



# Student Voices

in Higher Education

Conference Programme

## Building a Collaborative Future through Insight and Action

📍 BMA House | London

📅 April 30 - May 1, 2025



## About Explorance

[Explorance](#) empowers higher education institutions with next-generation feedback analytics to accelerate the insight-to-action cycle. As a collaborative partner, Explorance aligns with institutions that embrace a feedback culture, where open and courageous conversations are encouraged to drive purpose, impact, and growth.

In an AI-driven world where feedback is a critical tool that can lead to improved decision-making, Explorance stands by the philosophy of “Feedback for the brave”. Committed to amplifying the voices of students, staff, and faculty, Explorance tailors its solutions for institutions to advance vital initiatives through student and employee feedback: Teaching Effectiveness, Learning Excellence, Student Experience, and Staff Engagement.

To learn more, please visit [explorance.com](https://explorance.com) and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

Explorance is excited to host the Student Voices in Higher Education conference, now in its third year, which provides a unique space for academic, professional, and administrative teams to share best practice, insights, and lessons learned from student voice initiatives, and ensure we all take active responsibility to gather and truly listen to student voices.

This conference brings together contributors and delegates with responsibility for strategic planning, teaching and learning, student experience, satisfaction and voice, quality assurance and enhancement, as well as course and module evaluation.

## Wednesday, 30 April | Day 1

Time	Session	Where
10:30-11:00	<b>Registration &amp; Refreshments</b>	
11:00-11:30	<b>Welcome &amp; Structured Networking</b> John Atherton, <b>Explorance</b>	Great Hall
11:30-12:15	<b>Keynote: Voices of Dissent - The Future of UK Higher Education and Student Engagement</b> Phil Baty, Chief Global Affairs Officer, <b>Times Higher Education</b>	Great Hall
12:15-12:45	<b>From Complexity to Clarity: The University of Sheffield Journey with Explorance Blue</b> Daniel Morton, Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, <b>The University of Sheffield</b> Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, <b>Explorance</b>	Great Hall
12:45-13:45	<b>Networking Lunch</b>	Snow
13:45-14:25	<b>Understanding the Experiences of Home and Overseas Students – Evidence from the Student Survey Landscape</b> Johnathan Neves, Head of Business Intelligence & Surveys, <b>Advance HE</b>	Great Hall
	<b>Why Wait Until the End? Nottingham Trent University's Move to Mid-module Surveys</b> Caroline Pickering, Academic Quality Systems and Data Lead, <b>Nottingham Trent University</b>	Paget
	<b>Towards a Student Voice Framework for a Financially Challenged Sector</b> Dr Richard Telling, Associate Head, Sheffield Business School, <b>Sheffield Hallam University</b>	Courtyard Suite

## Wednesday, 30 April | Day 1 - Continued

Time	Session	Where
14:30-15:10	<p><b>Using Feedback to Shift Institutional Thinking About Commuter Students</b> Carolyn Moir, Head of Student Evaluation and Enhancement, <b>University of Worcester</b> Val Yates, Director of Access &amp; Inclusion, <b>University of Worcester</b></p>	Great Hall
	<p><b>Reimagining Student Voice: An Integrated Approach to Academic Enhancement and Service Delivery in Scottish Higher Education</b> Dr Andrew Struan, Director of Academic Services, <b>University of Glasgow</b> Dr Jennifer Boyle, Head of Student Learning Development, <b>University of Glasgow</b> Dr Scott Ramsay, Deputy Head of Student Learning Development, <b>University of Glasgow</b></p>	Paget
	<p><b>Alternative Ways of Engaging Student Voice – Exploring Belonging, Empowerment and Decolonising</b> Sami Safadi, Senior PG Academic Tutor &amp; Academic Student Success Lead, <b>Salford Business School - University of Salford</b></p>	Courtyard Suite
15:10-15:40	<b>Networking Break</b>	Snow
15:40-16:00	<p><b>A Familiar Survey Tool: An Introduction to Explorance Forms</b> Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, <b>Explorance</b></p>	Great Hall
16:00-16:50	<p><b>Panel Discussion: Measuring the Impact of Student Feedback Initiatives</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Phil Smith, <b>Independent HE Consultant</b> Claire Hamshire, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, <b>University of Salford</b> Kathryn Woods, Pro-Vice Provost (Student Academic Engagement), <b>University College London</b> Carolyn Moir, Head of Student Evaluation and Enhancement, <b>University of Worcester</b> Daniel Morton, Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, <b>The University of Sheffield</b></p>	Great Hall
16:50-17:00	<p><b>Day 1 Closing Remarks</b> John Atherton, <b>Explorance</b></p>	Great Hall
17:00-19:30	<p><b>Networking Reception</b> Bowl Food &amp; Drinks</p>	Snow

