

Who Seeks Access to What, When, and Why? Interrogating the Pivotal Role of Student Aspirations in Higher Education Participation

January 2015 to December 2015

Ms Le McKenzie, The University of Newcastle

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Modifications: Changed to meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.
Alternate text inserted for all images. Minor typographical errors corrected.

Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

2014 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

Who Seeks Access to What, When, and Why? Interrogating the Pivotal Role of Student Aspirations in Higher Education Participation

January 2015 to December 2015

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a **Final Report** (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an **Acquittal Report** (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
- the completed **Acquittal Report** template, in Excel and PDF.

All documents must be submitted to equity@education.gov.au by 31 March 2016.
If you require additional guidance or clarification please contact equity@education.gov.au.

*Please send a copy of any correspondence regarding this project to:

Ms Belinda Munn
Associate Director
Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education
University of Newcastle
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1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2(a)-(e) of Part A)

Objectives

Indicate the extent to which the Project Objectives specified in clause 3 of Part A of the Conditions of Grant were met. Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, please identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

Table 1: Project objectives

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
Investigate lower Higher Education participation and aspirations in schools from low socio-economic (SES) backgrounds.	Objective met.
Build the evidence base about the occupational interests of school students upon which targeted strategies can be effectively designed and implemented by universities, to increase access to participation in higher education by students from low SES backgrounds.	Objective met.
Analyse data on specific occupational choices of students across all primary and high school years (Year 3 to Year 12) to identify patterns and gaps in aspirations and optimal timing of interventions.	Matching data for Year 12 students from the NSW Department of Education was delayed until late February 2016 due to priorities and resources within the Department. As a result, data analysis was conducted on school students from Year 3 to Year 11 only.
Analyse data on the reasons students provide for their occupational choices.	Objective met.
Investigate students' motivations, hopes and desires as they relate to particular career interests and how these impact on their choices and decisions.	Objective met.
Provide a robust evidence base, able to be used by all Australian universities, to help shape targeted university outreach activities that resonate with and build on the ways in which low SES students talk about what interests them.	Objective met.

Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Below, please specify whether:

- all project Activities specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Project Milestones specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Key Performance Indicators specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were met.

Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

Table 2: Project activities, milestones and KPIs

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED/ IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
January 2015	Project start up	All staff appointments made, cleaning of data complete	Complete
June 2015	Review of literature	Review completed and annotated bibliography published online	Review completed. Currently exploring appropriate publication site/s.
March 2015	Data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative analysis of survey, achievement, and demographic data (~10,000 surveys) 	Analysis completed in four phases: Phase 1: analysis of 2012/2013 data	Complete
August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis of survey open-ended response data (~10,000 surveys) 	Phase 2: analysis of 2014 data (available in March 2015)	Complete
November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis of focus group data (~700 students) 	Phase 3: analysis of 2015 data (available in October 2015)	Not complete. Matching data from the NSW DET delayed until Feb 2016.
November 2015		Phase 4: consolidated data analysis	Complete (2012-2014 data only)
December 2015	Reporting of findings	Project report submitted	Complete
December 2015	Publication, conferences and dissemination	Draft papers prepared as work in progress for presentation at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities Australia conference AARE annual conference Other forums and subsequent publication 	Complete (AARE November, 2015, EPHEA November 2015, AERA April 2016. See details below. When the proposal was submitted we did not realise the Universities Australia conference was invitation only)

Highlights and Issues

Provide a summary of highlights and achievements arising from your project (maximum half page)

The project involved the analysis of the career aspirations and reasons for those aspirations drawing on more than 10,000 surveys of school students and focus groups involving 577 of these students. Regression analyses and qualitative analysis have created a rich picture of who seeks access to what, when and why, that will be available to inform the outreach and other strategic activities involving schools that are undertaken by universities. While analysis of 2015 data is yet to be completed several journal articles are in preparation, symposium presentations have been made, and engagement of external bodies has commenced.

