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Note from the editor



Navigating the labour market at any point in your career can be difficult and when we face a labour market which is even more complex and challenging due to uncertain economic conditions, we need to ensure that accurate and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is in place to help those making difficult decisions during their transitions. The articles in this spring edition of GMT provide both research and practice evidence in relation to CEIAG.

This edition's interview is with the Chair of the National Careers Council, Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE. We ask what role the Council will play in helping the Government achieve the right balance of national and local careers systems to support young people and adults in making well informed and realistic learning and work decisions in a complex and challenging labour market.

Gill Frigerio introduces the idea of 'career adaptability', and its value in relation to the work of higher education (HE) career services. The article summarises the work of a project team who are developing a UK questionnaire to measure the psycho-social competences defined as 'career adaptabilities', and highlight some possibilities for the future.

In GMT in practice, we feature how the Graduate Talent Pool has been providing internships to

graduates for the past four years. Craig Ineson explains the aims of the initiative to match graduates from a diverse range of institutions with internships in Small to Medium Enterprises and micro-enterprises.

In his article, Charlie Ball, builds on basic data on regional employment of graduates around the UK, featured in 'What Do Graduates Do? 2012', and takes an in-depth view of where the jobs for new graduates were actually found in the UK last year. Finally, Andrew McCulloch uses publicly available data to look at the proportion of children from lower participation areas going into HE. Does the improvement of social mobility rest with universities efforts to widen participation or the choice of parents and the secondary education establishment that they send their children to?

That isn't all...you will find an additional article online in the GMT digimag which features findings from recent graduate Liz McCoy's Masters dissertation about the relationship between career interventions and the learning styles of graduates.

I hope you enjoy the spring edition of GMT.

Kindest regards,

Jennifer Redman

News In brief

Fall in part-time student enrolment sparks review

The Higher Education Funding Council for England report published in March on funding changes in England 2012 revealed that enrolments in part-time study at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels have dropped. Immediately after the reports release, minister David Willets approached Universities UK to launch a review of part-time study (which will be reported on in autumn 2013) with particular concern over the decline in numbers despite the extension of loans to part-time students. www.universitiesuk.ac.uk (March) See back page for more details.

Flexible learning: needs of part-time students

The recently released Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report, *Flexible Learning: Wrapping Higher Education around the needs of part-time students* summarises the importance of part-time study and argues that the drop in the number of part-time students applying for courses could be evidence that the efforts of the Government to extend access to loans to part-time students isn't working. www.hepi.ac.uk (March)

Growing global graduates

UK universities growing global graduates is a report from the University Alliance which looks at international students and their experiences in UK higher education. Introduced at the British Council conference 'Going Global in Dubai, what are the motivations and drivers which attract international students to study in the UK?', the study explores international students' perspectives of employability. www.unialliance.ac.uk (March)

The new Career Development Institute

The Career Development Institute was launched on the 1st April. This new single UK professional organisation brings together the associations Institute of Career Guidance (ICG), Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG), National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults (NAEGA) and Association of Careers Professional International (ACPI-UK) to provide a single voice for all professionals working in careers information, advice and guidance whether in an educational, independent or consultant basis. Have a look at the new website: www.thecdi.net (April)

Follow up to the youth employment challenge

In their follow up report *Scaling the youth employment challenge* the UK Commission for Employment and

Skills looked at whether employers are engaging in the types of activities suggested in the summer 2012 report *The Youth Employment Challenge* to help tackle the difficulties young people face when entering the labour market. The new report also investigates the barriers to making the activities more widespread. (March) www.ukces.org.uk

Social mobility in higher education needs to start early

An interim report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills by HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access suggests that HE providers need to engage with young people early in their school careers in order to help increase widening participation in the future. The report highlights the challenges in providing the high quality, relevant information, advice and guidance to young people in schools and colleges and urges the Government to respond to those challenges on a national basis. Read more on the report, *National Strategy for Access and Student Success*, on the HEFCE website, www.hefce.ac.uk (March).

Skills audit in Wales

The *National Strategic Skills Audit Wales, 2012* is a report which looks at demand and supply of skills in Wales and identifies sectors which will be important for growth in the future.

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/research/130228-national-strategic-skills-audit-2012.pdf> (February)

HE an avalanche is coming

Think tank IPPR released the report, *An avalanche is coming: Higher education and the revolution road* which details the need by universities to 'act ambitiously' in order to realise their prediction of a golden age for higher education in the next 50 years. It goes on to explain that the student consumer is King and that universities cannot just stand still. www.ippr.org (March)

Higher Education Academy update

In the Futuretrack special edition of GMT we featured the first of a regular update from HEA Academic Lead Employability Maureen Tibby, who will be providing information on HEA support, events, resources, funding etc which may be of interest to readers. This edition's update can be found on page 19 with information about the HEA Employability Conference – defining and developing your approach to employability which will be held in Birmingham on 20th June 2013.

GMT interview

The National Careers Council: a new era for careers work in England

With Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE

During times of change people need access to reliable sources of information to help them make informed decisions about their futures; the Coalition Government is no different and have put together the National Careers Council for England (the Council) to advise them on the future opportunities for careers services in England. In this article we interview, the Chair of the Council, Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE¹ and ask what role the Council will play in helping the Government achieve the right balance of national and local careers systems to support young people and adults in making well informed and realistic learning and work decisions in a complex and challenging labour market.

As Chair of the National Careers Council for England (the Council) please could you tell us more about why the Council was formed and what are its aims and objectives?

In April 2012, the Coalition Government's vision for a better quality of information, advice and guidance on learning and work was set out in the document *The right advice at the right time*², the month a new National Careers Service³ (NCS) was launched. At the time, this heralded a new beginning for 'an all-age careers service' in England. Shortly afterwards, the former Skills Minister (John Hayes) announced his intention to create a National Careers Council stating: 'The National Council for Careers will help to create a new beginning in careers guidance by improving professionalism, forging links with business and ensuring advice reflects the competition and complexity of the labour market'⁴. Since the appointment of Matthew Hancock (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills) in September

2012, the Council has continued with its task to produce an annual report to government in May 2013. The aim is to set out a future vision for the NCS and wider careers support market.

We all know this generation of young people and adults face tough competition for jobs and the balance of occupations in the economy is rapidly changing. A coherent national and local careers system is required which helps people make well informed and realistic learning and work decisions. The Council's primary objective is to advise the Coalition Government on future possibilities for careers services in England, set within a context of major technological, economical, social and political change. This is a very dynamic, fast changing and challenging environment. In our first annual report, we aim to create a high profile dialogue on how best to deliver high impact careers provision to young people and adults. I see this in the context of a new era for careers work bringing to the forefront the unique contribution of careers information, advice and guidance that supports raising aspirations, achievement and ambitions of young people and adults in a rapidly changing global economy.

What are the key themes underpinning the National Careers Council's work and how will you know if the Council has made a difference?

For the first time, the careers sector has a direct line into Government at a cross-departmental and non-government departmental body level. The Council has brought together officials from the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Education (DfE) and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to review careers policies. The initial focus is on three broad

¹ Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE, is the Chair of the National Careers Council for England, Commissioner of the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and Associate Fellow at Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-careers-service-the-right-advice-at-the-right-time>

³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121205150610/http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/national-careers-service-for-england>

⁴ <http://news.bis.gov.uk/Press-Releases/New-National-Council-to-raise-standards-of-careers-advice-679d9.aspx>

themes which include: (i) intelligence, innovation and impact; (ii) connectivity of the NCS to business and the wider careers market (including higher education careers advisory services); and (iii) access, quality and professionalism. The Council has met with Ministers and representatives from over 85 organisations (including representatives from the higher education sector), to systematically review evidence from national and international policy and research findings, and contributed to the Heseltine Review⁵, Richard Review⁶, and the Education Select Committee's Inquiry into careers guidance⁷. We know that considerable evidence exists to demonstrate a relationship between clarity of career goals and educational attainment⁸, and there is a strong theoretical basis for the effect of careers education and guidance on attainment and associated behaviour⁹ and on student performance.¹⁰ We also know that as budgets tighten in the next Comprehensive Spending Review, there will be a growing need to have a strong narrative and evidence-base that convinces Treasury (as well as leaders in schools, colleges and universities) that investment in careers services yield positive educational, social and economic returns.

The issue of how employers connect to and value the work of careers services and careers professionals has also been scrutinised closely by the Council.

