

# Evaluation of Advancing Access

## Initial Project Report

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## Executive Summary

This Initial Project Report provides a first look at data collected as part of the evaluation of the Advancing Access project by the Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University. The report evaluates based on survey and web analytic data a series of research questions about the Advancing Access delivery so far, namely whether it is working and whether it is reaching target audiences.

### Advancing Access website and Virtual Conference

Between the Advancing Access launch in September 2016 and the data collection cut-off of 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 233 individuals had registered an account on the Advancing Access website, and 174 individuals registered for or participated in the Virtual Conference. 56 individuals did both, meaning that 351 unique individuals interacted with Advancing Access in that period.

Not all users were associated with particular schools – many worked as careers advisors not attached to a particular school; some worked at HEIs or other educational organisations. Of those associated with schools, 173 individual website users were from 149 schools or colleges in England. For the Virtual Conference, 133 individuals were from 108 schools or colleges in England.

Data on these schools gives an initial indication that the website is reaching its target audience. Only a small proportion of schools were identified as independent (3% of registered account holders and 6% of Virtual Conference users). The average rate of free school meals eligibility was above the national average for registered account holders and Virtual Conference users' schools. The average progression rate to any UK was a little over the national average for both sets of users, but below the national average for progression to 'top third' institutions and Russell Group HEIs (p.15).

Around 20% of identified schools were on the Advancing Access target list. At this stage, 7% of schools on the list had accessed either the website or the Virtual Conference (or both). Around two-thirds of schools accessing the website and the Virtual Conference were comprehensive schools and almost 40% were from 'disadvantaged' or cold spot areas, according to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) gaps in higher education participation analysis.

### Web user survey

A survey was delivered to all those who had registered on the Advancing Access website by 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016. 46 responses were received. On average, respondents had 18 years' experience of working in schools or colleges. Participants working in 11-18 and post-16 institutions were asked 'If students from your school / college progress to university, which universities do they most often progress to?' – 33% of the HEIs selected were Russell Group institutions.

The survey responses suggest that Advancing Access is perceived as intended: web users were more likely to agree that they saw Advancing Access materials as 'continuing professional development' than any other use. Information sheets were selected as the most useful resource format, with the presentation and notes the second most useful (p.25).

Feedback was generally positive, with agreement above 90% with statements whether content was useful, up to date, accurate and reflected respondents' own experience with students. Levels of agreement were somewhat lower on whether materials 'provide information that I didn't know before,' which may be linked to respondents' high levels of

prior experience. It will be useful to monitor this relationship as the audience for Advancing Access increases.

To get an early indication of potential impact on learners, respondents were asked 'Have the information and resources from the Advancing Access website improved your ability to support students with...' a range of options (p.27-29). The most positive response was on 'how to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course' (69% selecting 5 or 4 on a five-point scale). Subject specific entry requirements, the detail of student finance, writing references, how to access the most competitive universities or courses, the admissions processes at each university and KS5 choices all had more than 60% of respondents selecting 5 or 4.

## Virtual Conference survey

A survey was delivered to Virtual Conference participants (n = 173), and 49 responses were received. Respondents again had high levels of experience working in schools, with an average of 17 years. As above, respondents were asked about the universities that students from their institution typically go on to; in this case 48% of the HEIs selected were Russell Group institutions.

The majority of respondents (57%) attended the conference for 1-2 hours. The webinars on personal statements and academic references were the most likely to have been attended by survey respondents. When asked how they intended to use the information and resources from different conference areas, respondents were most likely to select 'develop their own knowledge'. 'Direct colleagues to it' was consistently the second most popular response.

Opinions on the quality of information and resources were consistent with the web user survey, with high levels of agreement that the resources were useful, up to date, accurate and reflective of users' own experience. As with the web user survey, there was lower agreement with 'provide information that I didn't know before' (although 73% did agree with this).

Respondents were appreciative of the convenience that the online model provided, with 71% saying that 'no need to travel' had influenced their attendance, and the same percentage selecting 'ease of attending' sessions. 100% of respondents said they were very likely or fairly likely to attend another Virtual Conference in future.

Virtual Conference participants were asked the same questions as website users on whether the resources provided had improved their ability to support students. The most positive response was on preparing for interviews, with over 71% selecting 5 or 4 on a five-point scale. The admissions process at different universities, writing references, preparing for admissions tests and how to write a good personal statement also scored highly.

## Next steps

Advancing Access delivery is still in early stages, with three more strands of the website yet to become available and on the ground delivery of training to commence soon; therefore these findings provide a very early picture of intended use and impact of the delivery. The Final Report will be able to further evaluate impact, as more time will have passed for teachers and advisors to reflect on and embed information and resources from Advancing Access.

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## Introduction

Advancing Access is a collaborative proof of concept project led by twenty-four UK universities (see Appendix A) to deliver an open-access online continuing professional development (CPD) resource for teachers and advisors related to progression to leading universities. The CPD, supplemented by face to face training with a targeted selection of schools and colleges, is designed to increase teachers' and advisors' knowledge about progression to leading universities and challenge any misconceptions they may hold. Targeting of schools and colleges is based on low levels of progression to leading universities.

Advancing Access, hosted by the University of Nottingham, is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and evaluated by the Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University. This initial project report focuses on the first phase of the evaluation, from the website launch in September 2016 to December 2016, and is intended to provide information for use in Advancing Access' response to HEFCE on the reach and potential impact of the project so far. The second phase of the evaluation, which will further investigate the impact of the intervention in schools and colleges, is scheduled for January to July 2017.

### Key evaluation questions

The key research questions for the evaluation are:

1. Does the intervention increase knowledge of enabling factors for progression to leading universities for teachers and advisors?
2. Does the intervention support attitudinal change regarding leading universities for teachers and advisors?
3. If changes in knowledge and attitudes take place for teachers and advisors, how does this affect learners?
4. Does the intervention increase the likelihood of higher-achieving learners at KS4 progressing to study facilitating subjects at KS5?
5. Does the intervention increase the likelihood of higher-achieving learners at KS5 making high-quality applications to leading universities?

A further dimension of the evaluation is investigating *which* schools and colleges, and therefore which learners, are reached by the intervention, as this is central to understanding the impact of Advancing Access. The aforementioned questions explore 'does it work?', however if the intervention only reaches those schools and colleges that are already successful in advising and supporting their most able pupils to access leading HE institutions, this could potentially increase inequality of outcomes rather than closing the gap. Therefore the evaluation also asks the aforementioned questions specifically about target schools and colleges, and further:

6. Has the intervention reached the intended audience?
7. How is the intervention used by the schools and colleges at which it is targeted?

## Advancing Access delivery to date

The Advancing Access website launched in September 2016,<sup>1</sup> with Strand 1: ‘How do I help my students choose a university and course?’ coming online in mid-September. Strands 2-4 will follow in 2017.<sup>2</sup> Strand 1 provides resources for teachers and advisors to support their students’ decision-making prior to making a university application. The resources include a guidebook, information sheets (e.g., information sources available, how to use league tables, the benefits of leading universities, and what life is like on a university campus), a PowerPoint presentation with accompanying notes, sheets to help teachers and advisors reflect, activity sheets for use with students, and five video case studies. There are two ways that users can ‘unlock’ online resources to view and download: individuals can register for an account,<sup>3</sup> or simply provide an email address on each visit to the site (details including region, school/college/organisation, postcode, name and role were also collected at this point).

The first Virtual Conference took place on 1<sup>st</sup> November between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm, with webinar presentations, a virtual staff room, and an exhibition hall. There were four webinar presentations covering personal statements, academic references, additional admissions tests, and applying to medicine, all including a text-based chat forum where delegates could ask questions of presenters and receive live answers. The virtual staff room gave delegates the opportunity to share ideas and receive live answers to questions, while the exhibition hall featured stands for each of the 24 partner universities, with the opportunity to conduct live text-based chat with university representatives and download university-specific materials on areas such as the details of university scholarships and bursaries, admissions policy, and supported progression programmes. Attendance for attendees was flexible, with the option to sign in and out at any point during the three-hour conference.

## Evaluation of delivery to date: surveys and web analytic data

This report focuses on the evaluation conducted against the research questions listed above on Advancing Access’ delivery to date, namely surveys and the analysis of web analytic data.

### Survey development and delivery

Surveys to evaluate each of the delivered components<sup>4</sup> were designed by CEM in discussion with the Project Manager of Advancing Access and received guidance and

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.advancingaccess.ac.uk/>.

<sup>2</sup> Strand 2: How do I help my students apply to university? Strand 3: How do admissions processes work at leading universities? Strand 4: How do I help my students make the right choices for post-16 study?

<sup>3</sup> Creating an Advancing Access account allows website users to track their progress through the CPD, save and interact with resources (i.e., like, rate, share, and comment), access resources without needing to ‘unlock’ them, and receive alerts when new resources are uploaded or there is an event.

<sup>4</sup> The evaluation also included the design of a baseline survey (see Appendix B Baseline Survey) to gauge starting knowledge and attitudes, for example perceptions of the defining characteristics of a ‘leading university’, percentage of UK undergraduates at Russell Group institutions who attended a state school, baseline access to resources, and confidence in advising students about KS4/KS5 choices and applying to leading universities. Prior to delivery of this survey, analysis was intended to match respondents between the baseline and post-intervention surveys, albeit acknowledging that it was not possible to ensure that the same individuals would complete surveys and that the match rate could potentially be low due to the design of the intervention as an open access website. There was little response to the baseline survey (less than 10 respondents),

feedback from the Advancing Access project Steering Group. The surveys were delivered online following the website launch and Virtual Conference. Advancing Access provided CEM with data on individuals who had registered an account on the website,<sup>5</sup> and to date has sent two updates. As such, all who registered for an account by 3<sup>rd</sup> November have received a link to the Initial Web User survey (see Appendix C).

Advancing Access also provided CEM with a list of individuals who registered in advance for the Virtual Conference. All registrants were sent a link to the Virtual Conference survey (see Appendix D) when the conference ended on the 1<sup>st</sup> November; a pop up as each attendee left the conference also included a link to the survey. The day after the conference, Advancing Access provided CEM with an updated list of conference registrants/attendees, and the survey mailing list was updated. An email to registrants/attendees from Advancing Access on the day after the conference also included a link to the survey.

Two additional reminders were then sent out for each survey; those who responded by 10<sup>th</sup> November are considered in this report.

### Research questions 1 and 2

The post-intervention surveys include questions that address the first two research questions for the evaluation regarding knowledge and attitudinal change. These include questions such as “The information and resources provide information that I didn’t know before”, and “How likely are you now to advise students at your school/college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?” As such, these questions are addressed in this report.

### Research question 2

Given that the third research question is learner-focused (*if changes in knowledge and attitudes take place for teachers and advisors, how does this affect learners?*), and the post-intervention surveys were targeted at teachers and advisors, this question will be considered as part of Phase 2 of the evaluation, which will include learner focus groups at two schools that have been involved in piloting Advancing Access.

### Research questions 4 and 5

Because the fourth and fifth research questions are regarding increases in the likelihood surrounding higher-achieving students either progressing to study facilitating subjects at KS4 or making high-quality applications to leading universities, at this early point in the evaluation and with the data collected so far, we can only extrapolate about such increases from the responses provided by teachers/advisors via the post-intervention surveys.<sup>6</sup> An example of a related item is asking teachers and advisors “Have the information and resources from the

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and as such reporting on this data in this report would be inappropriate. However, this low response at baseline was taken into account in the subsequent development of the post-intervention surveys, such that these could stand alone in capturing change at the post-intervention time point, rather than requiring comparisons across the baseline and post-survey matched items and respondents.

<sup>5</sup> Anecdotally, to date only a small number of individuals (less than 10) had opted to download resources without registering for an account; the large majority of users chose to register. Data on these individuals was not available in time for surveying and inclusion in this report due to technical issues in downloading the data from the website.

<sup>6</sup> Ideally, this topic would be investigated further using the National Pupil Database (NPD), as this would give an accurate measure of learners’ subject choice. However, the time lag on the availability of this data (for example, data on the subject taken by learners making KS5 choices in 2016/17 – starting study in 2017/18 – would be available for analysis in October 2019) means that it is not possible to use NPD data within the timescale of the current evaluation.

Advancing Access Virtual Conference improved your ability to support students with choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university?”

### Research question 6

This report can also comment on the sixth research question, whether the intervention has reached the intended audience so far, using website analytics provided by Advancing Access on those who have registered an account by 3<sup>rd</sup> November.<sup>7</sup> These data include the types of website users (i.e., teacher, advisors, etc.), and which school they currently work for. The website analytic data provided also includes a sign in count. For this report, we have compared the website user data with a pre-specified list of ‘target schools’ provided by Advancing Access in order to determine whether staff in these schools have interacted with the website. We have also matched website user data with publicly available contextual data on schools to evaluate the reach of the website.

### Research question 7

The final research question underpinning the evaluation, how the intervention is used by target schools and colleges could not be meaningfully addressed in this report. The number of survey respondents coming from target schools was too small to conduct a meaningful comparison of their quantitative responses against those of the rest of their respondents. Further exploration of the free responses of those in this subgroup also failed to provide enough information to conduct a comparison. With continued surveying and collection of web analytic data, this question can be explored in more detail. Furthermore, as current survey questions are mostly regarding intentions for use rather than use, given the tight turnaround for evaluation, the telephone interviews and interview visits with two schools involved in piloting the programme in Phase 2 of the evaluation should contribute to a meaningful answer to this question. Given that more time will have passed between the delivery of the intervention and the second phase of evaluation, it will be useful to see at this later point if and how target schools and colleges are reflecting on and embedding the Advancing Access resources and information.

### Scope of the report

This Initial Project Report will summarise the analysis of the web analytic data, and the quantitative responses<sup>8</sup> to the Initial Web User and Virtual Conference Surveys. Based on the findings of the evaluation in relation to the overarching research questions, recommendations will be made for the continuing evaluation of the project.

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<sup>7</sup> The evaluation will also investigate whether the delivery of face-to-face training has reached its intended audience, i.e., whether the schools and colleges that have requested and attended face-to-face sessions are on Advancing Access’ target list. This training had not taken place by the time of writing this report, and will be included in the report on the second phase of the evaluation.

<sup>8</sup> Qualitative free response data (along with additional quantitative data from those engaging with Advancing Access following this report) will be analysed in the final evaluation report, at the end of Phase 2 of the evaluation (July 2017).



## Website analytic data

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the main questions underlying the evaluation of Advancing Access is whether the intervention is reaching teachers and advisors in target schools and colleges and supporting their students' access to leading universities. In this section of the report, we investigate which schools have accessed the website and address the sixth research question: whether the intervention has reached the intended audience so far.

The intended audience comprises schools on Advancing Access' 'target list' of 697 schools. A further match was made to determine if those engaging with the Advancing Access components came from schools in cold spot areas, as identified by HEFCE. Matching to HEFCE cold spot areas was based on HEFCE's analysis of 2001 census wards in England where there are gaps between the expected and observed levels of young participation in higher education.<sup>9</sup> In HEFCE's analysis, wards are categorized into quintiles: quintile 1 has lower young participation in HE than expected, and quintile 5 has higher young participation in HE than expected.

