

Female-Only Exercise

Engaging Female Students

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) have learnt through previous projects that one of the best ways to engage females into sport and physical activity is by making the sessions female only. Armed with this knowledge they applied for Sportivate funding to run F.I.T (Females In Training) sessions.

Abi Dean, the Active Lifestyle Officer at MMU wanted to set up new female only sessions which are supportive, social and encouraging, with refreshments provided at the end of the session to try and create a support network, especially for those new to campus to aid with their transition. Abi said *'At this time of year we have a lot of young people coming onto campus who will be new to the area and this is a chance to get exercise into part of their routine.'*

By putting sessions on from the start of term, they can be built into participant's routines as they are starting out on their new lives at university. The first 6 weeks were free, thanks to the Sportivate funding, which encouraged attendance, as did the goal of completing obstacle race 'Rough Runner', for which participants had discounted entry. The goal was to get 30 participants through the programme with 12 completing the 6 weeks.

GreaterSport and MMU's previous project work with 18-25 year old females helped to effectively engage with this group. The result was that 183 students have engaged in the project at least once, with 57 completing at least 5 out of 6 weeks.

This high engagement shows how well the university knows their students and this particular demographic. Those who have attended the sessions have really enjoyed them, found they are toning up and benefiting mentally too. The project has also linked into the university's '#ThisMMUGirlCan' promotion around 'Breaking the Barriers' around body image and confidence in exercise which featured a number of participants from this project speaking about how the sessions have helped them.

Individuals who attended the session have said *'Thank you, this class makes me feel so good', 'I have done some of the exercises you told me to do - I have been doing the 30 day squat challenge and I am toning up!', 'I always thought I could never enjoy exercise but I really enjoy these classes' and 'I struggle with anxiety and I always leave your class feeling really good'.*

