

# Evaluation Summary Report 2017

## Political Minds Summer Residential

### Summary

Building on previous experience and evaluations, the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion (PPR) developed and delivered a 3-day residential (August 2017) supported by interns from The Richardson Institute. PPR designed the residential to provide an insight into the academic and social aspects of university life and to encourage applications to study Politics/IR. The summer 2016 residential, resulted in 5 students identifying that they came to Lancaster as a result of their engagement with the Political Minds event (Johnson, Mutton and REAP, 2016).

# 93%

The PPR residential met or exceeded expectations

The 2017 summer residential was attended by 29 students from 17 schools and colleges. It cost £270 per student funded by the department, not including staff time. The decision by PPR to assume responsibility enabled them to retain their traditional August timing and not restrict participation to students from a widening participation background. Both these factors would need reviewing for inclusion within the UK Student Recruitment and Outreach (UKSRO) programme of widening participation summer schools.

### Summer residential activities included:

- Informal introductory talks about Richardson Institute, PPR Dept. and Lancaster University to provide a context for the residential;
- Four subject seminars led by PPR PhD students to provide an experience of common university learning formats and methods and an introduction to key subject areas within Politics/IR, these included neoliberalism, sovereignty and extremism;
- Skills workshops to support participants' school and future university studies, including presentation and writing up sessions;
- Social evening activities held on-campus in a student social space, the evenings were facilitated by centrally trained UKSRO Student Ambassadors and offered more informal opportunities for discussion with current students about the university student experience.

### Methods of evaluation:

This summary report uses feedback from 27 respondents who completed an evaluation questionnaire (93% of participants) and interview with PhD intern; the respondents are from 17 different schools and colleges across England including Portsmouth, Taunton, the South East to Cleveland, Cumbria and the local area. It draws on previous summary reports as a point of comparison.

### Findings:

- **93%** identified that the summer school met or exceed expectations, this is higher than 85% in 2015/16 and compares favourably with UKSRO summer schools, who had an average of 83%.
- School remains key source of information about the residential with **70%** of students **finding out from their teachers**, and 85% when including internal school posters
- Expectations of the residential centred on **gaining experience of studying politics and providing insight into university life**.
- **74% of comments** cited the academic experiences, including the workshops and seminars to be the most useful part of the summer school.
- Achievements were diverse, ranging from attending the summer school (Figure 1) gaining an understanding of new political concepts; skills, such as debating, **"The ability to argue against my original viewpoint / stance"** (participant response), and presentation skills, **"Creating a presentation based upon teamwork and compromise"** (participant response), and increased confidence and friendships. These outcomes compare favourably with UKSRO summer schools.

***"It was so good!! Well worth the 4 hour travel"***

***"Very good 3 days that helped me learn a lot about the university life and what Politics is like to study"***

***"All the different workshops introduced ideas in terms of content (topics) and skills (e.g. critical thinking) which were quite new"***