We also provide a more general overview of the status of those who have engaged with the website and Virtual Conference, and their sign-in count, to give an idea of the reach of Advancing Access. This overview also comprises summary statistics based on matching the datasets with publicly available contextual data on schools, which includes:

- type of school
- schools' admissions policy type
- percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- percentage of pupils eligible for FSM in the last six years
- attainment at Key Stage 4 (% of pupils attaining 5+ A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent, including A\*-C in both English and Mathematics)
- attainment at Key Stage 5 (% of pupils attaining AAB at A-level)
- percentage of students progressing to Higher Education

Further to the contents of this report, we have updated the website registered account holders and the Virtual Conference registrant and attendee datasets with this data, where confident matches could be made based on data provided.

## Methodology

The web analytic data reported on here is for the two datasets: those who had registered an account on the website by 3<sup>rd</sup> November, and those on the registrant and attendee list for the Virtual Conference held on 1<sup>st</sup> November. This data was provided to CEM by Advancing Access via secure transfer, and fields provided include: name, school, region, postcode, sign-in count, and date the account was created (a full list of the column headers provided for each dataset can be found in Appendix E).

A process of data cleaning was carried out as part of creating successive mailing lists for the post-intervention surveys. Further checks of provided data, for example, where there was missing school name, postcode or Unique Reference (URN) data, were carried out as part of

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<sup>9</sup> Further information on gaps in young participation in higher education can be found here: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/gaps/>.

the process of matching to publicly available contextual data.<sup>10</sup> Technical details of each of these processes is included in Appendix F.

Matching to the target list provided by Advancing Access was done on the basis of URN and school name.<sup>11</sup> Matching for the HEFCE cold spots analysis was conducted with the aid of the GeoConvert website:<sup>12</sup> census wards in the gaps datasets were matched to data derived from the Advancing Access datasets, and the associated quintile was pulled across for each school or college.

School characteristics and contextual data, listed above, were matched on the basis of URN from Edubase,<sup>13</sup> as were the census, 2016 provisional KS4 attainment data, and KS5 attainment data for 2014-15, which are drawn from the DfE performance tables.<sup>14</sup>

## General overview

### Individual registrations

When data cleaning procedures were complete, a count was made of the number of individuals in each dataset. 233 individuals had registered an account on the Advancing Access website, and 174 individuals were on the Virtual Conference list. A match was conducted to determine the crossover between the two lists: 56 of those with registered accounts were also on the Virtual Conference list, signifying that in total 351 unique individuals have interacted with Advancing Access so far.

The table and figures below summarises the sign-in count data for individuals in each dataset:

Dataset	Number in dataset	Sign-in count average	Sign-in count min	Sign-in count max
Registered website account holders	233 <sup>15</sup>	1.3	1	5
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	174	1.7	1	9

The pattern of sign-in suggests that for the main website, users tend to have signed in just once at this stage – this is not unsurprising given that the website had been live for only a few weeks at the point of analysis. We might expect to see this rate increase in future,

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in some cases, the URN provided as part of the dataset did not match the postcode or school name. Upon investigation, URN provided was for a school that had closed, and a new URN had been allocated to the school/academy. Further notes on cleaning and matching the datasets are covered in Appendix E.

<sup>11</sup> Five and only one additional school in the website and Virtual Conference datasets respectively appeared as part of the name-based matching, all the remaining matched schools were found via URN-matching.

<sup>12</sup> GeoConvert, provided by UK Data Service Census Support, can be accessed via: <http://geoconvert.mimas.ac.uk/>.

<sup>13</sup> Edubase can be accessed via: <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml>.

<sup>14</sup> DfE census and KS4 and KS5 attainment data can be downloaded via: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>.

<sup>15</sup> The original dataset provided by Advancing Access had 35 students on it, none of whom came from target schools, and these 35 are not counted in the above figure of 233.

especially if Advancing Access are able to maintain contact with registered users as new strands are launched. The average sign-in count for virtual conference attendees indicates that many registered for the conference before their attendance; although some attendees simply registered on the evening of the event and some registered but did not ultimately attend.

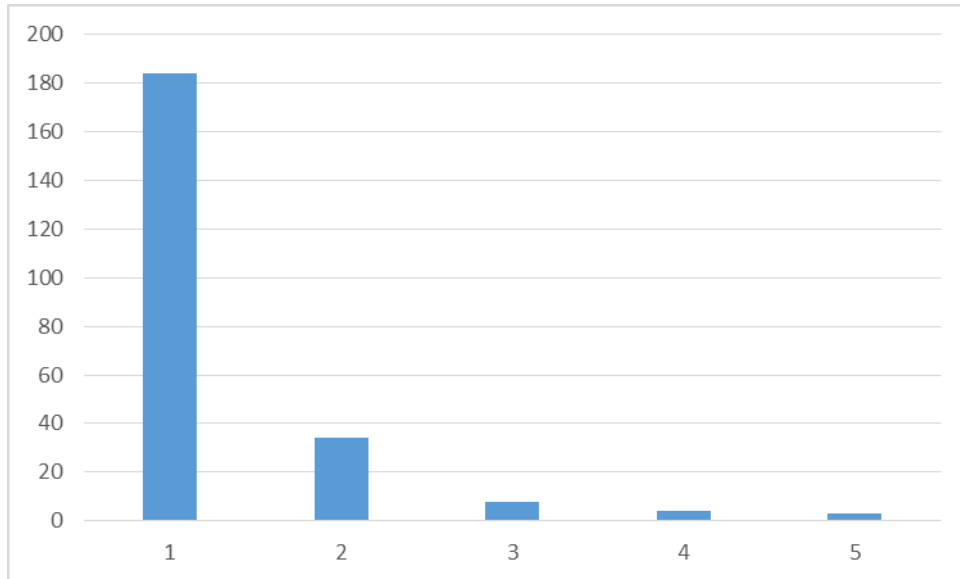


Figure 1. Sign-in count for Website Users

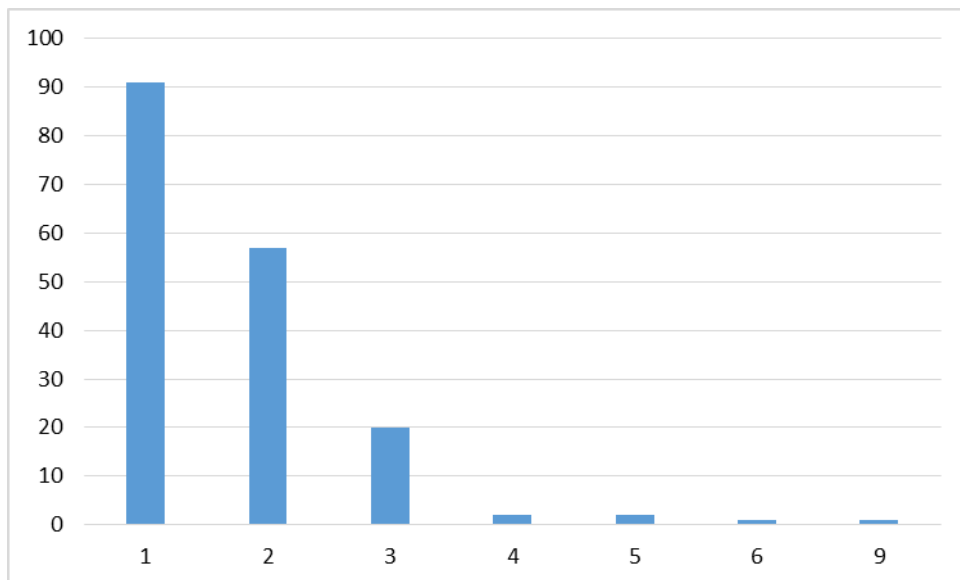


Figure 2. Sign-in count for Virtual Conference registrants and attendees

## Schools and colleges

After following the matching procedure as detailed in Appendix F, the dataset of individuals and their associated data was rationalised to retain a single line for each school, college or other institution.

For **registered account holders**, 173 individuals were from 149 schools or colleges in England. There were 11 individuals from 9 institutions in Wales, 3 from 3 different institutions in Scotland, and one individual from an international school; all of these institutions make up the 162 institutions listed in the table below.

Five individual account holders were from five different universities in England. One individual was identified as from a private tuition company, and there was no school data provided for 36 individuals (15.5%), which in some cases was due to individuals working as career advisors or in school-related occupations rather than attached to a school. There were three international individuals not attached to schools. None of these individuals or institutions are included in the figures in the table.

For **Virtual Conference users**, 133 individuals were from 108 schools or colleges in England. There were 7 individuals from 4 institutions in Wales, 2 from 2 different schools in Scotland, and one individual from an international school. These institutions are included in the count in the table.

Three individuals were from three different universities in England, and one individual from a university in Scotland. There were two international individuals not attached to schools. There was no school data provided for 28 individuals (16%), which in some cases was due to individuals working as career advisors or in school-related occupations rather than attached to a school. None of these individuals or institutions are included in the figures in the table.

<b>Dataset</b>	<b>Number of Schools/Colleges</b>	<b>Institutions in England</b>
Registered website account holders	162	149 (92%)
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	115	108 (94%)

## Characteristics of schools and colleges in England

Contextual data was only available for schools and colleges in England and the analysis here refers to the 149 (registered account holders) and 108 (Virtual Conference users) institutions identified.

### Admissions policy

The table and figures below show the admissions policies for matched schools and colleges; the majority of schools and colleges engaging with Advancing Access had comprehensive admissions policies. (Not applicable, unknown and not collected are all categories in Edubase.)

Admissions Policy	Dataset	
	Registered website account holders <sup>16</sup>	Virtual Conference registrants/attendees <sup>17</sup>
Comprehensive/ Comprehensive (secondary)	97 (65%)	72 (67%)
Modern	4 (3%)	0
Selective/ Selective (grammar)	9 (6%)	9 (8%)
Not applicable	5 (3%)	19 (18%)
Unknown	34 (23%)	7 (6%)
Not collected	0	1 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>108</b>

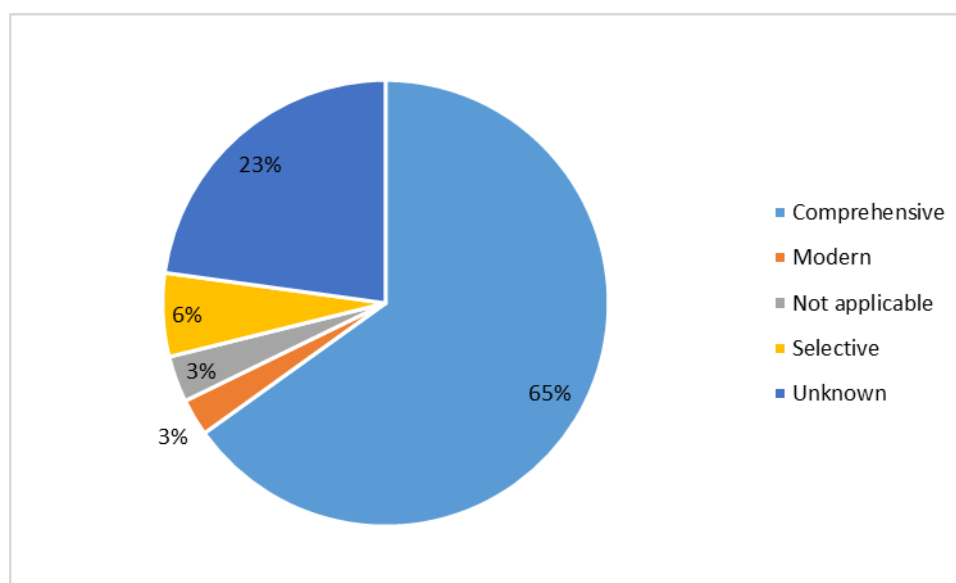


Figure 3. Admissions Policy for Registered Account Holders' Schools/Colleges

<sup>16</sup> Percentages calculated based on data for 149 institutions, there was no data for 60 individuals (out of the 233 in this dataset, i.e., 26%).

<sup>17</sup> Percentages calculated based on data for 108 institutions, there was no data for 44 individuals (out of the 174 in this dataset, i.e., 25%).

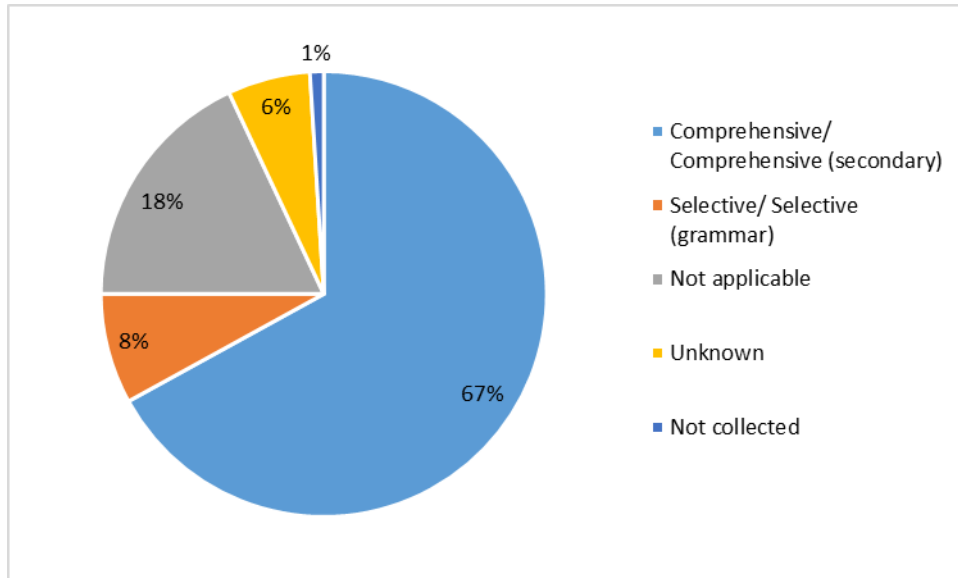


Figure 4. Admissions Policy for Virtual Conference Registrants'/Attendees' Schools/Colleges

### School type

The table shows the school type of matched schools and colleges. Note that some categories presented here merge one or more Edubase categories for ease of interpretation; the full breakdown of categories can be found in the dataset provided to Advancing Access. Only a small number of matched schools engaging with the intervention were identified as independent schools: 5 schools in registered account holders and 7 Virtual Conference users.

School type	Dataset	
	Registered website account holders	Virtual Conference registrants/attendees
Academy (Mainstream)	77 (52%)	59 (55%)
Community School	14 (9%)	6 (6%)
Foundation School	9 (6%)	6 (6%)
Further Education College/Institution	11 (7%)	18 (17%)
Other Independent School	5 (3%)	7 (6%)
Sixth Form College/Centre	19 (13%)	6 (6%)
Voluntary Aided/Controlled School	7 (5%)	3 (3%)
Other state school or college	7 (5%)	3 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>108</b>

### Free School Meals eligibility

The table below indicates the Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility for schools and colleges that we were confidently able to match, where these data were available. Averages are calculated based on the number of schools for which there was available data. Schools and colleges may have missing data if they have been recently established or changed status, for example. The figures show the distribution of each variable.