## Thursday, 1 May | Day 2

Time	Session	Where
09:30-09:55	<b>Registration &amp; Refreshments</b>	
09:55-10:15	<b>Welcome &amp; Structured Networking</b> John Atherton, <b>Explorance</b>	Great Hall
10:15-10:45	<b>Keynote: Effectively Bridging the Secondary and Tertiary Education Divide: Supporting Students to Succeed Using their Voice via a Pre-arrival Academic Questionnaire</b> Dr Michelle Morgan, Dean of Students, <b>University of East London</b>	Great Hall
10:45-11:15	<b>Smart Feedback: Using Explorance MLY to Decode Staff and Student Comments</b> Kirsty Scanlan, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance & Projects, <b>Heriot-Watt University</b> Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, <b>Explorance</b>	Great Hall
11:15-11:45	<b>Networking Break</b>	Snow
11:45-12:25	<b>Engaging Students as Partners: Applying UK Quality Code to Enhance Student Voice</b> Ruth Burchell, Quality and Standards Officer, <b>Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)</b>	Great Hall
	<b>Applying Our Research on Amplifying the Student Voice to Large Class Teaching</b> Fiona McNeill, Reader of Computing Education, <b>The University of Edinburgh</b> Nikola Popovic, Senior Lecturer in Applied and Computational Mathematics, <b>The University of Edinburgh</b> Daisy Bao, PhD Student, <b>The University of Edinburgh</b>	Paget
	<b>The Listening Matrix</b> Claire Hamshire, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, <b>University of Salford</b> Seán Taylor, Student Voice and Engagement Manager, <b>University of Salford</b> Lauren Beckett, Director of Advocacy, <b>Salford Students' Union</b>	Courtyard Suite

## Thursday, 1 May | Day 2 - Continued

Time	Session	Where
12:30-13:10	<p><b>From Feedback to Action: Harnessing NSS Insights to Maximise Change</b> Sarah Williams, Teaching and Learning Manager, <b>The University of Manchester</b> Daniel Bayes, Teaching and Learning Officer, <b>The University of Manchester</b></p>	Great Hall
	<p><b>Unheard, Unmeasured: Podcasting as a Platform for Student Voice</b> Dr Elliott W. Nikdel, Student Voice Manager, <b>University of Sussex</b></p>	Paget
	<p><b>Engagement Through Meaning - #SaveUoAlanguage</b> Christina Schmid, Student President, <b>Aberdeen University Students' Association</b></p>	Courtyard Suite
13:10-14:10	<b>Networking Lunch</b>	Snow
14:10-15:00	<p><b>Panel Discussion: Loud &amp; Clear – Student Leaders on the Power of Feedback</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Ellie Mayo-Ward, Campaigns &amp; Influencing Manager, <b>NUS Cymru</b> Gareth Jones, Head of Student Voice, <b>Open University Students Association</b> Christina Schmid, Student President, <b>Aberdeen University Students' Association</b> Sal Fox, Vice President, Education And Welfare, <b>Winchester Students' Union</b> Abdullah Khan, President, <b>Kingston Students' Union</b></p>	Great Hall
15:00-15:15	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b> Ellie Mayo-Ward, Campaigns &amp; Influencing Manager, <b>NUS Cymru</b></p>	Great Hall
15:15-15:25	<p><b>Conference Close</b> John Atherton, <b>Explorance</b></p>	Great Hall

## Session Descriptions:

Keynote Title	Voices of Dissent: The Future of UK Higher Education and Student Engagement
Keynote Speaker	Phil Baty, Chief Global Affairs Officer, Times Higher Education

The UK higher education sector is at a pivotal moment, navigating financial pressures, technological advancements, and evolving student expectations. While challenges exist, so do opportunities—to reimagine student engagement, enhance learning experiences, and strengthen the connection between education and future success.

