

# HOW CAN EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND BE THE MOST INCLUSIVE IN THE WORLD?



## PRESENTED BY

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## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

*sparqs Scotland  
Students as Change Agents 2022*

# THE PROBLEM

Looking at current research, our team identified 3 recurring problems affecting students entering higher education from across disadvantaged groups

1

*Educational institutions are limited in what they can implement to affect wider reaching social, political, and economic factors*

**"No school strategy can, for example, make a poor area more affluent, or increase the resources available to students' families..."**

*Chapman 2016, Journal of Professional Capital and Community 1(3) P.32*

2

*It was clear that early intervention was necessary, and that there needed to be a greater focus on life-long learning and greater communication between students at different stages of education*

**The data shows that disadvantaged students tend to consider the prospect of higher education later than their more advantaged peers...clearly demonstrating the need to embed careers information, advice and guidance...from an early age."**

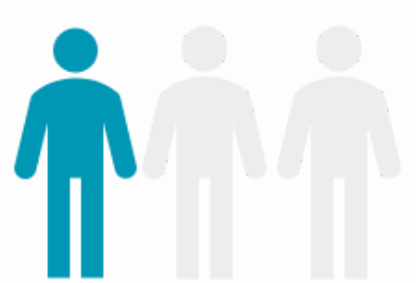
*Clare Marchant, Chief Executive at UCAS*

3

*Students frequently expressed that the amount of resources and support available, while extensive, was overwhelming, and that they often came into contact with it far too late*

**it was clear from ongoing feedback from new students... and staff involved that...fresher's week could be overwhelming. The sheer quantity of information imparted led to 'information overload'**

*Action on Access, 2009; Spacey and Mossop, 2019, P.167*



**1/3**

did **not** hear about apprenticeships



**1/4**

would **change** their N5/GCSEs



**1/3**

would **change** their post-16 options



**EMPOWER**



**ENHANCE**

**EDUCATE**

**WE BELIEVE**

*that a centralised peer support network run at a national level would encourage a more inclusive educational environment, creating students that are better informed about the opportunities available to them, and better supported at every stage of their higher education*

## **TRIEQUITY STAGE 1** **FROM SECONDARY 3**

STUDENTS ARE INTRODUCED TO A CENTRALISED INFORMATION HUB VIA THEIR SOCIAL EDUCATION CLASSES

STUDENTS BEGIN ATTENDING ANNUAL COUNTY PROGRESSION FAIRS WITH THEIR SOCIAL EDUCATION CLASS TO MEET AND SPEAK WITH A VARIETY OF OLDER STUDENTS

STUDENTS DEVELOP FUTURE PLANS WITH THE HELP OF THEIR SOCIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, AND CAN BE ADOPTED BY ACADEMIC FAMILIES REGISTERED THROUGH THE HUB TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PATHWAYS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN

## **TRIEQUITY STAGE 2** **APPRENTICESHIPS, COLLEGE, & UNIVERSITY**

THE GRADUATION SCHEME HELPS STRENGTHEN ALUMNI NETWORKS: WORKING STUDENTS KEEP IN CONTACT WITH THEIR ACADEMIC FAMILIES, HELPING CURRENT STUDENTS PLAN FOR THEIR LIFE BEYOND EDUCATION

THE ACADEMIC FAMILY SYSTEM WORKS ON A GRADUATION SCHEME: GRADUATING STUDENTS ARE REPLACED BY INCOMING STUDENTS WHO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF A PRE-EXISTING SUPPORT NETWORK

EXTENDED FAMILY DINNERS OCCUR ONCE EVERY 2 MONTHS. DURING FRESHERS, IMMEDIATE FAMILIES DECIDE ON A DAY FOR REGULAR GROUP STUDY SESSIONS AND A REGULAR FAMILY TRADITION

STUDENTS ARE PLACED IN ACADEMIC FAMILIES THAT THEY MEET AT THE START OF WELCOME WEEK

STUDENTS HAVE AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY OF CROSS-YEAR STUDENTS FROM THEIR OWN DISCIPLINE, AND AN EXTENDED FAMILY MADE UP OF IMMEDIATE FAMILIES FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES. EACH EXTENDED FAMILY HAS A SUPERVISOR TO REPORT CONCERNS TO