Dataset	% of pupils eligible for FSM for academic year 2014-15				% of pupils eligible for FSM at any time during the past 6 years for academic year 2014-15			
	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg
Registered website account holders	16	0	58	13.9	30	0	74	29.3
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	14	2	45	13.9	28	3	69	29.3

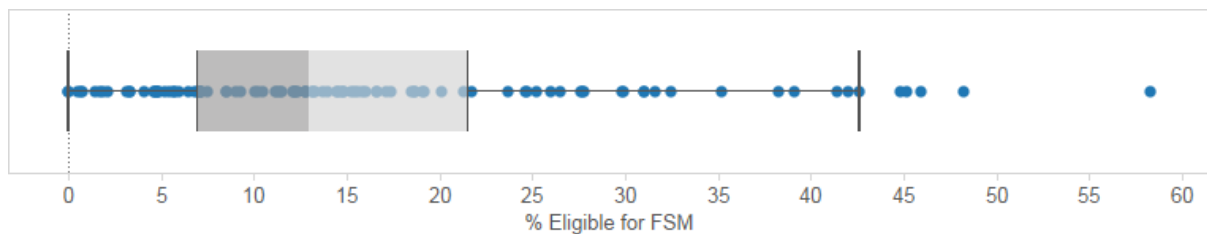


Figure 5: Distribution of % Eligible for FSM for Registered Account Holders' Schools/Colleges

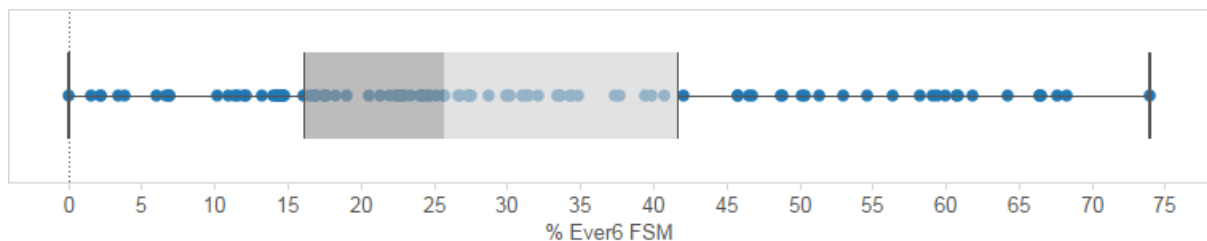


Figure 6: Distribution of % Eligible for FSM in the past 6 years for Registered Account Holders' Schools/Colleges

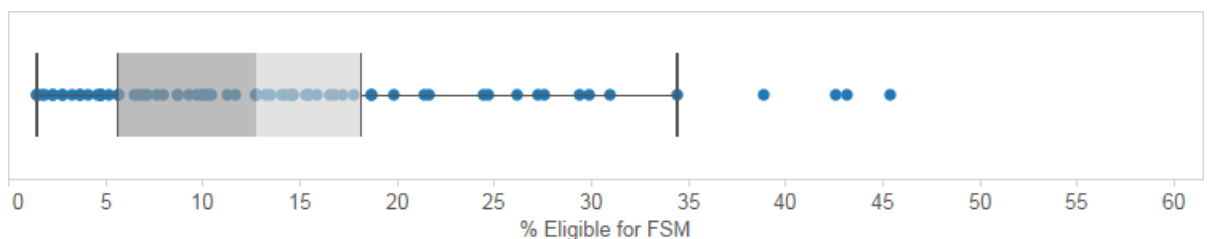


Figure 7: Distribution of % Eligible for FSM for Virtual Conference Registrants/Attendees' Schools/Colleges

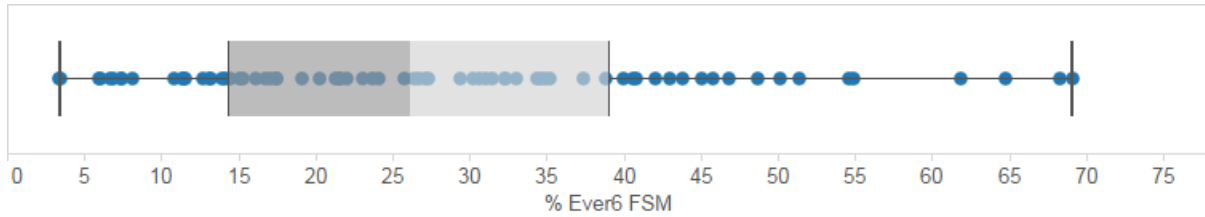


Figure 8: Distribution of % Eligible for FSM in the past 6 years for Virtual Conference Registrants/Attendees' Schools/Colleges

### Attainment and progression to higher education

The table below gives details of the academic attainment at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, as well as progression to a UK higher education institution, for schools and colleges that we were confidently able to match, where these data were available.

Dataset	% pupils achieving 5+ A*-C or equivalents including A*-C in both English and mathematics GCSEs (Provisional 2016)				% of A level students achieving 3 A levels at grades AAB or higher (of which at least two are in facilitating subjects, 2014-15)			
	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg
Registered website account holders	58	0	100	56.8	11	0	73	13.1
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	56	0	100	56.8	11	0	73	13.1

Dataset	% going on to UK HEI (England 2012-13)				% going on to top third UK HEI (England 2012-13)			
	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg
Registered website account holders	53	8	83	48	20	0	72	16
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	55	16	83	48	21	0	72	16

Dataset	% going on to Russell Group HEI (England 2012-13)			
	Avg	Min	Max	Nat. avg
Registered website account holders	15	0	67	11
Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	15	0	67	11



The figures below show the distribution of the percentage of pupils going on to a UK HEI, a top third UK HEI and a Russell Group HEI, for website account holders and Virtual Conference users.

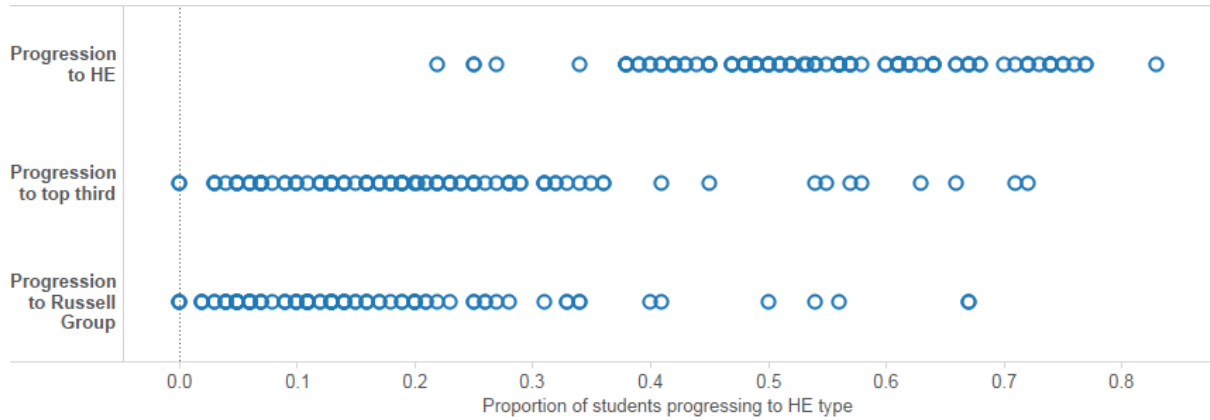


Figure 9: Distribution of % progressing to UK HEIs 2012-13 for Registered Account Holders' Schools/Colleges

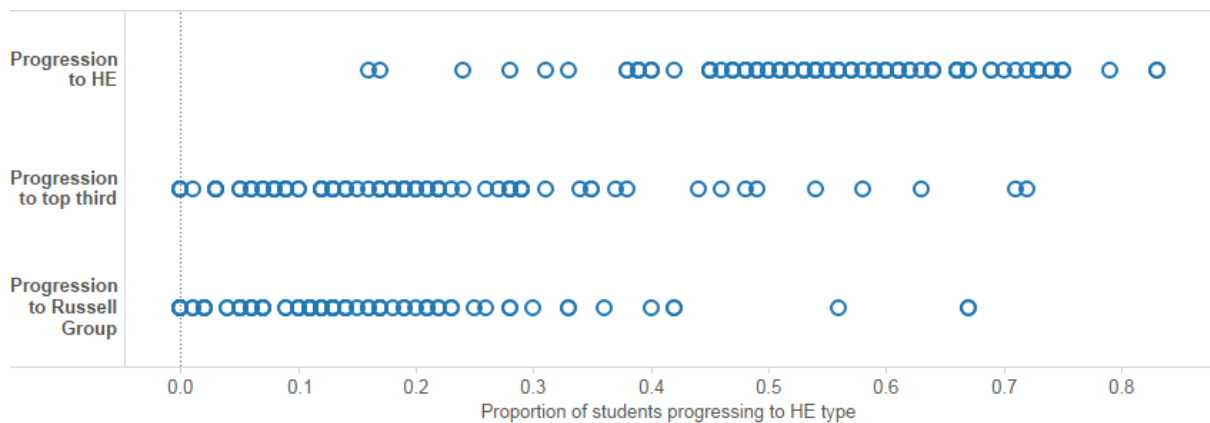


Figure 10: Distribution of % progressing to UK HEIs 2012-13 for Virtual Conference Registrants'/Attendees' Schools/Colleges

### Geographical location

The maps below show the location of matched schools and colleges in England. These maps give an early indication of the reach of Advancing Access.

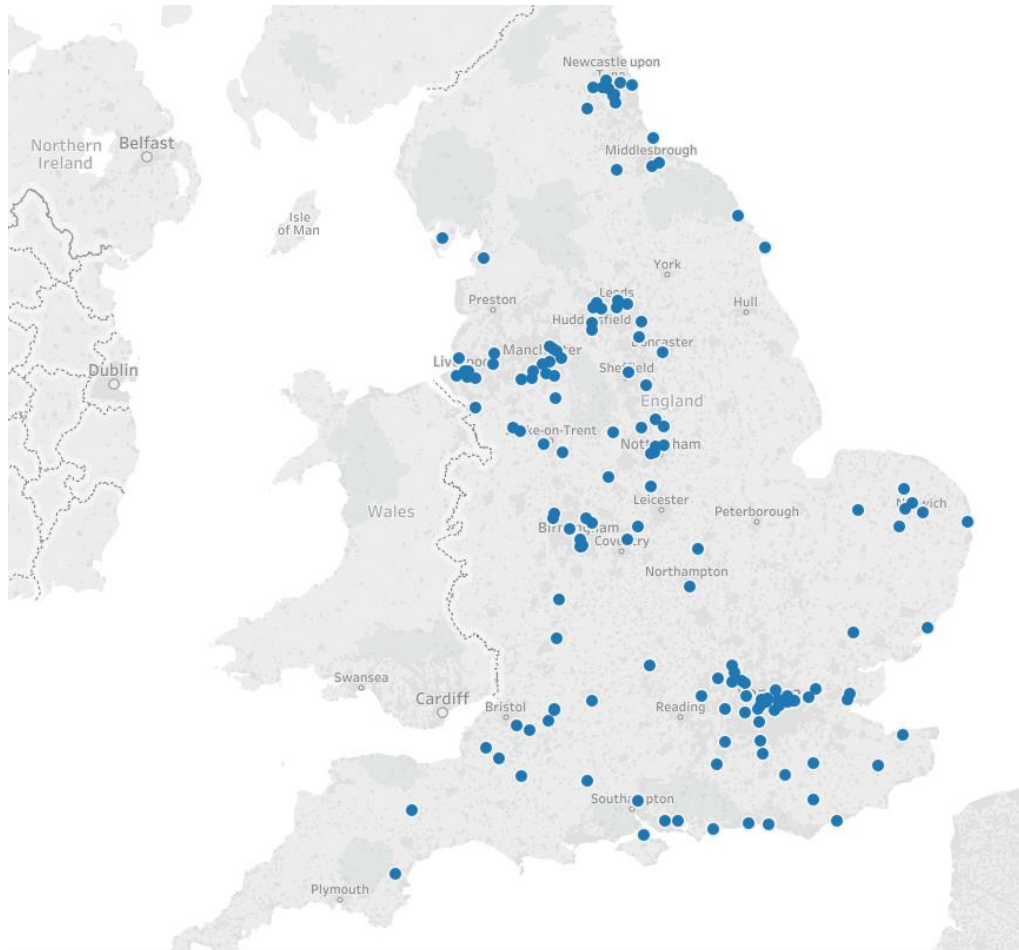


Figure 11: Location of Registered Account Holders' Schools/Colleges in England

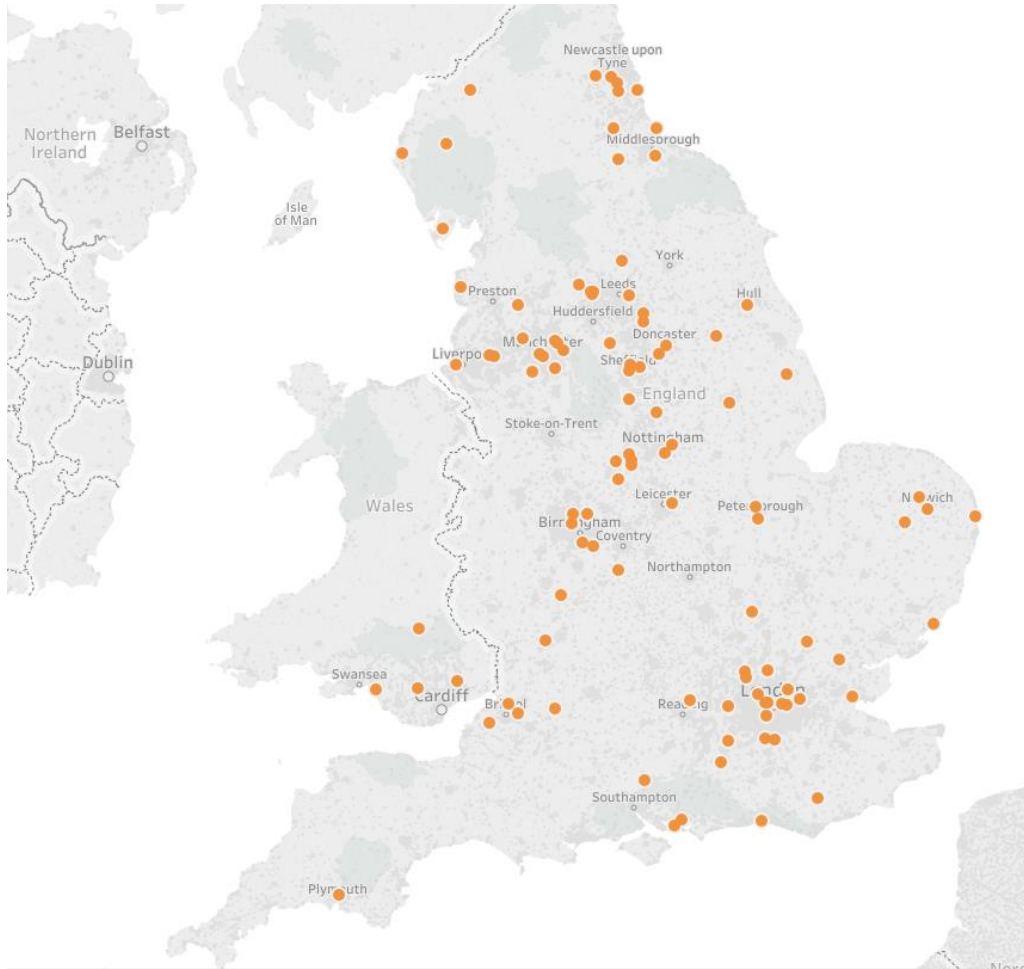


Figure 12: Location of Virtual Conference Registrants'/Attendees' Schools/Colleges in England

## Target schools

Advancing Access provided CEM with a dataset of target schools. This section investigates the overlap between the target schools list and the datasets of schools and colleges in England described in the section above.

