in an understandable, relatable manner.
- Communicating complex research concepts was achieved in a number of ways, including: introducing social science techniques of critical analysis through interactive debates and drama-based activities concerning migration; simple experiments that introduced pupils to medication; and utilising relatable technologies such as robotics and virtual reality to demonstrate haptic feedback.
 - Importance was placed on the development of age-appropriate content – particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as migration – whilst also showing how researchers think about these questions. The intention of the activities was to deal with sophisticated ideas but without assuming any knowledge.
 - For this reason, SUPI has helped to break down barriers about universities, demonstrating that they should be open places contributing to society, not places that are inaccessible to the majority. This was evident in the evaluation responses. After the events, pupils were provided with an evaluation questionnaire. According to collated feedback from four SUPI events, when asked ‘As a result of the event today I am more likely to think about going to university’, a combined total of 81% of pupils responded with ‘Definitely’ or ‘Maybe’.



- Drama, in particular, proved an effective vehicle for communication and a useful medium for engagement between students, teachers and academics, providing a platform for participation for all. This proved a very powerful means of ensuring pupils from different schools participated in and were challenged by the content.
- Many of the teachers were very involved in the activities, taking photos, asking questions, and taking concepts into their own classrooms. Positive interactions with teachers made it more engaging for pupils.

USE OF FEEDBACK:

- Since we, as university researchers, have not been engaged with this age group as a matter of course, feedback from pupils, teachers and researchers was very important in the early development and delivery of activities. In part, this allowed us to reflect on delivery methods and to recognise which themes were most appealing to pupils and teachers. In addition, university researchers were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and to amend delivery on subsequent engagements – the fact that activities were repeated twice per year helped us respond in a timely manner.
- Over the course of the four years, feedback from both pupils and school teachers has been positive. Considering that many of the pupils would not have previously visited the university, pupils overall enjoyed the experience, which helped with raising awareness of university and contributed to raising aspirations.
- It was clear from the feedback that pupils enjoyed the activities, and that they had an increased understanding of research at university as a result of their participation.

PARTNERSHIPS/RAISING ASPIRATIONS:

- Our initial decision to interact with pupils through a geographically diverse set of ALCs rather than through individual schools has had both positive and negative impacts on the project. Location turned out to be much more of an issue than we had expected, in particular in building consistent, effective and long-lasting relationships with our two most distant ALCs, Roe Valley and Dungannon. Both eventually dropped out of the project by the end of Year 3.
- On the positive side, however, engagement with ALCs allowed us to interact with a wide range of pupils from a diverse mixture of educational and social backgrounds, given the range of school types in Northern Ireland, including grammar, secondary schools, single-sex, and faith-based schools. Schools in disadvantaged situations are thereby involved – over half our schools have more than 20% of pupils entitled to free school meals and around three-quarters have 10% or more pupils with special needs. This mix undoubtedly added to the richness of the experience of pupils and researchers alike.
- By integrating the project within the Widening Participation Unit (WPU), the SUPI has utilised the expertise and experience of WPU staff in raising aspirations. For nearly all pupils, the project enabled what would have been their first visit to a university campus. Campus visits contribute to breaking down barriers that pupils may have about university and there was a focus on the pupils feeling welcomed when they visit for a day. Since ALCs have schools with a wide range of educational achievement and expectation, we stress that university is a realistic aspiration for all.

- Involvement of the WPU also informed our choice of new ALC partners – North Down and Ards, and Newry and Mourne – in Year 4. The WPU’s strong links with these ALCs and, in particular, with subject teachers whose interests aligned with our themes, were particularly important in inviting these to join the project.
- **Martine Gilmore ICT Teacher Bangor Academy & 6th Form College (North Down and Ards ALC) commented;** “Bangor Academy pupils thoroughly enjoyed participating in the SUPPI programme. Our pupils learned how Human Rights impact everyday life and they enthusiastically participated with pupils from St Columbanus in the ‘Human Rights in Action’ drama workshop, where they had the opportunity to think about Human Rights and immigration and make judgements about a number of cases. The pupils were keen to put their artistic talents on show when they created posters on Human Rights and were delighted to attend the prize giving ceremony to see their work displayed. The Academy is always keen to work with the University and we place great value on our on-going partnership. We look forward to being involved in further collaborative projects.”

CROSS DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

- Our themes were designed to encourage researchers to work across School, and in some cases Faculty, boundaries to expand their own knowledge of research taking place within the university.
- In particular, early career researchers (ECRs) were able to work with senior staff and, importantly, to see the commitment of senior colleagues in the delivery of the programme.
- Individual themes were not the only means of engaging pupils with interdisciplinary research. Our activities were scheduled in such a way that pupils often experienced two or three themes on any one day giving them a view of the breadth of research right across all parts of the university.

TWO STAGE INTERVENTION MODEL

- A two-stage intervention model was developed as part of the SUPPI project; a visit to a host ALC school and a return visit to Queen’s campus turned out to be a very important and beneficial aspect of the programme. Feedback from research staff showed that it was an excellent development opportunity for ECRs to deliver their workshops in (unfamiliar) school settings where not everything could be as well planned and prepared as in a university setting.
- Return visits to Queen’s by participating pupils and teachers not only gave them an opportunity to explore and to demystify the university environment but it also helped build a rapport between researchers and school pupils and teachers.

b) Please list the most important learning points from your SUPPI project

IMPORTANCE OF KEY CONTACTS IN ALCS AND COMMUNICATION

- Identifying key school contacts and nurturing these relationships are a first step to ensuring a successful SUPPI project. Key contacts in schools who are enthusiastic and committed to the project will ensure completion of tasks required for events to be delivered as agreed.

