

<b>Session Title:</b>	<b>4.6 Access Postgrad – PGT Home widening-participation</b>
<b>Speaker(s):</b>	<b>Alice Brereton – PG Recruitment Manager – University of Bristol</b>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Andrew Cooper</b>
<b>Reporter:</b>	<b>Colin McLean – University of Edinburgh</b>

<b>Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:</b>	<b>Alice Brereton – PG Recruitment Manager – University of Bristol</b>
<b>Overview/Aim of session:</b>	<b>Alice shared information on the University of Bristol's internal PG UG-PG progression project</b>
<b>Workshop Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>PGT Widening participation</b></li> <li>- <b>Access Postgrad as a case study</b></li> <li>- <b>Challenges encountered in the project</b></li> <li>- <b>Practical Top Tips</b></li> <li>- <b>Ambitions for the future</b></li> </ul> <p><b>PGT WP Recruitment</b>  Show of hands of how institutions resource PGT recruitment. Does your Uni have a stand alone PGT team or are they a mixed team with other responsibilities?</p> <p>Bristol has a team of four PGT Recruitment staff. This include a dedicated 1 x 0.5 FTE staff member specific to WP at Post grad level.</p> <p><b>PGT WP</b>  No sector wide agreements on what identifies a WP PG student but there is commitment from Universities to build on the progress made at UG Level.</p> <p>PGT WP is an emerging area and at present is not actively regulated by the Office for Students (OfS). Feels very much like a chicken and egg situation where no progress can be made until OfS take an interest, but OfS won't take an interest until they see the value.</p> <p>Many groups want to make progree in this area but best intentions regularly get delayed by other priorities.  At present, Universities who are committed to developing</p>

	<p>WP at PG level are reliant on sector wide papers. One paper mentioned was called 'Inequality in the highest degree'.</p> <p><b>Challenges</b> Identifying PG WP Students. Data and data collection is the biggest challenge.</p> <p>Do we use POLAR? How far back do we go with address history?, Do we/should we look at income?</p> <p>A group called NEON were mentioned to be looking into standardising or identifying what data should be used.</p>
<p><b>Case Studies/Examples:</b></p>	<p><b>The majority of the session was a case study of the Bristol Access Postgrad project</b></p> <p>The project launches applications in July and runs live from Nov-April each year. Small flexibility into May for late completion.</p> <p>Ask the teams from other depts supporting the project for their support next year immediately upon completion of current year. This means they are still engaged and value/success are fresh in their minds.</p> <p>Access Postgrad can lead to 10 x funded/fee waived places for current UG students who stay on to Postgrad at Bristol. Identifiers include BS postcode amongst other things such as Disability, Postcode, Gender and Ethnicity.</p> <p>Readily accepted that Access Postgrad is built on imperfect data as perfect data not available. Would rather do something now with imperfect data than wait years for anything close to perfect.</p> <p>There are another, larger, group of students who participate in Acces Postgrad who do not go on to receive funding but progress to PG at Bristol under their own or alternative funding. Some of these other students also go on to study at other Institutions which is still regarded as success. These students still receive the same logistics support, and 1 to 1 mentoring that the students who receive fee waivers do.</p> <p>Peer mentoring sessions are encouraged to have first session in person as much as possible. Mentors are given robust training both with recored materials and in person training including scenario role play etc.</p> <p>Sample teaching sessions saw low uptake until small changes made by using a Microsoft sign up from.</p>

	<p>Resulted in over 500% increase in sign ups.</p> <p>Scheme starts each year with a questionnaire which assess a number of skills/confidence areas. The participating students also undertake exit interviews in assessing the usefulness of the project.</p> <p>Some small gains seen in progression of students who identify as black but increase not significant to include for data.</p> <p>Access Postgrad has currently provided £334,000 directly to students.</p> <p>Eligibility for the project is designed to be as broad as possible to application process is short and simple. Eligibility is listed in the presentation slides but is only application to Internal Uni of Bristol students normally domiciled in the UK.</p> <p>97% of students who achieved fee waivers have completed their studies and one student returning to complete in next cycle, also fully funded.</p> <p><b>Challenges</b> Obtaining in-person attendance post-pandemic has been challenging.</p> <p>Had a blip where a donor was lost so one year had less funding but this has been resolved and backstopped by achieving funding from central scholarships fund. Blip did help to show however the value in funding by completion rates also impacted.</p> <p>Needs more resource than 1 x 0.5 FTE but unlikely to get more resource until OfS take interest.</p>
<p><b>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</b></p>	<p><b>What schemes do you have in your University or what support is available for PGT WP students?</b> Most delegates stated that they have a UG Alumni discount for those who stay on to PG at the same institution but all agreed the level of discount is not enough.</p> <p>University of Edinburgh and other delegates said they are focusing more on establishing admissions processes and identifying PG widening participation students, how this translates from UG to PG</p> <p>Loans are nowhere near enough to cover PGT fees in many institutions.</p>