The target schools list provided by Advancing Access contains data on 697 schools in England, and includes data on school postcodes, UCAS codes, school names and Local Authority, as well as KS4 and KS5 attainment. The summary statistics for the dataset are provided below:

Field name	Average	Min	Max
Average point score per A level student (full-time equivalent)	673	0	956
Percentage achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and maths GCSEs	56%	0%	99%

The average percentage of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and maths GCSEs for the target schools was around the same for the full datasets of those engaging with Advancing Access via the website and Virtual Conference.

## Target schools engaging with Advancing Access

### *Registered account holders*

37 individuals who had registered accounts on the website came from a total of 29 target schools, representing 16% of total registered users (n = 37/233) or 20% of the total English schools (n = 29/149) registered on the website.

### *Virtual Conference users*

25 individuals on the Virtual Conference list came from a total of 23 target schools, representing 14% of all Virtual Conference users (n = 25/174) or 21% of the total English schools (n = 23/108) on the Virtual Conference list.

### *Users of both platforms*

The lists were combined to remove duplicate users (i.e. those who had registered for both a website account and the Virtual Conference). In total, across both lists, individuals from 45 target schools and colleges (approximately 7% of the 697 total target schools), engaged with Advancing Access either through the website or Virtual Conference.

## HEFCE cold spots

Out of the 233 total individuals who registered an account on the Advancing Access website, there were 60 individuals for whom there was no cold spots data, due to coming from a university, an International, Scottish, or Welsh school, or through not being clearly associated with a school. The remaining 173 individuals came from 149 unique schools. Each school's Unique Reference Number (URN) was linked to the up to date Administrative Ward listed for that school in Edubase. The HEFCE gap analysis<sup>18</sup> is based on 2001 census wards. Using the Geoconvert website, matches were conducted between the Edubase Administrative wards and the 2001 census wards. There were three schools for whom we were unable to make a confident match to a gaps ward, due to disparities over time between wards. Out of the remaining 146 schools for whom a confident match could be made, 50 schools (34%) were in quintile 1 or 2, considered by HEFCE as 'disadvantaged'.

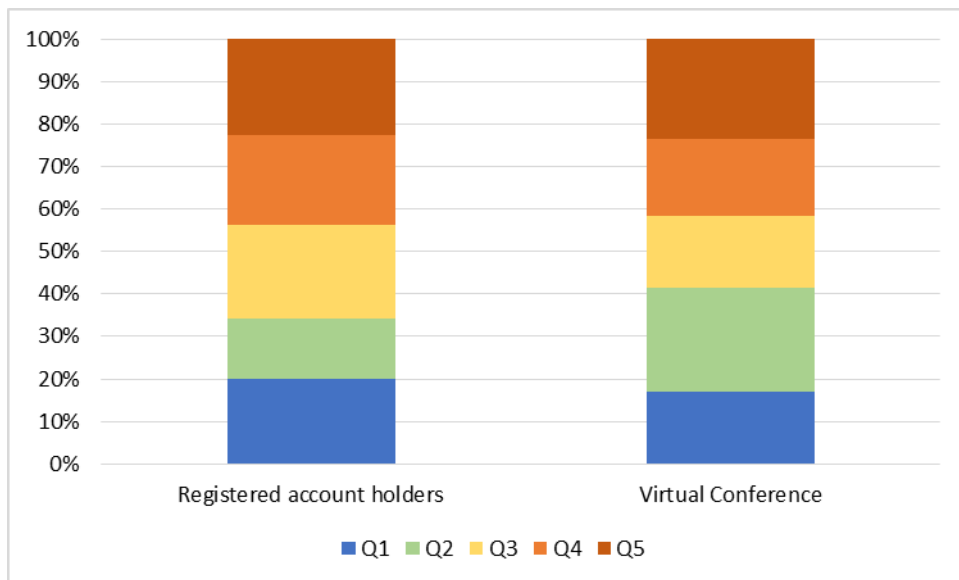
Out of the 174 total individuals on the registrants/attendees list for the Virtual Conference, there were 44 individuals for whom there was no cold spots data, due to coming from a university, an International, Scottish, or Welsh school, or through not being clearly associated with a school. The remaining 130 individuals came from 108 unique schools. The same procedure was used to link school URNs with Administrative Wards listed on Edubase, as described in the web account holder analysis. There were two schools for whom we were unable to make a confident match to a gaps ward, again due to disparities over time between wards. Out of the remaining 106 schools for whom a confident match could be made, 44 schools (42%) were in quintile 1 or 2, considered by HEFCE as 'disadvantaged'.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/gaps/>

The number of schools in each participation gap quintile for both datasets are shown in the table and graph below.

Participation gap quintile	Registered website account holders		Virtual Conference registrants/attendees	
	N (of schools)	% (of 146 schools)	N (of schools)	% (of 106 schools)
1	29	20%	18	17%
2	21	14%	26	25%
3	32	22%	18	17%
4	31	21%	19	18%
5	33	23%	25	24%



## Initial Web User Survey

The Initial Web User survey (see Appendix C) was delivered to a total of 233 individuals who had registered an account on the Advancing Access website by 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The survey email bounced back/was undeliverable to the email addresses provided by 3 individuals, hence the response rate of 20%<sup>19</sup> (n = 46) for the survey is out of 230. Not all respondents answered every question,<sup>20</sup> so there may be some variation in the total values across questions, however this should not affect the overall message.

We attempted a comparison of quantitative responses from those survey respondents who came from target schools as compared to the rest of those engaging with the website, in an attempt to answer the seventh research question on how target schools are using Advancing Access, however the number of individuals in the former group was too small (n = 8, 17%, from seven target schools) to validly conduct such group-level comparison. Study of free response data provided by this subgroup also failed to provide enough information for insight into this subgroup.

### Background of respondents

The respondents were asked about their role in school, with the breakdown of responses shown in the table below.

<b>Role</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Head teacher	0	0%
Deputy Head	1	2%
Head of Sixth Form	8	17%
Assistant Head of Sixth Form	3	7%
Head of Subject (or equivalent)	3	7%
Careers Advisor	15	33%
Teacher	1	2%
Other	12	26%
Missing	3	7%

There was a chance for respondents to select 'other' and over a quarter of respondents chose this, providing further details that included roles such as 'Access Project coordinator (external charity provider)', 'Head of Year 13', and 'Student Services Manager'. One respondent worked for an independent widening participation provider and one worked in assessment.

Respondents were also asked how long they had been working in schools, and the responses ranged from 1-38 years, with an average of 18 years. When asked how long they had been working in their current school or college, the average was 9 years. Out of those who responded regarding whether they had been a student ambassador or student mentor while at university, 12% (n = 5) had done so.

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<sup>19</sup> Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. As a result, rows may not add up to 100%. Similarly, smaller numbers of responses may be represented by 0%.

<sup>20</sup> For example, two respondents began the survey but did not complete.

The majority of respondents selected the post-16 (including 11-18) stage of education as best characterising the school/college they worked in, with only 14% (n = 6) of those who responded to this question saying they worked with the 11-16 range. When those working in 11-16 schools were asked about the post-16 destinations of their students, 4 selected A-levels, and two selected 'other' providing the responses 'GCSE and BTEC qualifications', and 'all of these but mainly A-levels'.<sup>21</sup>

For those who selected post-16 (including 11-18) as best characterising their school/college, the majority of those who responded regarding the post-18 destinations of their students selected 'University' (79%, n = 27).<sup>22</sup> Post-16 respondents were also asked, 'If students from your school / college progress to university, which universities do they most often progress to?', and could select the main three universities from three drop down lists. There were 91 selections in total, of which 30 (33%) were Russell Group institutions. The selections were combined for analysis and the universities selected more than once are shown in the table below.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>N</b>
University of Sheffield	4
Aston University	3
Birmingham City University	3
Cardiff University (Prifysgol Caerdydd)	3
Manchester Metropolitan University	3
University of Birmingham	3
University of Leeds	3
University of Nottingham	3
Bournemouth University	2
Cardiff Metropolitan University (Prifysgol Metropolitan Caerdydd)	2
Coventry University	2
De Montfort University	2
Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan University)	2
Leeds Trinity University	2
Northumbria University Newcastle	2
Queen Mary, University of London	2
Swansea University (Prifysgol Abertawe)	2
University of Cambridge	2
University of Huddersfield	2
University of Kent	2
University of South Wales (Prifysgol De Cymru)	2
University of Sunderland	2

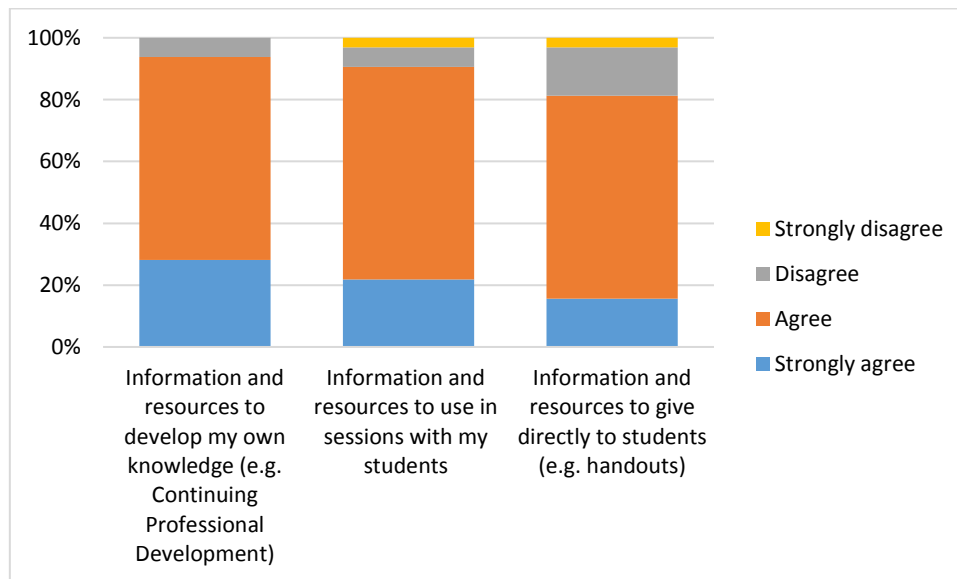
<sup>21</sup>The options provided were: A-levels, Career-focused qualifications such as BTEC or NVQ, Apprenticeship or other work-based programme, Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc., Armed forces, and Other (please specify):.

<sup>22</sup> The options provided were: University, Further education institution, Apprenticeship or other work-based programme, Employment, Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc, Armed forces, and Other (please specify):.

## General responses to website and delivery

In terms of more general responses to the website, respondents were asked to respond on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' with whether the information and resources on the Advancing Access website are best characterised as the descriptions shown below. The highest percentage of 'strongly agree' was for the description "Information and resources to develop my own knowledge (e.g. Continuing Professional Development)", in line with the underlying intentions of the project.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Information and resources to develop my own knowledge (e.g. Continuing Professional Development)	9	28	21	66	2	6	0	0
Information and resources to use in sessions with my students	7	22	22	69	2	6	1	3
Information and resources to give directly to students (e.g. handouts)	5	16	21	66	5	16	1	3



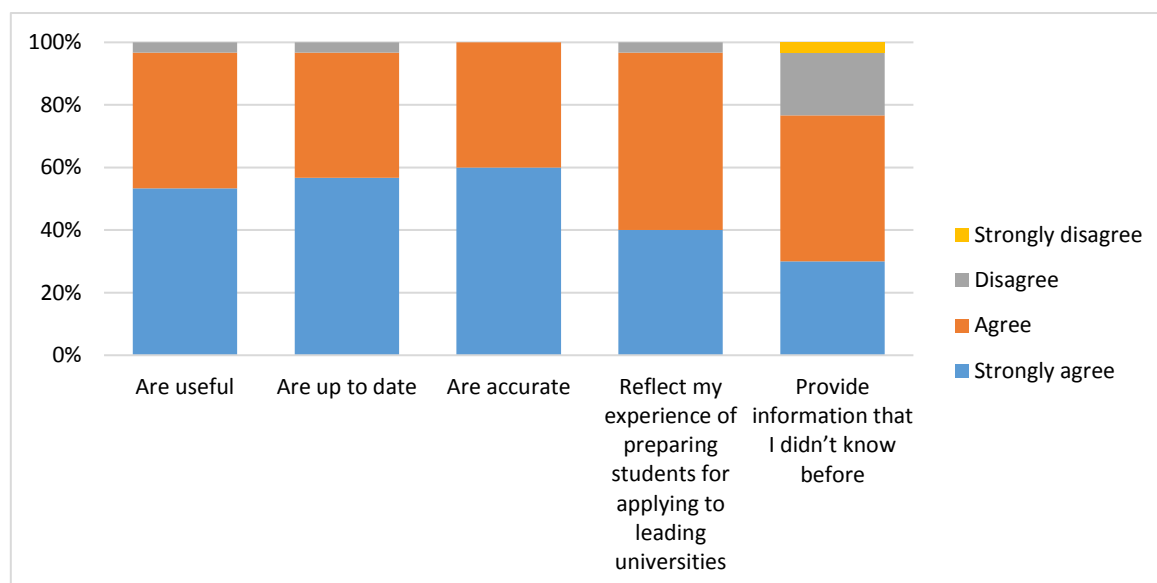


Respondents were also asked to select the most useful format of resources that they had found on the Advancing Access website (i.e., for Strand 1 so far), and selected the Information Sheets.

