



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY  
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# Into, Through and Beyond: Equitable Student Progression

Extended Programme

**HEIRNETWORK**  
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL  
RESEARCH NETWORK

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 **JS GROUP**

# Welcome to Buckinghamshire New University

Buckinghamshire New University is delighted to host the 17th annual HEIR conference entitled 'Into, Through and Beyond: Equitable Student Progression' and I wish you a warm welcome to our campus.

The HEIR conference brings together an important and diverse community who share an appreciation of the power of institutional research to improve student experiences and student outcomes. At BNU we share these values, using analysis and evaluation to support the University in its mission to transform the lives of our learners.

This year's theme of student progression is tremendously important to all at BNU and in the higher education sector. Political change and the cost-of-living pressures challenge institutions to demonstrate and articulate the value of the education they provide.

The theme raises moral questions too. Students in England fund the vast majority of the cost of their higher education, taking on significant debt to do so. Institutions need to be challenged to do their utmost in supporting students to succeed in their studies and in their future careers. Institutional research has a key role to play in helping the sector address this challenge by showing how universities add value to their students as they progress into HE, progress through their studies, and progress beyond into their chosen careers.

We hope that during this conference you will encounter new ideas, engage in lively debate and leave with a renewed inspiration to help your institutions express and enhance their own values.

I am delighted that BNU's University Chancellor, Jay Blades MBE will share with you the transformative impact of the education he received at our institution, along with international guest speakers who will highlight their experiences and provide different perspectives of the role of institutional research in higher education.

We welcome delegates from a range of professional and academic backgrounds across the UK, Ireland and internationally, and important sponsors with whom BNU enjoys a fruitful relationship.

We hope you enjoy this event and take the opportunity to form new connections with colleagues across the higher education sector.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Blades'.

**Professor Nick Braisby - Vice Chancellor**

# Keynote Speakers



## David Kernohan

### **Deputy Editor**

David Kernohan is Deputy Editor of Wonkhe. Until June 2016, he worked at Jisc as a programme manager and senior codesign manager, after being seconded from HEFCE in 2006. He has also worked for the University of Glamorgan (now the University of South Wales). As Associate Editor, David has responsibility for the development and delivery of a variety of editorial content. His key areas of wonkishness include teaching quality enhancement policy, funding policy, sector agency politics and history, research policy, and the use of technology and data in Higher Education.

David has written for Wonkhe since foundation, and also maintains a personal blog.



## Jay Blades MBE

### **Chancellor**

In March 2023, Jay Blades MBE became the University's first ever Chancellor where he was a student before launching a career which has seen him go onto become an award winning TV presenter, the nation's favourite furniture up-cycler, receive an MBE for his services to craft, give back to communities across the UK and become an ambassador for The Prince's Foundation; co-chairman of the Heritage Crafts Association and vice-president of City and Guilds.

Jay has also received an Honorary Doctorate from BNU for his community work supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and his significant contribution to furniture-making and crafts.

Brought up by his mother on a council estate in Hackney, he left school at 15 with no qualifications. Jay got back on track in 2001 by studying for a degree in criminology with philosophy at BNU where his dyslexia was both identified and supported by the University with tailored digital learning support.

He then found his true vocation in restoration and supporting vulnerable people in our society through his former charity, Out of The Dark.

BNU and Jay Blades are working together on new furniture-related courses and facilities, and to create legacy projects to provide opportunities and benefits for both its students and local communities.

The University fully funds the Jay Blades Thrive Bursary, in Jay's honour, which supports students from low-income families and areas of high deprivation or where fewer people go to university. More than £500k was allocated to students in the 2023-24 academic year.

# Vistor map



1

## Registration

Registration will take place at the desk in reception.

## Streams

Streams will be held in the South Wing and The Room. Please refer to the map below for guidance. To locate the rooms for Streams 1 and 2, enter through the main entrance and take either the lifts or the spiral staircase on the left to reach the third floor. For Stream 3, follow the directional signs from the Atrium to travel to The Room.

Student Ambassadors in blue hoodies will be available to provide assistance or directions if needed.





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1

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2

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Select the eduroam Wi-Fi network on your device and enter your username and password.

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**KEYWORD**

**HEIR24**

## HEIR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024 - Day One

Time	Stream 1 - S3.01	Stream 2 - S3.02	Stream 3 - The Room	Location	
9am - 10.30am	<b>Registration</b>			Main Reception	
10.30am - 11am	<b>Welcome and introduction to Day 1</b> Matt Hiely-Rayner - Co-Chair, HEIR planning group Nick Braisy – Vice Chancellor, Buckinghamshire New University			The Room	
11am - 12pm	<b>Keynote Speaker 1</b> Jay Blades - the importance of equitable student progression, the student perspective			The Room	
12.05pm - 1pm	<b>Workshops</b> <b>Stream 2</b> Immediate Marking and Feedback in Higher Education: A Transformational Assessment Strategy <b>Suzanne Doria and Sarah Williams</b>			The Room	
1pm - 2pm	<b>Lunch and Sponsor Stands</b>			Mezzanine	
2pm - 2.50pm	<b>Oral presentations 1</b>				
Session 1	<b>Stream 1</b>	<b>Stream 2</b>		Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02	
	Understanding the post-COVID-19 environment to better support equitable student progression and outcomes: a collaborative study  <b>Nigel Page, Rachel Hunt, Lauren Albee, Alison Snape and Daniel Berwick</b>	Enabling all learners to engage with their studies: an investigation of the factors affecting student engagement  <b>Benedict Watling</b>			
Session 2	Exploring the Asian Awarding Gap: A Qualitative Analysis of Student Experiences  <b>Elif Unsal Ozberk and Jo Parson</b>	Inclusive approaches in support of student continuation  <b>Penny Haughan and Harry Pearce</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02	Mezzanine	
2.50pm - 3.05pm	<b>Coffee Break and Sponsor Stands</b>				
3.05pm - 4.20pm	<b>Oral presentations 2</b>			Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02 Stream 3: The Room	
Session 1	<b>Stream 1</b>	<b>Stream 2</b>	<b>Stream 3</b>		
	Delivering Careers & Employability education to support the progression of online learners  <b>Victoria Wade</b>	Inclusive Attainment: inequity in student continuation and an expression of its transcendence  <b>Matt Hiely-Rayner</b>	Cultivating Cultural Competence: Evaluating Pharmacy Students' Knowledge and Perspectives Following a Cultural Competence Workshop  <b>Dipa Kamdar and Leanne May</b>		
Session 2	Student financial support: sector trends in usage vs feedback and continuation  <b>Peter Gray and Hannah Moralee</b>	Evaluating the Impact of First Year Microcredentials on the Student Experience  <b>Julie Blackwell Young, Jack Hogan and Stina Perschke</b>	Enhancing Pre-Placement Training Consistency and Standards: Optimizing Clinical Competency and Patient Safety in Healthcare Education  <b>Esin Turkaslan</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02 Stream 3: The Room	
Session 3	BAME Reciprocal DI-Lawgues: Diversity & Inclusion in the Law School Dialogues - reducing the BAME awarding gap & creating a stronger sense of belonging  <b>Shweta Band</b>	Exploring a Domino Effect: An Analysis of the Impact of Living in Disadvantaged Areas on Career Progression  <b>Mohammed Yakub</b>	How inclusive is the pharmacy curriculum at Kingston University?  <b>Dipa Kamdar and Soheil Rezaei</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02 Stream 3: The Room	
4.30pm - 6.30pm	<b>Break</b>				
6.30pm - 7.15pm	Drinks reception and poster presentation			Mezzanine	
7.15pm - 10pm	Conference Dinner			Winter Garden	

