

Surveys Conference 2017: List of Abstracts

Understanding and enhancing the student experience



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One hour workshops

1. Measuring and Improving Graduates' Life Quality Beyond Employment Outcomes

Glen Crust

University of St Mark and St John

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) items are proposed as an Optional Question Bank in HESA's revised DLHE survey <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/newdlhe/survey/optional>. The workshop describes what happens when university career services supplement the DLHE survey with these items. The combined data support curriculum-based interventions which offer graduate-level lives to all university leavers, as an alternative to enabling half to secure graduate-level employment at a cost of around £234,000 per job. You can read the arithmetic at bit.ly/234000DoTheMath

This workshop explores how curriculum partnerships can employ the expertise of career and learning development advisers to simultaneously improve graduates' employability, students' life quality and National Student Survey (NSS) scores. Many teenage students want happiness, excitement, community, satisfaction and fulfilment today, more than they want employability in a couple of years' time. The workshop will demonstrate methods for delivering career development and autonomy by harnessing these motivations.

2. A versatile survey - presentation of an ongoing reflective survey to support and monitor a team based project that can also be used to introduce team work, enhance employability, recruit students, and as part of an assessment strategy.

Maggy Fostier, Tracey Speake, Marcia Ody and Will Carey

University of Manchester

This workshop will first describe our ongoing reflective survey, how it supports team work and how it is assessed. Participants will then review summaries of team surveys to illustrate how they can be used to analyse and monitor team work. A discussion will ensue on how participants may want to use or adapt the survey and we can share our 11 year experience of reflective portfolio. Next, the assessment centre activity will be explained and a student evaluation presented. We will finally discuss how this activity could be turned into an assessment.

3. The importance of student surveys and the staff campaign

Shereen Sally

City, University of London

Student Surveys play an increasingly important role in getting student feedback about their overall experience at University. In order to get valid and representative data, it is essential to get high response rates. The 'Your Voice, Our Action' campaign at City University London is more than just a way to get students to fill out a survey which encompasses internal surveys, NSS and PTES and PRES, but be engaged in feedback on a broader level and to see how what they say contributes to improving the student experience for them and others.

In order to get students engaged it has been increasingly important to focus on a staff campaign of engaging and getting staff on board to understand the importance of surveys and take responsibility for student engagement. This workshop outlines the importance of the staff campaign and innovative approaches to supporting staff engagement with survey results and TEF metrics.

4. Course evaluations: developing a mutually beneficial teaching and learning experience

Jennifer O'Brien and Sarah Marie Hall
University of Manchester

All lecturers now ask students to complete some form of evaluation of their courses. Summarising students' experiences of course units in a set of numbers disguises a host of nuanced issues surrounding teaching and learning. Whilst a learning opportunity for student and teacher, the process represents a power-laden dialogue and one which is only going to grow in weight with the TEF. As recent research has identified, such evaluations can also construct hurtful, sometimes gendered spaces which need to be carefully interpreted and can steer teaching. This workshop aims to share experiences of module evaluation and their role in teaching and learning. We seek to address key questions such as how to administer surveys, how they should affect teaching and how to use them to the mutual benefit of teacher and learner. This session hopes to unite teachers interested in building the discussion into collaborative research.

Half-hour presentations

Parallel breakout sessions 1

1. Where are you right now? Using careers registration to support employability in higher education

Bob Gilworth and Fiona Cobb

The Careers Group, University of London

‘Where are you right now?’

If we want to support student’s progression into employability, we need to know the position they are starting from. A three year HEFCE funded learning gain project is investigating the value of ‘Careers Registration’ – adding two to four careers focused questions into student registration systems – as a measure of work readiness learning gain. In the first year of the HEFCE careers registration learning gain project, we collected, 191,297 student responses on career readiness and employment experience.

The aims of the session will be to explore the ways in which insight from such a vast amount of Careers Registration data are being used strategically by universities to develop and improve student outcomes, through monitoring and shaping student employability journeys, and to consider the potential impact for the learning gain landscape in higher education.

2. The benefits and challenges of developing surveys for evaluating widening participation activities and student experience.

