

The importance of adopting a whole institutional integrated approach to improve the experience, progression, retention and success of our students and staff



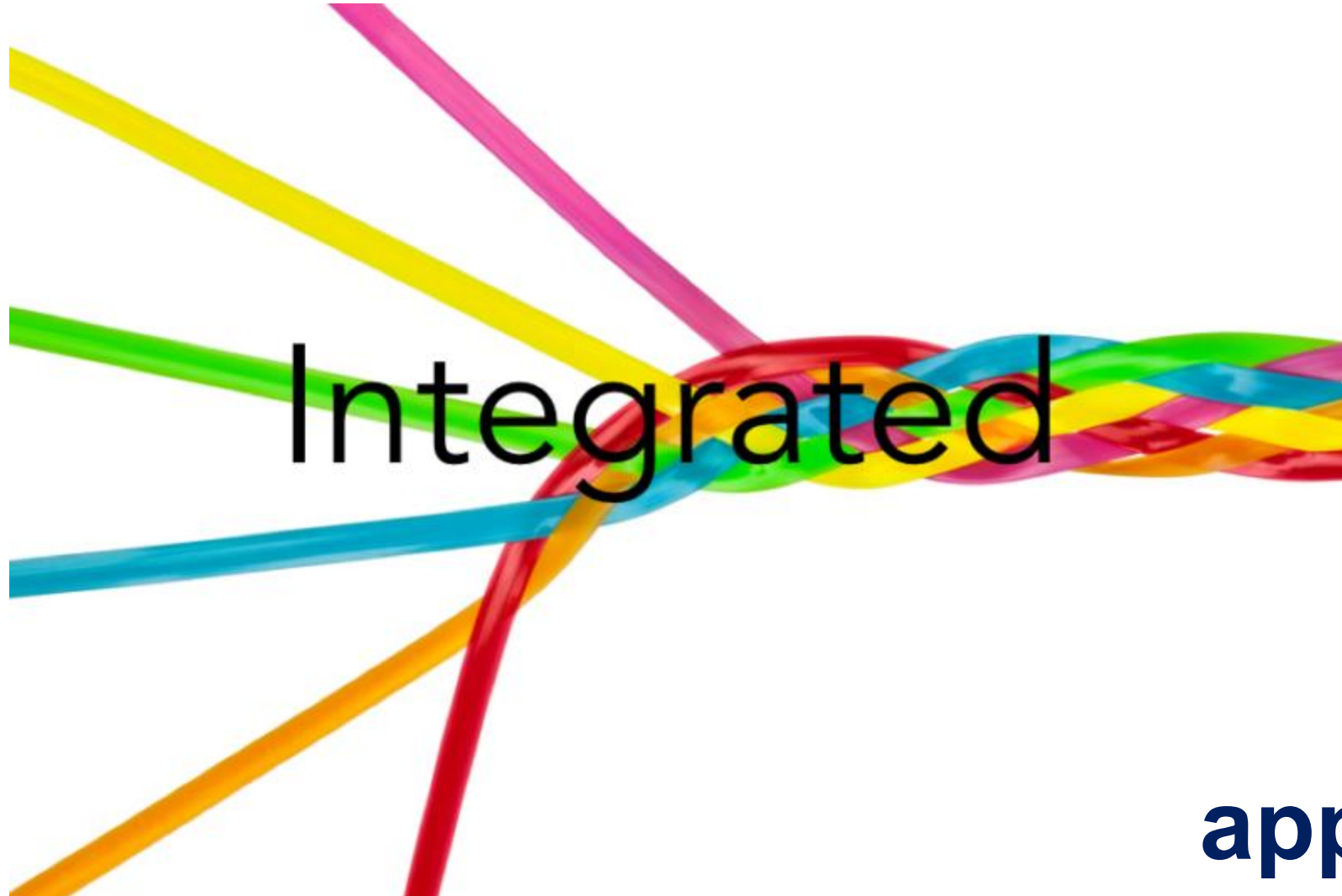
**Dr Michelle Morgan
Dean of Students
University of East London**

Aims and Objectives

This interactive workshop will highlight the:

- Challenges facing the sector and institutions
- Need to understand our student body and learning requirements
- Importance of identifying the stages in the study lifecycle and developing a whole university integrated framework
- The things we need to think about
- Proactive approaches and interventions and principles of good practice

The rationale behind the whole



approach

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



Mature student

1 of 5 on my course in a cohort of 80

Working class mixed race female student

First generation

Parents had no educational aspirations for me or my brother

A levels

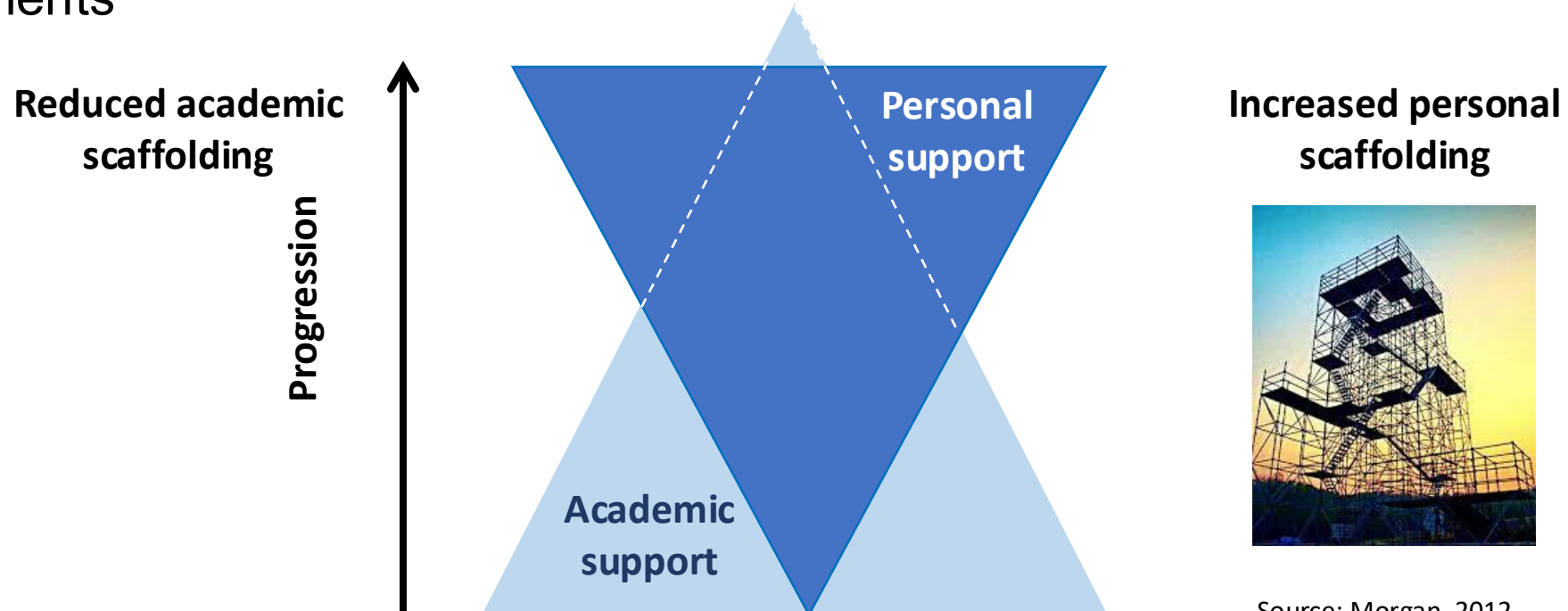
I did badly in exams, great with CW!
C, D, E - 100% exams

My brother inspired me to go because he made it!

Worked for 5 years before starting my studies

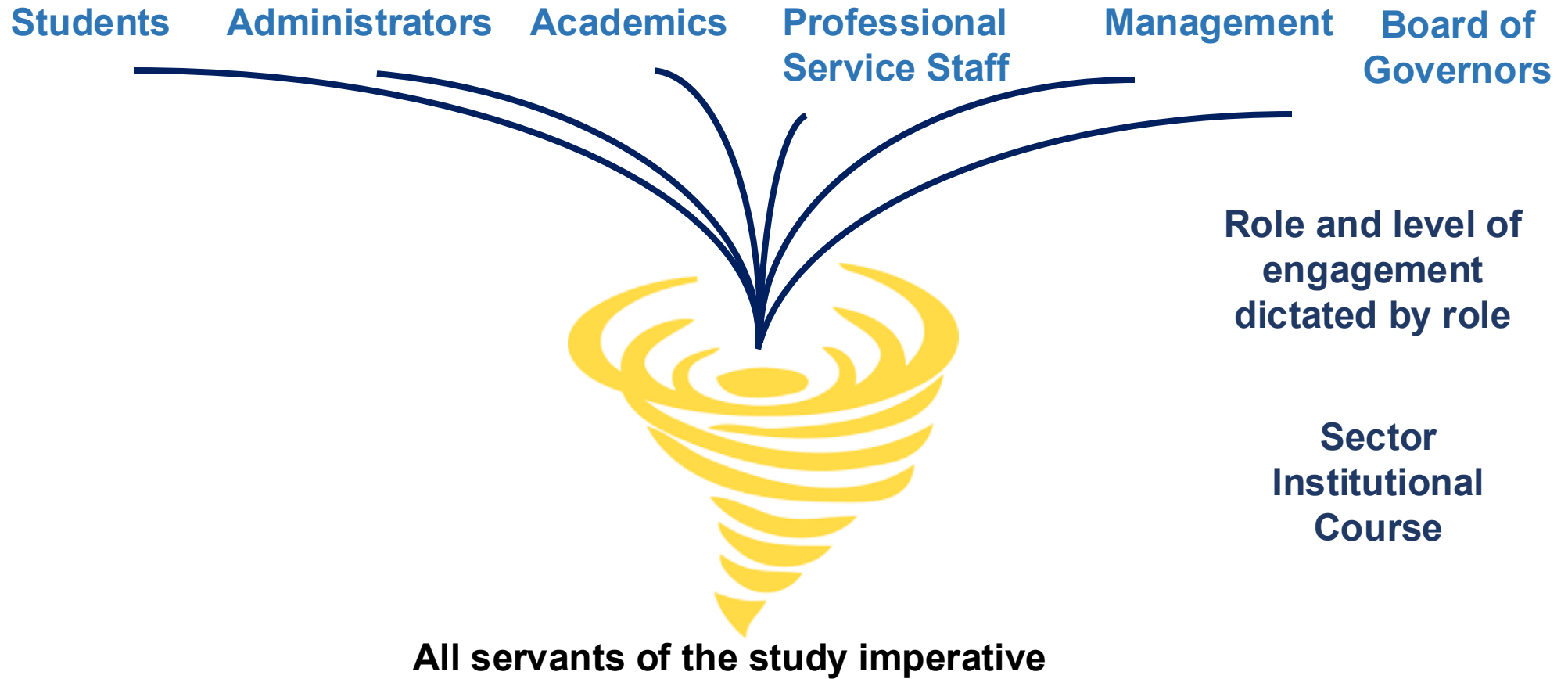
What I saw.....

- 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



Source: Morgan, 2012

What I realised.....



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



Staff won't go for it

It isn't going to happen

It's not in the budget

It is not the way we do things around here

That's not our problem

Now is not the right time.....

Students shouldn't go to university if they cant cope with it

We need to understand 'Known knowns and unknowns'

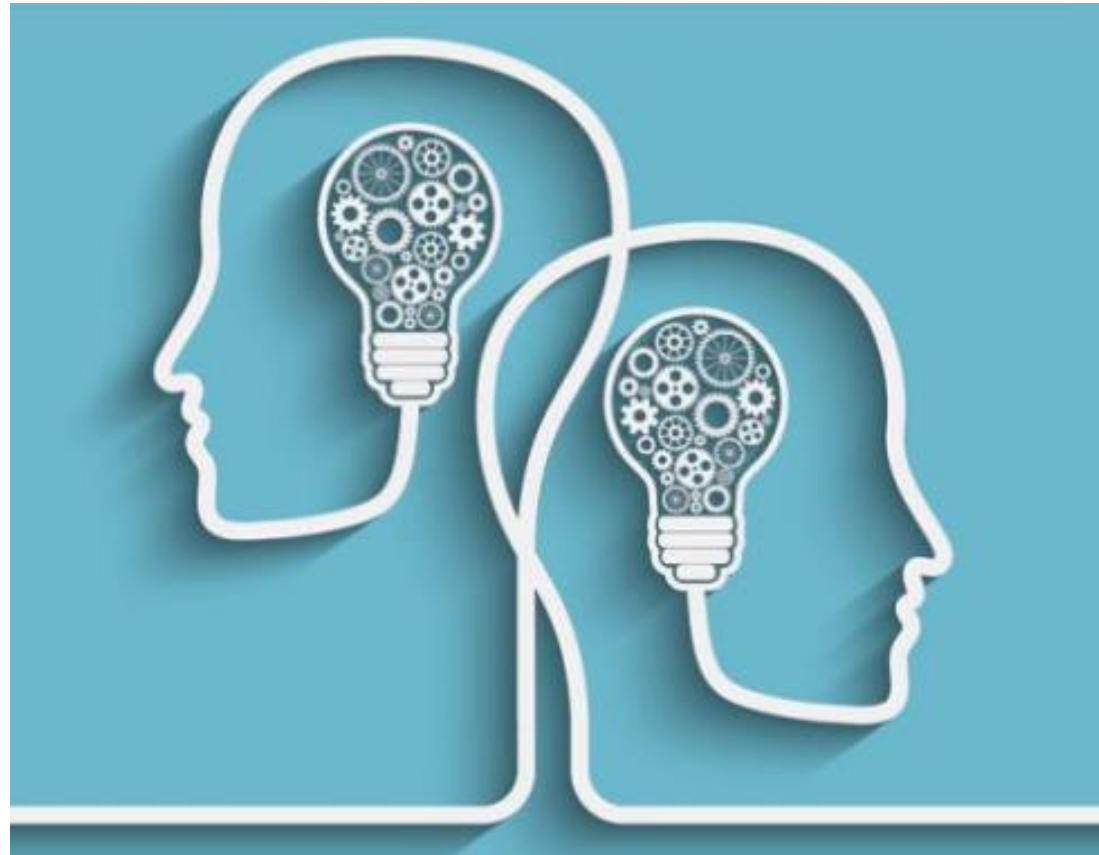


There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.

Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense 2001-06, USA

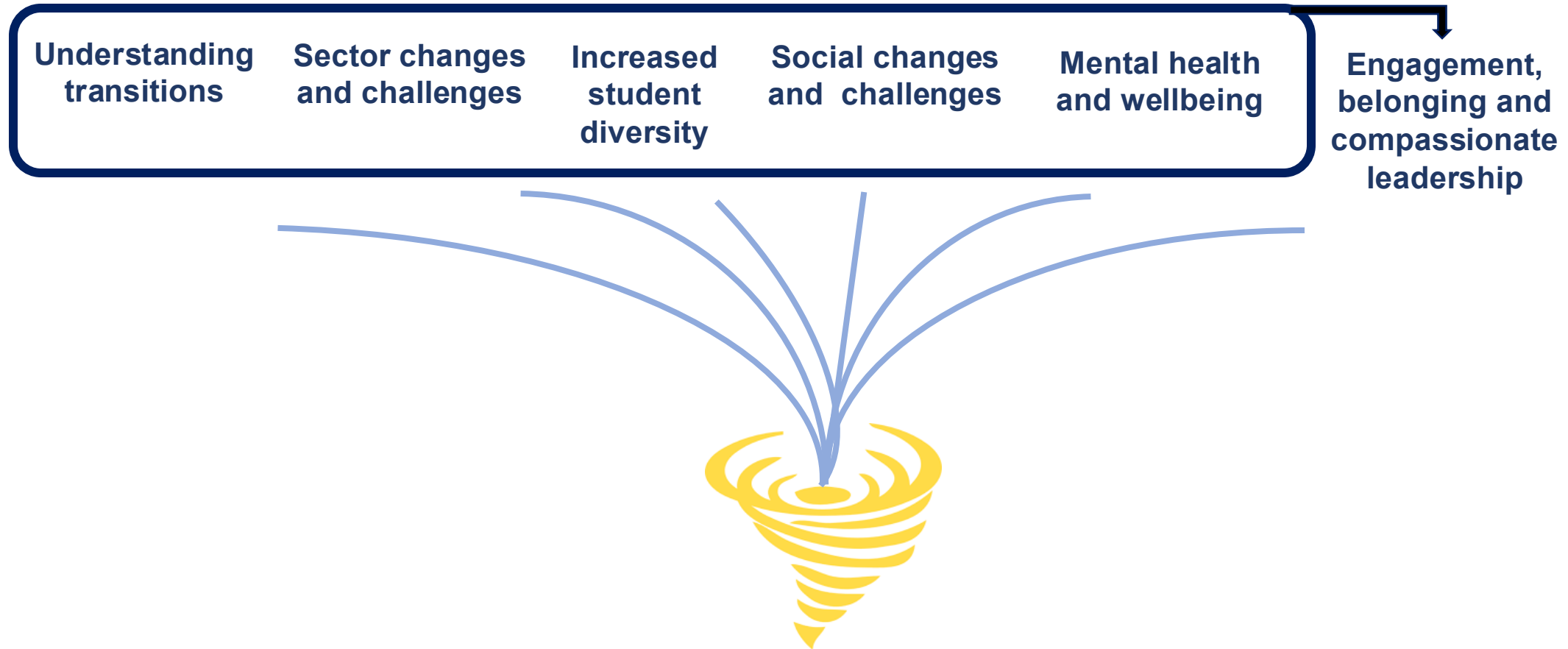
What do we need to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach?

What assumptions do we make about our students?

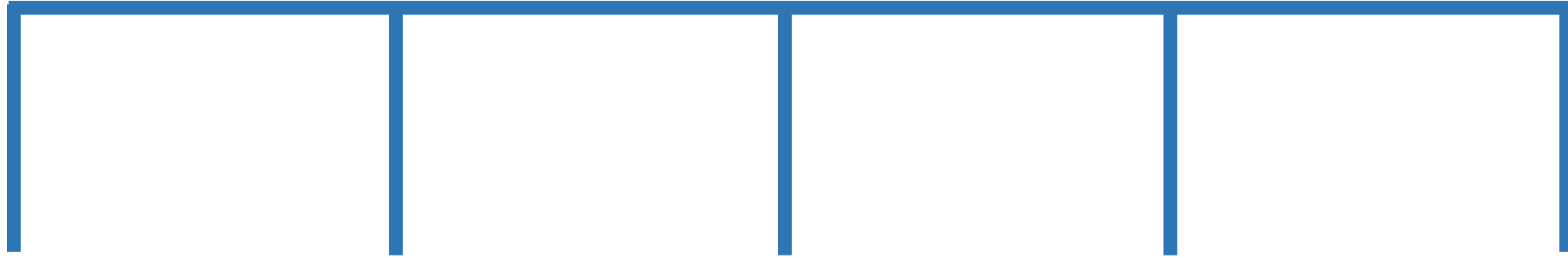


What challenges do we need to consider?

Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



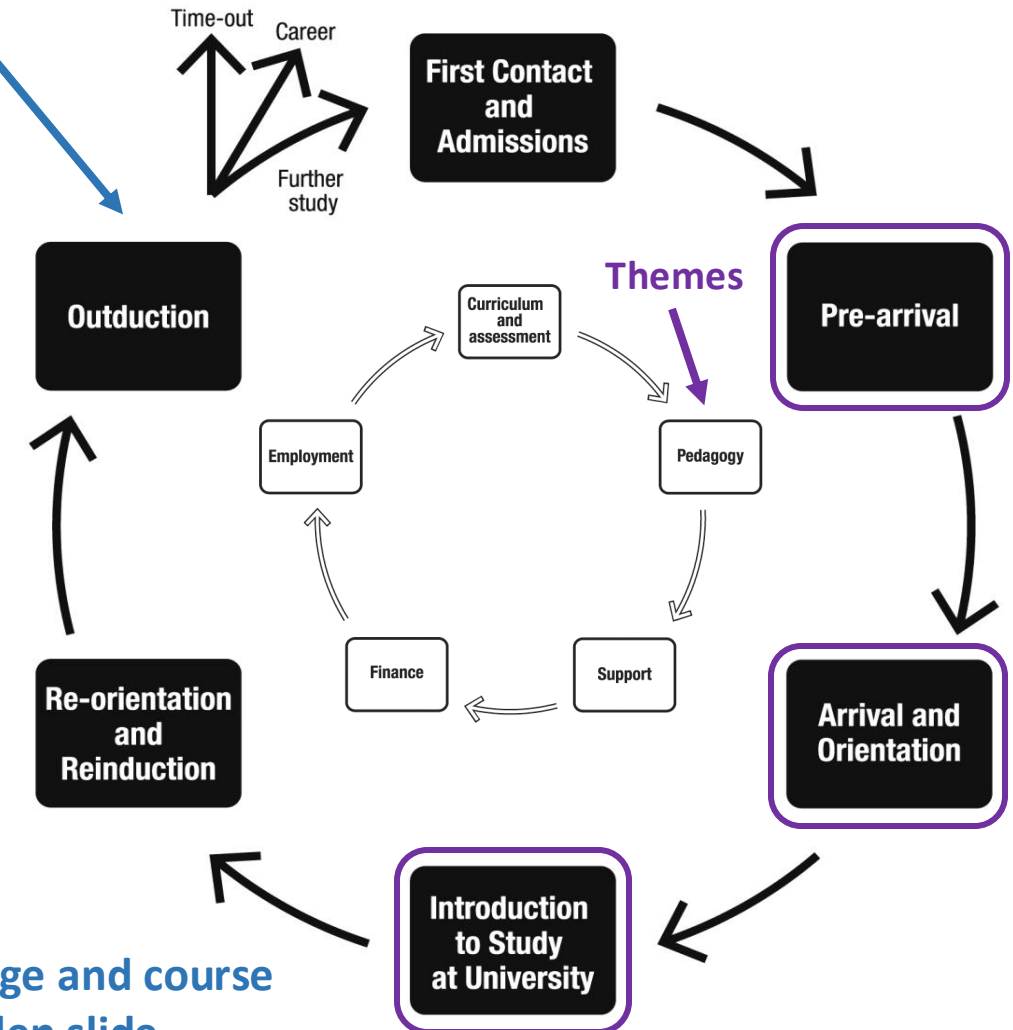
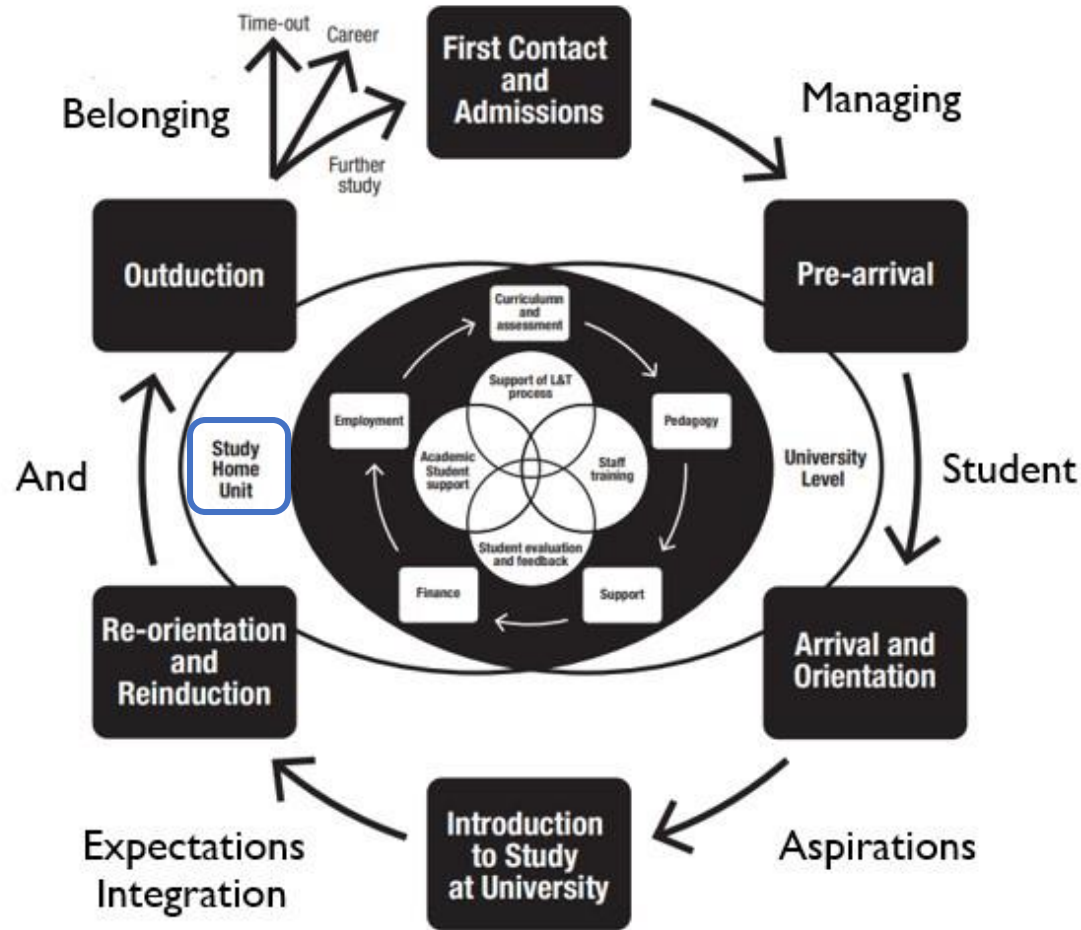
**Understanding
transitions**

Why supporting Student Experience Transitions is so important

SET Model
Morgan, 2008

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

Stages



[Improving the Student Experience by Michelle Morgan - Official Website](#)

Definitions of each stage and course mapping on hidden slide

Definitions of each stage

First contact and admissions

This is where the management of applicant aspirations and expectations of university should start with the provision of clear and honest information.

Pre-arrival (for all students)

This is the stage when new students get ready to come to university, and institutions should have a basic understanding of the backgrounds and support requirements of their new students. It is also when existing students prepare to return to their studies after the vacation period. There are two key elements to pre-arrival which are the hygiene factors (e.g. enrolling and sorting out accommodation), and course information (e.g. knowing when to arrive for course orientation/reorientation, pre-arrival coursework required and support available). Pre-arrival occurs from a few weeks before starting or returning to university study.

Arrival and university and course orientation

Arrival and course orientation is the period when new students arrive on campus, start to navigate their way around an institution, and settle into university life (up to 3 weeks). During the course orientation, students are introduced to their course with 'Induction to study' starting soon afterwards (see next stage). Arrival and Orientation takes place over the first three weeks.

Induction/introduction to study

The induction to study stage is where students start to lay the foundations for successful study in their course by equipping them with the relevant study and research skills for the level of study they have entered. This includes identifying and bridging study and knowledge gaps. This stage takes place over the first term/semester enabling students to undertake an 'academic' cycle so they understand what is required of them and how the learning processes work at university.

Reorientation and reinduction

Reorientation for returners covers information on what is academically expected of them in the coming year, where they can reflect on the skills they acquired the year before, and to identify what they need to build on and develop in order to succeed in their new level of study. Reinduction takes place over a longer period and introduces returning students to new skills to help them actively engage in the learning and assessment processes. The reorientation material resides on a returners pre-arrival page. Reorientation takes place over a 1-2 week period.

Outduction

Just as students are inducted into study when they enter higher education, they also need advice and support on how to make the transition out of it so they can effectively adapt to life post study through the outduction stage. This activity should start at the end of the penultimate year of study but proactively be undertaken in the final year. Again, information resides on the final year pre-arrival pages.

Course mapping Level = year

A student on a one year course

- Pre-arrival preparation
- Orientation (e.g. 2 weeks)
- Introduction to university study by the end of semester 1 or term 1
- Reorientation and reinduction at the start of semester 2 or term 2
- Outduction just after the start of semester 2 or the beginning of term 3.

A student on a three/four-year full-time degree

- Pre-arrival preparation
- Orientation (e.g. 2-3 weeks)
- Introduction to university study during level 1
- Reorientation and reinduction in level 2
- Outduction starts semester 2 of Level 2 and continues into Level 3

A student entering as a direct entry/articulated student into level 2

- Pre-arrival preparation and information of orientation and introduction to study
- Orientation and introduction to study in semester 1 level 2 before returners come back
- Reinduction to Level 2 will have to run alongside or be incorporated into their programme/course
- Outduction starts in semester 2 of Level 2 and continues into Level 3



What we need to think about

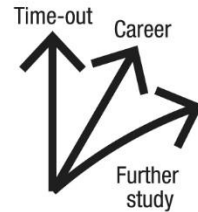
Key pinch points for an undergraduate student?

Preparing to leave

- Worried about results
- Sense of loss
- Not sure if an in-person graduation will take place
- Issues of moving from a structured, safe place to the unknown
- Loss of direction
- Challenges with the employment market
- Family expectations that a university degree will lead to improved chances
- Uncertainty about how employers will view a Covid19 degree?
- Concern that that teaching wasn't able to cover everything need.

Later years

- Reduction in structured learning and scaffolding
- Increase in independent learning and group assessment
- Mid-term blues
- End of year exhaustion
- Coping with workload and assessment that 'counts'
- University life being different to expectations
- Timing of activities disrupted
- Relationships with fellow students and staff challenged by blended learning
- Anxiety about alternative assessments and the impact on marks
- Impact on placement availability



First Contact
and
Admissions

Outduction

Pre-arrival

The Student Experience
Transitions Model

Re-orientation
and
Reinduction

Arrival and
Orientation

Introduction
to Study
at University

Start preparing

- Unsure what to expect
- Knowing what questions to ask
- Worrying about not fitting in
- Finding accommodation
- Sorting out financial issues
- Undertaking pre-enrolment
- Will applicants feel able to come with cost of living rise?
- Will they want to defer?
- Retake pre-entry exams?

The first year

- Learning how to study in HE
- Learning how to live with strangers
- Coping with independence
- Transitions issues- personal, finance, balancing workloads
- Wobble week (3-6)
- First formal feedback
- Placement activity for courses in the first year
- Coming back after the Xmas break
- Exams and results
- Sorting out accommodation for year 2
- Dealing with illness or family illness bereavement
- Managing technology and social relationships online

Key PGT study pinch points

Preparing to leave

- Worried about results
- Concern about employment
- Will a PG qualification really make a difference?
- Not sure if an in-person graduation will take place
- Issues of moving from a structured, safe place to the unknown
- Loss of direction
- Challenges with the employment market

Semester 2

- Group assessment frustrations
- Transitions issues- personal, finance, balancing workloads
- PGT study being different to expectations
- Timing of activities disrupted
- Relationships with fellow students and staff challenged by blended learning
- Anxiety about alternative assessments and the impact on marks

Start preparing

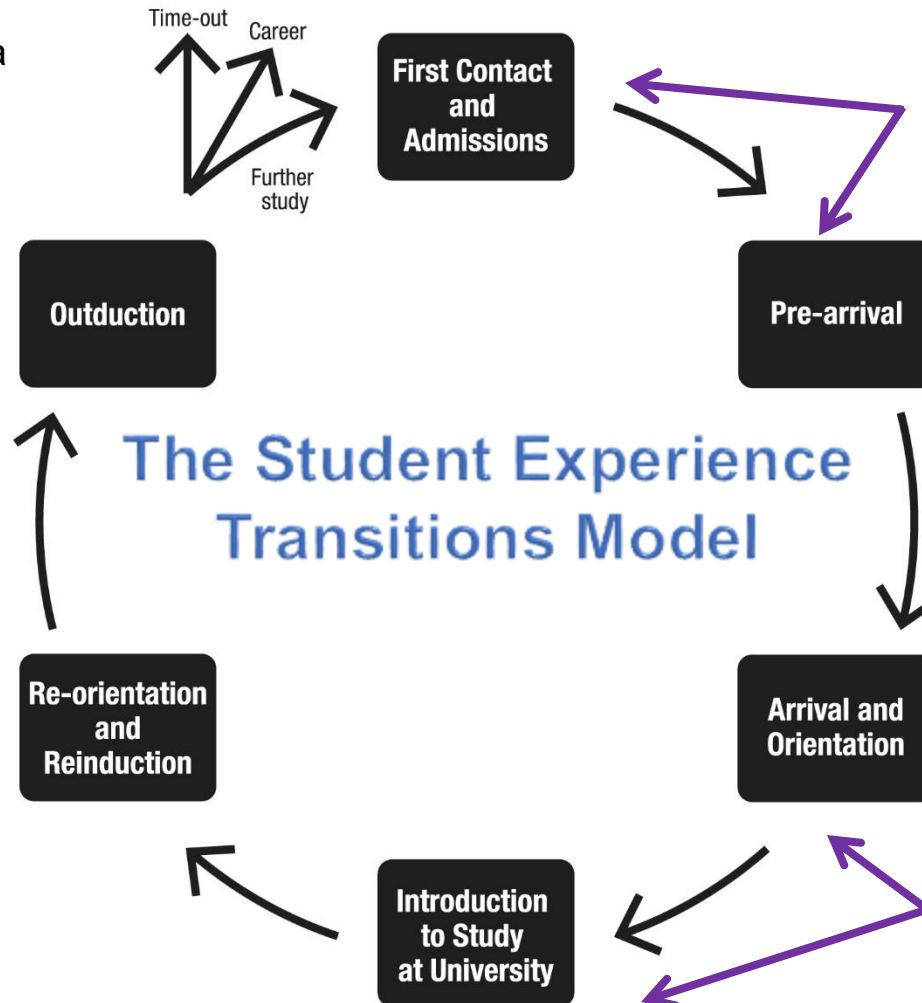
- Unsure what to expect
- Knowing what questions to ask
- Obtaining funding
- Consideration of value vs cost
- Finding appropriate /affordable accommodation



Widening and sustaining postgraduate taught (PGT) STEM study in the UK: a collaborative project
Creating change through understanding expectations and attitudes towards PGT study, experiences and post-study outcomes from the perspective of applicants, students, universities and employers.

Developed and funded by the UK's Higher Education Funding Councils

Programme supported by
Understanding Policy for a better tomorrow



Semester 1

- Learning how to study at PG level
- Transitions issues- personal, finance, balancing workloads
- First assessment at PGT level
- Identifying skill ability and gaps
- Expectations not met
- Realisation of choosing wrong course
- Dealing with illness or family illness bereavement
- Managing technology and social relationships online

Key PGR study pinch points

Completion and preparing to leave

- Worried about the Viva
- Is it good enough?
- Concern about employment
- What next!
- Will a PhD qualification really make a difference?
- Imposter syndrome

Applying

- Am I good enough
- Mode of study
- Funding

Start preparing

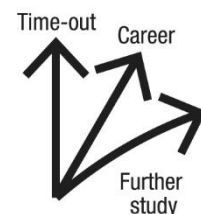
- Enthused
- Excited
- Sorting practicalities

Mid cycle

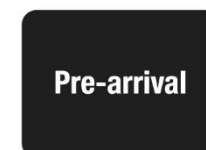
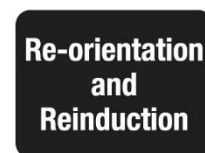
- Writing the thesis
- Loss of focus
- Isolated and lonely
- Struggle/conflict within scholarly community
- Problems in research processes (e.g. ethics)

Early transition stages

- Overwhelmed
- Balancing workload
- Accessing your supervisor
- Changes in supervisor
- Isolated and lonely
- Learning the discipline/study discipline



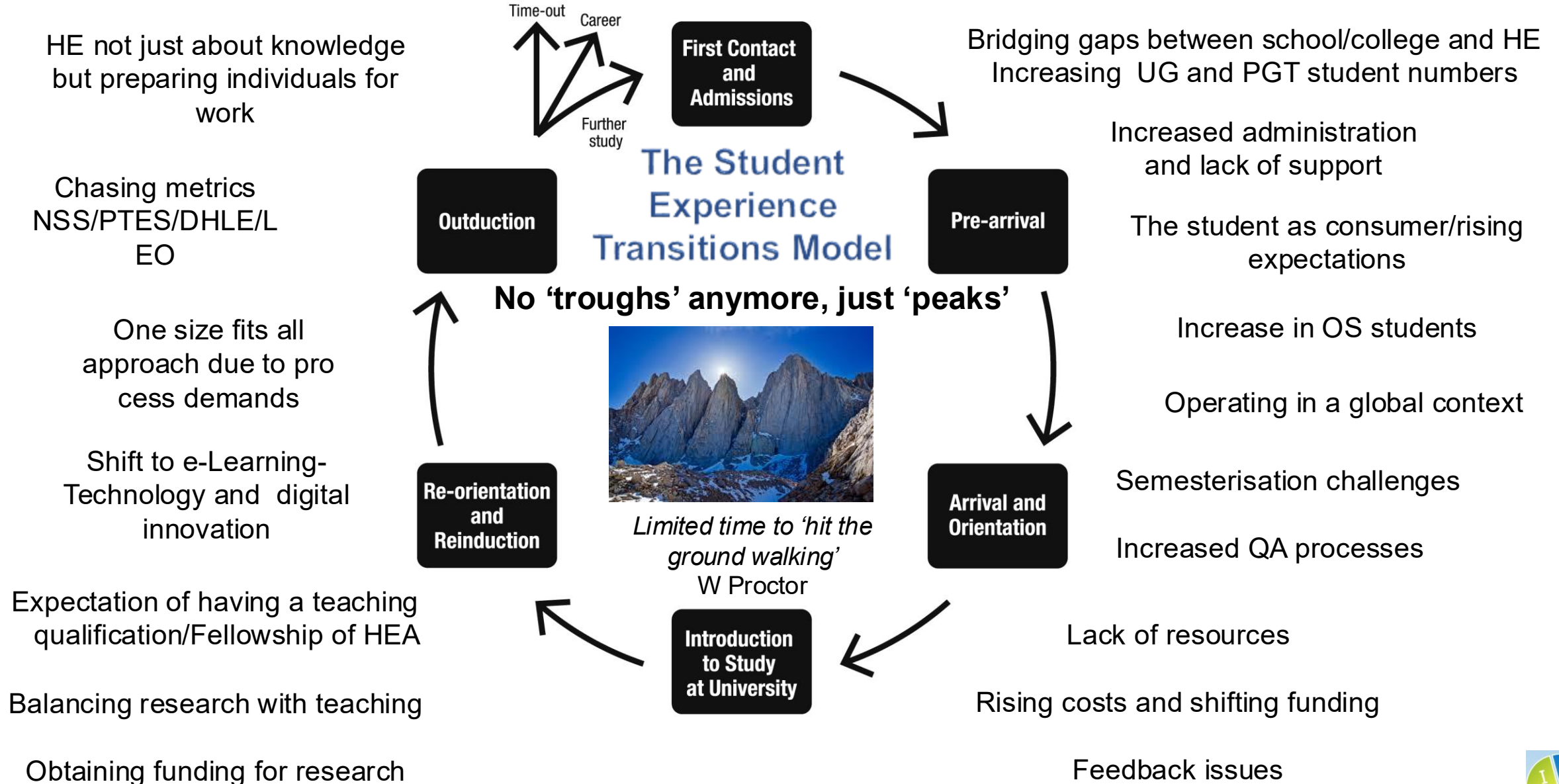
The Student Experience Transitions Model



Initial transitions

- Overwhelmed
- Excited
- Understanding rules of PGR study
- Expectation of supervisor/student relationship

Staff pinch points



What we need to think about?

