ACTIVE UNIVERSITIES 6 MONTH REPORT

Projects provided their first six monthly progress reports to cover the period from the start of delivery of their Active Universities project up to the end of December 2011. Universities provided their reports in two parts:

- A spreadsheet showing the actual outputs (Participants, Throughput etc) achieved during the reporting period against the agreed targets.
- A written progress report setting out overall project progress, achievements, problems and any learning that the project thought would be useful to share with Sport England and other Active Universities projects.

PART 1: BASIC DATA SUMMARY

This section summarises the information provided by the universities in their reporting spreadsheets.

1. Overall Programme Performance

HE Student Participants (40 projects)

Year 1 Target	6 Month Actual	% of Year 1 Target Achieved
46,777	24,034	51%

- All 40 projects have targets for Participants. 38 of these projects have so far reported their Participant figures for the first six months.
- The total number of Participants reported so far is 24,034.
- The target number of Participants for year 1 is 46,777.
- Projects therefore achieved 51% of the year 1 target over the first six months of the programme.

Percentage of total Participants that are HE students (40 projects)

HE Students	Other Participants (inc Staff)	Total
92%	8%	100%

- All of the Participants figures presented in this report show the number of HE students. However, just over 2,000 other individuals have also taken part in Active Universities activity across the programme.

Percentage of total Participants by gender (40 projects)

Male	Female	Total
60%	40%	100%

- 60% of Participants in the programme have been male and 40% have been female.

Throughput (27 projects)

Year 1 Target	6 Month Actual	% of Year 1 Target Achieved
910,725	144,127	16%

- 27 projects have Throughput targets. 26 of these projects have reported their actual Throughput figures for the first six months.
- The total Throughput reported so far is 144,127.
- The target Throughput number for year 1 is 910,725.
- Projects therefore achieved 16% of the year 1 target over the first six months of the programme.

Visits per Participant for projects reporting both measures (26 projects)

Participants	Throughput	Average Visits per Participant
14,624	144,127	10

- 26 projects have reported actual figures for both Participants and Throughput. There has been an average of 10 visits per participant for these projects.
- The average figure hides significant variation between projects (it is skewed by the six projects that average more than 10 visits per participant, while the majority (20 projects) average fewer than 10 visits per participant).

Interpretation and discussion

Progress against the Participants measure is going well. If the same number of Participants begin to take part in the second half of the year as took part during the first six months, then the programme will meet the year 1 target for Participants.

Slower progress has been made against the Throughput measure. There are several likely explanations for this:

- The pattern of Throughput lagging behind Participants at this stage is to be expected because Throughput takes a longer time to build up – the individuals that took part in the first six months have already been counted in the Participants measure and will not be counted again in that measure. However, any future sessions of activity that they take part in through the programme will continue to count towards the Throughput totals.
- Some projects have reported success in transferring Participants from Active Universities activity into university club and community settings. Although a success in terms of increasing regular participation, this means that these individuals cease to contribute to the project Throughput figures.
- Many of the projects have reported that they are finding it difficult to meet their Throughput targets because of the nature of the more informal/social/casual activities they are offering. These activities are proving effective for attracting people who might not want (or be able to) take part in more formal/structured activity. However, a consequence of the more casual 'drop in' ethos is that many participants will drop in and out rather than

attending every session. This is discussed in more detail in the section of this report summarising the written feedback from the projects.

Although not all projects have targets for Throughput the key outcome of Active Universities is to increase the number of students participating in 3 x 30 minutes of sport per week. As a result both Participants and Throughput should be the focus for all projects. Sport England are working with projects to ensure they are successful in both attracting and retaining Participants to deliver this key outcome. Additionally, the Higher Education Sports Participation and Satisfaction Survey is measuring participation rates by students.

PART 2: QUALITATIVE REPORT

In addition to the quantitative data reported in Part 1, all projects receiving Active Universities funding from Sport England were required to provide a written progress report setting out overall project progress, achievements, problems and any learning that the project thought would be useful to share with Sport England and other Active Universities projects.

The information gathered through this process has been grouped under the following headings:

1. Planning and partnerships/links
   a. Internal partnerships
   b. External links
2. Timetabling
3. Facilities
4. Marketing and communications
   a. Marketing channels
   b. Social/recreational emphasis - popular appeal versus retention
   c. Addressing cost barriers
5. Workforce
6. Clubs and exit routes
7. Administrative challenges
8. Sports doing well / struggling
9. Competitive opportunities

1. Planning and partnerships/links

Nine projects said they found they needed to spend more time on planning and preparation for activities. A number of projects mentioned the importance of understanding the student demographic. Many reports highlighted the need to continually evaluate the programme, respond to feedback and anticipate or react to changes in demand, including moving to a more flexible programme structure. Some projects also stressed the importance of providing a good quality experience.