Personally, I will know the Council has made a difference if, in the short and medium term, the Coalition Government accepts and implements our recommendations. More importantly, I hope that our work contributes towards improving the life chances of individuals, especially those facing tough decisions regarding their personal and financial investment in learning and work. The recent Heseltine Review (2012)¹¹ argues that:

'One of the most oft-repeated, but also most frequently ignored recommendations in the field of UK vocational education and training (VET) over the last 30 years has been the need for more and better careers information, advice and guidance.'

(Keep, quoted in the Heseletine Review: 22)

The National Careers Service (NCS), introduced in April 2012, was proposed to be an 'all-age' careers service yet has been criticised for its focus on vulnerable adults at risk of unemployment.

The National Careers Service (NCS) has recently celebrated its first year in operation. We have learned that the NCS focus has adjusted over time in response to new and evolving policies at a national and regional level. The role and remit of the NCS could be strengthened further and it is timely to set out a future strategic vision before plans for the next round of NCS procurement takes place from summer 2013 onwards. Also, this new vision should be a catalyst for further debate on how best to create a more visible and accessible 'all-age careers service'. There is an urgent imperative in England (and elsewhere in Europe and further afield) to secure an appropriate balance between providing core services to all (avoiding 'marginalising the mainstream') and targeting intensive services to those who need them most. Given careers guidance policies and provision are located within and across a range of sectors (e.g. schools, vocational education and training, higher education, adult education, and employment) careers services to individuals need to be as seamless as possible. I believe it is vital to develop strategies that will help make good quality careers provision accessible to all whilst avoiding over-serving or under-serving individual requirements. Of course, this is easy to say this but much harder to achieve in the realities of grass roots policies and practices. Nonetheless, this is a challenge that has to be addressed. Access to career guidance services for adults at times of transition is crucial for positive outcomes both for the individual and smooth functioning of the labour market (Brown and Bimrose, 2012)¹². Some argue for change in transition points to take account of demographic shifts (Schuller & Watson, 2009)¹³ focusing on those up to 25, 25–50, 50–75, 75+. This is contested territory, for example, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2012)¹⁴ highlights the need to create

⁵ See: www.gov.uk/the-national-careers-council

⁶ Op. Cit.

⁷ Op.Cit.

⁸ Inter-Ed (2004). *Career Goals and Educational Attainment: What is the Link?* Glasgow: Careers Scotland.

⁹ Killeen, J., Sammons, P. & Watts, A.G. (1999). *The Effects of Careers Education and Guidance on Attainment and Associated Behaviour*. Cambridge: National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling.

¹⁰ For example, Lapan, R., Gysbers, N. & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: a state-wide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 75, 292-302.

¹¹ Heseltine Review (2012) *No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth*, The Rt Hon. The Lord Heseltine of Thenford CH, London: Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, October 2012.

¹² Brown, A. and Bimrose, J. (2012) 'Role of vocational training and learning at work in individual career development across the life-course: examples from across Europe', in *Beruflichkeit zwischen institutionellem Wandel und biographischem Projekt, (Bildung und Arbeit series), (German Edition), [Professionalism between institutional change and biographical project]*, 167- 188, Editors: A. Bolder, R. Dobischat, G. Kutscha, & G. Reutter, G., Wiesbaden: Springer

¹³ Schuller, T. & Watson, D. (2009) *Learning Through Life Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning Summary*. Leicester: National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

¹⁴ <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/the-youth-employment-challenge.pdf>

more career opportunities for young people given this group have suffered disproportionately in the current economic downturn. The recent Select Committee Inquiry into careers education for young people¹⁵ also makes a case for greater investment by Government in this regard. Achieving the right balance in service and funding allocation is difficult, especially in austere times, but this is something that has to be reconciled. With pressures on the public purse, an ageing society and the need to stimulate greater investments and added value returns for participation in learning and work, innovative and creative new approaches are required. Clearly the recent empowerment of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to drive forward growth in their local areas, the future role of the NCS and higher education involvement is significant in this regard.

Could this shift in policy enhance social mobility?

I'm not convinced any shifts in policy will *guarantee* social mobility; however, by putting the spotlight on the NCS and wider careers support market this heightens everyone's awareness of social equality and inclusion and individuals' access (or otherwise) to educational and labour market opportunities. As Alan Milburn states: 'there's plenty of research that shows you need careers advice to improve social mobility' (p.5)¹⁶. We know that careers services also support economic efficiency, make the labour market operate more effectively by reducing drop-outs from education and training, and reduce mismatches in supply and demand, and market failure by helping ensure that individuals maximise their talents. These are key points which can easily be overlooked by disinterested parties. As new policy developments emerge within the Welfare Reform Agenda, Industrial and Skills Strategies (including higher education, apprenticeships and traineeships) a common theme emerging is greater emphasis on 'outcomes' and for individuals to have access to 'trusted information' from reliable sources. I would like to see more stability in the careers system and individuals having access to trusted information. Having worked in at least four universities, I am very mindful of the wealth of expertise in career development and employability content-rich resources. There is a real opportunity to do something innovative and impacting to inform and support the talent pipeline and careers support mechanisms that feed into higher education.

Destination measures and Key Information Sets (KIS) play a key role here, and the career, employability and work-related activities on offer need to be communicated more readily to help inform student choices. Whilst competition exists between institutions, I believe there is scope to explore new ways of sharing careers and employability resources at a local and national level, if there is a will to do so.

Do you think the changes to the provision of careers information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges will impact upon applications to higher education in the future?

This is a contentious and important topic for debate. Admissions to higher education are under pressure for many reasons, including tuition fee increases and mixed messages being received by young people and adults on the likely economic returns on investment from higher education study. Clearly, the range and quality of careers information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges does have a direct impact upon applications to higher education, as outlined in recent findings on *Pre-HE Advice and Guidance* (Future Track, HECSU, 2012)¹⁷. If students fail to act in a well informed way, and do not have the confidence and contacts to make successful transitions then the consequences are far reaching for individuals, communities and the UK economy. Devolving the statutory duty to schools to secure independent and impartial careers guidance is new and uncharted territory in England. I am worried that we do not know for sure whether this approach will improve students (and parents') access to high quality careers provision. The Council has worked with OfSTED to support its early development work on the careers thematic review. OfSTED findings and the Council report to government in the summer will provide an important assessment of progress.

The tenet of 'impartiality' lies at the core of careers guidance practice; how do the new arrangements ensure that impartiality continues to be central in the provision of careers guidance?

Section 29 of the Education Act (2011)¹⁸ placed schools under a duty to secure access to independent careers guidance for young people. Recent updated guidance from DfE for schools and local authorities asserts the statutory requirement for 'impartiality' which is obviously essential in a complex and

¹⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news/substantive-careers-guidance/>

¹⁶ Milburn, A. (2012) *Social mobility in higher education*. GMT Spring, 2012. Manchester: Higher Education Careers Service Unit.

¹⁷ HECSU (2012) *Pre-HE Advice & Guidance: Information about choices and options*. Manchester: Higher Education Careers Services Unit in association with Warwick Institute for Employment Research, Coventry. Visit: http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Futuretrack_Summary_2012_-_Pre-HE_advice_and_guidance.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/section/29>

competitive market place. From September 2013, the duty will be extended to include all registered pupils in year 9 (12-13 year olds) and years 12-13 (16-18 year olds). The Government plans to extend an equivalent requirement for Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges through their funding agreements and will provide separate guidance to colleges. It will be very interesting to observe how this unfolds over time.

I was involved in earlier work undertaken by the Careers Profession Taskforce (2010)¹⁹ which highlighted that a new thematic report would be of immense benefit to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), helping to highlight and promote excellent provision, good professional practice and examples of how best to assure impartiality (para. 3.24). It was argued that ‘professionals working in institutions providing high quality CEIAG could then offer peer-to-peer support, to spread innovative, dynamic and excellent CEIAG throughout the system’ (Op. Cit). Since then, radical changes have taken place with a plethora of new players and differing ‘careers and/or employability offerings’ emerging in schools, colleges and universities. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2013)²⁰ also provides helpful practical insights for policy-makers to address and monitor impartial careers guidance in a lifelong learning context. I am confident the Career Development Institute (CDI), a new UK-wide careers professional body, will be working alongside its strategic partners at a regional and national level to assess progress in this regard.

How will the Council relate to the new Career Development Institute?