First contact and Admissions



- Setting expectations
 - Managing expectations and aspirations
 - Academic integration
 - Social integration.
- Why should I go to university?
 - How and why will university study be different to previous types of study?
 - What is expected of me as a university student?
 - How are students treated at university?
 - What happens in each academic level of study?
 - What support advice and help is available both academically and personally throughout the lifecycle?
 - Is university suitable for me?
 - What will the university experience give me in terms of benefits?
 - What are my options after university?



Pre-arrival



- Continue to set and manage expectations and aspirations
- Continue to support academic integration
- Continue to support social integration.



Do I need to undertake any pre-entry academic work or reading?

Where am I going to live?

What accommodation can I afford?

When can I move in?

What do I need to do before I arrive at university?

How do I register or enrol?

What if I don't end up liking my course or my flat mates?

What if I am not smart enough to keep up with the other students?

I have a disability but what if no one understands?

Arrival and orientation



- Expectations set during the first contact, admissions and pre-arrival stages need to be delivered
- Focus on academic and not administrative activities
- Opportunity to make friends
- Appropriate information and support
- Often a temptation to overload with information
- Settle into their university life and studies as soon as possible



- How do I enrol?
- Where is my departmental student office?
- When will I get my timetable?
- How do I use my timetable?
- What extra curricula activities can I get involved in?
- How do I navigate myself around campus?
- When do I meet my course leader/personal tutor?
- When do lessons start?
- What support services do I have access to?



Provide the right type of information at the right time!



Students need:

Honest information

Trouble shooting road map



Induction (introduction) to Study



- Settling into studies
- Coping with the demands of academia
- Managing pressures of life
- Induction period
 - A full academic cycle
 - Minimum of 1 semester
 - Maximum of 1 academic year.



- Where and how do I find academic information?
- What do I do if I miss a lesson?
- What do I do if I don't get on with my personal tutor?
- What do I do if I seem to be the only one struggling?
- What do I do if I want to change accommodation?
- What do I need to do in the first few weeks at university?
- What will be expected of me academically in the first few weeks?
- What support services do I have access to?
- What do I do if I think I have a health or wellbeing issue?
- What if I struggle with the commute, cost of living and travel costs?
- What if I don't settle in and I want to leave?

Re-orientation



- Takes place at start of new academic year
 - Reminder of academic and personal support available
 - Reorientation session for all returners
 - Update on what's changed.
- How much of this year counts towards my final grade?
 - What are the assignments and when are they due?
 - What skills do I need to develop/improve for this level of study?
 - What do I need to do in the first few weeks?
 - What will be expected of me academically at this level?
 - What support services do I have access to?
 - What do I do if I start to struggle and fall behind?
 - What do I do if I am not getting on with my allocated summative assessment group?
 - How do I get work experience?
 - What extra curricula activities can I get involved in to help with skill development?



-
- Benefits of PALS to students**
- promotes **collaborative and active learning**
 - deepens student's understanding of the subject/discipline
 - develops **key study skills** and promotes **independent learning**
 - Helps students make a successful transition to tertiary studies
 - improves **retention & progression rate** amongst students
 - Improves **academic performance** of attendees

- 

- Ongoing study skill development
- Revision sessions, past exam papers
- Work returned more quickly
- Project help

- Access to placement, employability advice and support whether via the curriculum or extra curriculum
 - Presentation and report writing skills
 - CV writing, job interview help
 - Careers advice
 - Opportunities to engage in
- 

-

OUTduction

‘Getting students through the student lifecycle involves more than simply getting them to complete their course. It should support students in the transition from the world of study into the world of life’.

‘OUTduction’ starts during INduction when students are introduced to the key skills and knowledge they will build upon and utilise during and post study’.



Source: M Morgan, 2008

OUTduction activities

- Focused employability skills

- Debating skills
- Project management
- Time management
- Report writing skills
- How to get a job
- Use Alumni to mentor and advise



- What to do with the degree?

- Career route options
- How can skills learnt at university be transferred to life post study?
- Future study and its value?



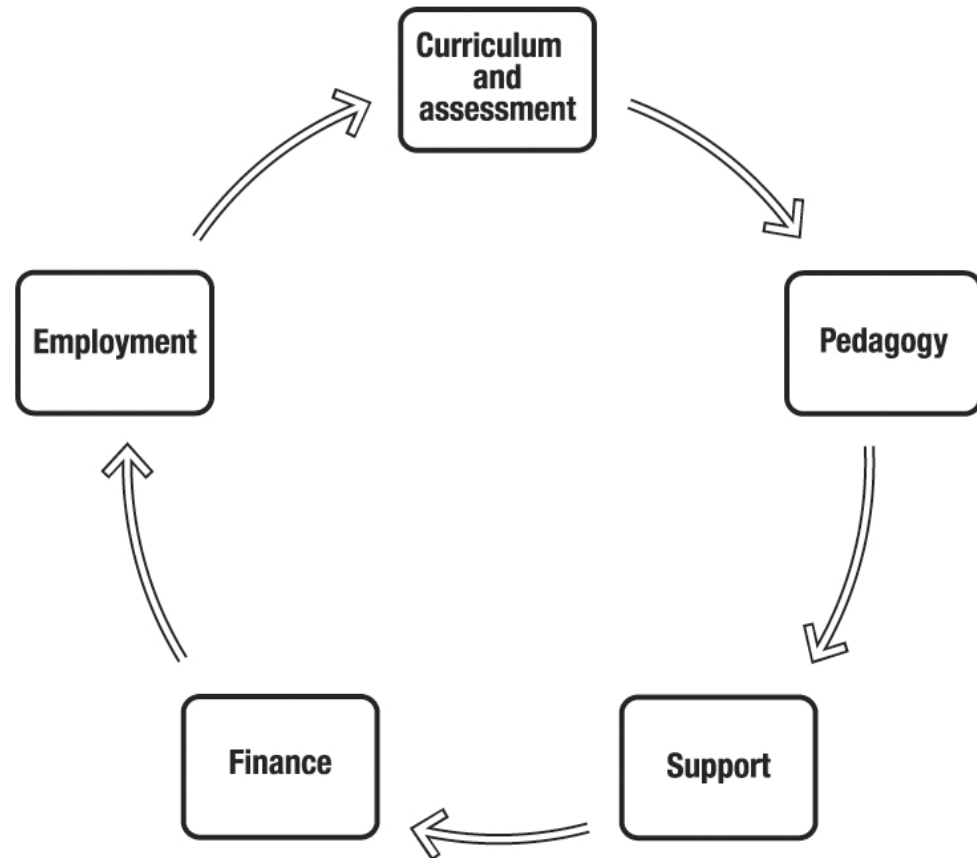
- Transitioning to life post study

- Adapting to life outside of university
- Uncertain economic, social and political environments
- Coping with feelings of loss, uncertainty, disappointment.



- When will I get my results?
- When should I start applying for jobs even though I don't know my classification?
- Who do I get a reference from?
- Where do I go if I am not coping with my academic studies?
- Where do I go if I have problems outside of university?
- What do I do if I am not getting on with my allocated assessment group?
- Where can I get funding for further study?
- When do I have to start paying back my loan?
- Do I get any continuing support as an Alumni?

Themes to consider when developing practical initiatives



Stage = Reinduction

Theme = Curriculum and Assessment

Activity within the theme = Placement/internship

Themes

Curriculum and assessment

Considerations

Credit value of placement
Type of assessment

Pedagogy

Transferability of learning into work
Transferring work learning into the classroom

Finance

Costs related to placement year
(e.g accommodation, uni fees, money management advice)

Employment

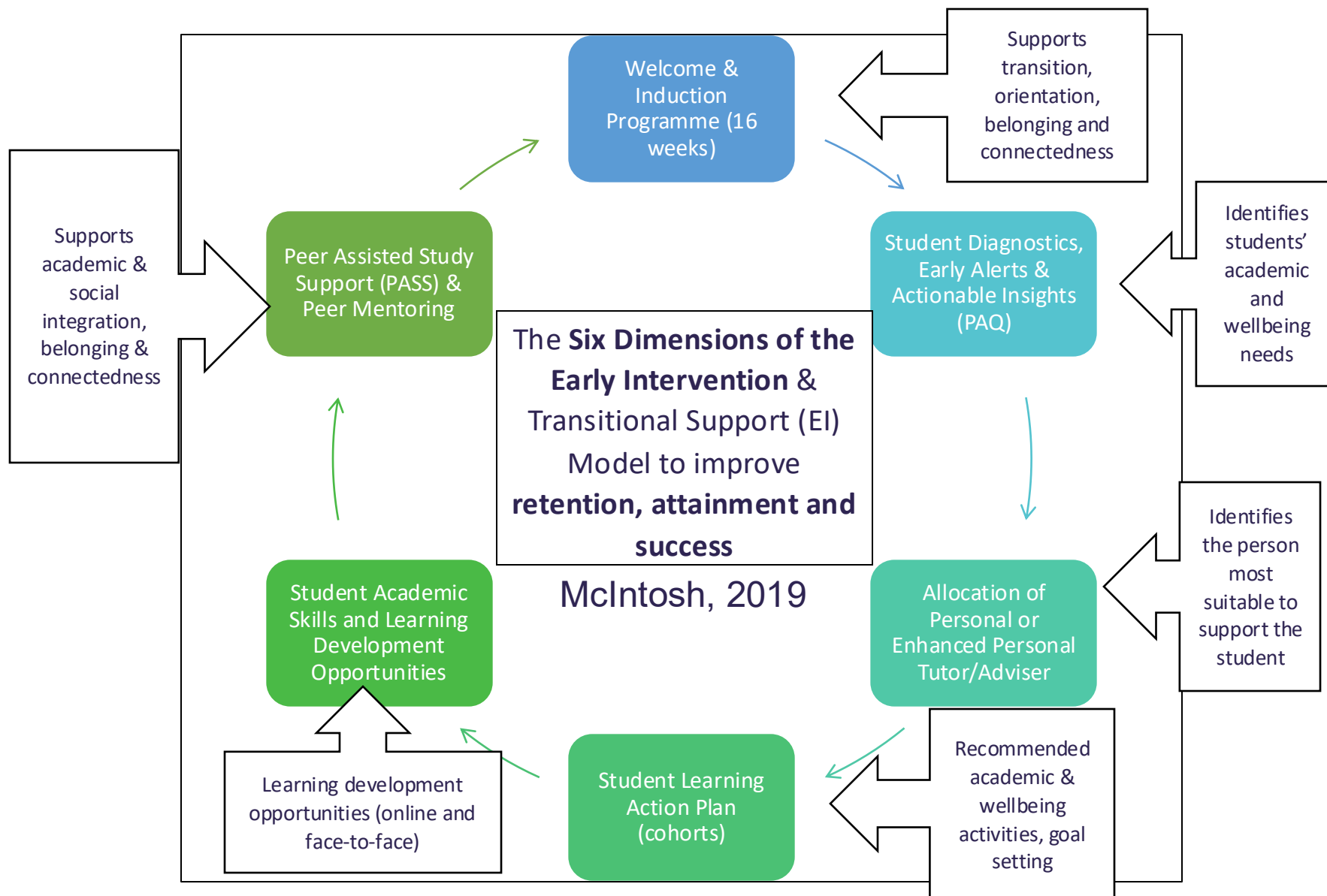
Getting a placement
Utilising current employment skills post study

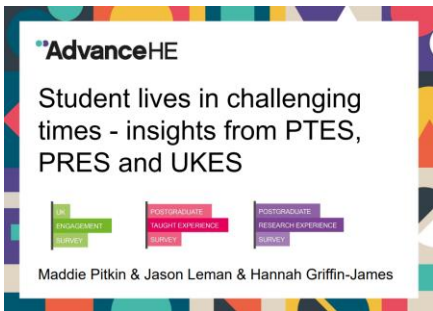
Support

Providing support to placement students
(e.g. mental health and wellbeing, disability)

Curriculum and Assessment Pedagogy Themes

Early Intervention & Transitional Support (McIntosh, 2019)





[Student Surveys | Advance HE](#)
[\(advance-he.ac.uk\)](http://advance-he.ac.uk)

TURBOCHARGING THE FUTURE

The Interim Report of the UPP Foundation Student Futures Commission

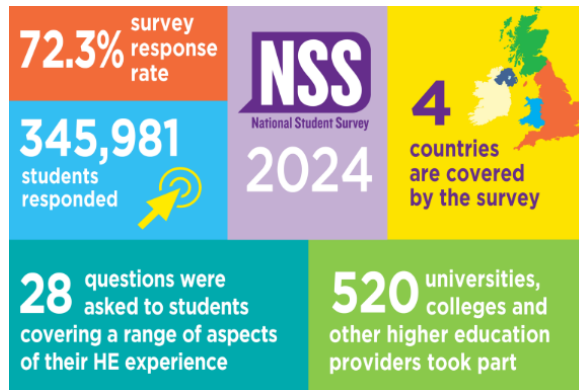
[Turbocharging the future \(upp-foundation.org\)](http://upp-foundation.org)



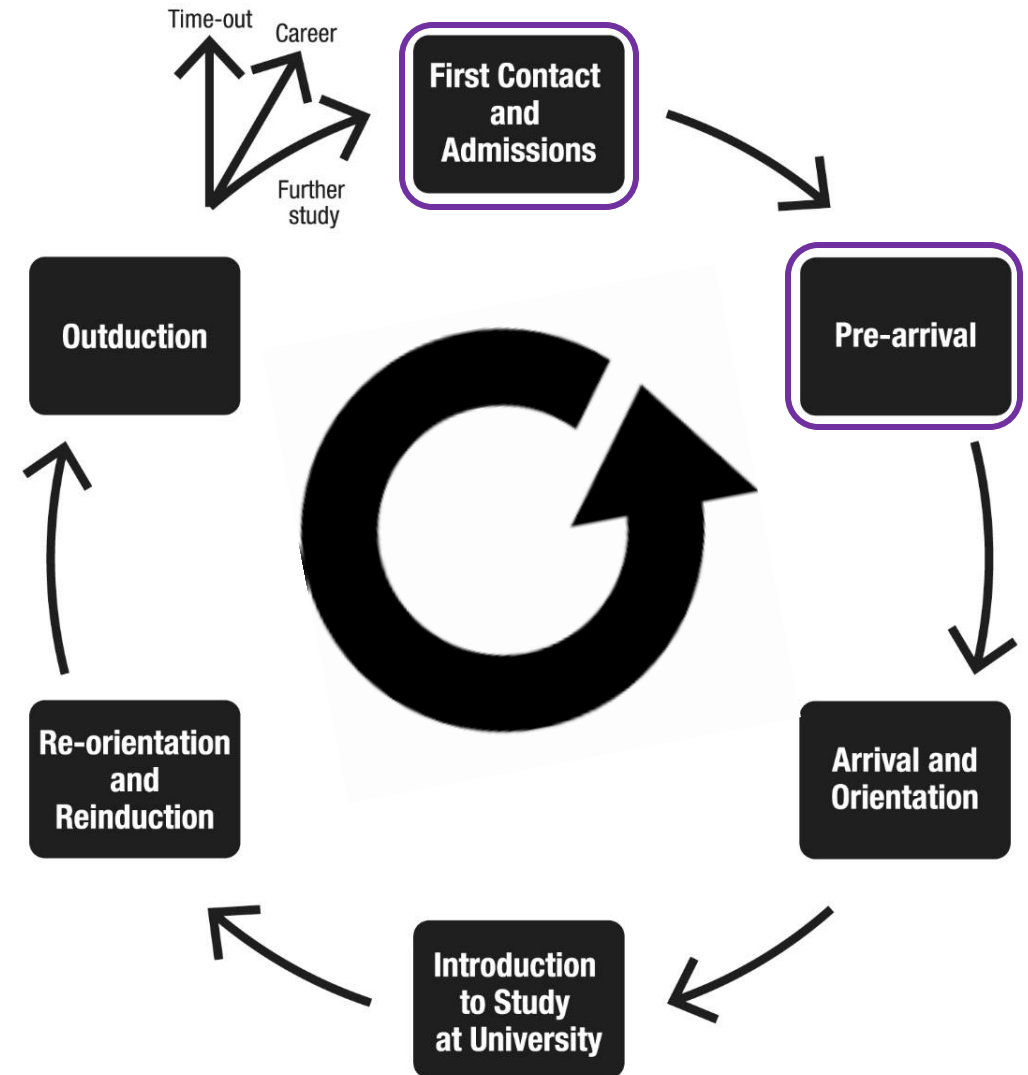
[Belonging-and-inclusion-survey-Wonkhe-Pearson-Feb-22.pdf](#)



[Data and analysis | UCAS](#)



The Student Experience Transitions Model



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

Rationale for the PAQ- understanding social changes and prior learning experiences, concerns and expectations

- A meaningful pre-arrival/arrival 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.
- Feeds into all institutional activities, process and policies including APP.
- 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 wave 1 initial results | Advance HE](#) and JISC

Stops assumptions being made

Formalised through the 11 University, HEFCE funded Postgraduate Experience Project
(called Entry to Study Survey)



Widening and sustaining postgraduate taught (PGT) STEM study in the UK: a collaborative project
Creating change through understanding expectations and attitudes towards PGT study, experiences and post-study outcomes from the perspective of applicants, students, universities and employers.

Analysed and written by Michelle Morgan and Ines Direito
Edited by Michelle Morgan

Postgraduate experience project
Understanding today
for a better tomorrow



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

Bridging the gap between secondary and tertiary education

Findings from the Undergraduate Level 4 Pre-Arrival Academic Questionnaire (PAQ)

A case study from a Post 1992 University



Dr Michelle Morgan
February 2020

[Bridging the gap between secondary and tertiary education-Morgan 2020.pdf](#)
([improvingthestudentexperience.com](#))



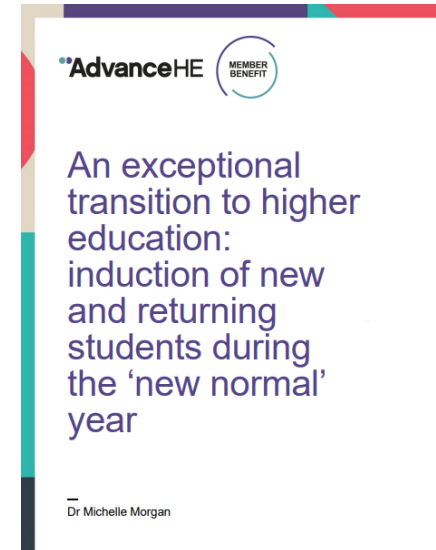
Financial concerns and working intentions of incoming Level 4 students

The potential implications for applicants and students in 2020/21 due to Covid19

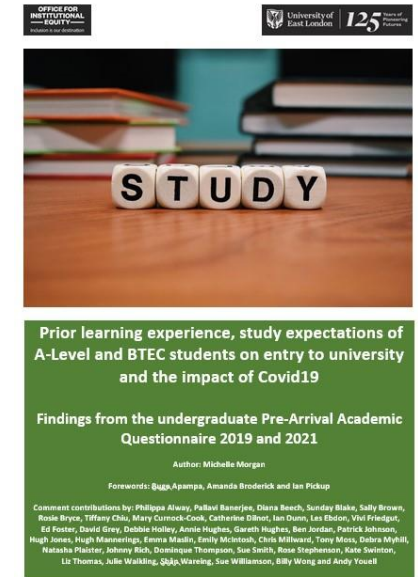
Dr Michelle Morgan

3 August 2020

[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](#))

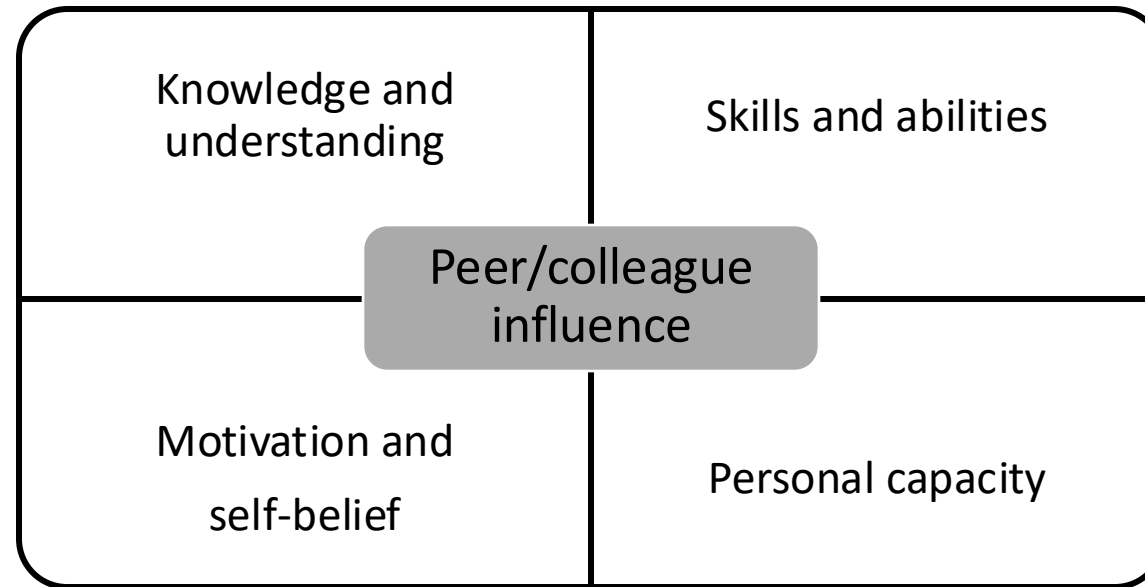


[Prior learning experience, study expectations of A-Level and BTEC students on entry to university and the impact of Covid19](#) | Advance HE
([advance-he.ac.uk](#))

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



Source: Foster, 2023

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

A roller coaster with red tracks and blue supports is shown against a sunset sky with orange and yellow clouds. The coaster features several loops and drops, with the tracks curving and twisting in the air. The blue support structure is made of vertical poles and cross-bracing.