- Being creative in the approach to ensuring senior management support within the ALCs helps raise the profile and commitment to the project. In some ALCs, the individual responsible for engagement with Queen's at the beginning of the project rotated out of post and it was sometimes difficult to establish an effective contact with the replacement. We were able to circumvent this in some cases through internal contact with the Head Teachers Forum, hosted by Queen's to facilitate discussion on a range of issues/projects between the university and post-primary education in NI. Nevertheless, although having a single contact in an ALC offered a model of simplicity, there were times when it would have been useful to have contacts within individual schools.
- In Year 4, taking an opportunity created by the re-organisation of the university, we moved the administrative support for the project to a central university office from a rather poorly resourced Faculty office. The identification of WPU as the administrative unit brought immediate benefits, including: individual contacts in every school in our ALCs; a group of staff who were used to organizing school events on and off campus; and, access to student helpers when required on campus. Note that the latter are not ECRs but students who have volunteered to liaise with visiting groups; their role is to guide pupils across campus and answer general queries about Queen's and student life.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the ECRs is also key to the delivery of a successful project. The transition to WPU enabled ECRs to focus on the content and delivery of their themes rather than the logistics of arranging the dates and locations of events.
- Early communication over dates, programme content and logistics was key to the success of getting ALCs on board. On more than one occasion dates had to change due to school commitments so having the flexibility to do this within the parameters of the project allowed schools to participate.
- Theme leads maintained professional and effective internal relationships throughout the duration of the project. It was clear from the outset that there was a shared vision within the delivery team and that theme leads worked to complement each other's involvement.

TEACHING STAFF

- Our model made it difficult to engage consistently with individual teachers. We had no control over those selected to accompany pupils to the university; in some cases they were not specialists in the thematic areas. Our experience was much more positive when visiting ALCs since the activities were often held in specific areas, such as science labs or drama area, and specialist teachers were usually involved.
- Resources for teachers to use in the classroom is an important aspect but does depend on attendance of subject teachers, as noted above. Following several of the events, teachers were provided with resources that they could use these back in school with other pupils and as follow-on activities with the pupils who attended the events. For example, following an event with North Down and Ards ALC, where they looked at Human Rights in Action, one of the accompanying teachers delivered the Learning for Life and Work Qualification. They were keen to access the resources used on the day so that they could use this as a basis for teaching others.

ACTIVITIES AND FEEDBACK

- It is important to review mechanisms for evaluation on an ongoing basis and to adapt evaluation mechanisms to ensure information gathered is measuring a range of factors relevant to the sustainability of the project. Gathering feedback after events from pupils, teachers and researchers is key to planning further activities but it would also help to gather additional information on feedback and to have an overall framework for evaluation that is implemented from the start of the next three years of the project. During Year 1 of the project, a lengthy questionnaire was developed for pupils to complete post-event; this was re-designed into a more concise questionnaire, and further questions were framed around the annual RCUK evaluation.
- According to feedback, interactive tasks are the best way to introduce techniques as these tended to be the activities that the majority of participants engaged with the most. Teachers reported that pupils enjoyed being actively engaged. For example, during the debates on migration, the pupils responded well to having their voice being taken seriously. It gave them a sense of ownership as their responses shaped the directions of the activities. In some cases, the approach to the activities was also altered during the lifespan of the project:
 - For Electrical Engineering activities, initial activities contained lots of small components; on reflection this was unsuitable for activities with this age group. Subsequently, robots were introduced. The human shape of the robot made the activity more relatable for the pupils and removed the original difficulties.
 - Pharmacy researchers reflected that on the first occasion there were probably too many activities and that they were trying to do too much during engagement days. This was then altered for the following events to include less whilst maintaining the quality.
- In some instances, the same pupils took part in the two-stage model whilst in others, different groups were involved in each of the school and campus visits. On reflection, it may have been better to have the same pupils involved in both stages as they would benefit from meeting research staff in school initially and then take part in a follow-up return visit. Although this would lead to fewer pupils being involved with the project, it would allow for a more prolonged engagement. The project to date has done both and recognises that embedding skills from repeat contact is an effective learning strategy. However, one-off events allow for repeated content – this is good for PhD development as researchers can hone an activity with different groups. This provides an opportunity for reflection and revised delivery for future workshops. Engagement techniques can be improved and developed through this method.
- Having different activities on the same day proved popular with the pupils, giving them taster sessions of research content from different disciplines. Feedback was consistently positive across the different activities.

RESEARCHERS: RECRUITING AND TRAINING

- It was important to source enthusiastic and committed ECRs to deliver the activities, whilst ensuring a support structure for skills development.
- SUPI provided challenges for younger academics, as some found it initially difficult to convey research to school pupils. As a result, the decision was made not to delve into complex features or difficult terminology, as it would become easy to confuse the pupils.
- In some instances, it was felt that PhD students could have been briefed more as some of the language used in early activities was difficult for the pupils to understand.
- Though training in communication and public engagement was provided through the Graduate School, which opened during the lifetime of the project, we were, perhaps, too reliant on ongoing feedback – more bespoke training and further understanding of the level of the pupils and their school curriculum could have been acquired in advance of delivery.
- Positively, PhD students gained increased responsibility and ownership of the activities, planning events and designing workshops.

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

- Senior management endorsement has been vital for the success and continuation of the project.
- The project faced several challenges during its lifespan, having to deal with a severe cut to the University budget, and major re-organisations of Faculties, Schools and the academic year. These led to additional workload on staff, as well as uncertainty over the future of disciplines and posts. Since the project in each School was led by an individual academic, we were impacted to some degree by the loss of key staff, for example, through sabbatical leave, and had to build teams that had resilience against loss of a theme leader.
- In Year 4, embedding administration centrally within WPU led to an improvement in the organisation of the project.
- Further, by integrating the project within WPU, we have utilised the expertise and experience of WPU staff. Whilst A-Level performance in NI is the best in the UK, it hides many wider issues of inequality and underperformance. WPU staff have relevant knowledge and contacts in all our schools that have enabled the project to use activities to help showcase university as a realistic aspiration.

c) Please list all engagement activities that were developed and run during your SUPI project

Activity Log Listed below as per the relevant Researchfish headings:

Activity	No. of Pupils	Activity Years	Description
School visit to the Sonic Arts research centre	90	2013	Workshop and interaction provided School pupils with an insight into career options.
Visit to St Mary's Grammar, lead school in the Magherafelt Area Learning Community (7 schools) - Creative Arts/Sonic Arts Research	75	2013	Workshops for pupils and teachers - there was a lot of interest in Sonic Arts which covered sound recordings and electronic circuit board building.
Schools visit (North Belfast Area learning Community) to Queen's University Belfast - Languages and Creative Arts (interactive drama)	90	2013	Performance of Mojo Mickybo and Workshop at Brian Friel Theatre, Queen's University. This performance was related to bullying and how to deal with it.
Newtownabbey Secondary School; Monkstown Community College; Rosstulla Special School - Visit by QUB team including actors, Queen's drama director and PhD Students	30	2013	Follow-up drama workshop with actors and QUB staff - an opportunity to develop the ideas of the play within the pupils' own environment and meeting with PGR students and learn about how their research connect with local community issues.
Visit from QUB Pharmacy and Cancer Research staff to Magherafelt Area Learning Community lead School St Mary's Grammar	75	2013	Pharmacy and Cancer Research under the theme From Discovery to Recovery, held separate laboratory workshops with pupils in which they looked at cancer slides through microscopes; made toothpaste, shampoo, DNA of strawberries etc.
QUB outreach day for Magherafelt ALC school pupils in various QUB laboratories	90	2013	Promoted an interest in knowledge of science subjects and the possible careers following study of science subjects at school and at university.
Schools visit (North Belfast Area learning Community) to Queen's University Belfast - Languages and Creative Arts (interactive drama)	60	2014	Second performance of Mojo Mickybo and Workshop at Brian Friel Theatre, Queen's University. This performance was related to bullying and how to deal with it.
Visit from QUB Languages and Drama (Crossing Borders in the 21st Century theme) to Roe Valley Area Learning Community; lead School Limavady Grammar.	60	2014	Performance of scenes from Mojo Mickybo in French and English at Brian Friel Theatre, Queen's University

Visit from QUB Pharmacy and Cancer Research staff to Magherafelt Area Learning Community lead School St Mary's Grammar	60	2014	Second Pharmacy and Cancer Research under the theme From Discovery to Recovery, held separate laboratory workshops with pupils in which they looked at cancer slides through microscopes; made toothpaste, shampoo, DNA of strawberries etc.
QUB staff from Pharmacy and Cancer Research attended a careers convention in Magherafelt ALC	600	2014	Interaction with pupils as they potentially choose science subjects moving forwards in their second and third level education, therefore potential interaction with our future undergraduate students. The invitation to participate in this careers convention is testament to the impact our events had on pupils and their teachers.
Visit - Dungannon ALC	90	2015	Pupils from a variety of schools in the Dungannon Area Learning Communion visited Queen's to engage with researchers in Cancer, Pharmacy and Sonic Arts.
NI Science Festival	More than 500	2015	Several QUB teams involved in this project took the opportunity to run events during the first-ever Northern Ireland Science Festival held in February 2015. The overall audience at the Festival was in excess of 30,000. The event led to a number of invitations for researchers to take part in other events throughout year.
Magherafelt ALC visit to QUB	90	2015	90 Year 9 pupils from schools in the Magherafelt ALC visited Queen's in June 2015 to engage with researchers on the theme of Crossing Borders in the 21st Century. For most of our researchers this was their first engagement with this age group. We have had excellent feedback from pupils and teachers on this event, with several commenting that it helped break down the divisions that are ingrained in NI society.
Pharma @ W5	More than 500	2015	A team of researchers from our School of Pharmacy engaged in outreach activity through the major science and discovery centre in Northern Ireland, W5. Staff engaged with several hundred pupils over the two days of this event.

ESRC Festival of Social Sciences	Between 200-400	2015	Early career researchers from our new Q-Step programme took part in the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences in November 2015. This was an important opportunity for newly-appointed academic staff to engage with the general public and to explain the important role of quantitative methods in the social sciences.
Hydebank Wood College	60	2015	Researchers from Drama led a presentation of a play Mojo Mickeybo at Hydebank Wood College based inside Northern Ireland's only young offenders centre. Over 50 inmates attended the play and took part in a follow-up workshop. It was noted by the prison officer who facilitated the workshop that it drew out some prisoners who tended not to engage well with the educational programme in the College.
Visit to Magherafelt ALC	90	2015	A team of researchers from Law, Sociology and Politics visited the Magherafelt ALC in November 2015 and ran a number of activities, including a poster competition, on the theme of Societies in Motion. Around 90 pupils from 6 schools were involved and feedback was very positive, with several commenting that it had helped them in thinking about careers.
ALCs visit to QUB	71	2016	17 non-selecting schools (Year 9 pupils) visited Queen's University and took part in a range of activities including a drama workshop that encouraged pupils to consider time, space, mood and tension. Challenging topics were addresses ranging from global warming to the Syrian refugee crisis. Pupils also took part in an engineering challenge to design and test a boat made from tinfoil and card. Participants were nominated to take part due to their engagement with the Queen's Junior Academy.
North Down & Ards ALC - visit to QUB	70	2016	Bangor Academy & 6th Form College Year 9 pupils attended Queen's University to take part in the Societies in Motion project.

MLP: Visit to QUB	75	2016	Year 9 pupils from schools within the Magherafelt Learning Partnership attended workshops at Queen's University hosted by the Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC), Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology (CCRCB), and the School of Pharmacy.
Schools visit to QUB - Flight Simulator	10	2016	Pupils from two Junior Academy Schools were invited to Queen's to take part in a flight simulation activity hosted by the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering.
St Colm's HS visit to QUB: Flight Simulator	5	2016	Pupils from St Colm's High School were invited to Queen's to take part in a flight simulation activity hosted by the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering.
North Down & Ards ALC visit to QUB	70	2016	Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College, and St. Columbanus College, visited Queen's Pupils had the opportunity to learn about Human Rights and engage with researchers from the School of Law, and School of Arts, English and Languages at Queen's.
Newry & Mourne ALC: Visit to QUB	60	2016	Year 9 pupils took part in two workshop sessions delivered by early career researchers. The first, drama based, learning workshop looked at issues such as immigration and Human Rights. The second workshop, an engineering challenge, got pupils to investigate the design of a boat from given materials to support a given weight.
QUB Visit to Newry: EEECS & Pharmacy	60	2016	QUB researchers visited the host school in the Newry & Mourne ALC (Newry High School) which welcomed pupils from other schools in the ALC. Pupils took part in two workshop activities in school: an Electronic, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science workshop and a Pharmacy workshop hosted in the school science lab.