The Council has monitored closely the transformation of four professional associations from public, private and voluntary/community sectors into a new unified professional body. This is a major achievement, given the history and heritage that underpinned each of their organisations’ work. The new Career Development Institute (CDI)²¹ should perform a key role in driving

forward exemplars in the design and delivery of high quality professional career development services. Karen O’ Donoghue, the newly appointed CDI President and Chair,²² states this: ‘must be a game changer for the profession’. I think she’s absolutely right in her assertion that the CDI must now focus on building its credibility, viability and voice. It’s a new beginning and there’s significant potential for the CDI to articulate: how it can potentially further develop the National Occupations Standards for career development; how it plans to strengthen and build a UK-wide career progression framework for those entering and those within the careers industry; and most importantly, to outline its relationship with higher education and employers. With regards to the latter, these areas have largely been in decline in recent years and my own view is this must change rapidly. The extent to which the CDI succeeds in its ambitions will ultimately be determined by its members and affiliates.

The Coalition Government set a vision for the NCS workforce that by April 2015, 50% of its careers advisers will be registered as a career development professional with the CDI, for which they have to be qualified to NVQ level 6. The remainder will have to have a minimum qualification at level 3, recognising the new professional framework and career progression routes that the CDI have set out. Those working in the higher education sector perform a pivotal role in helping to strengthen career development policies and practices.

We are moving into a new era that places greater emphasis on ‘trusted information’ that helps make learning provision relevant to the world of work, helps employers to recruit the right people and helps individuals to make informed career decisions. This means looking beyond where we are currently in terms of providing online and face-to-face careers services in silo areas and finding effective ways of developing a national all-age careers service that has greater relevance and impact at a local level.

For more information about the work of the National Careers Council for England go to:
<https://www.gov.uk/the-national-careers-council>

To find out more about Dr Deirdre Hughes work go to the DMH Associates webpage:
<http://deidrehughes.org/> or contact her by email deidre.hughes3@btinternet.com

¹⁹ <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CPTF%20-%20External%20Report.pdf>

²⁰ <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn/>

²¹ <https://www.cparegister.org/>

²² President and Chairs’ acceptance speech at the CDI first Annual General Meeting held on 25/3/13 at NCVO, All Saints Street. London.

GMT research

Career Adaptabilities: testing a new approach to supporting student career development

In this article, Gill Frigerio¹, provides an overview of work currently underway to develop a psychometric measure of career adaptability for use in a UK context and to pilot its use in higher education career and employability services. We begin by exploring the idea of ‘career adaptability’, and its particular value in relation to the work of higher education career services. It goes on to summarise the work of a project team who are developing a UK questionnaire to measure the psycho-social competences defined as ‘career adaptabilities’, and highlight some possibilities for the future.

The language we have used to discuss the individual factors which affect graduates’ transition to the labour market have changed and developed over the years. One current preoccupation is their preparedness to adjust to change, foregrounding the importance of adaptation to new social contexts over the lifespan. With this in mind, contemporary ideas about ‘career adaptability’, which has developed from career construction theory and the developmental tradition of career development theory, are particularly relevant.

Career adaptability has been recently defined as,

‘The capability of an individual to make a series of successful transitions where the labour market, organisation of work and underlying occupational and organisational knowledge bases may be subject to considerable change’ (Bimrose et al, 2011)

And it is this focus on change which makes it such a powerful concept.

Theoretical perspectives on career development have evolved in line with social and economic changes which are reflected in the contemporary labour market context. This is part of an overall shift in emphasis from career maturity as the central construct in career development (where immaturity was characterised by a lack of planfulness, knowledge and decision making) to career *adaptability* (Savickas, 1997).

Employability as a term can be subject to some slippery usage in higher education. Many practitioners are more comfortable with definitions which focus on *sustainable* employability (the ability to get a job, thrive in that job and then move on to get another job). However, policy makers have been inclined to use the term synonymously with first destination employment.

In contrast with the dominant discourse of *employability*, where much emphasis is placed on the employer, their articulated skills requirements and their hiring decisions, career adaptability focuses on the individual. As such it is consistent with ‘new conceptions of work life [which] recognise that career belongs to the person, not the organisation’ (Duarte, 2004). It is also consistent with the professional values of career guidance practitioners with their focus on the needs of the client.

Career adaptability is thus a more person-centred interpretation of sustainable employability, and therefore more useful for those delivering client centred services. It incorporates both the individual’s own *readiness & resources* as they engage with the labour market, as well as the *responses & results* of this engagement. Savickas has gone on to identify the

¹ Gill Frigerio is a Senior Teaching Fellow in the Career Studies Unit, Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick

Table 1: Career Adaptability Dimensions (Savickas, 2013: 158)

Adaptability dimension	Attitudes and beliefs	Competence	Coping behaviours	Career 'problem'
Concern	Planful	Planning	Aware Involved Preparing	Indifference
Control	Decisive	Decision making	Assertive Disciplined Willful	Indecision
Curiosity	Inquisitive	Exploring	Experimenting Risk taking Inquiring	Unrealism
Confidence	Efficacious	Problem solving	Persistent Striving Industrious	Inhibition

adapt-abilities (psycho-social competences) which adaptable individuals develop and manifest. The development of these could then be identified as the goal of career development services. For HE career services, it is a useful articulation of what it is that means that some graduates operate more effectively than others so rather than accepting structural factors as a reason why career transitions are challenging, we can focus positively on the psycho-social competences that can be developed to adjust to, or overcome barriers.

Savickas' most recent definition of these psycho-social competences are concern, control, curiosity and confidence. These dimensions are explained more fully in Table 1.

Career adaptability research to date

Since 2008, an international group of researchers have been working to develop an assessment tool for Career adaptability. Under the leadership of Mark Savickas, this group took the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), designed for use in the USA, and conducted a 13 country study to validate it in international contexts (see the Journal of Vocational Behavior special edition 80, June 2012). Whilst the UK was represented in this group, initial work here was qualitative in approach, enriching the quantitative assessments by identifying descriptors for adaptability based on mid career case studies (McMahon, Watson and Bimrose, 2012; Brown, Bimrose, Barnes & Hughes, 2012).

Career adaptability is a particularly useful theoretical perspective for HE career services as it connects with a range of current priorities, such as:

- Finding ways to manage access to resources, encouraging some to be less reliant on support and operate more independently, whilst reaching out to engage those who need more support
- Measuring impact of services – particularly apposite given the ongoing emphasis on first destination as a performance indicator for institutions. With so many other variables affecting those outcomes beyond the quality of the service, something closer to the purpose and intended outcomes of the service is required.
- Articulating clearly that purpose and intended outcomes in ways that are transparent to stakeholders such as institutional colleagues, employers and users, as well as consistent with theoretical basis for our professional practice.
- Finding ways for students to engage more fully with their own career development, conceptual tools which will help students take ownership of their career development – knowing that this is a prerequisite for the most effective transitions.

That said, instruments which measure attributes associated with employability have been shown to be problematic (Wright, 2012). An evaluation study of the Personal Skills Award (PSA) at the University of Birmingham showed significant qualitative changes in employability related values, attitudes & behaviour. Participants showed evidence of reflecting on

skills/experiences; applying skills and attributes to specific situations/contexts, increased ability to articulate skills and attributes and increased confidence leading to higher aspiration. However, before and after administration of psychometric tests showed no change.

From this research, Dr Toni Wright concludes that rather than increasing student's cognitive skills, the PSA may be changing their application of skills and the meaning ascribed to their possession. At this point, we joined forces and convened a group to consider the psycho-social nature of career adaptabilities as a possible alternative for measurement.

Toni (based at Newman University) and I have since been working with Professor Jenny Bimrose of the University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research, Jane Artess of HECSU and Career Services at Warwick and Birmingham Universities, we have been applying these ideas to the HE Careers context in the UK. We are currently validating the questionnaire in a UK context, which we believe will be of value throughout the UK. Initial data are promising and we aim to have concluded this initial phase by summer 2013.

We envisage a number of potential uses for such an instrument, as a development tool for work with individuals and group, as a value added measure for intervention, for benchmarking purposes and to inform resource allocation and prioritisation. Consistent with Savickas' initial philosophy and vision that this work on career adaptability should be a 'gift' to the career profession, commercial gain is not sought – but funding to support the development of the concept and its application in the UK context is essential.

We are particularly keen to use the framework of career adaptabilities with students as a means for them to consider their own development, since direct engagement with theoretical constructs can be so valuable in surfacing students' own personal career theories.

A number of institutions have already expressed an interest in getting involved in the next phase of our work, following an initial presentation at the AGCAS heads of service conference in January 2013. Other readers are invited to contact g.frigerio@warwick.ac.uk to express interest in being kept up to date on the work.

