



Eden Centre
for Education
Enhancement

Five years of Student Partnership at LSE



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Introduction to the report

This research, conducted by Ananya (Graduate Intern: Student Partnership Insights, 2024), explores the main contributions made by LSE's student partnership initiatives in the last five years, between 2018–2023. It thinks about the contributions made by student partnership as body of activity, as well as the specific contributions made by its composite findings and recommendations.

Student partnership at LSE

A main purpose of LSE's student partnership initiatives is to create mechanisms for students to critically reflect on their personal journeys, share their lived experiences with staff, and engage in enhancement activity and/or decision making processes across the institution. The two key mechanisms they utilise are **research** and **dialogue**.

- **LSE Change Makers offers an opportunity for partnership through research.** This is a collaborative research initiative between LSE and the LSE Students' Union, in which students undertake independent research and map ways to investigate the '*causes of things*'. In the five years covered by this report, over 250 students have received funding from LSE, submitting 133 completed projects that demonstrate students' critical thinking, methodological sophistication and innovative solution-oriented approach.
- **The Student Education Panel offers an opportunity for partnership through dialogue.** Every year, it brings together around 50 students from across degree programs and levels of study and offers a safe and principled place to collectively reflect on their experiences of a particular topic or theme and make constructive suggestions for enhancement. Over 150 students have participated over the three years covered by this report, contributing to School-level discussions around topics/themes including inclusive classrooms, community and belonging, academic culture, and much more.

The recommendations and insights offered by the students who participate in Change Makers and the Student Education Panel are then communicated with senior leadership and staff across LSE, facilitating the creation of informed solutions with or by relevant stakeholders.

Overview of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide readers with tools, lenses and approaches to understand the varied different contributions and insights offered by LSE's student partnership initiatives.

- The first part of this report reflects on how Student Partnership initiatives have contributed to LSE, through their alignment with LSE's strategic goals, enhancement-focussed outputs, and their roles in shaping both individual and

collective student experiences.

- The second part of this report looks to identify the key areas of interest for staff and student partners, and what we can learn from reading various Change Makers reports and Student Education Panel summaries alongside each other. It is organised into four research themes (*academic and career development, community building, identity and inclusion, and School and inter-departmental concerns*) and nine recommendation types (*awareness, communication, curriculum, events, infrastructure, inclusive pedagogy, research, representation and support*).

Although this report is organised into research themes and recommendation types to help readers navigate the archives, it emphasises the need for an **interconnected approach**. For this purpose, the researcher finds it beneficial to keep in mind three terms to help establish the interconnections across the various insights from student partnership activity, and what they reveal about students' foundational needs. These terms are: *full and meaningful participation, sense of belonging, and student voice*.

Aspirations for the report

This report aims to contribute towards positive change by providing a roadmap to understand the concerns of students with the help of a broad thematic breakdown of research, and recommendation types for targeted intervention.

This report needs to be followed with the ongoing work of mapping the achievements across departments and school levels where recommendations of the students (or actions based on the students' findings) have been implemented. Following this, the report findings will need to be communicated with school level committee and stakeholders associated with target areas of intervention for discussion and further exploration.

This report also needs to be revisited and updated on an annual basis, as LSE's student partnership archive continues to grow. For example, a key next step will be to analyse and integrate the findings and recommendations from student partnership activity during the 2023/24 academic year.

Additionally, although this report focuses on the outputs of two defined student partnership programmes within LSE, their findings should not be viewed in isolation. It is important to also legitimise diverse forms of student voices, in different locations across the university, and ensure that principles of partnership are enacted when engaging with other critical developments at LSE.

Locating the researcher

This report is written by Ananya, a Graduate Intern, working with the Eden Centre to produce this report on five years of student partnership insights. This project reflects my own experience as international master's student at the LSE Department of Gender Studies, along with the invaluable learnings both as a Student Education Panellist and Research Intern with the Eden Centre. My motivation to work with the

Eden Centre has been shaped by the commitment and unwavering support that members have provided to ethical empowerment of the student community at LSE. In the past year and a half, I have had the opportunity to reflect on my journey to, within and beyond LSE, engage in stimulating interactions with stakeholders across the School who believe and invest in meaningful change for whole community. I have also expanded my strategic skill sets and gained career opportunities that have enabled me to be financially independent. These initiatives have instilled a strong sense of empowerment within me, and I bring forth this research to give back to the community and support LSE's ongoing initiatives. I, like the majority of the students who participated in the initiatives, have strong faith and envisage LSE as a truly inclusive institution which produces both world leading research and principled and ethical scholars. I am grateful for the guidance and support I have received from Lydia Halls, along with other members of the Eden Centre, who embodies the true collaborative spirit of student partnership and whose mentorship is foundational for this report.

Further Information

A more detailed academic research report is also available, which includes further information about and explanations for the organisation of research themes and recommendation types. Please email Lydia Halls, Student Partnership Manager, for a copy (l.halls@lse.ac.uk).



Part 1: Insights from analysing the archives as a whole

The number of applicants, and high levels of engagement amongst the selected Change Maker's Project and Student Education Panel participants is indicative of students' strong identification with LSE, as well as their desire and dedication to contribute to the overall enhancement of institution and its success. In return, LSE compensates them for the time and labour they have invested in their research and/or participation, reflecting the value of their contributions and their positioning as key stakeholders in the university community.

Based on a thematic analysis of Change Makers projects between 2018-23, and Student Education Panel summaries between 2020-2023, this report submits that student partnership initiatives have contributed to institutional enhancement and both individual and collective student experiences.

Contributions to institutional enhancement activity

1) Student partnership and education strategy

Students' research and insights have contributed to the [LSE 2030 Strategy](#) priorities **1: Education for Global impact** (by positioning students as agents of change within the institution) and **3: Developing LSE for Everyone** (contributing to efforts to enhance inclusive student experiences of education) in the following ways:

- Students' research and insights have helped with the **contextualisation of these strategic aims**, as students develop evidence-based insights based on their experiences during facilitated interaction with peers and stakeholders, both within and across departments. Through this, they highlight how LSE's strategic priorities are interpreted and experienced in the day-to-day functioning of the School and its students.
- The outputs of student partnership activity provide an **intersectional reading of school-wide priorities**, underlining the nuanced ways in which students' experiences of inclusivity are shaped by their class, caste, religion, gender, sexual orientation, residence status of the students among others.
- Additionally, students partnership work **encapsulates how these issues have evolved** over the years, providing the School with specific and relevant research aligned with recent global and local developments, and their impacts on students' lives and learning environments.

