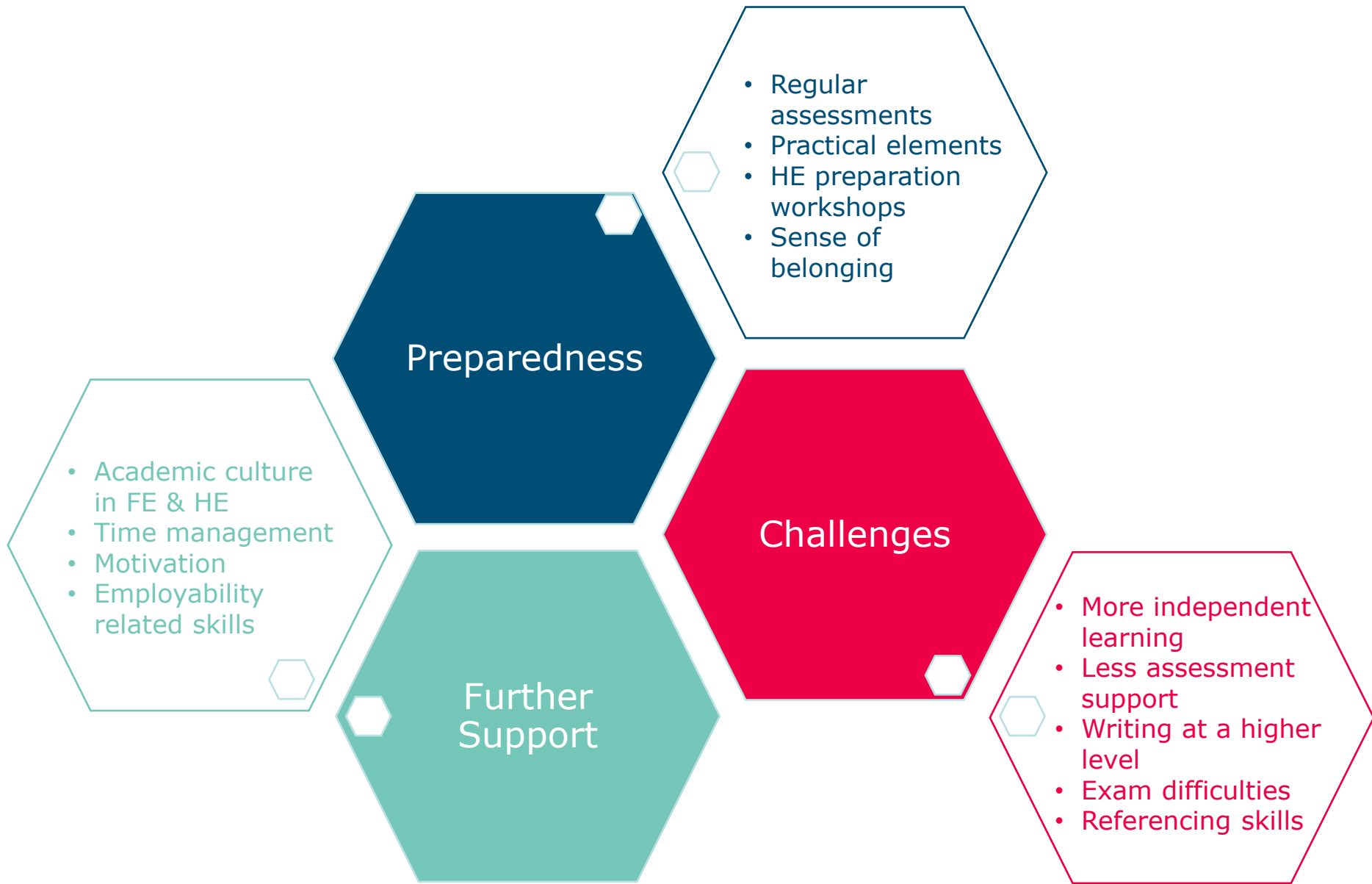


BTEC Transition Research

- Qualitative research via a semi-structured focus group
- First year undergraduate students (n=6) studying at our Brackenhurst campus who had all previously studied a BTEC at Brackenhurst
- Research themes:
 - Study skills support in FE
 - Additional support provision in FE
 - Access to additional academic support in HE
 - Strengths and difficulties during first undergraduate term
 - Support required moving forward into second term



The following information was distributed in the delegate pack prior to the symposium

Nottingham Trent University – BTEC Transition Research

Context

Nottingham Trent University's student BTEC cohort has increased year on year and therefore addressing any potential mismatch between the academic preparedness of the BTEC entry cohort and course curricula is increasingly critical if we are to meet our 'Success for All' goal for inclusive provision.

Focus Group

We spoke to one group of first year undergraduate students studying at our Brackenhurst campus who had all previously studied a BTEC at our Brackenhurst campus.

Transition

The majority of students agree that their transition from BTEC to Higher Education has been relatively smooth. Students feel that studying a BTEC at Brackenhurst made them feel more prepared. One of the main reasons for this is because they were used to writing regular assignments. Some students also feel that the practicals they completed during the BTEC course prepared them well for their HE course.

However, some students do feel that they have faced some challenges since starting their degree.

Longer lectures and a larger workload are amongst the issues experienced by BTEC students, who feel that university requires them to complete more work in their own time.

Other students have also been challenged by the level of writing expected from them at university and feel that they did not receive sufficient practice with this when studying at BTEC level.

Students also report finding exams difficult because they did not have to do any throughout their BTEC course.

However, all students agree that they felt prepared for beginning their course at university.

Support

Students are generally happy with the support they receive from their tutors and lecturers. They say that tutors inform them well about the library support.

All students agree that they would like to receive more help with the suggested activities (exam support, critical analysis, referencing, time management, writing skills, academic regularities, additional 1-1 / group tutorial support).

The area where students require the most support is referencing, as this is one aspect of university that they find particularly challenging. Students want to be told how to improve their referencing and do it properly, rather than just being told that they're not doing it correctly.

Whilst academic skills support is available at NTU, none of the students in this study accessed additional support during their first semester.

Review

The location, feel and familiarity of the campus were students' main reasons for choosing to study at NTU after completing their BTEC at Brackenhurst. Students like the fact that Brackenhurst "*feels like home*" and they "*already know the facilities*".

Now that they have completed their first term at NTU, students would like the next two terms to involve more 'practice progress' to prepare them for placements and further support their studies.

All students agree that they would recommend the BTEC to HE route to others. Their reasons for this are because they feel that the smooth transition is beneficial and the BTEC courses prepare individuals for degree level study.

Students were also asked what advice they would give to current BTEC students on preparing for university. **Time management and writing practice** were the most common answers; students say that they would encourage others to try writing at a higher level before starting university.

Actions implemented since the focus group

All Brackenhurst FE level 2 students to attend a series of workshops preparing for HE.

Targeted exam workshops for all first year undergraduate students who came from a BTEC entry route.

Revision and exam best practice training for HE academic members of staff.

All first year students to attend GRIT transformational coaching programme in 2018/19 student induction.

HE academic staff to begin to observe BTEC lessons to enhance understanding.