



# LIFT OFF Learning Skills

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2019-2020 Final Report

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## **Background:**

### ***The LIFT OFF Programme:***

LIFT OFF is part of the national Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP) and operates in secondary schools throughout Fife and Tayside. The programme aims to increase progression rates to higher education by targeting pupils who have the potential to succeed in higher education, but may face barriers in getting there. Working with targeted pupils from S3 to S6 allows us to raise aspirations and awareness of opportunities to progress on to higher education after school. This is achieved through sustained engagement with core pupils at a range of in-school and campus-based events.

LIFT OFF Learning Skills (LOLS) is a short course that core pupils are offered the chance to complete in S5. LOLS aims to equip pupils with important skills required for studying in higher education, to improve their awareness of life during higher education, and to give them the confidence to strive towards a higher education destination after school. The LOLS course carries 3 credit points at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 6, giving pupils who successfully complete it the chance to gain an additional qualification which is recognised on UCAS applications. To achieve this, pupils must pass three assessment criteria: successful participation and engagement in workshop sessions, satisfactory completion of a reflective learning log, and participation in the delivery of a group presentation.

### ***Change in LOLS delivery:***

In previous years, LOLS comprised of a series of 5 in-school workshops, a Campus Day Visit to a partner higher education institution, and a final in-school feedback session. Workshops were delivered over multiple weeks by LOLS tutors, who were recent graduate/postgraduate students. Tutors were also responsible for marking the assessment criteria completed by the pupils.

Due to both the expansion of the LIFT OFF programme and efforts to reduce the number of school class hours being missed to participate in the LOLS course, the format of LOLS was changed for the 2019-2020 academic year. As a result, LOLS was run as a two-day campus based event at Abertay University, which took place during the school October holidays. This involved a series of four workshops, three of which were delivered by LIFT OFF staff and one delivered by an external partner (the Royal Literary Fund). Follow-up sessions were still completed in-school for presentation assessments and feedback. Despite these changes and the event running during school holidays, we still saw a high level of sign-up and attendance for the course.

### **Assessment criteria:**

LOLS is run on a pass / fail basis. In order to pass the module, participants must successfully complete the following three pieces of assessment criteria:

#### ***(1) Workshop participation and involvement***

Tutors assess each pupil's contribution to class. This involves assessing: attendance, participation in discussion, listening skills, preparedness and behaviour. These skills are crucial in achieving success in Higher Education and are increasingly forming part of the assessment process for modules at university and college. Assessors complete an individual assessment matrix for each pupil. A score of 15 out of 20 (or above) is required to pass this element. All absences from LOLS workshops for reasons of illness or emergencies must be confirmed by the pupil's parent/carer or contact teacher. A pupil missing more than 1 (out of 4) LOLS sessions without permission will not be allowed to pass the module and therefore will be withdrawn from LOLS.

#### ***(2) Reflective learning log***

Pupils are required to complete a learning log after each LOLS workshop (**Appendix 1**). These ask the pupils to consider their own learning, strengths and weaknesses, and how this might impact their future work. This kind of reflective awareness is needed to develop Higher Learning.

Staff assess whether a serious and honest effort to reflect has been made. A checklist is provided for this purpose. Pupils must obtain a positive outcome in 5 out of the 6 questions (per page) and 4 out of 5 Log Checklist questions to pass this element.

Remediation is offered to pupils who have not hit all the reflective learning log markers before a final result is given.

#### ***(3) Group presentation***

Pupils deliver a group presentation in school after the workshop delivery in the partner HEI. The presentations are delivered to the lead assessor and an internal verifier (another LIFT OFF member of staff). Pupils are assessed on the structure, content, quality of communication, and evaluation aspects of their presentations. Such structured presentations are commonplace in Higher Education.

Each member of the group is assessed individually using the presentation assessment form. A simple pass / fail process is used. Candidates must speak for at least 4 minutes each and achieve 5 out of the 6 assessment elements.

Pupils who fail the group presentation element of the module will be given the chance to present again prior to or at the LOLS feedback session that follows the end of the module. Only in exceptional circumstances will a third chance be given, and this is at the discretion of the module co-ordinators.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as the way of copying or using someone else's work and presenting as if it was their own. Plagiarism can be present in logbooks submitted by candidates or within their presentation.

Assessors outline to the Learners (LOLS Pupils) the definition of plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarising in the introduction to LOLS.

Where plagiarism has been identified, and occurred either unintentionally or intentionally, the candidate will be informed. In minor offences (for example poorly referenced work or closely matching colleagues work) they will be given to opportunity to re-submit. In severe cases (for example where there is evidence that a candidate has submitted work that is not their own) the candidate will fail the module, with the school and parent/carers being informed.