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GMT in practice

Graduate Talent Pool and Internships

In this article, Craig Ineson¹, explains how the Graduate Talent Pool has been providing internships to graduates for the past four years. The initiative aims to match graduates from a diverse range of institutions with internships in Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and micro-enterprises. Find out here how the service can help graduates, careers services and employers to get the most out of internships to satisfy everyone's needs.

Graduate Talent Pool (GTP) is a free service which enables employers to promote quality internships in their organisations to recent UK graduates. Since its inception in 2009, around 90,000 UK graduates have registered with the service, looking to tap into the valuable experience offered by internships.

At GTP we define an internship as a limited period of work – perhaps to deliver a specific project – which allows a graduate to obtain practical, relevant, and professional experience to complement their academic teaching. Internships also offer graduates the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills in a real working environment and to network amongst professionals.

For employers, internships can provide access to new skills, a flexible and cost-effective labour force, and the opportunity to develop current staff at the same time as developing the next generation of professionals.

We recently conducted an evaluation of Graduate Talent Pool in order to establish whom we serve, where users are located, and (for graduates) where they studied. The research revealed a diverse graduate registrant base, with most UK universities well represented including Russell Group, 1994 Group and post-1992 institutions. So, graduates from right across the spectrum see the value of internships in kick starting their careers.

Should interns be paid during their internship?

This is a very common question. Because internships are not defined under law, there is a grey area as to whether internships need to be paid or not.

The answer depends on whether an intern would be considered a worker. If it can be shown that a person is a worker, then he or she must be paid the national minimum wage (presently £6.19 for a person of graduate age). There are a number of factors that help determine whether or not someone is a worker but it is generally accepted that if they form part of the commercial operation of a business, providing valuable or vital work, then they should be paid for their time².

Ninety-eight per cent of the vacancies on Graduate Talent Pool are paid-for positions, the remainder accounted for primarily by unpaid positions with charities. Through the use of a comprehensive Quality Assurance process, we do our best to ensure that all positions advertised are accessible, sustainable and legal.

Why is Graduate Talent Pool relevant to careers services?

Internships advertised on Graduate Talent Pool present a fantastic opportunity to help get graduates into graduate-level roles, not least because many employers are looking to turn their internships into permanent positions. We pride ourselves on offering quality internships, so all vacancies are checked before they are posted and 98% of current vacancies are for paid positions.

SMEs are Graduate Talent Pool's primary employer audience. Micro-enterprises are well represented and a small number of blue chip employers use the service. The majority of Graduate Talent Pool advertisers do not recruit in pre-determined patterns. They will recruit as and when they need and at short notice.

¹ Craig Ineson is the Graduate Talent Pool Administrator and is responsible for all quality assurance, reporting and general enquiries on behalf of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

² There are other factors which may imply that an intern should be paid. You can find more information at the Graduate Talent Pool site <http://bit.ly/Y9Kjc3> or at GOV.UK <http://bit.ly/ZK25hN>

This ensures a constant supply of vacancies to the site throughout the year, although there are natural spikes around graduation time.

By directing your graduates to Graduate Talent Pool you will be providing one more opportunity for them to gain essential experience and secure paid, graduate-level positions that may well turn into long-term employment.

Several universities are already using the service to advertise internships. If you have vacancies, whether internally or with partner employers in your locality, which are suitable for graduates, you can advertise them free of charge on Graduate Talent Pool.

Why is Graduate Talent Pool relevant to employers?

Internships provide employers access to the freshest graduate talent – a large pool of candidates motivated to work and ready to impress. They will provide new perspectives and bring skills and expertise that may not already exist in your organisation.

Our website includes a wealth of information to help employers set up internships, and we have a UK based employer helpline for those who have further questions. All vacancies are checked before they are posted and we will contact you if there are any concerns about National Minimum Wage issues or anything else.

Internships are flexible in that many graduates are looking for new and exciting ventures after leaving university. Do you need cover for a project at short notice? Internships are a great way to bring in labour resource to get the job done – at any time of the year.

Internships also allow you to thoroughly assess graduates' suitability for permanent positions in a low risk way.

Many employer users of Graduate Talent Pool are SMEs or micro-enterprises. We understand that you may not have systems in place to handle vacancy advertising and application. We not only provide advertising for free but offer you the option of filtering candidates with extra questions, and of using an online applications system that sends candidate CVs and cover letters straight to your inbox. If you have your own application forms, we can direct candidates to them. Simply sit back and watch the applications roll in.

The most significant benefit Graduate Talent Pool offers employers is this: Graduates are actively looking for internships and consider them an important part of starting a career. Around 90,000 graduates have registered for the service since inception; if you have quality internships, we have applicants.

Further information about Graduate Talent Pool can be found at:

For graduates: graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk

For employers and careers services: graduatetalentpool.bis.gov.uk

GMT research

What do graduates do – and where do they do it?

What Do Graduates Do? 2012 examined basic data on regional employment of graduates around the UK, in this article Charlie Ball¹ builds on that piece to take an in-depth view of where the jobs for new graduates were actually found in the UK last year.

Figure 1 examines the basic breakdown of UK graduate employment six months after graduation by region of the UK.

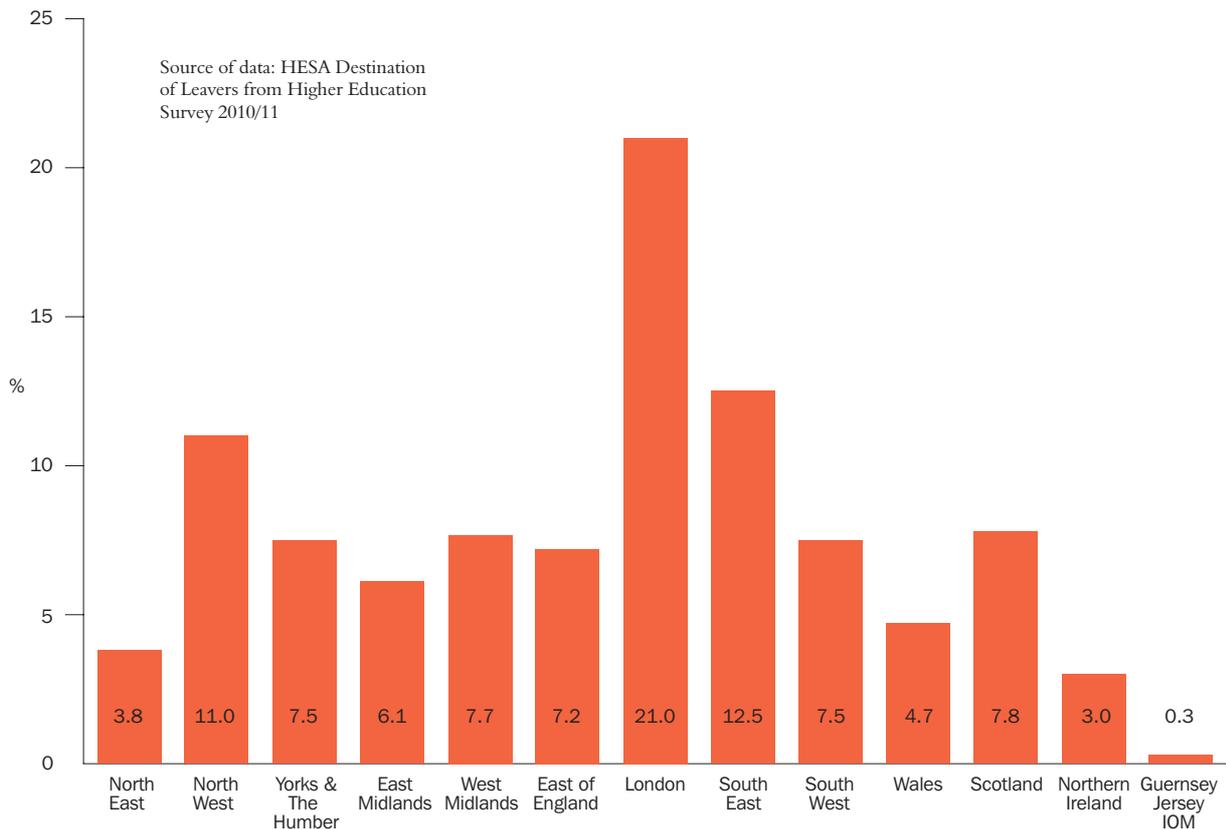
Just over a fifth of graduates began their career in London, and there were few changes between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The balance of employment around the country has stayed remarkably stable over the last five years, and Figure 2 (over the page) examines change over time.