Ten research journal articles are in preparation for submission to national and international journals by July 2016. These include an overarching paper comparing students for the ten most popular career options (Unpacking the career aspirations of Australian school students: Towards an evidence base for university equity initiatives in schools); and papers focused specifically on who chooses STEM (Who chooses STEM and why?); teaching (Regulating who teaches: Policy implications in light of the aspirations of Australian school students), the arts (Widening participation in the Arts), medicine (Widening participation in Medicine), nursing (Helpers and heroes: Australian school students' motivations and perceptions in relation to a nursing career); the defence forces (School student career choice and representations of masculinity in the ADF); and sports-related careers ("I want to be a sportsperson": A mixed method investigation of student aspirations).

Symposia were held at the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australia (EPHEA) Conference, Geelong, November 2015 (five presentations) and at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Conference, Fremantle, December 2015 (four presentations). A conference presentation was made at the Dubbo Careers Conference (November, 2015) and one conference presentation on who chooses teaching will be made at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Washington, April 2016. Presentations were conducted with Equity practitioners from Charles Sturt University (November, 2015) and Southern Cross University (February, 2016).

Presentations to external bodies include a presentation at the C50 celebration dinner at Port Macquarie (November, 2015) which included representatives of UON Port Macquarie and Mid North Coast-located alumni, educators and members of the Education and Skills Forums, as well as other key regional stakeholders from business, industry, government and community; at the Central Coast Education Summit (December, 2016), involving leaders from Higher Education, policy, business and industry; and at the University of Newcastle Council Meeting (December 2016). We have also shared the data on aspirations for Nursing with University staff engaged in a project on the provision of pathways for students to transition between secondary education, TAFE and university for careers in nursing and critical aged care and disability careers.

Did the project lead to implementable outcomes? What changes will result at your institution/nationally? Are there activities resulting from this project that will be continued?

Once the final analyses are completed and results disseminated further through journal articles and other forums, we anticipate considerable interest in the work and follow up activities. The discussion held with nursing staff at UON about what might be required to encourage more students into nursing and critical aged and disability care careers is indicative of the strong foundation these data provide for a better understanding of school students' orientations toward a wide range of careers.

Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?

Yes No

Where applicable, indicate number of the following resulting from this project:

Student contacts	N/A
Journal (or other publication) submissions	10
Conference Presentations	9
Websites developed	N/A
Educational or marketing campaigns	N/A
Community organisations engaged	2
Schools engaged	N/A

Optional - If you included transformational/behavioural change KPIs in your EOI please summarise outcomes here:

N/A

Describe any issues that occurred during the year and any mitigation strategies you implemented.

A key issue was a delay in obtaining important demographic and academic achievement data from the NSW Department of Education for 2015 to be matched with survey and focus group data. While the project would have benefitted from the inclusion of this fourth year of data, the three year data set was more than adequate for all preliminary analyses to be undertaken. Most of the publications arising from this project will use the full data set, re-running statistical models as appropriate.

2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

[List the titles of any published reports, pamphlets or other documentation produced in the course of the Project and attach them to this Final Report.]

Table 3: Additional materials produced over the course of the project

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
N/A			

3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4(e), clause 6.7-8 of Part A)

Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?

Yes No

[Complete the Acquittal Report template and attach it to this Final Report.]

**IMPORTANT NOTICE - Unspent 2014 HEPPP Partnership Grant Funds*

- Grant recipients must fully expend these 2014 National Priorities Pool funds in the project period for which the grant is made and report on this expenditure to the Commonwealth, including the amount of any unspent funds.*
- If a provider fails to spend the full amount granted it in respect of a year, the unspent funds may be recovered by the Commonwealth.*

DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2014 National Priorities Pool project *Who Seeks Access to What, When and Why? Interrogating the Pivotal Role of Student Aspirations in Higher Education Participation* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

Title	Professor
Name	Andrew Parfitt
Position	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Signature	