

To **book a place**, contact TLAcademy@ljmu.ac.uk or call ext. 8678/8101.

4.00pm – 5.30pm, Wednesday 21st October
Roscoe Boardroom, Egerton Court, 2 Rodney Street

Vocational Qualifications and Degree Outcomes in Higher Education

Robin Shields and Alex Masardo

University of Bath

A number of studies have been undertaken at LJMU looking into the performance of students with non-traditional entry qualifications. The authors of a recently published national report, funded by the HEA, looking at this issue from a sector perspective will open our Research and Practice Seminar Series this year. The PVC Education will Chair this session.

This study investigates outcomes and support for students with vocational qualifications who pursue degrees in universities. Using a mixed methods approach, the study combines a quantitative analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) with qualitative data obtained from student focus groups and staff interviews at two UK universities. The quantitative analysis reveals significant differences by degree outcomes, even when controlling for demographic variables. However, focus group discussions also show that these students – who mostly hold BTECs – are highly capable, and possess qualities that can help them succeed at the highest levels in HE. The results point to a need for greater awareness of the landscape of university entry qualifications.

Biographies:

Dr Robin Shields

Robin is Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Management and Director of Studies for the Doctorate of Business Administration in Higher Education Management, at the University of Bath.

Robin's research analyses the globalization of higher education with a focus on the intersection of higher education, knowledge production and economic trade. He is particularly interested in applying innovative quantitative research methods; for example his published research has used social network analysis to examine how

changing flows of international student mobility can be used to better understand the globalization of higher education as well regional integration initiatives such as the European Higher Education Area. Robin recently won the George Bereday prize for the most outstanding article published in the Comparative Education Review. His research has been widely funded including by the ESRC and the Higher Education Academy. More recent work has analysed social media communication between elite higher education institutions using exponential random graph models, a new method of statistical models for network data. Robin has also published research in the field of international education more widely, with a particular focus on education, international development, and armed conflict, building upon his doctoral work in Nepal.

Dr Alex Masardo

Alex teaches on the BA Education with Psychology and MA Education programmes at the University of Bath. He researches pedagogy, learning and diversity and has recently completed a Higher Education Academy-funded project with Dr Robin Shields looking at changing patterns in vocational entry qualifications, student support and outcomes in undergraduate degree programmes. He is currently working with Prof. Sean Aita, Arts University Bournemouth, on a HEFCE-funded Theatre-in-Education initiative “What are my Options?” as part of The National Networks for Collaborative Outreach scheme.

Alex’s research also explores the post-parental separation care of children and the different ways in which law and policy respond to changes in and influence the regulation of family relationships. He is currently working with Dr Bruce Smyth, Australian National University, exploring aspects of Shared Parental Responsibility for Children’s Education.

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