Things to consider across all transitions stages in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach

Sector changes and challenges

Challenges for staff

UK driven by metrics

TEF
REF
KEF
NSS
PTES
GOS (LEO)



Clampdown on 'Mickey Mouse' degrees in major funding overhaul

Minimum entry requirement and a cap on student numbers are proposed

Campus Wokery as Academic Rigour and Authentic Experience: Why Critics Get It Wrong About Inclusion

Sunday Blake, GuildHE

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

Keeping ahead of policy

Higher Education Policy Statement and Reform

Government consultation response

July 2023

CP 876



Policy paper
Lifelong learning entitlement: what it is and how it will work
Updated 9 July 2025

Applies to England

Contents

Why we need the LLE

Who will be eligible for the LLE

Courses included under the LLE

How funding will work

LLE loan repayments

How the Office for Students will regulate providers under the LLE

Personal account and record of learning

Modular acceleration programme

How we will support the sector to deliver the LLE

The lifelong learning entitlement (LLE) will transform the post-18 student finance system to create a single funding system. It will replace:

- higher education (HE) student finance loans
- advanced learner loans

From September 2026, learners will be able to apply for LLE funding for the first time for courses and modules starting from January 2027 onwards.

The LLE will allow people to develop new skills and gain new qualifications at a time that is right for them.

From its launch, the LLE loan will be available for:

- full courses at [level 4 to 6](#), such as degrees, technical qualifications, and designated distance-learning and online courses



MillionPlus
The Association for Modern Universities



RESEARCH REPORT

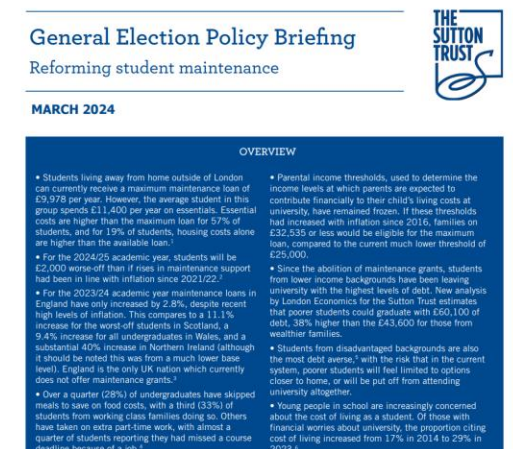
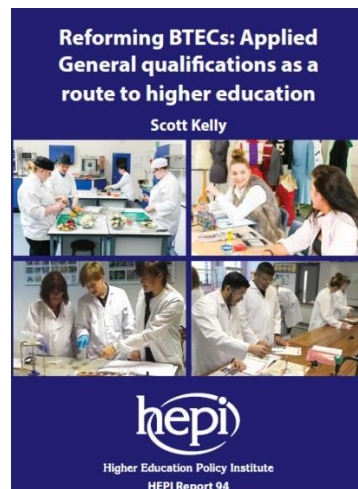
Forgotten Learners: building a system that works for mature students

Published March 2018

THE LOST PART-TIMERS

The decline of part-time undergraduate higher education in England

Claire Callender and John Thompson
- March 2018



Cross sector changes and challenges

- Focus on metrics and league tables



- Reduced resources



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



- Institutional
- Lack understanding about changing student body and prior experiences
- Increased student growth in UK recent years.

Level and type of study- New entrants England

Country of HE provider

England ▼

Entrant marker

Entrant ▼

Mode of study

All ▼

Sex

All ▼

Permanent address

All ▼

PGT 2024/5

FT 298,120

PT 108,695

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Postgraduate					
Doctorate research	24,500	22,895	22,680	23,835	23,980
Other postgraduate research	4,955	4,305	3,915	4,020	7,450
Institutional credit at postgraduate research	45	80	75	50	50
Total postgraduate research	29,500	27,280	26,670	27,905	31,480
Master's taught	277,720	309,015	363,900	338,090	317,980
Postgraduate Certificate in Education	25,520	22,115	16,315	14,775	15,910
Other postgraduate taught	44,345	47,215	47,400	48,125	46,775
Institutional credit at postgraduate taught	19,825	23,300	25,590	26,870	26,150
Total postgraduate taught	367,410	401,640	453,200	427,865	406,815
Total postgraduate	396,910	428,920	479,875	455,770	438,295
Undergraduate					
First degree	556,905	549,155	561,895	558,085	569,530
Foundation degree	13,170	12,295	11,995	10,365	8,680
HNC/HND	8,085	7,145	8,740	9,235	9,635
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	670	650	550	305	225
Other undergraduate	32,615	31,865	37,650	28,940	26,135
Institutional credit at undergraduate	22,785	23,235	28,485	30,535	28,970
Total other undergraduate	77,330	75,185	87,410	79,380	73,645
Total undergraduate	634,235	624,340	649,305	637,470	643,175
Total	1,031,145	1,053,255	1,129,180	1,093,240	1,081,470

UG 2024/25

FT 562,845

PT 80,330

Portsmouth PGT

19/20 2880

21/22 4320

23/24 3845

24/25 3575

FT 2625

PT 950

Portsmouth UG

19/20 8905

21/22 6030

23/24 6210

24/25 7340

FT 6300

PT 1040

UG Decline of 21 year olds and over

Country of HE provider **England** Permanent address **All**
 Entrant marker **Entrant** Level of study **All undergraduate** Mode of study **All**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Sex					
Female	362,890	352,725	361,390	351,945	351,885
Male	270,345	270,130	283,515	283,395	287,255
Unknown	995	1,480	4,405	2,130	4,030
Age group					
20 and under	392,245	387,940	398,800	394,925	405,540
21-24 years	81,675	77,745	77,740	74,840	74,600
25-29 years	49,580	46,665	47,270	44,080	42,525
30 years and over	110,570	111,970	125,475	123,605	120,485
Age unknown	160	20	25	20	20
Disability status					
Known disability	92,270	94,895	104,275	113,000	119,735
No known disability	541,965	529,445	545,030	524,470	523,435
Religious belief					
No religion	255,385	248,600	255,615	236,775	233,690
Buddhist	5,030	5,310	6,610	6,580	7,200
Christian	181,770	172,580	179,885	176,690	179,050

[Reset filters](#) | [Download table \(csv\)](#) | [Download source data \(csv\)](#) | [About SB273 Figure 5](#) | [Notes](#)

PGT Notable decline of 25 year olds and over

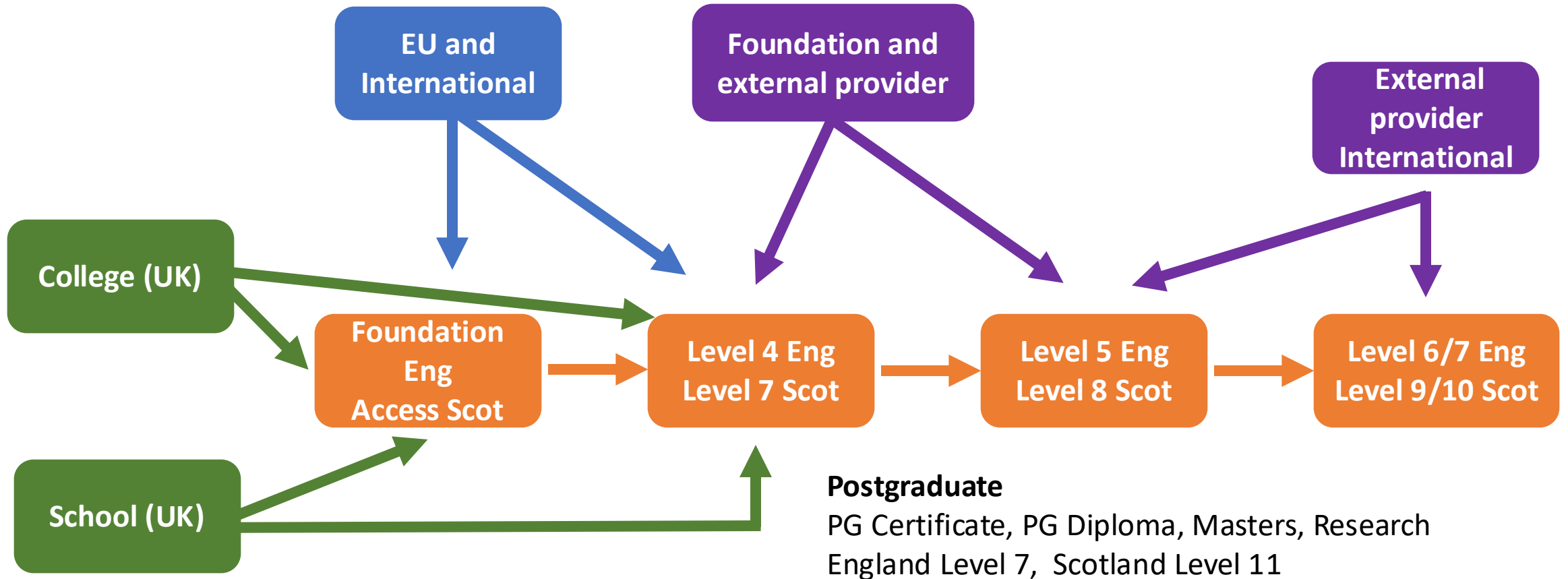
Country of HE provider **England** Permanent address **All**
 Entrant marker **Entrant** Level of study **Postgraduate (taught)** Mode of study **All**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Sex					
Female	219,305	237,590	264,085	249,990	224,840
Male	147,215	162,895	186,220	175,900	180,120
Unknown	890	1,155	2,900	1,970	1,850
Age group					
20 and under	2,765	3,850	5,380	5,610	7,110
21-24 years	175,465	186,365	197,810	189,480	190,130
25-29 years	79,825	92,780	112,335	101,790	90,860
30 years and over	109,285	118,600	137,645	130,930	118,695
Age unknown	65	45	35	50	20
Disability status					
Known disability	38,040	38,825	41,135	43,395	47,135
No known disability	329,370	362,815	412,065	384,470	359,680
Religious belief					
No religion	151,490	147,620	144,675	138,465	134,125
Buddhist	4,520	6,240	9,065	8,820	7,580
Christian	95,015	102,530	115,480	100,795	93,475

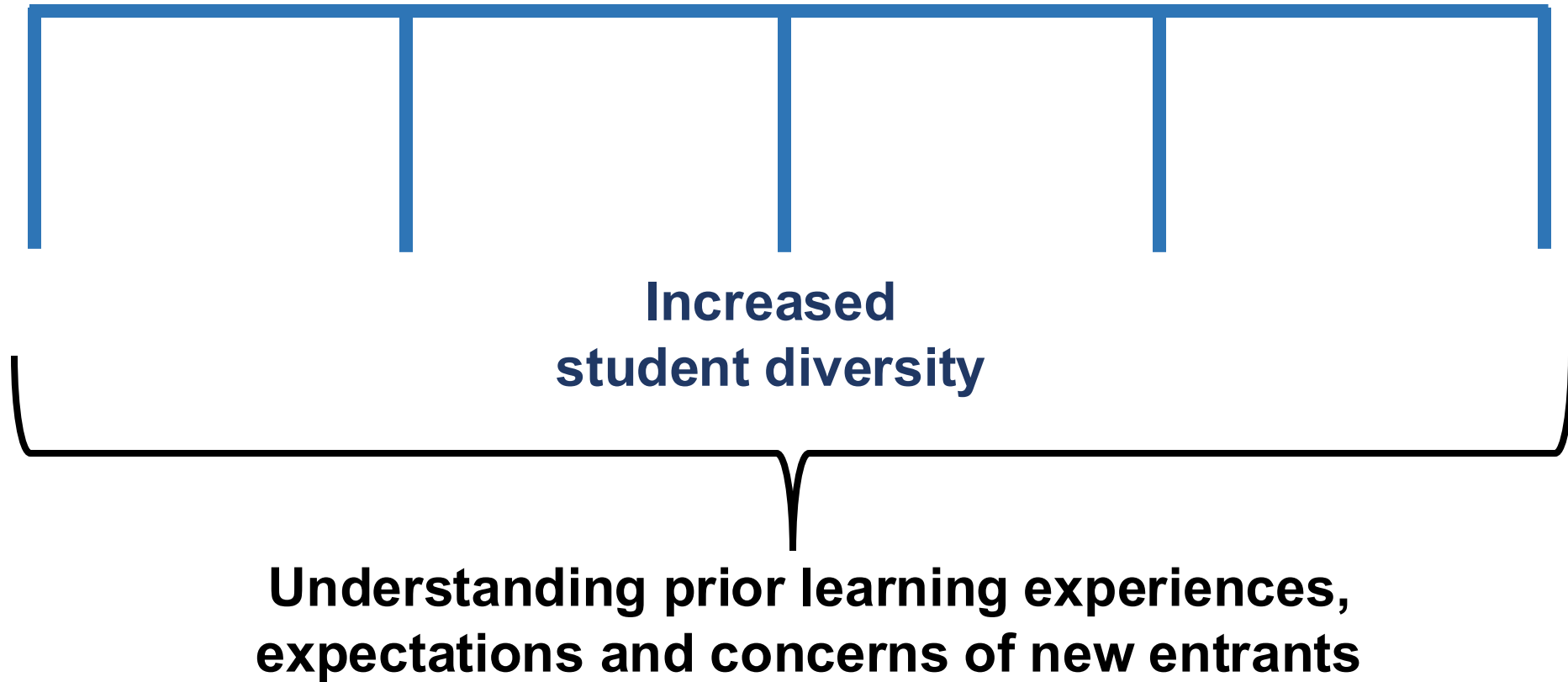
[Reset filters](#) | [Download table \(csv\)](#) | [Download source data \(csv\)](#) | [About SB273 Figure 5](#) | [Notes](#)

2030= decline in home 18 year old's

Where do our students come from?



Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



What we know about incoming students

Student characteristics including those that are 'protected' and type of entry qualification, impact on UG (and PGT) retention, progression and success.

Care experience

[Recent Reports & Outputs](#)
[Research website \(drzoebaker.co.uk\)](http://Research website (drzoebaker.co.uk))

Disability

Estrangement

Ethnic minorities

1st generation- 'less' lived experience guidance than 2nd generation

Free meals

Mature student- out of a 'study' routine but expected to study as if just come out of education

Generational status

Mode of study

Polar and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Sex

Sexual orientation

Socio-economic background

Commuter student



The complex lives of students



UG UK domiciled, English Second Language, Direct Entry



UG Mature, Disability (dyslexia), single parent



PGT International, transgender



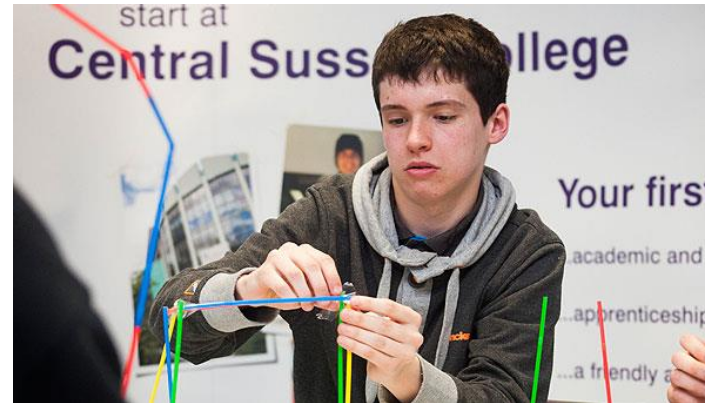
UG, Visiting, International



Mature, Veteran, Commuter, Carer of Elderly Parents



Disabled, Postgraduate, Part-time, BAME



UG Young Learner, Care Leaver Disability (Mental Health)



UG, part-time, Work-Based Learning

Our diverse student body

Age and communication factors

In the UK and Europe, individuals are legally considered adults at **18 years old** in almost all countries. This milestone—known as the "age of majority"—grants full legal capacity, the right to vote, and the ability to sign binding contracts.

The standard approach to communication is structured as follows:

- Primary & Secondary Schools (Ages 4-16):** Communications, including school reports, newsletters, and attendance records, are sent directly to parents or legal guardians. Students at this age are not considered legally independent.

- Sixth Forms & Colleges (Ages 16-18):** Educational institutions typically communicate directly with the student as they are considered young adults. However, institutions frequently keep parents in the loop regarding critical matters like overall attendance, mock exam results, and academic progress reviews (often sending grade reports to both).

- Universities (Ages 18+):** Due to strict data protection laws (UK GDPR), universities will generally **only** communicate with the student. Unless a student provides explicit consent, universities will not share academic progress, grades, or disciplinary actions with parents, even in the case of fee payments.



17 years and 364 days old

Communications to
parents/legal guardian

Classified as a child/minor

Legal documents, contracts
and agreements signed by
parents/legal guardians



18 years old

Communications to the
student

Classified as an adult

Responsible for signing
legal documents,
contracts and
agreements

Challenges of managing expectations



Fun in study.....

But a common issue is not getting on with your study group

Be mindful that students need 'real' models not just 'role' models



Happy flat mates.....

But a common issue is with living with new people and not getting on with them



Fun in free time...