## HEIR ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024 - Day Two

Time	Stream 1 - S3.01 	Stream 2 - S3.02 	Stream 3 - The Room 	Location
9am - 9.30am	<b>Registration</b>			Main Reception
9.30am - 10.30am	<b>Keynote Speaker 2</b> David Kernohan - WonkHE			The Room
10.30am - 11.20am		<b>Oral presentations 3</b>		
Session 1	<b>Stream 1</b> Advancing Competency-Based Education and Rubrics in Japan: Promoting an Inclusive Curriculum for Student Progression. <b>Kunihiko Takamatsu, Nishide Takashi, Tetsuya Oishi, Sachio Hirokawa, Sayaka Matsumoto, Aoi Kishida, Ryosuke Kozaki, Masao Mori, Shotaro Imai and Mio Tasubakimoto</b>	<b>Stream 2</b> Best practice collaborative evaluation for Access and Participation Plans, a case study. <b>Helena Gillespie</b>	<b>Stream 3</b> Rethinking peer team support and collaboration to enhance student engagement, progression and graduate outcomes. <b>Nigel Page</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02 Stream 3: The Room
Session 2	Drivers and deterrents of undergraduate and postgraduate re-enrolment at alma mater. <b>Scott Rawlinson</b>	Pre-arrival questionnaires case study: understanding student expectations and creating a platform to measure educational gain. <b>Joe Mahon and Paul Morgan</b>	Implementing whole programme teaching and learning principles to address persistent progression issues. <b>Kryss Macleod</b>	
11.20am - 11.35am	<b>Coffee Break and Sponsor Stands</b>			Mezzanine
11.35am - 12.30pm		<b>Workshops</b>		
		<b>Stream 1</b> Developing Incremental assessment to support engagement, progression, and outcomes. <b>Kryss Macleod and Maria Bryan</b>	<b>Stream 2</b> Implementing and evaluating the impact of inclusive curricula within the School of Law. <b>Sarah Conner and Morag Duffin</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02
12.30pm - 1.30pm	<b>Lunch and Sponsor Exhibits</b>			Mezzanine
1.30pm - 2.15pm	<b>Higher Education Institutional Research: arising topics and future projects</b>			The Room
2.15pm - 3.05pm	<b>Oral presentations 4</b>			
Session 1	<b>Stream 1</b> Dissertation Navigator, preparing students beyond HE. <b>Josephine Van-Ess and Xiangming Tao</b>	<b>Stream 2</b> Enhancing First-Year Student Success through a Comprehensive Year-long Support Programme. <b>Julie Brunton, Kathryn Nethercott, Lindsey Smith, Sibel Kaya, Steve Briggs, John Reynolds, Caroline Reid, Fiona Factor and Annie Danbury</b>	<b>Stream 3</b> Locating 'communities' in community-based learning: empowering local community groups in university-community partnerships. <b>Rehan Shah and David Geiringer</b>	Stream 1: S3.01 Stream 2: S3.02 Stream 3: The Room
Session 2	Critical, compassionate co-creation for developing belonging within the classroom. <b>Kryss Macleod</b>	International graduate outcomes – literature review. <b>Yashraj Jain</b>		
3.05pm - 3.30pm	<b>Closing address, next conference, evaluation</b> Matt Hiely-Rayner, Rachel Bowden, Helena Gillespie			The Room

# Welcome to HEIR

After many months of planning, it is a real pleasure to welcome you all to the Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) Conference 2024, hosted by Buckinghamshire New University!

We are thrilled to bring you this event in BNU's brand new campus development. This year's theme is equitable student progression and encompasses multiple strands of IR activity that have illuminated previous conferences. Progression is usually taken to mean student progression on their course of study: engaging, being retained, making academic progress and gaining a good award, and our sub-themes of inclusive student experiences, inclusive / decolonised curriculum and learning gain address these aspects of the student journey. With a broader interpretation of 'progression', our speakers also address the 'into' and 'beyond' stages of the journey: transition into HE and progression into careers and further study.

Our keynote speakers will set the scene for each day with a different angle on why student progression is so important as a topic for institutional research. Firstly, Jay Blades will bring the perspective on how supporting student progression impact our students and on the second day, David Kernohan will lay out the implications of student progression for policy and governance.

On behalf of the HEIR Network Group and the Buckinghamshire New University Conference Planning Group, we hope you find the event enjoyable and useful and look forward to receiving your feedback.



**Matt Hiely-Rayner**

Director of Strategic Planning & Change, Buckinghamshire New University And Co-Chair of the HEIR Planning Group



**Rachel Bowden**

Head of Evaluation and Policy Department, University of Brighton And Co-Chair of the HEIR Planning Group



**Elif Ozberk**

Senior Insight Analyst, Buckinghamshire New University And Senior Lecturer, Buckinghamshire New University

# About the HEIR network

# HEIRNETWORK

## HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK

The UK and Ireland Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) network was established in 2008 to bring together institutional research (IR) enthusiasts and practitioners working in the UK and Ireland higher education sectors. The HEIR network believes that IR is playing an increasingly important role in enhancing learning and teaching practice and providing timely and relevant evidence to aid management decision making at all levels within UK and Irish higher education institutions. The network is coordinated by a voluntary Planning Group that focuses on supporting the network through providing networking opportunities and facilitating host institutions in organising the annual HEIR conference.

### What we do

The activities of the network are focused on achieving the following four objectives:

1. To build an IR community in the UK and Ireland that can help individuals develop their knowledge and expertise and contribute to the building of capacity for IR across the sector
2. To be a forum for discussion around contemporary issues and for sharing ideas, experiences, practices and solutions to issues and problems
3. To inform HE policy and practice through engaging directly with policy-makers
4. To work with other bodies to aiming to impact on HE policy and practice
5. Check out the Network's website and join the mailing list at [www.heirnetwork.org.uk](http://www.heirnetwork.org.uk)

## How inclusive is the pharmacy curriculum at Kingston University?

### Oral Presentation 2 | Session 3 | Stream 3

 The Room

Day 1 3.05pm - 4.20pm

Dipa Kamdar<sup>1</sup>, Soheil Rezaei<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [dipa.patel@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:dipa.patel@kingston.ac.uk), Kingston University, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2EE

<sup>2</sup> Kingston University, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2EE

#### Abstract

##### Background:

The inclusive curriculum framework (ICF) provides a strategic approach to fostering inclusivity in higher education, enabling students to reach their full potential. Early adoption of the ICF at Kingston University (KU) demonstrated positive impact (McDuff et al., 2020). Principles include creating an accessible curriculum, improving representation within the student and staff body and in educational material, and developing key skills empowering pharmacy students to become culturally competent, empathetic practitioners with the ability to provide equitable healthcare to diverse communities. A series of inclusivity workshops relating to cultural competence and health inequalities was embedded in the curriculum to equip students with these skills. There has been progress improving ethnic representation, however, LGBTQ+ and disability health topics are often underrepresented in pharmacy curricula, which can perpetuate stereotypes and marginalisation (Mawdsley and Willis, 2019).

##### Aim:

To explore student experiences and perspectives of inclusivity in the pharmacy curriculum at Kingston University.

##### Method:

A mixed-methods approach was used. Following ethical approval, a paper survey was distributed to first, second, third- and fourth-year pharmacy students (minimum sample size of 241 based on Raosoft calculator at 95% confidence interval). The survey was divided into five sections: representation, academic support, inclusive curriculum, inclusivity workshops, and demographics. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a validated interview guide with subsequent thematic analysis.



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## Results:

The survey response rate was 131% (n=316/241) with 5 semi-structured interviews. 79% (n=277/316) students were 18-24 years old. 23% (n=72/316) were men, 68% (215/316) women and 1% (n=4/316) identified as non-binary. There was a range of ethnicities with Arab being most common (19%) and 7% (n=23/316) identified as having physical and/or learning disabilities.

Majority of students (85%; n=269/316) were satisfied with overall representation amongst lecturers and educational material. Only 32% (n=100/316) agreed students with learning differences are accommodated with inclusive teaching practices with 54% (n=172/316) desiring accessible PowerPoint slides and 70% (n=220/316) requesting easy to read, formatted materials (n=220/316) with reports of difficulties with Canvas (virtual learning environment) organisation.

70% (n=222/316) agreed the pharmacy curriculum is inclusive with 74% (n=233/316) believing the course prepares students to provide healthcare services to a diverse population. 72% (n=226/316) indicated the inclusivity workshops improved their awareness of health inequalities.