a) Please summarise the impact(s) of your SUPI project across its lifetime

CROSS-COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- The community in NI is still deeply divided along religious, national identity and social lines and one of the most powerful, if unexpected, outcomes of the SUPI has been the pleasure pupils have in meeting and working together with others from different backgrounds. Pupils have often limited experience or understanding of attitudes and perspectives beyond their local community – there are over 100 ‘peace walls’ separating communities in NI. Teachers have said they have felt empowered by a number of the activities to address difficult issues of division with a greater level of confidence in citizenship classes. They have been able with pupils, for example, to research areas such as emigration, immigration and human rights law in the context of our own local divisions.
- Considering the dynamics of the education system in Northern Ireland, a notable success of this particular SUPI project was that we ensured school pupils had the opportunity to interact with children from different community backgrounds. Several schools participated on the same day, and dividing the pupils into smaller groups, typically around 6 in number for individual ECR-led activities, meant pupils would meet other pupils with whom they would not have many opportunities to interact. Feedback refers to the pleasure pupils get from being part of a group that breaks down the community (religious) divisions. In this regard, the interactive drama proved particularly popular because it deals with issues of sectarianism, peer pressure, and bullying that are familiar in their daily lives and deals with these using rather frank language not normally allowed in the classroom.

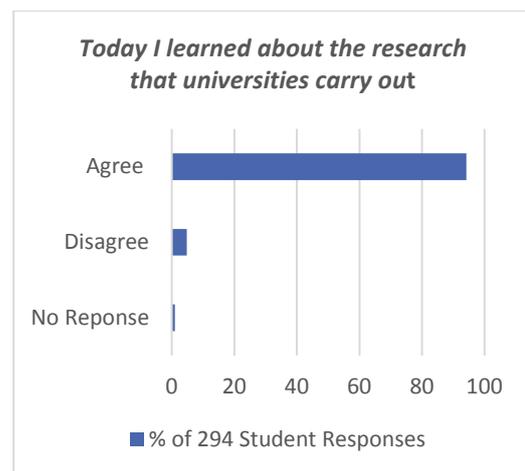
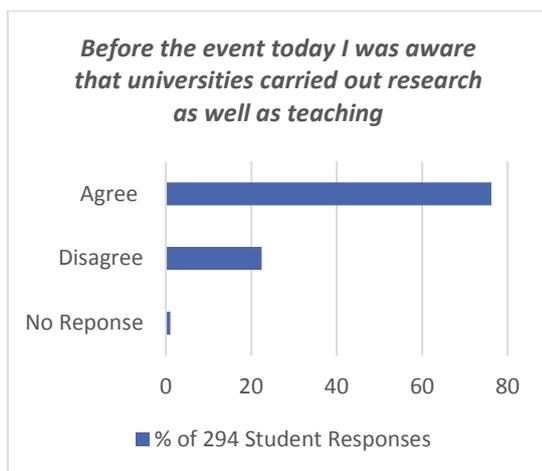
GEOGRAPHICAL IMPACT

Throughout the duration of the project the team managed to engage with various ALCs throughout NI, widening the impact of the project, although as mentioned previously not all ALCs were engaged throughout the four years. The geographical spread of ALCs meant that both urban and rural schools could take part in the events and activities offered, which was an additional developmental aspect for participating pupils.

RAISING ASPIRATION

- For nearly all pupils, this was their first visit to a university campus. Some of the students may not have had parents or siblings at university, and some may not have previously been to Belfast. Visits immediately make university a less unknown, more welcoming place, and students can begin to picture themselves at university.
- Since our ALCs each contain schools with a wide range of educational achievement and expectation, we stressed that university is for all and is a realistic aim for pupils. By integrating the project within the Widening Participation Unit (WPU), the SUPI has utilised the expertise and experience of WPU staff in raising aspiration.

- As over 80% of our undergraduate intake is from NI and we have a large fraction of local academic staff, we often find that a team member will have been educated at a school in the ALC. Such local connections are also a useful way of presenting role models to pupils.
- The activities have also helped with this engagement process, showcasing current research as relatable and something to which to aspire.
- Although it is difficult to measure any changes in aspiration and the impact of activities due to the age of the participants, plans are in place to track progress via the Queen’s Junior Academy:
 - (The Queen's Junior Academy programme aims to raise awareness and aspiration amongst those who are the "most able but least likely" to continue to Higher Education. The programme is aimed at Years 9-12 and delivers a range of workshops, both school and campus based, to selected partner schools across Northern Ireland.)
- It was clear that awareness amongst the pupils of research at university increased, as evidenced through collated feedback (see Figures below). Pupils with no previous knowledge or concept of university and research became much more aware; when asked the question ‘Before the event today I was aware that universities carried out research as well as teaching’, 76% of pupils agreed. Comparing this with the response to the question ‘Today I learned about the research that universities carry out’ – a statement with which 94% of pupils agreed – it is clear the overall awareness and understanding increased significantly.



IMPACTS ON TEACHING IN CLASSROOM

- Overall, teachers were positive about their participation of their pupils in SUPi.

Below are examples of comments taken from teacher evaluations:

Do you feel that the event today helped to inspire pupils towards Higher Education?

- *“Yes. Very welcoming staff and surroundings. This made pupils think about wanting to access university education.”*
- *“Yes, some of the students asked questions about getting into university.”*
- *“Yes definitely – gave them a good insight into what can be expected at uni.”*
- *“Yes – the students inspired many pupils with what they studied.”*

Do you feel that the pupils who attended engaged with the topics presented?