> "We have (also) learnt that there needs to be a greater emphasis on planning and promotion and less of an emphasis on providing multiple sessions. We fell into the trap of offering too many sessions and not giving the officers sufficient time to promote sessions and prepare to ensure that the 'session experience' was of a standard where everyone would want to return. We re-evaluated this in early November and there is now a better balance between session delivery and promotion and planning."
>
> *University of Durham project*

At the Queen Mary Students Union project overcrowding at some activities led to negative feedback, so session capacity numbers were reduced to improve quality. More typically projects have been prompted to make changes to venues and timing of sessions, or the type of activity being offered. Some projects, having recognised that female students were not participating in the expected numbers, were taking steps to address this either by including more activities that are popular among women or, in instances where the predominance of males in mixed sessions was identified as an issue, offering women-only sessions.

The BaNtA project at the University of Hertfordshire holds weekly review meetings with its Activators (students paid for 10 hours per week). Six universities said that involving students in decision making increased their attachment to activities.

a. Internal partnerships

These are widely felt to be crucial to the success of programmes. University departments whose involvement and support was valued included halls, registry, accommodation, commercial and the library. An accommodation officer sits on the University of Bath's 3:Thirty Club programme committee.

Many projects described partnerships with the students union (SU)/ SU clubs as helpful, for example in reaching the non/less sporty students and those rejected by SU clubs, and providing volunteer coaches, although one project had difficulties building this relationship, calling it 'a long game'.

> *"It is really important to establish good partnerships/relationships with non-competitive social sections of university clubs and to train these non-competitive students via NGB courses as they make really good leaders/assistant coaches/mentors for the less confident non-sporty students."*
>
> University of Birmingham project

At the University of Plymouth's project, gaining support and establishing partnerships with lecturers and course leaders has enabled the activator to promote and discuss activities with students before lectures. Activators now 'touch base' with lecturers each term and ask them to circulate a newsletter to students and suggest times when activators can talk to their students.

b. External links

Ten projects said that linking with NGBs/affiliated clubs had helped them in a variety of ways:

- facilitating session delivery,
- recruitment of participants,
- providing incentives to participation,
- offering exit routes,
- providing officials.

At the University of Gloucestershire, links with NGBs have enabled the project to establish a jointly supported volunteer team of HE Coordinators for football, netball, cricket, volleyball, and running.

Five projects reported successful links with local authorities, CSPs or community sport networks.

> *"Working with local sports clubs like Canterbury Tennis Club and Jelly Legs Running Club to subsidise membership joining fees has been an effective and successful way to retain participation. With tennis, every trysport participant has now become a social member of the club, enabling them to use the outdoor tennis courts free of charge ………… It was important to link in with Local Authority Sports Development Teams to establish the clubs to work with in areas trysport weren't so familiar with, for example in the Tunbridge Wells area to find venues and coaches. In addition linking in with the County Sports Partnership for a Sport Makers Workshop was successful in recruiting additional Activity Ambassadors and their hours contributing towards trysport could be used for their accreditation."*
>
> Canterbury Christ Church University

The University of Hertfordshire has worked with community sport networks to drive funding to clubs to run sessions for students. The University of East London has developed links and run sessions at local FE colleges.

2. **Timetabling**

The scheduling of activities has caused headaches for projects in a large number of universities. The most common constraints have been the availability of facilities and coaches, students' preferences, and patterns of absence/presence on campus particularly those on vocational courses that feature placements, but also more generally during evenings and weekends. Two projects faced a particular challenge offering activities across two universities with different timetables and needs.

Some projects had been able to negotiate extended facility opening hours. At the University of Derby, Sunday hours were extended so that the sports centre closes at 10pm instead of 5pm, however students were reluctant to walk through the dark and deserted surrounding area. This barrier was overcome by running Sunday evening recreational sessions in multiple sports, so that students arrive and leave in greater numbers, travelling more safely.

Sessions at unpopular times that failed to attract many paying participants picked up when they were offered free at the University of Chichester.

> "Our initial plan was to run cricket tournaments and one off taster sessions on Saturdays however very few students remain on campus at weekends and it is therefore very difficult to get participants to these activities. To make best use of our Saturday timeslot we have placed our basketball league at this time as participants have shown more willingness to stay on campus at these times if they are part of a team competing regularly."
>
> *Queen Mary Student's Union project*

At the University of Salford, poorly attended evening sessions off campus have been replaced by two daytime sessions on campus and one with free transport to an off campus venue, responding to student feedback. Three projects have addressed timing issues by offering afternoon sessions that students go to straight after lectures.

Three projects highlight the challenges presented by students on vocational courses with limited campus time.

