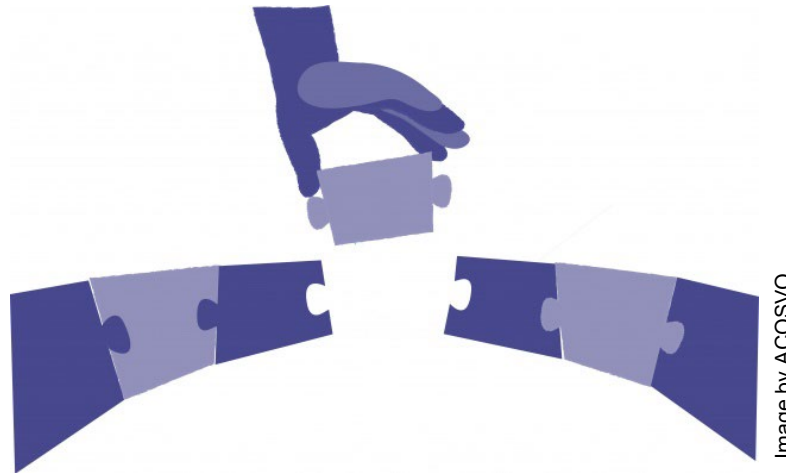# Reimagining postgraduate education

Supporting the Postgraduate Taught Student Experience using a Pre-arrival Academic Questionnaire

Image by ACOSVO

Dr Michelle Morgan

Dean of Students

University of East London

X @it_se

Aims and Objectives

- Challenges facing the sector and institutions

- Understanding our postgraduate student body (data from multiple sources)

- What we need to think about

- Rationale and purpose of the pre-arrival academic questionnaire

  - What it is and is not

  - National pilot

My study journey

£2500 bank loan debt that took 7 years to pay off
Impacted on pension contributions

Last year to get a grant and fees paid- 1989

Had to work and study as my partner was unable to work due to an injury

Went to a Polytechnic
Last year to graduate with a CNNA degree

No help or support from parents

Working class mixed race female student

First generation
Parents had no educational aspirations for me or my brother

A levels
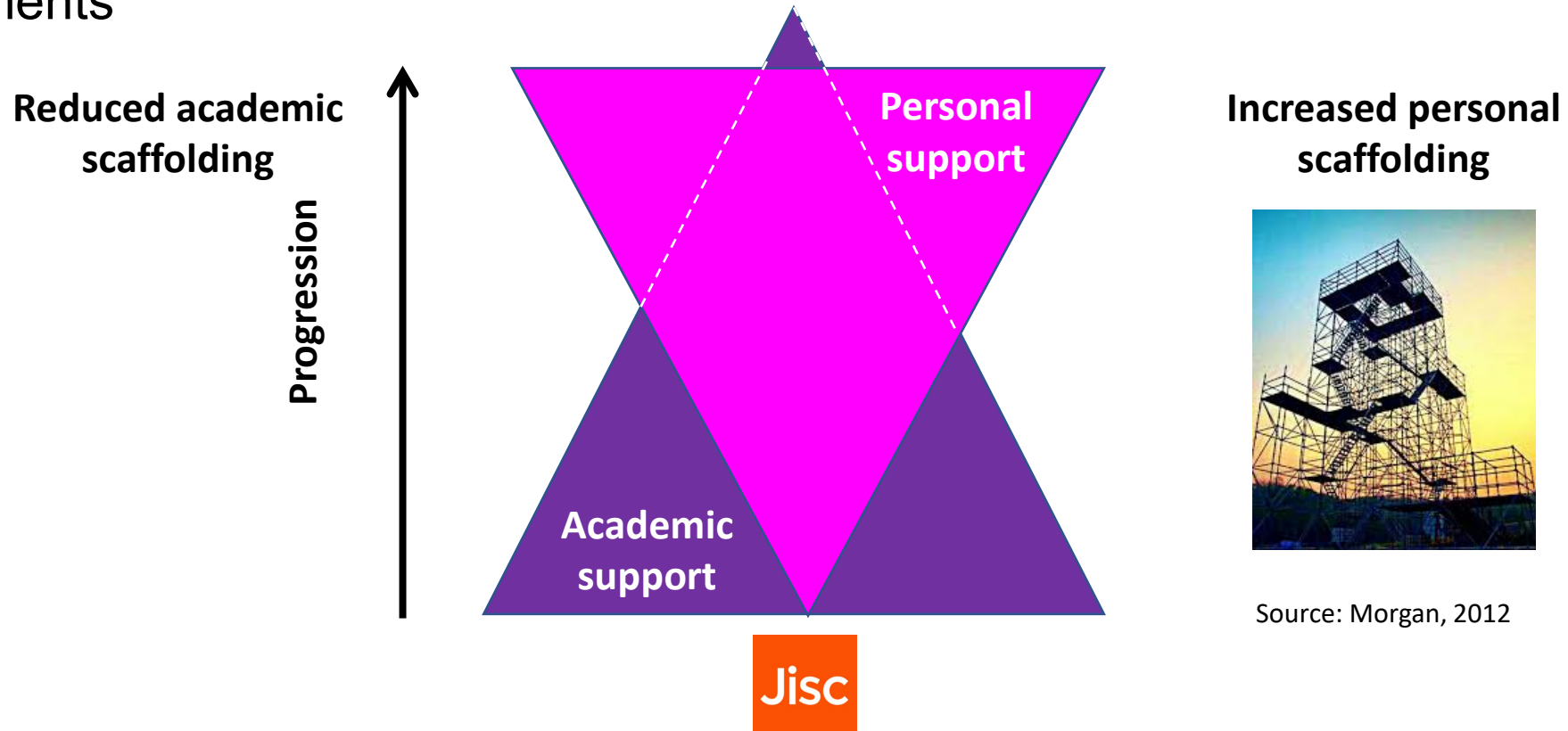I did badly in exams, great with CW!
C, D, E - 100% exams

My brother inspired me to go because he made it!

Mature student
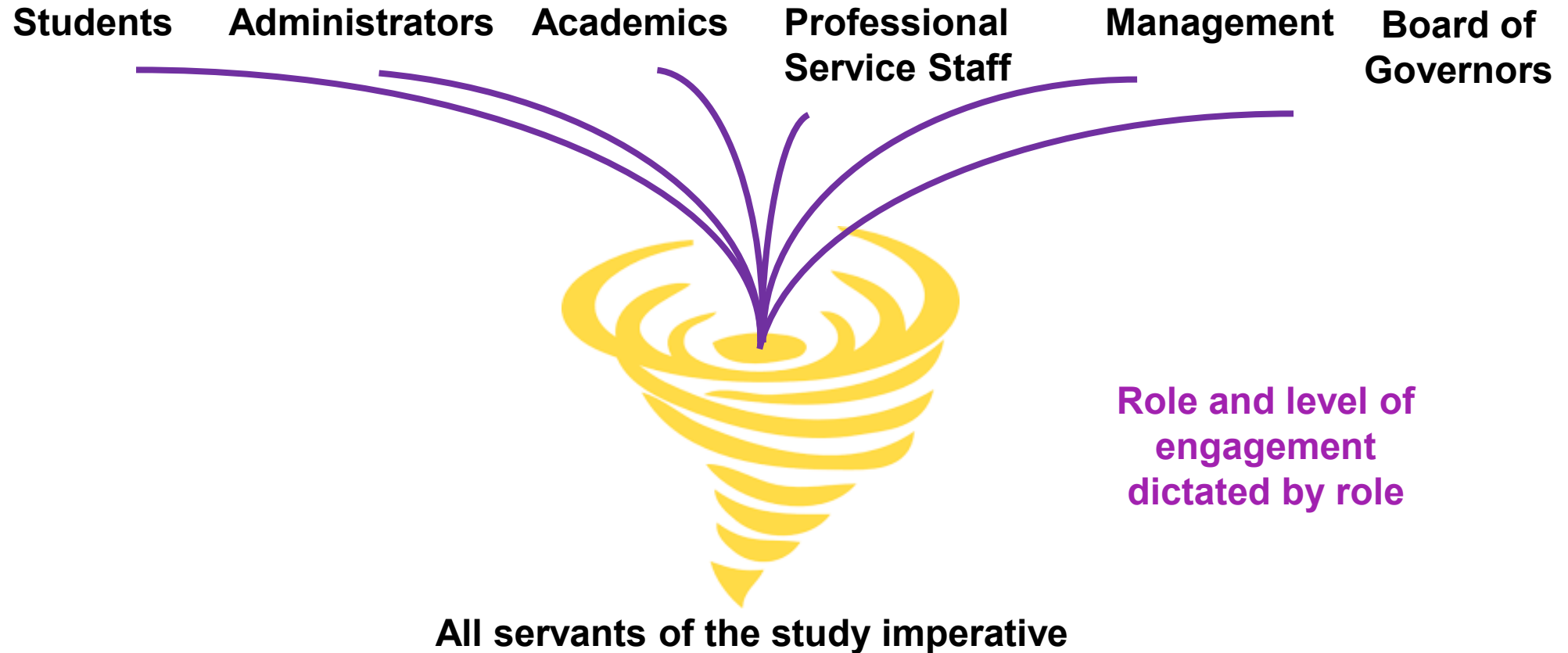1 of 5 on my course in a cohort of 80

Worked for 5 years before starting my studies

What I saw..........

- Concentration on 'first 2 weeks' then later 'first year' on the first year of a traditional degree - in practice and literature

- Them and us- administrative vs academic

- Silo practices between faculties and the centre

- Increased student diversity but limited awareness of different learning and support requirements

Reduced academic scaffolding

Progression

Personal support

Academic support

Increased personal scaffolding

Source: Morgan, 2012

What I realised...........