- *"Yes they did a lot. I heard lots saying how good it was."*
- *"Very well. Tasks were very well managed and targeted to pupils' level."*
- *"Yes, again some of them. I feel they co-operated better with the drama aspect."*
- *"Yes- mostly all students engaged in some way."*
- *"Yes – took them a while to warm up with the drama."*

Has attending today been beneficial to you as a school staff member? Please give details.

- *"Yes, it has given me a greater insight into Human Rights and teaching ideas."*
- *"This activity will assist pupils with LLW (Learning for Life and Work) and Citizenship units greatly."*
- *"Yes, I am inspired by all the students who acted in the moot court."*
- *"Yes, it has taught me useful ways to teach human rights."*
"Yes – I have recently started teaching citizenship so I feel it will be beneficial to me in the classroom."

Following today's event would you be likely to use the activities or any of their aspects in the classroom?

- *"Yes the moot courtroom could be replicated."*
- *"Yes, especially the PowerPoint at the start and the activity of declaration vs evil laws."*
- *"Yes, parts of the drama. Liked the interactive voting system also."*
- *"Yes, 100%."*
- *"Yes – creates good discussion."*

Has attending the event today increased your confidence in engaging with university research staff?

- *"University staff have always been excellent."*
 - *"Yes, they have been enthusiastic, energetic and interacted really well with my students."*
 - *"Yes and has taught me the benefits of doing so."*
- Certain activities, such as the Pharmacy experiments and Drama exercises, were used by several schools in the classroom to supplement the curriculum.
 - Poster competitions were used throughout the SUPI project as a way of judging interest in particular activities and to revisit the research ideas after the engagement days.

RESEARCHERS

- The current HE sector emphasis on impact has made involvement in the SUPI project attractive for early career researchers and academics.
- One PhD student from Drama was able to test research methodology in project workshops; this contributed directly to her thesis.
- Involvement provided opportunities and challenges for researchers – offering a framework to think about how concepts are presented in an impactful way to different audiences.
- SUPI is particularly good for younger lecturers for thinking about ways to communicate in different scenarios.

- Public engagement has benefited hugely: One of our project leads, Dr Maeliosa McCrudden, won both the Mendel Medal for Biological and Biomedical Sciences and the overall Westminster Medal (the winner of winners) at the STEM in Britain awards held in the Houses of Parliament in 2016. She attributes her ability to explain research in ‘layman’s terms’ to her involvement in the SUPI project.
- The chance to develop a programme of events over the course of the project allowed for an ongoing evaluation of approach, meaning that the activities could be reviewed and tailored according to the feedback of both the pupils and students involved, and challenges were addressed as the projects evolved. For ECRs, SUPI in particular, provided a platform for engaging with different audiences and translating their research concepts in order to communicate with this age group.
- SUPI also provided a platform for participation across different academic levels. For example, a Queen’s undergraduate pupil designed an experiment involving the creation of a paper boat and testing how much weight it could hold – this experiment was subsequently used during the activity days.
- Finally, the project has had significant impact on the careers of theme leads. Outreach is recognised in the Queen’s promotion criteria. During the period of the project, two theme leads were promoted to Professor and two to Senior Lecturer, one was appointed as Dean of the Graduate School and one as Head of the School of Law.

b) Please summarise any influence your SUPI project has had on your institution, its culture, or that of any other institutions, cultures and projects/initiatives.

INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

- Many projects can run successfully within large organisations relying on the good will of key individuals however, to generate sustainable long-term projects there is a need for institution buy in. From the outset, the Queen’s SUPI project engaged Senior Management within the university to highlight the importance of the RCUK funded SUPI project. Professor Tom Millar, Project Lead recognised the importance of raising the profile of the Queen’s University SUPI project internally with key staff members including the Pro Vice Chancellor for Education and Students. Professor Millar was keen to ensure that the commitment to the existing SUPI was identified in key university documents such as the Higher Education Strategy and Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP). Once referenced within such documents the university have a commitment to deliver on the stated aims and objectives giving listed projects increased significance. (Outlined in Section 9)
- The SUPI project has been endorsed at a Senior Management level and Professor Tom Millar has been able to secure internal funding for its continuation for a further 3 years.
- The Celebration Event held in 2016 also served to highlight the importance of the work. The event – attended by Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Head of the Queen’s Graduate School and various other representatives of the Senior Managements Team – presented a further opportunity to highlight the project over its lifecycle. This was an important event not only to present the success of the programme and recognise participants’ achievements, but to raise awareness internally within the institution. Pictures from the event can be found in Annex 1. **Jackson Frew (Magherafelt Learning Partnership) spoke at the SUPI Celebration Event on the 1st December 2016. Extracts from his speech are available below:**
 - *“The Principals were unanimous that it was vital to give their pupils, the adult citizens of tomorrow’s world, the best possible experiences of these issues with research experts from such a prestigious university as QUB. To not allow the pupils to have these experiences, the Principals felt, would be a dereliction of their duty of care to their pupils. It was a must to take part”**“There can be no doubt that the pupils really enjoyed their visits to QUB and the return*

visit to Magherafelt... the pupils have enjoyed all of the workshops, be they the science practicals in From Discovery to Recovery, or the discussions in the Crossing Borders in 21st Century workshops. Further you will see in the photographs from across all of the workshops, many smiling faces or faces of young people deep in concentration.”

- *“The MLP Careers subgroup would like to continue to build on the SUPI contact and is interested in developing links with the lecturers who delivered the workshops and others. This inevitably would provide the pupils with a greater knowledge and understanding of science, law and other courses available and the entrance requirements. This information would be of immense help to pupils as they make subject choices at the transition points of Year 10 and Year 12.”*

LINKS WITH SCHOOLS

- The engagement days have strengthened existing links and forged new relationships with schools across NI.
- Often engagement activities have focused on A-Level students with an emphasis on recruitment; SUPI has provided many opportunities to work with a younger cohort from a diverse range of schools.

