How to widen access to postgraduate study

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NEON Access Academy
NCVO, London
9 December 2016
Welcome!
Outline of the day

Now: Setting the scene

11.30 Tea/coffee

11.45 Evidence on access

13.00 Lunch

13.45 What can we do about postgraduate access?

15.00 Break

15.15 What are you going to do about it?

16.00 Close
1. Why be concerned about postgraduate access?

2. Evidence on postgraduate access
   - From research
   - From the Postgraduate Support Scheme

3. What do we mean by ‘widening participation’ at postgraduate level?

4. What to do?
Crowdsourcing

Finding out about postgraduate education from your fellow delegates!
1. Setting the scene

Why be concerned about postgraduate access and widening participation?
Postgraduate growth

- International growth of postgraduate numbers (Clarke and Lunt, 2014; Morgan, 2014; Wakeling, 2010)
  - UK
  - US
  - Australia
  - China

- ‘Postgraduate premium’ (Lindley and Machin, 2013; Triventi, 2013; Wakeling and Savage, 2015)
  - Wages
  - Employment/occupation
  - ‘Fit’/skills
UK PG numbers tailing off?
UK interest in postgraduate access

£9,000
Why should we care?

3 reasons:

1. Economic benefit
   – overall participation (some subjects more than others)

2. Waste of talent
   – cf. Andy Murray on UK tennis and the LTA
   – Diversity and its knowledge dividend (esp. PhD entry)

3. Social justice

   Institutional enlightened self-interest?
I think post-graduate education is a real time-bomb in terms of social mobility. (Interview in *Graduate Market Trends*, Spring 2012, p. 4)

Postgraduate study is “becoming a new frontier in the battle to improve social mobility.”

Alan Milburn
[UK] Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty
Postgraduates in the English HERB
Some policy action (England)

- £25M programme funded by HEFCE 2014-15
  - 20 projects in 40 universities
  - Investigate funding, innovation, employability, access

- £50M scholarships 2015/16
  - 10,000 for £10,000
  - Currently being evaluated

- Masters (+PhD) loan scheme from 2016/17
  - Opportunity…or full stop?
Some policy action (Wales)

• Diamond review recommended:
  – extension of UG funding system to masters
  – 150 Welsh PGR scholarships in Wales

• Welsh government response:
  – Accept PGR scholarships (plus add PGR loans)
  – Provide portable means-tested fee/maintenance support (as UG) *but no fee regulation*
  – New system to be introduced in 2018/19
Some theory

David P. Baker
Penn State University

“Education’s mastery of social mobility”
(2011, p.24)
Maximally Maintained Inequality

• Raftery & Hout (1993):
  – Expansion of educational opportunities at one educational level has led to…
  – …reduction in educational inequalities at that level (saturation) which has led to…
  – …increase in educational inequalities at the next level

• Responses:
  – Various studies challenge the saturation hypothesis
  – Declining background effects (Mare 1981; Hansen, 1997); but cf Torche (2011)
Randall Collins: credential inflation

- Credential inflation = value of qualifications goes down as more people obtain them

- Argues education has grown through social closure, not technical requirements of the economy

- See also Alison Wolf (2002): the ‘tyranny of numbers’
Per cent of first-degree graduates holding a postgraduate degree by age group and social class origin
Source: Wakeling & Laurison (forthcoming)
Running up the down escalator?

- Paradox: continued educational inequalities
- Expansion of higher education has not increased overall social mobility

Escalator analogy from Patrick Ainley, University of Greenwich
Meritocracy and inequality
What does it mean for your institution?

In discussion with those on your table, consider:

• What is the position of postgraduate study in your university?
  – Taught/research
  – Home/international
  – Rationale for growth

• Are postgraduates part of your widening participation strategy? Are they included in your OFFA Access Agreement?

• Which senior manager/office is responsible for postgraduate policy?
PGT complexity

Level, discipline, student/programme intentions, industry
## Level of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part-time</th>
<th>PGR</th>
<th>PGT</th>
<th>Other PG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≈30%</td>
<td>≈60%</td>
<td>≈70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| UK-domiciled | 60% | 54% | 92%     |

| Self-funded (UK) | 37% | 72% | 43%     |

| High tariff HEIs | 66% | 37% | 24%     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Largest subject</th>
<th>Biological sciences</th>
<th>Business &amp; administrative studies</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolments</td>
<td>94,645</td>
<td>282,905</td>
<td>123,785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HEFCE (2013a, Figure 10, p.36)
Cumulative transition rate to PG

Duration since first degree qualification (years)

Source: HEFCE (2013a, Figure 10, p.36)
### Subject discipline

The table below shows the progression rates to Postgraduate study for various subject disciplines from 2009/10 to 2010/11. The data is sourced from Wakeling & Hampden-Thompson (2013, Figure 5.3, p.18).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Discipline</th>
<th>Did not progress to Postgraduate study</th>
<th>Progressed to Postgraduate Taught</th>
<th>Progressed to Postgraduate Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical &amp; Philosopical Studies</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics, Classics and Ancient Languages</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern, Asiatic, African Languages</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Languages, Literature</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical and Computing Sciences</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture, Building and Construction</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Administrative Studies</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts &amp; Design</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Communications &amp; Documentation</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Veterinary</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects Allied to Medicine</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine &amp; Dentistry</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UK-domiciled first-degree graduates 2009/10 – 2010/11**

Source: Wakeling & Hampden-Thompson (2013, Figure 5.3, p.18)
Figure 5.1: Postgraduates as a percentage of all students in UK HEIs, by subject discipline

Source: HESA (2007a). Table 2e.