Resource Format	Selected	
	N	%
Guidebooks	0	0
Information sheets	12	40
Presentation and presentation notes	9	30
Student activity sheets	3	10
Video case studies	6	20

Respondents were asked to show how much they agreed, on a scale from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’, with various statements about the information and resources on the Advancing Access website, shown in the table below. For the first four items, agreement (strongly agree or agree) was above 97%. The highest disagreement was for the statement ‘Provide information that I didn’t know before’, which is linked to the research question *does the intervention increase knowledge of enabling factors for progression to leading universities for teachers and advisors*, with which 7 respondents (23%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Are useful	16	53	13	43	1	3	0	0
Are up to date	17	57	12	40	1	3	0	0
Are accurate	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
Reflect my experience of preparing students for applying to leading universities	12	40	17	57	1	3	0	0
Provide information that I didn’t know before	9	30	14	47	6	20	1	3



Respondents were then asked specifically about how they intend to engage with resources available as part of Strand 1, which provides support regarding the decisions involved prior to making a university application. The specific resources and the use most commonly selected are presented in the table below, with an asterisk (\*) next to those for which there were two equally most commonly selected uses. The most commonly selected use across resources was 'direct students to it'. The guidebook was selected by the largest number of respondents for developing respondents' own knowledge, with an equivalent number of respondents selecting that they would direct students to the Sources of information info sheet.

	<b>Yes (N, %)</b>
Use it to develop my own knowledge	Guidebook: 11, 24%
Build it into lessons	Benefits of a leading university: 8, 17% Presentation notes: 6, 13%*
Direct students to it	Sources of information: 11, 24% Using league tables: 7, 15% Life on a university campus: 6, 13%* Presentation: 6, 13% Presentation notes: 6, 13%* Video case studies: 10, 22%
Embed it into a CPD session with colleagues	
Direct colleagues to it	
Haven't looked at this resource / strand yet	Life on a university campus: 6, 13%* Teacher and advisor reflection sheet: 7, 15% Student activity sheet: 10, 22%

Respondents were also asked about factors that might prevent them using the resources, or limit the impact of the resources in their school or college. While almost half of those answering each question responded that none of the below factors were likely to prevent them from using the resources or limit their impact, the second most commonly selected was 'Not enough time' for both questions.

	What factor, if any, is most likely to prevent you using the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?		What factor, if any, is most likely to limit the impact of the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?	
	N	%	N	%
None	14	50	11	41
Not part of my role	1	4	1	4
Don't have the support within school	1	4	1	4
Not enough time	10	36	8	30
Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college	0	0	0	0
Students' own perceptions / aspirations	1	4	5	19
My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university	0	0	1	4
Other	1	4	0	0

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate how likely it was that these factors would prevent them from embedding the materials into current practice at their school or college, with over 80% of respondents selecting 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely'.

	Very likely		Fairly likely		Not very likely		Not at all likely	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How likely is it that these factors will prevent you from successfully embedding Advancing Access resources and information into current practice at your school / college?	0	0	5	19	14	52	8	30

## Changes for learners

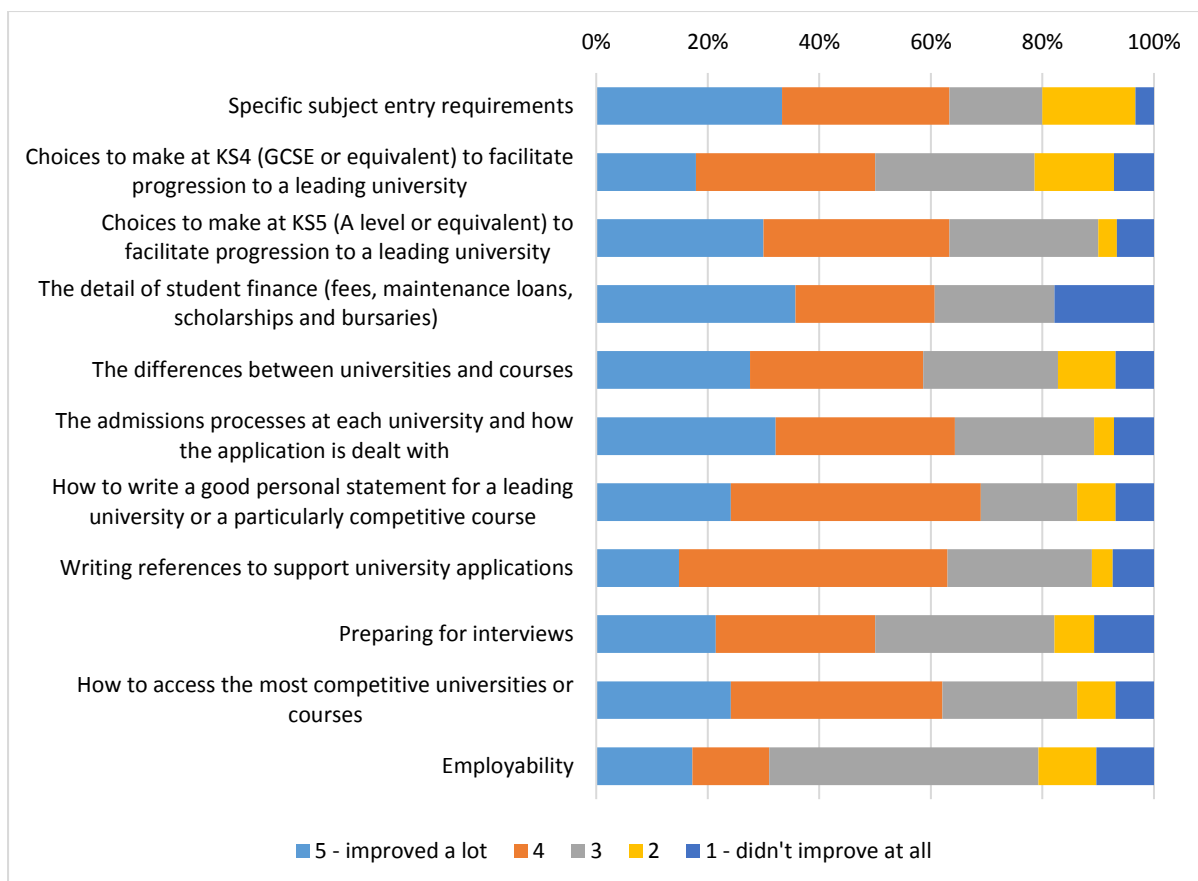
The research questions underlying the evaluation also included changes for learners, in terms of an increased likelihood of their progression to study facilitating subjects at KS5, and making high-quality applications to leading universities.

Respondents were asked a general question to gauge changes in these factors, 'Have the information and resources from the Advancing Access website improved your ability to support students with' and then given the statements shown in the table below, which they could respond to on a scale of '5 – improved a lot' to '1 – didn't improve at all'.

In terms of increasing the likelihood of students progressing to study facilitating subjects, relevant items are 'Specific subject entry requirements', as providing a direction or goal for students, and 'Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent)...' and 'Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent)...' to facilitate progression to a leading university. For each of these statements, the majority of response was characterised by '5 – improved a lot' or '4',

with 63% selecting these options for subject entry requirements, 50% for GCSE choices, and 63% for A level choices.

	5 improved a lot		4		3		2		1 didn't improve at all	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Specific subject entry requirements	10	33	9	30	5	17	5	17	1	3
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	5	18	9	32	8	29	4	14	2	7
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	9	30	10	33	8	27	1	3	2	7
The detail of student finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	10	36	7	25	6	21	0	0	5	18
The differences between universities and courses	8	28	9	31	7	24	3	10	2	7
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	9	32	9	32	7	25	1	4	2	7
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	7	24	13	45	5	17	2	7	2	7
Writing references to support university applications	4	15	13	48	7	26	1	4	2	7
Preparing for interviews	6	21	8	29	9	32	2	7	3	11
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	7	24	11	38	7	24	2	7	2	7
Employability	5	17	4	14	14	48	3	10	3	10



In terms of increasing the likelihood of students making high-quality applications to leading universities, the following items were most relevant:

- How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course
- Writing references to support university applications
- Preparing for interviews
- How to access the most competitive universities or courses

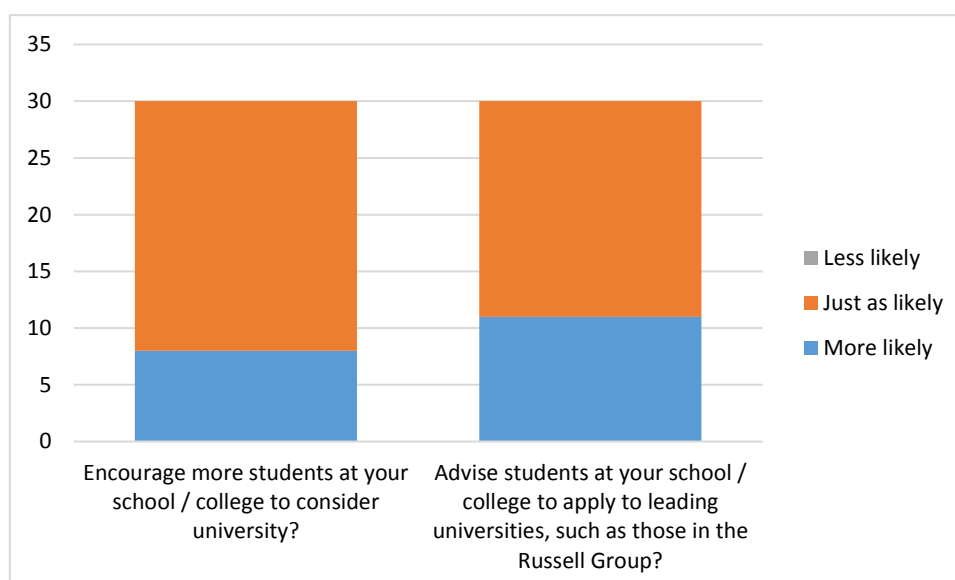
The highest level of improvement among these was for the personal statement item, for which 69% (n = 20) of respondents selected either '5 – improved a lot' or '4'. The same percentages for each of the remaining statements are: references (63%), interviews (50%), and competitive courses (62%).

The two statements with the highest ratings of '2' or '1 – didn't improve at all' across all options were:

- Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university (21% selected these options)
- Employability (21% selected these options)

Linked to the research question regarding change in attitudes to leading universities, as well as to the aforementioned changes for learners question regarding applications to leading universities, respondents were asked, as a result of engaging with the information and resources from the website, how likely they were to encourage and advise students as shown in the table below. No respondents selected that they were less likely, and the higher selection of 'more likely' was for the statement "Advise students at your school/college to apply to leading universities such as those in the Russell Group".

	More likely		Just as likely		Less likely	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encourage more students at your school / college to consider university?	8	27	22	73	0	0
Advise students at your school / college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?	11	37	19	63	0	0



## Summary

These findings present a summary of the Initial Web User Survey data. In sum, respondents were mostly in career advisor, other and head of sixth form roles, had many years of experience, and were working in 11-18 or post-16 institutions. The overall understanding of Advancing Access was as CPD, in line with the intent of the project developers. In terms of the website, respondents selected the information sheets and presentations as the most useful formats for resources, and had a positive view of the resources (useful, up to date, and accurate). Furthermore, for the majority, the resources provided information that they did not know before.

Respondents most frequently suggested that they would use the Strand 1 guidebook resources for developing their own knowledge, and direct students to the sources of information info sheet. In terms of factors likely to prevent respondents from using the resources or the impact of the resources, respondents selected not enough time as the

second most common factor after 'none'. However, more than 80% said the factors suggested were not very or not at all likely to prevent them from embedding Advancing Access materials into their current practice.

In terms of answering the research questions, responses included that website users generally felt their ability to support students was improved, with the highest rating for writing good personal statements for leading universities. Having engaged with the resources, 37% of respondents said that they are now more likely to advise students to apply to leading universities like Russell Group universities.

These are positive initial findings, however, they are based on 20% of those who have created website accounts. This survey will be sent out as more users register for a website account, which will increase the amount of data available for the Final Report (July 2017). Furthermore, due to the delayed launch of various strands of the website and the tight evaluation window, some teachers/advisors responded saying said that they needed more time to be able to use the materials, and would complete the survey at a later date.

## Virtual Conference survey

The Virtual Conference survey (see Appendix D) was delivered to a total of 173 recipients<sup>23</sup>, with a response rate of 28% (n = 49).<sup>24</sup> As with the Initial Web User survey, not all respondents answered every question, so there may be some variation in the total values across questions, however this should not affect the overall message.

We also attempted a comparison of quantitative responses from those survey respondents who came from target schools as compared to the rest of the Virtual Conference survey respondents, in an attempt to answer the seventh research question on how target schools are using Advancing Access. However, the number of individuals in the former group was too small (n = 8, 16%, from seven target schools) to validly conduct such group-level comparison. Study of free response data provided by this subgroup also failed to provide enough information for insight into this subgroup.

### Background of respondents

The respondents were asked about their role in school, with the breakdown of responses shown in the table below.

<b>Role</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Head teacher	0	0%
Deputy Head	1	2%
Head of Sixth Form	9	18%
Assistant Head of Sixth Form	5	10%
Head of Subject (or equivalent)	2	4%
Careers Advisor	11	22%
Teacher	4	8%
Other	13	27%
Missing	4	8%

There was a chance for respondents to select 'other' and again, over a quarter of respondents chose this, providing further details that included roles such as 'Career Consultant for Local Authority', 'Non-teaching Progress Manager', and 'Head of Year 13'. Two respondents worked for an organisation involved in training teachers.

Respondents were also asked how long they had been working in schools, and the responses ranged from half a year to 42 years, with an average of 17 years. When asked how long they had been working in their current school or college, the average was, as for the Initial Web Survey, 9 years, although the range was between 0 and 28 years. Out of those who responded regarding whether they had been a student ambassador or student mentor while at university, 16% (n = 7) had done so.

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<sup>23</sup> Two different members of staff from one school attended the virtual conference under the same registration email, and survey links were only sent to those who had provided an email.

<sup>24</sup> Two of those who responded to the survey were not on the registration list and thus are not taken into account for the total response rate figure, but do figure into the number of survey respondents; they will have received the link via the emails sent by Advancing Access.



