

TASO Annual Conference

How to Evaluate

#TasoCon23

TASO

Transforming Access
and Student Outcomes
in Higher Education

Opening Keynote

Dr Eliza Kozman, Deputy Director

#TasoCon23



I have the skills and knowledge to undertake good evaluation at my institution

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

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I know how to develop a Theory of Change as part of our APP work

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TASO is the go-to organisation for evidence and evaluation support in HE

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Transforming Access
and Student Outcomes
in Higher Education

Why measuring risks to equality of opportunity matters

John Blake, Director for Fair Access and Participation
Office for Students

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The Value of HE

Dr Eliza Kozman, Deputy Director

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Overview of session

1

Aims

2

Findings

3

Facilitated discussion reflecting on new evidence

4

Q&A

Value of HE - Panellists



Dr Claire Crawford
Associate Professor of
Economics at UCL CEPEO



Rajan Gill
Mathematics Student
University of Birmingham



Baljinder Rana
Head of Aimhigher West
Midlands

Aims

- A belief in the value of higher education for disadvantaged students underpins our mission
- We wanted to better understand the individual and societal impacts of disadvantaged young people graduating from higher education courses



Components



Rapid
review

Analysis of
publicly
available UK
Households
Survey data

Rapid review

- For disadvantaged graduates, how does HE impact:
 - a. future income and careers?
 - b. future well-being
 - c. attitudes towards other people and communities?
 - d. Social mobility
- What are the broader social, environmental and economic benefits?

Rapid review evidence included

OfS standard of evidence	Number of papers reviewed
Type 1 - Narrative	4
Type 2 - Empirical enquiry	51
Type 2 with counterfactual	19
Type 3 - Causal	0
Meta-analysis	4
Total	78

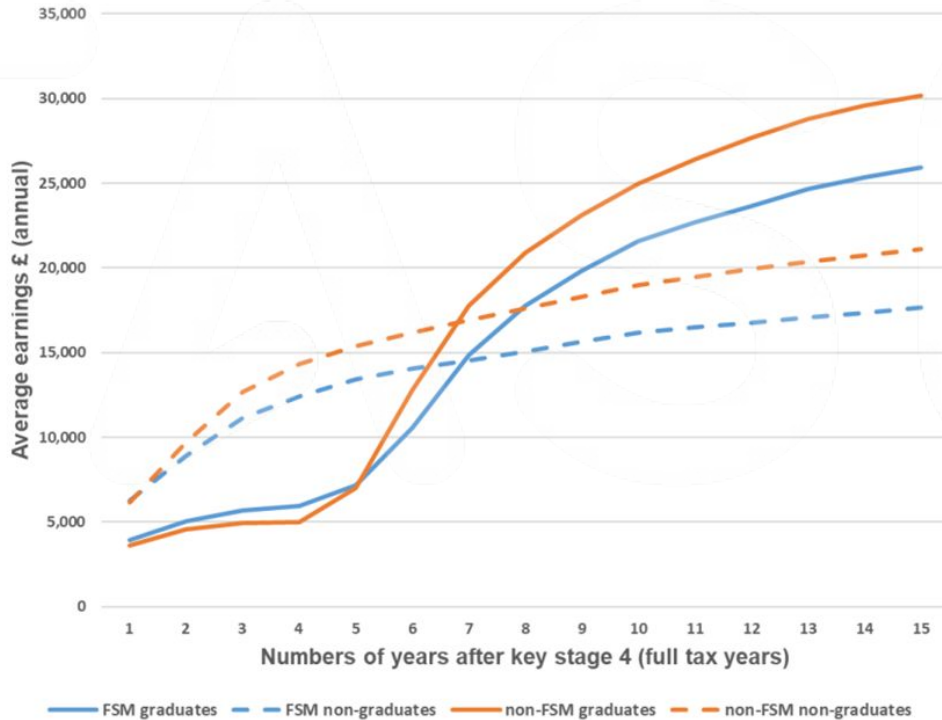
Key findings (1)

- Disadvantaged young people who attend higher education have **higher future earnings** than disadvantaged young people who do not
 - The difference is around £8,300 at 15 years after Key Stage 4
- HE can increase **social and geographical mobility** for disadvantaged young people
 - 22% of FSM graduates were in the top quintile of earners at age 30, compared to only 6% of FSM non-graduates

Key findings (2)

- But **disadvantaged graduates earn less than non-disadvantaged graduates**
 - One paper estimates that this earnings gap is around 10%, even when controlling for other factors, such as the specific university attended.

