

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

22 – 24 April 2022

## FRESHERS FORTNIGHT 21J AND 22B EVALUATION REPORT

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The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** the information provided in the report
- ii) **comment** on the information provided in the report, in particular the recommendations

### 1. Executive Summary

**1.1** This paper will evaluate Freshers Fortnights 21J (20 September – 3 October 2021) and 22B (25 January – 6 February 2022). The paper begins with an Introduction and Key Findings (Section 1), followed by demographic analysis of attendees and mailing list subscribers (Section 2), attendees' experience of attending Freshers Fortnights 21J and 22B (Section 3), the communications (Section 4), evaluation of the programmes of events (Section 5), evaluation of other activities (Section 6), feedback from event hosts (Section 7), evaluation of online Freshers Fortnights (Section 8), impact beyond Freshers Fortnight (Section 9) and finally recommendations (Section 10). The recommendations are outlined in Section 4 of this covering paper.

### 2. Introduction

**2.1** The report will evaluate the 20 September – 3 October 2021 (hereafter 21J) and 25 January – 6 February 2022 (hereafter 22B) Freshers Fortnights, organised by the Association's Student Community Team, with Lara Munday as the Project Lead. The Open University Students Association Freshers Fortnight is held twice a year, in September – October and in January – February. Freshers Fortnight is an opportunity for both new and continuing Open University (OU) students to engage with fellow students, take part in events and activities, and learn about the Association.

**2.2** The evaluation is based on four Feedback Surveys completed by students who engaged with Freshers Fortnight 21J and 22B and hosts of the events, as well as other engagement metrics over both Freshers Fortnights.

**2.3** This report shows that on the whole Freshers Fortnights 21J and 22B were successful events. For example, in response to the question, ‘How well did Freshers Fortnight meet your expectations?’, 81% of respondents of the 21J survey and 75% of respondents of the 22B survey selected that it either met their expectations, exceeded their expectations, or met most of them. Further, hosts also found Freshers enjoyable, with 100% of survey respondents for 21J and 94.1% for 22B finding delivering an online session enjoyable. One attendee said:

*“It’s the best event to start your journey at the OU, a reliable source of information, incredibly supportive and friendly colleagues. an opportunity to get connected with other students, ask questions, be heard, and receive advice. Finally, have an enjoyable time and feel that you are a member of the OU community.”* (21J Feedback Survey)

### **3. Recommendations**

**3.1** The recommendations given in the report will provide valuable insight for future Freshers Fortnights and online events in general. The recommendations are as follows:

**3.2 Training:** Continue to improve training for hosts of online events, which will be developed in line with the Meet-Ups Review. This includes training on using online platforms, tips on how to host a successful, engaging, and welcoming event, tips on promotion, and training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

**3.3 Accessibility:** Continue to improve accessibility of online events. To ensure there are detailed event descriptions and clear explanations for joining sessions, slides available prior to sessions where possible, and hosts are aware of how to ensure their events are accessible.

**3.4 Safety and security:** Continue to monitor safety and security of events with feedback from hosts – updating and reviewing guidance and training when necessary. To consider options for access to session links – either continuing with using forums or considering other options on the new website (e.g. links viewable to registered members).

**3.5 Communications:** Start Freshers communications earlier to give students more advanced notice (CAMELs, StudentHome, social media). Explore further avenues to increase promotion of Freshers e.g. the OU’s main communications channels and Module Team Chairs.

**3.6** Taking these recommendations into account, Freshers Fortnight 21J and 22B have been positive and engaging events, showing an entirely online Freshers experience can provide a sense of community.

**3.7** Members are asked to note and comment on the information provided in the report.

**Lara Munday**  
**Projects Officer (Student Community)**

**Anca Seaton**  
**Vice President Community**