



CEC 04/21/7

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

16 – 18 April 2021

Freshers Fortnight Evaluation Report

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** the evaluation report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report introduces the evaluation of Freshers Fortnight 20J (28 September – 10 October 2020) and 21B (25 January – 7 February 2021). The events were organised by the Student Community Team and VP Community, 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. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Freshers Fortnight, which is usually a mixture of online and face-to-face events, was held entirely online for the 20J and 21B intakes.
- 1.2 The Freshers Fortnights included online events (40 events at Freshers Fortnight 20J and 49 events at Freshers Fortnight 21B), competitions and prize draws, and Digital Freebies for students to download.
- 1.3 The evaluation is based on two Feedback Surveys; the first completed by students who engaged with Freshers Fortnight 21B, and the second completed by hosts of the events, as well as other engagement metrics over both Freshers Fortnights.

1.4 This report shows that Freshers Fortnight 20J and 21B were successful events. The feedback on whether Freshers Fortnight 2021 met attendees' expectations gives an overall satisfaction figure of 80%. Furthermore, 80.9% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement 'I found the hosts and facilitators friendly and welcoming'. 68.7% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement 'I feel that attending Freshers has made a positive contribution to my student experience'. The hosts of the Freshers Fortnight 21B sessions also had a positive experience, with 95.6% of survey respondents stating that they found delivering an online session enjoyable, and 100% agreed that there was clear information on how to join in with Freshers.

2. Recommendations

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

- i. Reduce reliance on social media: Social media is useful for engaging many students, but other communication methods need to be improved for students who do not use social media.
- ii. Presentation of sessions: The programme could be improved by dividing sessions into categories, to enable attendees to see similar sessions grouped together.
- iii. Visibility on OU platforms: Increasing the visibility of Freshers Fortnight on OU platforms such as StudentHome and module pages.
- iv. Security of online events: The increase in the number of online events inevitably leads to higher risk in terms of security. Work has already begun on improving the security of online events and guidance for hosts of events, and this work will continue as the Community Team undertake a Meet-Ups Review in Spring-Summer 2021.
- v. Number of sessions: Fewer or more spread out sessions could be an option for future Freshers Fortnights, as the majority of respondents in the survey said they attended 0-5 sessions during Freshers Fortnight 21B.
- vi. Sustainability: Although an online Freshers Fortnight with no face-to-face events can be seen as an improvement in terms of environmental impact, other areas could be improved, for example the prizes offered.
- vii. Involvement with the OU: OU sessions at Freshers Fortnight 21B were popular, so it is recommended for these to continue for future Freshers Fortnights.
- viii. Impact after Freshers: Future evaluation surveys could have questions on the activities that attendees would like to be involved in as a result of attending Freshers, so that more analysis can be done on the impact after Freshers.
- ix. Time-flexible activities: As many OU students are juggling other responsibilities as well as studying, it is important that activities are flexible for students to be able to get involved in when they have spare time.

2.2 Members are asked to note these considerations.

Lara Munday

Projects Officer (Student Community)