Findings from students' research can be a useful lens through which to revisit LSE's strategic goals, to ensure they continue to be relevant, to assess the effectiveness of current change programs, and to allocate resources for developing new initiatives aligned with student's needs. Thus, these insights from students are critical tools with which to promote dialogue based, inclusive change at LSE.

2) Extending LSE's global classrooms

LSE's student partnership initiatives **encapsulate the spirit of Global Classrooms** at LSE. They bring in researchers and participants from around the world, who critically reflect on their positionality and aim to develop collaborative and culturally sensitive projects and/or insights that are influenced by key social and economic issues at local, national and global levels. The research questions and aims of Change Makers projects, and student suggestions for Student Education Panel topics, come from students' experiences in class, seminars, halls of residence, and London as a city. At the same time, global concerns and political developments like the pandemic, Black Lives Matter, and the Me Too movement are all external influences on student's research.

3) Student partners as social scientists

LSE's student-led research and dialogue outputs from the past five years have contributed to the co-creation of knowledge about education that **supports LSE's position as a leading social sciences university**. They contribute by:

- Filling key research gaps within LSE, and the wider UK Higher Education sector
- Bringing the theories students learn from classes into action, encouraging critical and constructive relationships with various aspects of LSE.

Additionally, Change Makers' projects and Student Education Panel topics across years are designed in relation and conversation with each other, bringing more specific insights in context of ever evolving global context, thus establishing robust knowledge exchange opportunities.

4) Supporting LSE's enhancement efforts

Student partnership initiatives provide unique opportunities to bring in students' perspectives and insights on issues of departmental and School-wide concerns.

Change Makers projects have been instrumental in bringing together best practices. They develop recommendations that identify and promote high quality pedagogical practices from/for teaching staff across LSE's departments to facilitate an inclusive and participatory learning experience. Furthermore, they sometimes identify examples of successful programs and support mechanisms from other UK universities.

Students have also optimised the available support and resources provided by LSE's student partnership initiatives to offer feedback and evaluation of newly introduced programs. They provide suggestions to improve administrative loopholes, enhance communication and public outreach strategies, and improve feedback and grievance redressal mechanisms.

Additionally, students have contributed to strengthening existing initiatives at LSE by coming up with new research questions, innovative methodologies and focussing on target groups that may have been historically missing in sample design, with the aim

of enhancing overall student satisfaction and consequently school and departmental reputations.

5) The value of the student lens

Within Change Makers, student researchers gain access to school wide surveys, departmental reports, and LSE owned data then **interrogate and interpret it from a student perspective**. Firstly, this produces a jargon free and comprehensive understanding of the data that could be more effectively communicated to the wider student community at LSE, enhancing their existing knowledge about institutional practices. Secondly, students research produces rich qualitative data, or additional quantitative data, that can help LSE to further understand how the themes identified in School-level survey data (or similar) is being lived and experienced by students.

Contributions to students' experiences

1) Benefits for student participants

These initiatives offer an enhanced form of representation for student's needs, by giving them unique access to resources and platforms to explore and articulate their concerns, an opportunity to develop better understanding of institutional level practice at LSE and finally opportunities to engage with diverse stakeholders and shape institutional policy and strategic decisions. However, their benefits extend beyond these immediately visible benefits of partnership.

Students develop essential **skills for future career opportunities** by undertaking independent research projects and engaging in dialogue between students and staff. Within Change Makers, for example, this includes analytical skills, report writing, designing surveys, conducting interviews, communication and networking skills and project management skills.

Students also find a stronger **sense of belonging** to an LSE community. These initiatives create opportunities for collaborative research and constructive dialogue, which is important in an institutional context where students often report feeling isolated, and as viewing other students as competitors and not colleagues. The Student Education Panel, for example, provides a principled and safe space for students to share their concerns and critically reflect on various dimensions of their academic journey, which in turn fosters space for informal interaction and building interpersonal connections. The diverse composition of the panel creates an inter-departmental collaborative space, providing students with an opportunity to identify common concerns that span across different departments and demographics, and then to collectively formulate insights on their experiences of LSE.

Moreover, both student partnership initiatives are good **part time work opportunities** (or equivalent) for current students at LSE, thus supporting students by reducing their financial pressure due to high cost of living.

2) Benefits for the wider student community

The topics selected for Student Education Panel meetings actively convey the sensitivity of the School towards the evolving priorities for current students, and publicly position students as key stakeholders in relevant discussions.

Through the Change Makers research archives, both incoming and current students can locate projects which acknowledge the varied experiences of students. Seeing their identities being recognised and the efforts to improve their experiences can help to enhance their overall feelings of trust towards the school.

Last but not least, the Change Makers archive and insights from the Student Education Panel function as an important **resource hub** for new academic and non-academic staff to familiarise themselves with unique student community at LSE and better meet its diverse needs.



Part 2: Analysing the archives by research theme and recommendation type

In addition to analysing the value of student partnership as being ‘more than a sum of its parts’ (as described above), this report looks to identify the key areas of concern for student partners, and what we can learn from reading various Change Makers reports and Student Education Panel summaries alongside each other. While individual small-scale research projects or Student Education Panel meetings may not always provide everything LSE needs to fully understand a problem or make a change, collectively they can paint a rich and nuanced understanding of how different students are experiencing a particular aspect of university life.

The second part of this report brings the different topics from Change Makers and the Student Education Panel ‘in conversation’ with each other. This is achieved by organising students’ insights into thematic categories, and then into a typology of recommendations, while also highlighting the fluidity and interconnectedness between them.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative methodological approach, namely the thematic analysis of 100+ Change Makers projects and the summaries of nine Student Education Panel meetings between 2018–2023.

This resulted first in the identification of four broad research themes, formulated based on the following criteria: (a) key words used in the research titles of Change Makers projects (b) themes of the Student Education Panel meetings (c) overarching goals of the research and dialogue within student partnership initiatives. While the researcher has tried to include majority of research undertaken by students, this report is not exhaustive. Some reports and recommendations have not been selected due to a difficulty in situating them within the predominant themes. Some of these reports have been added in the ‘Acknowledgement of other reports’ section.

This then resulted in the identification of a typology of recommendations that are evident across all four of the research themes. The aims of these nine recommendation types are to provide reader with a clear understanding of the nature of suggestions put forward by students and to identify areas in which LSE can improve existing services or invest additional resources for enhanced student experiences at LSE. It is hoped that these recommendation types will make the student partnership archival material easier to navigate by key stakeholders across the institution.