> "The majority of nursing students are mature females whose time is spent mostly off campus on placements hospitals across London - they have been traditionally hard to engage. Their weekly routine is constantly changing and therefore they are unable to commit to a consistent day/time each week. Activities need to be flexible and the project has identified a particular interest in swimming, racquet sports and going to the gym.
>
> Working alongside the local leisure centre and operator they have been looking to develop a leisure card and establish activities which students can take part in on the days that they are on campus. The SU has agreed to fund leisure cards giving students concessionary rates. Students will be able to sign up at the fresher's fair, and several taster sessions are planned in fresher's week, to try and encourage them into an active routine on the days they spend on site. Longer term the project is looking at engaging community partners and leisure providers close to all the hospitals where the students train, to secure offers to make participation more accessible for the students across the greater London area."
>
> *Bucks New University project*

Swim Buddy ambassadors/mentors have been trained at the University of Birmingham, who will be available to assist non-swimmers and novices at a variety of times to offer flexibility.

3. Facilities

The majority of projects reported problems relating to the use of university and/or external facilities.

A number of projects had difficulty gaining slots for their sessions in university sports facilities where the popular times have traditionally been taken by clubs. One project mentioned that while suitable rooms were available for some activities, consecutive weekly bookings were difficult as the space was also hired out for conferences. A minority found booking systems and internal charging

procedures were unwieldy, and one project reported difficulties gaining staff buy-in. One project also had problems of this nature using external facilities, with time changes and a lack of flexibility.

Travel to facilities, mentioned in other sections, was commonly found to be a barrier to participation at external venues and also for some university facilities. When the University of Plymouth project arranged skiing and snowboarding sessions they provided clear travel instructions, with many transport options provided, for example bus times, route and number, cycling and car route and time taken. The Roehampton University project ran on campus tasters to generate interest in off campus sessions.

The University of Hertfordshire's main sports facilities are heavily used by clubs and community users, however additional capacity has been created by replacing some little used and unsightly tennis courts with a multi-use games area. The project is also one of a small number of projects that have utilised non-traditional spaces, holding badminton sessions in the main entertainment room of the Student's Union. At Canterbury Christ Church University zumba sessions take place in large teaching rooms after lectures.

Two projects had to cope with delays in the completion of new facilities, holding up the launch of activities. At Middlesex University local external facilities were hired, as close to the university as possible, enabling the launch of some of the activities that would have otherwise been put on hold due to the facility delays. At the University of Birmingham 3G golf risked losing momentum as it was expected to make use of a new synthetic green. The project managed to start initial delivery despite this, with golf for beginners in a large sports hall and links being established with a local golf club and with Birmingham Golf Development.

Outdoor and/or portable table tennis tables have been used by a number of projects to make sports activity both more visible and accessible. Indoor tables have been set up in student halls, a canteen and in a student common room. One project put an outdoor table next to the sports centre, another put one outside a student hall.

4. Marketing and communications

A high proportion of projects highlighted the importance of having a strong and sustained marketing and promotional campaign, access to resources, ongoing updates and the collection of students' feedback.

> "It is very important to keep reinforcing information to students and staff, and to continually evaluate what you currently offer. "
>
> *Middlesex University project*

Two projects said they had been hampered by a lack of marketing support and expertise.

Difficulties targeting students in halls were mentioned by two projects, while two others said they were communicating successfully via hall reps. The De Montfort University Students Union project is planning to visit halls to promote volunteering.

       a. Marketing channels

Projects use a wide variety of methods to promote activities to students and gather feedback. Many projects confirmed the enduring effectiveness of printed media – leaflets, posters, newsletters, also eye catching banners and displays, although one project commented that traditional methods tended to attract those already doing sport. They pointed to the need to think about where non-sporty students view and receive information, and use the right language and imagery to appeal to them. One project placed printed mouse mats in the university library.

Emails were mentioned as useful, for example capturing email addresses when students sign up for activities allows updates and surveys to be circulated, however one project said they were limited by the university's constraints on e-marketing.

A number of projects had used universities' 'SIA' screens, but, while helpful, this medium can also have limitations.

> " …sports sessions were advertised on the screens, unfortunately the faculties in charge of each screen put a stop on promoting other departments' services due to the high demand and overload of information. At the early stages of the project we knew promoting using the screens was very effective getting students to sessions. One eye-catching slide summarising the project was designed and is displayed on all of the screens, it's not as effective but does remind students of the project and supports the other promotional materials around campus. Trying to replace the SIA screens was difficult but the newsletter has provided a personal approach to the project and encouraged the activators and students to meet face to face through lectures and on campus."
>
> *Plymouth University project*

Social media has been widely used to publicise activities, provide updates and capture feedback, however although some projects found this method very useful, there were variable reports of its effectiveness. The University of Derby project has made use of the 'event' feature on Facebook to get an idea of interested attendees. The coach or 'activator' has then been able to match names against the event register.

The majority of projects had used the opportunity of fresher's fairs to promote and gauge interest in activities, some offering taster sessions or competitions and/or staging demonstrations of the sports on offer. Demonstrations/displays as well as tasters have also been put on at other times and venues, including some linked to other events. The University of Essex project offered 3-sport tasters during Human Rights Week, linked to the Right To Play campaign.