Taken from Wakeling (2009, p.124)
Funding arrangements

- Like undergraduates: PGCE
- Mainly scholarships: PhD
- Mainly self-funded: masters (but…)
- Mix of employer/self: Other PG
- Masters loans
  - Government scheme *in England* (!)
  - Crowded out others (PCDL, Durham credit union, Metrobank etc)
Student intentions

• MBA vs MA Local History

• PhD vs PGCE

• Age: 22 vs 26 vs 35 vs 55

• Full-time/part-time (employed/not?)
Institutional patterns

Source: Wakeling & Hampden-Thompson (2013, Figure 7.1 p.36)
Institutional profiles

• There are five postgraduate profiles and five different institution names

• Can you match each institution to its profile?

• Which one fits your institution?

• What do you think this profile means for widening participation to postgraduate study in your institution?

All statistics are from HESA Student Record 2014/15, except for progression to PG study which is from HESA DLHE 2009/10 – 2010/11
Tea/coffee break
Institutional profiles

• There are five postgraduate profiles and five different institution names

• Can you match each institution to its profile?

• Which one fits your institution?

• What do you think this means for widening participation to postgraduate study in your institution?
2. Evidence on postgraduate access

Findings from research
What inequalities are there?

- Looking at UK-domiciled students now
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Socio-economic background
  - Social class
  - Postcode
  - Parental education
Source: HESA Students in Higher Education Institutions (1994/95 – 2013/14) UK-domiciled students/qualifiers only
Ethnicity
## Percentage of first degree qualifiers by progression to taught higher and research degree by selected background characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Progressed to PGT</th>
<th>Progressed to PGR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Caribbean</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Other</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Other</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, inc. mixed</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from: Wakeling, P. & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2013) *Transition to higher degrees across the UK: an analysis of national, institutional and individual differences*. York: The Higher Education Academy. (Source: HESA Student Record and DLHE 2011-12)
Source: Wakeling (2009), Figure 2, p. 96. Refers to 2004/05.
Socio-economic background
UK-domiciled graduates’ rates of immediate progression to higher degrees by social class and gender, 2001/02 – 2009/10

Figure 12 Cumulative transition rate to PG by duration, split by POLAR groups 1 (low) and 5 (high), for 2002-03 young UK full-time first degree qualifiers at English HEIs.

First-degree alumni progression to taught postgraduate masters degree at six research intensive English universities, by various measures of socio-economic background

Summary of differences so far

• Gender differences, but mainly PGR

• Ethnic inequalities
  – complex by group and type of study

• Socio-economic background differences
  – Persistent over time
  – Less stark than in UG entry
Why the differences?

• In pairs, try to think of as many reasons for these inequalities as you can

• You might want to draw on:
  – What you know from UG WP
  – Experiences in your institution

• Write your reasons on post-it notes
  – 1 post-it for each separate reason
Academic factors
Rate of progression by UK-domiciled first-degree graduates to taught higher degree, by social class and first-degree classification, 2009/10 – 2010/11.

Rate of progression by UK-domiciled first-degree graduates to taught higher degree, by social class and first-degree institution type, 2009/10 – 2010/11.

Figure 8.5. Rate of progression to taught higher degrees (upper second class honours or better only) by subject discipline and gender: 2009-10 & 2010-11 combined

Selected odds ratios from logistic regression model to predict progression to taught higher degree by UK-domiciled first-degree graduates 2009/10 – 2010/11
Motivations and aspiration
Motivations/aspirations

1. A long-held intention, from early undergraduate study or before (relatively unusual);
2. Not knowing what else to do;
3. Having an idea for a career but being unable to find a suitable – or indeed any – job;
4. Being in a career and wishing either to change track or to accelerate progression on the current track.

(Source: Wakeling et al., 2015 – qualitative study undertaken by CRAC of 2009 and 2012 graduates from Leeds/Manchester/Newcastle/Sheffield/Warwick/York, n=120)
Motivation for enrolling in postgraduate study (Pathways to Postgraduate Study survey)

Source: Wakeling et al. (2015) Figure 8.4 –based on survey of alumni
## Intention/actuality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social class background (NS-SEC 3-class scheme)</th>
<th>Taught postgraduate Master’s study: intention and outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realised intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial and professional occupations</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate occupations</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine and manual occupations</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Futuretrack Wave IV respondents, UK domiciled graduates, undergraduate study in England, excl. Medicine and Dentistry, excl. Colleges and Specialist HEIs, full-time student at Wave II, N=4,988.