These themes and types are not intended to create a hierarchy of topics, but to demonstrate the various research themes and recommendation types are in

conversation with each other and are interrelated. They have been selected (at least in part) according to the nature, importance and frequency of their findings/recommendations, as well as their perceived strategic usefulness to the School at the time of writing. This means that not all research and insights included in the report have been represented equally.

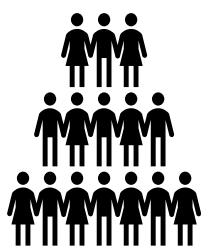
Glossary of research themes and recommendation types

Research Theme

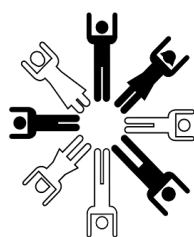
Definition



Academic and Career Development: reflects the strong desire among students to have meaningful engagement with their degree program, gain transferrable skills for better career opportunities and enhance the academic culture of LSE.



Community Building: includes students' recommendations on areas like class participation and engagement, the role of academic mentors, communication between academic and non-academic staff and students, student societies, networking and socialising with current students and alumni, and infrastructure to strengthen the sense of community within the school.



Identity and Inclusion reflects that students' experiences at LSE are shaped at the intersection of their race, class, caste, gender, sexual orientation and political context of country of residence (among others). It also best demonstrates how Change Makers projects have been developed in relation to each other, with projects building on findings from previous years' research.



School and Interdepartmental Concerns: includes common concerns experienced by students across departments; recommendations for a more universal / whole school approach; and suggestions that may require a top-down approach from senior management.

Recommendation type

Definition



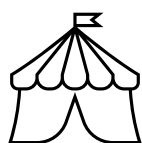
Awareness: suggestions to enhance LSE's current level of understanding of issues, bring a difference in the framing of School-level discourse, and initiatives to improve visibility of issues that concern student community.



Communication: suggestions to improve the accessibility, clarity and transparency of information for applicants and students.



Curriculum: suggestions to critically reflect on course content (with a particular focus on materials and case studies) with the aim of making programmes across departments more engaging, representative and inclusive.



Events: suggestions for internal and external activities to provide extracurricular development opportunities, overcome isolation, and promote community building.



Infrastructure: suggestions to improve the physical structures and facilities of the LSE campus to enhance the overall experience of students, especially those with specific needs based on their intersectional identities and/or residential status.



Inclusive Pedagogy: suggestions for teaching practices that promote positive engagement, a sense of belonging within a diverse student community, the participation of students from underrepresented socio-economic backgrounds, and support to equip teachers to identify and address more of the issues faced by their students¹.



Research: suggestions to collect and analyse further qualitative and quantitative data about student experiences, and to utilise the findings to assess key issues faced by students, identify current administrative

¹ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Eden-Centre/Inclusive-Education-at-LSE/inclusive-pedagogy>

loopholes, and plan effective evidence-based intervention strategies.

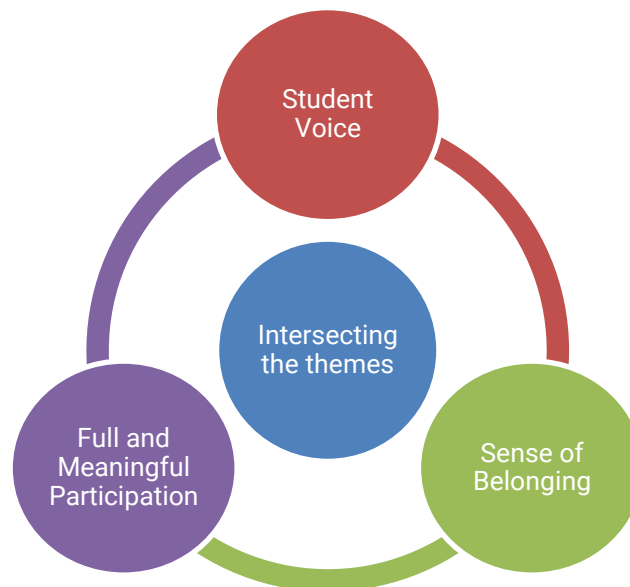


Representation: suggestions for mechanisms to improve dialogue between students and staff, and to increase the visibility and availability of roles (both staff and students) that can facilitate stronger representation of student's needs.



Support: suggestions focussed on three interrelated areas of support: financial and administrative resources, appointment of staff to address specific needs of students, and avenues for grievance redressal.

Exploring the intersections



Although this report is organised into four research themes to help readers navigate the archives, it emphasises the need for an interconnected approach to reading. For this purpose, this research finds beneficial to use three terms to establish the interconnections across the Change Makers' research and Student Educational Panel insights. This includes:

1. **Full and Meaningful Participation** (to overcome structural barriers),
2. **Sense of belonging** (across intersecting social identities) and
3. **Student Voice** (including freedom of expression, opportunities for critical dialogue and participation in decision-making)

For instance, the **community building** section indicates the significance of interconnected reading of the broad themes underlined in the report. In this context, although only 13 Change Makers projects include the words '*community building*' in their research title, recommendations from other projects are also significant for

fostering a sense of belonging across age, class, caste, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and other social identities.