Average earnings of FSM eligible and non-eligible individuals in employment with and without a degree for KS4 cohorts in 2001-02 to 2006-07 (tax years: 2003-04 to 2017-18)



Source: Figure 19 reproduced from Anderson and Nelson (2021)

Gaps in the evidence

- Little evidence on how outcomes for disadvantaged graduates vary according to the specific education pathway pursued.
- Lack of evidence surrounding the role that additional factors play in causing the disparities observed in outcomes between disadvantaged and other graduates, for example, prior attainment, ethnicity and home region.
- Lack of high-quality, UK-specific evidence on the value of HE for disadvantaged students in terms of 'softer' outcomes, such as well-being and attitudes.

New analysis

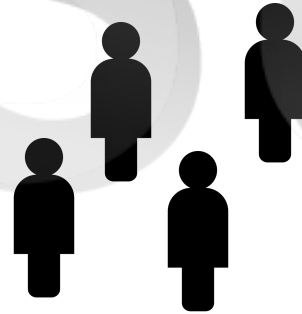
- Analysed publicly available data from the UK Household Longitudinal Survey – Understanding Society (Usoc)
- Higher levels of soft outcomes among higher education graduates, ***but probably because they are likely to be younger, more affluent and employed***



New analysis

However, the correlation between higher education and a series of social capital outcomes remains after controlling for background factors:

- Number of close friends
- Diversity of friends
- Reduced loneliness



Recommendation 1

While attending higher education has clear economic benefits, higher education providers must do more to address the gap in labour market outcomes between disadvantaged graduates and their peers.



Recommendation 2

Subject and institution choice are factors that may partly determine future earning potential.

Pre-entry information, advice and guidance may help students enter courses which are a better match for their long-term earning potential based on prior attainment.



Recommendation 3

To address the remaining gaps which exist between more and less advantaged graduates, higher education providers must take a strategic approach to employability support, developing and evaluating programmes specifically designed for disadvantaged students.



Recommendation 4 & 5

Further research is needed to identify the impact of other characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and prior attainment on the outcomes of disadvantaged graduates.

To accompany the evidence on the economic value of higher education, there is a clear need for more evidence on the non-economic outcomes for disadvantaged graduates.



Facilitated discussion reflecting on new evidence

Q&A



Lunch Break

12:30 - 1:30pm

Evaluating attainment-raising programmes: Theories of Change

Rain Sherlock / Evaluation Manager

#TasoCon23



Which type of attainment-raising activity is best supported by causal evidence?

- School governance and teacher training
- Academic tutoring
- Developing study and soft skills
- Aspiration-raising initiatives

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Outline of session

1

Background and context

2

Attainment-raising initiatives case studies

3

Evaluator top tips

4

Q&A

Panellists



Jack Mollart-Solity,
Head of What Works,
King's College London



Sally Bamber, Senior Lecturer,
PGCE Secondary Mathematics,
University of Chester

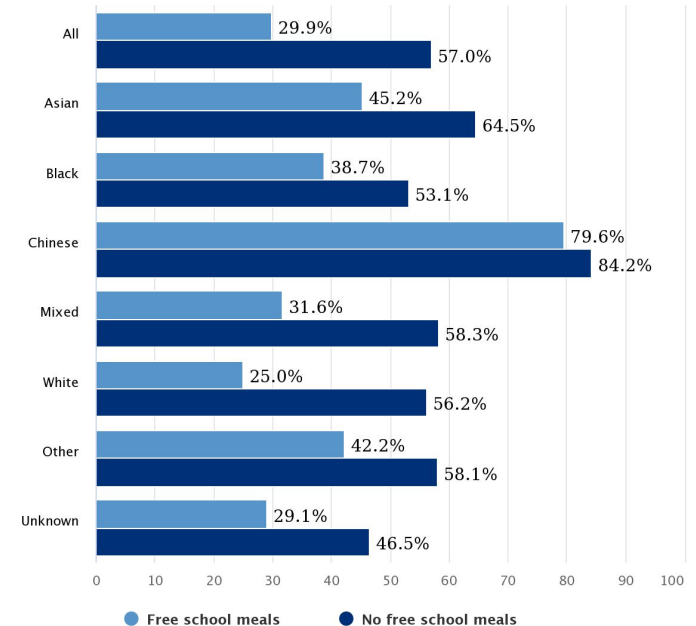


Raynette Bierman,
Associate Director, Ipsos

Attainment-raising outreach

- Attainment-raising outreach is high on the agenda as HEPs respond to latest guidance from the OfS
- Evidence supports academic achievement as the most important predictor for progression to HE (Crawford et al., 2016)
- What does this mean in practical terms?