Students   Administrators   Academics   **Professional Service Staff**   Management   **Board of Governors**

Role and level of engagement dictated by role

All servants of the study imperative

Recruitment, retention, progression and attainment of students via the delivery of a high quality student experience in, through and out of the study journey

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Known and unknowns

There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know
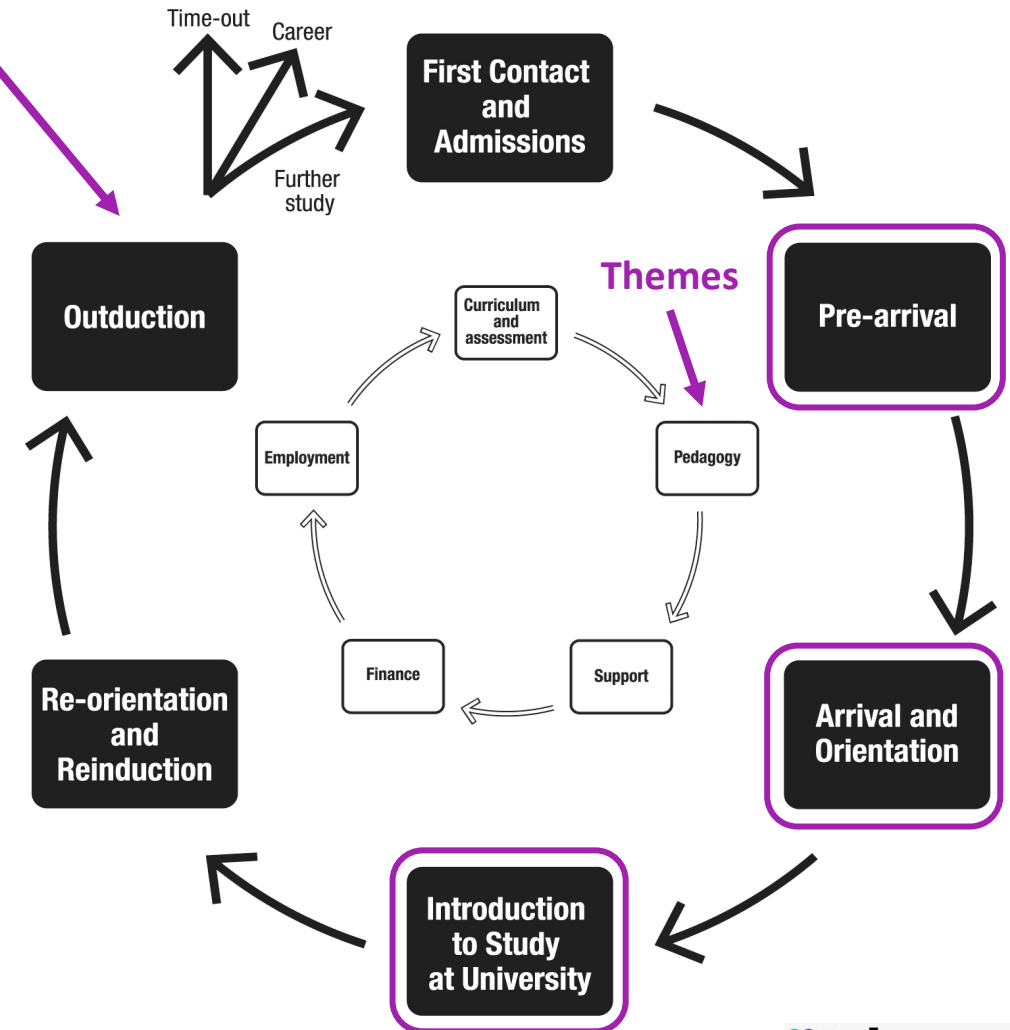
Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense 2001-06, USA

Why supporting Student Experience Transitions is so important

- **Course at the heart**
- **Avoid top down**
- **CL key**
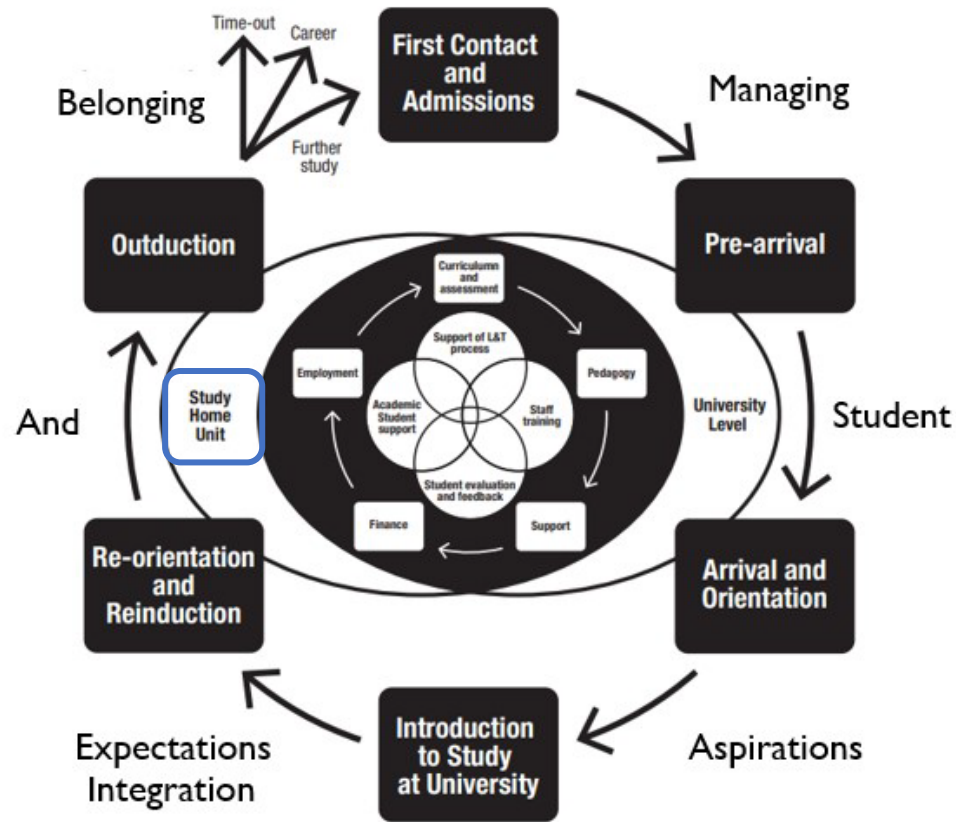
Stages

Themes

Improving the Student Experience by Michelle Morgan - Official Website

Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach in supporting students and staff

Understanding transitions
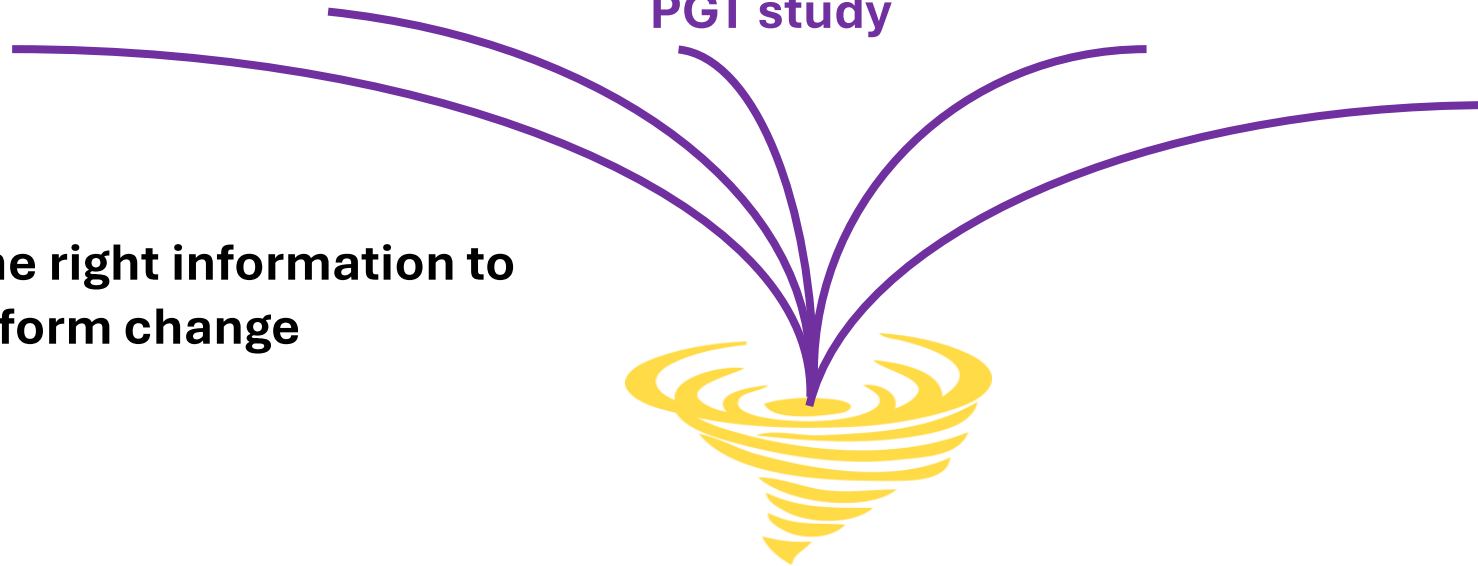
Sector changes and challenges

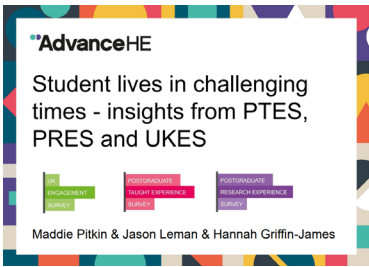**Increased student diversity and reasons for PGT study**

Social changes and challenges

Engagement, belonging and compassionate leadership

We need the right information to inform change

Student lives in challenging times - insights from PTES, PRES and UKES

Maddie Pitkin & Jason Leman & Hannah Griffin-James

Student Surveys | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)

TURBOCHARGING THE FUTURE

The Interim Report of the UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission

Turbocharging the future (upp-foundation.org)