## **LOLS Moderation**

### ***Credit rating:***

LIFT OFF Learning Skills (LOLS) carries 3 credit points at SCQF level 6 awarded through Fife College. As part of this process all LOLS material must be quality assured by Fife College.

Assessors score the complete pupil assessment criteria using a pupil assessment booklet and store evidence to demonstrate how each element has been met. Samples of the assessments are internally verified by LIFT OFF before an external moderation evidence folder is sent to an allocated Fife College member for approval. Credit points cannot be awarded until the external moderation process has been completed and approval granted.

**Internal verification:**

LIFT OFF managers and development workers act as internal verifiers for LOLS. They are responsible for ensuring that LOLS assessment standards, as outlined in the assessment policy, are being met. Their involvement is tracked and opinions evidenced via the pupil assessment booklet. Each pupil will have their own assessment booklet, which will be stored in school clusters for evidence.

A minimum of 30% of assessment evidence from each assessor must be internally verified. The sample size should take into account how experienced the assessor is. In this respect, larger samples should be included from new staff in comparison to established staff. The 2019-20 LIFT OFF internal verifiers are shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1: 2019-20 Internal verifiers:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Identifier</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Mairi McKinnon	MM	LIFT OFF Programme Manager
Mel Rookes	MR	LIFT OFF Depute Manager & LOLS Coordinator
James Morris	JM	Development Worker & LOLS Coordinator
Graham Motion	GM	Development Worker & LOLS Coordinator
Hannah Campbell	HC	Development Worker
Jack Nield	JN	Development Worker

**External moderation:**

The pupil assessment evidence should be collated into a folder to be submitted to Fife College for external moderation and quality assurance. This folder should include a sample of assessment evidence from all tutors (assessors), the size of which should be at least the square root of double the total LOLS sign up. The external moderation folder should include the following evidence:

- 1. LIFT OFF Overview**
- 2. LOLS Syllabus (course outline)**

3. ***LOLS Assessment Policy***
4. ***Sample Certificate***
5. ***Assessor Training Information***
6. ***Assessor CV's***
7. ***List of Internal Verifiers and Assessors***
8. ***Master Results Spread Sheet***
9. ***Summary evaluation document***

A Master Pupil Results spreadsheet should also accompany the external moderation folder. This should detail the following information for each LOLS candidate:

1. ***School***
2. ***Assessor (tutor)***
3. ***Internal verifier for each assessment element (presentation and logbook)***
4. ***Pupil name***
5. ***Additional support needs (if any)***
6. ***Assessment modification (if any)***
7. ***Participation result***
8. ***Logbook result***
9. ***Presentation result***
10. ***Overall LOLS result***

On each result element a key should be used to detail whether this was achieved on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting. It should also detail any pupils who withdrew from the programme.

### **Workshop overviews:**

#### ***Workshop 1: Application and admissions.***

This workshop ...

CfE Outcome	I am investigating different careers/occupations, ways of working, and learning and training paths. I am gaining experience that helps me recognise the relevance of my learning, skills and interests to my future life.  (Health & Wellbeing, Planning for Choices and Changes)
Session Outcomes	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand their understanding of HE choices available to them.</li> <li>• Examine new skills and terminology (Applications &amp; Admissions).</li> <li>• Begin to explore their own possibilities and preferences in HE based on their individual career aspirations.</li> <li>• Understand the value of the LOLS programme.</li> <li>• Reflect on their own experiences and consider the skills and qualities that these skills have developed.</li> <li>• Pupils will fill in a section of Reflective Learning Log.</li> </ul>

### Workshop 2: Life in HE

Workshop 2 covers...

CfE Outcome	I am investigating different careers/occupations, ways of working, and learning and training paths. I am gaining experience that helps me recognise the relevance of my learning, skills and interests to my future life.  (Health & Wellbeing, Planning for Choices and Changes)
Session Outcomes	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss their expectations, predictions and worries about HE.</li> <li>• Learn about life in HE, with LIFT OFF staff and student volunteers sharing their experiences.</li> <li>• Learn about note taking techniques.</li> <li>• Learn to read, analyse and evaluate an article.</li> <li>• Learn about Self-Management (i.e. time &amp; money).</li> <li>• Pupils will fill in a section of Reflective Learning Log.</li> </ul>

**Workshop 3: The Bridge**

Workshop 3 was the only session developed and delivered by external staff, The Royal Literary Fund.

