UKCGE PGT Student Experience Working Group

Current research into postgraduate taught education in the United Kingdom: methods, areas of focus, gaps. A systematic scoping review

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Common areas of study include:

- widening participation (e.g. Wakeling and Laurison, 2017);
- transition into PGT (Bamber, *et al*., 2019; Bownes, *et al*., 2017; Evans, *et al*., 2018);
- motivations for PGT study (Bowman, 2005; Ho *et al*., 2012; Morgan 2015)
- PGT student identity (Chapman and Pyvis, 2005; Tobbell and O’Donnell, 2013);
- the challenges facing PGT programme directors (Macleod, *et al*., 2018; Mitchell, 2015)
- PGT student perceptions of support (Hallet, 2010);
- building PGT student communities (Schartner, 2015);
- a focus on online communities (Joksimović, *et al*., 2015; Mello, 2016), and
- blended learning (Adekola, *et al*., 2017);
- employability (Li, 2013);
- PGT assessment (Brown, 2014; Dunworth and Sanchez, 2018) including,
- the dissertation stage (Ginn, 2014).
Rationale for the Review

• The higher education sector is heavily populated with agencies which produce reports, many of which contain primary data, however these reports are not peer reviewed.

• The diversity of the sector and its students, along with this rapid expansion of research and interest in this area, makes it increasingly difficult to keep up with developments and maintain an awareness of relevant evidence which could inform policy and practice in the area.

• The aim of this systematic review is to generate an overall view of the current state of knowledge regarding the PGT sector in the UK, including the quality of the evidence, areas of focus and gaps in existing knowledge.
Key research questions

• What are the methodological features of research into the PGT sector in the UK?
• What are the areas of focus of research into PGT in the UK in the last 5 years?
• Where are there gaps in robust evidence?
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

• **Inclusion criteria**
  - published from Jan 2008 onwards
  - reporting data from the UK (may be alongside reports of data from other national contexts)
  - peer reviewed or grey literature or PhD theses
  - reporting primary data in which data for PGT students/ sector is discrete and identifiable or secondary analysis of such data
  - with a description of the sampling strategy, data collection procedures and the type of data-analysis considered
  - There are no inclusion/exclusion criteria based on quality

• **Exclusion criteria**
  - No UK data presented
  - Data presented but no information on how they were collected beyond naming a method
  - PGT related data are not identifiable
  - A purely conceptual or theoretical paper
Search Strategy

• Literature databases BEI, ERIC, Web of Science, and IBSS will be searched using thesaurus terms (where available) and free-text searches. The searches will be adapted for each database as required.

• Google Scholar will be used for forward citation tracking of included studies to identify more recent publications meeting the inclusion criteria.

• The reference lists of publications meeting inclusion criteria will be screened to identify other publications meeting the inclusion criteria.

• Research into Higher Education Abstracts will be hand-searched from 2008 - present.

• Grey literature: Key organisations will be identified (through professional networks) and a Google advanced search within those organisation domain names, using search strings adapted for the more basic Boolean search options, will be performed to find grey literature. Google advanced search results (title, URL, description extract) will be scraped in bulk using DataMiner (https://data-miner.io/) and exported into Excel for screening offline.

• In addition, a call for additional grey literature will be issued through UKCGE networks, JISCmail lists, and PhD theses will be searched using ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
Data Extraction

• A data extraction framework will be used to record the following information:
  • Study details (authors, year, citation, country of study,)
  • Methodology (aim of study, research design, methods of data collection, methods of analysis)
  • Sample characteristics (size, setting, demographics [age, sex, country of origin], mode of study (full-time, part-time, online, face to face, blended), recruitment, whether intended by authors to be representative
  • Disciplinary field of participants where stated
  • Focus of study (e.g. employability, assessment, sense of belonging, internationalisation, motivations for study, transitions)
  • Theoretical framework adopted where stated
  • Results/ Findings reported
  • Quality score using the appropriate Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist
Team approach

• Dozier is leading on developing the search strategy and search terms

• Macleod and Matthews-Smith will carry out the sifting and extraction for academic literature,

• Marvell will lead on the grey literature sifting and extraction.
Predicted outcome

• A qualitative synthesis structured by the research questions will be produced. Some numerical data will also be presented, e.g. number of papers by topic over time.