London has been consistently the most common first employment destination for new graduates, but had been seeing a relative decline in share of early employment up until the recession hit. Since the recession, London’s share of early employment increased and has continued to rise. Scotland, by contrast, has experienced a year-on-year fall. The East of England meanwhile, has seen steady rises in the share of national employment of new graduates for the last five years.

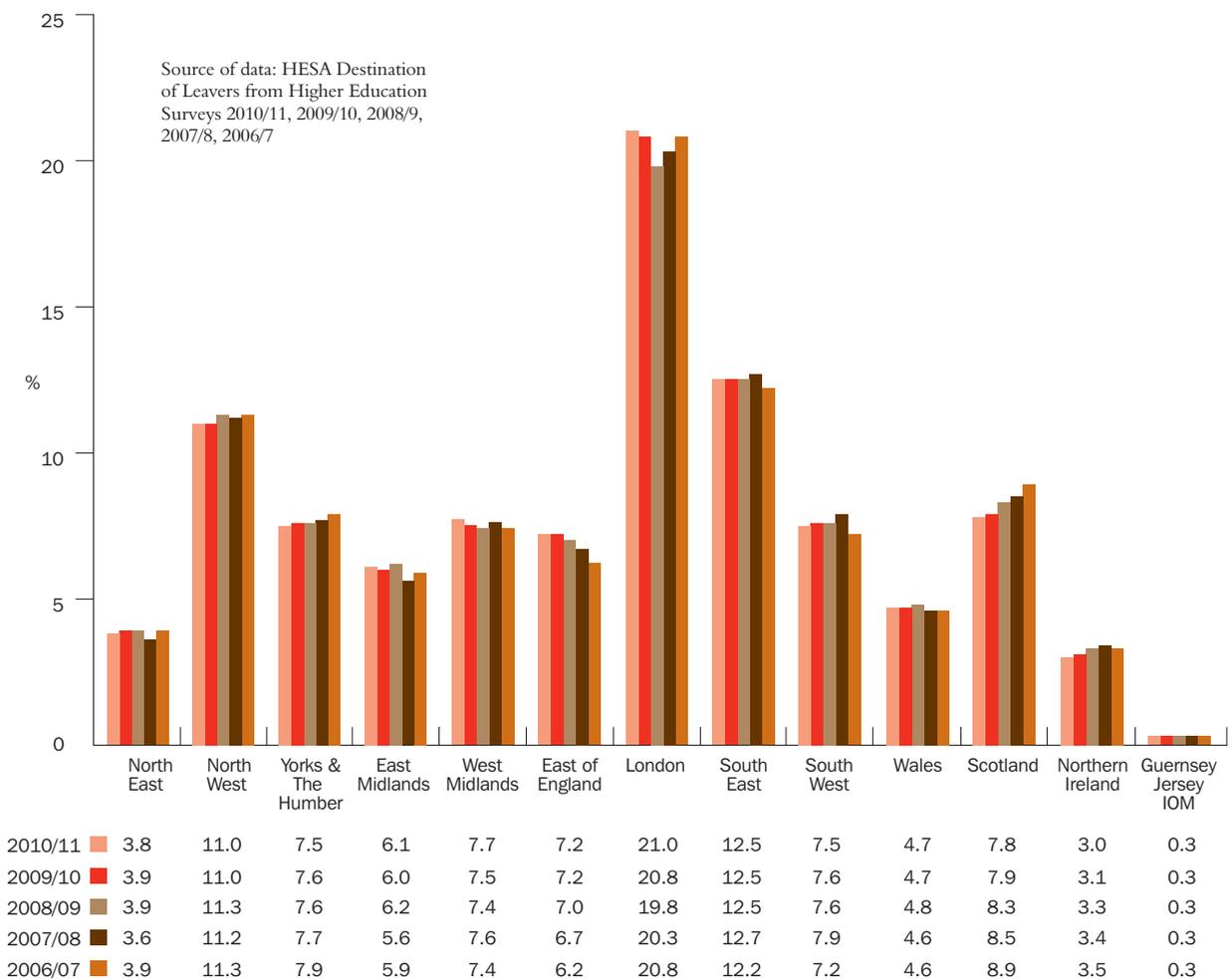
But the jobs market is different in different parts of the country, and destination data can help to examine where jobs in different professions were distributed. In 2010/11, several professions saw over 1,000 new, UK-domiciled, first degree graduate entrants, and we examine the geographical distribution of five of them in Figure 3 (over the page). The professions examined

Figure 1: Where were graduates from 2010/11 employed?



¹ Charlie Ball is the Deputy Director of Research at HECSU and author of the article, 'Regional overview of graduate employment' featured in What Do Graduates Do? 2012. You can download a pdf of What Do Graduates Do? 2012 at: www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_what_do_graduates_do.htm.

Figure 2: How has the balance of regional employment changed in five years?



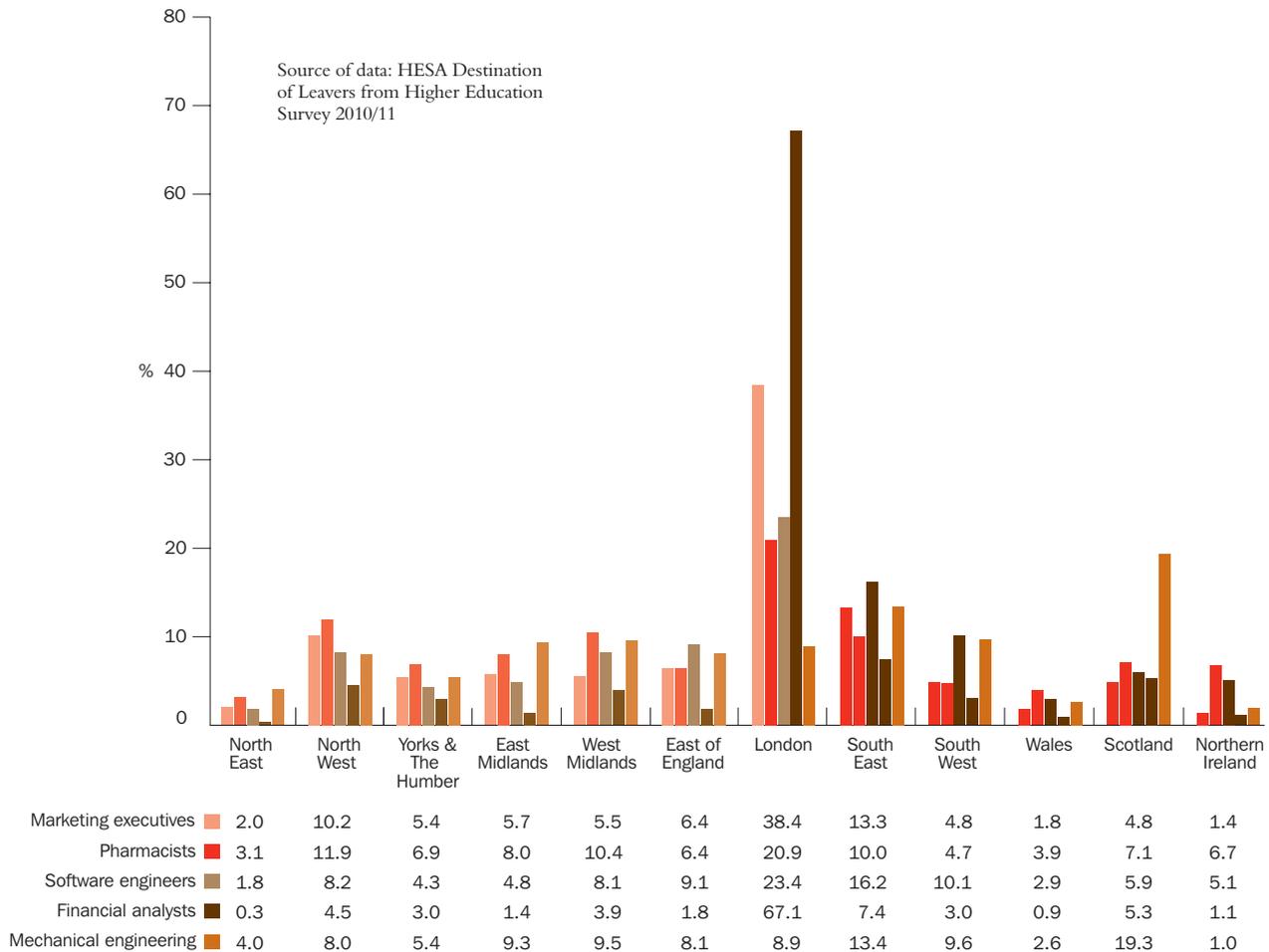
are: marketing executives (2,795 new entrants), pharmacists (1,905 new entrants), software engineers (1,365 new entrants), financial analysts (1,170 new entrants) and mechanical engineers (1,080 new entrants).