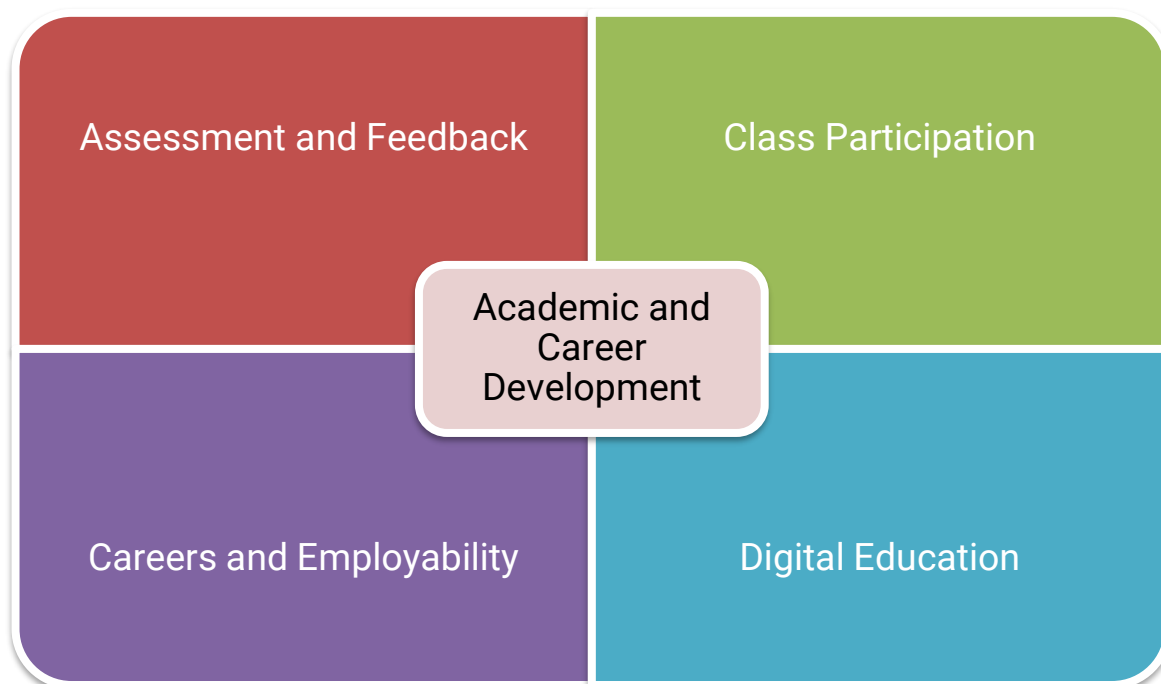
For example:

- **Full and Meaningful Participation** enables us to see the connections between **community building** and **identity and inclusion** themes, as [Pelech et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) and [Abdelhadi \(2021/22\)](#) underline both neurodivergence and religion as social categories affect the student's experience of community.
- **Sense of belonging** enables us to see the connection between the **community building** and **academic and career development** themes, as [Ducker \(2022/23\)](#) highlights the importance of safe spaces in helping students feel part of a community in the classroom.
- **Student Voice** enables us to see the connection between **community building** and **School and inter-departmental** themes, as [Hooper \(2020/21\)](#) concluded that student activism facilitates the process of community building.

Thus, these three terms are helpful to piece together the interconnections across all four research themes of *community building*, *academic and career development*, *identities and inclusion* and *School and inter-departmental concerns*.

Academic and Career Development

Research theme at a glance:



Assessment and Feedback

Students see these as two key tools through which they can develop academic and professional skills and assess their academic success and limitations. Students are requesting tailored and future-oriented feedback about their academic performance.

Specific suggestions have included:



Communication:

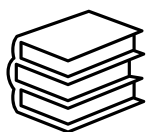
- [Straub \(2018/19\)](#) recommends that departments should develop specific marking matrices depending on varying expectations and assignments.
- [Ahmed et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) suggest scope of assessment should be clearly defined i.e. outlining the theories and concepts that students could utilise.
- [Tan et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggest that departments should communicate the differences between learning outcomes and exam expectations.
- Student Education Panel insights on [Assessment Enhancement \(2021/22\)](#) suggest that assessment guidelines could be included in the course directory so that students can make informed

decisions about which courses to pick based on assessment methods.



Support:

- Research (e.g. [Straub \(2018/19, Ahmed et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) and [Tan et. al. 2020/21](#)) identifies three ways of supporting students. This includes (a) increased provision and promotion of interaction between students and staff (b) consistent and detailed feedback, (c) flexibility to accommodate specific needs of students.
- Student Education Panel [Assessment Enhancement, 2021/22](#)) suggest that feedback should be more detailed and transferrable between formative and summative assessments.
- [Tan et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) and [Ahmed et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) specifically recommend flexible office hours, facilitating peer feedback for formatives and group office hours to help students overcome the feeling of isolation (especially around assessment) and promote collective wellbeing.



Curriculum:

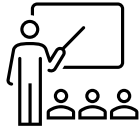
- The Student Education Panel ([Assessment Enhancement, 2021/22](#)) asks for assessments that offer 'real life' applicability of what students are learning, and enable them to showcase their knowledge in a more effective way.

Class participation

Research identifies three key contributors to low class participation: (a) large class sizes, (b) a competitive environment in classes, (c) difficulties in comprehension and articulation for some non-native English-speaking students.

Change Makers research and discussions among Student Education Panellists centre the importance of inclusive pedagogical interventions to enhance class participation across level of study, degree specialisation, ethnicity, race and gender identity. These include enhanced facilitation strategies and active encouragement of student participation, both of which can be enabled by increased staff engagement with development opportunities.

Specific suggestions have included:



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- Various reports suggest that teachers should promote small group discussions and introduce group activities catering to diverse student needs, and that departments should develop clear guidelines regarding codes of conduct and ethical modes of participation. Specifically:
- The Student Education Panel ([Inclusive Classrooms, 2020/21](#)) suggests that teachers should offer different (but equally valued) methods for participating in classes.
- The Student Education Panel ([Inclusive Classrooms, 2020/21](#)) also suggests greater efforts to foster an environment that is not overly competitive, and that positions learning as a partnership.
- [Aishah et. Al. \(2022/23\)](#) recommends that teachers could do more to 'control' participation, by promoting students who do not have as much of a chance to talk in class.
- [Baez \(2021/22\)](#) suggest the adoption of '*engagement silence*', in which a teacher asks a question and gives one minute of silent thinking time before taking the responses from students. This provides preparation time that could be especially useful for students whose first language is not English.
- [Ducker \(2022/23\)](#) suggests that staff should be offered training in microaggressions, mediation strategies for conflict resolution, and sessions on intercultural awareness and appreciation.

Careers and Employability

Research reveals that students are highly concerned about their future opportunities after completing their degrees at LSE and would like to see LSE playing a greater role in their professional skills development. They suggest more skill-based trainings, tailored career sessions based on industry requirements, and work experience opportunities for students.

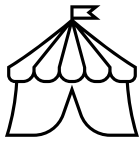
Specific suggestions have included:



Awareness:

- [Asif \(2019/20\)](#) submits that enhancing awareness of extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities is

essential for increasing inclusive student participation in them.



Events:

- [Asif \(2019/20\)](#) found that 'meet an alum' and 'alumni coffee mornings' are greatly appreciated by students.



Representation:

- [Asif \(2019/20\)](#) suggests the appointment of an LSE Careers Ambassador in each department and year group for promotion of LSE Careers' events.