Thematic analysis showed students desired more exposure to disability, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic factors in the curriculum. With regards to LGBTQ+ healthcare, students felt confident discussing inequalities, risks and using pronouns, but less confident understanding the nuances of transgender healthcare.

## Discussion and Conclusion:

Steps taken to implement an inclusive pharmacy curriculum have been successful with majority of students finding diverse representation throughout the course and the inclusivity workshops providing awareness of health inequalities, enabling their

journey as sustainable healthcare professionals. However, increased exposure to LGBTQ+ and disability representation was requested by students to improve confidence with patients, similar to findings by Mawdsley and Willis (2019). Accessible material remains a critical issue for many students, especially those who are neurodivergent, therefore all staff must utilise the accessibility toolkit to ensure equitable teaching material.

## References:

Mawdsley A. and Willis S. (2023). Undergraduate pharmacy education must become more inclusive of LGBTQIA+ people. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*. 310(7971). Available from: <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/opinion/undergraduate-pharmacy-education-must- become-more-inclusive-of-lgbtqia-people> (Accessed 06/05/2024)

McDuff N., Hughes A., Tatam J., Morrow E., and Ross F. (2020). Improving equality of opportunity in higher education through the adoption of an inclusive curriculum framework. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*. 22(2):83–121.



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## Cultivating Cultural Competence: Evaluating Pharmacy Students' Knowledge and Perspectives Following a Cultural Competence Workshop

### Oral Presentation 2 | Session 1 | Stream 3

#### The Room

Day 1 3.05pm - 4.20pm

Dipa Kamdar<sup>1</sup>, Leanne May<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [dipa.patel@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:dipa.patel@kingston.ac.uk), Kingston University, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2EE

<sup>2</sup> Leanne May, Kingston University, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2EE

#### Abstract

##### Background:

A cultural competence (CC) workshop was embedded in the Kingston University pharmacy curriculum. Wilson et al. (2013) defined cultural competence as "the acquisition and maintenance of culture-specific skills" to navigate successfully within new cultural contexts and engage effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is imperative students can culturally engage with each other during higher education (HE) as well as within the context of pharmacy where CC is understanding how healthcare is delivered and responding to the needs of a diverse population (Tseng and Strelitzer, 2008).

Unconsciously, personal cultural interpretation can influence how healthcare is provided. Improving CC reduces health inequalities and develops sustainable, inclusive practitioners.

##### Aim:

To evaluate pharmacy students' knowledge and perspectives following a cultural competence workshop.

#### Method:

First-year pharmacy students participated in a CC workshop and worked in small, mixed groups. Learning outcomes and activities included raising awareness of terms such as culture and CC, inclusive language, evaluating a pharmacist-patient video consultation with language barriers, consideration of how health and medicines are affected by culture and beliefs, and factors affecting health inequalities. Students completed a self-reflection tool to raise awareness of their strengths, bias, and developmental needs in their CC journey.

Following ethical approval, a post-workshop paper survey was distributed to pharmacy students (minimum sample size of 112 based on Raosoft calculator at 95% confidence interval). Data was analysed using descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel.



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## Results:

The response rate was 73% (n=82/112). 95% (n=78/82) students were 18-24 years old. 25.6% (n=21/82) were men, 70.7% (58/82) women and 3.7% (n=3/82) identified as Other. There was a range of ethnicities with Asian and Arab being most common (24%; n=20/82 and 21%; n=17/82 respectively) and the most common religion was Islam (59%; n=48/82). 11% (n=9/82) identified as having a physical and/or learning disability.

51% (n=42/82) correctly defined CC. 81% (n=66/82) were able to identify inclusive language but only 38% (n=31/82) correctly answered how religious beliefs may affect prescribing.

74% (n=61/82) believed their awareness of health inequalities improved and 70% (n=57/82) perceived increased awareness of their own cultural bias. 67% (n=55/82) believed the workshop improved their understanding of inclusive language. 67% (n=55/82) recognised they had limited CC and needed to develop their learning. Qualitative feedback indicated students enjoyed learning about different cultures and beliefs, and the interactive-style of the workshop.

## Discussion and Conclusion:

Students worked in small, diverse groups to share different views of cultures and to enable collaborative learning. A CC workshop is essential in any HE curriculum to promote course community, engage students with sustainable practice and develop their ability to work in a global environment. Within the pharmacy course, most students improved their awareness of CC and acknowledged its necessity in their practice (Tseng and Strelitzer, 2008).

However, knowledge of CC varied with high awareness of inclusive language but poor knowledge of factors such as religious beliefs affecting medicines. It is evident that CC must be integrated into the curriculum after an initial workshop to consolidate and apply learning as the cultural landscape is ever evolving.

## References:

Tseng, W. and Strelitzer, J. (2008). Cultural Competence in Health Care. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

Wilson, J., Ward, C. and Fischer, R. (2013). Beyond culture learning theory: What can personality tell us about cultural competence? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. 44(6):900-927.



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## Delivering Careers & Employability education to support the progression of online learners

### Oral Presentation 2 | Session 1 | Stream 1

 S3.01

Day 1 3.05pm - 4.20pm

Victoria Wade<sup>1</sup>, Laura Brammar<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>[laura.brammar@careers.lon.ac.uk](mailto:laura.brammar@careers.lon.ac.uk) University of London, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

#### Abstract

Online learning is key to equitable provision as it affords learners flexibility and, at its best, provides access to students of all ages, backgrounds and geographical locations. Online learning has been steadily increasing around the world 1 (WEF, 2022) Driven by the adjustments enforced by the pandemic and the increasing focus on lifelong learning linked to skills shortages, plus the advances in technology, online learning is increasingly feeling like an accessible option rivalling traditional forms of on campus higher education.

With this trend set to increase, how can careers and employability education be successfully designed and delivered online in an engaging and meaningful way, which benefits a diversity of students?

The University of London has approximately 40,000 students studying programmes in over 180 countries. These include UG and PG courses in a range of subject areas, with academic direction for these courses coming from across University of London Federal Member institutions. Whilst some students learn at Recognised Teaching Centres, many students study wholly online. Consequently, the University of London Careers Service (UoLCS) has been created as a purely digital service working to deliver careers education in an engaging and inclusive way.

The UoLCS recognises that online learning is not solely for first time undergraduates looking to get their first jobs after graduating. Our students are at different stages of their careers; some are studying their first degrees whilst others are experienced professionals in their field, undertaking a UoL degree because they want to advance their career or pivot into another sector. We steer away from a 'one size fits all' approach and are aware of the necessity of providing careers education that is relevant to all of our students, or risk forgoing any future engagement from them.

In this session, UoLCS will delve into how they set up a wholly digital service that meets the needs of the diverse and geographically dispersed students at UoL. Using interactive discussions, delegates will engage in conversations about the challenges and opportunities of how to deliver careers education online. Delegates will also be shown global data and invited to interact using online polls.



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As a result of this session, delegates will:

1. Understand how to provide careers education and employability activities that are relevant and beneficial to every student, regardless of their course, location, or stage in their career.
2. Learn about the Careers Service's design principles—inclusive, future-facing, accessible, impactful, and collaborative—and how these principles support strategic and operational delivery.
3. Gain insights into designing meaningful interventions that effectively support student progression before, during, and after their studies.
4. Explore strategies for engaging students, alumni, and employers in the process of enhancing careers and employability services.
5. Discover methods to use data effectively to segment and target student interventions, measure impact, and map educational gains.

## References

World Economic Forum (2022) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/online-learning-courses- reskill-skills-gap/> (accessed 14 May 2024)



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## Understanding the post-COVID-19 environment to better support equitable student progression and outcomes: a collaborative study

### Oral Presentation 1 | Session 1 | Stream 1

 S3.01

Day 1 2pm - 2.50pm

Nigel Page, Rachel Hunt, Lauren Albee, Alison Snape and Daniel Berwick

#### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly challenged the way students identify and interact with their learning environment on campus, both in time and space, which can be reflected in the student experience, overall levels of engagement, and ultimately progression and attainment. The COVID-19 aftermath has also merged with a cost-of-living crisis and an increased prevalence of mental health issues bringing new challenges to students and staff. Therefore, there has never been a more pressing time to understand and define the support needs of students in the post-COVID-19 era to ensure relevance, accessibility, and commitment in an ever-changing society. This collaborative study, conducted across three South London higher education institutions (Kingston University, King's College London, St George's), involved the collection of survey data from 900 life science students transitioning into higher education at level 4 and incorporated focus groups.