Students don't always get the time

'A degree is a rung on the ladder of lifelong learning'

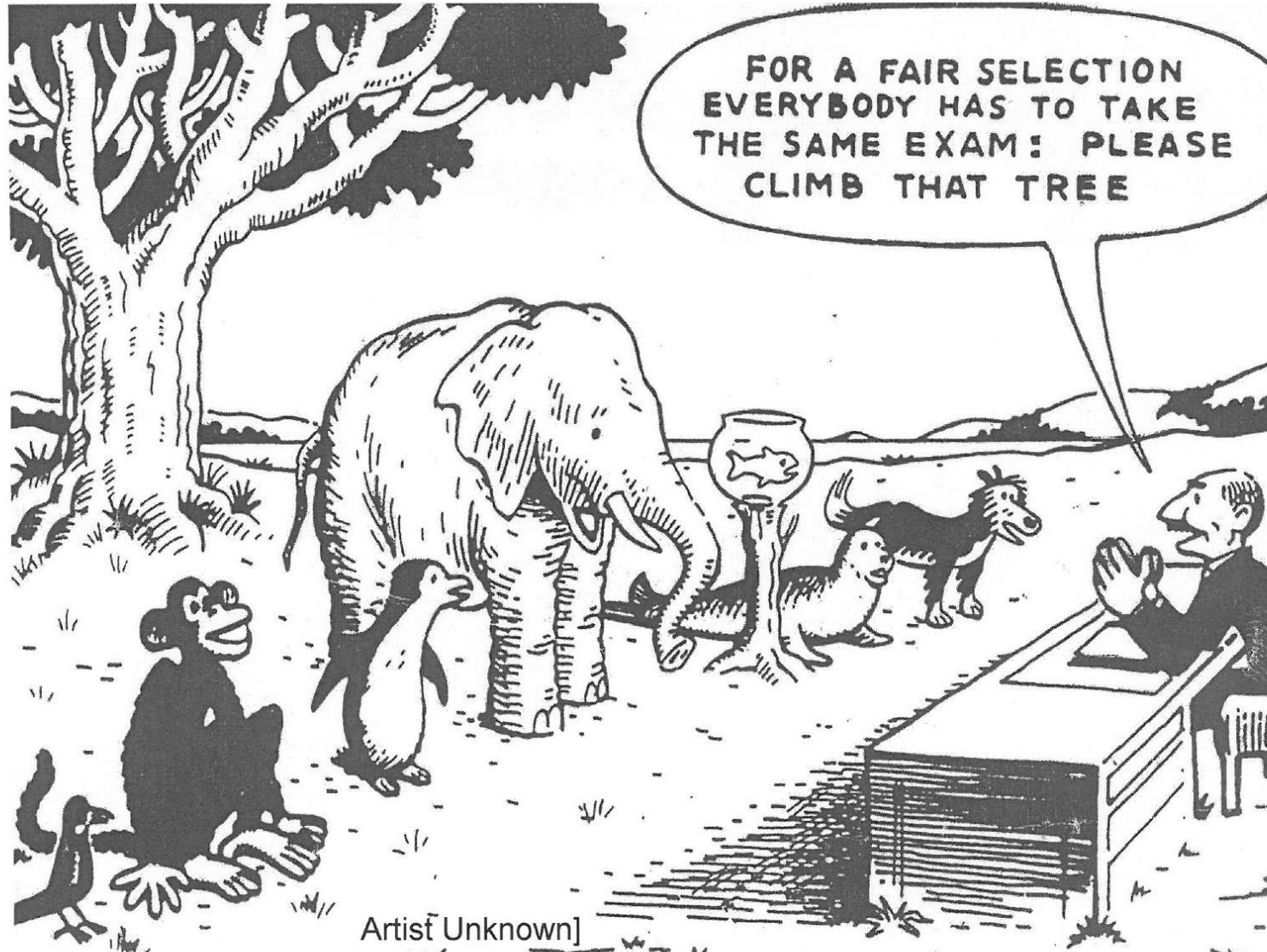
Prof Sir D Watson



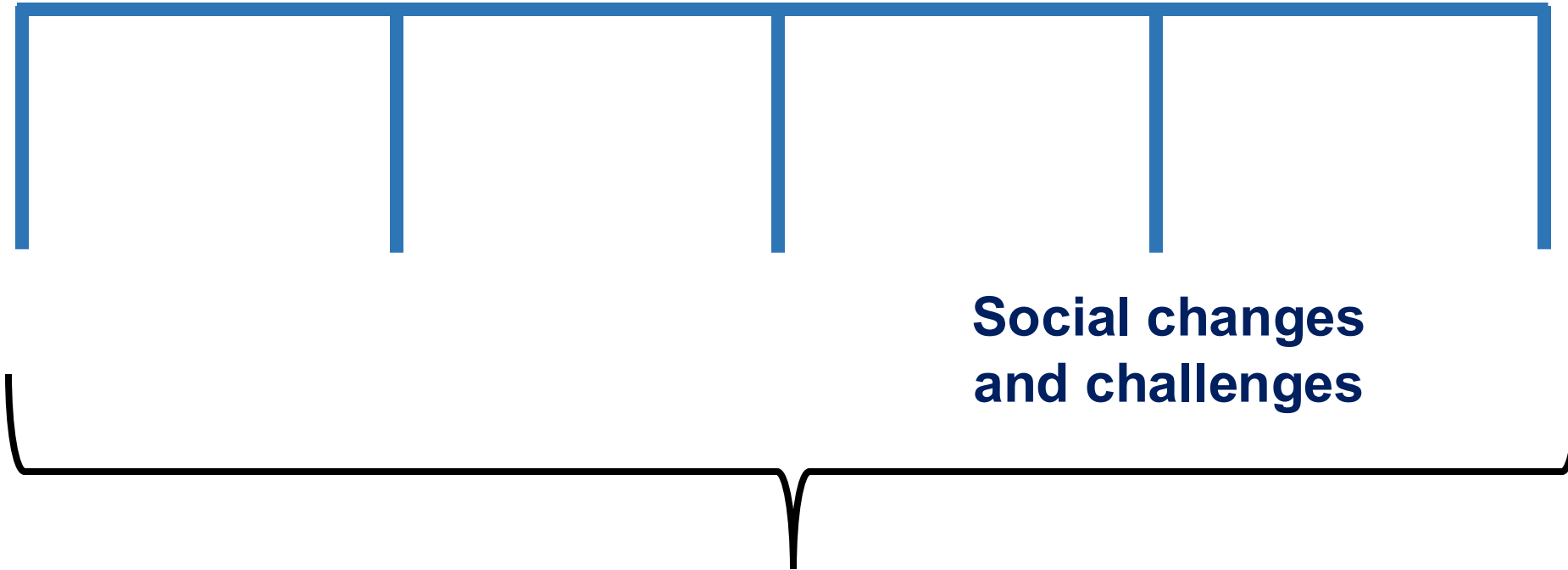
Land a dream career.....

Disappointment can be experienced

One size fits all



Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



**Understanding prior learning experiences,
expectations and concerns of new entrants**

Impact of Covid19 -Where we are and what we know

5 broad learning experiences of new entrants from school/college in 2024/25

During covid
Phase 1
2019/20



Choosing subjects
for GCSE,
Nationals, SVQs
14 years old

During Covid
Phase 2 2020/21



GCSE,
Nationals,
SVQs
Yr 1
15 years old

'New normal'
Phase 3
2021/22



GCSE,
Nationals
SVQs
Yr 2
16 Years old

Impact of
Phase 4
2023/24



A-Level
BTECs/HNC/
HND
Yr 1
17 years old

Impact of
Phase 5
2024/25



A-Level
BTECs/HNC/
HND
Yr 2
18 years old

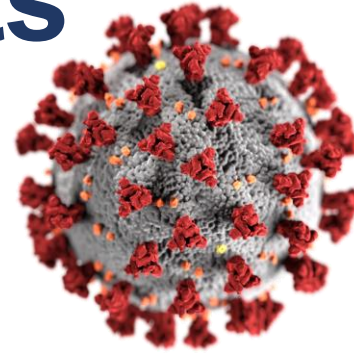
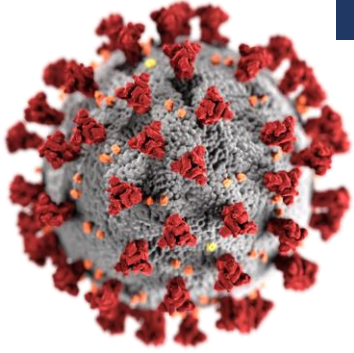
Impact of
Phase 5
2025/26



Enter HE

Impact of Covid19 on UG entrants

National PAQ



74% were in study during Covid19

Loss of social engagement with friends at school or college	54%
---	-----

Loss of a structured learning environment	53%
---	-----

Worry about lost learning and knowledge gaps	42%
--	-----

Lack of self-discipline	36%
-------------------------	-----

Concerns on entry

Lack of confidence about study ability	35%
--	-----

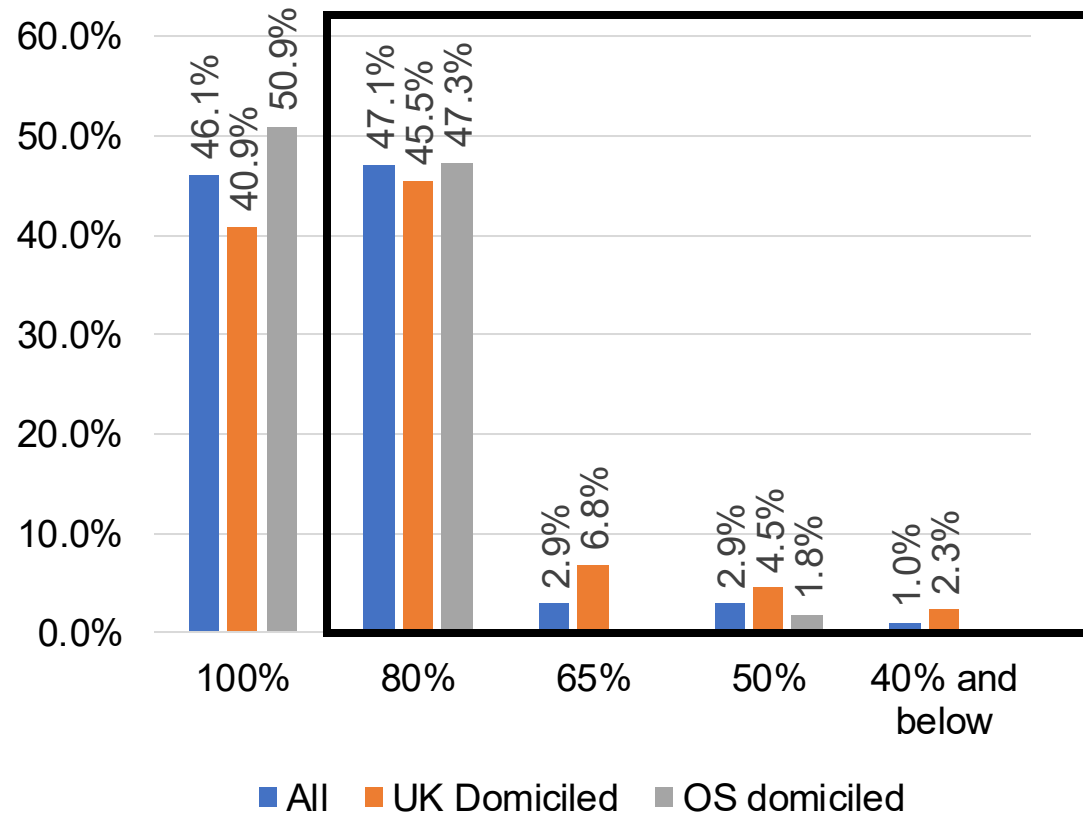
Fitting in with class-mates	42%
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Getting on with fellow students	37%
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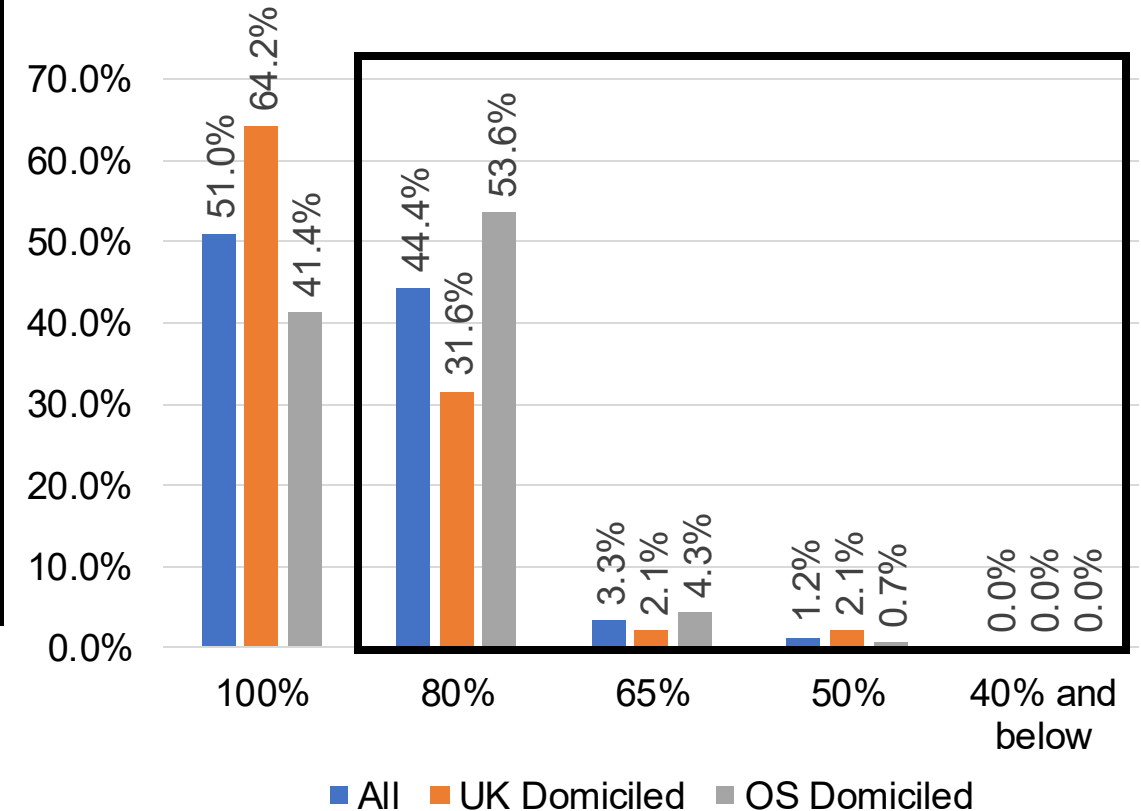
Worry about knowledge gaps	30%
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Attendance of entrants National PAQ

New UGs

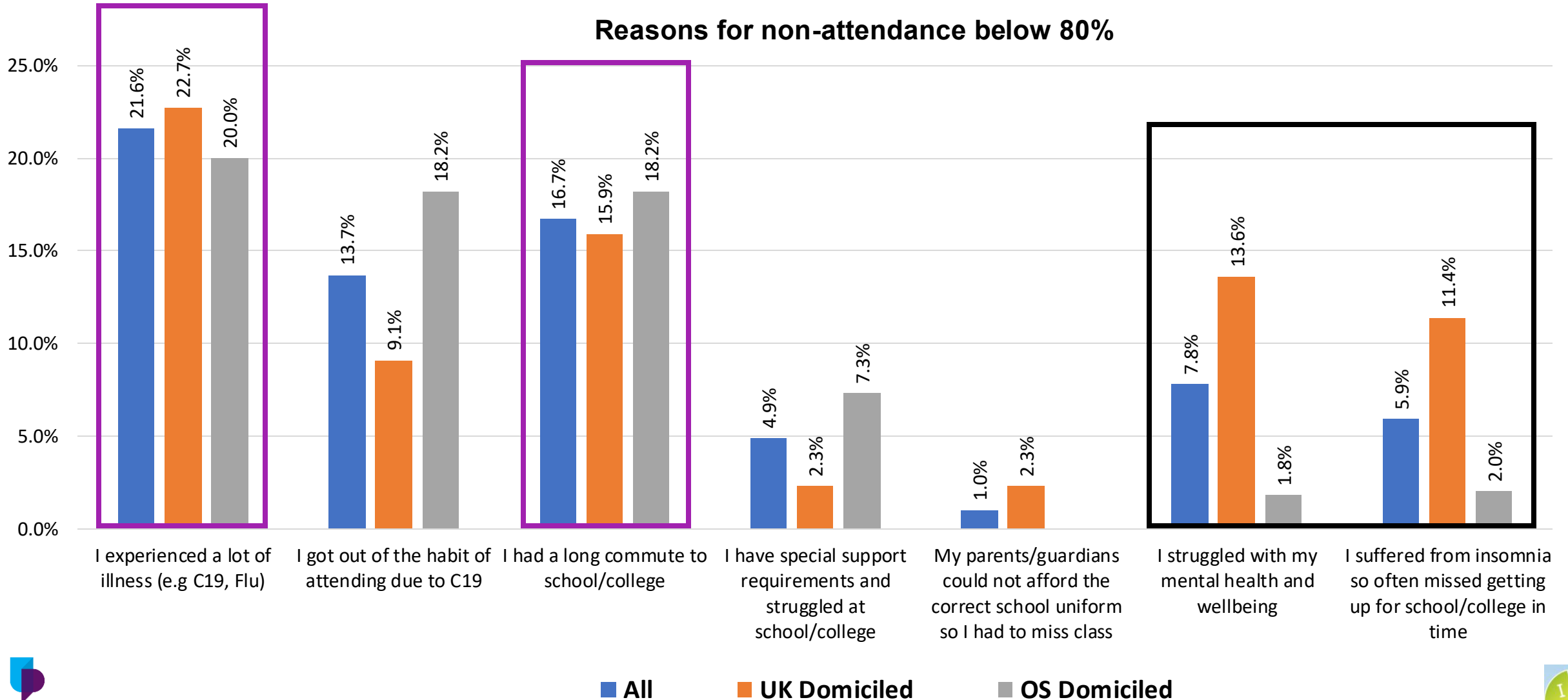


New PGTs



Reasons for reduced school and college attendance

National PAQ



Visits to a university before choosing and starting a course

National PAQ

Abbreviations All= whole dataset, CG= Comparison Group, 1U= one Uni

<u>Year achieved highest entry qualification for UG study</u>				<u>Visits to universities by applicants before choosing and starting their course</u>				
	All	CG	1U		All UG	1U	All PGT	1U
2025	55%	65%	39%	0	29%	42%	71%	73%
2024	17%	17%	19%	1	21%	21%	16%	14%
2023	8%	6%	12%	2	21%	19%	7%	8%
2022	4%	3%	7%	3	15%	11%	5%	4%
				4+	14%	6%	1%	1%

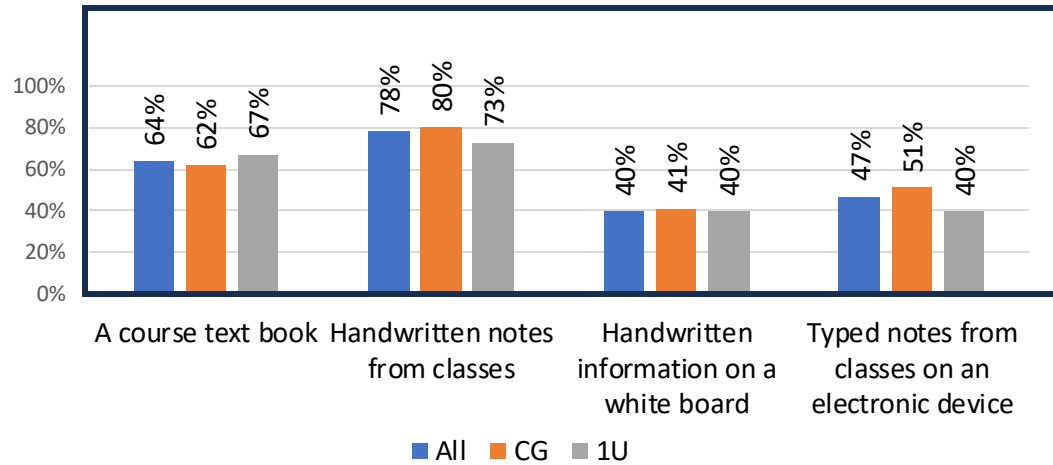
Most likely to not visit any university in-person before choosing and starting their course