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Data and analysis | | UCAS

Students' perceptions of belonging and inclusion at university

February 2022

Belonging-and-inclusion-survey-Wonkhe-Pearson-Feb-22.pdf
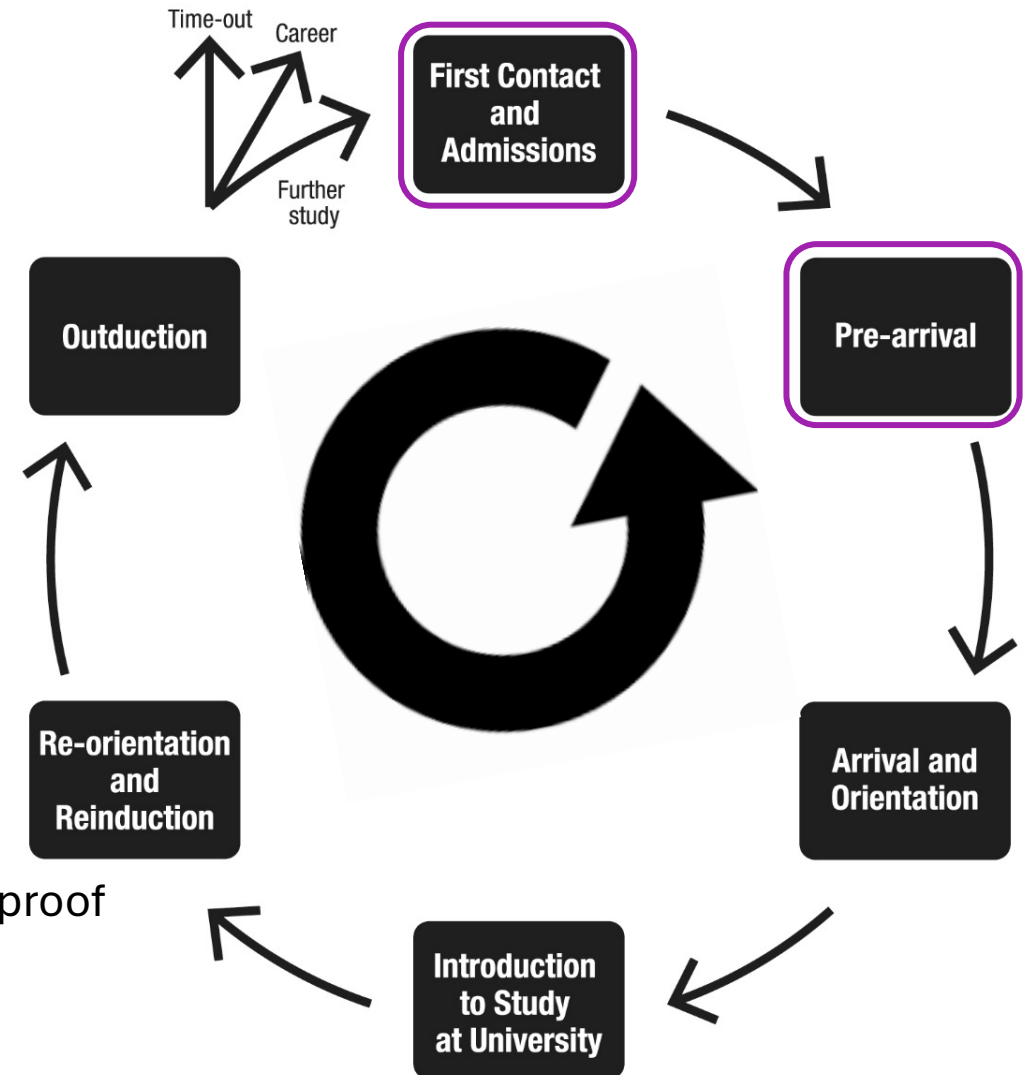
Understanding prior learning experiences, expectations and concerns of new entrants

Pre-arrival Academic Questionnaire

- Shared understanding and collaboration for the need to super proof
- Student experience
- Retention, progression and success

The Student Experience Transitions Model

Time-out
Career
Further study

First Contact and Admissions

Pre-arrival

Outduction

Arrival and Orientation

Re-orientation and Reinduction

Introduction to Study at University

Source: M Morgan (2011) Improving the Student Experience- the practical guide for universities and colleges, Oxon:Routledge.

Stops assumptions being made

Formalised through the 11 University, HEFCE funded Postgraduate Experience Project

(PAQ formerly called Entry to Study Survey)

Postgraduate-Experience-Report-Final-Kingston.pdf (makingthemostofmasters.ac.uk)

Bridging_the_gap_between_secondary_and_tertiary_education-Morgan_2020.pdf (improvingthestudentexperience.com)

Financial_concerns_and_working_intentions_of_incoming_Level_4_university_students-_implications_of_C19.pdf (improvingthestudentexperience.com)
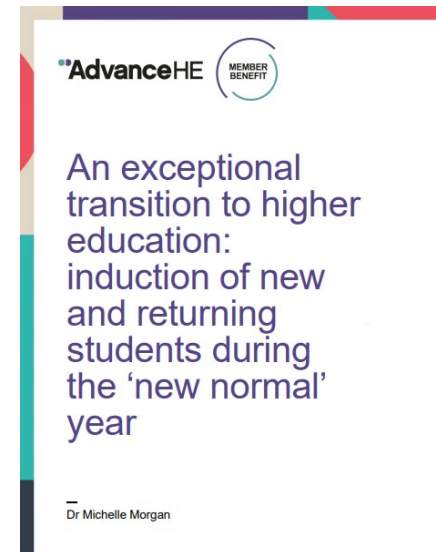
An exceptional transition to higher education: induction of new and returning students during the 'new normal' year | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)
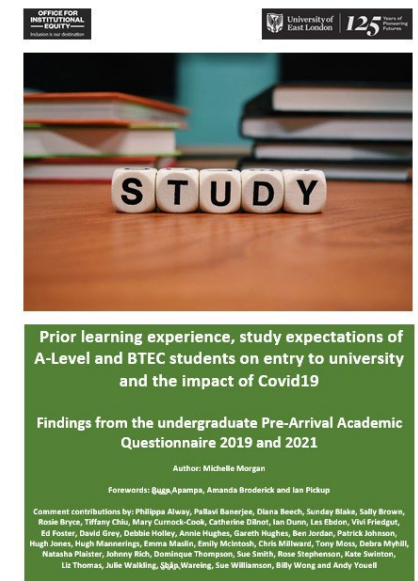
Prior learning experience, study expectations of A-Level and BTEC students on entry to university and the impact of Covid19 | Advance HE (advance-he.ac.uk)

Sector changes and challenges

Challenges for staff

UK driven by metrics

TEF
REF
KEF
NSS
PTES
GOS (LEO)

Evening Standard

Clampdown on 'Mickey Mouse' degrees in major funding overhaul

Minimum entry requirement and a cap on student numbers are proposed

GOV·UK

Home > Entering and staying in the UK > Visas and entry clearance > Student visas

News story

New measures to tackle student visa abuse

New proposals will further crackdown on student visas, ensuring only genuine students can come to the UK; route will be kept under review.

The pressure on everyone is immense in this 'brave new world' of HE

High student expectations

Reduced funding

Academic pressure to be a teacher, researcher, administrator

Increase in student numbers

Declining resources

Increased administrative tasks

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Keeping ahead of policy

Higher Education Policy Statement and Reform

Government consultation response

July 2023

CP 876

Education (Scotland) Bill

This Bill establishes a new body called Qualifications Scotland. It also creates a new office His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.

This is a Government bill

The Bill was introduced on 4 June 2024 and is at Stage 2

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

MillionPlus
The Association for Modern Universities

RESEARCH REPORT
Forgotten Learners: building a system that works for mature students

Published March 2018

THE LOST PART-TIMERS

The decline of part-time undergraduate higher education in England

Claire Callender and John Thompson
- March 2018

THE SUTTON TRUST

House of Commons Library

Research Briefing

By Paul Bolton, Joe Lewis
31 January 2023

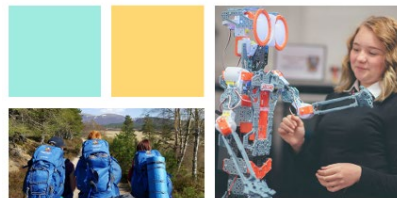Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England

Reforming BTECs: Applied General qualifications as a route to higher education
Scott Kelly

hepi

Higher Education Policy Institute
HEPI Report 94

It's Our Future: Report of the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment

June 2023

THE SUTTON TRUST   UCAS

WHERE NEXT?
WHAT INFLUENCES THE CHOICES OF WOULD-BE APPRENTICES?

General Election Policy Briefing
Reforming student maintenance

THE SUTTON TRUST

MARCH 2024

OVERVIEW

• Students living away from home outside of London can currently receive a maximum maintenance loan of £9,978 per year. However, the average student in this group spends £11,400 per year on essentials. Essential costs are higher than the maximum loan for 57% of students, and for 19% of students, housing costs alone are higher than the available loan.[1]
• For the 2024/25 academic year, students will be £2,000 worse-off than if it rises in maintenance support had been in line with inflation since 2021/22.[2]
• For the 2023/24 academic year maintenance loans in England have only increased by 2.8%, despite recent high levels of inflation. This compares to a 11.1% increase for the worst-off students in Scotland, a 9.4% increase for all undergraduates in Wales, and a substantial 40% increase in Northern Ireland (although it should be noted this was from a much lower base level). England is the only UK nation which currently does not offer maintenance grants.[3]
• Over a quarter (28%) of undergraduates have skipped meals to save on food costs, with a third (33%) of students from working class families doing so. Others have taken on extra part-time work, with almost a quarter of students reporting they had missed a course deadline because of a job.[4]

• Parental income thresholds, used to determine the income levels at which parents are expected to contribute financially to their child's living costs at university, have remained frozen. If these thresholds had increased with inflation since 2016, families on £32,535 or less would be eligible for the maximum loan, compared to the current much lower threshold of £25,000.
• Since the abolition of maintenance grants, students from lower income backgrounds have been leaving university with the highest levels of debt. New analysis by London Economics for the Sutton Trust estimates that poorer students could graduate with £60,100 in debt, 38% higher than the £43,600 for those from wealthier families.
• Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are also the most debt averse,[5] with the risk that in the current system, poorer students will feel limited to options closer to home, or will be put off from attending university altogether.
• Young people in school are increasingly concerned about the cost of living as a student. Of those with financial worries about university, the proportion citing cost of living increased from 17% in 2014 to 29% in 2023.[6]

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Sector challenges

- Focus on metrics and league tables

- Reduced resources and funding
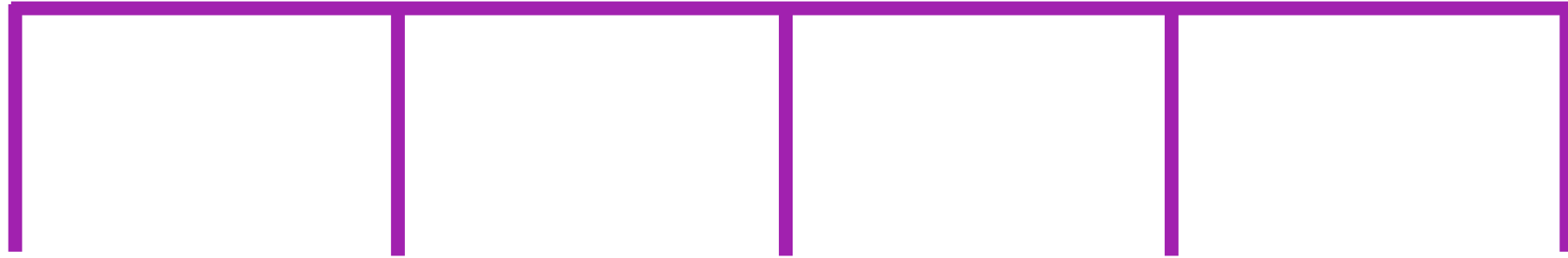
- Not allowing metrics to negatively drive evolution of offerings and experience

- Institutional

- Lack understanding about changing student body and prior experiences

- Expectations of students of what a PGT course will deliver

What the PAQ can tell us

**Impact of increased
student diversity**

Who participates on PGT Study (HESA)

HESA - Experts in higher education data and analysis

All PGT enrolments (including masters, PGCE and Other PG)

HESA student figures include anyone enrolled for more than two weeks on a higher education (HE) course that is primarily based in the UK, unless they are an incoming exchange student, on sabbatical, writing-up or dormant.