## **TRIEQUITY** **STAGE 3** **POST-EDUCATION**

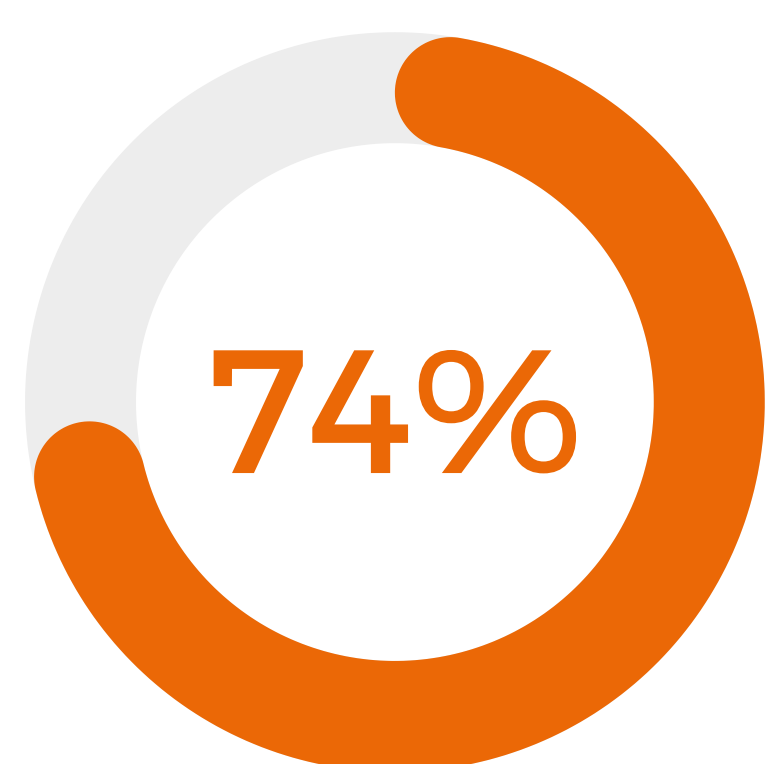
# STRENGTHS

## SUSTAINABLE

*Triequity makes use of existing educational infrastructure including: social education, school career fairs, online resources (e.g those provided by UCAS and Skills Development Scotland), academic families, and alumni networks, but crucially, it would improve the efficiency of this existing infrastructure and be likely to generate higher engagement.*

“ **Involvement engenders students' sense of belonging in college... generating feelings among students that they matter and others depend on them** ”

- Strayhorn, 2012: involvement promotes student retention



**74%**  
of surveyed university students reported having low wellbeing

- Mental Health Foundation

“ **splitting up the student body into smaller components makes it a lot harder to get lost...it provides you with a network...something that I think helps level the playing field between privately educated and state kids** ”

- 2nd Year Durham Undergraduate on colleges

## INCLUSIVE

*Triequity is designed to improve outcomes for as many students as possible*



*A 2022 (Birmingham) study on peer assisted leaning demonstrated that younger students gain valuable life skills from interacting with older students, while the help from younger students made integration easier for those who had spent time out of education*



*International students could benefit from having a built-in support system upon arrival; interaction from stage 1 onward could help international students feel involved in Scottish society while improving local students' inter-cultural sensitivity*



*Updating and democratising access to social education would help LGBTQIA+ students. Resources on disability awareness might improve peer understanding, and help those with un-diagnosed learning difficulties find help sooner (especially for girls, for whom under-diagnosis of certain learning differences is common)*