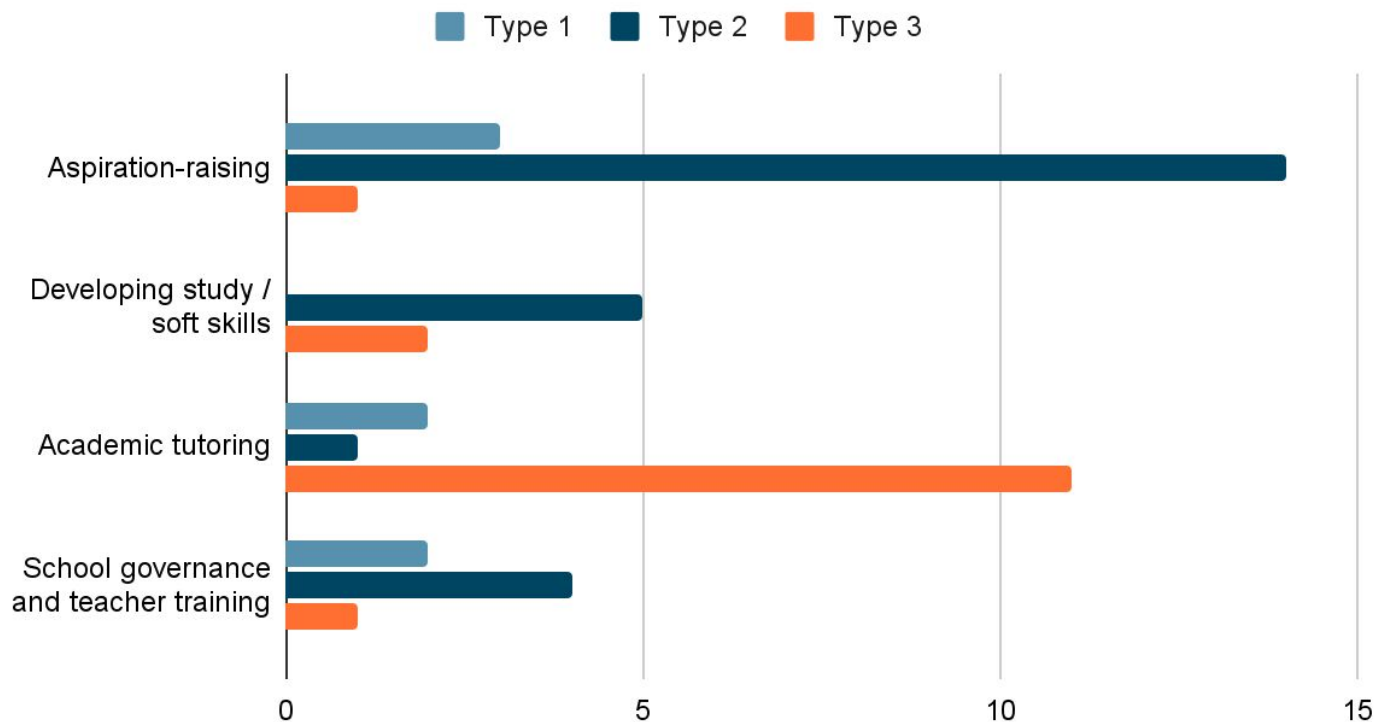
Title: Percentage of pupils getting a grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE by ethnicity and eligibility for free school meals. Location: England. Time period: 2020 to 2021 academic year. Source: Key stage 4 performance: academic year 2020/21| Ethnicity Facts and Figures GOV.UK