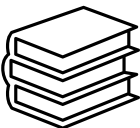
Support:

- [Fernandez \(2019/20\)](#) suggests that LSE Careers and LSESU create a central database of external opportunities and more internal research projects for undergraduate students, so that they can combine skills development with financially-necessary part-time work, and inform students who undertake part-time work out of financial necessity about their workplace rights.

Digital Education

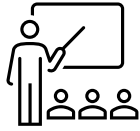
This topic has been gaining significance in student partnership spaces, particularly post-pandemic. The Student Education Panel on [Digital Education Futures \(2021/22\)](#) highlighted students' positive experience with online learning and recorded lectures, with higher comprehension and enhanced accessibility to course material. Similarly, [Sandars et. al. \(2020/21\)](#)'s survey results suggested higher satisfaction among students with online classes, as they can provide greater flexibility and convenience. Key areas of improvement include ensuring equitable access to digital technologies, increased digital skills training for students and staff, and interventions to improve isolation caused by technology.

Specific suggestions have included:



Curriculum:

- [Bhatnagar et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggest making digital skills courses mandatory (non-graded) part of degree requirements, offering workshops that integrate multiple complementary software to help students understand how different software work in harmony, and offering similar provision to alumni.



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- Insights from the Student Education Panel ([Digital Education Futures, 2021/22](#)) suggest that all educators should be provided training on best practices for remote learning.
- [Sandars et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggests that class teachers should incorporate techniques that promote greater interaction (e.g. motivating students to turn on the camera if/when online learning is utilised).



Research:

- [Miskow \(2019/20\)](#) suggests that LSE should collect more information on the design of Blogs, Forums, Turnitin and Wiki along with collecting data on reasons for student's dissatisfaction with these platforms. Based on this, standard guidelines should be introduced across departments.



Infrastructure:

- Insights from the Student Education Panel ([Digital Education Futures, 2021/22](#) and [Education and the Campus Environment, 2022/23](#)) both identify a need for campus to change to accommodate increased digital education, for example enhanced classroom set-ups, more plug sockets, ergonomic seating, etc.

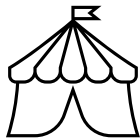
Community Building

Research theme at a glance:

Student partnership insights underline the positive impact of community in improving the academic performances of students, creating an inclusive space for free expression of concerns, a balanced social life, and potential career opportunities post graduation, thus resulting in higher level of overall satisfaction among students.

Students have recognised areas like class participation and engagement, the role of an academic mentor, communication between academic and non-academic staff and students, student societies, networking and socialising with current students and alumni and infrastructure as key elements through which a sense of community could be strengthened within the school.

Specific suggestions have included:



Events:

- [Gerard et. al. \(2018/19\)](#) assesses the role of volunteering activities on community building in the context of undergraduate students. Their research finds a positive correlation between the two and recommends promoting volunteering opportunities through student residential halls to promote a sense of belonging.
- [Cossey \(2020/21\)](#) explores the constraints experienced by LSE students living in private renting accommodation and submit that students in non-LSE accommodation feel less supported and did not experience as strong a sense of community beyond the campus. The research suggests that more non-alcoholic events should be organised and some of these events should be in the residential areas so that students can become familiar with their new environment in the company of others.



Infrastructure:

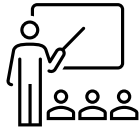
- [Carvalho \(2018/19\)](#) submits that every department should have one common room. [Renton et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) reach a similar conclusion and submits that a dedicated physical space for Economics students will provide opportunities to socialize and improve the sense of community.
- [Caleffi et. al. \(2018/19\)](#) underlines the role of food in promoting social relationships. Thus, they suggest that campus should have more facilities like microwaves, kettles and collective seating areas designed to promote socialising.



Representation:

- [Nowicka \(2019/20\)](#) establishes a link between participation in national societies and creation of strong interpersonal bonds, improving overall university experience of students. They recommend building a strong alumni network through both national and career-oriented societies.

Inclusive Pedagogy:



- Student Education Panel Insights on [Academic Culture \(2022/23\)](#) underlines that academic mentors are a significant contributor to the academic cultures at LSE, and can play a key role in building community (e.g. by organising group mentoring sessions).
- Student Education Panel Insights on [Connection and Isolation \(2022/23\)](#) reveals the impact that meaningful connections with teaching staff can have on their sense of feeling part of a community at LSE.
- Student Education Panel Insights on [Inclusive Classrooms \(2020/21\)](#) highlights the important role that classroom connections have in developing non-competitive and mutually supportive social relationships.
- [Renton et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) submits that more efforts should be made by academic mentors to reach out to students in their first year on undergraduate degree program to support an early sense of community.

Identities and Inclusion

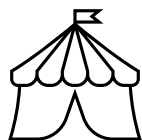
Research theme at a glance:



Race and Ethnicity

A concern that the student partnership activities have researched with sensitivity over the years is the experience of racial discrimination both within and beyond classrooms at LSE. Research underlines heightened financial insecurity, imposter syndrome and restricted participation felt among BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) students in particular.

Specific suggestions have included:



Events:

- [Tshola \(2021/22\)](#) suggests hosting a biannual event at LSE where all ethnic and cultural societies come together, using LSE Welcome to talk about the experiences of different racial and class groups at LSE, and that LSESU should organise Black British seminars/events.
- [Okufuwa \(2022/23\)](#) observes the low level of participation of Black students in LSESU sports team and suggests organising inclusive events like inaugural black history month themed sports night.



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- [Chaurey \(2018/19\)](#) suggests including empathy training for professors to notice unintended consequences of racial exclusion.



Research:

- [Chaurey \(2018/19\)](#) suggests commissioning further research to understand race-based

isolation and exclusion experienced by some students.



Support:

- [Ishaq \(2022/23\)](#) identifies an intersection between BME students and commuter students, and suggests establishing an Uber voucher system for commuting students to attend society events. They also suggest the creation of a dedicated point of contact within LSE LIFE to provide support for commuter students.
- [Okufuwa \(2022/23\)](#) suggests that LSE sports membership should have a system whereby fees are reduced/removed based on individual circumstances.



Representation:

- [Noman et. al.](#) (2019/20) underlines the unique challenges of BME PhD students and suggests the formation of a BME students' forum within each department.
- [Tshola \(2021/22\)](#) suggests the creation of a public forum that is accessible to both student and staff to voice their concerns related to racism on campus.
- Secondly, while recognising the positive impact of student societies, [Tshola \(2021/22\)](#) suggests greater collaboration between LSE, LSESU, LSE LIFE and the African Caribbean Society to alleviate the pressure of representation and events of the Black British Students.
- [Okufuwa \(2022/23\)](#) suggests the introduction of LSESU Athletics Union inclusivity executive members.
- [Chaurey \(2018/19\)](#) suggests the creation of informal groups for students of colour in every department, and regular town hall meetings to understand and enhance their experiences.

