Improving post-graduate study learner outcomes for learners from widening access backgrounds

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Outline

1. Evidence on postgraduate access (20 mins)
   • From research
   • From the Postgraduate Support Scheme

2. Exercise: an institutional strategy for PG* WP (25 mins)

3. Group discussion (15 mins)

* Focus is on taught postgraduate courses
Evidence on postgraduate access complexity inequalities
# Level of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PGR</th>
<th>PGT</th>
<th>Other PG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>≈30%</td>
<td>≈60%</td>
<td>≈70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-domiciled</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-funded (UK)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High tariff HEIs</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest subject</td>
<td>Biological sciences</td>
<td>Business &amp; administrative studies</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<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

Source: HEFCE (2013a, Figure 10, p.36)
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)
Institutional patterns

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

• Funding:
  – PGCE, PhD, masters
  – Loans

• Student intentions and motivations:
  – Academic or vocational
  – Career entry or development
  – Full-time or part-time
  – Vague or specific
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.

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

**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

Reason 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

Source: Wakeling et al. (2015), Figure 8.5.
Evidence on interventions
What can be done about it?

Postgraduate Support Scheme and elsewhere
PSS Headlines


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?)
• Enthuse
• Inform
• Monitor
• Demystify
• Support
• Monitor
• Finance
• Mentor
• Advise
Group exercise (20-25 mins)

In groups of (ideally) **FIVE**:

You are the widening participation manager for a university (description provided)

You are asked to come up with a **five point plan** to widen participation to postgraduate study

You will have some (limited) resources

What ideas and approaches might you ‘borrow’ from undergraduate WP work?

**Be prepared to present your plan to the group**
Some concluding thoughts

(...if we have time)
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?
Interventions

• Inreach – IAG to our own undergraduates

• Outreach (trickier?)

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

• Money
  – (my view: national system needed)
References