Natalie Holland and Jo Armstrong

REAP, Lancaster University

This paper reports on the use of surveys in an evaluation of university widening participation (WP) activities, exploring the benefits and challenges associated with their development. It draws from the experience of, firstly, using surveys to evaluate across diverse activities and, secondly, to explore changes over time in the student experience. The starting point is discussion of the challenges associated with these uses, including the need to reach a shared understanding of terminology and attempting to achieve a balance between competing objectives, such as achieving comparability while allowing for specificity. Such issues frequently revolve around seemingly small details which usually remain invisible to the users. The paper argues that resolving these issues is invariably difficult and time consuming but that this process needs consideration to highlight its importance and the payoff in terms of the benefits that can be accrued for the WP students themselves in achieving more robust results.

3. Bringing them together: integrated approaches to analysis of core student survey data

Colin Calder

University of Aberdeen

This presentation will discuss evolving approaches to student survey data analysis which have developed after support for core surveys was brought together within the Centre for Academic Development at the University of Aberdeen.

Three case studies drawn from our first year with the United Kingdom Engagement Survey (UKES) will be used to illustrate the enhancement value and insight that can be extracted from these data, and discuss how surfacing and disseminating this value acts as a catalyst for further evaluation of learning and teaching activities.

4. Loughborough's Doctoral Well-Being and Support Online Survey: A pro-active tool to investigate student needs, well-being and progression

Katryna Kalawsky
Loughborough University

Postgraduate research (PGR) student challenges are unique from undergraduate and postgraduate taught student populations. The different academic, environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal issues that PGRs may face can have a significant impact on their well-being and subsequent ability to achieve their full-potential.

It is important that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) take a pro-active approach to investigate PGR well-being to establish areas for improvement and identify current strengths. In that regard, the Doctoral Well-being and Support Online Survey was developed at Loughborough University. Whilst the ultimate goal of the survey was to provide a valuable contribution towards the University's strategic ambition to achieve a world-class doctoral experience, the survey has been shared widely with several HEIs throughout the UK and adapted for other cohorts.

In this session, the development of the survey, key findings and subsequent actions will be shared. Information on how to access the survey will also be provided.

5. The value of undertaking surveys to explore the expectations and experiences of applicants and students at the start of the PGT journey.

Michelle Morgan, Bournemouth University
Inês Direito, UCL Institute of Education

The postgraduate 'experience' is explored via valuable surveys undertaken by the HEA (PTES and PRES). However, understanding the prior learning and work experiences, and expectations of postgraduate taught (known as PGT hereafter) applicants and students on entry is a valuable but neglected area across the sector.

The aims of this session are threefold. Firstly, it will report the findings of 3 surveys undertaken by the Postgraduate Experience Project (funded by HEFCE and comprising 11 Universities) which explored the prior learning and work experiences and expectations of applicants and students at the start of the PGT journey. Secondly, it will demonstrate how the findings are highly valuable in providing institutions with the intelligence to help convert offers to acceptances and acceptances to enrolments, to assist with managing learners expectations, and to enable HEIs to support their students effectively in, through and out of their studies. Thirdly, it will argue for the need for a national survey on entry to PGT study to help the sector effectively improve the PGT student experience.

6. Contextualising the postgraduate research experience – exploring and responding to diverse student needs

Caroline Heaton and Alan Donnelly
Sheffield Hallam University

This presentation will explore the extent to which sector-wide survey tools such as PRES are able to successfully evaluate the varying needs, expectations and experiences of a diverse range of postgraduate research students. We will discuss Sheffield Hallam University's approach to contextualising PRES results within the institution, in an attempt to inform targeted interventions, and will consider effective ways of enhancing, interpreting and using PRES data to meet local needs.

Parallel sessions 2

7. Give me what I need to pass: Approaches to learning, course complaints, and academic performance among undergraduate student 'consumers'

Louise Bunce and Melanie Bennett
Oxford Brookes University

Undergraduates who self-identify as a consumer of their education achieve lower academic grades than those who do not (Bunce, Baird & Jones, 2016). The current study tested the hypothesis that this is because paying fees creates a customer – service-provider relationship between students and universities, which fosters passive or surface approaches to learning. 679 undergraduates studying in England, UK, completed an online questionnaire to assess their consumer orientation, level of course complaints, approaches to learning, and level of academic performance. The analysis replicated previous findings and supported the hypotheses, finding that poorer academic performance was associated with identifying more strongly as a consumer, making more course complaints, and engaging more in surface approaches to learning. Furthermore, the relationships between identifying as a consumer and complaining with academic performance were mediated by level of surface approach to learning. Implications for positioning students as consumers and charging increasingly higher tuition fees are discussed.