This presentation will delve into the multifaceted impact of travel and cost implications for university engagement, the influence of timetabling, and reasons for non-attendance, encompassing factors such as the teaching environment, health concerns, and other commitments. Furthermore, an exploration of the interplay between various demographics will be presented, offering an evaluation of common challenges and unique features across institutions. Our analysis will shed light on the distinct differences that may disadvantage underrepresented groups, emphasising the necessity of considering these nuances in the development of new approaches to support equitable student progression and outcomes.



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## Best practice collaborative evaluation for Access and Participation Plans, a case study

### Oral Presentation 3 | Session 1 | Stream 2

📍 S3.02

Day 2 10.30am - 11.20am

## Professor Helena Gillespie

[h.gillespie@uea.ac.uk](mailto:h.gillespie@uea.ac.uk)

University of East Anglia Norwich UK

### Abstract

The UEA Widening Access and Participation team has collaborated with UEA's Centre for Higher Education Research, Policy, Practice and Scholarship (CHERRPS) to develop an innovative project aimed at improving the quality of evaluation for Access and Participation Plans. Working with funding from Transforming Access and Student Opportunities (TASO) and evaluators from the University of Staffordshire, we developed a project focussed on peer assisted learning and framed by TASO's approach to evidence ratings (TASO 2024).

In this presentation, we will describe how we approached a project to develop narrative and empirical evidence on the impact of peer assisted learning on students in their first year at UEA. We present this as a case study and examine to what extent the learnings could contribute to the understanding of best practice in APP evaluation.

Using an implementation and process evaluation methodology (IPE) (Saunders 2016) and statistical analysis, we examined the impact of peer assisted learning and how it has evolved during the last ten years at UEA. We will discuss our approach to the evaluation including how we used quantitative data on student participation and characteristics to understand the impact of PAL, and how the IPE

has informed the evolution of the project through interviews with stakeholders, concluding that:

1. The structure of the programme could be changed to enable more effective collaboration
2. The establishment of long terms goals is important for this initiative

The focus of this presentation will be on how collaboration is essential to develop effective approaches to evaluation for Access and Participation Plans. Given the increased focus on evaluation for APPs across the sector from 2025, these learnings, set in the context of TASO's evidence ratings, are important for all HEIs developing evaluation for their next APP. The presenter will be Professor Helena Gillespie, who provides academic leadership to the Widening Access and Participation team at UEA in her role as Associate ProVC.

### References:

TASO (2024) Evidence ratings. <https://taso.org.uk/evidence/evaluation-guidance-resources/evidence-standards/> [Accessed 30.5.24]

Saunders, R. (2016) Introduction, Overview, and Perspectives. In: *Implementation Monitoring and Process Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. pp. 1-17

## Enhancing First-Year Student Success through a Comprehensive Year-long Support Programme

### Oral Presentation 4 | Session 1 | Stream 2

 S3.02

Day 2 2.15pm - 3.05pm

Julie Brunton<sup>1</sup>, Kathryn Nethercott<sup>2</sup>, Lindsey Smith<sup>2</sup>, Sibel Kaya<sup>2</sup>, Steve Briggs<sup>2</sup>, John Reynolds<sup>2</sup>, Caroline Reid<sup>2</sup>, Fiona Factor<sup>2</sup>, Annie Danbury<sup>2</sup>

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#### Abstract

The implementation of academic coaching and tutoring in higher education institutions is on the rise to address the diverse needs of various student demographics. Many institutions have established academic support programs to increase retention (Robinson, 2015).

Research (Alzen et al., 2021; Cooper, 2010; Reinheimer & McKenzie, 2011) indicates that students who receive academic tutoring and coaching perform better academically and are more likely to continue their studies. Tutoring and coaching are associated with improved success and retention rates compared to students who do not seek such support. Despite its growing adoption, research on the effectiveness and implementation of academic coaching and tutoring remains limited. The diversity of coaching and tutoring approaches further restricts the depth of research in specific contexts (Alzen et al., 2021; Capstick et al., 2019; Robinson, 2015). Researchers (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Capstick et al., 2019; Howlett et al., 2021) call for more empirical studies to examine the effects of academic tutoring and coaching on student outcomes.

This study aimed to establish the influence of the Academic Success Tutor and Coach (AST/C) intervention on retention rates in targeted courses and capture the perceptions and experiences of tutors, coaches, and students during the intervention. The AST/C Programme targeted foundation and first-year students in courses with low institutional retention rates.

AST/Cs aimed to identify students at risk of disengagement and provide targeted support through one-to-one or small group sessions, or referrals to central support services. They served as a bridge between faculties and student support teams. The evaluation of this programme employed a mixed-method approach where quantitative metrics such as assessment submission, pass rates, and retention data are analysed across the university and within courses, compared with previous years. Qualitative data, including student and tutor/coach feedback and interviews, provide insights into the AST/C intervention and perceptions of its effectiveness.



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Quantitative data showed that assessment submission and pass rates for foundation and first-year students significantly improved in most target courses during Semester 1, with more students passing and fewer needing resit opportunities. University-wide improvements in these markers suggest positive progress in retention and continuation. Semester 2 data further supported these findings, showing improvements in the intervention groups and institutional continuation data compared to the previous two years. Data from the summer exam boards will offer a more conclusive picture of the program's impact on retention rates.

According to the qualitative data, initial student feedback on tutoring and coaching was overwhelmingly positive, with most students expressing satisfaction with the program and intent to seek further support. Tutors and coaches reported challenges, particularly at the beginning of their roles, but felt a strong sense of unity and support within their academic

teams, facilitating problem-solving and contributing to positive student outcomes. Interviews with students, tutors, and coaches will provide more in-depth information about their experiences with the intervention.

## References

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## Dissertation Navigator, preparing students beyond HE

### Oral Presentation 4 | Session 1 | Stream 1

📍 S3.01

Day 2 2.15pm - 3.05pm

Josephine Van-Ess<sup>1</sup> and Xiangming Tao<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> JV205@sussex.ac.uk, University of Sussex, Sussex House, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RH, United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> University of Sussex, Sussex House, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RH, United Kingdom

#### Abstract

Literature (Porter & Phelps, 2014; Duke & Denicolo, 2017) indicates that educational practices do not always prepare and support students for diverse careers. In addition, industry data shows that one-fifth of graduates lack key skills needed in the workplace (Personnel Today, 2019) and career management skills (ISE, 2021). Although it can be sometimes difficult to provide opportunities for students to develop these skills in the learning context, Higher Education Institutions still have the responsibility to support students develop these skills in addition to the knowledge acquired as part of their degree outcomes.

Additionally, feedback from students indicated variations in the levels of support students received from their allocated supervisors.

To address this challenge, we are currently piloting an approach that uses the dissertation supervision process aimed at improving educational learning and supporting students to develop key employability skills beyond their studies. The approach involves developing a module on the virtual learning environment (VLE) where students can access curated resources aimed at supporting them through the dissertation process and developing key employability skills.

The module uses an integrative learning approach which enhances learners' abilities to connect knowledge, skills, and contexts across different times and domains, thereby promoting a holistic approach towards learning gains. The materials on

the VLE include videos, quizzes and worksheets that introduce students to a wide range of skills needed in the workplace and create opportunities for them to develop some of these skills whilst undertaking their dissertation.

As we are currently piloting this project and students are yet to start their dissertations, we hope to gather feedback from students at the end of their studies regarding the usefulness of the module. We also hope to use data from the VLE to identify the number of students who accessed materials on the VLE and how long they engaged with the materials.

We hope to have gathered some findings by September to share with colleagues at the conference.

Duke, D. & Denicolo, P. (2017). What Supervisors and Universities Can do to Enhance Doctoral Student Experience (and how they can help themselves). *FEMS microbiology letters*. 364.