Two thirds of graduates who found jobs as financial analysts began their career in London, with only South-East England and Scotland seeing more than one in twenty financial analysis jobs. Within London, most roles were based in the Square Mile of the City of London or on Canary Wharf, with Westminster and Holborn also common. Outside London, Edinburgh and Glasgow were the most common workplaces for these financial analysts. Surrey and Manchester were the next most popular – but to put this into perspective, only 2% of the roles in the profession were based in Manchester. This is a job that is very concentrated in a few locations and an aspiring financial analyst will have a reasonably good idea of where they are likely to need to be based before they apply.

Around two in five (38%) of graduates who were employed as marketing and advertising executives were based in London, with one in ten employed in the North West. Central London was the most common place for these marketing executives to be working, but unlike the very concentrated jobs market for financial analysts, marketers were found in more parts of London with Southwark and Hammersmith and Fulham both common places to start work. Outside London, Surrey, Merseyside, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Manchester all provided at least 40 jobs each locally for graduates working in marketing last year.

Almost one in four (23%) of software engineers started their career in London, and another 16% in the South East. The most common city outside London for this group to start work was actually Belfast, but software engineers starting in Belfast were unusual; they were almost all from Northern Irish institutions, and most said that they had found out about their job through

Figure 3: Where did graduates starting work in a range of roles start their career in 2010/11?



their careers service. So, although there appears to have been a reasonable jobs market for software engineers in Belfast, in practise, it is probably less accessible to graduates who are not educated locally. The other most common locations for new graduate software engineers were Cambridge, Surrey, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, and Gloucestershire.

The distribution of graduates working as pharmacists around the country was not dissimilar to the distribution of graduates in general – Northern Ireland and the Midlands had a slightly larger share than the national average, whilst Scotland, South-East and South-West England had a little lower share than their share of national graduate employment. Pharmacy is another profession where careers services are rather more likely than average to be cited by graduates as the place where they found out about the job, and this may help graduates to find roles throughout the country. London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Belfast, Leeds, Hertfordshire, Essex, Lancashire, Newcastle and Kent were all popular places for these pharmacists to find work last year.

Mechanical engineers were spread much more evenly throughout the country, with London far from the most common location of employment. Much the most common place for mechanical engineers to start their career was Aberdeen, with the oil and gas industry providing many opportunities. Other regions with a strong mechanical engineering jobs market included Coventry and Warwickshire, Newcastle and Tyneside, Derby and Leicester, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and Surrey. London, although significant, is much less important than for other professions, and would-be mechanical engineers are advised to expect to live and work away from more conventional graduate employment hotspots. Overall, the regional pattern of employment of graduates has not changed dramatically since the recession, but broad patterns of work can conceal significant differences between the distribution of some roles. Not all jobs are found equally spread across all parts of the country, and students who aspire to work in particular parts of the country will need to work closely with well-connected local careers services to ensure that they do not have unrealistic expectations about the work available in their chosen location.

Find out more about the destinations of graduates from 2010/11 in *What Do Graduates Do? 2012* available at: www.hecsu.ac.uk/current_projects_what_do_graduates_do.htm

GMT comments

Social mobility: keeping it in the family

In this article, Andrew McCulloch¹ uses publicly available data to look at the proportion of children from lower participation areas going into higher education. The data shows that there are significant variations between universities and their admissions of students from areas of lower participation and that these have been relatively unchanged over time. So, does the improvement of social mobility rest with universities efforts to widen participation or the choice of parents and the secondary education establishment that they send their children to?

I saw on the news that the Deputy Prime Minister is sending his son to 'The London Oratory', an exclusive state school in West London. As might be expected this attracted some claims of hypocrisy in the press, given that the Deputy Prime Minister is leading government attempts to increase social mobility. Social scientists understand education as playing a dual role in social mobility. Education reduces social mobility because it is the main pathway through which better-off families pass on advantages to their children: in comparison to children from less well-off families, children from better-off families have a higher chance of themselves being better-off as adults mainly because they are more likely to go to university. Education also promotes social mobility, however, in that a university education has benefits for any child irrespective of their social background.

The key role of education in social mobility explains why many social scientists were against the introduction of tuition fees for higher education. Students have been required to pay tuition fees for higher education since 1998/99 and many universities now charge the maximum fee of £9000 per year. In response to concerns over the affordability of higher education for students from less well-off families the Higher Education Act 2004 established the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). Universities that charge more than £6500 per year now need to have an access

agreement with OFFA setting out the steps they will take, such as bursaries and studentships, to ensure that children from less well-off families can still afford to go to university.

Whether or not higher tuition fees are discouraging students from less well-off families from going to university is difficult to gauge, however, using routinely available statistics. As part of the admissions process students are asked to provide information on parental occupation and on whether they attended a state or private school. The published information² on occupation is subject to a relatively high level of non-response, however, either because young people do not know the occupation of their parents, do not wish to respond or feel that such questions are intrusive. In 2010/11, some universities had recorded information on occupational background for less than 60% of students. The information on the type of secondary school students attended is more complete than that on parental occupation with an overall response rate of around 95%. The number of students who went to public school is a relatively small group, however, and the type of school students attended is probably a better way of measuring concentrated affluence rather than participation of young people from under-represented groups.

In the absence of suitable data on the socio-economic characteristics of individual entrants, HEFCE uses a geographical indicator (POLAR or Participation of Local Areas³) to monitor trends in participation among young people from under-represented groups. The POLAR classification calculates the proportion of the population aged 18 in an electoral ward who entered higher education, with the proportion of entrants from areas in the bottom quintile of the distribution being used as an indicator of the extent of participation of young people from under-represented groups. This way of measuring participation of under-represented groups in higher education assumes that students from areas which have a low rate of

¹ Andrew McCulloch is a Quantitative Researcher at the Higher Education Careers Services Unit. This article was originally published under the title, 'Why do government ministers send their kids to private schools?' first published online by Significance Magazine, a publication of the Royal Statistical Society.

² For information contained in the Performance Indicators in HE in the UK go to: www.hesa.ac.uk/pis

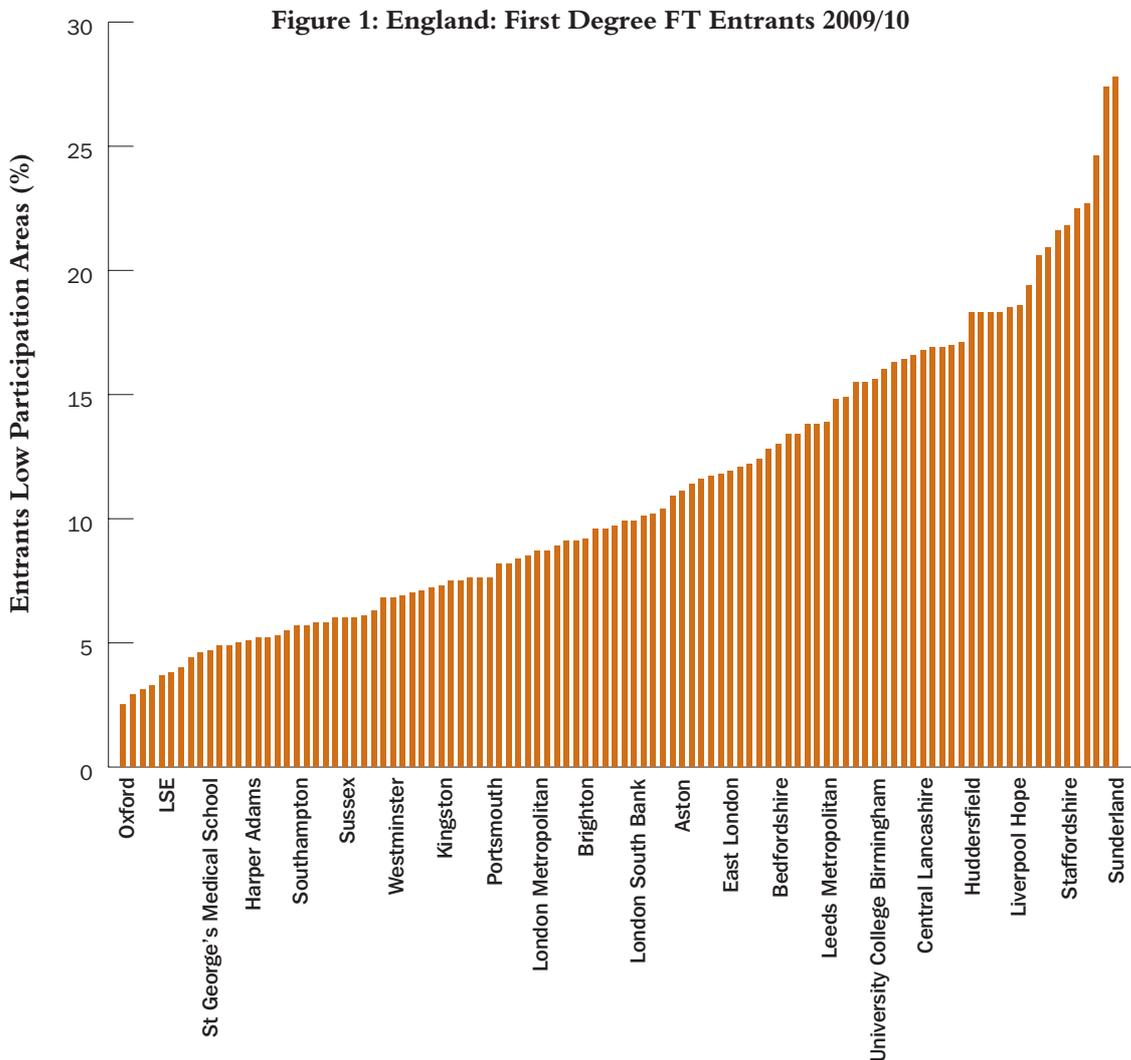
³ You can access more information and data from POLAR through the HEFCE website at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/>