- 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

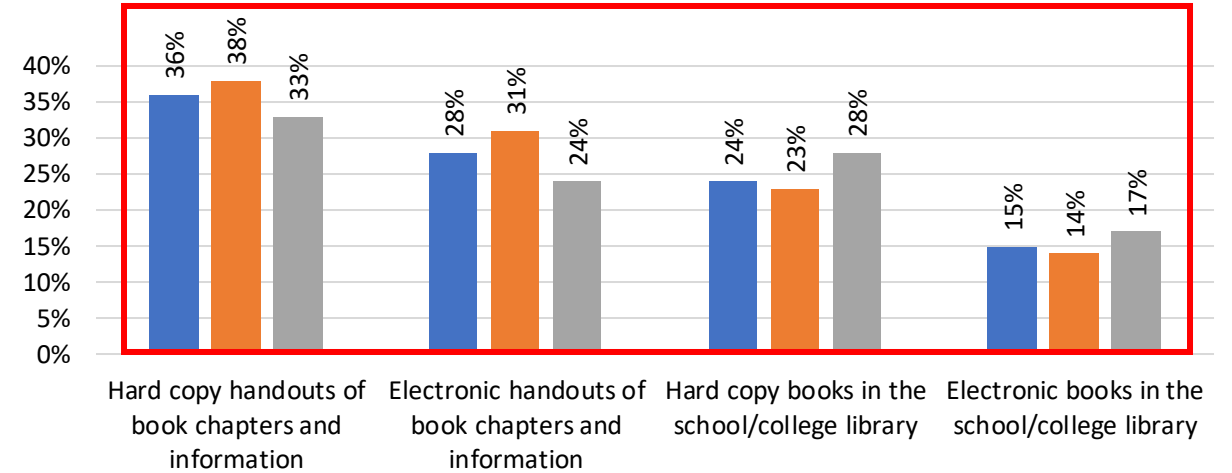
UG Prior learning experiences National PAQ

Accessing learning information

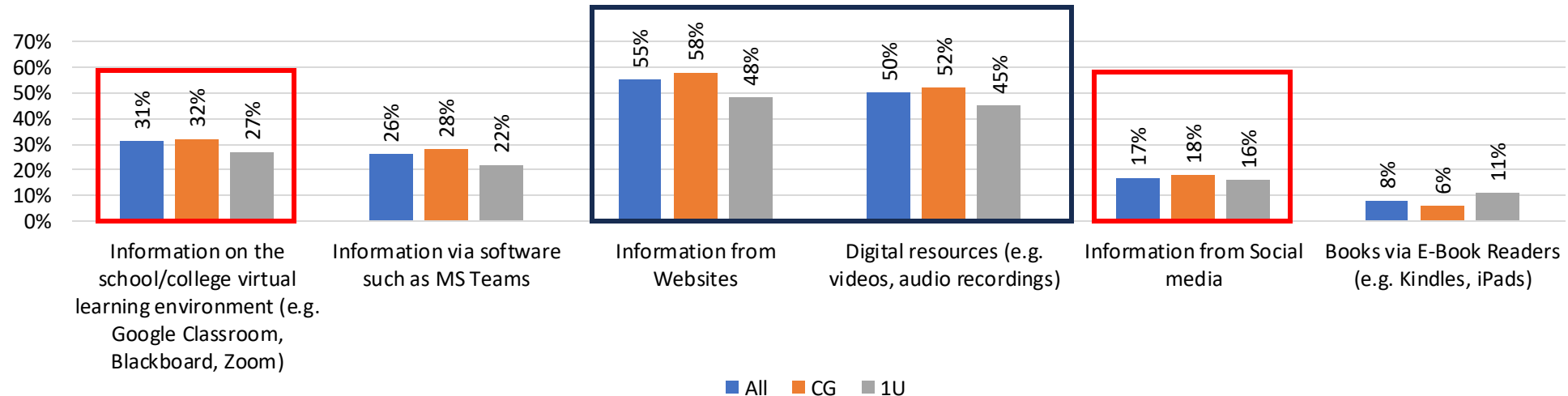
Course textbooks and notes



Library materials and handouts



Digital materials



Type of mobile phone and data package National PAQ

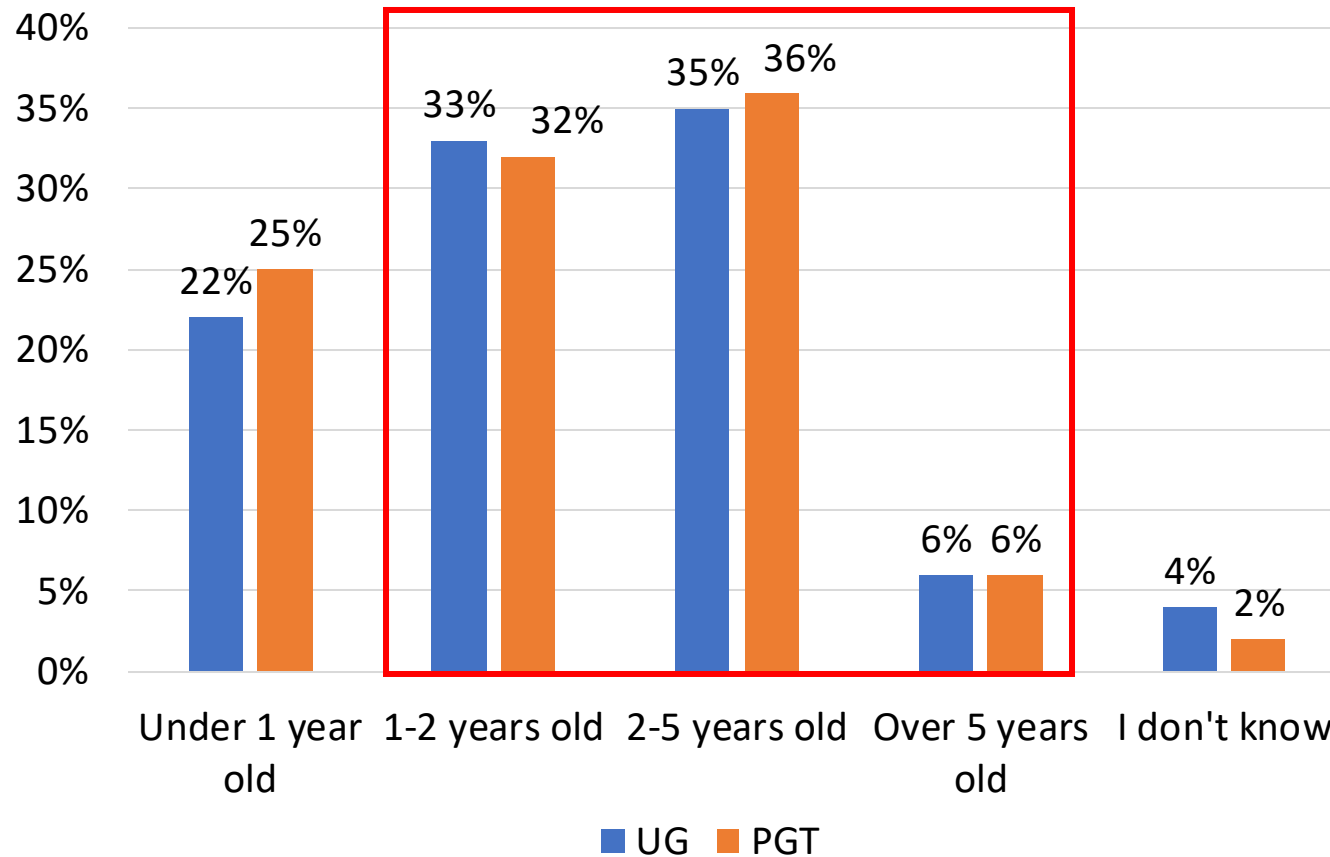
	UG	PGT
Android	27%	42.2%
iOS	73%	57.6%
I do not have a phone	0%	0.1%

	UG UK	UG Non-UK	PGT UK	PGT Non-UK
Android	25.3%	40.6%	34.0%	47.3%
iOS	74.4%	59.2%	66.0%	52.5%
I do not have a phone	0.0%	0%	0%	0.1%

	UG UK	UG Non-UK
Up to 10 GB	12.3%	13.4%
Up to 15 GB	6%	9.3%
Up to 20 GB	8.4%	14.2%
Over 20 GB	22.1%	24.2%
Unlimited	29.5%	18.6%
I do not know	21.6%	20.3%

	PGT UK	PGT Non-UK
Up to 10 GB	17.8%	21.5%
Up to 15 GB	6.8%	8%
Up to 20 GB	9.1%	14%
Over 20 GB	19.5%	21.2%
Unlimited	31.1%	16.9%
I do not know	15.7%	18.4%

Age of mobile phones National PAQ



Issues with phones over 2-3 years old

Significantly hinder participation in modern virtual learning environments (VLEs) due to:

Performance and Software Incompatibility

- App Incompatibility: Older phones may no longer support the latest operating system (iOS or Android) updates.
- Lag and Slow Processing
- Limited Storage

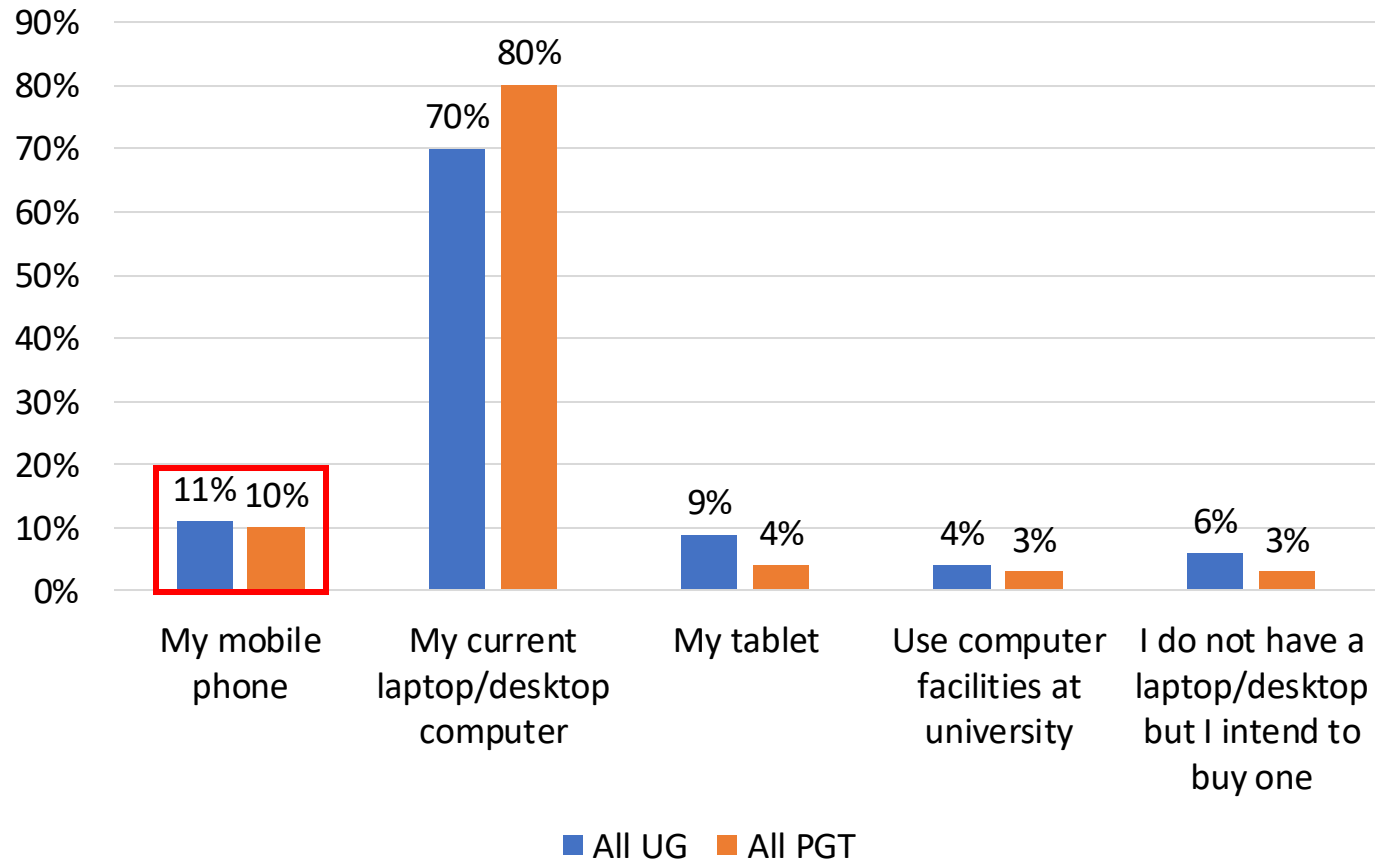
Technical Limitations (Video/Audio/Battery)

Impact on Learning Experience

Main tech used for study and experience of Gen AI

National PAQ

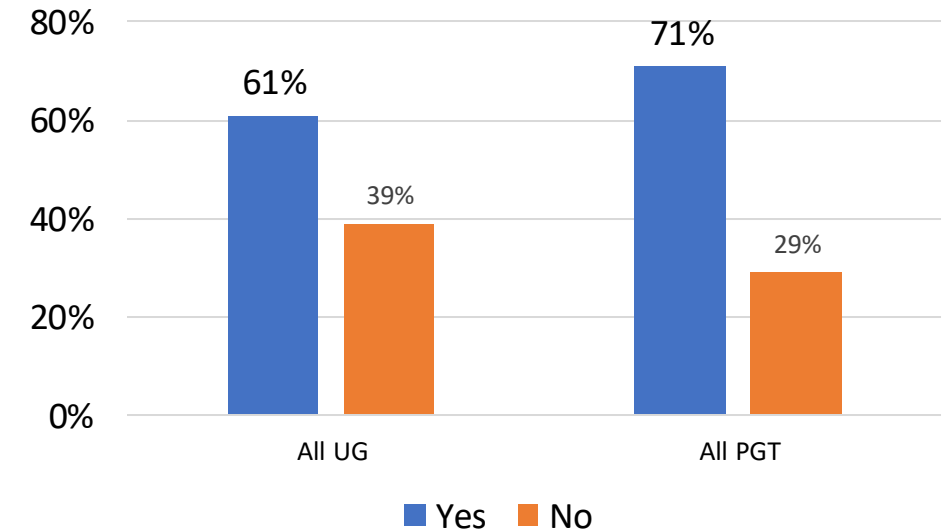
Main tech to be used to access information and learning materials



[AI visibility is reshaping how students discover universities - HEPI](#)

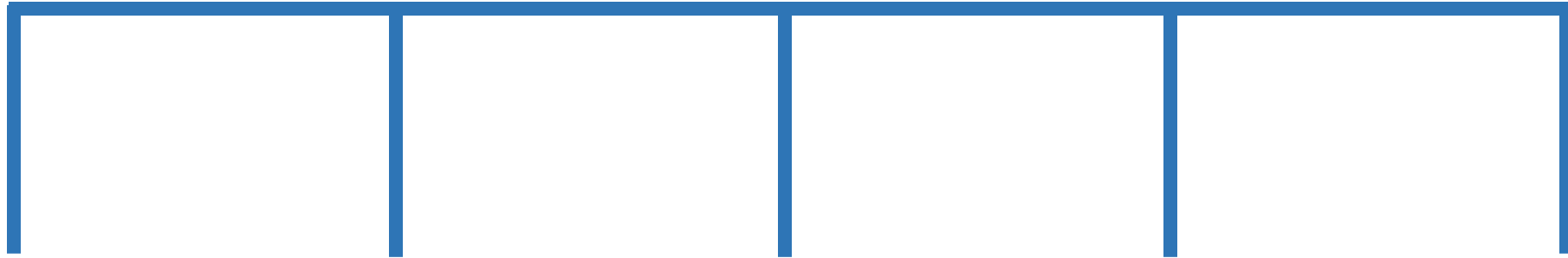
Experience of Gen AI

(e.g. ChatGPT, Grammarly, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, QuillBot, Dall-E, Adobe Firefly, DeepSeek, Midjourney, Canva AI)



- Grammarly and ChatGPT- highest use
- Reasons for use
 - *improve writing by correcting spelling or grammar mistakes*
 - *explore topics of interest, summarise information or text*
 - *explain concepts.*

Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



**Mental health
and wellbeing**



- **Engineering, medicine and dentistry** courses have the lowest declaration

[450% increase in student mental health declarations over last decade but progress still needed to address declarations stigma | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

- **Women are 2.2 times more likely to declare** a mental health condition than men.
- Some **LGBT+ students - six times** more likely to share a mental health condition
- **Care experienced students – almost three times as likely.**
- One in five students research support specifically for an existing mental health condition before they apply



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



- 34% of children between 7-16 had a problem with sleep 3 or more times over the previous 7 days.
- For 17-23 year olds this was 64%.

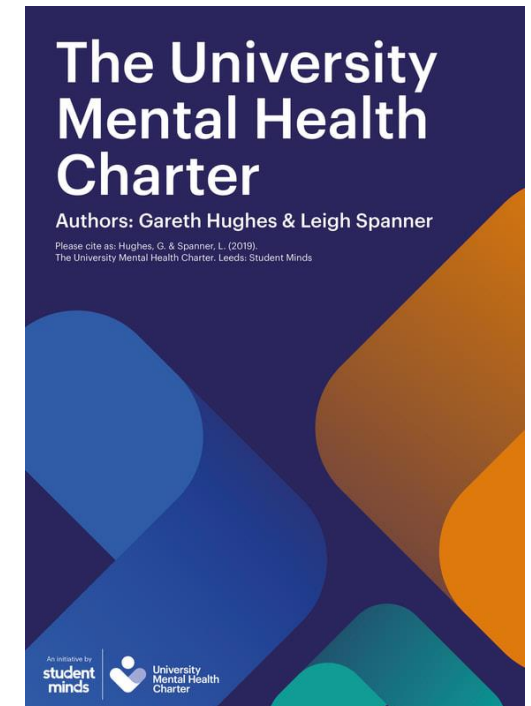
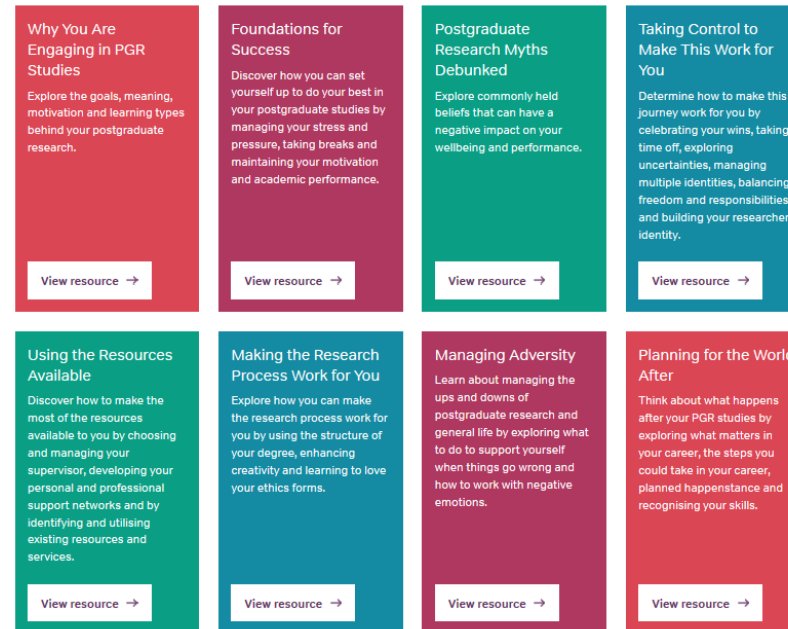
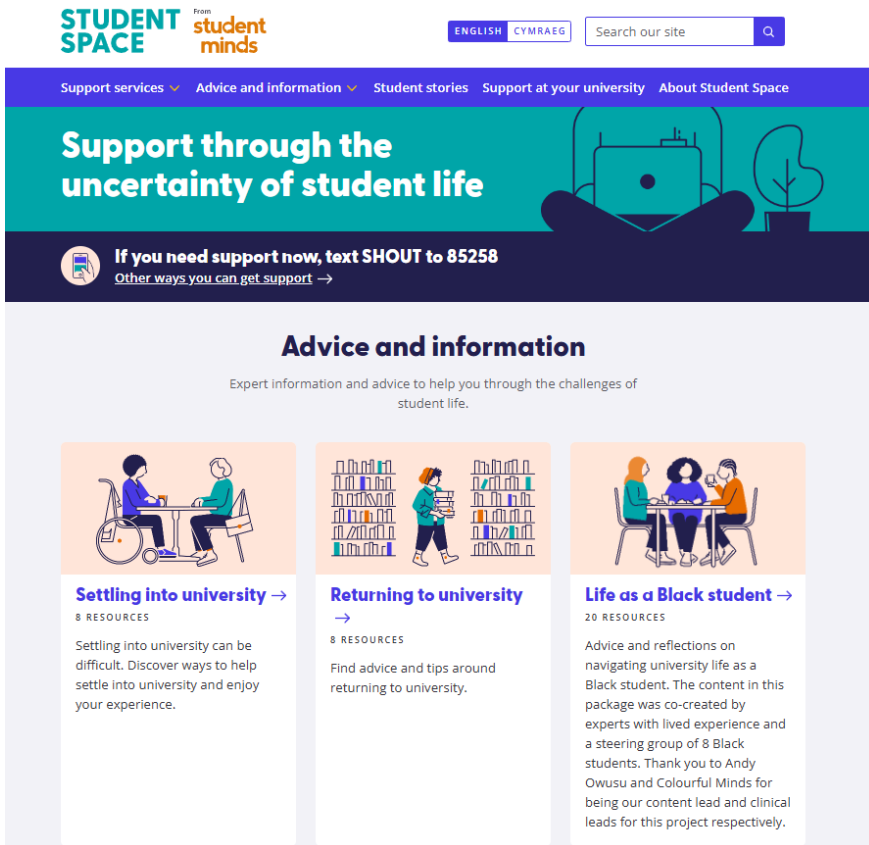
Concerns on entry (very concerned/concerned) National PAQ

UG top 10 concerns		PGT top 10 concerns	
Cost of living	55%	Cost of living	68%
Coping with the level of study	48%	Coping with the level of study	64%
Fitting in with new classmates	42%	Fitting in with new classmates	54%
Getting into debt	42%	Lack of information about how to study at university	52%
Lack of information about how to study at university	41%	Mental health and wellbeing	50%
Sufficient funding	39%	Cost of travel to university	49%
Getting on with fellow students	37%	Sufficient funding	49%
Cost of travel to university	36%	Concerns about knowledge gaps due to prior learning	44%
Mental health and wellbeing	36%	Getting back into study as been out of study for a while	44%
Lack of confidence in my ability	35%	Getting into debt	44%

Wellbeing Integrated Whole Institutional Approaches

University management teams, staff and students should be encouraged to engage with the [University Mental Health Charter](#) and [Student Minds](#) –

[Home](#) resources.