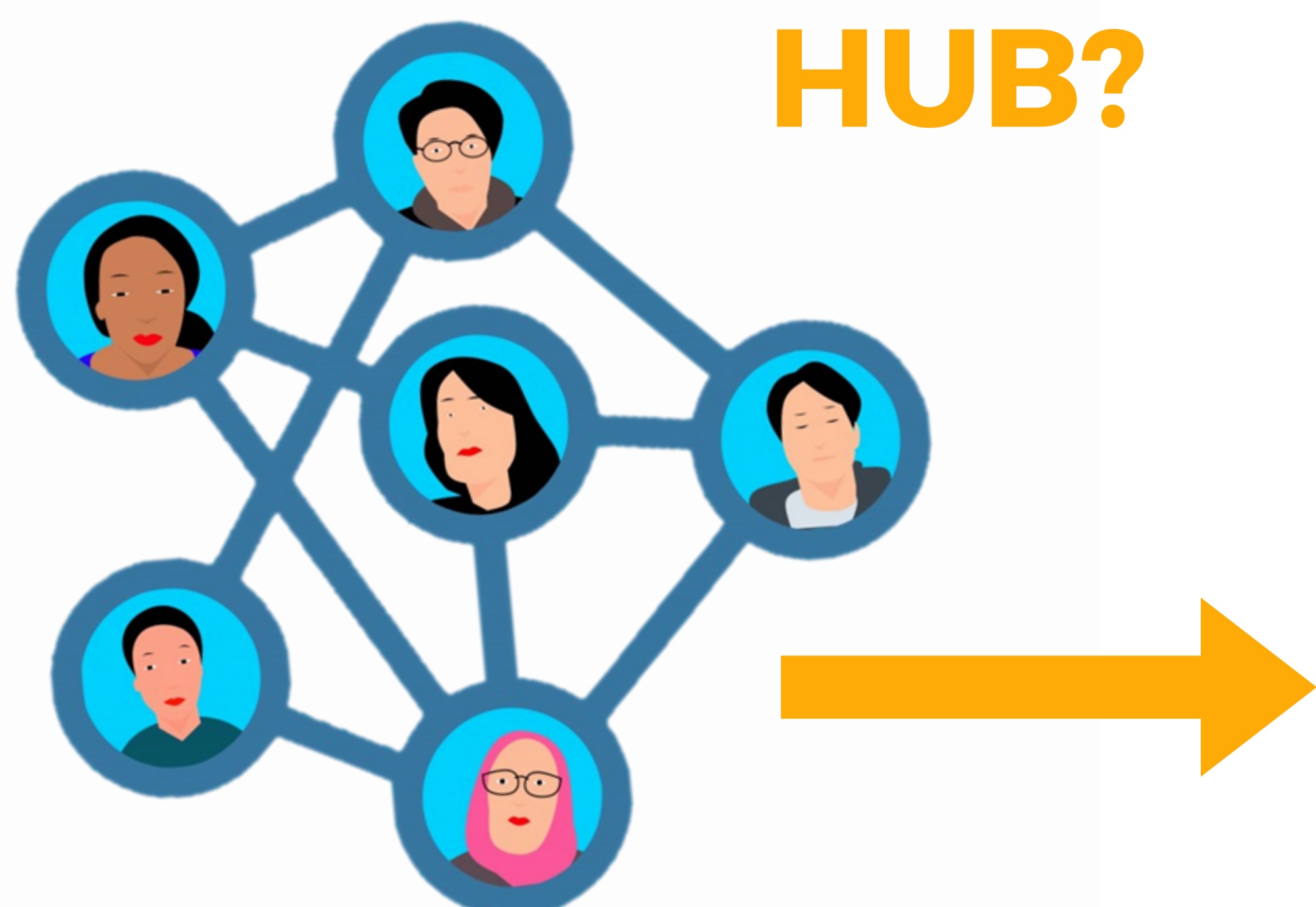


*In-built networking would help students with fewer personal connections, such as those from low-income households or care experienced students, gain valuable exposure and knowledge, thereby leveling the playing field with wealthier, privately educated students*



*Online families for distance learners could help increase feelings of belonging and give students off campus a tangible connection to their institution*

## WHAT IS THE HUB?



*The triequity hub would collate all existing resources in one place. Students could enter information about their circumstances and the hub would filter the resources most relevant to them. Social education teachers would be able to connect students with older peers using the academic families register (or the guilds register for apprenticeships). General social education resources in areas such as civics, finance, identity, & diversity might help close gaps between school districts, meaning students are not dependent on personal connections or the policies of individual schools to safely and reliably access vital information*

# LIMITATIONS

?

*What if there are disproportionate numbers of students who want to talk to families in a particular subject?*

**We could prioritize students who need the connections most or who would struggle to find connections on their own. We could connect students with families from other subjects where modules overlap to cope with overflows**

?

*What about students with limited access to technology?*

**We could provide iPad or laptop loans (many institutions do this already)**

?

*What if there is too much information/ what about the infrastructure needed for the information hub?*

**It would be costly to change the system and collate the information, but the time-saving and mental health benefits seem to outweigh this. Additionally, the system will be sustainable and efficient. It would be good to partner with UCAS on this, as they already provide most of the information we would include in the hub.**

?

*What about students who are immuno-compromised, or do not live on/ near campus, or those with additional commitments such as a part-time job or caring responsibilities?*

**We may not be able to ensure engagement if students have more pressing responsibilities. We hope that they can use the academic family system to their advantage by getting help and support from their family. To combat any difficulties regarding physical meet-ups, individuals can have the option to join a family that primarily meets online. Alternatively, individuals can have the option to join a family where others have the same commitments, for example, a family of carers. Through this, the pressure to meet is lessened, whilst maintaining a support network for disadvantaged individuals.**

?

*How can you ensure engagement with families?*

**Our hope is that a more universal system and some form of defacto structure would better establish a culture of academic peer support. While many of the initiatives we are linking exist already, studies show that voluntary participation tends not to help with, but instead reinforces, differential attainment outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged students (Davison, 2022)**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH



STUDENTS AS  
**CHANGE**  
AGENTS



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