CfE Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help me develop an informed view, I can recognise persuasion and bias, identify some of the techniques used to influence my opinion, and assess the reliability of information and credibility and value of my sources.</li> <li>I can convey information and describe events, explain processes or concepts, providing substantiating evidence, and synthesise ideas or opinions in different ways.</li> <li>I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express and justify opinions within a convincing line of thought, using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.</li> </ul> <p>(Literacy and English)</p>
Session Outcomes	<p>Young people will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand their understanding of writing styles.</li> <li>Consider the transferability of the skills required to write successfully and how these support higher learning.</li> <li>Gain practical skills in editing examples of writing.</li> <li>Develop cognitive reasoning skills through logic exercises.</li> <li>Pupils will fill in a section of Reflective Learning Log.</li> </ul>

**Workshop 4: Working Together, the seminar experience and preparing your group presentation.**

Workshop 4

CfE Outcome	<p>I am investigating different careers/occupations, ways of working, and learning and training paths. I am gaining experience that helps me recognise the relevance of my learning, skills and interests to my future life.</p> <p>(Health &amp; Wellbeing, Planning for Choices and Changes)</p>

Session Outcomes	Young people will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the importance of team and group work in HE.</li> <li>• Experience a seminar-style discussion on issues explored in the academic lecture – the impact of mental health on young people.</li> <li>• Identify their group, and assign roles and responsibilities for the group presentation based on individual members' strengths.</li> <li>• Examine and discuss the mental health Core Reading Materials (LIFT OFF Pen Drive), thereby putting the skills developed in note-taking sessions into practice.</li> <li>• Design, plan and develop a group presentation</li> <li>• Fill in a section of Reflective Learning Log.</li> </ul>
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### Partner schools:

As per the proposed LIFT OFF Expansion plan (2018), LOLS is offered to both Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools.

The below table displays the schools who participated in LOLS in 2019-20:

Tier 1 schools	Tier 2 schools
Arbroath Academy	Auchmuty High School*
Baldragon High School	Brechin High School
Beath High School	Dunfermline High School*
Braeview Academy	Harris Academy*
Craigie High School	Viewforth High School
Glenwood High School	
Levenmouth Academy	
Lochgelly High School	
St Paul's RC Academy	

**\*Denotes schools that are new to the LIFT OFF programme in AY 2019-20.**

***Pupil recruitment:***

In order to recruit pupils onto the 2019-20 LOLS course, the LIFT OFF team ran a promotional session in all partner schools in August 2019. In this session pupils were given a comprehensive overview of the learning skills programme and the proposed dates of delivery.

As the promotional visits were voluntary, LIFT OFF were unable to guarantee that all S5 core pupils were seen in person. Despite this, the team worked closely with contact teachers to ensure that all core pupils received an application form and were signposted to the overview online.

After the in school promotional visits, pupils were given an application form to be filled out and returned to the LIFT OFF member of staff. An example of this can be found in **Appendix 3**.

In the instance that not all of the places were filled by core pupils, there was the potential to recruit non-core pupils onto the course. After which, these pupils then became core pupils; entitled to the full suite of LIFT OFF activities for the remainder of their time at school.

***Eventbrite:***

Pupils who registered their interest in LOLS at their promotional session were sent a follow-up information email with a link to register for the LOLS event through Eventbrite. Eventbrite was chosen for this as it is an easy to use platform which is GDPR compliant. Pupils were provided with a password to access the LOLS registration link and given a deadline to complete their sign-up. This provided LIFT OFF with a simple way of tracking the number of pupils registered for LOLS.

Once registration was completed, emails were used to inform pupils, along with contact teachers and parents/carers, of updates to LOLS planning and details they needed for the event.

***Groups:***

After both waves of pupil recruitment and confirmation of attendance pupils were allocated in to four groups for LOLS. We aimed to keep pupils from each school together but tried to ensure each group contained schools from Fife and Tayside. Groups were created to fit room capacities, with schools combined to ensure there were no more than 30 pupils per group. Final groups were as follows:

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Arbroath Academy Baldragon Academy Craigie High School Beath High School	Brechin High School St. Paul's RC Academy Glenwood High School Viewforth High School	Harris Academy Auchmuty High School Dunfermline High School	Braeview Academy Lochgelly High School Levenmouth Academy

### Logistical Considerations:

During planning there were several logistical issues that needed to be focused on. It was important to ensure that the available rooms that had been booked were fit for the purpose of the workshops and had the required capacity for the number of pupils attending. By carefully creating groups that did not exceed the lowest capacity room this problem was able to be addressed. The Applications and Admissions workshop was altered to require computer access after the initial room bookings had been made. Continued correspondence with the bookings staff at Abertay University was required to ensure that sufficient IT access was available. In order for pupils to use IT facilities on campus, each needed to have a guest username and password. While this allowed pupils to login to computers, however, there were still issues when using Microsoft Office programs. This should be considered in future planning.

