

Meet our Presenters

SESSION A: Benjamin Lay Suite: Main Room

From Primary School to Teacher Development: A Lifecycle Approach to Widening Participation

Ciaran Shantz, Anglia Ruskin University

Ciaran is a Schools and Colleges Engagement Officer at Anglia Ruskin University and a former teacher with over 10 years' experience in education. His work focuses on widening participation and creating equitable pathways into higher education through innovative, evidence-informed outreach. He collaborates with schools, colleges, academics and community partners to develop programmes that raise aspirations and attainment, supports progression and address barriers faced by under-represented learners. Drawing on his teaching experience, Ciaran is passionate about ensuring educational opportunities are accessible to all and that outreach activity is shaped by the needs of those it serves.

Teaching for the future: Thinking, Metacognition and learner agency for young people

Dr Emily Magrath and Dr Cloe Cheetham, IntoUniversity

Dr Emily Magrath is the Director of Programme Development & Impact at IntoUniversity and a member of the organisation's Senior Leadership Team. She has previously held roles managing an IntoUniversity Centre and leading on the organisation's evidence-led practice and staff training on delivery approaches. Emily completed her PhD at the University of Aberdeen.

Dr Chloe Cheetham is the Impact and Evaluation Manager at IntoUniversity, an education charity providing local learning centres across England and Scotland. She works within the data & impact team; her current projects include evaluating a family learning programme delivered in Scotland and this programme to improve primary school-aged pupils' metacognitive skills. She completed her PhD at Goldsmiths, The University of London.

Meet our Presenters AM

SESSION B: Benjamin Lay Suite: Breakout Room I

Ditching the Deficit Model: Reframing Vocational Learners Through Strengths and Equity

Dr Lindsey J. Munro, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Munro has held a number of strategic leadership roles, including Deputy Head and Head of the Department of Natural Sciences leading a team to design and implement change initiatives to enhance education metrics, the course portfolio and improve the student experience across Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science and Geography. Currently, she is a University Innovation Scholar leading on a project to close the differential awarding gaps for vocational students and to enhance graduate outcomes.

Pedagogical Innovation to Improve Student Engagement and Retention with Non-Traditional Learners

Dr Md. Anwar Hossain and Dr Nadia Liaquat, Bath Spa University

Dr Hossain is Senior Lecturer in Business and Management at Bath Spa University's Canary Wharf campus and Teaching Fellow at the University of Portsmouth, London. He holds senior and adjunct roles with Plymouth Marjon University Partnership, International Foundation Group and London Graduate School. He holds a Doctor of Management in Organisational Behaviour from the EIU, Paris, an MBA, a Cambridge Business Sustainability Management qualification and a PGCE. His research interests include sustainability Management, SDGs, ESD, AI in education, pedagogical innovation, leadership, organisational culture, organisational behaviour and HRM. A FAHEP Fellow and Ambassador, Chartered Manager and AdvanceHE External Examiner, he emphasises inclusive teaching and executive education.

Dr Liaquat is a Senior Lecturer and academic leader at Bath Spa University' Canary Wharf campus with extensive experience in UK higher education, specialising in programme leadership, academic quality assurance, assessment governance and student success across Business and interdisciplinary programmes. She is committed to advancing teaching excellence, student engagement and academic governance through mentoring academic staff, strengthening assessment standards and contributing to continuous quality enhancement. Her leadership approach focuses on maintaining academic integrity, improving student outcomes and supporting institutional excellence.

Meet our Presenters AM

SESSION C: Benjamin Lay Suite: Breakout Room 2

Why deep targeted engagement is worth the investment

Alexandra Lyons, Imperial College, London

Alexandra Lyons is the Outreach Evaluation and Research Manager at Imperial College London. Working in access and widening participation, she focuses particularly on effective evaluation cycles and evidence-based programme design. At Imperial, she leads on evaluation across a broad portfolio of STEM engagement activities for young people, seeking to understand the impact of each programme as well as building wider insights about what works and for whom. Recently, Alexandra completed a Churchill Fellowship research project to investigate approaches to supporting university transitions for underrepresented students in international contexts.

Equity with equality? Can contextualising everyone widen participation for medical admissions?

Dr Philip Chan, Kent and Medway Medical School

Dr Chan studied medicine at the University of Cambridge and joined Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) after a long career at the University of Sheffield, and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust as Clinical Director of Vascular service and Director of Medical Education. He also had a distinguished career as a consultant vascular surgeon most recently at The Northern General Hospital, Sheffield. Philip has a strong track-history in research and has had an active involvement in admissions research. His current responsibilities in KMMS are to lead selection and admissions, and to oversee our goals in widening participation in medical careers.