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Personnel Today, 2019 - Available at: <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/graduates-lacking-key-skills- hr-managers-say/> (Accessed: May, 2024)

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## Advancing Competency-Based Education and Rubrics in Japan: Promoting an Inclusive Curriculum for Student Progression

### Oral Presentation 3 | Session 1 | Stream 1

📍 S3.01

Day 2 10.30pm - 11.20pm

Kunihiko Takamatsu<sup>1</sup>, Takashi Nishide<sup>2</sup>, Tetsuya Oishi<sup>3</sup>, Sachio Hirokawa<sup>4</sup>, Sayaka Matsumoto<sup>1</sup>, Aoi Kishida<sup>5</sup>, Ryosuke Kozaki<sup>6</sup>, Masao Mori<sup>1</sup>, Shotaro Imai<sup>1</sup>, Mio Tsubakimoto<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kobe City Nishi-Kobe Medical Center, Okayama, Japan

<sup>7</sup> Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tokyo, Japan

### Abstract

The Japanese higher education system faces challenges due to the declining birth rate and the need for educational reform to promote lifelong learning. This study investigates the implementation of competency-based education and rubrics as an assessment methodology to develop an inclusive curriculum that bolsters student progression. Competency-based education emphasizes knowledge, skills, motivation, attitude, and values, aiming to cultivate learners who can adapt to societal transformations.

Despite the significance of rubrics in promoting an inclusive curriculum, a MEXT survey revealed that only 6.1% of universities explicitly stated grading criteria for all subjects using rubrics at the undergraduate level in 2020. To address this issue, we proposed a two-step approach for introducing rubrics across all subjects,

starting with a reference rubric (R2) derived from common learning outcomes in the diploma policy, followed by faculty members creating rubrics for their individually set learning outcomes.

Furthermore, we evaluated the comparison between R2 and rubrics in syllabi using the combined analysis of doc2vec pre-trained by Wikipedia text data, a Large Language Model (LLM), and cosine similarity(Ito and Takamatsu et.al, 2024). This approach aims to promote an inclusive curriculum that supports student progression by ensuring that the rubrics align with the diploma policy.



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The successful implementation of this approach at a university where rubrics were introduced for all subjects demonstrates the potential for competency-based education and rubrics to create an inclusive curriculum that supports student progression in Japan's higher education system. By addressing the challenges posed by the declining birth rate and the need for educational reform, this study contributes to the promotion of lifelong learning in Japan.

Moreover, from the perspective of the Meeting of Japanese Institutional Research (MJIR), this study highlights the importance of Institutional Research (IR) in Japan. MJIR aims to foster collaboration among IR professionals, share best practices, and promote data-driven decision-making in higher education. By showcasing the successful implementation of competency-based education and rubrics, this study emphasizes the role of IR in driving educational reform and supporting student progression in Japan.

Ito, A., Takamatsu, K., et al. (2024). Development of reference rubric (R2) to promote the use of rubrics in higher education, and comparison of the rubric of each subject with the R2. *Journal of Learning Analytics*. 7:1-13



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## International graduate outcomes – literature review

### Oral Presentation 4 | Session 2 | Stream 2

 S3.02

Day 2 2.15pm - 3.05pm

Yashraj Jain<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [info@theresearchconcierge.com](mailto:info@theresearchconcierge.com), Research Concierge, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, United Kingdom, WC1N 3AX

#### Abstract

In 2021-22, the total number of students in the UK were 2,862,620, of these 679,970 (24%) were international students (20% from outside the EU and 4% from the EU). On average international students from outside EU have comprised of 16% of the student population between 2017 and 2022, increasing by 24% from 2020/21 to 2021/22. This is also reflective of their large presence in the graduate labour market. And yet, there is a lack of tailored support for this group to achieve successful graduate outcomes—especially from policy makers, universities and the employment sector.<sup>1</sup>

The survey of 2020-21 Graduate Outcomes revealed that 84% of UK respondents were in employment or unpaid work, including 10% who were engaged in both employment and further study. This figure for non-EU international graduates dropped to 72% (of which 5% were in employment and further study). Variances are also reflected in graduate outcomes by ethnicity, with 85% of White graduates domiciled in the UK in employment or unpaid work compared to 79% of Asian graduates domiciled in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

In another study commissioned by AGCAS, 24% international students who were on a Graduate or Skilled Visa responded that their expectations were not being met while 18% were undecided. Thematic analysis of the responses from graduates who did not feel their expectations of post-study visas were being met revealed employers' poor knowledge of post-study work visas as the most common reason. Others cited examples of employers who had openly refused to accept applications from international graduates despite the Graduate Route being a valid right to work. The high costs associated with the Graduate Route was also reported as a barrier. Survey respondents were asked how many roles they had applied for since leaving university. 42% had applied for over 50 roles, 22% had applied for 25-50 roles, 21% had applied for 1-10 roles and 16% had applied for 11-25 roles.<sup>3</sup>



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A study by Kaplan, HEPI and IoD revealed business hiring practices across the UK's business community that do not align with the UK government's international graduate employment goals. The on-ground reality of using the Graduate and Skilled worker visa is starkly different to the ambition set by the policy makers in Westminster. Only 3% employers said they had already used or were planning to use the Graduate route to higher international students, while 1 in three (35%) employers were not even aware of what this was.<sup>4</sup>

These reasons exacerbate the international student job search experience. The implications of this research and its findings can help introduce interventions across UK universities that can support international students to secure equal opportunities when seeking to progress in their career after graduating.

1 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2023/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-202122-released>

2 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/31-05-2023/sb266-higher-education-graduate-outcomes-statistics/activities>

3 <https://www.agcas.org.uk/international-graduates-and-uk-employment>

4 <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Not-heard-of-this-Employers-perceptions-of-the-UKs- Graduate-Route-visa.pdf>



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Critical, compassionate co-creation for developing belonging within the classroom

## Oral Presentation 4 | Session 2 | Stream 1

 S3.01

Day 2 2.15pm - 3.05pm

### Kryss Macleod

Manchester Metropolitan University

#### Abstract

This paper explores situating techniques of co-creation with students within a framework of critical pedagogies to foster more equitable learning spaces. I argue that to create classrooms of participation, validation, and genuine belonging for diverse cohorts, we must start from the critical perspective that education is not neutral. This then enables us as educators to examine those aspects, influences, and positions that shape our institutions and own experiences, and then to co-create from places of understanding, enquiry, and compassion, rather than to further embed dominant perspectives and conformity.

I illustrate the potential for this using a practical example: a co-creation of a classroom commitment task session deployed at scale within a large law school, in a post 1992- institution. I argue that taking this critical approach to co-construction helps support us to shape classrooms worthy of our diverse cohorts, and create spaces of critical engagement with reality, valuing others, and equitable learning.



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Implementing whole programme teaching and learning principles to address persistent progression issues

## Oral Presentation 3 | Session 2 | Stream 3

 The Room

Day 2 10.30am - 11.20am

Kryss Macleod

Manchester Metropolitan University

### Abstract

Successful and inclusive student engagement is central to many primary higher education concerns, including progression. Charting the redesign and development of large-scale course delivery, across a number of years, this paper will give an overview of how L4 progression outcomes were increased from 73% to 89%, in a large undergraduate Law degree and for BAME cohorts, through the incorporation of a set of key teaching and learning principles within modules and across levels. The paper will discuss core elements of design and delivery, and results of this large-scale redesign project, which most notably, saw a year-on-year improvement in progression, engagement, and student outcomes.