	<p><b>Promoting PG opportunities</b> We completed a Menti board on how we promote PG studies to our students.</p> <p>Bristol said they use direct email which is successful but would like UG personal tutors to take up the mantle more.</p>
<p><b>Questions and Answers:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Statement. Mike Nicolson highlighted that OfS are aware of the risks identified in WP progression from UG to PG study. Significant investment made in PGR but PGT yet to be brought forward.</li> <li>- Question. MN asked if there was a difference in interest between students in Humanities vs students in Sciences?</li> <li>- Answer. Not done much to analyse this, though larger number of participants is usually Social Sciences. Can look into this further.</li> <li>- Question. How do you decide between Funded/non-funded?</li> <li>- Answer. Eligibility criteria, scored on Uni priorities and representation.</li> <li>- Question. How many UG students who participated in the scheme did not progress to PG due to missing academic requirements.</li> <li>- Answer. We think none but don't have data to hand.</li> <li>- Question. If not eligible for funding, what aftercare is there/access to resources?</li> <li>- Answer. Links are still provided to webinars etc but miss out on mentoring. Also no immediate drop out pattern but might see more drop out after first session. Important to note that although they may not be offered funding at start of the scheme, they may be offered it later if another student declines the fee waiver to attend another uni with higher scholarship.</li> <li>- Suggestion from MN: Talk to Research Council or Doctoral Training Centres regarding possibility of gaining access to some funding awards focused on using funding for evidencing diversity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SummaryKey takeaways:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants must have completed the Access Postgrad scheme to be eligible for Fee Waiver.</li> <li>- Scheme this year changed to only focusing on final year UG students.</li> <li>- Figures only reflect those who went on to study at Bristol but also progressed to other Universities.</li> <li>- We MUST remember that there are new contextual challenges for students to overcome post-pandemic and in the current financial crisis.</li> <li>- Don't be afraid to start small</li> <li>- Students who went to other Unis who offer larger scholarships still a win.</li> </ul>

- The exit interviews are showing a year on year progression in level of confidence responses.
- Great that students can make an informed choice, even if that choice is that PG study is not for them.
- Jules (dedicated WP team member at Bristol) was nominated for an award by the scheme participants. We were also shown quotes from participants on success of the scheme.

#### Continuous improvement

- Don't rely on supporting statements. Make application shorter and clearer
- Future cycles will apply the fee waiver to part-time studies as well as full time
- Keen to track Alumni more and utilise Alumni stories in promotion and development.
- More reminders for mentors to submit pro-formas
- New PG accommodation guarantees are now in pace which is very exciting.
- New external scheme called Participate Postgrad after success of internal scheme

#### Practical Tips

- Use what you have, don't wait for perfect data. Also have a strong rationale on why you're using the data you have in the way that you are.
- Bristol are lucky to have a very supportive UG WP Team to share expertise with PG. Many other unis feel they also have this same level of support from their UG teams.
- Bring Alumni of scheme to speak to new participants.
- Have a waiting list or reserve list – Be ready for the admin resource required to manage this.
- Microsoft forms ROCK!
- Have a firm deadline for applications so that you can manage resource.
- Mentoring is great in a flexible format, both in person and online.
- Mention of NEON, doing great work.

#### Next steps

- Fee waiver needs to be higher as fees increase as well as cost of living.
- Needs more staffing resource and supporting resource with two schemes now running.
- Needs more data on WP in PG and what that means
- Work with NEON colleagues to gather information
- Continuously collaborate with other sector colleagues to learn what others are doing and share best practise.