participation in higher education are a distinctive group. This might not be the case. Students from areas with low levels of participation in higher education might have similar characteristics to students from areas where more children go on to higher education, it is just that there aren't so many of them. It is an extremely practical approach, however. The only information required is the postcode of the student which is available for over 99% of entrants to higher education.

The most recent statistics show that 11% of university entrants in 2009/10 were from low participation areas. Students from low participation areas are therefore under-represented by a factor of around two in the student population in comparison to what would be expected if entrants to university had an even geographical distribution. Figure 1 shows the percentage of entrants from low participation areas for those universities in England which had more than

500 entrants in 2009/10. The figure shows that there is significant variation across universities in the proportion of entrants coming from low participation areas with the proportion of entrants from low participation areas ranging from over 20% at the University of Sunderland to less than 5% at the University of Oxford.

Do these figures show that elite universities such as Oxford are not doing enough to attract students from under-represented groups? The results clearly show that universities are selective in their admissions but the elite universities, such as Oxford, maintain that they select on academic merit and not the social background of applicants. If a young person from a less well-off family has the ability and qualifications to succeed, their social characteristics are not a barrier to entry into Oxford, Cambridge or the London School of Economics.

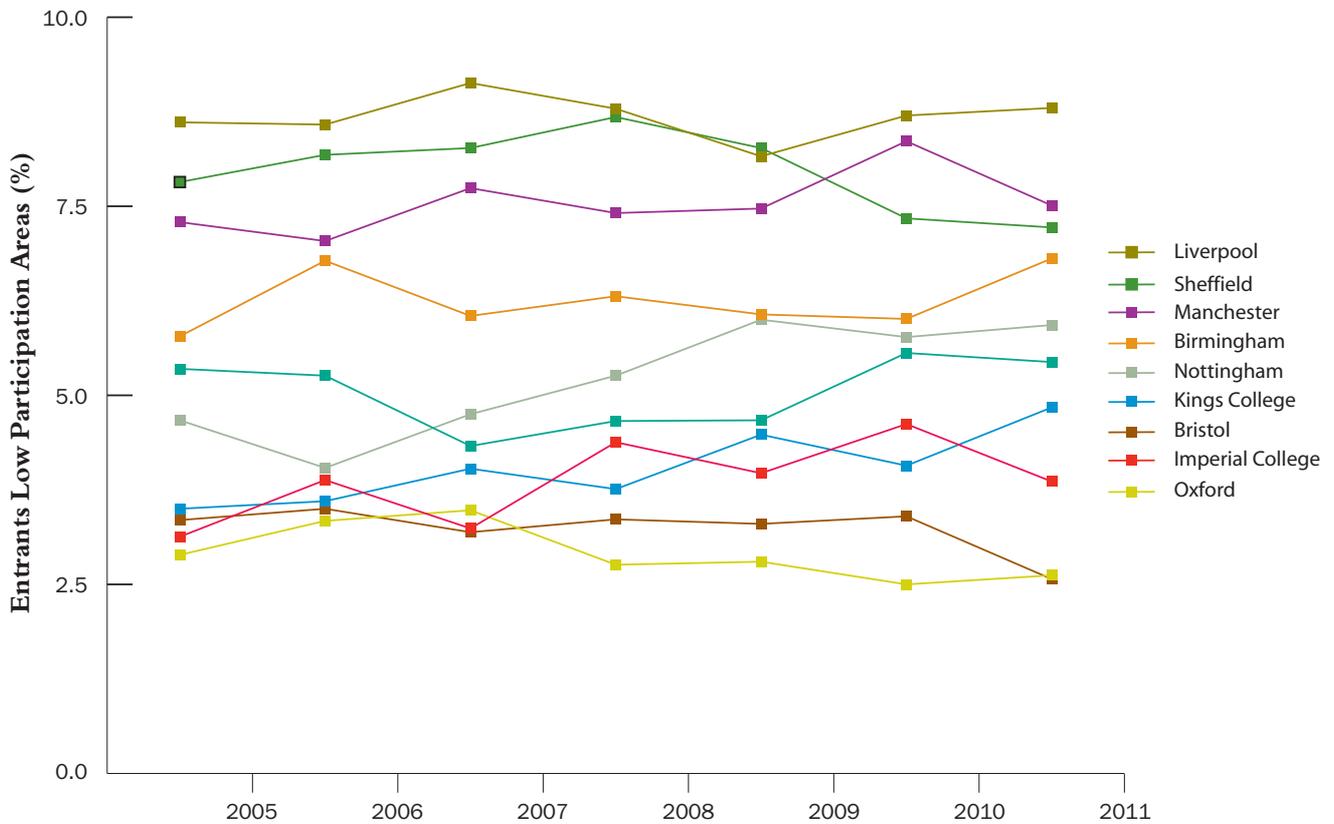


HEFCE has argued that the participation of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education has increased since 2005. While the overall proportion of young people from low participation areas who go to university has risen by around 30% since 2005, it is important to keep this in perspective. The overall number of young people in higher education has also risen by around 30% since 2005, so the overall proportion of young people in higher education from low participation areas has remained almost unchanged since 2005. Figure 2 shows how the percentage of entrants from low participation areas has changed between 2005 and 2011 for some of the universities in England and Wales which belonged to the Russell Group in 2012 (the University of

Cambridge did not provide data in 2005 and is omitted).

The data showed that none of the Russell Group universities have shown a significant increase in the proportion of entrants from low participation areas with the proportion of entrants from low participation areas varying from around 8% for Liverpool and Sheffield to 3% for Oxford and Bristol. Access to higher education may be the pathway through which social class is passed from one generation to the next, but because better-off parents almost always act to see that their children get the best education available, it is families and not universities which are the main cause of low levels of social mobility.

Figure 2: Change in % of participation between 2005 and 2011 for universities in England and Wales



GMT student research

Effective careers provision

It is interesting to learn more about the areas of careers information, advice and guidance which are of interest to students early in their research. This article was written by Liz McCoy who recently completed her MSc in Careers Guidance at the University of Glamorgan. Here Liz summarises her Masters dissertation to provide an insight into her interest in whether a relationship exists between the effectiveness of careers interviews and the learning style of graduates.

Researchers have long advocated the need to continue expanding and deepening the literature regarding why careers interventions are effective, with whom, under which conditions, and on which outcomes¹. Indeed, 'to ignore the interaction between client characteristics and treatment factors would disregard the continual calls for a better understanding of what vocational treatment works best for which clients'².