> "Over a two day period at the beginning of term we had a basketball net, table tennis table and shorthand tennis all positioned outside the hub building at the centre of campus. Students were encouraged to have a go on the sports equipment as they came past. This allowed us the greatest opportunity to promote the project's sessions not only to the students taking part, but to other people incidentally passing and watching it. Through the two days of promotion we got 350 email addresses of interested students. "
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> *University of Coventry project*

Face to face communication has been found to very effective, via student ambassadors / 'activators' (students employed to deliver and promote sessions), underpinning the publicity campaign and connecting with a wide range of groups and networks that would be difficult to reach if relying on a traditional marketing approach.

Canterbury Christ Church University project

"A combination and variety of methods were initially used to promote trysport including:

• A presence at the International Students Fayre (300 students), General Modular Scheme registration weekend at the Canterbury campus (4,000 students) and registration days at Broadstairs and Folkestone campus (400 students).

• A presence at Fresher's Fayres at the Broadstairs, Medway, Folkestone and Canterbury campus, promoting trysport to approximately 3,500+ students.

• At the Fayres and events attended each student was handed literature and approximately 1,000 e-mails were collected to formulate a mailing list for each campus.

• Speaking in 50+ Lectures for the most populated courses across the Campus Network.

• Creation of a Facebook page and posting on all the pages administered by the University.

• Messages posted on Blackboard (the University's communication method for courses and campuses). Access was granted to the Blackboard for the Broadstairs campus, enabling direct communication to 1,000+ students. For the other campuses Administrative Assistants communicated the messages via Blackboard on behalf of trysport.

• Creation of the website www.canterbury.ac.uk/trysport enabling students and staff to view activities on offer and book online. Since August 2011 the website has received 2,500 hits showing an interest in the ethos of trysport.

• Presence on all 5 campuses with posters, flyers, banners, pop-up banners, sign-up stands in the cafes, halls of residences, Students Union and University buildings; creating a greater awareness of sport/physical activity than ever before at the University.

• Regular slot in the student newspaper 'Unified' which has 3 editions per term and over 6,000 copies printed.

- Recruitment of Activity Ambassadors, being present on campus and speaking directly with students and staff, highlighting the ethos of trysport. Handing out literature and sign-posting people to the website. Ambassadors were encouraged to sign up to a Sport Makers workshop on 22nd November and further ambassadors were recruited from this.

- Attendance at a Coca Cola Olympic Torch Flame event on 3rd November with music, dance and sports demonstrations, attracting 500 students. There was a large presence of Activity Ambassadors to create a big impact on the students that attended the event.

- Using those students and staff who attended the first block of sessions to act as ambassadors through word of mouth, Facebook and e-mails to their cohort etc.

- Communication to over 500 student representatives across all campuses via attendances at representative training events, Facebook and blackboard.

- An online survey was sent to all those who participated in term 1 activity, of which 43 people responded. The top 3 methods of communication were through posters, flyers and banners (37.2%) trysport ambassadors (27.9%) and Blackboard (18.6%).

On campus, when speaking to students across all campuses there is a definite awareness of trysport, there is however a need for constant re-enforcement and reminders about sessions starting soon. This highlights the need to use a plethora of communication methods. The focus for term 1 was to 'try something new', 'try something different', 'try something exciting' with an emphasis towards first years."

b. Addressing cost barriers

Some projects have offered free sessions, and many have kept charges down to £1/£2 or provided free local authority leisure cards. The University of Salford project has offered free drop in sessions with coaching available if wanted.

'It was great to try something new for a small price. Good tuition provided and five sessions was the right amount of time to improve over the weeks.' - Student at Canterbury Christ Church University.

While attractive to students, one project reported that the low cost of heavily subsidised introductory sessions had made it difficult to sustain participation, as exit routes into sports clubs or leagues required students to pay considerably more . The University of Coventry project addressed this issue by negotiating reduced membership fees for students joining mid-year. The Staffordshire University SU project commented that students are less likely to turn up to activities that are free. *"I believe that this is down to the student's perceptions, that if sessions are free they don't have to turn up, so they don't value the session as much as if there is a value/price to it."*

The University of Salford's project laid on free transport to all activities off campus, so that travel costs would not deter students from going to sessions, however this did not affect participation as

most students made their own way to the venues. As a result students now have to book their free transport, to ensure the funding is spent more efficiently.

c. Social/recreational emphasis - popular appeal but implications for retention

Many projects promoted sessions as an opportunity to try something new or learn new skills, including one that adopted a personal development theme, but the most common emphasis was on recreational activity and the social aspects of sport. A number of projects promoted sport as fun, and highlighted the health benefits of participation. Many projects targeted students who had failed to be selected for university club teams or squads, providing opportunities for them to continue their chosen sport in new development squads or informal social sessions, and information about alternative activities on offer. The University of Bristol project is offering four categories of activity, from informal to competitive. The social/recreational emphasis was widely reported as attractive to participants, who have found the sessions enjoyable.