### Delivery outline

Day one

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
09:30 – 10:00	Arrival and Registration			
10:00 – 10:45	Intro Lecture	Intro Lecture	Introduction Lecture	
10:45 – 13:15	<i>Applications and Admissions</i>	<i>Life in Higher Education</i>	<i>The Bridge</i>	<i>Applications and Admissions</i>
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch			

14:00 – 16:30	<i>Life in Higher Education</i>	<i>The Bridge</i>	<i>Applications and Admissions</i>	<i>The Bridge</i>
16:30 –	Departure			

Day 2:

	<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Group C</b>	<b>Group D</b>
09:30 – 09:45	Arrival			
09:45 – 12:15	<i>The Bridge</i>	<i>Applications and Admissions</i>	<i>Life in Higher Education</i>	<i>Life in Higher Education</i>
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch			
13:00 – 13:30	Academic Lecture			
13:30 – 16:00	<i>Working together, the seminar experience and preparing your group presentation</i>			
16:00 – 16:30	LOLS Sign Off			
16:30 –	Departure			

**Evaluation:**

**Delivery:**

The delivery of the events is evaluated by both delivery staff and the pupils attending the events. This allows

**Tracking questions:**

To further evaluate the wider impact of LOLS, pupils are also asked set tracking questions at the beginning of the LOLS course and at the end of the LOLS course. These tracking questions are specifically designed to gain an insight into the pupil’s overall knowledge of HE and their level of preparedness when entering HE after school. Questions are answered by the pupils using an electronic keypad-based voting system called Powervote™, which ensures anonymity for the pupils.

Fig 1: Tracking question one, surrounding pupil aspirations.

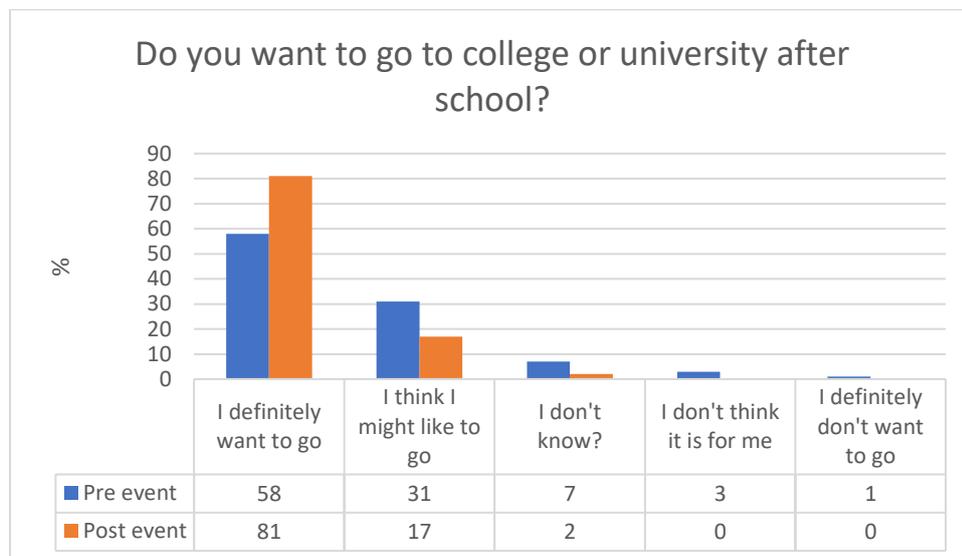


Fig 1. Demonstrates the impact of the LOLS workshops on pupil post-school HE aspirations. There was a significant increase, from 58% to 81%, in the number of the LOLS pupil cohort who were certain that an HE route was their preferred post-school destination after completing the LOLS course. It should also be noted that pupils who had initially ruled out HE destinations went from 4% of the group to 0%.

Fig 2: Tracking question two, surrounding pupil knowledge of HE.