- Up to 2010/11 increase in overall enrolments

- Growth was in OS (Non-EU) participation

- UK domiciled growth substantially declining especially part-time = dominant mode of participation

- 2011/12 start of decline across all domiciled groups and modes of study

- 2013 HEFCE Phase 1- Postgraduate Experience Project
  - One of 20 projects funded
  - Explore market regeneration of Master's both full and part-time
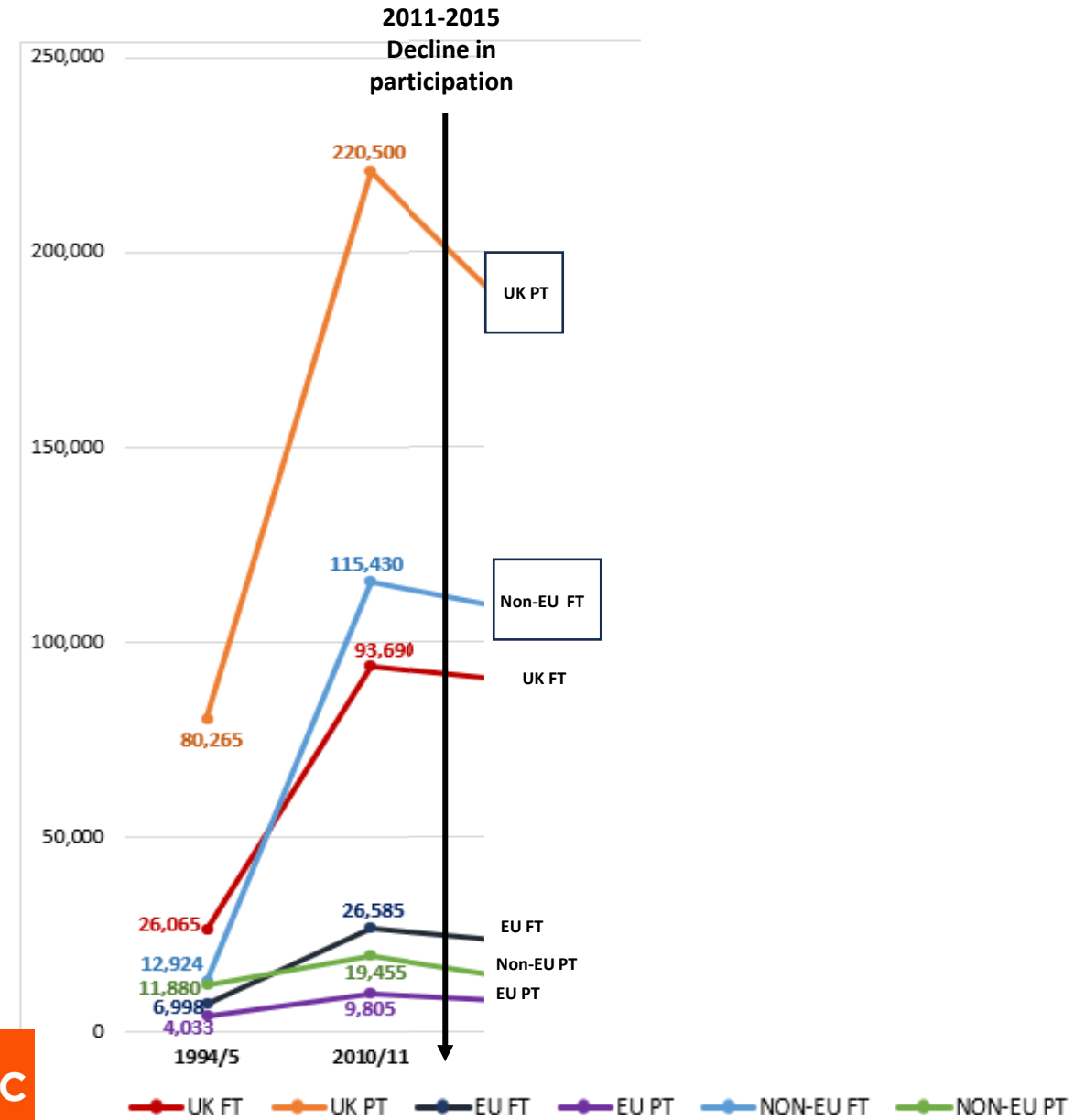
Who participates in PGT Study? (HESA)
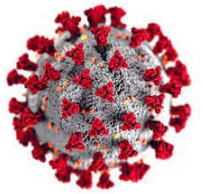
ALL PGT enrolments (including masters, PGCE and Other PG)

- PG Loan introduced 2016/17

- PG Loan availability
  - UK and Wales- Only masters
  - Scotland-PGDip and masters
  - NI-PG Cert/Dip and masters (taught/research

- Immediate increase in UK domiciled participation (orange, red)

- EU full and part-time participation is consistent over 30-year period (purple, dark blue)

- Non-EU full-time study is dominant mode (light blue)

- Increase in participation between 2016/17 and 2020/21:
  - Non-EU FT = 86.3%
  - UK FT   = 45.5%
  - UK PT   = 21.4%

- Across all types of PGT study part-time mode for UK domiciled remains dominant

2016/17
Intro of the PG
Loan Scheme

UK PT: 80,265 · 220,500 · 178745 · 186360 · 191080 · 226205
Non-EU FT: 12,924 · 115,430 · 106800 · 106670 · 132095 · 198720
UK FT: 26,065 · 93,690 · 89390 · 109395 · 124360 · 159145
EU FT: 6,998 · 26,585 · 22665 · 23740 · 23670 · 23775
NON-EU PT: 11,880 · 19,455 · 12610 · 11765 · 11210 · 13795
EU PT: 4,033 · 9,805 · 7390 · 7580 · 7285 · 7265

Years: 1994/5 · 2010/11 · 2015/16 · 2016/17 · 2018/19 · 2020/21

Legend: UK FT · UK PT · EU FT · EU PT · NON-EU FT · NON-EU PT

Participation rate 10 years on (HESA)
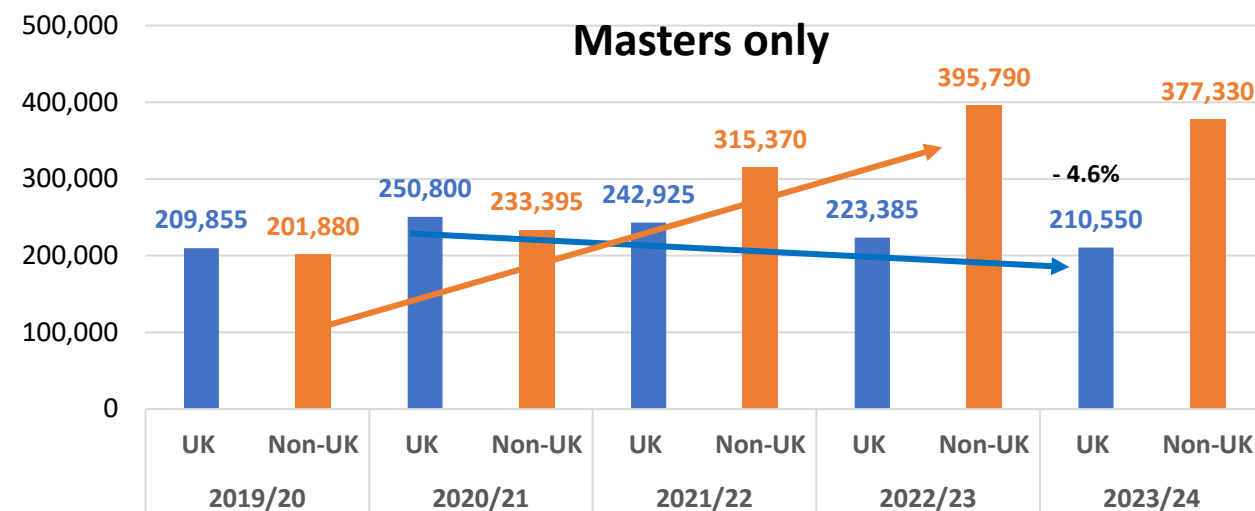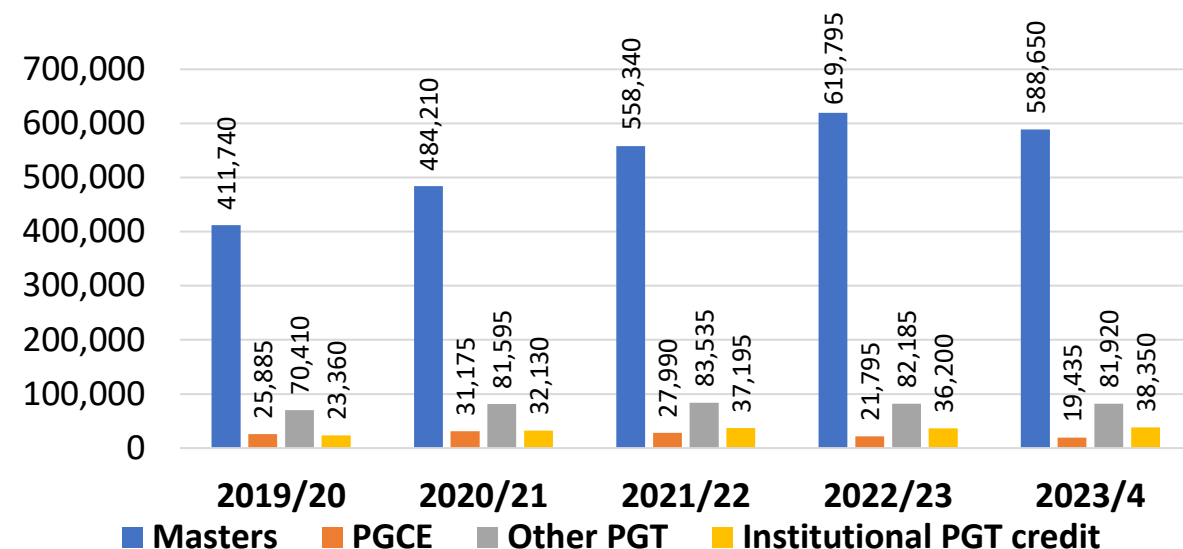
UK Masters continuing decline since 2020/1 (factors UG debt, social)