8. NSS Satisfaction: Driven by Personal Development and Psychological Needs

David Bowles and Catherine Day
Sheffield Hallam University

This talk reports on two studies carried out with the aim to establish the major contributing factors to student course satisfaction as measured by the National Student Survey. Study one was focused on data from the NSS itself (N = 1332), in which it was demonstrated that variance in overall course satisfaction is mostly driven by satisfaction with teaching quality and the students' personal development. Study two was focused on the psychological, or "internal" factors that might influence course satisfaction. Data was collected from a sample of undergraduate students (N = 250). This questionnaire-based study indicated that of the factors considered, the fulfilment of the basic psychological need to feel competent was the most influential on students' course satisfaction. We conclude that efforts to maximise student satisfaction should focus on enabling academic staff to excel as inspirational tutors, tutors who foster competence and confidence in their students' academic journey.

9. Interim module evaluation: insights from an institutional initiative

Elena Zaitseva and Sean Cashman
Liverpool John Moores University

One Minute Module Evaluation (OMME) was introduced at LJMU to provide module teams with a formal interim feedback on how students experience the module approximately half-way into teaching. The session will explore initial insights from an institutional research project looking at engagement of students and staff with both rounds of evaluation, 'predictive power' of OMME and its impact on results of final evaluation.

The discussion will be focused on dynamics and timing of student evaluations in both semester and yearlong modules, and how to maximise enhancement potential of the interim feedback. Participants will be encouraged to share their institutional approaches to interim course and/or module level evaluations.

10. The survey that is not a survey: Engaging staff and students through meaningful feedback

Cécile Tschirhart

London Metropolitan University

The Student-Led Module Feedback Scheme (SLMFS) was introduced at London Metropolitan University in October 2015. The survey was designed to provide staff with 'live' feedback from students in the early stages of studying on a module. Now in its second year of implementation, the SLMFS has become much more than just a survey. This paper will describe how, the way in which the 'survey' when implemented, had a direct impact on the student experience and on staff professional practice.

11. Writing Progression and WP: Insight from Data

Daniel Quinn, David Forde and Becky Collins

CU Coventry

The Academic Writing Service (AWS) employs a data log/dashboard that records key information from all service users at CU Coventry (CUC), along with their feedback. The purpose of this record is to build a picture of the types of students that use the service and the issues they experience when studying and formulate solutions to these. From collecting this data, the AWS has been able to positively contribute to the enhancement of the academic landscape at CUC.

The aim of this session is to illustrate how the data captured by the AWS has supported student needs and maximised inclusivity.

The objectives of the session are to explain the rationale for the data categories utilised, demonstrate how the AWS has supported student needs across CUC and discuss how the results from survey data have evidenced the contribution made to student progression.

12. The survey jigsaw: tools and techniques to assemble a complete picture of the student experience

Sara Burnett, Simon Collins and Elizabeth Malone

Kingston University

This presentation demonstrates how a professional services directorate, Library and Learning Services, has begun to use qualitative research data (using ethnographic techniques), to ensure that valuable quantitative data (such as NSS, internal surveys and benchmarking) becomes more meaningful. Repetition of questions and responses can lead to the risk of data and outcomes becoming stale. In a user focused environment we have taken a more dynamic approach, aiming to gain a greater insight into what our users really want from us. Free text options within our regular datasets tend toward the vague. We need to know what is truly meant by comments such as: 'more', 'space', 'nicer'.