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATING RESEARCHERS

- Early career researchers have also been able to take an increasing level of ownership, taking increased responsibility for the activities throughout the process, acquiring practice-based training through delivery.
- The ability to demonstrate public engagement skills has been advantageous for our researchers: several of the PhD researchers involved have achieved ‘Researcher Plus’, an internal recognition of PGR students who are involved in activities beyond their normal research, whilst others have taken up teaching and research roles within their schools.
- Several of our researchers have taken part in other engagement events including NI Science Festival and the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences.
- The Discovery to Recovery Pharmacy team was invited to London to participate in the Great British Bioscience Festival, sponsored by BBSRC. Nine researchers from the microneedle research team led by Professor Ryan Donnelly (Theme Lead) represented the School of Pharmacy and QUB at the event.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTION AND STAFFING LEVELS

- Throughout the project significant University Staffing has been used to support the Queen's University SUPI Project. Annually, between 37 and 55 staff members, including ECRs, worked on the Queen's SUPI project.
- Notably the highest number of staff contributed in Year 4 of the project as outlined in Section 8 of this report, Skills & People.

CROSS-DISCIPLINE COLLABORATION

Our cross-disciplinary themes enabled ongoing collaboration that allowed researchers to build significant working relationships with staff from other Schools.

The work of the SUPI project is known across the university and there have been several requests from individuals and Schools for additional collaborative opportunities: discussions are currently underway for new collaborations in the coming 3 years.

LESSONS IN ENGAGEMENT FOR WIDER UNIVERSITY

- Lessons are now evident from the four years of SUPI and provide a useful resource for the university – could this type of training be embedded within the Graduate School, for example? Preliminary discussions are underway.

4: PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTS

a) Please list any publications that have resulted from your SUPI project

DR MAELIOSA MCCRUDDEN

One of the researchers involved in the SUPI Project from Discovery to Recovery, Dr Maeliosa McCrudden, made a contribution on behalf of Queen's to the RCUK Poster display at the Engage Conference November 2016.

DAVID GRANT

Senior Lecturer in Drama, David Grant's most recent journal publication addresses the use of image theatre as an analytical tool with school-age children and uses the SUPI workshops as exemplar activity.

David Grant (2017), 'Feeling for meaning: the making and understanding of Image Theatre', in *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* Vol. 17, Iss. 2 (doi - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2017.1286977>)

Drama PhD students were also involved in the planning and delivery of the SUPI project. Research ideas were tested during some of the SUPI activities.

- Jen Goddard - Thesis Title: “Drama, Disability and the Act of Becoming”. Jen’s work had direct relevance in the engagement with Rosstulla Special School as part of the SUPI Project. Jen went on to publish several articles including; Jennifer Goddard (2015), ‘Childcare in Practice: Valuing the place of young people with learning disabilities in the arts’ Pages 238-255, Accepted 12 Mar 2015, Published online: 20 Aug 2015.
- Tom Saunders - Is currently working on his thesis entitled: “Representations of the Police in Northern Ireland Drama”. The themes involved in the Mojo Mickybo project had relevance to this piece of research.
- Molly Goyer - Used drama-based interactive methods for some of her data-gathering as part of her PhD project entitled: “Communities in Play: Evaluating the Social Value of Rural Youth Theatre”. Her work with SUPI allowed her to trial these methods.

DR JONATHAN COLE

Dr Cole (Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering) contributed to the SUPI project working with the Queen’s Junior Academy. One of the workshops delivered used extracts from a student’s project for workshop content.

Cole, J.S. and Shannon, P. (2016). Designing an interactive laboratory experiment to investigate buoyancy. *Presentation at the 23rd Annual Forum for Access and Continuing Education Conference*, Queen’s University Belfast, UK.

b) Please list any products e.g. artistic, creative or educational material outputs that have resulted from your SUPI project.

QUEEN’S SUPI WEBSITE

- As part of the project Queen’s set up a SUPI website to highlight the work of the project and schools involved. The website can be viewed using the following web address: <http://qub.ac.uk/sites/SUPI/>

VIDEO

- A SUPI video was produced prior to the end of the project highlighting the work to date. The video included interviews with link staff within the ALCs, Theme Leads and participants. The video can be accessed through the Queen’s University SUPI Website.

PRODUCTION

- David Grant's production of Mojo Mickybo benefitted from an extended life due to SUPI. Following the revival of the production for SUPI, the play went on a Regional Tour and performances at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast.

The Pharmacy Team prepared a cartoon representation of their work on vaccine delivery using microneedles which was previously available to view online via the YouTube Channel. They have used this in work with schools to clearly outline what they hope to achieve using this delivery platform.

POSTERS

- Numerous posters were produced as part of follow up competitions to gauge understanding of research principals covered in key research strands, example illustrated in Annex 2.

5: AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Please list any awards or recognition associated with your SUPI project

- During the period of the project, two theme leads were promoted to Professor and two to Senior Lecturer, Professor Margaret Topping was appointed as Dean of the Graduate School and Dr Robin Hickey to the Head of the School of Law. A further theme lead was promoted to Senior Lecturer in the 2016-17 promotions round.

RESEARCHER PLUS

- Researchers involved in the SUPI project had the opportunity to use this as their evidence to contribute towards gaining Research Plus Accreditation as part of their time at Queen's. Several of the PhD participants have achieved this additional award to date. The Research Plus Award, as well as developing research expertise in subject discipline, allows postgraduate research students to have opportunities to develop a range of skills which are transferable beyond the PhD to both academic and non-academic careers. Queen's have recently launched the Researcher Development Framework to summarise these skill areas and provide a tool for researchers to plan their personal and professional development. The Queen's Researcher Plus Award provides official recognition of these skills and assists researchers in demonstrating them to employers.

AWARDS

- SUPI has provided career benefits for some of our early career researchers with one theme lead, Dr Maeliosa McCrudden, winning both the Mendel Medal for Biological and Biomedical Sciences and the overall Westminster Medal (the winner of winners) at the STEM in Britain awards held in the Houses of Parliament in 2016.