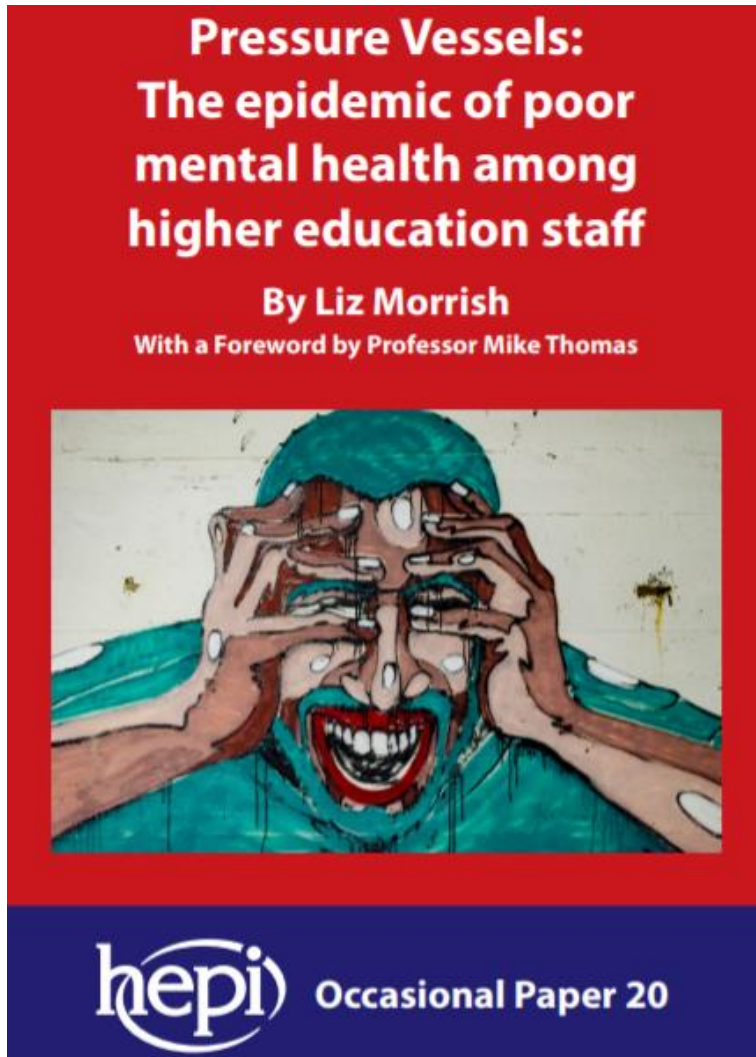
<https://thewellbeingthesis.org.uk/>

<https://studentspace.org.uk/>

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.htm>

[programme registration is now open.](#)

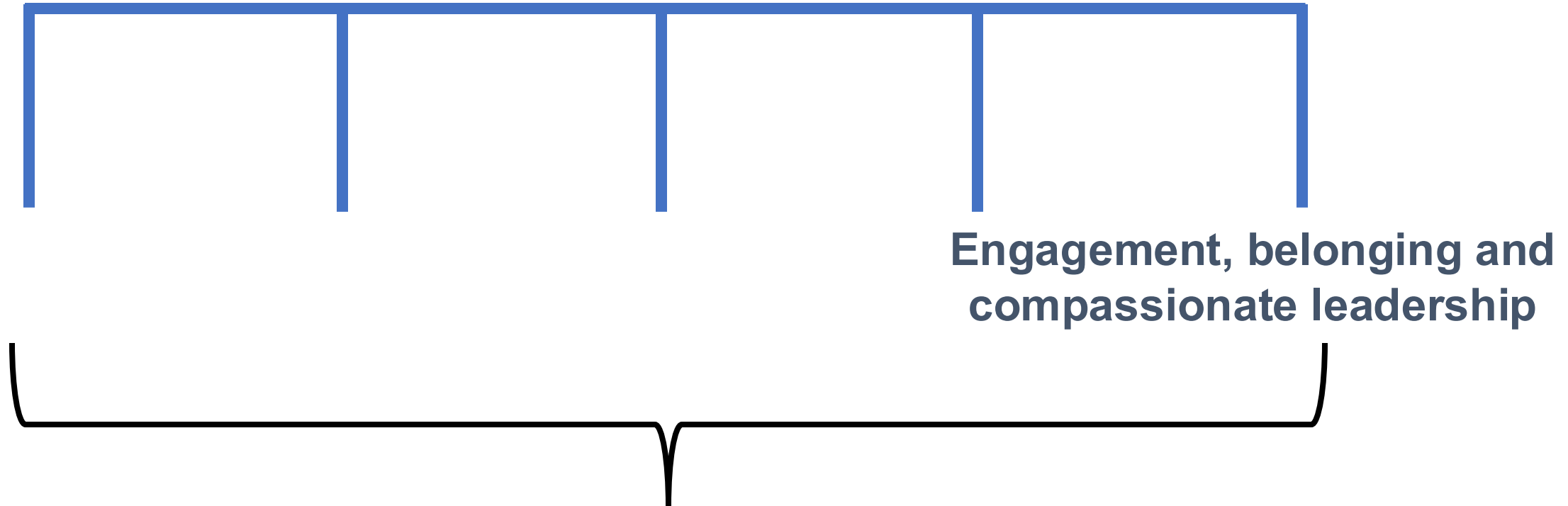
Supporting staff wellbeing



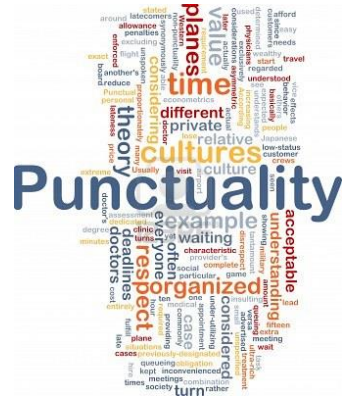
What we need to think about student learning

- Increase in **mental health declarations**
- Increase in **poor attendance at school/college**
- **Cost of living crisis** is affecting secondary students as well as tertiary
- **Knowledge gaps** as a result of the pandemic and ongoing illness
- **Lack of confidence** about ability to study at tertiary level
- **Prior learning experiences** will be different to university
- **Use of digital resources in school and college** generally reverted back to patterns pre-pandemic so don't assume digitally learning experienced
- **Digital poverty** impacting on learning

Things to consider in achieving a whole integrated institutional approach



**Understanding prior learning experiences,
expectations and concerns of new entrants**



Learning

Environment



Dr Emily MacIntosh, CSO, Harper Adams



Boring Lectures *meetings*



Attendance does not = engaged

Who is more engaged with their university?

All are full-time students

Student 1

Attends all lectures and seminars

Is not involved in extra curricula activity

Lives on campus

Does limited extra reading

Has 25 hours contact time a week

Timetable split over 2.5 full days

Do not undertake paid work

Dyslexic

Single and 20 years old

Student 2

Attends 80% of all lectures and seminars

Is a course representative

Lives 15 miles away and uses public transport

Does all of the extra reading

Has 12 hours contact time a week

Timetable split over 4 days

- One day has 1 lecture at 9am and another has 1 seminar

Undertakes 15 Hours paid work a week

No disability

23 Years old care leaver

Who has the greatest 'belonging'?



Being, Belonging, Becoming' By Professor Harriet Dunbar-Morris

[Building Belonging | Advance HE \(advance-he.ac.uk\)](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/building-belonging)

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/reports-publications-and-resources/student-surveys/uk-engagement-survey-ukes>

[Building Belonging in Higher Education: Recommendations for developing an integrated institutional approach \(wonkhe.com\)](https://www.wonkhe.com/resources/publications/building-belonging-in-higher-education-recommendations-for-developing-an-integrated-institutional-approach/)

Student 1

Attends all lectures and seminars

Is not involved in extra curricular activity

Lives on campus

Does limited extra reading

Has 25 hours contact time a week

Timetable split over 3 full days

Do not undertake paid work

Dyslexic

Single and 20 years old

Student 2

Attends 80% of all lectures and seminars

Is a course representative

Lives 15 miles away and uses public transport

Does all of the extra reading

Has 12 hours contact time a week

Timetable split over 4 days

* One day has 1 lecture at 9am and another has 1 seminar

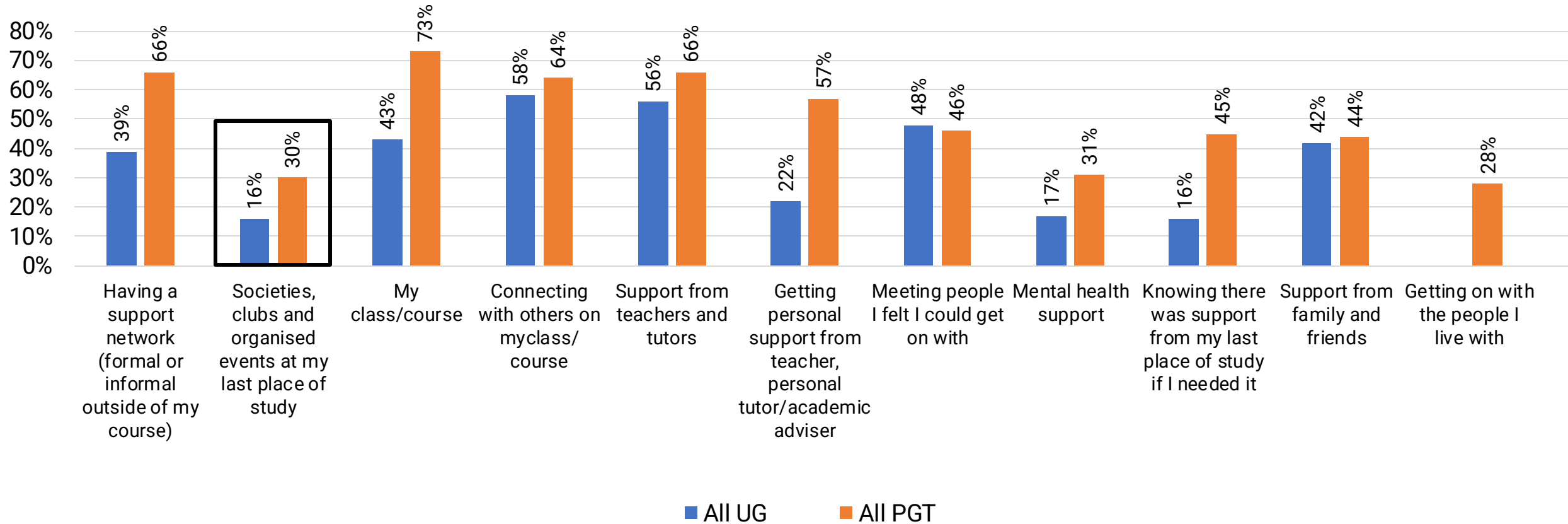
Undertakes 15 Hours paid work a week

Wheel chair user

23 Years old care leaver

What was important in helping to settle in at your last place of study

National PAQ



A practitioner's approach- Why 'mattering' is key to engagement and creating a sense of 'belonging'

'Belonging'

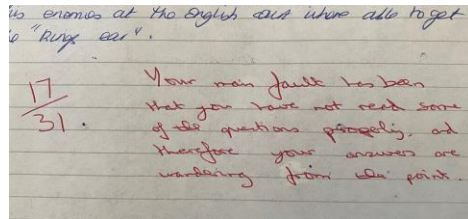
creates the space

Overarching concept
= feeling *welcome, accepted*
'1 directional' experience

'Mattering'

gives the space 'meaning'

Done on an individual level
= feeling valued, seen, heard,
personal worth
'Relational' experience



Asked via
the PAQ and Continuation questionnaires

Responses re: settling-in revolve
around being valued, seen and
heard at the university

Common words by new UGs and PGTs

Knowing:
useful support available
Academic support
Opportunities
Help provided
Respect and kindness
Equality and Inclusiveness
Heard/listened to
Good communications
Feedback (regular and helpful)
Clear communication
Checking ins
Not lonely

Common words by new UGs

Personal interaction
Understanding
Accepted
Caring environment
Encouragement
Honesty
Patience
Welcoming

Common words by new PGTs

My performance
Personalised support
Recognition for efforts
Acknowledgement
Known by my name
Appreciated
Fair treatment
Friendly environment

**These words are about feeling,
relationship and activities**

Meaningfulness, safety (trust) and availability in everything

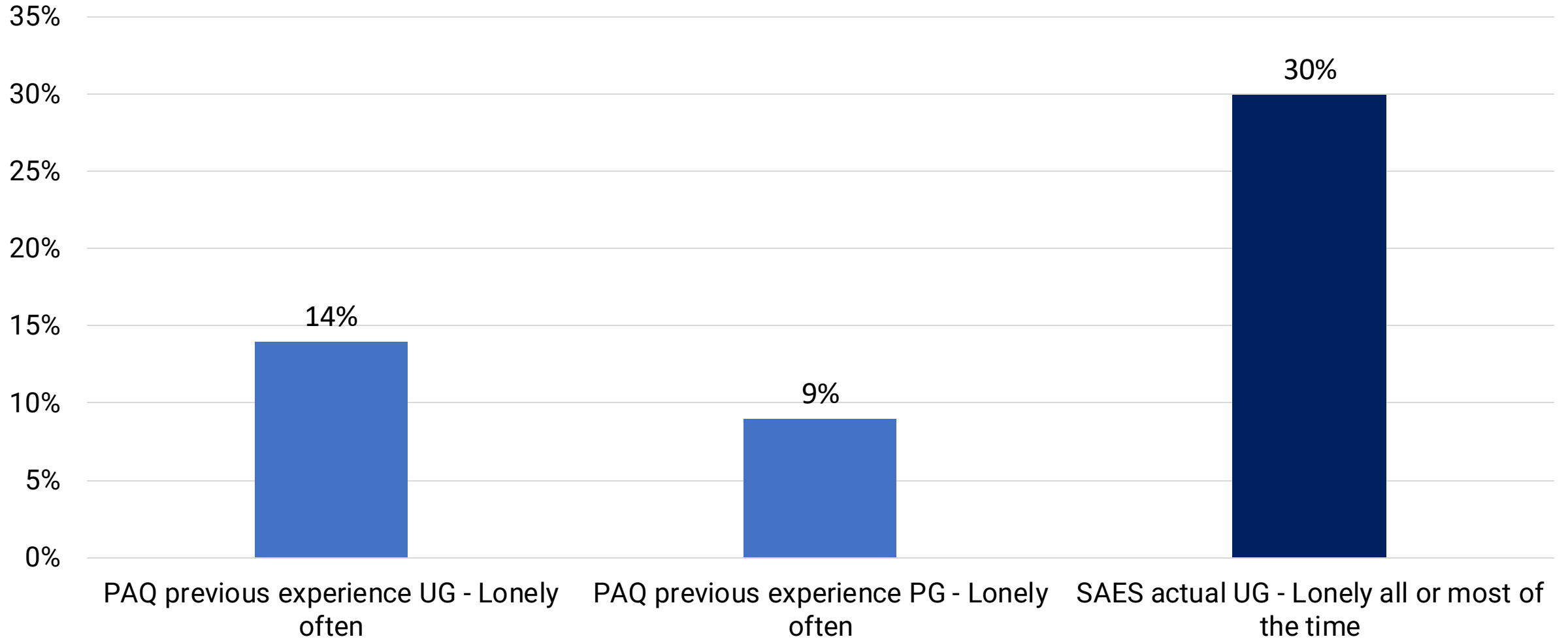
William Kahn, 1990 (Expert on Business Engagement)

(structure, management, resources, policies, activities)

Engagement → **Belonging**

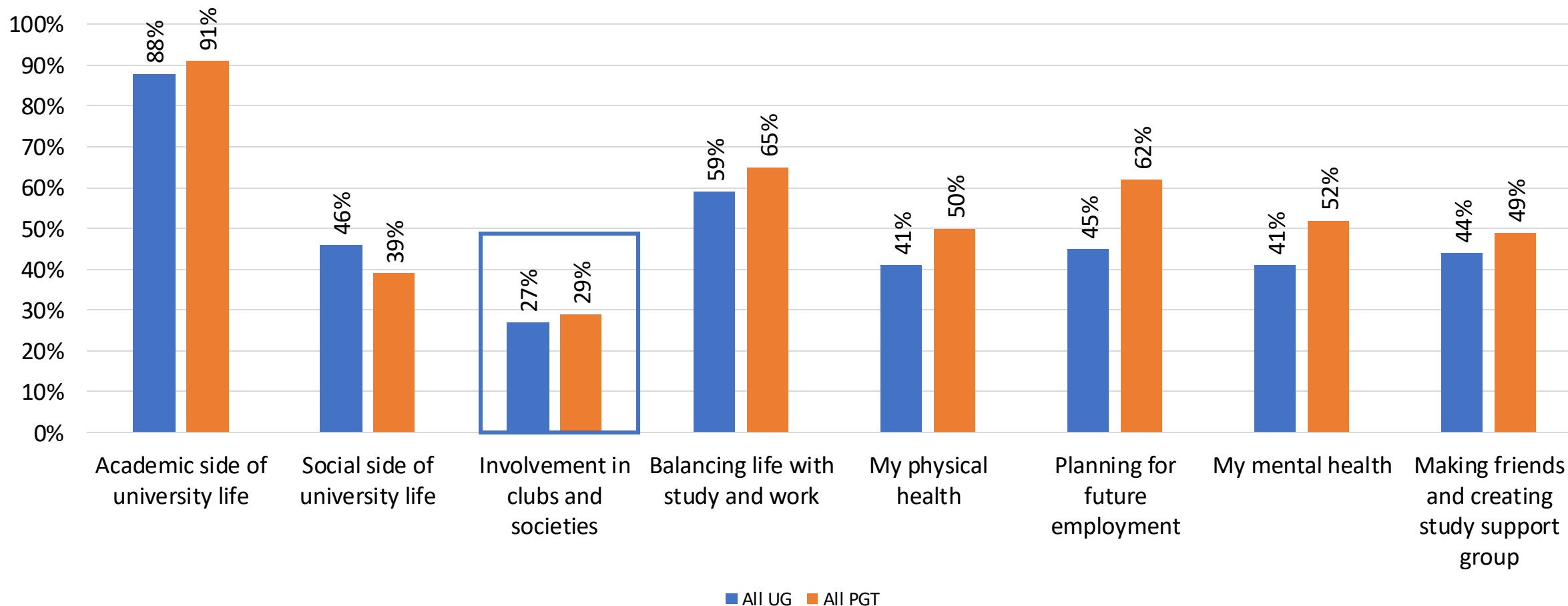
Morgan, Hampshire, McIntosh and Page-Tickell, 2025

