

So, what's your plan? Identifying differences in the career planning needs and behaviors of WP and non-widening participation (WP) Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students.

Introduction

Widening Participation (WP) Postgraduate students (PGT) refers to underrepresented group of students, this could include students who are considered mature, distanced learners etc. The aim of this project was to understand the perspective of WP PGT students and understand the difficulties they face and how universities can best support the students in their careers after finishing their studies

Aims

The aim of this project is to find ways in how universities can improve on their career provision so they can best support WP PGT students with their future. The research tries to understand the perspective of WP students through a series of focus groups with students from multiple universities to gain a understanding of their experience and what they think would have best supported them in their year.

Methods

During the six weeks of research, I was given with various tasks to assist with finding students, creating questions, and taking notes from the focus group. The first week was going through key reading's and gaining a deeper understanding about the research. The second and third week onwards the focus shifted to setting up and inviting students for the focus group. The fourth week, the focus groups took place and after that the next weeks was spent on transcribing and creating an analysis for the research.



Results and Conclusion

From the focus groups, I got to meet and understand the problems of WP students, there were a lot of topics such as a connect between lecturers and careers team which all universities could add to their career provision system which could been used to support them. Due to spam emails, we had to recreate the student invite and requested them to provide university emails to participate in the focus group. We didn't receive respondents from two universities and hence only four universities took part in the research. Next time requesting such information on an earlier date could help us better get students for the research.

Impacts and Reflection

The results from this focus group will help many universities improve their career provision for WP students which will result in more WP students joining universities so they can improve their career. We were able to fulfil the aim of this research and learn more about WP students. This project gave me experience and provided me with information about the work and time which is spent working on research.