


HEIR Annual Conference 2025 – Programme


Day 1: Thursday 4th September

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| 09:00-10:00 | Registration and Refreshments New Science Building (NewSci) Foyer – NewSci 0.01 | |
| 10:00-10:15 | Conference Opening Julian Blow (UEA Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation) - Fabio Aricò (Conference Chair) Rachel Bowden and Matt-Hiely-Rayner (HEIR Network Co-Convenors) Room: NewSci 0.07/8 | |
| 10:15-11:15 |  | Keynote 1: Bart Rienties (Open University) The role of artificial intelligence and digital assistance in student inclusion, retention and outcomes Room: NewSci 0.07/8 – Chair: Fabio Aricò |
| 11:15-11:30 | Comfort Break | |
| 11:30-12:30 | Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions | |
| | Informing Policy Room: NewSci 0.02 – Chair: Helena Gillespie Matt Hiely-Rayner (University of Sussex), Elif Unsal Ozberk, Benedict Watling and Mohammed Yakub (Buckinghamshire New University) Beyond awarding gaps: developing a value-added metric to understand graduate outcomes in UK higher education | Supporting Retention Room: NewSci 0.03 – Chair: Kay Yeoman Nigel Page (Kingston University London), Rachel Hunt, Lauren Albee and Alison Snape (King's College London) Understanding the post-covid-19 student landscape – have we adapted? |
| | Laura Harvey (Loughborough University), Fabio Aricò and Ritchie Woodard (University of East Anglia) Exploring educational gain as a metric to tackle attainment gaps and promote inclusion in higher education in the United Kingdom | Joe Mahon (evasys) From comments to action: empowering practitioners with AI-driven student insights |

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| 12:30-13:45 | Lunch, Posters, Sponsor Stands and Networking Room: NewSci 0.01 & Foyer | |
| 13:45-15:15 | Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions | |
| | Supporting Retention Room: NewSci 0.02 – Chair: Ritchie Woodard | Widening Access Room: NewSci 0.03 – Chair: Kelly Edmunds |
| | Marta Almeida Hill (University of Kent) Investing in success: the impact of financial support on student retention and engagement | Paul Howard-Jones, Colin J. Davis, Lucy McCarthy, Martin Parker, Tom Ralph, Kate Tilling, Kaitlin Wade, Lucy Wenham (University of Bristol) and Joe Williams (University of Cardiff) Student international travel related to higher education: carbon costs, wellbeing and recruitment |
| | Nandarani Maistry (University of Johannesburg) A different lens on retention: strategic responses to student risk in a developing country higher education context | Kate Ayres (Durham University) Out of our hands? towards collaborative accountability in elite admissions |
| | Gemma Standen (University of East Anglia) Continuation: exploring why HE students persist through their studies | Francesca Plom and David Smith (University of Kent) Evaluating an intervention to support boys from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds |
| 15:15-15:45 | Coffee Break, Sponsor Stands and Networking Room: NewSci 0.01 & Foyer | |
| 15:45-16:55 | Lightning Talks These short and inspiring presentations are designed to showcase preliminary results of work still in progress. They are aimed at sparking new ideas, connecting conference participants, and fostering future collaborations. Each presentation will be 10-minutes including questions from the audience. Room: NewSci 0.07/8 – Chair: Helena Gillespie | |
| | Kirsty Webb and Sam Swinton (University of East Anglia) Data-led interventions to improve BAME representation: a case study | |