In this keynote, Phil Baty, Chief Global Affairs Officer at Times Higher Education, will explore the key forces shaping the sector and how institutions can turn uncertainty into progress:

- **Financial sustainability and transformation** – can shifts in funding models reshape student experiences for the better?
- **The evolving campus environment** – Balancing free expression, safety, and inclusive dialogue in a rapidly changing world.
- **AI in education** – Meeting and exceeding student expectations in an era of intelligent learning.
- **Well-being and affordability** – Innovative ways institutions can support students beyond the classroom.
- **Graduate outcomes and employability** – Ensuring students see meaningful returns on their education investment.



### Phil Baty

#### Chief Global Affairs Officer, Times Higher Education

Phil Baty leads on government partnerships and global affairs at Times Higher Education, the data, insights and events partner to universities and governments worldwide - and winner of The King's Award for Enterprise 2024 in the International Trade category. Phil is also Director General of the Education World Forum, the world's largest gathering of education and skills ministers and is an award-winning journalist, a sought-after keynote speaker, media commentator and consultant.

<b>Title</b>	<b>From Complexity to Clarity: The University of Sheffield’s Journey with Explorance Blue</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Daniel Morton, Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, The University of Sheffield Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance</b>

This session will introduce Explorance Blue, our flagship Feedback Analytics platform, designed to support a wide range of feedback initiatives. Attendees will gain an overview of its key features and see a live demonstration of how the platform streamlines the collection, analysis, and action on feedback. Trusted by institutions worldwide, Explorance Blue enables seamless management of course evaluations, institutional surveys, and other assessments—all within a comprehensive, data-driven system.

Over the past five years, the University of Sheffield has transformed its approach to student surveys. Moving from a fragmented system with inconsistent practices across 40+ departments to a unified, transparent, and actionable feedback process. In this session, we’ll share key lessons from our implementation of Explorance Blue, detailing how we established consistency, improved data accessibility, and enhanced student engagement.



**Daniel Morton**  
**Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, The University of Sheffield**

Daniel is a Surveys and Data Insight Analyst at The University of Sheffield, working within a team dedicated to supporting education and academic quality. With five years of experience using Blue as the university’s internal tool for module and degree programme surveys, he has played a key role in developing and refining the institution’s approach since its implementation.



**Chris Slack**  
**Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance**

Chris is a Senior Solutions Engineer at Explorance, specializing in supporting institutions across the EMEA region. With over a decade of experience in higher education, Chris has been dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning through innovative technologies.

A graduate of the University of Huddersfield (2012), Chris holds a Senior Fellowship from Advance HE in recognition of his contributions to advancing educational practices. Before joining Explorance in 2022, he spent more than ten years at the University of Leeds as a Learning Technologist, where he managed key systems, including the institution’s central course evaluation platform.

At Explorance, Chris leverages his extensive technical expertise and deep product knowledge to help institutions optimize their use of Explorance solutions, aligning them with institutional goals and enhancing the overall learning experience.



<b>Title</b>	Understanding the Experiences of Home and Overseas Students – Evidence from the Student Survey Landscape
<b>Speaker</b>	Johnathan Neves, Head of Business Intelligence & Surveys, Advance HE

International students represent a crucial audience for the higher education sector, and in the light of recent challenges around the attractiveness of the UK as a destination, providing the best possible experience for those that do choose to study here is arguably more crucial than ever. Yet, how do we ensure that the diverse needs of home students are also taken into account and delivered upon?

The presentation will pull together evidence from high-profile sector surveys at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and focus on the different requirements and experiences of home and overseas students.

Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss the extent to which the different needs of home and overseas students have impacted practice at their institution and to share examples of how institutions are responding to these challenges.



**Jonathan Neves**  
**Head of Business Intelligence & Surveys, Advance HE**

Jonathan joined Advance HE in 2015, bringing with him 16 years’ experience in customer insight and market research. Jonathan began his career with TNS in London and has worked for market research agencies Quaestor and Optimisa, and also client-side at The Co-op, before specialising in Education, spending 8 years heading up research & insight at Learndirect, one of the UKs largest online learning and apprenticeship providers. Jonathan graduated from the University of Liverpool with a degree in Geography, and is a full member of the Market Research Society.