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SESSION A: Benjamin Lay Suite: Main Room

Sustained Outreach in Practice: Evaluating Leeds to Success Across the Secondary Lifecycle

Ayesha Akram and Emily Sharp, University of Leeds

Ayesha is a Senior Education Outreach Officer at the University of Leeds. Having joined the University in 2019 in Medicine Admissions, she moved into her current role in 2021. She leads on Leeds to Success, a sustained outreach programme supporting students from widening participation backgrounds, and co-chairs the Pre-16 Outreach Strategy Working Group. Ayesha is passionate about widening participation, educational inclusion, and creating pathways to higher education for underrepresented young people.

Emily is a Senior Education Outreach Officer in Research and Study Skills at the University of Leeds, having joined the team as an Education Outreach Fellow in 2018 before being appointed to her current role in 2023. Emily leads the university's Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) taught skills programme, pre-entry exam study skills provision, and Leeds to Success, a sustained outreach initiative supporting students from widening participation backgrounds. Alongside her outreach work, she is undertaking a PhD in History at Leeds and has teaching experience at undergraduate level. She also holds an MA by Research in History and English.

Practice and Evaluation Learnings – A Creative Summer School for Underrepresented Young People

Simone Hesselberg and Grace May, Bath Spa University

Simone is a creative producer supporting a range of creative outreach, practice-research and community-based projects. Within her role, she is committed to building generous, responsive structures that prioritise care, shared knowledge, and long-term creative sustainability. She leads the Young Artists Summer Programme and National Saturday Club at Bath Spa University.

Grace is an Evaluation Research Assistant at Bath Spa University. She jointly leads on Access and Participation (A&P) evaluation and research across the institution. Within this role, she is responsible for giving guidance to teams involved in implementing and evaluating Bath Spa's A&P Plan. She ensures that all A&P teams have access to relevant resources, arranges and delivers necessary training, and supports and quality reviews evaluations. Grace is a social scientist, with a diverse background in climate justice, environmental work, and social science evaluation.

Meet our Presenters PM

SESSION B: Benjamin Lay Suite: Breakout Room I

Enhancing Student Support through Proactive Engagement at the University of Leeds

Iona Gillies, University of Leeds

Iona graduated from the University of Leeds in 2023 with a BA (Hons) in Media and Communications. After this she went straight into her role as Engagement Caller at the University. Since becoming an Engagement Caller, Iona has realised how much support is available at the University of Leeds and how much members of staff want to help students. Engagement Calling allows the University to find and reach out to students who may need additional support and create a bridge so students can easily access tailored support for each of their needs.

From Diagnosis to Design: Using the Working Diagnosis Model to Close Disability-Related Awarding Gaps

Charlotte Stewart, Buckinghamshire New University

Charlotte serves as Head of Disability & Inclusion at Buckinghamshire New University. In this role, she oversees multidisciplinary support teams, designs and commissions staff training programmes, and shapes policy to ensure that disability and accessibility considerations are embedded across all functions of the University. She brings to the role a unique blend of legal expertise and academic insight.

Prior to her current appointment, Charlotte worked in legal settings and in higher education, giving her a strong foundation in regulatory frameworks, advocacy, and evidence-based policy. Within the University, she has led cross-institutional initiatives to enhance student experience, promote accessibility, and drive cultural change. Charlotte is Chair of the Higher Education Network for Disability Leads, where she convenes colleagues nationally to share good practice, and she serves on the EDI Committee of NOTA (the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abuse), helping to integrate inclusive and equitable approaches beyond the higher education sector.

Meet our Presenters PM

SESSION C: Benjamin Lay Suite: Breakout Room 2

Conscious Practice: Reframing Widening Participation through Equitable Institutional Practice

Dr Lesley Raven, Manchester Metropolitan University

Dr Raven is a Senior Lecturer in the Manchester Fashion Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University and Senior Fellow of Advance HE. She has over twenty years of cross-disciplinary pedagogic experience spanning fashion design, communications and business. Her Doctorate in Education explored educators' understanding of reflective practice through visualisation techniques; she has presented research at international conferences since 2013. From 2025–2027, she is a Lead Innovation Scholar for Flexible and Authentic Assessment, leading a cross-university Community of Practice. She has participated in the StellarHE and Aurora leadership programmes, reflecting her commitment to inclusive leadership, authentic practice and institutional change.

How can poetry inform curriculum decolonisation?

igor dos santos mota, University of Derby

igor is a PhD candidate at the University of Derby (UK), developing research on Decolonising University Curriculum. He is co-chair of the Decoloniality and Education Staff-Student Group and a member of the Decolonisation in Higher Education Network and the Race and Education Research Cluster. Igor holds a BA in English and Portuguese (UEFS, Brazil) and is an Erasmus alumnus (UMinho, Portugal). Besides, he is a teacher, award-winning poet, translator, and columnist. His poems have been performed and/or published across ten countries. He is also part of the poetry groups UNS British-Latinx Writers (UK), AddVerse (US), and Fazia Poesia (Brazil).