The majority of respondents selected the post-16 (including 11-18) stage of education as best characterising the school/college they worked in, with only 7% (n = 3) of those who responded to this question saying they worked with the 11-16 range. When those working in 11-16 schools were asked about the post-16 destinations of their students, all 3 selected A-levels.<sup>25</sup>

For those who selected post-16 (including 11-18) as best characterising their school/college (93% of respondents, n = 42), the majority of those who responded regarding the post-18 destinations of their students selected 'University' (88%, n = 36).<sup>26</sup>

Post-16 respondents were also asked, 'If students from your school / college progress to university, which universities do they most often progress to?', and could select the main three universities from three drop down lists. The selections were combined for analysis and the universities selected more than once are shown in the table below.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>N</b>
University of Leeds	6
Newcastle University	5
Northumbria University Newcastle	5
University of Manchester	5
University of Nottingham	5
University of Huddersfield	4
University of Sheffield	4
Cardiff University (Prifysgol Caerdydd)	3
Leeds Beckett University (formerly Leeds Metropolitan University)	3
University of Birmingham	3
University of Bristol	3
University of Exeter	3
University of the West of England, Bristol	3
University of Warwick	3
Bournemouth University	2
Edge Hill University	2
Manchester Metropolitan University	2
Nottingham Trent University	2
Queen Mary, University of London	2
Sheffield Hallam University	2
University College London	2
University of Bradford	2
University of Hertfordshire	2
University of Lincoln	2
University of Salford	2

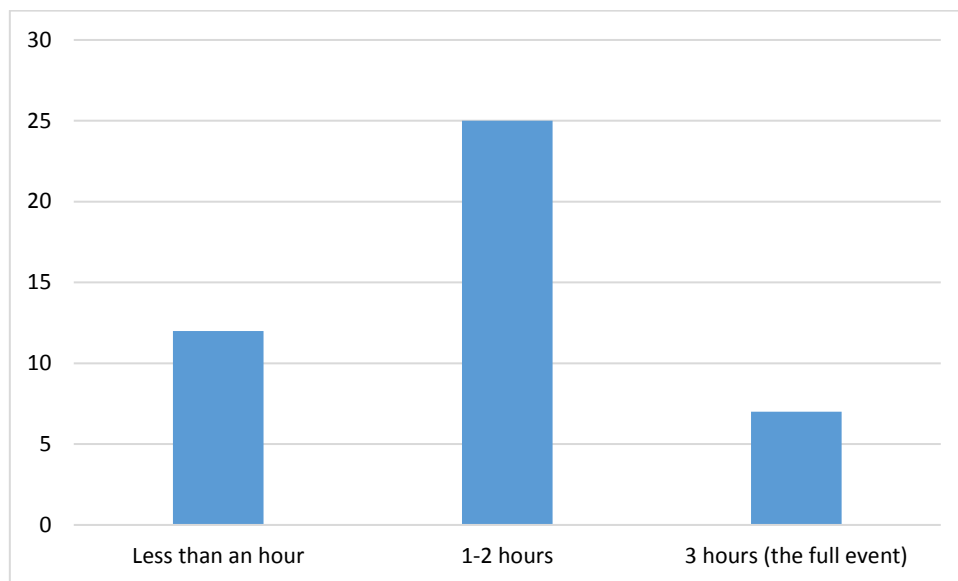
<sup>25</sup>The options provided were: A levels, Career-focused qualifications such as BTEC or NVQ, Apprenticeship or other work-based programme, Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc., Armed forces, and Other (please specify):.

<sup>26</sup> The options provided were: University, Further education institution, Apprenticeship or other work-based programme, Employment, Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc, Armed forces, and Other (please specify):.

## General responses to Virtual Conference

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the Virtual Conference in general. When asked to best characterise their attendance, respondents could answer “I attended for...” and then the options shown in the table below. The most frequent response, at 57% (n = 25) of the responses, was 1-2 hours.

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than an hour	12	27
1-2 hours	25	57
3 hours (the full event)	7	16



As part of the Virtual Conference included webinar presentations, respondents were asked about which, if any, they attended. The greatest number of respondents attended the webinars on Personal statements and Academic references.

	<b>N</b>
Personal statements	26
Academic references	26
Additional admissions tests	21
Applying to Medicine	18
None of the above	5

When asked about how they engaged with the available Virtual Conference areas, shown in the table below, the most frequent response was in terms of attending the specific area of the event, with Webinars receiving the most responses.

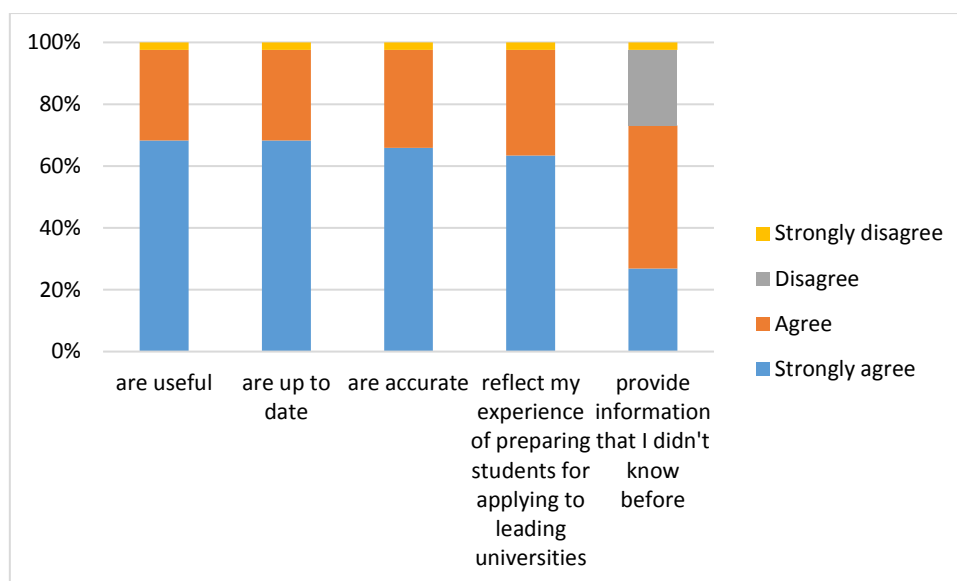
	<b>Attended this area of the event</b>	<b>Downloaded additional resources</b>	<b>Asked questions</b>	<b>Shared ideas with colleagues</b>
Staff Room	18	5	5	1
Exhibition Hall	22	17	5	2
Webinar presentation/s	36	8	6	7

Respondents were also asked about how they intend to use the information and resources they picked up at each of the Virtual Conference areas, with a range of suggested possibilities, shown in the table below. Across all of the areas of the Virtual Conference, respondents selected 'use it to develop my own knowledge' the most frequently, followed by 'direct colleagues to it'.

	<b>Use it to develop my own knowledge</b>	<b>Build it into lessons</b>	<b>Direct students to it</b>	<b>Embed it into a CPD session with colleagues</b>	<b>Direct colleagues to it</b>	<b>Didn't attend this area</b>
Staff Room	18	2	4	3	7	7
Exhibition Hall	25	8	15	11	15	6
Webinar presentation/s	35	16	18	17	23	1

As with the Initial Web User Survey, respondents were asked to show how much they agreed, on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', with various statements about the information and resources presented as part of the Virtual Conference, shown in the table below. For the first four items, agreement (strongly agree or agree) was above 97%. The highest disagreement was for the statement 'Provide information that I didn't know before', which is linked to the research question *does the intervention increase knowledge of enabling factors for progression to leading universities for teachers and advisors*, with which 11 respondents (27%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

	<b>Strongly agree</b>		<b>Agree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Strongly disagree</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Are useful	28	68	12	29	0	0	1	2
Are up to date	28	68	12	29	0	0	1	2
Are accurate	27	66	13	32	0	0	1	2
Reflect my experience of preparing students for applying to leading universities	26	63	14	34	0	0	1	2
Provide information that I didn't know before	11	27	19	46	10	24	1	2



Respondents were also asked about factors that might prevent them using the resources, or limit the impact of the resources in their school or college. While more than half of those answering each question responded that none of the below factors were likely to prevent them from using the resources or limit their impact, the second most commonly selected was 'Not enough time' for both questions, as on the initial web survey.

	What factor, if any, is most likely to prevent you using the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?		What factor, if any, is most likely to limit the impact of the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?	
	N	%	N	%
None	29	73	21	53
Not part of my role	0	0	1	3
Don't have the support within school	0	0	0	0
Not enough time	6	15	12	30
Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college	0	0	0	0
Students' own perceptions / aspirations	1	3	3	8
My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university	1	3	1	3
Other	3	8	2	5

When respondents were asked to indicate how likely it was that these factors would prevent them from embedding the materials into current practice at their school or college, 90% of respondents selected 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely'.

	Very likely		Fairly likely		Not very likely		Not at all likely	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How likely is it that these factors will prevent you from successfully embedding Advancing Access resources and information into current practice at your school / college?	3	8	1	3	19	48	17	43

Respondents were asked how they had heard of the Virtual Conference. Many selected 'other (please specify):' and mentioned having received an email or hearing about it at a conference or convention.

How did you hear about the Advancing Access Virtual Conference?	N	%
Advancing Access website	14	33
From colleagues	9	21
Other (please specify):	19	46

When asked about what factors influenced attendance at the conference, respondents could select all applicable options, shown in the table below. The three factors most frequently selected were

- No need to travel: 35, 71%;
- Ease of attending / leaving sessions: 35, 71%; and
- Time: 33, 67%.

What factors influenced your attendance at this conference?	Yes (N)	Yes (%)
Time	33	67
Date	12	25
Duration	13	27
No need to travel	35	71
Ease of attending / leaving sessions	35	71
Webinar content	26	53
Institutions present	26	53
Chance to interact with other delegates	8	16

A further question on the survey, asked how likely individuals were to attend another Advancing Access Virtual Conference in future, with the response options: very likely, fairly likely, not very likely, and not at all likely. Out of those who responded to this question, 100% selected very or fairly likely.

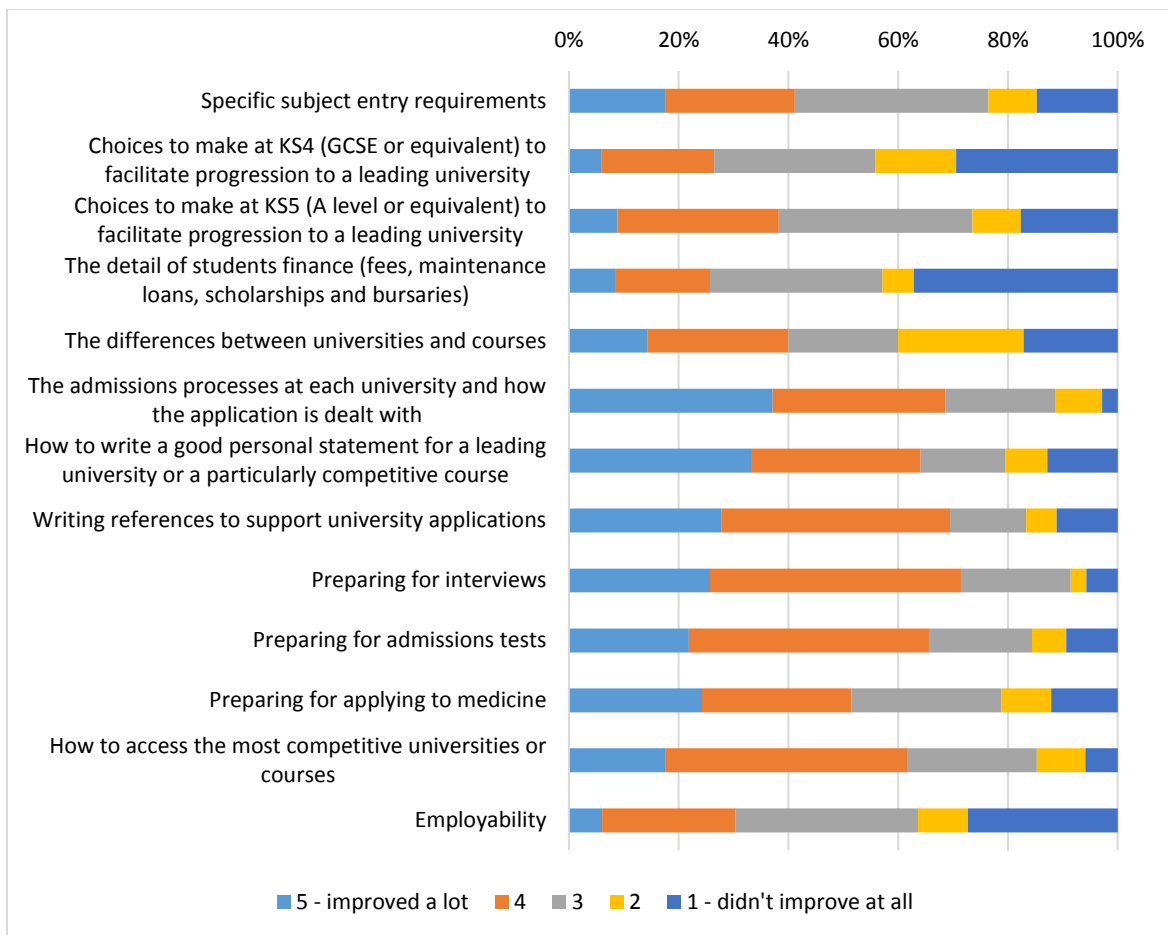
## Changes for learners

The research questions underlying the evaluation also include changes for learners, in terms of an increased likelihood of their progression to study facilitating subjects at KS5, and making high-quality applications to leading universities.

Respondents were asked a general question to gauge changes in these factors, 'Have the information and resources from the Advancing Access Virtual Conference improved your ability to support students with' and then given the statements shown in the table below, which they could respond to on a scale of '5 – improved a lot' to '1 – didn't improve at all'. There were additional items included for this survey, given the specific content of webinar presentations, and these were 'Preparing for admissions tests' and 'Preparing for applying to medicine'.

In terms of increasing the likelihood of students progressing to study facilitating subjects, the positive responses, '5 – improved a lot' and '4', were 41% for 'Specific subject entry requirements', 27% for 'Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent)...', and 38% for 'Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent)...' to facilitate progression to a leading university.

	<b>5</b> improved a lot		<b>4</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b> didn't improve at all	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Specific subject entry requirements	6	18	8	24	12	35	3	9	5	15
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	2	6	7	21	10	29	5	15	10	29
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	3	9	10	29	12	35	3	9	6	18
The detail of students finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	3	9	6	17	11	31	2	6	13	37
The differences between universities and courses	5	14	9	26	7	20	8	23	6	17
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	13	37	11	31	7	20	3	9	1	3
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	13	33	12	31	6	15	3	8	5	13
Writing references to support university applications	10	28	15	42	5	14	2	6	4	11
Preparing for interviews	9	26	16	46	7	20	1	3	2	6
Preparing for admissions tests	7	22	14	44	6	19	2	6	3	9
Preparing for applying to medicine	8	24	9	27	9	27	3	9	4	12
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	6	18	15	44	8	24	3	9	2	6
Employability	2	6	8	24	11	33	3	9	9	27



In terms of increasing the likelihood of students making high-quality applications to leading universities, the following items were most relevant:

- How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course
- Writing references to support university applications
- Preparing for interviews
- Preparing for admissions tests
- Preparing for applying to medicine
- How to access the most competitive universities or courses

The highest level of improvement among these was for the preparing for interviews item, for which 71% (n = 25) of respondents selected either '5 – improved a lot' or '4'. The same percentages for each of the remaining statements are: personal statements 64%), references (69%), admissions tests (66%), medicine (52%), and competitive courses (62%).