SUPI CELEBRATION EVENT

- As the project came to a close in December 2016, Queen's hosted a Celebration Event at which over 80 pupils had the opportunity to re-engage with the university, and feel part of a wider community of project participants. The celebration event also included a number subject-based stalls showcasing research from Queen's Schools; this served as a useful reminder to the pupils of some of the activities they participated in, and introduced them to new areas.
- The Celebration Event recognised the achievements of all those involved in the delivery of the SUPI project. ECRs and theme leads were formally recognised for their contribution by Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Jones, and Head of the Graduate School, Professor Margaret Topping. Presentations were also made at the event to recognise individual contributions from ALC members.

6: COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP

Please provide details of any significant collaborations and partnerships that have resulted from your SUPI project

COLLABORATION WITH ALC'S

Notably the most positive relationship was with Magherafelt Learning Partnership (MLP) with who we have formed a sustained relationship.

MAGHERAFELT LEARNING PARTNERSHIP (MLP)

The Magherafelt Learning Partnership was established in 2007. It provides a full representation of the post-primary sector of Northern Ireland as it includes controlled, grant maintained, integrated, maintained and voluntary grammar schools, both denominational and non-denominational. The only sectors that are not represented within the partnership is Irish Medium and single sex education.

Each school is co-educational, varying in size, type and history. The schools have a long-standing history of working with Northern Regional College, the local Further Education provider, both in terms of curricular provision and the continuing professional development of staff.

Following the initial engagement with MLP during the development of the grant application, we have formed very close relationships that have resulted in increased engagements in various other university projects. For example, this year seen the launch of the new Pathway Opportunity Programme for Queen's University. St Mary's Magherafelt hosted a recruitment visit for the university inviting other schools in the ALC. This resulted in a very positive engagement with the university as a great number of degree programme applications were received from schools in the ALC.

DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

The SUPI project led to increased visibility for the QUB production of Mojo Mickeybo, and created the opportunity for a second tour with an emerging company made up of Queen's drama graduates.

7: FURTHER FUNDING

Please list all further funding that your SUPI project has leveraged across its lifetime

- We were able to use the very positive reports of the benefits of the SUPI project from ECRs and theme leads to persuade the three Faculty PVCs and central university to guarantee funding for the next three years. Although at the level of 50% of current funding, we are hoping to recruit further themes from across the university. New themes will be required to make a (modest) subscription to the project with the aim of retaining the same number of school engagement events per year.
- This is a commitment of £25k per annum for each of the next three years, 50% from the University, and 50% divided equally between each of the three Faculties.

8: SKILLS AND PEOPLE

a) Please list any skills related developments that have taken place as part of, or as a result of your SUPI project

ENGAGEMENT SKILLS:

- SUPI has provided the opportunity for numerous researchers at various career stages to develop their public engagement skills.

TRANSLATING RESEARCH:

- Due to the age-group involved, it was necessary to translate research. This required a change of approach for 13-14 year olds, refreshing because there's a need to use different vocabulary/terminology to get complex concepts across to a young age group.
- Breaking concepts down into understandable chunks, demystifying terminology was a key skill for the ECRs to learn.
- Dealing with school children required a tailored teaching approach. Scientists had to strip down science to make it fun. Experiments were made enjoyable and understandable.
- Relating research to the curriculum was also a key skill that was needed to gain teacher engagement, making concepts relevant to the classroom.
- The need for communication and public engagement skills in the project contributed to the rapid development of such courses in the new Graduate School.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

- ECRs had to plan sessions and take increased ownership over of content

REDISCOVERING DISCIPLINE:

- Researchers noted that they had to ‘rediscover your own disciplines’. This was due to the fact that they had an audience that was not familiar with the detailed research function of the university. As pupils usually think of university as somewhere you can do a degree course, that is, training for a particular career, the fact that universities also conduct research and have staff whose job it is to conduct research was a new concept for many. Indeed, although many pupils might ‘know’ that universities carry out research, few will be aware of how research is carried out, nor the different approaches taken by different disciplines.
- Researchers also noted that being involved in the SUPI gave them the opportunity to understand the wider importance of their own research and how this can be translated to the general public.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

- The rise of the impact agenda in research has meant that it is important for PhD students/ECRs to be able to speak to different audiences. The SUPI project has made sure they have had the experience in doing this and also that they are well equipped to do so moving through their careers.
- ECRs have been very keen to be involved in the themes offered by Queen’s. A number of more junior academic staff have taken part in activities and the SUPI experience has been noted as being very beneficial for career progression. As mentioned previously, several of the theme leads have been promoted during the past four years. It is important to note that all retain enthusiasm for and participation in the project.

ENJOYABLE:

- Some of the researchers involved reported that their participation has provided some respite from their PhD or demonstrating or tutorial duties. Whilst honing and developing transferable skills, the activities can also be enjoyable as they provide the chance to deliver subjects in a different way.

PROJECT STAFFING:

The SUPI Project has afforded the opportunity for numerous staff and students to get involved in the design, development and delivery of the project.

In Year 1, researchers from 8 University Schools were involved in the project, including 8 Senior Academic Staff as Team Leaders, 17 Post-Doctoral Fellows; 16 PhD students, 3 Research Technicians and a Clinical Pathologist. Similar staffing levels were noted in Year 2 of the project.

In Year 3 some 34 researchers including; 14 Academic Staff, 6 PDRAs and 14 PGRs, as well as 6 technicians were associated with programme delivery.

Year 4 noted a total of 55 staff and students involved in the SUPI Project; the Principal Investigator, 8 Project Leads, 4 Administrative Support Staff, 3 technical staff, 13 PhD Students, 9 PDRA's, 7 Academic/Research (Early Career) staff and 10 student guides/ambassadors.

The extensive use of staff and students throughout the 4 years gave a range of experienced and early career staff and students the opportunity to work with new audiences challenging them to think outside the box.