"I liked playing without the seriousness of a proper team. The coach was positive and playing hockey was a good break from assignments" - student at Canterbury Christ Church University.

The casual aspect is felt by the University of Derby's project to have been crucial to their success in engaging students with disabilities to take part in sport. They attributed this success to the flexible nature of the programme and the removal of the annual commitment to join a club, play, and train regularly.

While flexibility, with no obligation to attend every week, is evidently appealing to students, a great many projects found that informal activities were linked to very variable attendance. On the one hand there were examples of overcrowded sessions leading to negative feedback, and a need to reduce session capacity in the interest of quality, while some sessions suffered from very low numbers and throughput generally has been below expected levels.

"Even when the sessions have been rated high in quality from our session's feedback survey, the semi sporty students have had less commitment then we envisaged… therefore… rather than mainly just recruiting our participants at the beginning of the term, weekly recruitment of participants will also become increasingly important. The approach to marketing will change, with more marketing throughout the project."

"Through feedback collected from the participants, it was found one of the main reasons for their non-attendance was not having the time to attend. This can be seen in the session attendances reducing towards the end of term, when the university work load increases. However of the participants who filled in a feedback form, 80% indicated they would be willing to pay for the full block of sessions up front rather than on a session by session basis, which they said would give them more of an incentive to show up. For term two we have changed our pricing structure so that paying for the full block of sessions upfront will be cheaper than paying on a session by session basis."

Coventry University project

Block payments are also being trialled at Middlesex University. The University of Brighton project had limited success with a loyalty scheme, offering rewards for attending ten sessions over eight weeks – in term one this was a free gym class pass.

5. Workforce

Delays in recruiting and appointing project staff were widely reported as responsible for a slow or rushed start to activities, with some projects mentioning the knock on effect on recruitment of coaches and volunteers. Staff capacity was found to be an issue for three projects. One project reported that the hours required for the funded role had been underestimated, and so some tasks were being shared out to students 'hired' for work experience, also enlisting help from club reps and sports committee members.

Many projects reported that student led activities and/or clubs had proved to be successful, and numerous projects have used student 'ambassadors',' champions' or 'activators' – some volunteers, some paid. They say that students are able to engage at a level which suits participants and develop activities to suit their needs. Two projects said they had embedded activators in faculties, benefitting from their good understanding of the students and campus. The University of Bristol project emphasised the value of getting students involved in owning and running programmes as a way of making the activity more sustainable beyond the three years.

Some projects had recruited volunteers through University and other local volunteering schemes. Projects also mentioned that the first run of activities has helped them to identify suitable activity leaders for their programme. One project found that the academic sports programme generated fewer coaches than expected, with a delay in modifications to the CSP-hosted Coach Web website (now completed, making the site more student friendly) thought to be partly to blame.

The benefits of deploying high quality and/or up skilled staff, as well as staffing continuity, were mentioned by a number of projects. Another success factor, reported by the University of Bedfordshire, was effective team work and a regular review process, with staff pinpointing potential problems and implementing solutions. Elsewhere a joint project involving the students union, health & wellbeing faculty and the university sport and recreation service found all the staff were willing and hardworking but occasionally struggled to achieve cohesion.

"Our workforce development programme, offering bursaries to potential coaches has identified and captured a student workforce and we are building on this by developing a database to focus opportunities, bursaries and courses to the student community, we are right on target here and this has worked well. Our volunteering workshops have been incredibly successful and we have already achieved our annual target for volunteers. We will work to develop these individuals as leaders and potentially put them into the workforce development programme if appropriate."

University of Bedfordshire project

Other projects mentioned the value of coach education opportunities as incentives for new clubs and as rewards helping to retain volunteers.

The University of Brighton project is among those that have worked with their CSP and Sport Makers to develop a volunteer pathway, so that volunteers see the added value they can gain from volunteering. The project has also found that setting their student volunteers targets has motivated them to increase participation and promote activities more.

> "The Friday night badminton session proved an immediate success, peaking at 57 and averaging 24. One of the main reasons for this success has been the roles of two volunteers who, having been set targets at the start of term, have developed and promoted the session successfully. They have facilitated each session giving all participants the opportunity to get as much game time as possible, with different partners, and against other participants at a similar ability to them. This is also done informally, reducing the level of structure to the session, and making it enjoyable whilst providing a level of competition for those who require it. The 1½ hour session also offers 6 courts, and has linked in with the University's badminton team, who signposted those not successful in trials at the start of the term to Active8 badminton."
>
> *University of Brighton project*

A number of projects reported students gaining qualifications as officials. NGBs and clubs have been used to source officials and coaches, sometimes with reciprocal arrangements. The University of Salford project arranged a basketball refereeing course after twenty students had expressed interest, but had to cancel when only four registered. They rearranged the course and advertised externally via the NGB to ensure minimum numbers were achieved.