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**Developing Incremental assessment to support engagement, progression, and outcomes.**

## Workshops | Stream 1

 **S3.01**

Day 2 11.35am - 12.30pm

**Kryss Macleod**

Manchester Metropolitan University

**Maria Bryan**

Manchester Metropolitan University

Engagement has long been recognised to be linked to student success and positive course outcomes (Trowler, 2010) and has been demonstrated to be a key predictor of academic success and achievement (Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong, 2008). Many students are motivated by assessment (Wass et al, 2015) and will focus their engagement for or around the assessment, and even students who are generally disengaged from the course may engage with assessments (Foster et al, 2012). However, the relationship between assessment and engagement can be complicated: generally, assessments constitute extrinsic motivation for learning (Whitehead, 1984), which is believed to promote a shallower cognitive approach than intrinsic motivation (Walker, Greene, Mansell, 2003), yet students often use assessment as a key indicator of both their learning, and how they should evidence it (Sambell et al, 2012). Continuous, or incremental, summative assessment has been found to have several positive impacts on student motivation and learning (Trotter, 2006), increasing student engagement (Holmes, 2015) and encouraging more consistent student effort through the year (Cole and Spence, 2012; Marriott and Lau, 2008). This workshop gives an overview of our work on developing an approach to incremental assessment and the evaluation of the outcomes of a large scale implementation across a UG law degree. We will discuss our project, analysis and results of the work, which demonstrate that carefully designed incremental assessment can be a pivotal part of closing progression and outcome gaps on modules. We then offer participants the chance to engage in tasks around understanding how to design and implement their own forms of incremental assessment at module and programme level.



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## Immediate Marking and Feedback in Higher Education: A Transformational Assessment Strategy

### Workshops | Stream 2



Day 1 12.05pm - 1pm

### Suzanne Doria and Sarah Williams

**Background:** Research suggests a disconnect between how tutors deliver feedback and how students may interpret it (Chalmers, Mowat and Chapman, 2018). The traditional assessment strategy in higher education often involves a significant delay between submission and when students receive their feedback, potentially hindering student progression (Winstone and Boud, 2022). In an attempt to enhance student experience and learning in a higher education environment, an immediate feedback assessment strategy was considered (Hooda, et al., 2022). This study examines the impact of immediate marking and feedback on student success through a case study of a new assessment regime in the first module taken by new students.

**Methodology:** The traditional method of essay submission with a three-week feedback turnaround was replaced with a portfolio assessment designed to develop essential student skills. The portfolio required students to evidence their knowledge of Harvard referencing, research skills, reflection, action planning and how to access university support services to improve the quality of the student learning experience (Peach, 2005). The assessment was supported by in-class scaffolding which supported student achievement (Van de Pol et al., 2015). The portfolio was submitted in the morning, followed by scheduled one-on-one marking and feedback sessions on the same day.

**Challenges:** Organising individual feedback sessions and ensuring tutor preparedness presented logistical challenges. Concerns about student attendance for brief campus visits were addressed by offering online sessions.

**Results:** The immediate feedback strategy led to the highest attended session of the module, surpassing attendance of traditional personal tutor sessions. All students who submitted the portfolio passed, a significant improvement over a similar module's 35.5% pass rate from the previous year. Notably, there were zero cases of academic misconduct, a stark contrast to nine cases in a comparable module the previous academic year.

**Discussion:** The new and authentic assessment strategy facilitated a more engaging and supportive environment for students, particularly during the critical early stages of their higher education journey. The approach also reduced staff workload, with no reassessment or academic misconduct cases to investigate.

**Conclusion:** Immediate feedback via portfolio assessment has proven to be a successful strategy in enhancing student progression and satisfaction. The initiative's success is evidenced by positive student feedback and a marked improvement in academic performance.

**Future Directions:** The assessment strategy will be refined and implemented again in the 2024/2025 academic year. Further research will explore student experiences with immediate feedback and the potential for broader application across other programs.

**Keywords:** Immediate Feedback, Higher Education, Student Engagement, Assessment Strategy, Academic Success.



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## References

Chalmers, C., Mowat, E. and Chapman, M., 2018. Marking and providing feedback face-to-face: Staff and student perspectives. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 19(1), pp.35-45.

Hooda, M., Rana, C., Dahiya, O., Rizwan, A. and Hossain, M.S., 2022. Artificial intelligence for assessment and feedback to enhance student success in higher education. *Mathematical Problems in Engineering*, 2022(1), p.5215722.

Peach, D., 2005. Ensuring student success: The role of support services in improving the quality of the student learning experience. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development*, 2(3), pp.1-15.

Winstone, N.E. and Boud, D., 2022. The need to disentangle assessment and feedback in higher education. *Studies in higher education*, 47(3), pp.656-667.

Van de Pol, J., Volman, M., Oort, F. and Beishuizen, J., 2015. The effects of scaffolding in the classroom: support contingency and student independent working time in relation to student achievement, task effort and appreciation of support. *Instructional Science*, 43, pp.615-641.



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## Inclusive approaches in support of student continuation

### Oral Presentation 1 | Session 2 | Stream 2

 S3.02

Day 1 2pm - 2.50pm

### Penny Haughan and Harry Pearce

Liverpool Hope University, Hope Park Liverpool, L16 9JD

#### Abstract

Continuation (retention) of students continues to be a high-profile issue within most Universities. Continuation forms such a central part of data reporting to the OFS and their oversight of the B3 metrics, that all universities need to remain vigilant on this matter. In more localised settings it is incumbent on universities to ensure that as many of their students as possible complete their degrees. This is based on both a moral and financial imperative to give students opportunity to stay on course and to complete their academic journey.

At Liverpool Hope there is a well-established formal process for follow up of students who are perceived by their academic schools to be less engaged with their studies. This works well for some students who respond and are helped back on course. We have however recognised that there are a number of groups of students for whom this formal approach is unhelpful and subsequently unsuccessful in encouraging them to return to class. These include amongst others, students with learning support plans, international students and also students with mental health related concerns.



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## Locating 'communities' in community-based learning: empowering local community groups in university-community partnerships

### Oral Presentation 4 | Session 1 | Stream 3

#### 📍 The Room

Day 2 2.15pm - 3.05pm

R. Shah<sup>1</sup>, D. Geiringer<sup>2</sup>

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2 Queen Mary University of London, 327 Mile End Rd, Bethnal Green, London E1 4NS

#### Abstract

In recent years, there has been a growing effort in implementing community-based learning and teaching (CBLT, henceforth) through the teaching and research practices of universities (Salam et al., 2019). CBLT describes an educational experience in which students engage in organised activities that benefit the local community as part of their academic curriculum, while enabling students to not only strengthen their academic knowledge, but also enhance their civic responsibility (Bringle and Hatcher, 2000).

Feedback from existing community partners indicates that community groups would like more active involvement in shaping such partnerships with universities. The '*History and Heritage Internship*' module at QMUL, for instance, features multiple (n=60+) community partner organisations, several of whom have expressed an interest in expanding and indeed reshaping the way they collaborate to develop new networks and working practices to better support knowledge exchange between universities and their community organisations. While these partnerships are known to provide beneficial learning experiences for our students, universities have a limited insight into the aims, expectations, and benefits of such collaborations for their community partners (Shah et al., 2023), who often have restricted scope to play a formative role in the design and delivery of teaching and learning.

Motivated by this, we hosted and led a workshop at QMUL to explore how community partners experience community-university collaborations. The intention of this was to develop and extend CBLT by foregrounding

the voices of community leaders/representatives, through which we aim to build more mutually beneficial and inclusive student learning practice, while also extending the networks of our community partners beyond the humanities and social science disciplines, thereby enabling them to work with the wider university.

In this presentation, we will share the key thematic insights and findings obtained from our workshopping exercises and group discussions (often prompted by student questionnaire feedback) with several of our existing community partners centred around their experiences, benefits and suggestions for potential improvement of university-community partnerships. This institutional research will serve to provide recommendations to enable local community partners to co-develop future collaborative endeavours and develop a blueprint to support universities in providing more inclusive learning experiences for their students.

#### References:

Salam, M., Awang Iskandar, D. N., Ibrahim, D. H. A., and Farooq, M. S. (2019). Service learning in higher education: a systematic literature review. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 20(4), 573– 593.

Bringle, R. G., and Hatcher, J. A. (2000). Institutionalization of Service Learning in Higher Education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 71(3), 273–290.

Shah R., Preston A. and Dimova E. (2023). Making community-based learning and teaching happen: findings from an institutional study. *London Review of Education*, UCL Press. 21 (1), 1- 17.