13. The truth is out there? Using internal surveys to predict NSS results

Heather Fotheringham

University of the Highlands and Islands

A university-wide end of module survey has been in place at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) since 2014-15 providing a means for students to feedback on their experiences at module level. The main aim of introducing the survey was to gather more immediate feedback than the National Student Survey (NSS), and at a level where good (and not so good) practice could be reliably identified. A subsidiary aim was to have a mechanism by which to predict NSS results. The aim of this session is to consider the relationship between internal and external surveys, and their relation (if any) to teaching quality. Session objectives are to:

- Describe current survey practices at UHI
- Compare module survey results with NSS results
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of using module survey results as a predictor of NSS results
- Discuss the relationship between survey results and teaching quality

14. OurSurveySays: gaining insight from the NSS open-text questions using linguistic analysis techniques

Matt Gee and Annis Mapleston

Birmingham City University

More and more student surveys are being run across the HE sector and within HE institutions. A great deal of high-quality work is being performed in the study of the quantitative questions, but many of these surveys also include open-text questions in which students are free to express their own views and priorities. Such responses often number in the thousands per institution, however, this valuable data cannot be properly explored due to the lack of suitable tools and the prohibitive time and cost of large-scale manual analysis.

In this paper we introduce OurSurveySays: a tool for the analysis of textual survey data. Using NSS responses, we show how themes can be extracted from the data. We assess the tool's potential to uncover the otherwise unarticulated needs of students. Finally, we explore how OurSurveySays is being used to understand student feedback and improve teaching at our own institution.

15. Empowering the Academic: Improving staff engagement with student surveys

Sophie Leslie and Michelle Deininger

Cardiff Metropolitan University

This presentation will provide an overview of the new approach to surveys and promotion of student feedback at Cardiff Metropolitan University, from foundation to PhD. In 2017, Cardiff Met introduced a Survey Season that provided a much more structured approach to survey promotion for all institutional surveys. This approach ensured that: the promotion was academic-led and supported by Student Representatives; survey promotion occurred during timetabled teaching sessions; students were made aware of how their feedback would be used; and, finally, students were shown how their responses would impact upon the future of the student experience at Cardiff Met. This new approach, which is part of a broader 'Have Your Say' student feedback campaign, has already had a large impact on response rates and staff engagement with all institutional surveys across Cardiff Met.

16. Is students' qualitative feedback changing now it is online?

Sandeep Gakhal and Caroline Wilson
Coventry University

Coventry University, like many other higher education institutions, has switched from a paper-based module evaluation survey to an online version, which has led to increased turnaround times of results and better quality of students' comments in terms of legibility (typed instead of handwritten). The session will discuss the implications of switching from paper to online evaluations, specifically exploring any differences in the content and tone of students' comments. This will involve drawing on associated links between behaviours adopted by individuals using social media platforms/open channels of communication. The findings of the study will be discussed, along with the implications of seeking more innovative and efficient ways of gathering student feedback to assess students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning.

17. Realising teaching excellence: measuring performance or facilitating enhancement?

Carolyn Nisbet and Marie Stowell
University of Worcester

This session explores the ways in which one University is using surveys to engage staff and students with conceptions of 'teaching excellence' and poses questions about how surveys can be used as effective tools for enhancement.

As part of its preparation for TEF, the University of Worcester surveyed its staff and students on teaching excellence. This generated a shared perception of 'excellence' which is quite different from the metrics driven approach of TEF, focusing much more on individual teacher practices, staff student relationships, institutional culture and habitus than performance outcomes. This dissonance in understanding of 'teaching excellence' poses challenges in engaging staff and students with the performance outcomes agenda of TEF. The session outlines some of the ways the University has been seeking to address this so that enhancement activity is meaningful and effective. The session will provide opportunities for participants to share experiences.

18. Is there an optimal teaching method?

Sverre Holm and Pål Bakken
NOKUT, Norwegian Agency of Quality Assurance in Education

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) conducts an annual, national student survey. NOKUT has also conducted a survey among the scientific staff at a selection of Norwegian educational institutions. All the participants were asked about several issues regarding quality of education of the study program they study or teach.

The purpose of the present project is to provide knowledge about the relationship between teaching methods and learning outcomes.

The main aims of our project are to:

1. Describe to what extent different teaching methods are used.
2. Describe the reported learning outcomes from both students and teachers.
3. Analyse to which degree different teaching methods contribute to learning outcomes.
4. Perform a qualitative analysis on data from the Norwegian Centres for Excellence in Education.

These data will be analysed and discussed both on national level, degree level and across disciplines of educations.

Poster Presentations

1. Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere: A Martini Model for developing a Moodle Badging system to enhance the learner experience.