6. Clubs and exit routes

Two projects initially suffered from poor coordination with existing clubs, and projects have worked to improve their links with clubs. Elsewhere, work with clubs and NGBs on promotions and events to raise awareness were mentioned. A number of projects have worked with students union clubs to recruit those not selected for squads/ teams, with a similar number using this link to recruit volunteer coaches. Clubs have already been mentioned as a source of officials for project activities.

Four projects reported that they had created new clubs. One project found that two of the new clubs had difficulty attracting members and maintaining regular attendances. For orienteering, which also struggled to recruit a student captain, project staff are working with the NGB to offer more social events and link to other clubs such as athletics and cycling, offering members the opportunity to take part in both sports. The rounders club, playing outdoors, suffered from poor weather and will be relaunched in spring and tap into the intramural competition programme. Another project also said they were drawing support from NGB community club development staff.

One project found that player/athlete development was not much of a priority for university clubs, whereas another found that its new netball sessions were poorly attended as the university's large club was already catering for the demand for that sport.

The Roehampton University project successfully persuaded a number of sports clubs to offer social/recreational sessions and/or increase their number of teams. The squash club has grown from just six regular players to thirty, and have entered a team in BUCS for the first time this season. They

receive support from a local club and coach and are developing more recreational and intramural opportunities for students and staff.

The University of Birmingham project ran 10 week blocks of sessions linking to clubs' social sessions and engaging the 'Cool Runnings' recreational arm of the athletics club.

The University of Hertfordshire project has worked with community sport networks to drive funds to local clubs to run sessions for students. The clubs are creating satellite student teams that will be able to compete in BUCS competitions.

Friendly matches against university clubs have been used as a way of developing players and offering an exit route. Project sessions have benefited greatly from the involvement of university clubs.

> "The judo sessions were very successful in the number of participants – 70% of the average attendance – who attended the sessions then took the exit route and continued their participation through joining the university judo club. What helped this was the fact that the university team ran the sessions, so the participants were familiar with the club and some of their members and there was the incentive of a BJA Student Voucher Book, which included the chance to purchase a GI (judo suit) for only £5 and gave free BJA membership. In addition there were free session vouchers given out if they joined the club and this also allowed holders to get a free grading, which the coach did on the last session."
>
> *University of Coventry project*

Each student at the end of their fifth week at the Canterbury Christ Church University project was informed of where else they could get involved with the sport they received coaching for, whether a Student Union club, pay and play session or community club.

One project commented that the programme's success in introducing or reintroducing students to sports was leading to them joining SU clubs and, although sustaining their participation was a positive impact, attendances at project sessions (and project throughput figures) suffered as a result.

7. Administrative challenges

A number of projects reported problems with both online and hand written registration forms, with information either missing, or illegible. One project commented that they'd had a lot of registrations but low attendance figures as students either hadn't turned up or had only taken part once or twice. Another reported congestion when students went to register because reception staff had been unclear how the process should work. Elsewhere the online booking system was said to be hard to use, with frequent breakdowns, while other projects said there had been delays setting up an online system, which was dependent on cooperation from the university. One project had set up a manual registration system as a backup to their online system, which suffered from rushed development and has required modifications due to insufficient time to test it before the programme started.

Elsewhere a dual system has been found to offer advantages:

> "We have found it useful to have two methods that students can use to sign up to the programme: Manual sign ups at the first session have been popular allowing students to literally drop-in. It also means they can bring along their friends without having to worry about signing everyone up in advance. They just have to bring their student ID card along to prove they are a student. Simple! Having the second option to allow students to sign up online has helped saved time reducing the amount of manual inputting that has had to be done by the coordinator. Approximately 40% of students signed up online."
>
> *University of Salford project*

The University of Hull project have created a spreadsheet to record participant data each week, to smooth the compilation of evaluation returns, and have offered to share this with others. They are educating coaches and volunteers at sessions to help address the problem of students completing forms illegibly or missing out key data.

A project that is offering activities through the local authority leisure provider as well as campus based leagues and activities was having to revise its communications with partners and some monitoring processes to ensure evaluation data is captured accurately.

> "I feel that it is essential to have one system which participants use to register onto the league/ activity, pay entry fees, and access their fixtures. This would ensure that when participants register onto a league that they complete all of the information we need to be able to report figures, and this would also save a lot of time which could then be used to increase participation figures. I was surprised when I met up with other Universities how many are still very paper based, and could do with such a system. I heard that BUCS score are developing a system, so this might be a possibility?"
>
> *University of Portsmouth*

There was one suggestion that templates for registration forms and publicity materials would be helpful, also asking that Sport England collate the evaluation data.

One project explained that the HE finance system was not a good fit with programme requirements, causing headaches with reporting and reconciliation and the payment of coaches. Another initially had to operate without any dedicated office space, having to hot desk.

