

Evaluation proforma

Faculty/Directorate	HWB
Department/area	Bioscience
Project title	Student inspirations and aspirations: and the effect on the BME attainment gap
Project lead name	Dr Mel Lacey
Contact email	hwbml1@exchange.shu.ac.uk
Other project team members	Nikki Abbott Dr Caroline Dalton Dr David Smith
Abstract including action research (or other project), working hypothesis, info from theory of change, change which is anticipated etc. (Around 250 words)	<p>This project worked closely with students to determine how their inspirations to study as well as their career aspirations correlate with level 4 attainment, retention and progression. The overarching aim was to reduce the BME attainment gap by gaining a better understanding of why students choose courses to study at university and how this links to career aspirations.</p> <p>The project addressed three key questions and was focused on the experience of students in the Bioscience and Chemistry departments -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is different between the aspirations of BMS BME students compared to those BME students on the other degrees? 2) What are the drivers that determine BME students' disengagement and why is this disproportionately a factor in attainment outcomes? 3) Is the pattern of lower attainment with local BME students replicated in other areas of the University? <p>Data collection: 202 statements around carrier aspirations were collected from L4 students at the start of L4. Each statement was thematically analysis to determine career aspirations and compliance with the task. Statements were also analysed for quality of English. Each response was then cross correlated against gender, ethnicity and attainment. Aspirations from the statements have been extracted and a score generated of the competition to achieve that goal. Four focus groups were conducted followed a user evaluations of the questions with a total of ~50 participants at the end of L4. Transcripts from the focus groups have then been thematically analysed.</p> <p>Initially, outcomes of the research demonstrate that: Asian students are significantly more likely to have aspirations for medical careers than white students. However, this same group of students underperformed compared to other Asian students and white students without medical aspirations. BME student's motivations for initial study are heavily dependent on family with influences around course choice. Motivation to continue study is heavily dependent on the enthusiasm of the tutors involved in delivery.</p> <p>Full data analysis is ongoing but demonstrates that engaged students no matter what background perform well. However BME male students are less engaged or disproportionately missing from the data sets.</p>
How students are being involved	A student intern was appointed to undertake data collection and part of the

	<p>analysis. She also ran the focus groups.</p> <p>Primary data for the project was collected from L4 student cohort.</p> <p>Focus groups were made up of L4 students from on, BSc Biomedical Science, Biology, Human Biology, Biochemistry and Chemistry.</p> <p>A student panel of ~6 students was used on two occasions to give a student voice to the questions prior to the focus groups and to sense check the outcomes.</p>
<p>How project is being evaluated</p>	<p>A mixed methods approach has been taken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration statements where analysis to determine the career aspirations of the students. Compliance with assessments was identified prior to the project as a marker and in this case each statement was assed to ensure it meet the criteria set. • A matrix score to determine the challenge associated with each career aspiration has been determined and will be cross referenced against performance. Statistical analysis will be performed to determine if a given group is more likely to pick a given career path. • The quality of written English within each of the aspiration statements has been quantified against the Flesch readability score. • Gender, ethnicity and attainment data is undergoing statistical analysis to identify significant changes in performance in relation to given characteristics. • Student attended focus groups, where transcribed and a thematic analysis has been performed. Common theme around the motivation of these students has been extracted and put into context.

<p>Key things What's worked well? Have you achieved what you set out to do? If not why not? What have been the Highlights?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student attended focus groups were enthusiastic and vocal. Happy to share experience and answer questions. • Large and informative data sets have been collected by using existing assessments as a way of gaining data. The final stage is the full analysis of this data. • Highlights, initial data analysis does demonstrate difference between student groups around attainment linked to aspirations.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Barriers	<p>Some student groups are harder to recruit as compared to others. The concern is we are not reaching the students we really needed to.</p> <p>BME males did not attend the focus groups.</p>
Enablers	<p>Student research was vital to allow this project to progress.</p> <p>Involvement of the professional services around careers was also highly important in determining the validity of the work.</p>
Replicability, transferability, scalability	<p>This work could be replicated in other departments as the methodology is not discipline specific. Scalability issues arise around qualitative analysis of very large text data sets.</p>
Any other comments	