Rapid evidence review

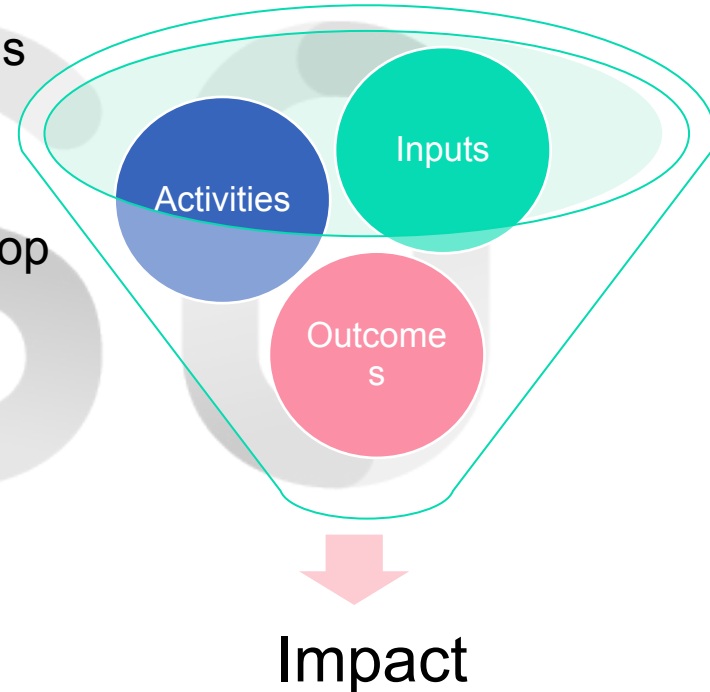
- The review covers ~45 studies categorised into four thematic areas - based on intervention focus
- Outcome measures vary across the studies but include:
 - GCSEs (for studies in the UK)
 - Attainment in core subjects, like maths and English
 - Intermediate outcomes that can be theoretically linked to attainment, such as psycho-social constructs (self-efficacy, confidence, motivation)

Thematic areas and quality of evidence



Recommendation to develop ToCs

- Develop ToCs to demonstrate change mechanisms and causal links between activities and outcomes
- TASO partnered with Ipsos and six HEPs to develop ToCs:
 - King's College London
 - London School of Economics
 - University of Greenwich
 - Aston University
 - University of Chester
 - University of Kent





Q&A

Refreshment Break

2:30pm – 3pm

Evaluating multi-intervention outreach and mentoring programmes

Sarah Chappell / Senior Research Officer

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Overview of session

1

Introduction to the project

2

Insight from a project partner (King's College London)

3

Mentoring as part of multi-intervention outreach (Brightside)

4

TASO's Mapping Outcomes & Activities Tool (MOAT)

5

Aligning with the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)

Panellists



Hannah Leyland, Impact
Manager, Brightside



Anna Anthony, Co-Director,
Higher Education Access
Tracker (HEAT)



Tayler Meredith, PA
Consulting (formerly of
King's College London)

Multi-intervention outreach programmes

- Multi-intervention outreach programmes are resource-intensive, combining a range of activities over a sustained period
- Existing evidence on their effectiveness:
 - Associated with positive attitudes and intentions towards HE
 - Associated with enrolment in HE
 - Lack of causal evidence from the UK – mixed evidence from the US
 - Focus on programmes as a whole

Project aims

- To build the evidence on multi-intervention outreach programmes
- To understand how best to evaluate multi-intervention outreach programmes

Project partners

- University of Birmingham – Years 8-11
 - Comparison of participants to a matched group
 - RCT of a parental engagement initiative
- King's College London (KCL) – Years 12-13
 - RCT of the K+ programme - progression to highly selective universities
- Aston University – Years 12-13
 - RCT of the Pathway to STEM and Pathway to Healthcare programmes

Project overview

Multi-intervention outreach and mentoring evaluation: Aston University (Pathways Programme), King's College London (K+) and University of Birmingham (Forward Thinking)

Local evaluation

Collaboration

Impact evaluation

Implementation and process
evaluation – interviews,
surveys, monitoring

Mapping
commonalities and
differences between
the programmes

Developing common
evaluation and
measurement
frameworks - MOAT

Thinking about how
to disseminate
findings and
promote best
practice

Key findings

- Birmingham:
 - Participation increased likelihood of enrolling in HE
 - Personalised messaging to parents increased engagement with events
- KCL - no effect on self-reported applications to HE (top-third)
- Aston - no effect on HE application (UCAS data)

BUT - interim report based on intermediate measures so should be treated with caution until final outcome data is available.