Two projects mentioned difficulties with fixture scheduling software, for example the University of Hull project said that stand alone software that does not require an internet connection did not seem to be available. The unpredictable turnout for one-off events presented problems, as the programmes available online cannot be used as there is no internet facility at the pitch. They have largely solved the problem by developing an excel spreadsheet which can calculate leagues of differing amounts of teams, create fixtures and record results.

8. Sports doing well / struggling

Some projects' reports contained few or no details of which of the sports they had offered were doing well and which had been failing to attract students. The named sports identified by projects as struggling to gather momentum were: basketball, judo, orienteering, rounders, rowing, rugby (tag) and running / jogging. The types of activities proving to be attractive ranged from traditional sports such as football, hockey and netball through the spectrum to the more modern inventions of dodgeball and zumba.

Numerous projects reported success in introducing students to sports they had not played before or that had previously been unavailable at their university. Handball has proved popular at two projects.

> "The delivery of the project identified (apart from football) that non active students like the non-traditional sports, the success of the volleyball (which started off as a free taster session) has been huge. The block sessions took a group of students to play against other teams in the Plymouth area after a few weeks. The Monday session still continues this term, with an additional Saturday session which is being delivered by a paid coach. Both sessions still attract new participants but the students who started in September continue to attend. The role of the activator, including the 'meet and greet' approach, contributed to the success of the sessions."
>
> *University of Plymouth project*

The Durham University project reported a slow start to volleyball, due to the late appointment of a volleyball officer, but innovative variations have proved to have an enduring appeal to students who are not drawn to the standard competitive sports.

> "Durham has always been a sporting university focused around competitive opportunities at both a university and college (intra-mural) level. Providing different sporting opportunities such as beginner classes and, in particular, 'basketball and volleyball aerobics' have been really well received. The officers have been able to engage a different 'type' of student and engage them regularly in physical activity. Retention has also been high. We have, of course, had students just attend one or two sessions but our registration processes evidence a very high retention rate with participants returning to sessions every week."
>
> *Durham University project*

The Tremough University project felt that group classes and unique sports that are not easily accessible to students provided the most successful environment for motivating non active students to reengage in physical activity. The University of Brighton project said it was important to allow time for new sports that initially attract low numbers to grow, being responsive and adapting as required. It was also observed by some projects that students' tastes change quickly and projects need to constantly reassess their offer.

Projects in the south west of the country, near the coast, reported success with surfing and kite surfing, with the University of Plymouth project also offering popular skiing and snowboarding sessions. Climbing was flourishing at two projects, one benefiting from a new facility.

Some projects experienced disappointing starts to outdoor sports affected badly by poor weather, and had to either find weatherproof alternatives e.g. mountain biking and indoor rounders or/and postpone the launch e.g. of track cycling at an open air velodrome (University of Bournemouth project).

The English Lacrosse Association project, working with 20 partner universities through service level agreements, identified three key elements that have been significant in achieving the targets for the programme and successful delivery:

- Readiness for support from the sector

- Deployment of high quality staff

- Availability of resources to support development (marketing & publicity including Facebook and equipment provided to universities engaging in the project).

Table tennis has proved popular at a number of projects, partly due to its versatility and convenience (previously described in the Facilities section) and the appeal of having an informal knock around without having to change or buy any specialist kit, but there were also reports of the sport's development at a competitive level. It was also mentioned, together with badminton, as a sport that overseas students were familiar with and enjoyed. The same number of projects (ten) reported success with badminton as specifically reported successful football sessions and leagues. Two projects reported successful multi-racket sports events.

"The two main successful initiatives of the project to date has been the University's first ever Racket-thon, which took place on the indoor tennis courts and featured all 5 sports. We had over 90 students show up for an afternoon of sport, and also managed to raise some money for charity. Another major success was being able to field a women's table tennis team in the BUCS competition which has never been done before. The success of these occasions has been down to volunteers, expert coaching and publicity from coaches in order to raise the awareness of racket sports at Leeds Met, and also a consistent development plan in place."

Leeds Metropolitan University project

"Of the four different sports sessions we ran in term one, the multi sports racquets session on a Friday evening proved to be the most successful. Squash, tennis and badminton was offered at the sessions, in which the participants could play two of the 3 sports for 1 hour on each. The sessions had 81 different participants attending, with an average attendance of 27 participants, with the highest attendance being 35. The success of the multi sports session approach has meant that we may be looking to recreate this approach during the summer term with a bat and ball session (rounders and cricket). "

University of Coventry project

> "Tag Rugby has proven difficult to get the interest and subsequent sign ups and so we haven't yet managed to hit the participant numbers we had hoped for. However, during fresher's fair we did receive a high level of interest from female players looking to set up a women rugby team. Working with the athletic union we have agreed to run a 6 week 'Get into to Rugby programme' focusing on TAG and aimed at female players. The aim will be to engage female participants with the added benefit of setting up a women's rugby club."
>
> *University of Derby project*

Many universities had very high expectations of recreational running groups/sessions to deliver a significant proportion of their targets. Take up (so far) has failed to come anywhere near expectations; it should be recognised that approaching winter is not a popular time to take up the activity on a regular basis, however that factor should have been taken into account. In two cases the activity has taken longer than anticipated to become available apparently due to delays in working with qualified leaders through the Run England programme. There were some examples of effective or promising initiatives however.