Gender and Sexuality

The key issues students experience in relation to gender and sexuality centre around **interactions** between academic and professional staff and students, **facilities** such

as gender-neutral bathrooms and **institutional** support. This includes a perceived lack of consultation and transparency around the decision to disaffiliate with Stonewall, lack of administrative support for gender-specific processes like name changes, and limited adaptability of general services at LSE to the needs of gender non-conforming students (like LSE LIFE, LSE Careers, Counselling services).

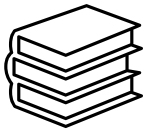
All of the suggestions in this section come from two reports: The Experience of Gender Non-Conforming Students ([PL, 2021/22](#)) and How do International LGBTQ+ Students Experience the LSE Environment? ([Bajaj and Sanadhanan, 2022/23](#)) which built upon, expanded, and added an intersectional lens to, PL's research.

Specific suggestions have included:



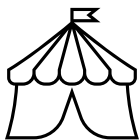
Communication:

- Communicating about the services available for LGBTQ+ students more effectively by including them in student handbooks and emails.
- Greater transparency from LSE leadership about management decisions that affect LGBTQ+ students and allies.



Curriculum:

- Including more queer authors and gender related courses, along critical engagement with outdated studies that may serve to reinforce discrimination.



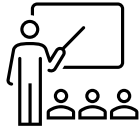
Events:

- More programs in LSE Careers and LSE Life for gender non-conforming students such as genderqueer alumni advise/meeting.
- Hold LGBTQ+ subsidised hall and university LGBTQ+ events (social and academic) including an introductory event during Welcome.



Infrastructure:

- More gender neutral toilets and gender-neutral changing rooms, separate to disabled spaces.
- A dedicated genderqueer-friendly space for students to foster a sense of community and security for gender non-conforming students.
- A support desk to help students access resources.



Inclusive pedagogy:

- Workshops that support staff and students to foster an inclusive and LGBTQI+ friendly environment. This includes programs on inclusivity, allyship, gender sensitivity, trans inclusivity and trauma informed workshops.



Support:

- Establish an opt-in program where students can get matched with LGBTQ+ staff mentors for guidance.
- Offer specific LGBTQ+ groups and workshops within the student counselling services.



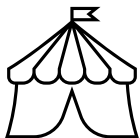
Representation:

- A dedicated LGBTQI+ officer and/or Sub Warden in all halls, and the option of living in a flat/floor with other LGBTQ+ students.
- Supporting students in forming intersectional student societies and study groups to provide safe space for people with marginalised identities.

Religious Beliefs

[Abdelhandi's](#) research (2021/22) highlighted the positive experience of faith-based societies and LSE Faith Centre provision. [Zainuddin's](#) project the following year (2022/23), was a continued investigation and further advancement of research in this area, focussing specifically on feelings on inclusion/exclusion. All the suggestions included in this section are from these two papers.

Specific suggestions have included:



Events:

- Establish more non-alcohol department events throughout the year.



Infrastructure:

- Physical: Increasing the number of faith related facilities in a greater number of buildings (such as a prayer room in the library)
- Digital: providing online classes and attendance options during faith related holidays.
- Introducing clearer signs in LSE's catering outlets about what is halal and non halal, and providing more halal options.



Representation:

- Increasing muslim representation within teaching. This will enhance understanding, lead to reduction of islamophobia narratives and inclusive teaching.



Support:

- Clarifying and highlighting how students can report faith related issues and what these issues entail, and taking a non-tolerance approach towards faith-related discrimination.

Neurodiversity and Disability

The Change Makers Project arounds this theme identify concerns around **disclosure**, **inclusive pedagogy** and targeting ableism outside classrooms and **administrative difficulties** for accessing Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) support and/or the implementation of Inclusion Plans (now called My Adjustments).

Specific suggestions have included:



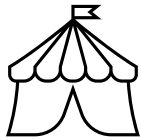
Awareness:

- [Beck et. al. \(2018/19\)](#) suggest increasing students' awareness about Disability and Wellbeing Services and recirculating Inclusion Plans at the start of each term and year.



Communication:

- [Beck et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) underlines the need for providing key information about adjustments and support available to students through formal communication channels.
- [Swanke et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests experimenting with the framing and timing of how LSE asks postgraduate applicants to declare disabilities and/or medical conditions to enhance the quality of responses received. This includes substituting disability language with adjustment language, re-framing the question as a diversity and inclusion initiative and changing the timing of the question, potentially to post-application.



Events:

- [Pelech et. al. \(2022/23\)](#) suggests that LSESU could offer recreational sports activities specifically intended to enhance the participation of disabled students in sports / activities.
- [Crutcher \(2021/22\)](#) suggests that LSE LIFE could introduce certain workshops specifically for neurodivergent students.



Inclusive pedagogy:

- [Pelech et. al. \(2022/23\)](#) suggests mandatory accessibility training for LSE staff taught by LSESU's Neurodivergent Students' Officer and Disabled Students' Officer.



Research:

- [Schulte et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests undertaking research on why not as many disabled students are applying to LSE or what role disability plays in decision making. They also suggest that LSE makes its current data on disability and neurodivergence more accessible to allow students to examine LSE's performance and suggest improvements.
- [Beck et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests including specific question in TQARO surveys to assess whether students with Inclusion Plans are receiving suitable accommodations across all of their classes.



Representation:

- [Schulte et.al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests setting up student councils comprising of students receiving support from DWS.



Support:

- [Pelech et. al. \(2022/23\)](#) suggest the creation of a mandatory 'Student Inclusion Officer' role across all sports clubs and societies.
- [Beck et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests further collaboration between the Disability and Wellbeing Service, Eden Centre, teachers and disabled students to devise innovative strategies for accessibility and inclusion.

International Students

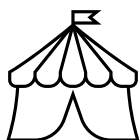
LSE has a vibrant international community of students and staff from across the globe. Insights from student partnership initiatives in the last five years have emphasised the significance of acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by the international community at LSE. This includes (but is not limited to) visa and travelling restrictions for students specifically from the global south, the cultural and academic shock students can experience and language barriers that hinder the participation and inclusion of non-English speaking students at LSE.