## Exploring the Asian Awarding Gap: A Qualitative Analysis of Student Experiences

### Oral Presentation 1 | Session 2 | Stream 1

 **S3.01**

Day 1 2pm - 2.50pm

**Dr. Elif Bengi Unsal Ozberk<sup>1</sup>, Jo Parson<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe Campus, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2JZ, [elif.ozberk@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:elif.ozberk@bucks.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup>Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe Campus, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2JZ

#### Abstract

U.K. higher education has persistently faced significant ethnicity awarding gaps, particularly impacting Asian students at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). Previous quantitative research revealed a notable 26.6 percentage point difference between Asian and White students in achieving good degrees. Recognizing the need for a deeper understanding, this study extends the investigation through qualitative methods to explore the underlying factors contributing to this gap.

Building on the quantitative findings, we conducted semi-structured focus groups with 6 Asian students enrolled at BNU. These discussions aimed to capture the lived experiences, perceived barriers, and suggestions for improvement from the students themselves. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and insights.

The analysis revealed several key themes. University-wide issues included concerns about the quality of teaching, understaffing, and delays in marking assignments and dissertations. Students also highlighted a lack of support from some teaching staff and insufficient resources. Challenges of student life emerged as another significant theme, encompassing difficulties in relocating from home, adapting to a new environment, managing multiple assignment deadlines, and balancing academic responsibilities with personal and financial pressures. Issues specific to South Asian students varied between home and

international students. Home students often faced cultural expectations, family responsibilities, and stigma related to mental health, while international students reported financial concerns, perceived prioritization of home students, and difficulties integrating with peers. Despite these challenges, students shared positive experiences with supportive teaching staff and personalized academic support. They emphasized the need for clearer communication regarding resources and support services, as well as curriculum adjustments to include simplified language and culturally inclusive content.

The findings underscore the complexity of the awarding gap, highlighting both systemic and personal challenges faced by Asian students. The insights gained from this qualitative analysis provide a valuable evidence base to inform targeted interventions and support strategies at BNU. By addressing these issues, we aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable academic environment for all students.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity Awarding Gap, Higher Education, Asian Students, Qualitative Research, Student Experiences, Thematic Analysis



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## Evaluating the Impact of First Year Microcredentials on the Student Experience

### Oral Presentation 2 | Session 2 | Stream 2

 S3.02

Day 1 3.05pm - 4.20pm

Julie Blackwell Young<sup>1</sup>, Jack Hogan<sup>2</sup> and Stina Perschke<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [j.blackwell-young@abertay.ac.uk](mailto:j.blackwell-young@abertay.ac.uk); Abertay University, Bell Street, Dundee, Scotland, DD1 1HG

<sup>2</sup> Abertay University, Bell Street, Dundee, Scotland, DD1 1HG

#### Abstract

In 2021 Abertay University launched 5-credit, mandatory microcredentials for entrants into first year (SCQF Level 7, FHEQ Level 4). These are known as the MySuccess modules (Millard, Blackwell Young & Hogan, 2023). The philosophy of these is based around Lizzio's (2006) "five senses of success" conceptual framework with the aim to enhance transition and provide foundational skills for success at university. These microcredentials have been designed collaboratively across academic and professional staff and the Abertay Students' Association. As part of the suite of microcredentials, first year undergraduate students take a mandatory introduction module which orientates them to systems, behaviours and expectations for success at university. An in-built diagnostic allows students to self-assess their strengths and areas for development to inform their choice of subsequent microcredentials.

The university is now at the stage of conducting some evaluation with the help of a student research assistant. Through statistical analysis we have been looking at what the patterns of student engagement in terms of pass/fails/non-submissions can tell us about our students and whether the introduction module can be used as a barometer of student engagement and success. We have also been analysing the data coming out of the diagnostic tool to see what information this can give us about student performance in their first year. Based on this analysis, we will discuss the evaluation data and what recommendations we are making to the wider university.

Lizzio, A. (2006). The Five senses of success: A conceptual framework for student transition and orientation. Griffith University

Millard, L., Blackwell Young, J. and Hogan, J. (2023) 'Designing personalized student development through microcredentials: An institutional approach' in Willison, D and Henderson, E. (eds). *Perspectives on enhancing student transition into higher education and beyond*, (pp. 122-142). (Advances in Higher Education and Professional Development (AHEPD) Book series). IGI Global . <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-8198-1.ch006>



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## Enabling all learners to engage with their studies: an investigation of the factors affecting student engagement

### Oral Presentation 1 | Session 1 | Stream 2

 S3.02

Day 1 2pm - 2.50pm

Benedict Watling<sup>1</sup>

Buckinghamshire New University

#### Abstract

Student engagement is widely recognised to have declined post-Covid, particularly among students that struggle to cover basic living costs in the cost of living crisis (McVitty et al., 2023). This study explores the relationship between student engagement and outcomes to determine the effect that this reduced engagement is having on learners. The barriers to engagement are then explored, focusing on both internal and external factors that can impact learners' ability to attend sessions and the intersectionality between these factors.

The study uses Pearson's correlation to test the hypothesis that attending sessions on campus is positively correlated with achieving better outcomes and establishes a weak to moderate positive correlation between attendance and module marks for undergraduate students at Buckinghamshire New University. Given this, student attendance should be encouraged; the study goes on to explore the barriers to attendance using further statistical analysis, hypothesising that external factors such as distance from campus, age, and socio- economic background affect learners' attendance. Internal factors are also explored in the data, including the session start time and the spread of sessions across the timetable. Within each of these, the study identifies the importance of intersectionality and the need for an individualised approach to meet learner needs to create an inclusive experience which enables attendance.

It is recognised that this is not a full picture of student engagement, and further work is proposed to explore the effect of VLE activity and usage of session recordings on student outcomes. Attending on campus may not be the best option for all learners and providing a variety of high quality resources will support differing learner needs. This study is also limited in its focus on quantitative data without the input of student voice, any interventions put in place should be co-designed with students to ensure the assumptions made are giving the right support needed and are targeting the right areas.

McVitty, C., Jackson, A., Blake, S. and Capper, G. (2023), *Cost of living and student belonging* [online]. WonkHE, available from <https://wonkhe.com/wp-content/wonkhe-uploads/2023/10/Cost-of-living-and-belonging-charts-.pdf> [accessed 23/06/2024]



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Rethinking peer team support and collaboration to enhance student engagement, progression and graduate outcomes.

## Oral Presentation 3 | Session 1 | Stream 3

 The Room

Day 2 10.30am - 11.20pm

### Nigel Page

Kingston University London

### **Abstract**

Evidence suggests that peer team support and the effective delivery of personal development and problem-solving strategies significantly enhance students' sense of belonging and ultimately their graduate outcomes. For peer team support and personal development to be successful, students must develop not only self-awareness and identity but also a keen understanding of others and their environment. At Kingston University, we recognised the substantial value of rethinking how bioscience students connect through their peers to discuss personal development and assist each other in various employability and developmental activities. This presentation will showcase our efforts around establishing a peer network and our experiences with teamwork generally highlighting the metrics and outcomes of our initiative. When we implemented a peer network at level 4 to promote inclusive peer values, it resulted in a 23% increase in student engagement and closed a 25% awarding gap. At levels 5 and 6, we will discuss our strategies and the resulting metrics for understanding and perfecting peer teamwork, which becomes increasingly complex and critical at these stages.



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## Inclusive Attainment: inequity in student continuation and an expression of its transcendence

**Matt Hiely-Rayner**

Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe Campus Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2JZ

Since 2018 the Guardian University Guide has included a continuation metric that displays the proportion of first year students who continue with their studies a year after studying at level 4. The primary purpose of this has been to provide a metric that presents prospective students with a sense of the risk that they would be studying with a depleting cohort or that they themselves might not receive the support they need to complete their course.

Sector analysis has long shown a relationship between entry qualifications and likelihood of continuation, with an association with age on entry also evident. This was apparent in the Guardian data too and, because prospective students would carry some of this latent risk into their studies wherever they chose to enrol, an indexing methodology was used to account for these factors before the data was employed as a performance metric.