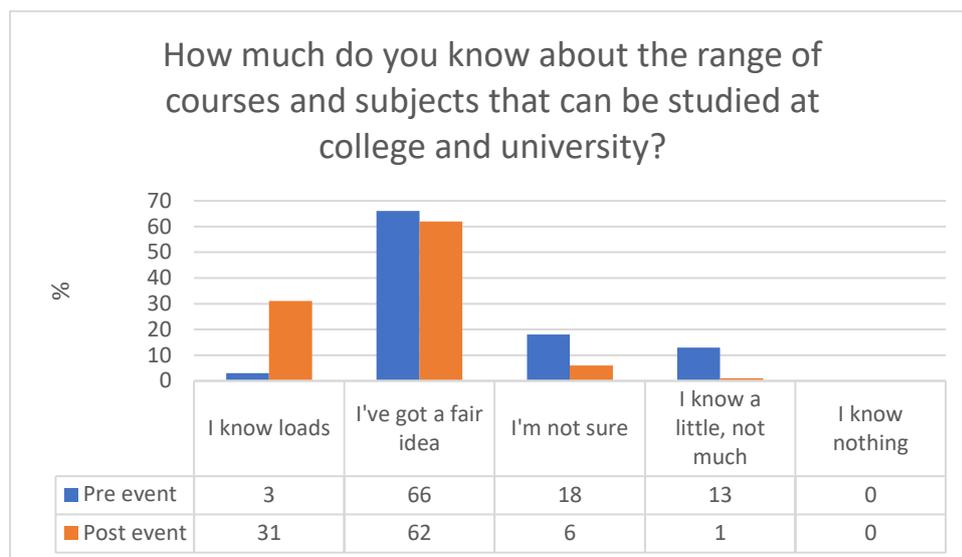


Fig 2. Demonstrates the impact of the LOLS course on pupil’s knowledge of HE options. The graph shows that there was large increase in the self-reported knowledge of HE courses from 3% of the cohort suggesting they possessed a wide knowledge base prior to LOLS, up to 31% after the course delivery.

Fig 3. Tracking question 3, surrounding access to information, advice and guidance support.

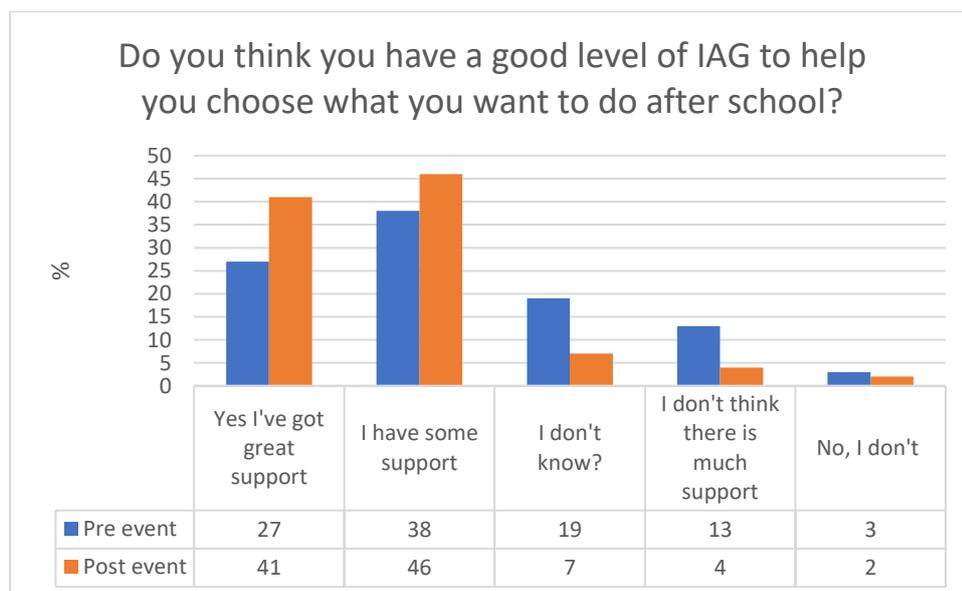


Fig 3. Displays the perceived level of support pupils think they have with planning for post school goals prior to LOLS and after LOLS. The data shows a 14% increase in pupils reporting that they had great support and an 8% increase in those identifying that they did receive some support for planning post-school after they had completed LOLS.

Fig 4: Tracking question 4 surrounding preparedness for HE.