This is how one project focused on its running strand in its first six months:

> *"Establishing a partnership with the Run England Birmingham Activator and the students from the 'Cool Runnings' section of the Athletics Club, hosting a Level 1 Leader in Fitness Running Course. Developing a sustainable delivery design, providing flexibility and an effective pathway for novice runners in order to start our Run in Brum delivery. Using a new Try Sport 'Social Running' group as a pilot and for testing safe routes for rolling out Run in Brum, plus the development of a booklet and an online routes resource that students will be able to download."*
>
> *University of Birmingham project*

Elsewhere the Roehampton University project has developed an effective athletics club, linked to a local community club (Hercules Wimbledon AC), with students attending weekly training sessions. The club is able to cater for both track and field events and a range of abilities. The project says a key achievement has been the quick progression from students attending on a recreational basis and moving into competitions, with members representing the university in the London Colleges Cross Country League. The club will also be sending athletes to all three BUCS competitions this year: the cross country, the indoor championships and the outdoor championships, which are being held in the new Olympic Stadium as the official test event.

Sports named as successful by projects:

Archery	Kite surfing / Surfing
Athletics - Track and Field & Cross	Korfball
Country / Running	Lacrosse
Badminton	Multiple Racket Sports
Basketball	Netball
Basketball and Volleyball Aerobics	Pilates / Yoga
Boxing	Rounders
Climbing	Rowing
Cricket	Rugby (Touch)
Cycling	Running / Jogging
Dance (incl. Ballet) / Dance	Sailing
Exercise	Skiing / Snowboarding
Dodgeball	Squash
Fencing	Swimming
Fitness classes	Table Tennis
Football	Tennis
Golf	Triathlon
Gymnastics and/or Trampolining	Volleyball
Handball	Zumba
Judo	

9. Competitive opportunities

While maintaining a strong emphasis on more sociable, less competitive activities, the majority of projects have either organised new intramural competitions and/or leagues or reported that some participants who have taken part in Active University sessions or joined newly created clubs or teams have gone on to compete in BUCS or other external events. Some projects held fresher's week competitions to help raise awareness and generate interest.

Ten projects reported they had either created new intramural leagues or an inter-hall league or expanded existing leagues, while others had staged intramural sports events or festivals. The Chichester University project was one of many to have success with football: *"By far the biggest achievement so far is the success of the Soccer 7s Intramural football league. We have 12 registered teams consisting each of a squad of 8 players who play regularly on a weekly basis"*.

> "The introduction of the new UNIversal League programmes has given a number of students, specifically undergraduates, the opportunity to engage in more informal and competitive formats of team invasion sports. This has included 11-a-side and 5-a-side Football, Netball and also individual racquet sports such as Tennis through a number of mixed gender box leagues."
>
> *Gloucester University project*

One project's intramural basketball and netball leagues were cancelled however, due to a lack of entries. Another project reported that a school points competition was a disincentive to intramural word of mouth recruitment to activities as students were discouraged from increasing the points accrued by rival schools.

The Staffordshire University project organised fun dodgeball tournaments, offering prizes for the best fancy dress & best team name. Students enjoyed the tournaments and are now looking to form a club. Competitive opportunities, both friendly and at a more serious level, are undoubtedly attractive to those students who fail to qualify for existing university teams.

> "Over 100 girls turn up to trial for the 3 teams, with a capacity for 35-40 girls maximum, in the past roughly 50-70 of these participants would have been told thanks for coming but you have not been successful. This year through our Sport for Fun investment we have managed to retain almost all of the girls wishing to play netball but did not make the teams and have formed a 'development squad' which consists of roughly 48 females who have been retained rather than turned away! They train weekly and have even been playing friendly games against local community clubs."
>
> *Bucks New University project*

As previously mentioned, a number of projects said that some students starting or resuming a sport through sessions run as part of the Active University programme were progressing to opportunities to take part in BUCS/other inter-university competitions, either through existing university clubs or in newly created clubs or teams.

> "Towards the end of the korfball sessions we had a friendly match against the Birmingham University Korfball Club's beginners. This proved very successful, facilitating improvement in the participants' vision of the game of korfball and helping them to extend their knowledge of the rules. Although they narrowly lost, they all thoroughly enjoyed the experience which provided them with a taste of playing the sport in a competitive environment. This has led to the University Korfball Club being established. The success of this method will be continued in next term's sports."
>
> *University of Coventry project*

The University of Roehampton project, which has hosted orienteering events on campus for community groups, plans to promote future such events to students, as part of its efforts to boost students' participation in the sport.