Non-UK Masters growth of + 86.9% since 2019/20

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	UK	Non-UK	UK	Non-UK	UK	Non-UK	UK	Non-UK	UK	Non-UK
Masters	209,855	201,880	250,800	233,395	242,925	315,370	223,385	395,790	210,550	377,330
PGCE	25,065	820	30,260	910	27,170	820	20,990	790	18,355	1,070
Other PGT	**63,500**	6,890	74,075	7,515	75,655	7,875	74,235	7,475	**74,300**	7,430
Institutional PGT credit	**22,080**	1,545	30,330	1,795	35,090	2,105	34,195	1,895	**36,395**	1,795

PGCE drop of -26.7%

UK Other PGT increase of +17.0%

UK Institutional credit increase of +64.8%

[HESA - Experts in higher education data and analysis](#)

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What the PAQ can tell us

Impact of social
changes challenges
and reasons for
PGT study

Mental health

- Childhood abuse, trauma, or neglect
- Social isolation or loneliness
- Experiencing discrimination and stigma, including racism
- Social disadvantage, poverty or debt
- Unemployment or losing your job
- Bereavement (losing someone close to you)
- Severe or long-term stress
- Having a long-term physical health condition
- Homelessness or poor housing
- Being a long-term carer for someone
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Domestic violence, bullying or other abuse as an adult
- Significant trauma as an adult, such as military combat, being involved in a serious incident in which you feared for your life, or being the victim of a violent crime
- Physical causes – for example, a head injury or a neurological condition

2022 of the level of insomnia being experienced by young people

Concerns of PGT students
September 2024 UEL

UG top 10 concerns			
Fitting in with new classmates	**37.4%**	**Lack of information about how to study at university**	**31.3%**
Coping with the level of study	**37.4%**	Getting used to living in a new country	25.8%
Lack of information about how to study at university	37.1%	**Cost of living**	**25.1%**
Mental health and wellbeing	**29.9%**	**Coping with the level of study**	**20.1%**
Concerns about cost of living	**27.4%**	**Accommodation costs**	**19.8%**
Lack of confidence about ability to study	26.5%	**Fitting in with the university culture**	**16.6%**
Getting on with fellow students	25.0%	**Mental health and wellbeing**	**15.8%**
Getting into debt	**21.0%**	**Cost of travel to university**	**15.0%**
Obtaining/having sufficient funding	**19.6%**	Having a long commute	13.7%
Concerns about knowledge gaps due to prior learning	17.8%	**Fitting my study around work commitments**	**12.0%**

Concerns by domiciled status (PEP)

Concern	UK	EU	OS
Coping with the level of study required at this level	**53.4%**	35.5%	29.3%
Difficulties in fitting the course around my existing work commitments	**35.1%**	13.8%	5.7%
Lack of confidence about my ability to study	24.3%	20.3%	24.4%
Lack of sufficient funding	28.3%	22.5%	14.8%
Concerns about committing more time to study	24.9%	22.5%	20.2%
Concerns about getting into debt	**25.9%**	13.8%	12.2%
Concerns about increasing my existing levels of debt	**24.3%**	9.4%	6.3%
Lack of information about study opportunities	12.4%	**15.2%**	**23.6%**
Having a long commute to attend the course	**18.6%**	9.4%	9.1%
Difficulties in fitting the course around family commitments	**20.5%**	6.5%	5.7%
Lack of information about funding support	**17.9%**	9.4%	8.8%
Getting used to living in a new country	1.9%	**31.9%**	**33.5%**
Getting on with fellow students	11.7%	**15.9%**	**18.2%**
Fitting in with the university culture	7.2%	**12.3%**	**24.7%**

PGT study expectations (PEP)

Confidence, concerns and anxieties about starting PGT study

CONFIDENCE level of confidence (very confident + confident)	CONCERNS (tick all that apply)
81.7% Coping with the travelling to university	**44.2% Coping with the level of study required at this level**
81.6% Looking after my health and welfare	**24.1% Difficulties in fitting the course around my existing work commitments**
78.6% Making friends	**24%** Lack of confidence about my ability to study
73.3% Getting involved in university life	**23.7%** Lack of sufficient **funding**
71.4% Coping with the standard of work	**23.2%** Concerns about committing more time to study
66.8% Managing money	**20.5% Concerns about getting into debt**
60.7% Coping with balancing life demands and study	**17.3% Concerns about increasing my existing levels of debt**

Student choices
Visits to a university before choosing and starting a course
September 2024 UEL

Number of visits by UK domiciled entrants

Chart data (UG / PGT):
- 0: 37.1% / 54.7%
- 1: 21.1% / 22.3%
- 2: 19.7% / 12.5%
- 3: 13.5% / 5.9%
- 4+: 8.6% / 4.6%

Legend: ■ UG ■ PGT
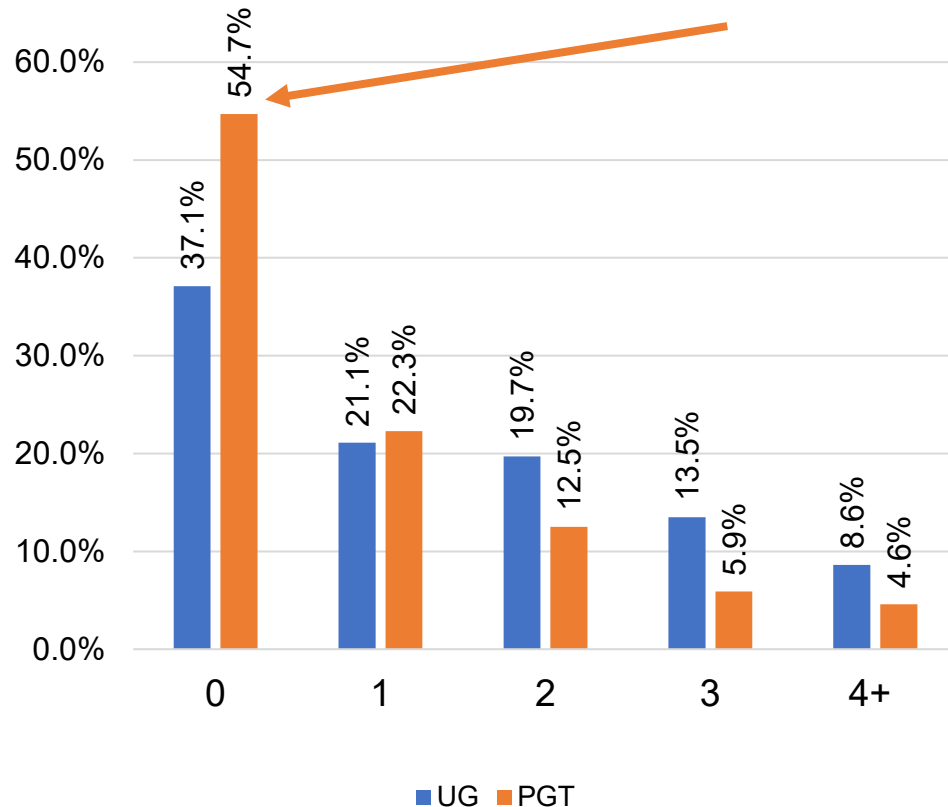
Most likely to have come through clearing as had not applied to university before

- Mature students

- Those who obtained their highest entry qualification earlier

- Students with caring responsibilities

- Students who have an impairment or disability

Most likely to not visit any university in-person before deciding where to go before or after confirmation

- Mature students

- Students with NO impairment or disability

- White ethnic group

- Those with siblings who have all been to university before them

- Staying at home and studying

Reason for choosing their university (PEP)

Reason (select all reasons)	UK	EU	OS
Course content	**50.7%**	**57.8%**	**48.4%**
Location of institution	**59.2%**	**34.1%**	**35.3%**
Reputation of chosen subject area	40.1%	45.9%	42.5%
Overall reputation of the institution	**30.3%**	**43.0%**	**49.0%**
I have studied at the institution before	**33.8%**	**13.3%**	**3.4%**
Good teaching methods	21.8%	24.4%	29.9%
Reputation of department	25.1%	30.4%	25.1%
The cost of the programme was lower compared to other institutions	29.6%	26.7%	25.1%
Institutional facilities	**17.4%**	**13.3%**	**29.9%**

Graduates from this institution have a good career and employment prospects	**20.2%**	**22.2%**	**21.1%**
It was recommended to me	**17.1%**	**25.9%**	**27.9%**
Delivery of the programme is flexible enough to fit around my life	**21.4%**	**7.4%**	**12.8%**
There were opportunities for work placements/working with employers	11.7%	14.1%	13.4%
It is the only institution offering this programme	15%	14.8%	11.4%
The way the programme is assessed	13.4%	11.1%	13.1%

Opportunities for international collaboration/fieldwork	**6.8%**	**12.6%**	**17.7%**
Reputation for good social life	5.9%	9.6%	14.5%

Motivations for doing a PGT course by mode of study

Choice of mode of study

- Reasons for studying FT (select up to 3 reasons)
  - **50.5%** *It would allow me to concentrate on the subject*
  - **49.4%** *I wanted to complete the course as quickly as possible*
  - **43%** *It was the most appropriate way to study the course*
  - **9.6%** *I only got funding for full-time study*

> *Concentrate on the subject* was more cited by second generation respondents, under 25, and OS.
> *Complete the course* was more cited by first generation respondents, above 25, UK and EU.