Once demographic factors were introduced, some non-benign associations were revealed. This session will explore what these associations were and how their transcendence was expressed as a metric.

In 2019's Guardian awards, the concept of 'inclusive attainment' sought to celebrate the UK universities that were doing most to overcome the disadvantages with which some students enter HE, and this was a factor in determining the University of the Year award. While the awards were discontinued amid the pandemic, there may be space for a measure of inclusive attainment within current policy landscapes and this session will include discussion of relevance to England's APP and TEF exercises.



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## BAME reciprocal DI-lawgues Diversity & Inclusion in the Law School Dialogues

Shweta Band

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### Abstract

BAME DI-lawgues (2021- ongoing) is a Reading Law School initiative and a long-term project designed to close the BAME awarding gap. This project is a part of the University Access and Participation Plan and aims to build a rich qualitative dataset on reducing the BAME awarding gap and creating a stronger sense of belonging by nurturing a safe, inclusive space for our BAME students.

This session explores innovative practices in tackling the enduring impact of ethnicity awarding gap and inclusivity concerns on BAME student progression throughout their course of study. The initial findings demonstrate a strong correlation between inclusion, sense of belonging, engagement, retention and progression. This session will present findings, challenges and recommendations from the Reciprocal DI-lawgues project. Interactive mentimeter activities will be used to invite audience feedback/suggestions on the theme of *impact of inclusivity on ethnicity awarding gap*.

The key-takeaway for the audience will be learnings from the success measures/challenges in developing long-term staff-student partnerships in addressing ethnicity awarding gap. The session will benefit a wide range of audience including staff involved in shaping curriculum design, teaching, assessment, feedback, student experience, and engagement.



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## Exploring a Domino Effect: An Analysis of the Impact of Living in Disadvantaged Areas on Career Progression

Mohammed Yakub

Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe Campus Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2JZ

### Abstract

High attainment is often key to having a competitive edge in the respective industry. Unfortunately, research by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) revealed that students receiving free school meals achieve the equivalent of almost three A-level grades lower than students who do not receive free school meals. This gap is even more significant when comparing to students who received free school meals for over 80% of their time in school, classed as 'persistently disadvantaged' (Tuckett et al., 2021). This study will further explore the impact of living in socially disadvantaged areas (according to IMD2019 and POLAR4) on L3 attainment, and the subsequent impact this may have on degree classifications, graduate outcomes, and earning potential.

The study uses Pearson's correlation, amongst other visualisations, to identify the strength of the relationship between the various metrics outlined above, and how these all come together to tell us more about the effect that living in socially disadvantaged areas has on career progression both amongst BNU students, and students across the sector. BNU data supports the conclusions made in the research done by EPI, revealing that BNU students from the most deprived 20% of postcodes (according to IMD2019) have consistently lower UCAS tariffs and subsequently go on to graduate with much poorer degree classifications than students from less deprived areas. HESA data is then used to link this to life after graduation, investigating the significance of the impact of degree classification on graduate outcomes and salaries, amongst graduates from both BNU and the sector. A domino effect is observed, showing a potential link between geographical residence prior to entering HE and career progression after HE. LEO data is used for further sector context, providing a more direct comparison across the sector between the proportion of students living in socially disadvantaged areas and graduate salaries, amongst other things, strengthening the messages drawn from the other

2 data sources. Analysis of the LEO data reveals a moderate negative correlation between the percentage of graduates from areas in the most disadvantaged 20% (according to POLAR4) and median graduate salaries.

A hypothesis that can be drawn from this study is that an increase in support targeted towards HE students from most socially disadvantaged areas and with tariffs on the lower end of the scale may see an improvement in attainment amongst these students. Further work needs to be done with regards to the specific support that would benefit students most and looking into the reasons behind these gaps. For example, students from socially disadvantaged areas are perhaps more likely to work in a full-time job alongside L3 and HE studies, contributing to reduced attainment in both of these stages of education. With more insights into what these reasons are, we may be able to mitigate the effect these have on attainment and career progression in general more effectively.

Tuckett, S., Robinson, D. and Bunting, F. (2021). Measuring the disadvantage gap in 16-19 education. [https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Measuring-the-16-19-disadvantage-attainment-gap\\_EPI-2021.pdf](https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Measuring-the-16-19-disadvantage-attainment-gap_EPI-2021.pdf) (Accessed 04/07/2024)



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## Drivers and deterrents of undergraduate and postgraduate re-enrolment at alma mater

### Scott Rawlinson

It is not news to those working in UK Higher Education that the sector faces financial challenges. HE providers, particularly those lower in the rankings, may also have noticed that many of their undergraduates and postgraduates elect to pursue further study elsewhere, thus losing a valuable income stream. This research asked undergraduates, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students in a one-to-one setting about the drivers and deterrents of re-enrolment at their alma mater. It finds evidence for structural, institutional, and personal factors driving and/or deterring re-enrolment at alma mater. Structural factors, such as being first-in-family to attend HE, impact cultural capital and “know-how” regarding researching, applying for, and undertaking further study. For post-1992 institutions, such as the one where this research took place, competing in the field of ranking is futile. A better use of resources would be to highlight the strength and meaningfulness of faculty-student relationships, the support available, and belonging, as well as devising creative ways to bring these institutional features into greater relief.



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## Enhancing Pre-Placement Training Consistency and Standards: Optimizing Clinical Competency and Patient Safety in Healthcare Education

Esin Turkaslan

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### Abstract

Clinical placements are an integral part of training for nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, paramedics, Advanced Clinical Practitioners, and Physician Associate students. These placements require students to complete a portfolio, which is signed by an allocated clinical supervisor. The specifics of these training requirements vary between universities and healthcare trusts. However, all programs emphasize core professional and clinical skills that students must review before beginning their placements. Joint support from the allocated placement providers is essential to ensure students are safe and competent to start their training. Research indicates that thorough preparation and support during placements significantly enhance student learning outcomes, increase patient safety, improve training quality and prevent potential incidents within the NHS.

Despite the benefits of pre-placement training, there is a notable gap in the consistency and comprehensiveness of these preparations. A study by Henderson et al. (2020) found significant variability in the pre-placement training provided by different institutions, leading to discrepancies in student preparedness and confidence. Furthermore, a lack of standardized training protocols across universities and healthcare trusts has been identified as a critical gap. Professional bodies such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) emphasize the importance of uniform guidelines for pre-placement training. The General Medical Council (GMC) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) also support the development of standardized protocols to ensure training quality.

Recent research by Loughran et al. (2022) underscores the pressing needs within the NHS for more comprehensive and consistent pre-placement training. Their study highlights that insufficient training can lead to increased incidents, compromised patient safety and a decrease in the overall quality of healthcare services. Moreover, the NHS Education for Scotland

(NES) emphasizes the necessity for clinical supervision frameworks to support ongoing professional development and maintain high standards of care.

In light of these considerations, the aim of this research is to explore students' perceptions of the quality and standardisation of pre-placement training. These insights will guide the standardization and optimization of training quality and patient safety.

In this study, a survey developed by the researcher was administered to students. Frequency analysis was used to analyse the data.

A survey conducted among healthcare trusts revealed significant insights into the current state of pre-placement training. The survey results indicated that 45% of respondents rated the comprehensiveness of pre-placement training as fair or poor. Furthermore, 67% of respondents noted inconsistencies in training quality across different universities and trusts. The survey also highlighted specific areas needing improvement, such as clinical skills, safety protocols and communication skills. Additionally, 82% of respondents agreed that standardized pre-placement training protocols would benefit both students and supervisors.

By adhering to these standards and addressing the identified gaps through standardized pre-placement training protocols, training programs can optimize educational outcomes and maintain the highest levels of patient care and safety.

**Keywords:** clinical placements, training, portfolio, clinical supervisor, core skills, patient safety, NHS, professional standards



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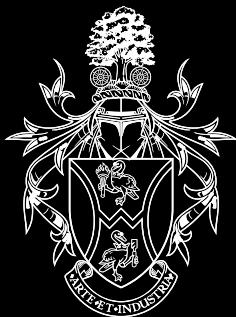
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