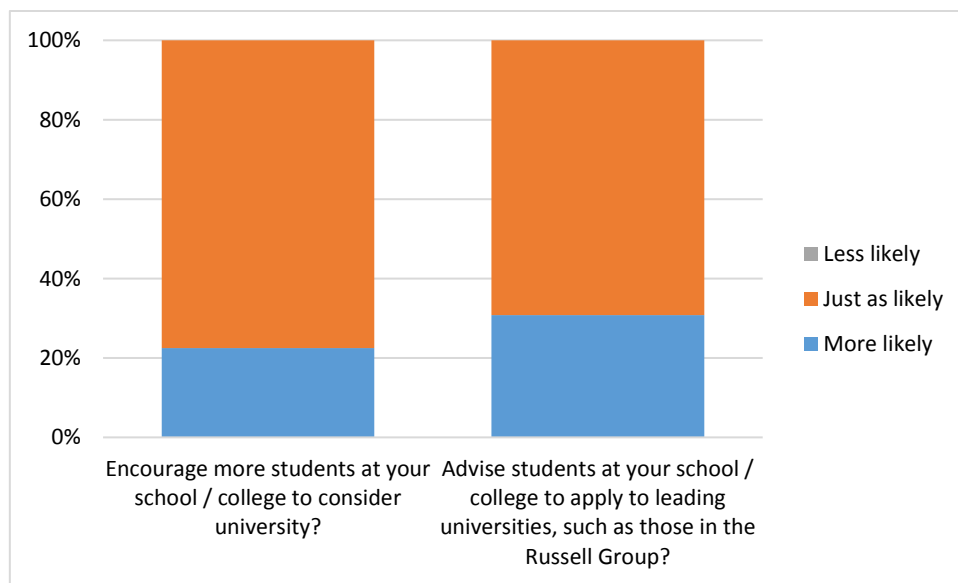
The two statements with the highest ratings of '2' or '1 – didn't improve at all' across all options were:

- Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university (44% selected these options)
- The detail of students finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries) (43% selected these options)



Linked to the research question regarding change in attitudes to leading universities, as well as to the aforementioned changes for learners question regarding applications to leading universities, respondents were asked, as a result of engaging with the information and resources from the Virtual Conference, how likely they were to encourage and advise students as shown in the table below. As with the Initial Web User survey, there were no respondents who selected that they were less likely (for either question), and a larger number of respondents said they were more likely to advise students to apply to leading universities such as those in the Russell Group than those who responded 'more likely' regarding students considering university in general.

	More likely		Just as likely		Less likely	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Encourage more students at your school / college to consider university?	9	23	31	78	0	0
Advise students at your school / college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?	12	31	27	69	0	0



## Summary

These findings present a summary of the Virtual Conference survey data. In sum, respondents were mostly in other, career advisor, and head of sixth form roles, had many years of experience, and were working in 11-18 or post-16 institutions. In terms of interacting with the Virtual Conference, the majority of respondents said that they attended for 1-2 hours. The webinars on Personal Statements and Academic References had the greatest number of attendees. Respondents heard of the conference via emails from Advancing Access and via the website, and the most influential factors in deciding to attend were not needing to travel and the ease of attending and leaving the sessions.

In terms of engagement across the different Virtual Conference areas, respondents mostly selected they had attended them, and the area they attended most was the webinar component. Respondents most frequently said they intended to use the information and resources they picked up at each of the Virtual Conference areas to develop their own knowledge, which is aligned with the CPD intended by the developers. As with the Initial Web User Survey findings, respondents generally had a positive view of the resources (useful, up to date, and accurate), and for the majority, the resources provided information that they did not know before.

In terms of whether participants felt that their ability to support students had improved, there was variation across the range of topics, in line with the content of the Conference. The highest improvement rating was for preparing for interviews. Having engaged with the Conference, 31% of respondents said that they are now more likely to advise students to apply to leading universities like Russell Group universities.

When asked what might prevent them using the resources or limit the impact of these resources, most respondents selected 'none' and only then 'not enough time', although 90% of respondents then suggested that these factors are not very or not at all likely to prevent them from embedding the resources into their current practice. Encouragingly, all who responded to the survey said that they were either very or fairly likely to attend another Advancing Access virtual conference in future.

These are positive initial findings. It must be noted that as the survey response rate was 28%, we cannot be entirely confident that the responses reflect the experiences of all attendees. However, there is no reason to assume that responses would be biased in a particular direction. Repeating the survey at additional conferences in future will increase the amount of data available to understand the intended use and impact of Virtual Conference resources.

## Conclusions and looking ahead

This report has provided a first look at data from Website Analytics and the Initial Web User and Virtual Conference surveys. The findings suggest engagement with teachers and advisors<sup>27</sup> from almost 300 schools and colleges across England, the rest of the UK, and internationally. There was also engagement from individuals with a professional interest in Advancing Access who were not directly linked with schools/colleges. Around 20% of the schools/colleges that engaged with Advancing Access are from the target list, and close to 40% were from areas classified as 'disadvantaged' (quintiles 1 and 2) in HEFCE's cold spots/participation gap analysis.

The early findings from the surveys present a positive picture of engagement with Advancing Access so far – there seems to be understanding of the resources as CPD, and there is evidence that teachers and advisors are feeling their ability to support students has improved by engaging with the web resources and Virtual Conference. Of further interest is that around 30-40% of respondents on each survey are more likely to advise their students to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group, as a result of engaging with Advancing Access.

Due to the early timing of this initial evaluation, it will be useful to catch up with individuals who have engaged with the project later on, to obtain a better picture not just of how they *intend* to use the resources and information, but how they have used and embedded it. This will also allow for us to gauge use of Strands 2-4 as these become available. Phase 2 of the evaluation will be able to provide this closer and more in depth look, with the inclusion of detailed interviews and focus groups; these evaluation methods should also provide an idea of how those from target schools and colleges in particular are using the materials. We would also recommend that Advancing Access continue to survey participants and monitor school characteristics after the current evaluation is complete.

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<sup>27</sup> The current analyses are based on teachers and advisors, rather than students in the datasets, given the focus on CPD. There were 35 students in the website dataset: none of these students came from target schools. For those for whom there was school data ( $n = 27$ , 77%), the students came from 4 schools, with 24 of these coming from the same school.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### **Advancing Access University Partners:**

The University of Birmingham  
The University of Bristol  
The University of Cambridge  
Cardiff University  
Durham University  
The University of Edinburgh  
The University of Exeter  
The University of Glasgow  
Imperial College London  
King's College London  
The University of Leeds  
The University of Liverpool  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
The University of Manchester  
Newcastle University  
The University of Nottingham  
The University of Oxford  
Queen Mary University of London  
Queen's University Belfast  
The University of Sheffield  
The University of Southampton  
University College London  
The University of Warwick  
The University of York

## Appendix B

### Baseline Survey

#### **Advancing Access**

Advancing Access aims to support the progression of learners from less advantaged backgrounds to selective universities. Advancing Access is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to provide free, web-based, continuing professional development resources for teachers and advisors who support pupils making their Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5 and university choices.

#### **Evaluation of the Project**

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University is working to evaluate the early impact of Advancing Access. By completing this survey you will contribute to this evaluation and the development of Advancing Access.

#### **How we will store and use the data you provide**

CEM will link up your response to this survey with your response to any other surveys we ask you to complete and with contextual information about your school or college (such as FSM rates and HE progression rates). We will also link up your responses with measures of Advancing Access resource usage. This information will contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the content and delivery of the Advancing Access project.

All the information you provide will be stored securely, treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. The Advancing Access team will only receive anonymised data and we won't say anything in our reports that could identify you or your school. The research has received ethical approval from Durham University School of Education's Ethics Advisory Committee.

#### **Opt-in Consent**

If you take part in the survey, this will be treated as opt-in consent to your data being used as described above. If you decide at a later stage that you no longer want us to use your data, please contact Kirsty Younger, the lead researcher, on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176. You can also contact us if you have any questions about the research or how we will use your information.

#### **This Survey**

We would prefer you to complete all questions - but if there are any you don't want to answer, please leave them blank. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you very much for taking part in our research.

Advancing Access 2016 Baseline Survey

## 1. Personal Details

**First name:**

**Surname:**

## **2. You and your school / college**

**What school / college do you work for?**

School Name	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	<input type="text"/>
Town	<input type="text"/>

**What is your role in school / college?**

- Headteacher
- Head of Sixth Form
- Head of Subject (or equivalent)
- Careers Adviser
- Teacher
- Other

Further details (optional):

**In total, how many years have you been teaching or working in schools?**

**How many years have you been employed at your current school / college?**

If you completed an undergraduate degree and / or postgraduate qualifications, which institution(s) did you attend?

### 3. Leading universities

We are interested in the way that people perceive different universities. What do you think are the defining characteristics of a 'leading university'?

How would you define a 'selective university'?

### 4. Russell Group universities

The Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining excellence in research, teaching and learning. Please now consult the list of Russell Group universities on their website <http://russellgroup.ac.uk/about/our-universities>. Now that you have seen this list, what percentage of Russell Group UK undergraduates do you think have attended a state school?

Which of the following best describes how frequently you advise the highly academically able pupils that you work with (or have worked with) to apply to Russell Group universities?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Never

## 5. Resources

**Do you currently have access to information and resources - either for building your own knowledge, for use with your students, or both - about any of the following topics? (Please select all that apply)**

	Info and resources to develop my own knowledge	Resources to use directly with my students
Specific subject entry requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university (like those listed above)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university (like those listed above)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What previous experience or extra-curricular activities students might need to access leading universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The detail of student finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The differences between universities and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing references to support university applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Where do you currently access information and resources to help you in these areas?  
(Please select all that apply)**

- I look for resources myself
- Colleagues' recommendations
- My school / college provides resources and training
- A university provides my school / college with information and training
- Conferences and events I find myself
- Conferences and events suggested by my school / college

**What is the main format of the resources you use to build your own knowledge and inform your advice to students?**

- Paper-based materials (brochures, promotional materials)
- Face-to-face presentations
- Online materials
- Virtual presentations
- Other (please specify):

## **6. Training**

**What would be the best time for you to access online events / virtual conferences?**

- Development time during the school day
- After school on a school day
- Evening on a school day
- Outside of term time

Other (please specify):

**Do you have any examples of careers or university resources, websites, or training you have found particularly useful?**

## 7. Perceptions of leading universities

**How far do you agree with the following statements?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I encourage my students to be ambitious in their university applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students at my school apply to leading universities every year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leading universities are looking for students from schools like mine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My school provides students with preparation for applying to leading universities (e.g. interviews)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students at my school very rarely get the grades needed to attend leading universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I advise my students to seriously consider staying local for university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't want my students to have to face rejection from leading universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you were advising a student who was predicted three As at A-level, how many institutions likely to make an offer around AAA, would you advise them to apply to (assuming that they will use all five UCAS choices)?**

**In what circumstances would you advise students at your school to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?**

**Are there any circumstances in which you would not advise highly academically able students at your school / college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?**

## **8. Provision at your school / college**

**Which universities does your school / college interact with most closely? (Please select the three main institutions from the drop down lists below)**

Institution

1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>

If you can't find an institution on the list, please write it here:

**How well do you feel that students at your school are supported to make careers and university decisions? (Answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is "very well supported" and 1 is "not well supported".)**

5 - very well supported

4

3

2

1 - not well supported

**How confident do you personally feel advising students on the following areas? (If advising on a particular area is not part of your role, please select 'n/a')**

	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	n/a
Specific subject entry requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The detail of student finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The differences between universities and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing references to support university applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Are there any areas where you would particularly like more information or support to help you advise students?**

## 9. Finally

**Thank you very much for your participation. We may want to follow up some responses with more detailed interviews by phone. Please indicate whether you are happy for us to contact you for this purpose.**

- Yes, I am happy to be contacted for more detailed responses
- No, I do not want to participate in research interviews

If yes, please provide contact details and the best way to contact you (e.g. school phone number, appropriate contact times):

## You have now finished the survey

Thank you very much for taking the survey. If you have any questions, or at a later date would like to withdraw from the research, please contact Kirsty Younger, the Principal Investigator at CEM on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176.

## Appendix C

### Initial Web User Survey

#### **Advancing Access**

Advancing Access aims to support the progression of learners from less advantaged backgrounds to selective universities. Advancing Access is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to provide free, web-based, continuing professional development resources for teachers and advisors who support pupils making their Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5 and university choices.

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All the information you provide will be stored securely, treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. The Advancing Access team will only receive anonymised data and we won't say anything in our reports that could identify you or your school. The research has received ethical approval from Durham University School of Education's Ethics Advisory Committee.

#### **Opt-in Consent**

If you take part in the survey, this will be treated as opt-in consent to your data being used as described above. If you decide at a later stage that you no longer want us to use your data, please contact Kirsty Younger, the lead researcher, on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176. You can also contact us if you have any questions about the research or how we will use your information.

#### **This Survey**

We would prefer you to complete all questions - but if there are any you don't want to answer, please leave them blank. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you very much for taking part in our research.

## 1. Personal Details

First name:

Surname:

## 2. You and your school / college

What school / college do you work for?

School Name

Postcode

Town

What is your role in school / college?

- Headteacher
- Deputy Head
- Head of Sixth Form
- Assistant Head of Sixth Form
- Head of Subject (or equivalent)
- Careers Adviser
- Teacher
- Other

Further details (optional):

In total, how many years have you been working in schools?

How many years have you been employed at your current school / college?

If you completed an undergraduate degree and / or postgraduate qualifications, which institution(s) did you attend?

While you were studying, did you work as a student ambassador / student mentor, for example on outreach programmes or open days?

Yes

No

### 3. Advice to students

Which of the below best characterises the school / college you work in?

11-16

Post-16 (including 11-18)

### 4. Destinations



Which of the following best characterises the post-16 qualification choices of students from your school / college?

- A levels
- Career-focused qualifications such as BTEC or NVQ
- Apprenticeship or other work-based programme
- Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc.
- Armed forces
- Other (please specify):

## 5. Destinations

Which of the following best characterises the post-18 destinations of students from your school / college?

- University
- Further education institution
- Apprenticeship or other work-based programme
- Employment
- Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc.
- Armed forces
- Other (please specify):

If students from your school / college progress to university, which universities do they most often progress to?

(Please select the three main institutions from the drop down lists below.)

1. [drop down of universities]

2. [drop down of universities]

3. [drop down of universities]

## 6. The Advancing Access Website

The following questions are about your experience of using the Advancing Access website so far.

The information and resources on the Advancing Access website are best characterised as:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Information and resources to develop my own knowledge (e.g. Continuing Professional Development)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information and resources to use in sessions with my students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information and resources to give directly to students (e.g. handouts)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What was the most useful format of the resources you found on the Advancing Access website?

- Guidebooks
- Information sheets
- Presentation and presentation notes
- Student activity sheets
- Video case studies

Please show how much you agree with the following statements about the Advancing Access website: The information and resources...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
are useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
are accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
reflect my experience of preparing students for applying to leading universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
provide information that I didn't know before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further comments:

Have the information and resources from the Advancing Access website improved your ability to support students with:

	5 - improved a lot	4	3	2	1 - didn't improve at all
Specific subject entry requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The detail of student finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The differences between universities and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing references to support university applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	5 - improved a lot	4	3	2	1 - didn't improve at all
Preparing for interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As a result of engaging with the information and resources available on the Advancing Access website, how likely are you now to...