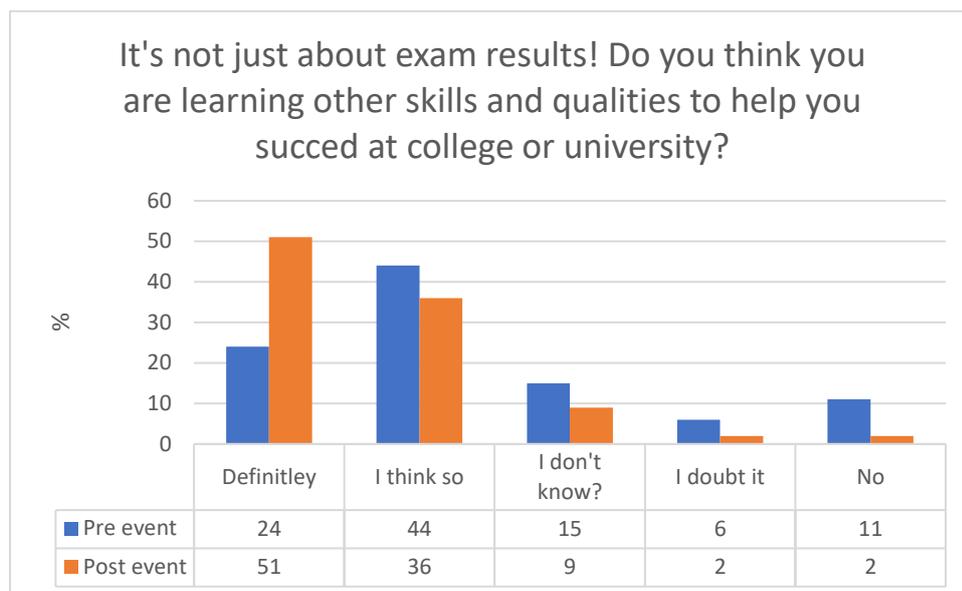


Fig 4. Shows the pupil self-reported awareness of additional skills and qualified required for HE learning prior to completing the LOLS course and after. The collective percentage of pupils who felt they “definitely” or “thought” they were acquiring the necessary additional skills increased from 68% to 87% once they had participated in the LOLS course.

Fig 5: Tracking question 5 surrounding confidence in post-school transition planning.

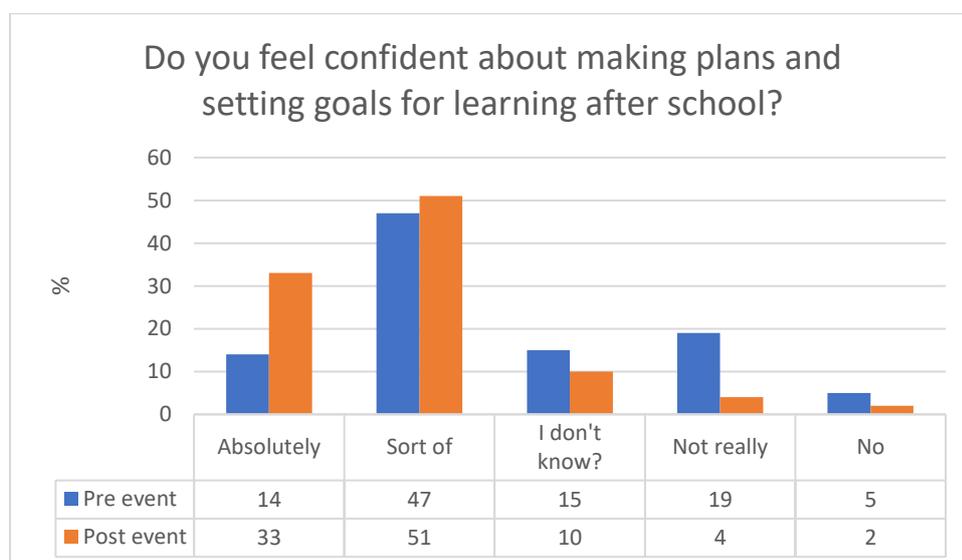


Fig 5. Shows the pupils self-reported confidence surrounding post school learning goals prior to, and after, completing the LOLS course. The data shows a 19% increase in pupils reporting that they were “absolutely” confident in achieving post school goals and a 4% increase in those identifying that they had some confidence surrounding these plans after they had completed LOLS.

Fig 6: Tracking question six surrounding preparedness for HE.