Currently the traditional careers interview is typically the intervention delivered as part of University guidance services. However, the assumption in the literature that the effectiveness of careers interventions varies between individuals begs the question that, if not all graduates benefit equally from the careers interview, could this be due to individual client characteristics, and if so, how can this be addressed in order to provide an equally effective service for all?

In the context of my research the question addressed was, why do some graduates find careers interviews to be effective, and others do not?

Individual client characteristics

From a personal perspective, I benefit most from learning through collaborative work and discussion-

based exploration of ideas, and therefore for me, the one-to-one careers interview scenario may not necessarily be the most effective mode of delivery. The tendency for me to learn best via a more collaborative approach, both in terms of subject-knowledge and self-knowledge, can be interpreted as being due to my strong activist learning style preference. This is according to Honey and Mumford's (1992) learning style preference categories³. In developing their learning style preference categories of activist, reflector, theorist and pragmatist, based on Kolb's experiential learning model, Honey and Mumford pointed out that teachers and university lecturers have a tendency to assume that students all learn in the same way. The categories within this framework differ in a number of ways. Activists involve themselves fully and enthusiastically in new experiences, are open-minded and gregarious, and tackle problems by brainstorming. Reflectors prefer to observe problems from many different perspectives, take their time in making decisions, and tend to adopt a low profile while keeping their distance slightly. Theorists are thought to adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories, they like to analyse and synthesise and dislike subjectivity and ambiguity. Finally, pragmatists are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice, and are proactive and act quickly and confidently on ideas that attract them. As part of my investigation, among other factors, I explored learning style preference as a cause of this variation in how effective graduates found the traditional careers interview.

The research

This small-scale exploratory investigation with 25 graduates looked at how learning style preference influenced the effectiveness of a traditional thirty-

¹ e.g. Jepsen, D. A. (1992). 'Annual review: Practice and research in career counselling and development, 1991', *Career Development Quarterly*, 41(2), pp. 98-129; Flynn, R. J. (1994). 'Evaluating the effectiveness of career counselling: Recent evidence and recommended strategies', *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 28(4), pp. 270-280; Flynn, 1994. Fretz, B. R. (1981). 'Evaluating the effectiveness of career interventions', *Journal of Counseling Psychology Monograph*, 28(1), pp. 77-90; Whiston, S. C., Sexton, T. L. and Lasoff, D. L. (1998). 'Career-intervention outcome: A replication and extension of Oliver and Spokane (1988)', *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 45(2), pp. 150-165; Whiston, S. C., Brecheisen, B. K. And Stephens, J. (2003). 'Does treatment modality affect career counseling effectiveness?' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 62, pp. 390-410.

² Whiston, S. C., Brecheisen, B. K. And Stephens, J. (2003). 'Does treatment modality affect career counseling effectiveness?' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 62, pp. 390-410.

³ Honey, P. And Mumford, A. (1992). *The manual of learning styles*. 3rd edn. Maidenhead: Peter Honey.

minute careers interview. Participants' learning style preference was obtained using Honey and Mumford's learning styles questionnaire, and data was also collected on other factors that may impact on effectiveness; gender, age, domestic/international status, subject discipline, previous career interventions, previous work experience, and reason for visiting the careers service.

How effectiveness was measured

Watts (2002) stated that for guidance to be effective, individuals need to be able to implement and 'relate it to their individual needs and convert it into personal action'⁴.

For this study, careers interview effectiveness was measured using quantitative and qualitative methods. Prior to their interview, participants completed a verbally administered Basic Information Questionnaire, which began with the collection of factual data, and finished with the open-ended question enquiring as to the reason for participants' visit to the careers service. The concept of career readiness was then introduced, and participants provided a pre-intervention career readiness score, where it was explained that, "On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 meaning you feel totally unprepared to start making career decisions, with circumstances not in place for this to happen, and 10 being that you're totally ready with everything in your life set up so that you can make career decisions, where would you place yourself?".

Participants then attended their traditional careers interview, and on their return, completed Honey and Mumford's learning styles questionnaire and the FIRST-Q, adapted from Bedford's FIRST questionnaire⁵, which assesses the elements of focus, information, realism, scope and tactics.

The last item on the FIRST-Q was the post-intervention career readiness scale, where career readiness scores were again recorded. The difference in pre- and post-intervention career readiness score was then taken as the quantitative measure of intervention effectiveness, and the FIRST-Q the qualitative measure of effectiveness.

So was there a relationship between learning styles and effectiveness?

The investigation yielded no direct result of influence of graduates' learning style preference on the effectiveness of the careers interview. These findings did suggest that there may be a difference in how effective graduates regard careers interventions to be based on their own learning style preference but only when the individual's reason for their visit has been addressed sufficiently, and their expectations met. For example, the results implied that the interview was most effective for pragmatists who were visiting for CV and job application advice and this may be due to pragmatists' preference to try out ideas and see their techniques in practice.

If guidance interventions in HE careers services are made to be more personally engaging and meaningful to graduates, and therefore more effective, this could have a subsequent impact on graduates' eventual employability on exit from university and entrance into the labour market, as well as on the success of lifelong career development thereafter. The findings from this research do support the suggestion that in terms of careers intervention, one size doesn't necessarily fit all, however more research into the relationship between individuals' learning style preference and reason for visiting the service may be insightful and provide guidance on what other interventions may make the careers service more effective for individuals.

Liz runs an employability mentoring initiative in Bristol, which focuses on delivery of individualised programmes to help young people to be successful in University admissions and labour market environments.

To find out more about Liz's work, please refer to www.redbrickfutures.co.uk

⁴ Watts, A. G. (2002). 'The role of information and communication technologies in integrated career information and guidance systems: A policy perspective', *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 2(3), pp. 139-155.

⁵ Bedford, T. (1982) *Vocational Guidance Interviews Explored*, London: Careers Service Branch, Department of Employment.

HEA Employability Conference

20th June 2013

Defining and developing your approach to employability

Location: The Studio Birmingham, 10.30-4pm.

The programme will include:

- The launch of the HEA Employability Framework, a process for embedding employability into the curriculum.
- An opportunity to hear about the role of the new National Council for Universities and Business (NCUB)
- Initial findings from the NCUB placement research project
- Results of the HEA Impact study of *Pedagogy for Employability* (2012) and how Pedagogy has been used to support embedding of employability in the curriculum.
- Initial findings from the HEA funded *Graduate Skills and Capabilities* Research Project conducted by a team from Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) and Mantz Yorke which focuses on employability, assessment and the curriculum.

As well as keynote addresses, there will be a choice of workshops and opportunities for networking, sharing of good practice and informing employability support.

Confirmed presenters include:

Jane Artes,	Director of Research, HECSU
David Docherty,	Chief Executive, CIHE
Terry Dray,	Director of Graduate Advancement and Employer Engagement, Liverpool John Moores University
Joe Marshall,	Project Manager, National Centre for Universities and Business
Maureen Tibby,	HEA Academic Lead-Employability HEA

The cost of this event is £50 for attendees from HEA subscribing institutions and includes refreshments and lunch.

For further details of HEA support, news, events, research, resources, training and funding go to www.heacademy.ac.uk

Bookings Now Open for HEA Annual Conference: powerful partnerships: defining the learning experience 3-4 July 2013, University of Warwick.

Book your place at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/annual-conference>

Universities UK

review of part-time and mature higher education



Universities UK

Part-time higher education in the UK is changing. In England, for example, numbers of students recruited to part-time undergraduate courses fell by 40% between 2010-11 and 2012-13. Declines have also been seen in Scotland and Wales, despite their different funding systems.

This is part of a complicated and longer pattern in recent years, and has led to concerns about the ability of the UK to meet its skills needs and compete internationally.

Universities UK has recently launched a review of part-time and mature student provision in the UK. The review will report in October 2013 and will consider:

- What explains the changes seen in part-time undergraduate provision?
- What are the implications for UK skills and international competitiveness?
- What should be done? What practical solutions are there to removing the barriers for part-time students, encouraging more to study and improving their experiences?

We'll be looking not only at communications and national policy, but also at the experiences of students, from enrolment to careers advice. We're particularly interested in universities' and colleges' engagement with employers to ensure that courses are relevant and flexible.

We have been pleased to involve HECSU in the review; they have given evidence about their views, especially relating to careers advice, and shared helpful research such as the Futuretrack studies.

Now we are seeking the views of universities and colleges, students, employers and a wide range of other interested bodies.

For more information, to let us know your views or to join the virtual network supporting the review, please see the Universities UK website at <http://bit.ly/16uu7mg> or contact Fiona.hoban@universitiesuk.ac.uk