Yorkshire Consortium for Equity in Doctoral Education

Challenges in evaluating collaborative postgraduate widening participation work

These slides, presented at a NEON conference in 2022, outline the challenges faced when institutions and projects attempt to evaluate cross-institutional WP programmes - particularly at postgraduate level.

Produced by: Colin McCaig & Lucy Clague (Sheffield Hallam University)
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YCEDE cannot guarantee that all information contained in this resource is accurate at the time of reading, particularly with regard to dates, deadlines, and funding availability.

Suggested Audience: Staff
Suggested Sub-Audience: Evaluation & Impact

This resource is intended for use in improving equity and outcomes for ethnically minoritised individuals interested in doctoral study or careers in research.
This resource was produced by the staff named above on behalf of the YCEDE project. Please ensure appropriate credits are clearly included in any external use of this resource.

Presentation structure

- What is the YCEDE Programme?
- Outline of the YCEDE evaluation
- Partnership challenges

What is YCEDE?

A collaboration between five universities in Yorkshire, 12 UKRI funded Doctoral Training partnerships and Centres for Doctoral Training plus a number of external partners dedicated to equity at doctoral level.

Central to YCEDE is the question of access to doctoral study for graduates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

UNIVERSITY of York

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

The University Of Sheffield.

Sheffield Hallam University

UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD
MAKING KNOWLEDGE WORK

What does YCEDE want to change?

1. Widening opportunities to ensure equity of access to and participation in research.
2. Changing institutional practices and culture to reduce inequality in offer rates.
3. Ensuring that we deliver an excellent experience for PGRs of Colour by developing institutions in which they feel a valued part of the wider scholarly community.
4. Provide an evidence base for interventions to share widely across the HE sector and beyond.

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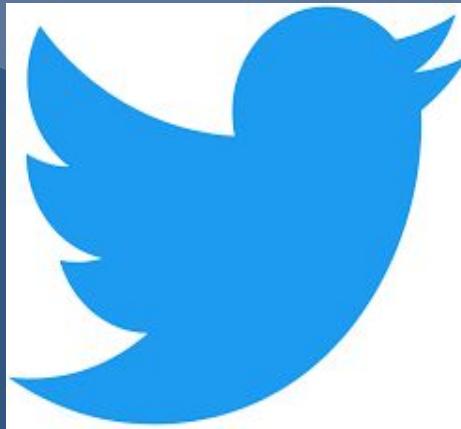
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The Evaluation plan

1. Constructed Programme and work-strand logic models and theories of change
2. Used the mechanisms and outcomes to develop appropriate evaluation methods

3. The methods:
   - quantitative data analysis of institutional PGR data
   - monitoring data for programme activity
   - documentary analysis of academic selectors' criteria and practices
   - pre/post activity surveys with PGR applicants and students
   - interviews with programme leads and staff
   - co-creation style listening rooms interviews

Challenges evaluating collaborative programmes

1. Institutional differences

2. Disciplinary differences

3. Data challenges

Institutional variations

- number / proportion of PGRs varies
- size and discipline mix
- variable links to DTPs and Research Councils
- importance of PGR to institutional mission and the way responsibility is located varies
- centralised versus autonomous systems – e.g. admissions

Disciplinary variations

- academic disciplines – humanities, arts, social sciences (cohort sizes)
- natural sciences and other vocational disciplines
- role of professional bodies (BMA, Law Society, Institute of Physics etc)

- Cohort size variation:
  - natural sciences often recruit larger numbers – more scope for adjusting selection practices to address bias
  - social sciences/humanities – more of an individualised recruitment process

Data challenges and tips for collaborative working

- GDPR and laws around the sharing and processing of **personal data**
- Data sharing agreements are essential but take time
- Institutions deal with data in different ways particularly around permissions/consent
- Data extraction can be complex and tricky!
- Beware of data breaches!
- Get everyone on the same page

Want to know more?

@theYCEDE
@lucy_clague
@colin_mccaig

l.clague@shu.ac.uk
c.mccaig@shu.ac.uk
info@ycede.ac.uk

Subscribe to the YCEDE newsletter at www.ycede.ac.uk

Data sharing across institutions blog post at:
https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/sioe/posts/