- Reasons for studying PT (select up to 3 reasons)
  - **58.7%** *I had a job/wanted to continue working*
  - **27.2%** *I couldn't afford full-time study*
  - **25.7%** *In full time work and being allowed study release*
  - **19.9%** *I have family commitments/caring responsibilities*

> *I had a job* was cited by 67.4% of respondents coming straight from work.
> *Couldn't afford* was cited by 42.1% of respondents coming from university.

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Motivations for doing a PGT course

Reasons for undertaking a postgraduate qualification

- Top 3 reasons (out of 21):
  - **70%** *To improve my employment prospects*
  - **66.7%** *I was interested in the subject*
  - **61%** *To develop a more specialist set of skills and knowledge*

I was interested was the first reason for EU. *Part-time* respondents third reason was *to progress in my current career.*

For respondents between 26 and 40 years old, the second most cited reason was *to develop a more specialist set of skills.*

"A lot of people now have an undergraduate degree, and having a master's just give you that upper edge above everyone else"

Reasons for choosing the university

- Top 3 reasons (out of 22)
  - **50.8%** *Course content*
  - **49.3%** *Location of institution*
  - **41.6%** *Reputation of chosen subject area*

For the Russell Group University
- **80.2%** *Overall reputation of the institution*
- **64.5%** *Reputation of chosen subject area*
- **56.2%** *Course content*

When the responses of the scholarship students were analysed, the first cited reason was *I have studied at the institution before*, with **61.6%**. This is also not surprising due to the PEP scholarships that went to many alumni.

Location of institution was the first reason for part-time respondents , students coming straight from work, first generation, UK domiciled, male respondents, and above 26 years old.

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PGT study expectations (PEP and UEL 2024)

What are you looking forward to about starting your course?

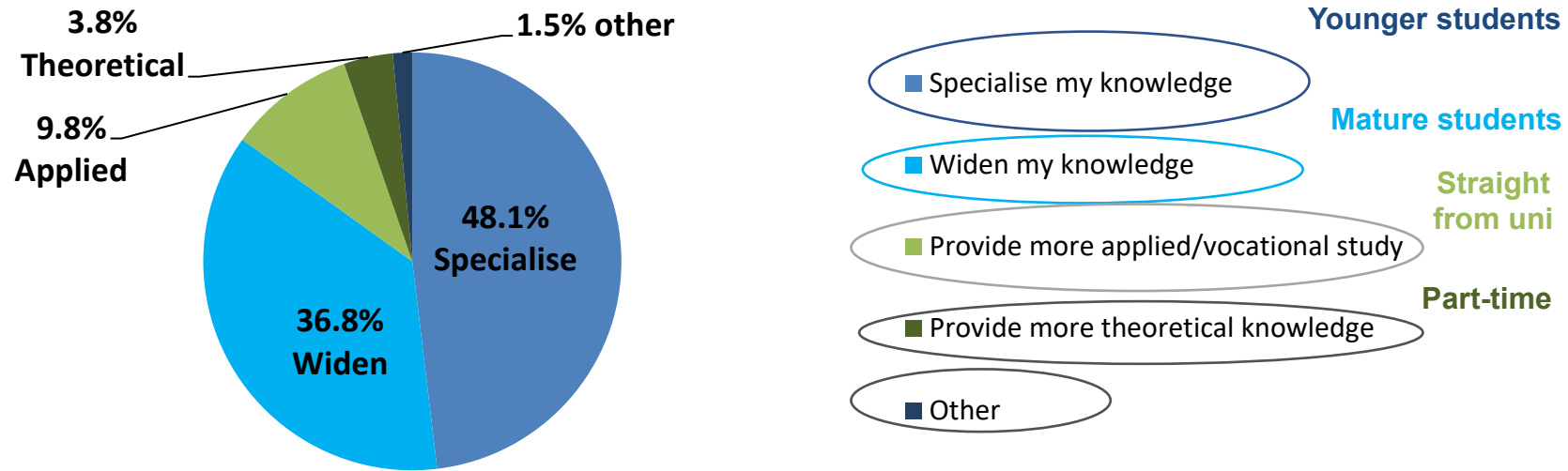**Respondents have very specific expectations**   No domiciled differences

Academic	Course	Good course structure Support from lecturers. Good communication Work in projects. Hands-on/practical training. Site visits Good grades/doing well in the course
	Knowledge and skills	Learning a new subject. New challenges Professional skills. Research skills
	Institution	Facilities
Career	Employability	Workshops in employability Opportunities for placements. Career prospects Getting a professional qualification
	Networking	Meeting new people in the same field Gaining contacts in the industry
Interpersonal	Social aspects	Working with likeminded people. University life Social interaction with the academic community
Personal	New experiences	New challenges. New institution Improve self-confidence Independence/living away from home.

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PGT study expectations
(PEP but reflected in UEL 2024) data

Expected outcomes of undertaking postgraduate study

3.8% Theoretical

1.5% other

9.8% Applied

48.1% Specialise

36.8% Widen

Younger students

Specialise my knowledge

Mature students

Widen my knowledge

Straight from uni

Provide more applied/vocational study

Part-time

Provide more theoretical knowledge

Other

Attitudes towards postgraduate study

- **93.1%** *PG requires more independent study than at UG level*
- **87.4%** *PG level should provide a more personalised study experience for the student than at UG level*
- **74.9%** *I expect more value for money at PG level than at UG level*

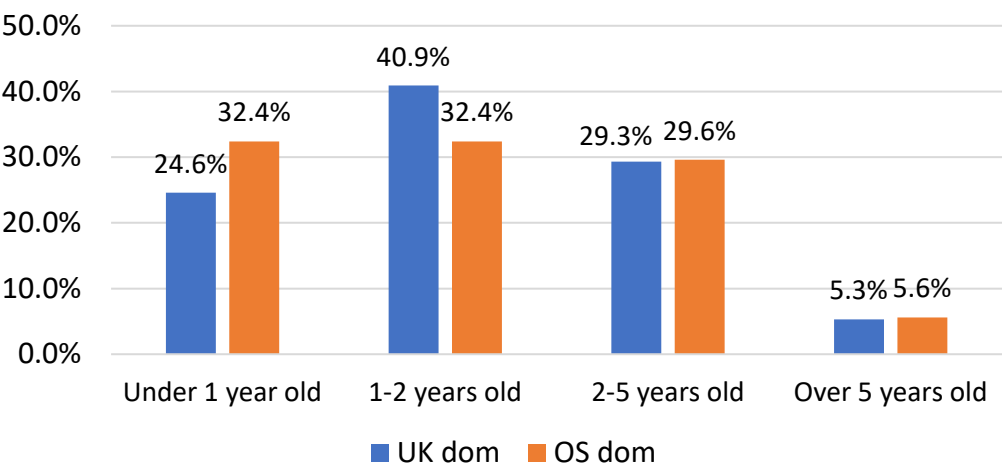- **21.6%** *I do not know what to expect at PG level.*

UK= 25.3%
EU = 13.8%
OS = 17.2%

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AdvanceHE
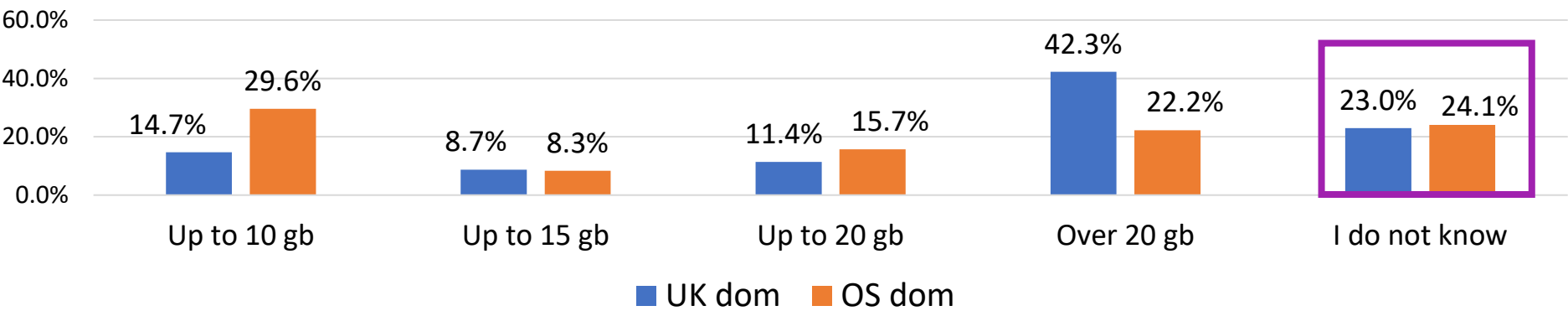
Tech -Type of mobile phone and data (UEL Sept 2024 PAQ)

Type of phone by domiciled status

	Android		iOS	
	UG	PGT	UG	PGT
UK	26.0%	35.0%	**71.2%**	**60.0%**
OS	**54.0%**	**60.3%**	44.0%	38.8%

Age of mobile phone by level of study

Bar chart with categories "Under 1 year old", "1-2 years old", "2-5 years old", "Over 5 years old".
- Under 1 year old: UK dom 24.6%, OS dom 32.4%
- 1-2 years old: UK dom 40.9%, OS dom 32.4%
- 2-5 years old: UK dom 29.3%, OS dom 29.6%
- Over 5 years old: UK dom 5.3%, OS dom 5.6%

Legend: UK dom, OS dom

Monthly data package by level of study

Bar chart with categories "Up to 10 gb", "Up to 15 gb", "Up to 20 gb", "Over 20 gb", "I do not know".
- Up to 10 gb: UK dom 14.7%, OS dom 29.6%
- Up to 15 gb: UK dom 8.7%, OS dom 8.3%
- Up to 20 gb: UK dom 11.4%, OS dom 15.7%
- Over 20 gb: UK dom 42.3%, OS dom 22.2%
- I do not know: UK dom 23.0%, OS dom 24.1%