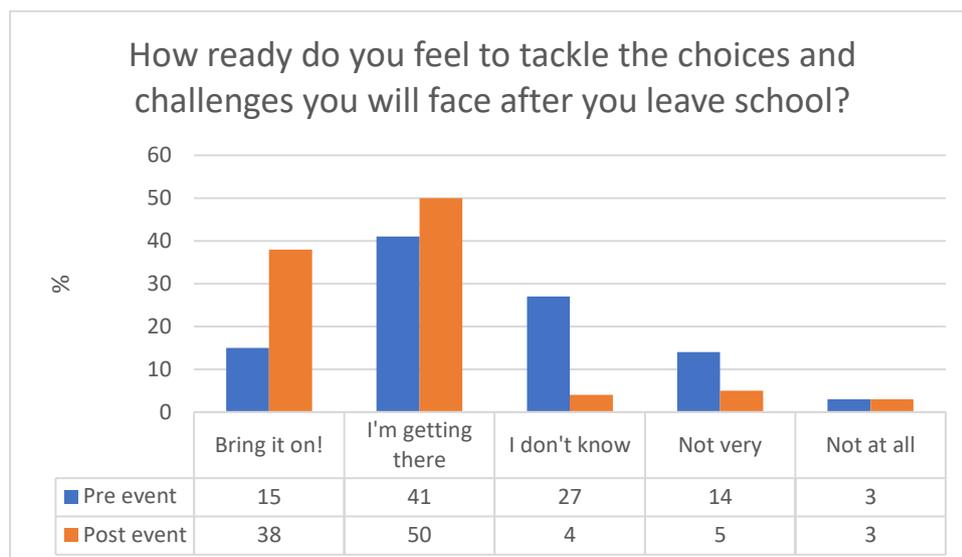


Fig 6. Outlines the final tracking question surrounding overall confidence in tackling post-school choices and challenges. The collective percentage of pupils who identified their confidence and readiness as “bring it on” and “I’m getting there” increased from 56% to 88% once they had participated in the LOLS course.

**Qualitative**

Pupils were encouraged to share their experiences about all of the elements of LOLS during the feedback sessions through a combination of reflective exercise worksheets and discussion groups led by the LIFT OFF staff member running the feedback session in school. Pupils were given discussion topics that referred to a particular element of the LOLS course delivery and were given time to have a free form discussion with peers and LO staff

THIS IS  
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## Discussion topic 1

- Did the delivery in the holidays suit your timetable?
- How did you feel about the length of the workshops?
- Would you structure the day differently and if so, how?
- What are your thoughts about campus delivery, school delivery or mixed location delivery?

The format!



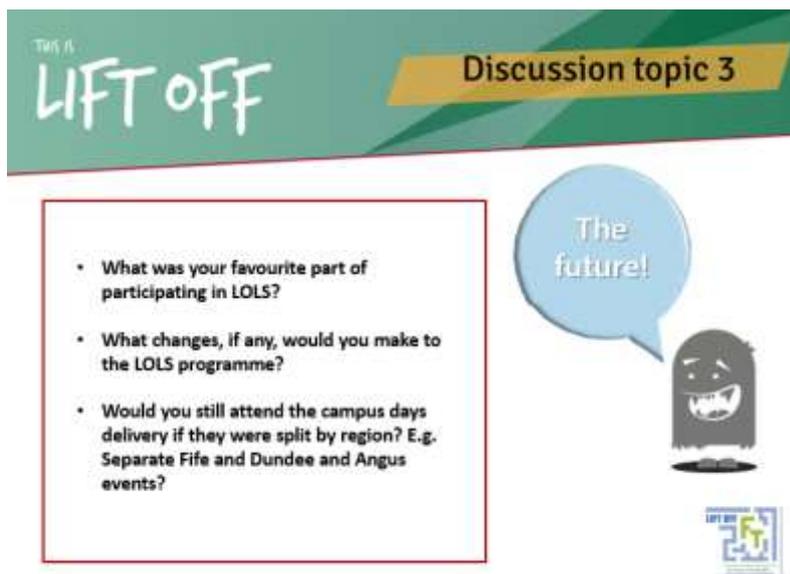
THIS IS  
**LIFT OFF**

## Discussion topic 2

- Did the workshops cover relevant, useful material?
- Do you think that any HE skills were missing from the sessions? If so, what would you add?
- Did the workbooks and pupil materials compliment the sessions?
- What did you think of the topic of mental health? Can you think of a suitable academic alternative?

The content!





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**Discussion topic 3**

- What was your favourite part of participating in LOLS?
- What changes, if any, would you make to the LOLS programme?
- Would you still attend the campus days delivery if they were split by region? E.g. Separate Fife and Dundee and Angus events?

The future!



The pupil focus groups uncovered a number of common themes:

- The majority of the pupils preferred the campus delivery format opposed to term time delivery, citing the lack of timetabling clashes with core classes as the main benefit of this. They further stated that the HEI delivery format gave them a more realistic student life experience, as opposed to in school delivery.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils still prefer to be assessed via a presentation as opposed to an alternative method, e.g. essay format, stating that this remains a core transferable skill that they rarely get to develop in school.
- The academic lecture from HEI partner staff was particularly well reviewed in this delivery cycle with some pupils requesting longer input in future.
- Some pupils stated that the workshop length could be reviewed moving forward, with the proposal of moving one of the sessions to an alternative date.

## Conclusion and future recommendations:

Recommendations for future LOLS provision are based on a variety of metrics; the qualitative pupil feedback, the staff feedback gathered post-delivery and the advice provided by the credit rating body Fife College. Based on this information, the following are recommendations for LOLS in academic year 2020-2021:

1. Encourage all IVs to complete assessor feedback/comment box on IV sheets.

The majority of Candidate Assessment Evidence Booklets had IV comments recorded, but a few were blank.