**Intention for taught Master's study vs. outcome by socio-economic class background**


(Similar results from HEFCE’s analysis of NSS IAGS)
Barriers

Reasons for not enrolling in postgraduate study

Source: Wakeling et al. (2015), Figure 8.5. (All following figures in this session are same source)

Per cent of cohort

Reasons for not enrolling in postgraduate study

- I am in employment
- It is too expensive
- I’m fed up with studying
- I don’t want to be an academic
- I do not want to leave my job
- I’m not suited to postgraduate study
- I don’t know what it will lead to
- I want to focus upon something else
- There is no funding or financial support
- There are no feasible options
- I didn’t/ won’t meet academic conditions
- Personal reasons
- Other

Reasons for not enrolling in postgraduate study

Source: Wakeling et al. (2015), Figure 8.5. (All following figures in this session are same source)
Material factors
The broad geographical mobility of Taught Master’s students in England

- London ‘brain gain’
- Geography of opportunities (e.g. CDTs)
- Staying at home?

Futuretrack Wave IV respondents, UK domiciled graduates, undergraduate study in England, excl. Medicine and Dentistry, excl. Colleges and Specialist HEIs, engaged in Taught Master’s study, TM study location known, N=1,170.

NB Light orange cell colour indicates 10<N<30.
Source of postgraduates’ tuition fee funding by social class

Source of postgraduates’ funding for living costs by social class
Current debt levels of taught postgraduates
Doctoral study

• Qualitative interviews with 53 PhD students and non-participants

• *Cost* a disincentive; *debt* not so much
  – Especially at masters level

• Availability of funding crucial for PhD:
  – signals “you’re good enough”
  – and obviously pays for the course!
To think about over lunch
3. What can be done about it?

Evidence from the Postgraduate Support Scheme and elsewhere
What are others doing?

- Erm….
  - Not much!

- Mellors-Bourne et al (2016) found very little PG WP practice
  - Even in departments which were successful on paper

- Doctoral diversity and US summer programmes
Postgraduate Support Scheme: purpose

“to ensure that taught postgraduate education:

• “is accessible to the most capable students regardless of their background, thereby maximising its contribution to social mobility and the diversity of the professions, including the higher education profession

• “continues to be a successful and sustainable sector at the heart of higher education teaching, research and knowledge exchange, thereby supplying the highest level of skills and knowledge to industry, the professions and public services, and attracting students from around the world.”

(HEFCE CL18/2013, p. 2)
The portfolio

• 20 projects supported, £25M (+50% match)
  – at least one in each English region
  – 9 in London
  – Biggest in the whole world ever?

• Varying sizes (consortia, some small single institution projects); £3M max

• 6 Russell Group; 5 post-1992; 4 small/specialist

• ~2,000 studentships/awards
Two overarching messages from PSS:

1. Funding helps.

2. More than funding is needed.
Funding and finance

• Range of shapes and sizes of award

• Generally oversubscribed: latent and frustrated demand

• Student views: finance essential
  – Or for some projects key factor
  – Studying at all vs. studying better (PT work)
Funding and finance

• Size of award:
  – Generous ones all did well
  – Partial funding: good enough…for some

• General, simple schemes worked best

• Debt, fee levels

• To address financial advantage, assess financial disadvantage (how?)
What do we mean by ‘widening participation’ at postgraduate level?
• Enthuse
• Inform
• Monitor
• Demystify
• Support
• Monitor
• Finance
• Mentor
• Advise

Financial means

Background characteristics

Qualifies (e.g. has a first degree)

Integration into a way

Application

Offer

Successful outcome

Hygiene factors

Funding
The formula?

GOOD ADVICE\textsuperscript{a} +
ATTAINMENT\textsuperscript{b} +
FUNDING\textsuperscript{c} =
ENTRY TO POSTGRADUATE STUDY
Measures

• Monitor aspiration; attainment; discrimination; application; choice:
  – Gender
  – Ethnicity
  – First degree institution
  – Socio-economic class (?)
  – Parental education

• Means test (material)
Admissions and ‘co-opetition’

• Competition a barrier to IAG/ outreach/inreach

• No national application system

• Message to stakeholders about PGT atomised

• Examples of successful collaboration/ co-operation in PSS
Visibility and momentum

• PSS has raised the profile of PGT, within institutions
  - …but 2014 PG=1997 UG?

• Frequently no institutional ‘location’ or policy

• Monitor data

• How to keep it going?
You are the committee!

• You have one full course tuition fees and living costs studentship to award

• You have a shortlist of five candidates

• The university has stipulated the award should be made

  “to attract talented students who may be underrepresented at postgraduate level and who may not otherwise be able to participate”

• On your table, decide who will get the award and why
Interventions

• Inreach – IAG to our own undergraduates

• Outreach (trickier?)

• SPA for PGT (and a national application system?)

• Money
  – (my view: national system needed)
Tea/coffee break
4. What are you going to do about it?
Key points from the day

• PG WP: the issue and why we should care; PG complexity

• Patterns and inequalities of access to PG

• Causes and solutions

• Plans of action: taking it back to the office

• Your final observations?
References