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| | Scott Knight (University of East Anglia) Inclusive admissions, recruitment & marketing: a case study for collaboration within HE providers |
| | Sierra Smucker, Rachel Bowden and Joanna MacDonnell (University of Brighton) From transitioning to belonging: an examination of the relationship between an extended transition program and students' feelings of belonging in higher education |
| | Chun Hao Wang and Genovefa Kefalidou (University of Leicester) Research culture insights from I-REACCH: differing perceptions and expectations at the University of Leicester |
| | Tomoko Torii (Waseda University) and Elena Zaitseva (Liverpool John Moore University) Advancing EDI at university: reflexive practices in UK-Japan higher education contexts |
| | Vanessa Dodd (University of Staffordshire) Reflections on the first year of student co-creation to support the APP |
| | Alison Cullinane (University of Edinburgh), Sarah Gretton (University of Leicester), Ruth Deighton (University of Edinburgh), NiccoloTiango (University of Edinburgh) and Nigel Page (Kinston University London) Data-driven insights and cross-comparisons into student perceptions of reflective practice |
| 16:55-18:30 | Rest Time – Optional Visit to UEA Art Trail - Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts |
| 18:30-19:00 | Drinks Reception Modern Life Café – Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts |
| 19:00-22:00 | Conference Dinner and Networking Modern Life Café – Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts |

Day 2: Friday 5th September

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| 08:30-09:30 | Registration and Refreshments New Science Building (NewSci) Foyer – NewSci 0.01 | |
| 09:30-10:30 | Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions | |
| | Improving Outcomes Room: NewSci 0.02 – Chair: Kay Yeoman | Supporting Retention Room: NewSci 0.03 – Chair: Fabio Aricò |
| | Zhongzhi He (Macau Millennium College) Home virtuality and suspension (xue fu): the sense of home among Chinese international students in the West | Nicola Watchman Smith (Teesside University) and Joe Mahon (evasys) Using AI to unlock actionable insights from student free-text feedback |
| | Lauren Flannery and Dr Elizabeth Scholefield (University of East Anglia) Embedding relational pedagogy in higher education: a global professional development initiative | Mark Heazle and Julia Robathan (University of East Anglia) From sidelines to headlines: sport and physical activity's role in student and institutional success |
| 10:30-11:00 | Coffee Break, Sponsor Stands and Networking Room: NewSci 0.01 & Foyer | |
| 11:00-12:00 |  | Keynote 2 – Valerie Harvey Graduate outcomes in Irish higher education: enhancing the evidence base Room: NewSci 0.07/8 – Chair: Ritchie Woodard |
| 12:00-13:00 | Lunch, Posters, Sponsor Stands and Networking Room: NewSci 0.01 & Foyer | |

In partnership with

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| 13:00-13:50 | <p>Lightning Talks</p> <p>These short and inspiring presentations are designed to showcase preliminary results of work still in progress. They are aimed at sparking new ideas, connecting conference participants, and fostering future collaborations. Each presentation will be 10-minutes including questions from the audience.</p> <p>Room: NewSci 0.07/8 – Chair: Helena Gillespie</p> |
| | <p>Steph Copsey and Julie Smith (University of East Anglia) Make it count - metacognition and access</p> |
| | <p>Julie Blackwell Young and Luke Millard (Abertay University) Creating a new university student success strategy</p> |
| | <p>Janet Horrocks (Abertay University) Empowering postgraduate students who teach: the impact of a bespoke programme of support</p> |
| | <p>Evan Hancock (University of East Anglia) The UEA's progression partnership</p> |
| | <p>Marta Almeida Hill (University of Kent) Widening participation through partnership: The University of Kent's role in sponsoring a multi-academy trust</p> |
| 13:50-14:00 | Comfort Break |
| 14:00-15:30 | <p>Panel Session: Sunday Blake, Ann Cotterill, and Rhona McCormack Student access, retention and outcomes: perspectives from England, Ireland and Scotland</p> <p>Room: NewSci 0.07/8 – Chair: Kelly Edmunds</p> |
| 15:30-15:45 | <p>Closing Remarks – Announcement of HEIR 2026</p> <p>Room: NewSci 0.07/8</p> |



| | Poster Presentations |
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| on display both days | Nigel Page (Kingston University London) Using data to enhance personal tutoring, mentoring and teamwork |
| | Jen Coleman and Alice Bush (University of East Anglia) Prioritising conversations with and between students to build community & belonging in large undergraduate cohorts: a collaborative podcast initiative |
| | Evan Hancock, Caroline Stewart and Josh Gray (University of East Anglia) UEA's Careers marketing personas |