National PAQ - More students may end up feeling lonely upon entering HE than in their previous studies



Priorities for the coming year National PAQ

Top 5 = Academic side of University life, Balancing study and work, Planning for the future, Making friends and My mental health



The importance of libraries and student services

- Bridging support between schools/faculties and professional services
- Integrated third space professionals (Whitchurch, 2012; Nutt and McIntosh, (2022))
 - Information Access for users
 - Manage Collection Development
 - Organization and Management of Resources
 - Instruction and Support for users
 - Programming and Outreach activities
 - Digital Literacy for users
 - Community Engagement
 - Research Support
 - Staff Management
- Safe 'space' to create 'sense of belonging' but importantly 'mattering'

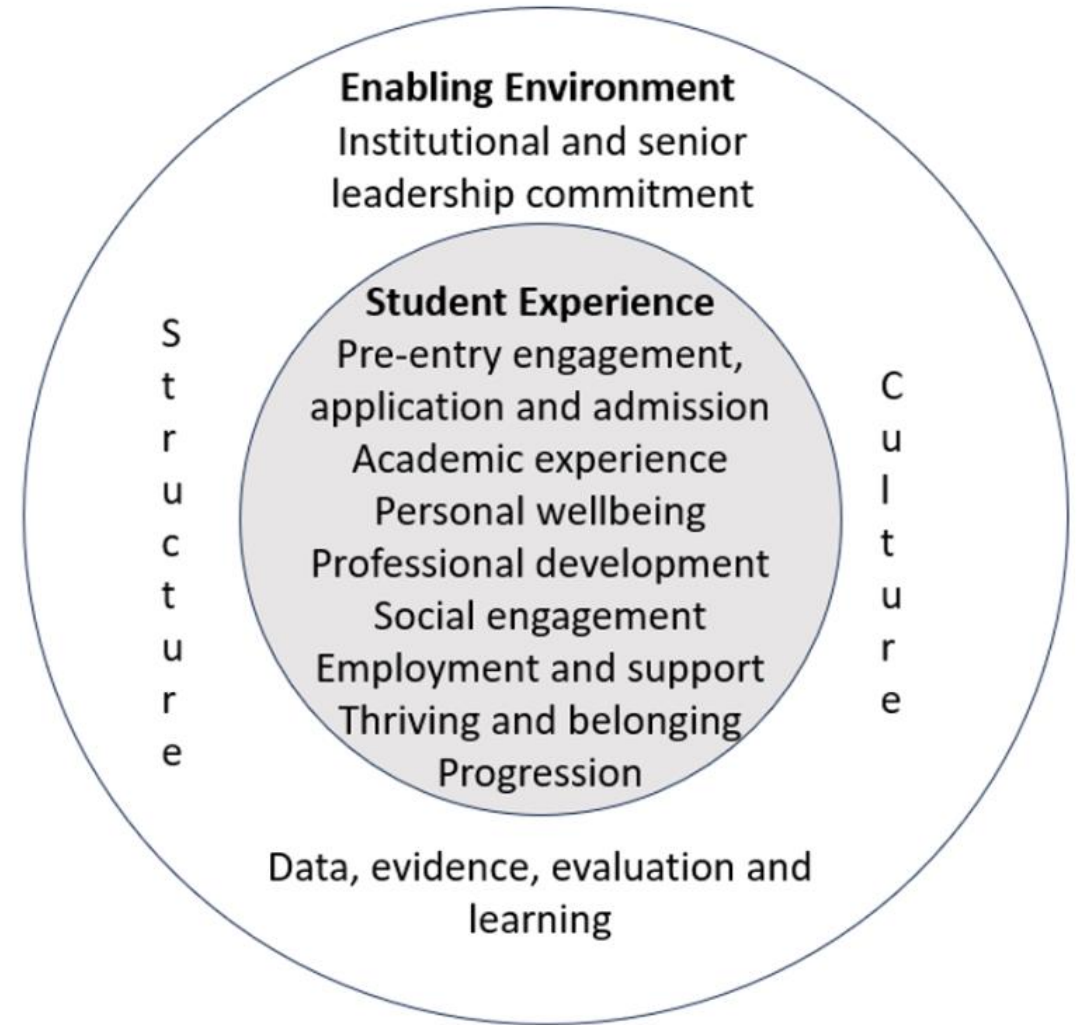


Whole Provider Approach: Toolkit

Liz Thomas and Mike Hill

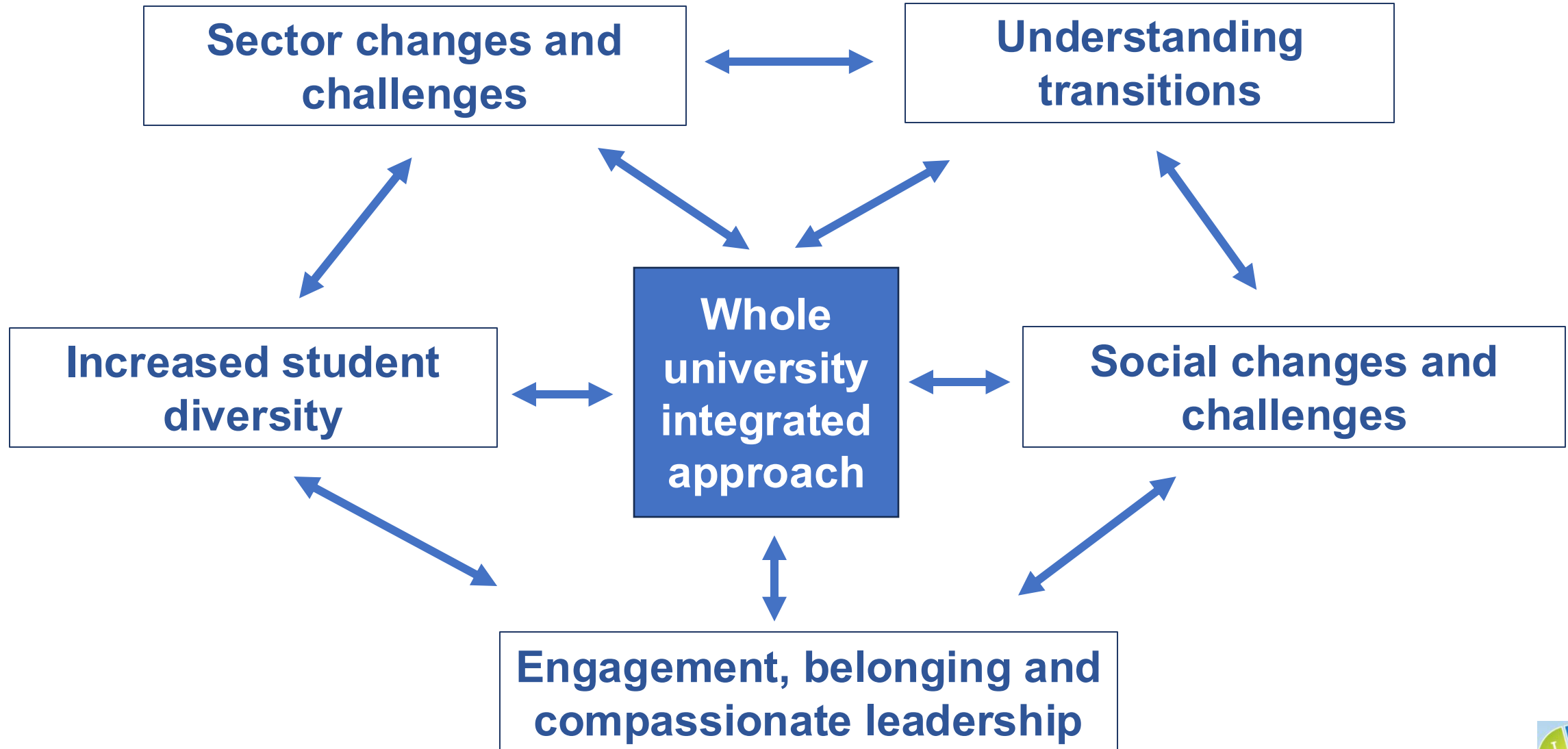
The enabling environment consists of four dimensions:

- Institutional and senior leadership and commitment to diversity and success, which is explicit, clearly communicated and demonstrated.
- Institutional policies and processes (structure) aligned to support widening access and student success, and the coordination of work across the higher education provider.
- All staff and students understand the institutional commitment, and have the relevant skills, knowledge and support to engage with the agenda, and effective communication facilitates engagement.
- Widening access and student success work is underpinned by data, evidence, evaluation and learning.

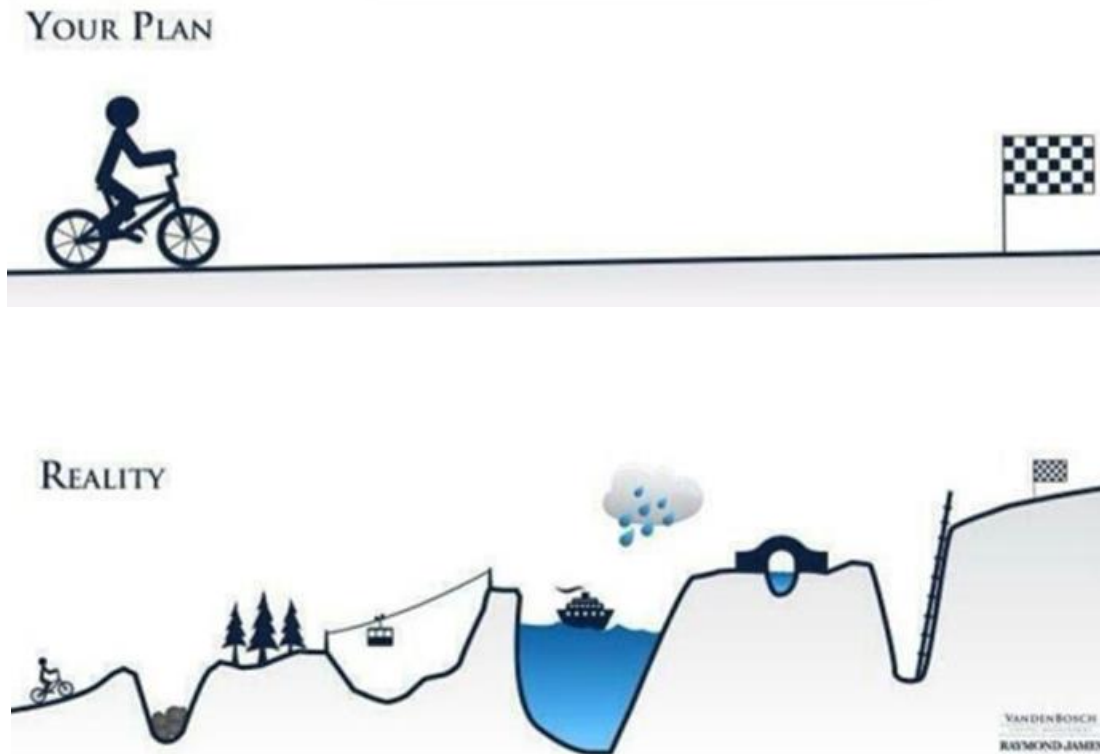


[What is a whole provider approach to widening access and student success? | Wonkhe](#)

Summary -Things to think about



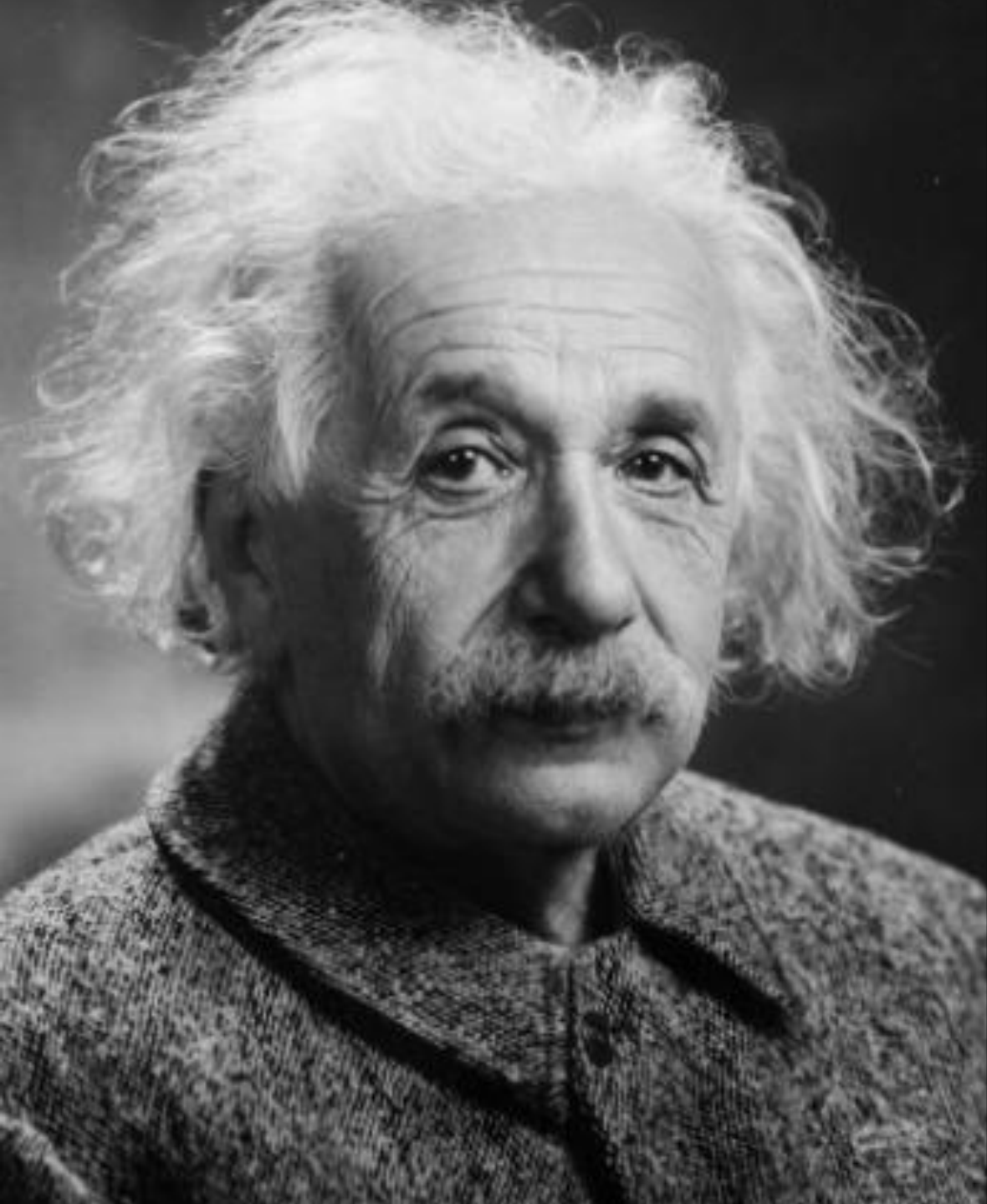
The journey is never easy





Multi-faceted





We can't solve
problems by using
the same kind of
thinking we used
when we created
them.

~ Albert Einstein

Conclusion

‘We need to inspire new generations to engage in higher education, to believe in the benefits of HE and to invest in it. By ensuring that no student is forgotten or left behind, through adopting an inclusive strategy in all its activities, sustainability should be achievable’.

Morgan, 2013

Thank you for listening

Any questions?

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Editor and Contributor to *Improving the Student Experience-A practical guide for universities and colleges* (Routledge, 2012) and *Supporting Student Diversity in Higher Education* (Routledge, 2013)

Most recent publications:

Morgan, M. (2023) [Prior learning experience, study expectations of A-Level and BTEC students on entry to university and the impact of Covid19](#) | London: University of East London

Morgan, M. (2022) The Retrospective/Prospective PhD by Publication Journey in Chong, S.W and Johnson, N. (ed) *Landscapes and Narratives of PhD by Publication*, Basingstoke: Springer Nature

Morgan, M. (2022) The student Experience Transitions Model- integrated practice to inspire staff to support students in Nutt, D. and McIntosh, M. (ed) *The Impact of the Integrated Practitioner in Higher Education Studies in Third Space Professionalism*, Abbingdon: Routledge

Morgan, M. (2020) *An exceptional transition into higher education*, York: AdvanceHE

Morgan, M. (2020) *inancial concerns and working intentions of incoming Level 4 students -The potential implications for applicants and students in 2020/21 due to Covid19*. Available online at: http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/covid19/Financial_concerns_and_working_intentions_of_incoming_Level_4_university_students-_implications_of_C19.pdf

Morgan, M. (2020) *Bridging the gap between secondary and tertiary education*. Available online at: http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/UG_documents/Bridging_the_gap_between_secondary_and_tertiary_education-Morgan_2020.pdf

Morgan, M. (2018) *Fostering engagement in higher education of all stakeholders in the delivery of a high quality student experience-PhD by Publication*, Bournemouth:Bournemouth University

Morgan, M. and Direito, I. (2016) *Widening and sustaining postgraduate taught (PGT) STEM study in the UK: a collaborative project. Creating change through understanding expectations and attitudes towards PGT study, experiences and post-study outcomes from the perspective of applicants, students, universities and employers*. Available at: http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/PG_documents/Postgraduate_Experience_Report_Final.pdf

Creator and author of <http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com>

Editor/Chapter and Case Study Author of *Improving the Student Experience- a practical guide* (published by Routledge 2011)

Editor/Chapter and Case Study Author of *Supporting Student Diversity in Higher Education- a practical guide* (published by Routledge 2013).

Example of interlinking stages and areas

Stage = Arrival and Orientation **Activity** = First week's orientation programme

Themes	Issue	Staff involved
Curriculum and Assessment	• Start the process of learning by giving out and explaining timetables (if not available pre-arrival) • Explain course documents and curriculum	Home unit academics and non-academic staff, Central Units such as Academic Registry, LRC, IT, external examiners, student representation
Pedagogy	• Start the process of teaching students how to study at university such as having a fun lecture in a large LT • Get students to start working in groups on fun activities (e.g. Fun subject quiz or rocket building competitions) • Light touch study skills (LRC?)	Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university L&T academic centres, staff development, LRC, IT, student representation
Finance	• Costs related to study (e.g. accommodation, uni fees, • Money management of advice for students	Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university financial services, student representation
Support	• Light touch reinforcement of support available students (e.g. disability, dyslexia, financial guidance)	Home unit academics and non-academic staff, disability/dyslexia/equal opportunity units, financial services, student representation
Employment	• Job fair • Reminder of purpose of education and how to transfer learning skills into the workplace in PT work, placements or post study	Home unit academics and non-academic staff, university careers and employability/enterprise units, student representation