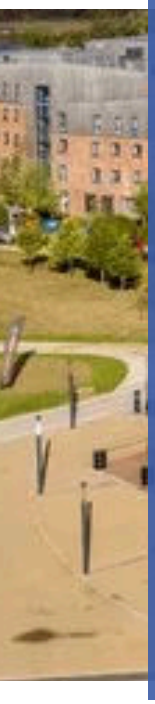
Case Study

University of Lancaster

Five year partnership supporting the development of **coaching and mentoring approaches** within the **Lancaster Success Programme (LSP)**





Overview of On Track Programme

What began as a one-off training session has evolved into a **deeply embedded, strategic and reciprocal partnership** focused on **student success, belonging and social mobility.**

By equipping student support staff, mentors and volunteers with coaching skills, institutions can create more empowering conversations, strengthen students' confidence and sense of belonging, and help students take greater ownership of their development.

This approach moves beyond supporting individual students through one-to-one coaching. It builds the capability of those working closest to students, creating a multiplier effect that can influence hundreds of student interactions over time.

Over time, the partnership has expanded beyond coaching skills training to include ongoing professional development, coaching qualifications, supervision, programme design and collaborative evaluation. Members of the Student Success Team have undertaken coaching training and qualifications through Inclusive Futures, while both organisations have worked together to develop and evaluate approaches to coaching and mentoring that support student progression and belonging.

The partnership has also contributed to wider conversations across the higher education sector through conference presentations, collaborative research, and involvement in the NEON Coaching and Mentoring Working Group, helping other institutions explore the role of coaching and mentoring in access, participation and student success.

Evaluation

Key Statistics:

Participants were **twice as likely to achieve a First-class degree** than eligible non-participants

Approximately **500 students** supported

356 students engaged during **2025-26**

2,747 one-to-one **coaching sessions** delivered



Key Student Findings:

- Participants were **less likely to leave university early,** with non-completion rates of **3.67%** compared with a UK benchmark of **7.8%.**
- Participants were **four times more likely** to **continue their studie**s than eligible non-participants

Key Staff Findings:

- Training participants reported **increased confidence across key coaching competencies** including active listening, powerful questioning, goal setting and supporting students to find their own solutions.
- Staff and volunteers have **adopted coaching approaches in other areas of their work**, extending the reach of coaching principles across the university.

What does Lancaster say?

"Beyond the LSP, **we are seeing a ripple effect into the wider university community.**

Our volunteer coaches are taking what they have learnt and are using it in their broader workload.

For instance, one of our team applied Inclusive Futures' ideas and techniques to a mature student action learning set outside of the LSP's 1:1 coaching sessions and **the feedback we received from the students was incredible.**

As **staff confidence in coaching has increased**, **so too has delivery and impact** within the Lancaster Success Programme."

Martin Walker, Head of Social Mobility and Student Success

Future Implications

The Lancaster University partnership demonstrates how coaching can create impact far beyond individual coaching conversations. By developing coaching capability within student support teams and embedding coaching into institutional practice, universities can create sustainable approaches to **supporting student success, belonging and progression.**

The partnership also highlights the **power of long-term collaboration.** Over five years, Inclusive Futures and Lancaster University have continually tested, refined and strengthened approaches to coaching and mentoring, creating an **evidence-informed model** that **supports both student success and staff development.**

Through sharing learning across the sector, the partnership has contributed to broader conversations about **social mobility, access, belonging** and the **role of coaching** in higher education.