Specific suggestions have included:



Communication:

- [Lau \(2022/23\)](#) emphasises that the first few weeks are especially important for international students. They suggest that departments and halls release a timetable for Welcome as early as possible during summer, and communicate with students so that they can prepare accordingly.



Events:

- [Siddhika \(2020/21\)](#) recommends organising short workshops for students about the technologies used in education at LSE to minimise effect of academic culture shock.
- [Lau \(2022/23\)](#) suggest that cultural events and workshops could be organised with the aim of overcoming homesickness among international students, similar to the LSE Faith Centre's Iftaar Dinner.
- [Kohlmann \(2019/20\)](#) proposes the introduction of inter-departmental meetings where in students who are learning English can share their experiences and coping mechanisms.



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- [Kohlmann \(2019/20\)](#) recommends utilising small groups in seminars to support students whose first language is not English.

Commuting Students

Research indicates that the experiences of commuting students differ significantly from students who reside in residential halls ([Swift 2019/20](#)). Long commuting hours negatively impact students' abilities to socialise, access in person events and develop a sense of belonging to the wider community at LSE. Commuting students' experiences also remain an under-researched and less-acknowledged area, thus

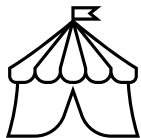
restricting the development of, and access to, necessary support ([Zazzarino et. al. 2019/20](#)).

Specific suggestions have included:



Communication:

- [Swift \(2019/20\)](#) suggests creating a new page on the LSE website with advice and tips specifically for commuting students.



Events:

- [Swift \(2019/20\)](#) suggests that a commuters' welcome event could be organised during off-peak hours during Welcome.
- [Zazzarino et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) proposes that there should be a 'bring your family to the university' day to integrate commuting students' families and home lives into the LSE community.
- The Student Education Panel ([Connection and Isolation, 2022/23](#)) suggests that LSE could do more to replicate the events offered in halls for commuter students.



Infrastructure:

- [Zazzarino et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggests that LSE could provide sleeping spaces on campus to allow students to stay overnight if needed on occasion. Further, there could be extended provision of other facilities like lockers, showers, refrigerators and microwaves for commuting students.



Research:

- [Swift \(2019/20\)](#) suggests collecting and collating more data on commuting students and their experiences.



Representation:

- [Swift \(2019/20\)](#) proposes the introduction of a commuter students' officer at LSESU.

Socioeconomics

This section includes the research conducted on the experience of students from underrepresented backgrounds due to their financial status and prior education. Change Makers projects investigate strategies to accommodate concerns of first-

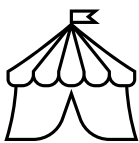
generation learners and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Key issues identified include imposter syndrome and negative impacts on academic outcomes. Student research found that financial insecurity can be interlinked with student wellbeing, leading to self-esteem issues, depression and anxiety among students. As a result, students can experience lower level of belonging with the wider LSE community.

Specific suggestions have included:



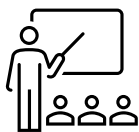
Communication:

- [Srivastava et al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggest that LSE's Student Marketing and Recruitment team could tackle a perception of LSE as an international institution primarily for students from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds by diversifying the case studies used in recruitment materials.
- [Dean \(2020/21\)](#) and [Chung \(2020/21\)](#) suggest increasing the awareness of, and clarity of communications about, scholarships and support funds, as well as providing more information to students about the process of applying for financial support.



Events:

- [Chung \(2020/21\)](#) recommends the introduction of financial literacy event to introduce first-generation, low-income students to information about taxes, on campus jobs, managing their finances and understanding scholarship/bursary offers.



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- [Lee \(2020/21\)](#) suggests providing workshops/resources to strengthen staff understanding about disparities in the educational experience of students before they arrived at LSE.
- [Chung \(2020/21\)](#) suggestions approaches to help faculty members and mentors be more aware of, and signpost effectively towards, resources for students who require financial assistance, opportunities and support.



Representation:

- [Lee \(2020/21\)](#) affirms that LSE Widening Participation should continue to employ student ambassadors from underrepresented background during the first year at university. Additionally, they

could create a family-style network of Student Ambassadors, a pre-entry programme, and a support network of tutors and mentors for students from underrepresented backgrounds.



Support:

- [Dean \(2020/21\)](#) suggests creating a social fund to support enable financially insecure students to participate in events, thereby helping to overcome any feelings of social exclusion and isolation they may be experiencing.

School and Inter-Departmental Concerns

Research theme at a glance:



Decolonising and Diversifying

Since 2018, the decolonisation and diversification of education has been a recurring theme across research and dialogue as part of student partnership initiatives.

Key requests from students include **focus on decolonising the curriculum** (especially the inclusion of scholars from global south and critical reflexivity among staff and students), **representative faculty** with appointment of more diverse academic and professional staff, and strengthening **financial support** for applicants and students from global south.

Specific suggestions have included:



Curriculum:

- A common suggestion across Change Makers research has been to promote diverse and inclusive reading lists that branch out from a current focus on White scholarship produced in elite universities within the UK and the US. This has been echoed within the Student Education Panel, who make the connection between the diversity of the curriculum and whether a student feels like they belong in the classroom ([Connection and Isolation, 2022/23](#)).
- [Munster \(2020/21\)](#) and [Olejniczak \(2020/21\)](#) suggest the introduction of distinct courses/modules that explore the colonial links of different academic disciplines, making the structural inequalities and power dynamics within academia more visible.



Inclusive Pedagogy:

- [Ennis \(2021/22\)](#), in the context of the European Institute, suggests an optional training course on decolonising education for all teaching staff.



- [Lepratti et. al. \(2018/19\)](#), with the aim of promoting freedom of academic expression, suggests that all staff should develop an understanding of the implications of Home Office activity on international student experiences.

Representation:

- [Srivastava et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) suggests the creation of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee in the School of Public Policy for the purpose of analysing existing course materials and resources, and identifying opportunities for further inclusion of diverse readings and ideas within the curriculum.
- [Tamang \(2020/21\)](#) suggests establishing an EDI committee with a high proportion of BAME students and staff, along with an expert on decoloniality to audit working and teaching in the department on which the report focused (International Development).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing is a popular topic amongst LSE's student partners, with four Change Makers projects dedicated to this topic. Research finds that financial strain, academic pressure and homesickness are key stressors impacting student health and mental wellbeing. Additionally, concerns regarding mental health stigma prevents students from reaching out for help.