Mentoring

- Mentoring can be especially difficult to evaluate
- Exploratory evaluation of Brightside online mentoring at KCL and Aston
 - Commonalities and differences
 - Measuring engagement
 - Understanding the volume and content
 - Relationships between mentoring and overall programme engagement

Mentoring evaluation findings

- Engagement best measured through messages sent AND days spent on platform
- Positive relationship between mentoring engagement and overall programme engagement
- Messages were more likely to be in response to mentor
- Most common message content:
 - UCAS application
 - Personal statements
 - Subject choices

Mapping Outcomes & Activities Tool (MOAT)

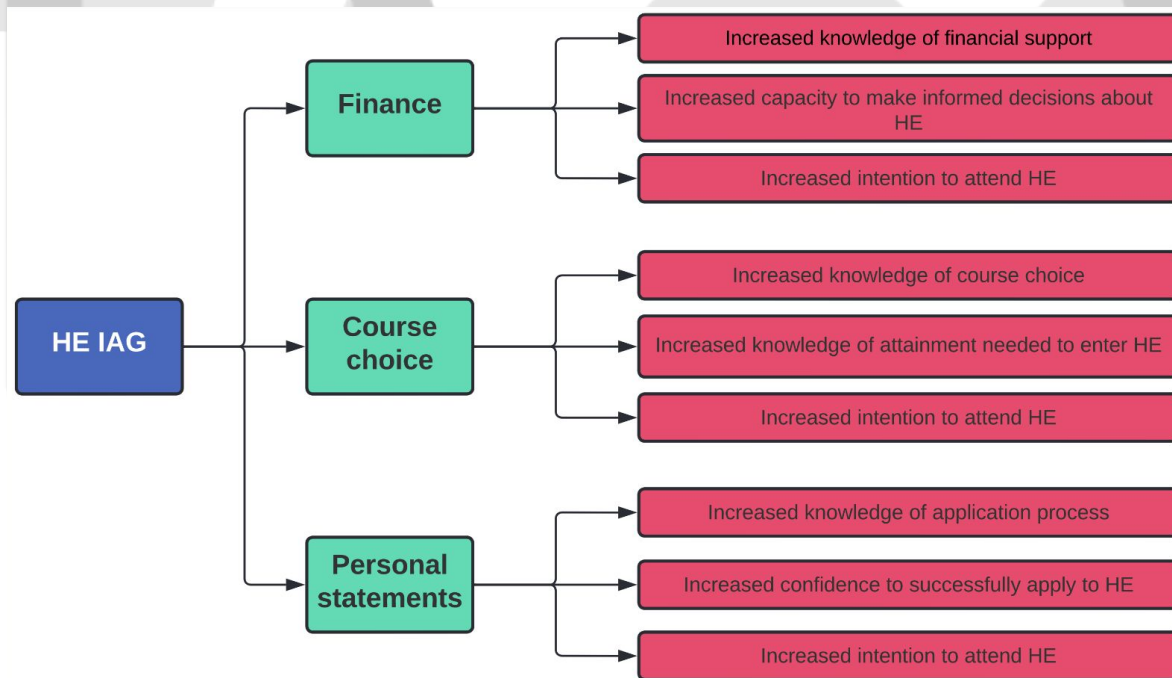
Mapping Outcomes & Activities Tool (MOAT)

- The MOAT has been developed to:
 - Aid consistent and more rigorous evaluation practice at provider level
 - Support the generation of evidence on multi-intervention outreach programmes
 - Improve our understanding of how specific elements of multi-intervention outreach programmes lead to particular outcomes

Mapping Outcomes & Activities Tool (MOAT)

- The MOAT includes:
 - Activity types and associated sub-types
 - Short, intermediate and long-term outcomes (attitudinal and behavioural)
 - A mapping of the activity sub-types to the most relevant outcomes

Mapping Outcomes & Activities Tool (MOAT)



Questions

Comfort Break

4:15pm – 4:30pm

Closing keynote

Dr Omar Khan

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I would recommend TASO resources and support to colleagues

1 - Strongly disagree 10 - Strongly agree

Score: ★ 0.0

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Thank you for joining us!

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