Legend: UK dom, OS dom
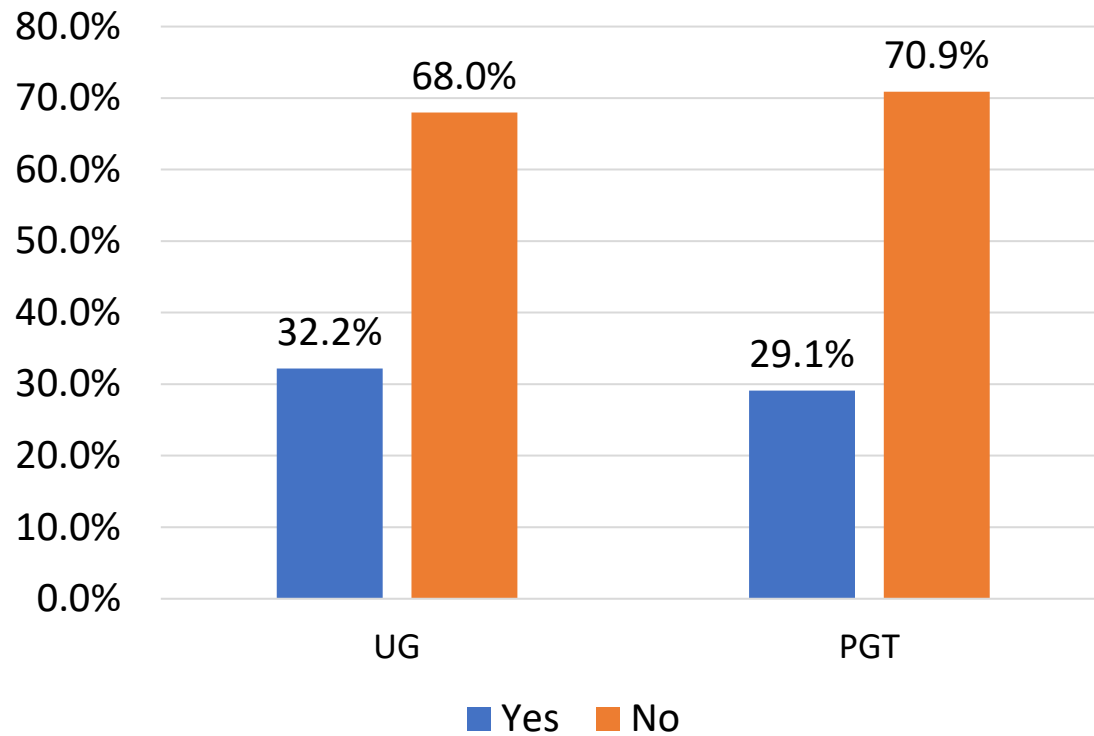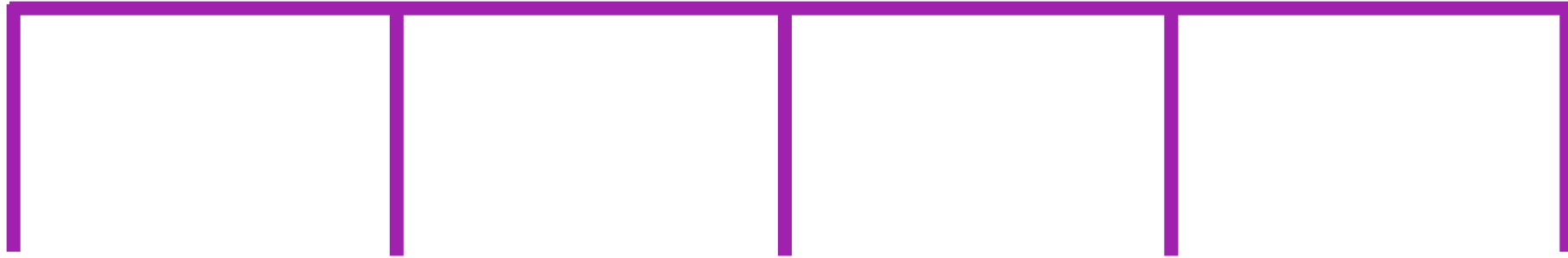
Experience of using Generative AI

Experience of Generative AI
such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Grammarly, Quillbot, CLAUD
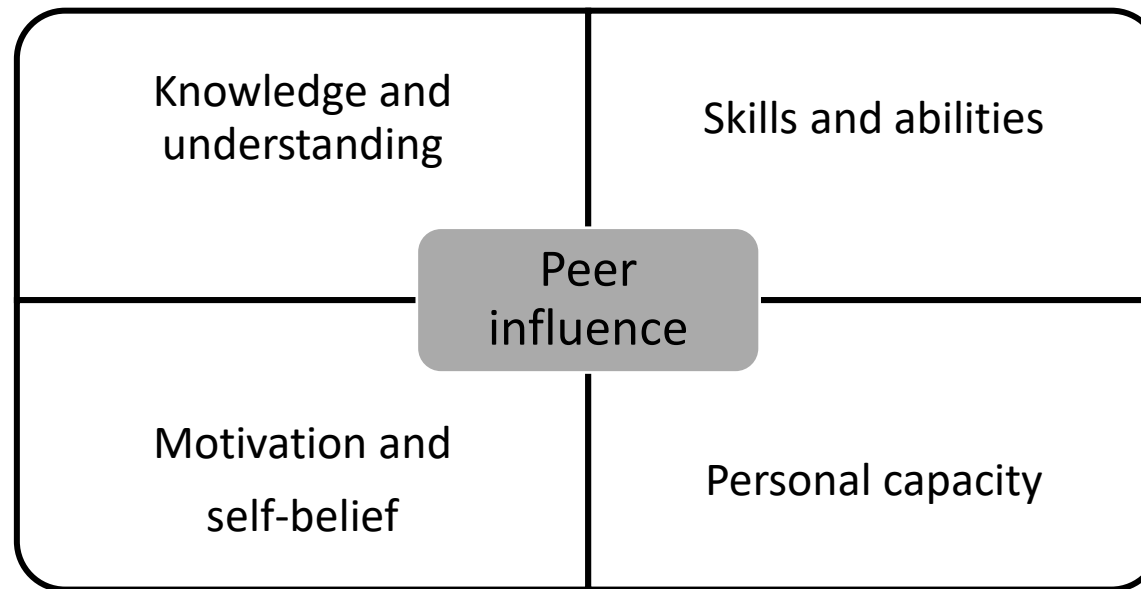
What the PAQ can tell us

Engagement, belonging and compassionate leadership

We want to reduce Engagement 'Poverty'

The Joseph Rowntree Trust define poverty when *'a person's resources are not sufficient to meet their minimum* needs' (Joseph Rowntree Trust, 2014).

Resources needed for engagement

Knowledge and understanding	Skills and abilities
Motivation and self-belief	Personal capacity

Peer influence

Source: Foster, 2023

Foster, E. (2023) *A new model of student engagement- Aspects of engagement.* Available online: A New Model of Student Engagement – Living Learning Analytics Blog

Goulden, C. and D'Arcy, C. (2014) *Anti-poverty strategies for the UK: A definition of poverty*, York: Joseph Rowntree Trust.

What the Pre-arrival academic questionnaire is not!

- It is not a marketing or enrolment related activity but a *focused and meaningful 'course' activity (i.e. course, programme)*

- It is **not a complex process for institutions** in that is requires student data to be uploaded in advance before completion like PTES

- It is **not judgmental** nor will be used for regulatory purposes

- It will **not be used for league tables**

Rationale for the PAQ at institutional level

- A **meaningful pre-arrival/arrival course activity** that provides a parity of initial academic experience for all students across courses.

- To provide staff across academic and professional support spheres with **vital information that will assist them in developing and evolving their provision in real time** to bridge the perceived and actual skill and knowledge gaps of students.

- **Students get feedback within 3 weeks** of starting with headline findings and advice

Feedback is critical

7 core sections

Previous study qualifications

Previous study experience

Motivations and expected challenges of study being

undertaken

Student expectations

Current learning expectations

Attitudes towards the level of study being undertaken

Biographical/ demographic details

[Pre-arrival questionnaire (PAQ) national pilot](#)
AdvanceHE and JISC

University of East London

Jisc

AdvanceHE

Partnership collaboration and interventions

- Shared understanding for the need to super proof
  - Student experience
  - Retention, progression and success
  - Identifying upcoming issues such as student diversity and social changes and challenges

- Shared understanding of purpose
  - Institutional needs
  - Sector needs
  - Importance of leadership
  - Research and evidence led
  - Identifying good practice

- Implementation of the UG and PGT surveys across 2 waves. Will work with 20-30 providers in England for each year of the survey. Participation in both years is desirable but not essential.

Rationale for the PAQ at sector level

There are a range of overarching objectives for this OfS EOO Innovation funded project.

- **To establish consistency** in how the sector collects and acts upon information from students upon arrival around their learning styles, expectations, challenges and requirements.

- **To drive dedicated activity at local level** to close the gap between expectations, requirements and the actual experience upon arrival.

- **To provide robust data-led evidence** to enable institutions to address inconsistencies in how different groups of students (for example by social background, qualification type, geography and demographics) begin their learning and develop a platform to progress to good outcomes.

- **To create a fuller understanding** across the sector of the Pre-arrival experience, providing evidence for wider policy making and cross-sector activity.

- **Support providers** in delivering a range of practical outcomes across different student groups, including improved wellbeing and belonging, improved continuation and attainment. Earlier and preventative intervention should further contribute to higher progression to further study or employment.

Purpose and scope of the National Pilot PAQ Project

- Institutions will receive their own results in a fast turnaround after the close of the survey – for their own analysis.

- Institutions will receive analysis by AdvanceHE similar to Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) that will focus on providing anonymised benchmark comparison across all participating institutions

- Resources will be provided on how to share the key relevant findings with students, and staff.

- Membership of a facilitated participation network to access support and advice from peers.

- Free conference attendance for each year of participation to share best practice.

- Access to sector specific reports and published papers based on the overall findings.

- Institutions are required to hold a valid Jisc Online Surveys licence (paid for by institutions directly) for each year of their participation.

Inclusive and Collaborative Steering and Working Groups

- The Project Steering Group comprises of sector stakeholders involved in policy and strategy at a national level. Steering group made up of sector policy bodies including NUS, TASO, GuildHE, JISC, AdvanceHE, UKCGE, UCAS, NUS, SSAT, EPC, Unite Group, NEON.