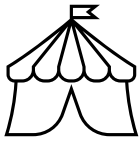
Specific suggestions have included:



Communication:

- [Sheng \(2019/20\)](#) argues the need to make Mind's Mentally Healthy Universities Initiative's marketing material more accessible.
- [Chaplin et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) proposes to 'flatten' the student support map making it easily navigable, along with providing a contact template for peer support scheme, ensuring higher engagement. They also suggest that LSE collaborates with The Beaver, Pulse Radio, LSE LIFE and student societies to promote inclusive mental health support.
- The Student Education Panel ([Navigating LSE Services and Support, 2020/21](#)) suggests there should be more communication of LSE's mental

health and wellbeing provisions. They also recognise that improving communications around stressful topics (e.g. exams) will also contribute to improving students' wellbeing.



Events:

- [Saunders et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) suggest that more drop-in sessions are made available, along with events as part of an awareness campaign to alter the culture of asking for help.

Support:

Research suggests taking a more culturally sensitive approach to support, for example by providing tailored services to students:

- [Sheng \(2019/20\)](#) suggests that this could be achieved by acknowledging and serving the requirements of different subgroups of students within LSE's counselling provision
- [Chaplin \(2021/22\)](#) provides a similar recommendation in the context of the Peer Support Scheme at LSE.

Sexual Misconduct and Campus Safety

Change Makers projects have engaged extensively with students' feelings of safety both within campus and London as a city. They submit that students' perceptions of their safety are impacted by their gender, race and sexual orientation. They also conclude that formal consent training is considered an essential tool to enhance student's confidence in consent knowledge and to reduce students' experiences of sexual misconduct.

Specific suggestions have included:



Awareness:

- Research across all years finds that mandatory consent education continues to be an important tool for increasing students' perceptions of sexual safety.
- [Fontenez et. al. \(2019/20\)](#) highlights the particular need for a face-to-face course, which includes topics on consent, bystander intervention training and details on LSE's sexual misconduct policies.



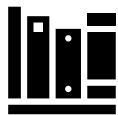
Communication:

- [Farley et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggest that the School provides clear signposting of safe contacts in physical spaces on campus.



Infrastructure:

- [Farley et. al. \(2020/21\)](#) suggest increasing lighting on small pathways and roads which are identified as feeling unsafe by students.



Research:

- [Thode et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) suggest further research on students' experience and/or perceptions of safety on campus.



Representation:

- [Kaczmarczyk \(2021/22\)](#) suggests the appointment of a permanent staff member within LSE or LSESU, who is responsible for dissemination of consent education programmes.



Support:

- [Thode et. al. \(2021/22\)](#) recommends continuing the funding for consent education programme.

Student as Agents of Change

Student partnership research has explored student voice in relation to the mechanisms available for providing feedback and affecting change. Two Change Makers projects ([Andras \(2020/21\)](#) and [Bradbury \(2020/21\)](#)) explored the ways in which Unitu (a platform that allowed students to post questions, ideas or feedback) impacted student voice at LSE. They found that students appreciated opportunities for anonymous feedback without fear of reprisal, but that engagement with the platform was limited. Secondly, [Hooper \(2020/21\)](#) undertook unprecedented research on the experience of student activism at LSE. Furthermore, the Student Education Panel have critically reflected on the connection between their experiences of providing feedback and their sense of connection to (or isolation from) the university ([Connection and Isolation, 2022/23](#)).

Specific suggestions have included:



Awareness:

- [Hooper \(2020/21\)](#) suggests acknowledging the influence that student activists have had on changes and improvements at LS.



Communication

- [Bradbury \(2020/21\)](#) suggests that, if considering the wider adoption of an online feedback platform, it should be centralised as the main communication platform within a department in order to enhance effectiveness and engagement.
- Insights from the Student Education Panel on [Communicating with Students \(2021/22\)](#) and [Connection and Isolation \(2022/23\)](#) highlight that students are repeatedly disappointed by how LSE responds to issues that matter to students, identifying 'institutional silence' and a lack of transparency as two key areas for improvement.



Research:

- [Hooper \(2020/21\)](#) suggests creating an archive of activism at LSE to raise awareness of its history and impact.
- [Andras \(2020/21\)](#) propose further quantitative research on the useability of online feedback platforms across LSE.



Support:

- [Hooper \(2020/21\)](#) suggests that LSE increases opportunities for face-to-face dialogue between Students Union campaigners and members of senior management, and the allotment of time in Town Hall meetings for discussion about SU campaign topics.
- [Andras \(2020/21\)](#) suggests that online feedback platforms would be most productive on a university-wide level than a department-level.



Representation:

- Student Education Panel insights on [Connection and Isolation \(2022/23\)](#) identify the important role of student voice in determining whether a student feels part of the university, suggesting events to understand the purpose and impact of feedback, more opportunities to provide nuanced, qualitative feedback,

and options for giving feedback collectively as opposed to individually.



Further reading

As underlined in the introduction, this report is not intended as an exhaustive list of all the research undertaken under the Change Makers programme, or discussions by the Student Education Panel. Instead, its focus is on developing broad thematic categories to effectively communicate the overarching concerns from across student partnership activity, rather than a description of the funded projects. Therefore it should be re-emphasised that the decision of whether or not to reference a project should not be taken as indicative of the selected projects having greater significance over the others.

This section provides a few additional examples of students' other contributions, and illustrate the diversity and uniqueness of research topics. They also exemplify significance of work that doesn't sit within the main identified themes, and their continued importance for further investigation in upcoming academic years.

- [Syranidis \(2018/19\)](#) undertook research on the best ways of promoting LSE's Ethics Code with focus on (a) The Anti Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy (b) the code of good practice for students with emphasis on plagiarism, (c) The Environmental Sustainability Policy.
- [Buckley \(2019/2020\)](#) pioneered the research on how concerns of students with forced migration background could be addressed at LSE. This Change Maker project had the dual aim to encourage more future applications from students with refugee and asylum-seeking background and to support students within LSE to improve the culture of sanctuary in Higher Education.
- [Gupta & Ratnaparkhi \(2022/23\)](#) and [Freeman \(2019/20\)](#) conducted original research into the extent to which sustainability and climate concerns are embedded into the curriculum of two departments at LSE, and suggestions for wider adoption/integration of these topics.

Therefore, we strongly encourage readers to further engage with the full breadth and depth of the [Change Maker's Research Archive](#) and [Insights from Student Education Panel](#), both of which have been further updated to include the latest research from 2023/24.



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

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