Geoffrey Hughes, Lee Ward and Paul Zisu
CU Coventry

Commencing this year the Business Improvement and Customer Care Team at CU Coventry have developed and constructed a set of standards to raise the level of participation and maximise the impact of Moodle pages used by staff and students to support learning. As it's a Lecturers role to populate and develop the platform, we decided to develop a set of metrics to award those who go the extra yard in their pages for the good of the learner experience.

The aims of the presentation is to highlight the need for a raise in standards for Moodle usage and move away from the stale repository that can still exist within some organisations.

Objectives for the presentations will be to;

- Explore the process used to badge Moodle pages within a Widening Participation organisation.
- Discover ways in which data informs the badging process.
- Identify methods of Moodle usage to align with elements of ISO 9001 to reinforce continuous improvement.

2. Continuing postgraduates' experiences of the National Student Survey.

Hazel Marzetti and Donna Murray
University of Edinburgh

At the University of Edinburgh we are using the data collected through the National Student Survey (NSS) to plan enhancements to policies, practices and communication plans. Despite our detailed analysis of our qualitative and quantitative NSS data, we wanted to gather further insights by talking to students directly. Therefore, in 2016 we undertook a project to unpick this. We identified a group of 200 students who had completed their undergraduate studies at Edinburgh and progressed to postgraduate study, and invited them to participate in focus groups to discuss their experiences. The focus group revisit the NSS questions with students to discuss explicitly their interpretations of the questions, their opinions on their academic experiences pre- and post- graduation, and whether question wordings could be changed to improve specificity of students' interpretations. This poster will explore the findings of our study and how we have used them to enhance our policies, practices and plans.

3. The Distance Learning Experience: Evaluating the needs of post-graduate students.

Ruth Cross, Helen Ingle and Thom Shaw
Leeds Beckett University

In response to changes in market demand, technology and the nature of the student body the provision of distance learning courses has expanded substantially in recent years. This has resulted in the development of a new mode of delivery for the MSc in Public Health – Health Promotion at Leeds Beckett University which is now offered entirely on-line using the virtual learning environment. The course is now in its third year of delivery which provides an opportunity for evaluation of the student experience to take place. The aim of this session is to report on this evaluation and to highlight key findings. The learning from this, in terms of the student experience, will be emphasized in order to inform practice on distance learning provision.

4. Edinburgh Napier University's Graduate Employability Project: Building an Evaluation Approach to Evidence Student Outcomes

Fiona Wager
Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier University's Graduate Employability Project was established in 2013 to provide an institutional approach to enhancing graduate employability for Scottish domiciled undergraduate students. The Project, supported through Scottish Funding Council Regional Coherence Funding, is now complete.

The presentation will highlight the approach taken in developing a mixed methods approach to evidence student outcomes on this cross-institutional employability project, including:

- Evidencing student outcomes through utilising existing survey data from Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE), together with internal student progression data and degree outcomes data;
- Building tools including self-reporting surveys and other qualitative methods to gain a rich understanding of the benefits of engagement in employability opportunities.

This poster presentation will share our experience of developing the evaluation approach, share key findings in terms of student outcomes, and consider successes and challenges associated with the approach, and the lessons learned which will be of wider interest.

5. Evaluating Student Learning Gain: An Alternative Perspective

Martyn Polkinghorne, Gelareh Roushan and Julia Taylor
Bournemouth University

Evaluating the learning gain of students is a Teaching Excellence Framework metric and current proposals are to collect data from existing national sources including the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education and the National Student Survey.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England has considered more focussed models, defining learning gain as the distance travelled by a student in terms of skills, competencies, knowledge and development.

A novel alternative perspective is now proposed in which learning gain is presented as being a two-dimensional paradigm, including both the distance travelled (explicit knowledge) and the journey travelled (tacit understanding) gained by the student.

A qualitative research study was undertaken at Bournemouth University using a small-scale pilot to investigate this concept. Initial results yielded promising data and provided a potential model for evaluating student learning. Further development work is now being undertaken with a larger test group of students.