- The Working Group will comprise of sector practitioners and research experts across a range of student experience areas including Learning and Teaching, Generative AI, Belonging, Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Steering Group roles and responsibilities

The Steering Group will:

- Comprise of sector stakeholders involved in policy and strategy at a national level.

- Review and confirm the approach undertaken in the delivery of PAQ (including content and ethics)

- Comment on the findings and offer informed insights and advice on how institutional, and sector strategic planning and policy could evolve.

- The membership is designed to bring together key policy bodies and sector commentators to influence policy in a united voice.

Membership of the Steering Group

- Chair Les Ebdon (Professor Sir), Chair of the Advisory Group (National Policy)
- Buge Apampa (Professor), Pro-Vice Chancellor Education and Experience, University of East London (L&T and EDI)
- Ruth Arnold (International and Education Charities)
- Graeme Atherton (Professor), Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Regional Engagement at the University of West London and Vice Principal, Ruskin College Oxford (National Policy, former Director NEON)
- Diana Beech (Dr), Director of the Finsbury Institute and former CEO of London Higher (National Policy)
- Natasha Dhumma, National Union of Students
- Owen Gower (Dr), Director for the UK Council for Graduate Education (Postgraduate Policy)
- David Grey, UKAT (National Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising)
- Kat Heywood (Dr), Head of Business Intelligence Data Analytics, JISC
- Ben Jordan, UCAS, Head of Policy (Recruitment and Data)
- Charles Knight, Director, Leadership, Governance & Management, AdvanceHE
- Nick Hillman/ Rose Stephenson, Higher Education Policy Institute (National Policy)
- Gareth Hughes Student Minds Mental Health Charter (Student and Staff Mental Health)
- Omar Khan (Dr), Chief Executive Officer TASO (Evaluation and Policy)
- Sue Williamson, Director and CEO of the Schools, Students and Teachers Network (National Policy and L+T)
- Johnny Rich, Chief Executive of the Engineering Professors' Council (Widening Access and National Policy)
- Jenny Shaw, HE External Engagement Director, The Unite Group
- Brooke Storer Church (Dr), Chief Executive, GuildHE (Policy)

Working Group roles and responsibilities

The Working Group will comprise:

- Sector practitioners and research experts across a range of student experience areas including Learning and Teaching, Generative AI, Belonging, Mental Health and Wellbeing.

- Responsibilities will include to review the current questions in the PAQs in their area of specialism, agree the timing and delivery of the PAQs and confirm the ethical approach to data sharing.

- The inclusion of sector practitioners and research experts across a range of student experience areas should provide confidence to the institutions participating in the pilot regarding its benefit, PAQ content and potential inputs that will inform and shape their institutional approach.

Membership of the Working Group

- Liz Austin (Professor), Sheffield Hallam University (Student Voices, Evaluation and Student Engagement)
- Sue Beckingham, Sheffield Hallam University (Generative AI, L&T)
- Sunday Blake, Unite Foundation & Policy exchange board (Widening Access, Belonging)
- Mark Bennett, Director (Audience & Editorial) at FindAUniversity Ltd (PGT Recruitment and Support)
- Tiffany Chiu (Dr), Imperial College London (Inclusion)
- Rachel Ditchfield, Director, Savanta
- Josh Freeman, Policy Manager, Higher Education Policy Institute (National Policy and Secondary Teaching)
- Vivi Friedgut, Founder and CEO Blackbullion (Finance)
- Wendy Garnham (Professor), Sussex University (Widening Participation Transitions and Secondary Teaching)
- Debbie Holley (Professor), Bournemouth University (L&T, Technology)
- Patrick Johnson, University of Law (Legal and EDI)
- Deborah Johnston (Professor), London South Bank University, (Disability)
- Rose Luckin (Professor), Institute of Education (Generative AI)
- Emma Maslin, Senior Policy and Research Officer at AMOSSHE (Commuter students)
- Emily McIntosh (Dr), University of West of Scotland (Collaboration and Co-creation)
- *Michelle Morgan (Dr), Dean of Students, University of East London (Transitions, PAQ, Wellbeing) Also on the SG*
- *Jonathan Neves (Dr), Head of Business Intelligence & Surveys, AdvanceHE Also on the SG*
- Lydia Pell, Student Minds Assessor and Clinical Supervisor(Mental Health)
- Liz Thomas (Professor), University of York (Widening Access and Student Success)
- Paul Wakeling (Professor), *University of York (Postgraduate Taught Research and Policy)*
- Dominic Walker (Dr), Business intelligence and surveys consultant, Data analytics, JISC
- Billy Wong (Professor), Institute of Education, University of Reading (Access and Participation)

Outline timescales (year 1)

- April – June 2025: Confirm institutional participation
- April - July 2025: Confirm question sets, ethics, methodology – through working and advisory group
- August -September 2025: Survey set up
- Late September – early November: Survey window wave 1
- November – topline institutional data received
- December/ January – benchmarking data
- January 2026 onwards – working group members receive anonymised raw data for own analysis
- April 2026: Sector reports produced. Instititional case studies
- May 2026: Wave 1 dissemination event
- Year 2 timings will broadly match this into 2026/2027

Selection of participating institutions

Rationale for selection
- Reasons for participation
- Who submitted expression of interest
- Representation of type of institution and region

60 expressions of interest (4 duplicates)
- 12 only in 2025
- 5 only in 2026
- 38 both years
- 11 only UG

Type of institution expressing an interest 2025 (n=50)
- 26 Post -92s
- 8 Russell
- 9 Small and Specialist
- 3 Colleges
- 4 Pre-92s

**Region of the 50 expressing an interest in 2025**

1	East
3	East Midlands
2	West Midland
13	London
9	North East
8	North West
6	South East
8	South West

Ethical and technical areas

- Ethical approval

- AdvanceHE and JISC Terms & conditions, & Data Protection Agreement

- Institutional access to the survey
  - Same as PTES, SAES, UKES
    - Downloaded template that is locked
    - Text and logos can be added
    - Faculty/Department/school and course questions can be added at the end

  - Student access
    - Public facing
    - Applicant student ID will be requested
      - An institutional check
      - Enable extra student characteristic data to be added

Outputs by UKCGE

- Present key findings PGT findings via workshops (in-person and online)

- Work with UKCGE members to identify useful support mechanisms
  - Access to Information and Resources
  - Professional Development
  - Peer Support

- Provide workshops to explore PGT institutional and discipline focused initiatives

- So please talk to Paul Wakeling and myself about what would be useful to you.
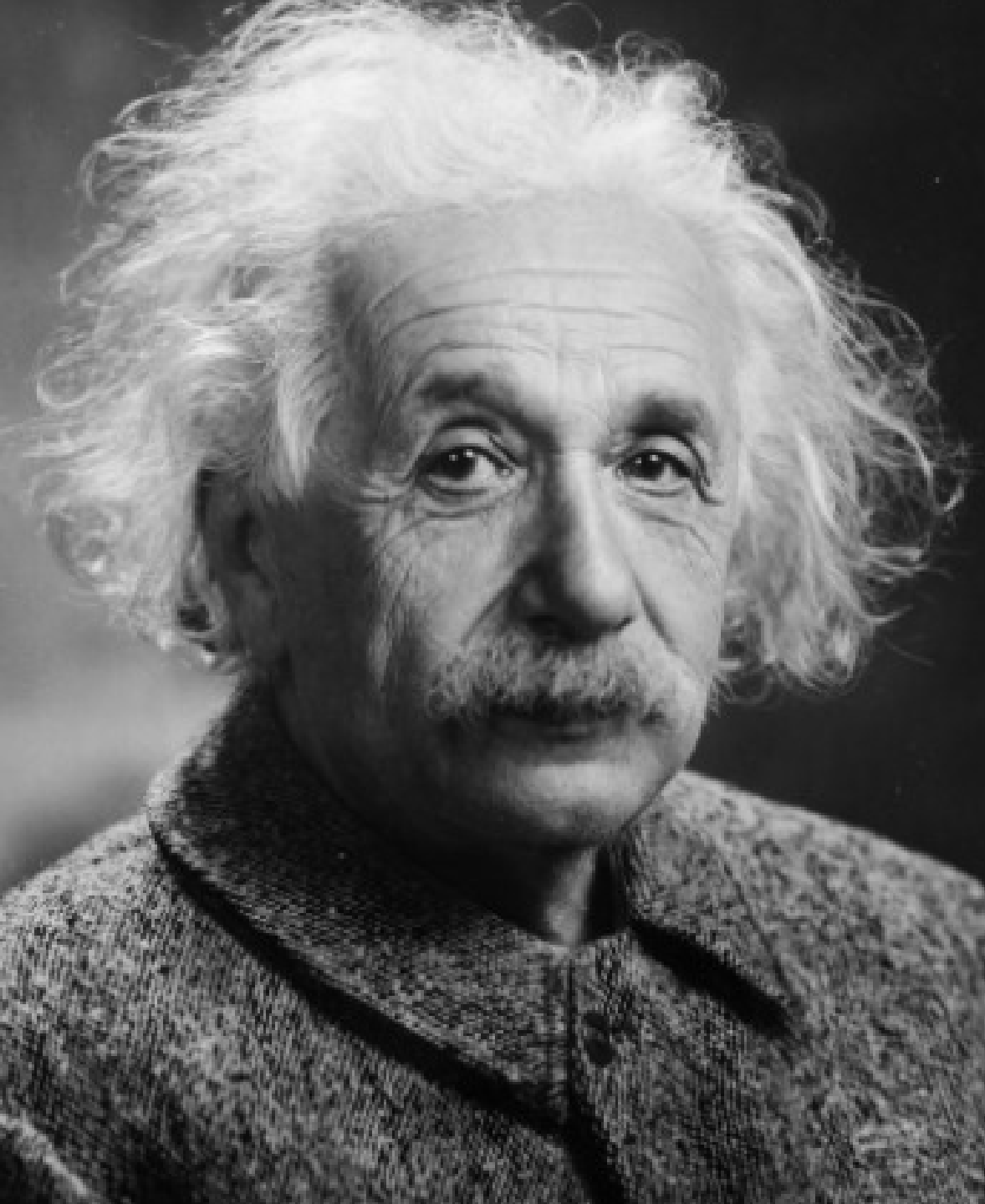
We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

~ Albert Einstein

Thank you for listening
Any questions?

Dr Michelle Morgan

Dean of Students

University of East London