TEACHERS:

- Some of the school teachers who took part in the project relished the opportunity to get engaged with Queen's research, and gave them an insight into how a University operates. Many experienced teaching in university but few were engaged with research. The importance of the research agenda for individuals and for society was clearly recognised.

b) Please list any secondments placements and internships to or from other organisations associated with your SUPI project

- None Noted

9: OTHER

Please state here any other information associated with your SUPI project that you would like RCUK to know as part of final reporting.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (WAPP)

- Queen's University submit an annual Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP) to the Department of the Economy for approval. The WAPP is a formal commitment outlining how the University will aim to widen access through raising the aspirations and attainment of those who are 'most able, least likely' to come to Queen's. The WAPP has two key thematic priorities, reflecting the student lifecycle; Pre-entry Outreach and Flexible Access to Higher Education, and Supporting Transition, Retention, Attainment and Employability. SUPI is included in priority one as: "Develop the sustainability of widening participation opportunities within the Research Councils UK (RCUK)-funded project involving early career and doctoral researchers working with post-primary schools to enhance the pupil learning experience and aspiration, and promote awareness of research", see Annex 3.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY EDUCATION STRATEGY

- Queen's University's new Education Strategy (2016-2021) has a number of key priorities articulated under seven inter-related strands:
 - Dynamic and relevant curriculum and assessment
 - Professional Standards
 - Widening Participation, Equality and Diversity

- Employability, Enterprise and Global Citizenship
- Internationalisation
- Innovation and Flexible Delivery
- Innovation in Postgraduate Taught Education

See Annex 4.

- A key aim within the 'Dynamic and relevant curriculum and assessment' is to "offer cross-disciplinary degrees in each Faculty" and that "all students will have an opportunity to explore the relevance of different disciplines to contemporary challenges facing the world". This will be achieved by developing "opportunities for inter- and multi-disciplinary learning, drawing as appropriate, on Global Research Institutes and Pioneer Research Programmes". The experience of developing cross-disciplinary learning has been core to the development of the SUPI project and researchers have had a positive experience of working creatively and collaboratively. This was reflected in our most recent meeting with the internal group of researchers on next steps when a number of themes were suggested as having potential across a number of subject areas.

EMBEDDING SUPI WITHIN QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

- Embedding SUPI within the Widening Participation Unit (WPU) has given an added element of administrative support to the project. By integrating the project within the Widening Participation Unit, the SUPI has utilised the expertise and experience of WPU staff in raising aspirations. This has allowed the project to access increased Area Learning Communities and Post Primary Schools with which the WPU have effective working relationships. Whilst priorities for the Junior Academy Programme remain working with young people from non-selective schools, working through Area Learning Communities has increased the significance of targeting regional groups of schools. Participants from Widening Participation backgrounds can be identified in any school sector; grammar, secondary or integrated. It is important for these young people to have the opportunity to work with their peers and this is something that we will continue to encourage with future activities. Working with WPU highlights the importance of universities working [with a](#) younger cohort of pupils, something the Queen's SUPI project highlighted from the outset. These increased interactions undoubtedly have the potential to influence a wider age range.
- The Widening Participation Unit and Themes Leads are looking forward to supporting the project over the next three years with the hope of embedding the SUPI more widely within Queen's. Feedback from current theme leads and WPU indicates that it would be a realistic aim to have all subject areas within Queen's involved in SUPI by the end of the next three-year cycle. We believe that this aim is achievable as many of the original staff involved in the first year of SUPI have now been promoted to senior positions within Queen's and act as advocates for it.
- There is potential to ensure professional development for teachers is embedded as part of the SUPI project. Going forward, we would hope to give this aspect of the project more attention as it will increase the overall impact. We will explore developing follow-on workshops and activities to support teachers to enhance their current teaching practice. The Widening Participation Unit will facilitate greater involvement from the teachers to ensure effective linkage with the curriculum. This will address the feedback from some researchers who recommended increased collaboration with

teachers in order that future activities further reflect the curriculum. Guidelines to prepare teachers for SUPI events will be developed. This will facilitate the identification of who would be most appropriate teachers to gain maximum benefit from the project as well as being clear about their role in actively participating in the engagement days.

- Widening Participation and Public Engagement have been working to ensure there is a holistic approach to activities with external partners. This is ongoing but the aim is that it will lead to a university-wide understanding of active projects and opportunities for public engagement of which SUPI is a key strand.
- The new Graduate School has recently agreed a business plan which includes a focus on researchers becoming future leaders. Professor Margaret Topping, Dean of the Graduate School, was a theme lead in the project and, at the recent SUPI celebration event, was keen to highlight her commitment to the future of the project, in particular to work with theme leads to identify opportunities for postgraduate ECRs to show leadership within the project.
- Queen's complies with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and has held the European Commission's Human Resources Excellence in research Award since 2012. The actions that are undertaken to fulfil the University's commitments to these are held by the Graduate School (for postgraduate students) and the Staff Development and Training Unit (for PDRAs). The project will develop its relationship with both to ensure that appropriate and recognised training is made available to the SUPI ECRs.

FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY SUPI PROJECT

- Based on the existing delivery model, the Queen's SUPI project team would be keen to use a similar two stage collaborative model to continue future project delivery. The current model consists of an initial visit to the Area Learning Community (ALC) where a host school facilitates other participating schools and university contributors. In the second stage of the Project, participating ALC's are invited to attend a campus visit to the university and are tasked to produce posters as part of a competition to consolidate pupils learning. This model has proved beneficial to both schools and project staff giving both the opportunity to learn/present outside their normal environments.
- It is envisaged that future projects will also target the Year 9 and 10 pupils. Year 10 is especially important year as young people in Northern Ireland select their GCSE subjects at this point. The project can be particularly influential in these years as some young people may be encouraged to follow particular subject paths such as STEM or the Arts depending on the experiences they have been exposed to through their involvement in the SUPI project. Engaging with cutting edge research may also inspire the next generation of researchers in a range of disciplines.
- Furthermore, it is envisaged that integrating the Queen's University SUPI project with the young people involved in the Queen's University Junior Academy Programme in year 9 and 10, will allow access to a captive audience of schools and young people from Widening Participation backgrounds. These young people will be tracked throughout their school career to Year 12 and then hopefully transfer into the Queen's Senior Academy Programme in Years 13 and 14. Senior Academy Participants take part in aspiration and academic support programmes to support progression to Higher Education.