6. Exploring Student's Agency as a Tool for Transition in University

Zoi Nikiforidou and Alex Owen
Liverpool Hope University

Students' experiences of and resources for agency during their Higher Education varies. This study was inspired by the Agency of University Students (AUS) Scale, developed by Jaaskela et al (2016). A mixed methods approach was used with a view to obtaining the students' perceptions (N=39) regarding their experiences. A vignette with a neutral character, J, was introduced and 9 open-ended questions, accessed through an online survey were used. Thematic coding was used to identify the experiences of students in relation to the various aspects of the AUS scale and this resulted in two main findings. Firstly, students indicated making friends and being accepted by others as a main worry. Secondly, students gave two forms of

advice for new starters; emotional and practical. This survey provides understanding in relation to first-year undergraduate students' needs and well-being, in order to support student progression and retention.

7. Objective versus subjective skills self-assessment – impact and challenges

David Martin and Kirsty Miller
University of Dundee

"Please indicate your skill in abstract writing on a scale of 1-5." Relative assessment like the preceding sentence is unanchored – each student has their own definition of the meaning of the abstract scale points 1 through 5 and this is anchored exclusively in their own experience. The only given in such a set of results is that the student matched their ability to a self-constructed scale. We have endeavoured to assess student skills with objective self-assessment, where the competencies described are anchored in specifically measurable outcomes that are explicitly related to real world criteria. Our experience in identifying objective criteria for sometimes intangible skills and competencies will be discussed, along with the student responses.

8. THE SELF*e* REFLEXIVE SURVEY

Helen Jackson
Ulster University

The reliability and usefulness of data collected through student response surveys, is largely dependent on the ability of the surveyed student to effectively reflect on behaviours that relate to their learning experience. The aim of the SELF*e* REFLEXIVE survey is to leverage the intensified processes of self-reflection created by novel forms of convergence across the social landscape in which photography is embedded, to record and examine learning behaviours.

The project deploys a visual ethnographic methodology that uses 'selfies' as the reflexive artefact on which relevant and authentic insights into the student learning experience can be explored. Presenting the outcome of the survey using an interactive infographic model, the objective of the survey is to yield accurate practical measures of the variances and patterns in the student experience in higher education, and to create alternative formats on which to describe the connections between behaviour and learning in this sector.

9. The support and retention of under-represented groups

Helen Hooper and Damian Parry
Northumbria University

Despite an international deficit of scientists and engineers and research showing most children find science interesting, the students who take post-16 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subjects fall into roughly the same gender, ethnic and social groups as they did 20 years ago. As well as increased training this highlights an imperative to develop better recruitment and retention strategies for under-represented groups.

We focussed on identifying retention issues and initial career aspirations in first year STEM students to enhance support in these areas. Students at 3 HEIs were challenged to articulate their understanding of what professional scientists routinely do, including a 'Draw a Scientist' task. Drawn images provided a rich and complex data set that revealed a range of misconceptions, including gender biased stereotypes.

Implications for student support, progression and retention will be discussed, especially for under-represented groups, such as women, who remain a minority within many STEM professions.

10. Surveys in Postgraduate Distance Learning as Potential Fertile Ground for the Often Elusive Interpersonal Connection

Dawn Albertson, Derek Tracy and Kyle Dyer
King's College London

Our international postgraduate MSc in Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health at King's College London consistently scores equal to, or above, on-campus offerings in student satisfaction and quality ratings. However, like many online programmes, it faces medium-specific challenges in students' sense of interpersonal connection. In response to a student survey we have created a system that meets the twin goals of actively engaging students in reflecting on and shaping their progression, as well as creating a meaningful ongoing personal connection with academic staff. After introducing the learning contract programme, history and design, data will be presented on its initial impact and student reaction. Goals, potential shortcomings, and vision for the future of the programme will be discussed.

11. Using art to explore the emotions experienced by undergraduates

Susan Jenkins
Cardiff University

Aim

The purpose of the study was to use creative artwork and free text to explore the emotions of dental undergraduates as they enter initial clinical practice in order to enhance the student experience.

Objectives

Qualitative research methods were used to explore the thoughts and feelings of students as they engage with first clinical practice. In the first phase, they were asked to submit (anonymously) a sketch that best expressed their feelings about treating members of the public for the first time. Secondly, they were given a single Post-It note and asked to record their biggest single fear in this context. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were used to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced; and to explore how creative arts could be used to better inform staff and support students at a particularly stressful time during their course.