


HEIR Annual Conference 2025 – Programme

Day 1: Thursday 4th September


09:00-10:00	Refreshments and Registration	
10:00-10:15	Conference Opening Fabio Aricò (Conference Chair) Julian Blow (UEA Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation) Rachel Bowden and Matt-Hiely-Rayner (HEIR Network Co-Convenors)	
10:15-11:15		Keynote 1: Bart Rienties (Open University) The role of artificial intelligence and digital assistance in student inclusion, retention and outcomes
11:15-11:30	Comfort Break	
11:30-12:30	Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions	
	Informing Policy 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 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	
13:45-15:15	Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions	
	Supporting Retention	Widening Access
	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	
15:45-17:05	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.	
	Nicola Watchman Smith (Teesside University) and Joe Mahon (evasys) Using ai to unlock actionable insights from student free-text feedback	
	Kirsty Webb and Sam Swinton (University of East Anglia) Data-led interventions to improve BAME representation: a case study	

	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
17:05-18:30	Rest Time – Optional Visit to UEA Art Trail and the Sainsbury's Centre
18:30-19:00	Drinks Reception
19:00-22:00	Conference Dinner and Networking

Day 2: Friday 5th September

08:30-09:30	Coffee and Registration	
09:30-10:30	Research Presentations – Parallel Sessions	
	Improving Outcomes	Supporting Retention
	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	
11:00-12:00		Keynote 2 – Valerie Harvey Graduate outcomes in Irish higher education: enhancing the evidence base
12:00-13:00	Lunch, Posters, Sponsor Stands and Networking	

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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>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, Rhona McCormack, Kerr Castle Student access, retention and outcomes: perspectives from England, Ireland and Scotland</p>
15:30-15:45	Closing Remarks

	Poster Presentations
displayed during the whole conference	Nigel Page (Kingston University London) Using data to enhance personal tutoring, mentoring and teamwork
	Uzma Asif, Asim M. Alshanberi, Mohammed Shaikhomer, and Safaa M. Alsanosi (Batterjee Medical College) Enhancing student engagement and retention in medical education through AMBOSS-driven case-based learning
	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