2. IV comments should provide supportive feedback to the assessors on their assessment decisions.

In the Candidate Assessment Evidence Booklets that were looked at, the IV comments in the main appear to be a review of the students and the quality of their work rather than focussed on the Assessors' decisions and comments.

IVing should be seen as an ongoing and supportive process that provides feedback to the Assessor. The Assessor should give good feedback and feedforward to the students whereas the IV would provide feedback to the Assessor on their assessment decisions. Whilst the student work needs to be reviewed to do this, it should not be considered second marking, but should ensure that all assessors are making consistent and reliable assessment judgements against the standard.

Possible examples of comments made by the IV could include -

- *The reflective log and presentation were very developmental and the tutor clearly shows this in his comments to her, providing very useful and positive feedback.*
- *The feedback from the assessor is supportive and clearly showed that the standards had been met by the student.*

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- *I agree with the assessor in that she was an excellent pupil and the feedback and feed forward from the Assessor reflects this.*

3. Recommend a standardisation meeting prior to the next delivery to support assessors in making consistent and reliable assessment judgements.

A standardisation meeting with Fife College would be a useful exercise to discuss and agree the minimum standard the student has to attain and ways in which the reliability of judgement can be maximised. A useful standardisation meeting activity may be exemplification to aid understanding of the standard required and possibly discuss different ways that the standard could be achieved. Discussion should also identify potential enhancements to the assessment process. e.g. change of assessment method, integration of assessments, re-wording assessment.

Some learning points to consider - one of the assessments looked at by Jude Campbell, a pupil at Harris Academy. The Internal Verifier, although in agreement with the overall result, did not agree with the points awarded for the participation assessment and stated that they would reduce his overall participation score. It would be useful for the Assessor and IV to discuss this further and in addition this could be the topic of a standardisation meeting so that all assessors dealt with the issues in a similar manner.

4. Recommend the LOLS Assessment Policy states an upper limit for group presentation to enable pupils to present within a given range, for example 4-6 minutes.

This would allow students to develop their time management skills and would ensure all presentations are assessed under the same conditions. In practical terms, a time constraint would be useful if a number of group presentations are being delivered in one day.

5. Assessment Policy should be updated with a section on it detailing what the IV should do if they don't agree with the assessment decisions made by the Assessor.

This should confirm if discrepancies are found in the sample the Internal Verifier should then check as many assessments as necessary for them to accurately provide detailed feedback to the assessor on the nature of the problem and the corrective actions required by the assessor.

6. Recommend a Marking Scheme to cover the Presentation Assessment Criteria.

We also thought it may be useful to have a marking scheme for the presentation assessment criteria, for example 1, 2 or 3 marks for the 6 sections. Students would then need to achieve 10 from 18 for a pass or students need to achieve at least 2 marks in 5 sections or students can only obtain a 1 in one section. Students seeing the marking scheme would help understanding of what they had to do to achieve.

7. Redevelop materials focussing on academic writing skills.

The majority of pupil feedback suggested that the RLF devised content was not pitched at the correct level and lacked engaging, interactive elements. This workshop should be reviewed using the parameters of the SCQF framework and redeveloped to include more interactivity and enhanced delivery materials.

8. Maintaining the majority of delivery in a partner HEI.

Based upon the pupil feedback and with the projected increase in senior core pupil numbers, the delivery method of LOLS in an HEI based format should be maintained for the next academic delivery year. This will also satisfy teacher feedback citing concerns of in-school workshop delivery impacting timetabled classes, a pattern in teacher feedback observed over multiple years.

9. Review the length/number of academic workshops.

Pupils expressed that the workshop length should be reviewed. It is suggested that these be reduced during campus event delivery, with an additional in-school session added to maintain learning hours. This approach will also satisfy the pupil request for increasing the length of the academic lecture.

10. Exploring future support staff roles.

Whilst the delivery of LOLS utilising the core team did result in easier quality control and enhanced training, this did result in an increased work load for core staff. An assessor role that may encompass some of the marking/assessment criteria responsibilities will be explored in the future with advice sought from Fife College with regard to staff criteria and recruitment.

11. Multiple HEI site consideration based on projected pupil numbers e.g. “regionalising” the events.

The projected core pupil numbers for 2020-21 need to be reviewed with a view to potentially deliver LOLS in two regional campuses over two weeks of the school holidays. This would allow for less travel in some regions and also allow for increased partnership working with other institutions. A regional approach would also ease pupil numbers for single events.