	More likely	Just as likely	Less likely
Encourage more students at your school / college to consider university?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advise students at your school / college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further comments:

## 7. Strand 1: How do I help my students to choose a university and course?

This page asks about your experience of accessing Strand 1 on the Advancing Access website, which provides support regarding the decisions involved prior to making a university application.

How do you intend to engage with the following Advancing Access CPD resources from Strand 1: How do I help my students to choose a university and course?

	Use it to develop my own knowledge	Build it into lessons	Direct students to it	Embed it into a CPD session with colleagues	Direct colleagues to it	Haven't looked at this resource / strand yet
Guidebook - How do I help my students to choose a university and course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information sheet: Sources of information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information sheet: Using league tables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information sheet: Benefits of a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information sheet: Life on a university campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation: How do I help my students choose a university and course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation notes: How do I help my students choose a university and course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher and adviser reflection sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student activity sheet: Working with students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video case studies: Josh, Mayowa, Orin, Sarah, Sharn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any further comments about how specifically you intend to use the resources from Strand 1.

## 8. Using the resources

What factor, if any, is most likely to prevent you using the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?

- None
- Not part of my role
- Don't have the support within school
- Not enough time
- Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college
- Students' own perceptions / aspirations
- My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university
- Other (please specify):

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What factor, if any, is most likely to limit the impact of the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?

- None
- Not part of my role
- Don't have the support within school
- Not enough time
- Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college
- Students' own perceptions / aspirations
- My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university

Other (please specify):

How likely is it that these factors will prevent you from successfully embedding Advancing Access resources and information into current practice at your school / college?

Very likely

Fairly likely

Not very likely

Not at all likely

Are there any areas you feel have not been covered by the Advancing Access resources that you would find useful? Please detail below.

## You have now finished the survey

Thank you very much for taking the survey. If you have any questions, or at a later date would like to withdraw from the research, please contact Kirsty Younger, the lead researcher, on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176.

## Appendix D

### Virtual Conference Survey

#### **Advancing Access**

Advancing Access aims to support the progression of learners from less advantaged backgrounds to selective universities. Advancing Access is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to provide free, web-based, continuing professional development resources for teachers and advisors who support pupils making their Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5 and university choices.

#### **Evaluation of the Project**

The Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University is working to evaluate the early impact of Advancing Access. By completing this survey you will contribute to this evaluation and the development of Advancing Access.

#### **How we will store and use the data you provide**

CEM will link up your response to this survey with your response to any other surveys we ask you to complete and with contextual information about your school or college (such as FSM rates and HE progression rates). We will also link up your responses with measures of Advancing Access resource usage. This information will contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the content and delivery of the Advancing Access project.

All the information you provide will be stored securely, treated confidentially and used only for research purposes. The Advancing Access team will only receive anonymised data and we won't say anything in our reports that could identify you or your school. The research has received ethical approval from Durham University School of Education's Ethics Advisory Committee.

#### **Opt-in Consent**

If you take part in the survey, this will be treated as opt-in consent to your data being used as described above. If you decide at a later stage that you no longer want us to use your data, please contact Kirsty Younger, the lead researcher, on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176. You can also contact us if you have any questions about the research or how we will use your information.

#### **This Survey**

We would prefer you to complete all questions - but if there are any you don't want to answer, please leave them blank. The survey should take around 15 minutes to complete.

Thank you very much for taking part in our research.



## 1. Personal Details

First name:

Surname:

## 2. You and your school / college

What school / college do you work for?

School Name

Postcode

Town

What is your role in school / college?

- Headteacher
- Deputy Head
- Head of Sixth Form
- Assistant Head of Sixth Form
- Head of Subject (or equivalent)
- Careers Adviser
- Teacher
- Other

Further details (optional):

**In total, how many years have you been working in schools?**

**How many years have you been employed at your current school / college?**

**If you completed an undergraduate degree and / or postgraduate qualifications, which institution(s) did you attend?**

**While you were studying, did you work as a student ambassador / student mentor, for example on outreach programmes or open days?**

Yes

No

### **3. Advice to students**

**Which of the below best characterises the school / college you work in?**

11-16

Post-16 (including 11-18)

### **4. Destinations**

**Which of the following best characterises the post-16 qualification choices of students from your school / college?**

- A levels
- Career-focused qualifications such as BTEC or NVQ
- Apprenticeship or other work-based programme
- Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc.
- Armed forces
- Other (please specify):

## **5. Destinations**

**Which of the following best characterises the post-18 destinations of students from your school / college?**

- University
- Further education institution
- Apprenticeship or other work-based programme
- Employment
- Specialist college e.g. drama, dance, etc.
- Armed forces
- Other (please specify):

**If students from your school / college progress to university, which universities do they most often progress to?**

**(Please select the three main institutions from the drop down lists below.)**

1.

2.

3.

## 6. The Advancing Access Virtual Conference

The following questions are about your experience of attending the Advancing Access Virtual Conference.

**What best characterises your attendance at the Virtual Conference? I attended for...**

- Less than an hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3 hours (the full event)

If you have any comments about the duration of the Virtual Conference, please specify:

**Please select which, if any, of the webinar presentations you attended:**

- Personal statements
- Academic references
- Additional admissions tests
- Applying to Medicine
- None of the above

**In what ways did you engage with the following Virtual Conference areas?**

	Attended this area of the event	Downloaded additional resources	Asked questions	Shared ideas with colleagues
Staff Room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibition Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Webinar presentation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How do you intend to use the information and resources you picked up at each of the Virtual Conference areas?**

	Use it to develop my own knowledge	Build it into lessons	Direct students to it	Embed it into a CPD session with colleagues	Direct colleagues to it	Didn't attend this area
Staff Room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibition Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Webinar presentation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any further comments about how specifically you intend to use the resources from the Virtual Conference.

## 7. Reflecting on the Virtual Conference

**Please show how much you agree with the following statements about the Advancing Access Virtual Conference: The information and resources that I picked up...**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
are useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
are accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
reflect my experience of preparing students for applying to leading universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
provide information that I didn't know before	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further comments:

**Have the information and resources from the Advancing Access Virtual Conference improved your ability to support students with:**

	5 - improved a lot	4	3	2	1 - didn't improve at all
Specific subject entry requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS4 (GCSE or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choices to make at KS5 (A level or equivalent) to facilitate progression to a leading university	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The detail of students finance (fees, maintenance loans, scholarships and bursaries)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The differences between universities and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	5 - improved a lot	4	3	2	1 - didn't improve at all
The admissions processes at each university and how the application is dealt with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to write a good personal statement for a leading university or a particularly competitive course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing references to support university applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for admissions tests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing for applying to medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to access the most competitive universities or courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**As a result of engaging with the information and resources available as part of the Advancing Access Virtual Conference, how likely are you now to...**

	More likely	Just as likely	Less likely
Encourage more students at your school / college to consider university?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advise students at your school / college to apply to leading universities, such as those in the Russell Group?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Further comments:

## 8. Using the resources

**What factor, if any, is most likely to prevent you using the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?**

- None
- Not part of my role
- Don't have the support within school
- Not enough time
- Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college
- Students' own perceptions / aspirations
- My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university
- Other (please specify):

**What factor, if any, is most likely to limit the impact of the Advancing Access resources in your school / college?**

- None
- Not part of my role
- Don't have the support within school



Not enough time

Progression to HE is not a priority at my school / college

Students' own perceptions / aspirations

My students rarely get the grades needed to attend a leading university

Other (please specify):

**How likely is it that these factors will prevent you from successfully embedding Advancing Access resources and information into current practice at your school / college?**

Very likely

Fairly likely

Not very likely

Not at all likely

## 9. Finally

**How did you hear about the Advancing Access Virtual Conference?**

Advancing Access website

From colleagues

Other (please specify):

**The Advancing Access conference was provided online as a Virtual Conference. What factors influenced your attendance at this conference? Please select all that apply.**

Time

Date

Duration

No need to travel

Ease of attending / leaving sessions

Webinar content

Institutions present

Chance to interact with other delegates

Other (please specify):

**Are there any topics you feel have not been covered by the Advancing Access Virtual Conference that you would find useful? Please detail below.**

**How likely is it that you will attend another Advancing Access Virtual Conference event in future?**

Very likely

Fairly likely

Not very likely

Not at all likely

Please feel free to provide any further comments on how useful you found the Virtual Conference overall, and any other feedback on what could be improved.

## You have now finished the survey

Thank you very much for taking the survey. If you have any questions, or at a later date would like to withdraw from the research, please contact Kirsty Younger, the lead researcher, on [kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk](mailto:kirsty.younger@cem.dur.ac.uk) or 0191 334 4176.

## Appendix E

Web Analytic Data provided by Advancing Access: Raw Column Headers

Dataset	Column Header	Notes
Website	Name	
	Role	
	Email	
	School	
	Region	
	Postcode	
	Urn	Unique Reference Number
	La	Local Authority
	Laestab	Local Authority Establishment Number
	Urn	Unique Reference Number
	Estab	Establishment Number
	Establishment no	Local Authority Establishment Number
	Establishment type	e.g., College, Academy
	Education phase	Coded as 0 or 1
	Sixth form	Coded as 0 or 1
	Admissions policy	e.g., Selective, Comprehensive, Unknown
	Percentage fsm	Percentage of pupils eligible Free School Meals
	Sign in count	e.g., 1, 3, etc.
	Current sign in at	e.g., 2016-10-27 14:28:58 UTC
	Created at	e.g., October 27 2016 14:28:58
Virtual Conference	Id	
	Username	
	Name	
	Last name	
	Email	
	Role	
	Region	
	Postcode	
	Organisation	
	Urn	Unique Reference Number
	Created at	i.e., time of registration
	Webinar admin	Coded as FALSE or left empty
	University admin	Coded as FALSE or left empty
	Super admin	Coded as FALSE or left empty
	Sign in count	e.g., 1, 4, etc.

## Appendix F

### Data cleaning and preparation technical details

The following web analytic data was received from Advancing Access on:

12<sup>th</sup> October:

- Registered accounts 12.10.16
- Virtual conference signups 12.10.16

31<sup>st</sup> October:

- Registered accounts 31.10.16
- VCAttendee list\_311016pm

3<sup>rd</sup> November:

- Registrations and attendees FINAL [Virtual Conference]
- Registered accounts 02.11.16 [updated website account holders]

Cleaning of the datasets to send out survey links involved the following procedures.

We highlighted the top row and sorted the file by role. We created a new tab for those who had given their role as 'student' ("Student role" tab) and a tab for problematic accounts ("Problematic accounts") from the list: those who had provided a testing email, such as [test@test.com](mailto:test@test.com), [testing@tester.com](mailto:testing@tester.com), or were clearly from the Advancing Access or evaluation team. Of those who provided "test" emails, no name was provided, and given this meant we had neither name nor email, these individuals could not be contacted to take part in the survey. These individuals did sometimes provide further data, such as role (Careers advisor, Enrichment officer, Subject lead), and school. In the latest transfer of data (3<sup>rd</sup> November), names known to be testing accounts were removed by Advancing Access.

We made manual corrections based on assumptions from email addresses, i.e., adding first names and surnames, and removed 'Mrs' and middle initials. We also ran a 'Text to Columns' split, in order to split out first and surnames across columns. In some cases, names were split over three cells. We also used the '=proper' function to fix capital letters.

To compile our email lists and ensure single individuals who had created more than one account did not receive numerous survey links, we ran a check of duplicates by surname and email provided. A 'Duplicate entries' tab was created and all instances of duplicates were added in, to retain details of multiple school links and sign in counts. Where duplicate accounts could confidently be considered as belonging to the same individual, we amended the sign in count on the main 'Users' tab in order to capture the total times the individual had interacted with the website.

As successive lists were transferred by Advancing Access, we found that some of those with duplicate accounts had actually registered an account, for example in July, but were not present on earlier lists (that had been compiled and sent through for surveys to be delivered). With successive lists, we also kept track of those who had completed the survey as we were wary of sending too many reminders to earlier lists. Some emails bounced, and where possible, we checked these for typos and corrected them.

## Matching procedure

Two types of matching were conducted on the datasets of website and Virtual Conference registrants/attendees that are being returned to Advancing Access: matching to determine if schools/colleges were on the Advancing Access target list or in a HEFCE cold spot, and a more general matching of school/college details to publicly available data on school characteristics in order to determine reach of the Advancing Access delivery.

Both datasets provided some data on postcode, school name, or Unique Reference Number (URN) for each individual. As there was a high proportion of missing data across these fields, including no FSM data provided as part of the 'Percentage fsm' column, additional checks were made. These checks included determining whether the provided name and postcode for a school matched to publicly available data using Edubase;<sup>28</sup> the same procedure was used to check URNs, if provided. Issues with the data included, for example, a case in which the URN provided in the data did not match the school name and postcode. Upon investigation, the URN provided was for a school that had closed in a previous academic year, which had since been allocated a new URN.

In some cases, where only a postcode was provided, and two schools are situated within that postcode, which can mean for example a multi-site school/academy or that two schools have merged, school characteristics were pulled across for the school with attainment and census data. Confident matches were made when there was data for two fields: school and postcode, postcode and URN, or school and URN. Where there was missing data for more than two of these fields, a check was made of the teacher or advisor's email: if this was an official school email, a likely match could be made. There were some cases where there was no school data was provided: matching based on postcodes would be uncertain for these individuals given that this could be a home postcode.

Publicly available data was then matched in based on the confident URN matches. For England, data on admissions policy ('ADMPOPOL') and school type ('REFTYPE') were taken from Edubase, whereas the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM ('PUPFSM') and percentage of pupils eligible for FSM in the last six years ('EVER6') were taken from the DfE census data for academic year 2014-15. Attainment at Key Stage 4 was taken from the 2016 provisional DfE performance tables,<sup>29</sup> and represents the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C or equivalents including A\*-C in both English and mathematics GCSEs ('PTAC5EM\_PTQ\_EE'). Attainment at Key Stage 5 was taken from the 2014-15 DfE performance tables,<sup>30</sup> and represents the percentage of A level students achieving 3 A levels at grades AAB or higher (of which at least two are in facilitating subjects, 'PTGRADEAAB2\_ALEV'). Progression to higher education (% going on to UK HEI) is taken from the DfE KS5 destination dataset, with leavers in 2012 starting HE in academic year 2012-13.

Some schools were in Scotland, Wales, or overseas, and for these schools the data that could be matched in is limited, older, or unavailable. In the updated datasets, available, comparable data for these schools is provided, and these schools are flagged.

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<sup>28</sup> Edubase data is available here: <http://www.edubase.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml>.

<sup>29</sup> Provisional Key Stage 4 data for 2016 is available here: <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>.

<sup>30</sup> Also available at the above URL.