Heading up the student surveys portfolio at Advance HE, Jonathan is lead-author of the Advance HE-HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey report, and is responsible for the overall strategy for the UK Engagement Survey as well as the Postgraduate Taught and Research Experience Surveys (PTES and PRES).

<b>Title</b>	Why Wait Until the End? Nottingham Trent University's Move to Mid-module Surveys
<b>Speaker</b>	Caroline Pickering, Academic Quality Systems and Data Lead, Nottingham Trent University

Like many institutions at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), we have historically sought feedback from students towards the end of their modules. However, in recent years, low response rates and reports of survey fatigue amongst students and staff made us question our approach.

Following a small 2023/24 pilot, NTU has moved to shorter, mid-module surveys this academic year. This approach prioritises using feedback to enhance the teaching and learning experience closer to real-time and to support student understanding of the content being delivered.

This session will provide an overview of NTU's experience of moving to mid-module surveys. Successes, challenges and lessons learned will be shared to enable attendees to consider whether moving their feedback collection windows earlier in the academic cycle might present opportunities (and challenges) for their institutions.



**Caroline Pickering**  
**Academic Quality Systems and Data Lead, Nottingham Trent University**

Caroline is Academic Quality Systems and Data Lead within the Centre for Academic Development & Quality (CADQ) at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and provides operational oversight of the following applications:

- curriculum management system (CourseLoop);
- module & course evaluation system (MySay);
- external examiner database and reporting portal.

Caroline represents the needs of the business and users in all activities relating to these applications, working closely with other service providers, particularly Digital Technologies, and vendors.

As part of her role, Caroline supports the University in managing and developing the systems and processes by which information (quantitative and qualitative) can be used to improve decision-making, enhance quality and inform external quality assessment requirements.

Caroline is an experienced higher education administrator and manager in teaching and learning services, central and faculty/school administration and quality management. Prior to joining NTU Caroline held various administrative and management roles at both the University of Manchester and the University of Cambridge.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Towards a Student Voice Framework for a Financially Challenged Sector</b>
<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Dr Richard Telling, Associate Head, Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University</b>

Nearly three quarters of Higher Education Institutions will be in deficit by academic year 2025-26, according to modelling by the Office for Students (2024). With most full-time academics in the UK now earning more than £50,000 (Times Higher Education, 2024), staff wages are a significant cost to HEIs who have begun to restructure and prioritise core business i.e. teaching and learning activity. This brings into question how Student Voice is administered at an appropriate cost at a time when institutions across the sector look to achieve cost savings.

Sheffield Hallam University piloted a new Student Voice framework in academic year 2024/25 among three of its ten schools. The new framework was designed to ensure effective and more rapid response to student feedback, as well as drive efficiencies for academic staff responsible for administering course-level Student Voice processes.

This presentation focuses on the learning achieved from implementing a new Student Voice framework through a simple why, what, so what format. It includes an evaluation of the new approach, from both students and staff, who were asked to rate the new approach.



## **Dr Richard Telling**

**Associate Head, Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University**

Dr Richard Telling is an Associate Head at Sheffield Business School – home to over 5,500 students. Richard provides leadership for the Student Experience portfolio, driving the School's approach to community development, societies and enrichment, academic advising, continuation, student voice, and induction. His research interests align with his leadership role and he has disseminated his work on student voices and belonging at conferences nationally.

<b>Title</b>	Using Feedback to Shift Institutional Thinking About Commuter Students
<b>Speakers</b>	Carolyn Moir, Head of Student Evaluation & Enhancement, University of Worcester Val Yates, Director of Access & Inclusion, University of Worcester

As more and more students travel from home to study, the need to support commuter students has increased. How do we create a sense of belonging for these students, how do we make their time on campus as positive as possible, and how do we increase attendance and then keep them on campus? It's often approached as a problem to fix.

The University of Worcester has moved from identifying anecdotal evidence to capturing formal feedback through surveys and other student-focused initiatives to better understand the needs of these students. Using feedback to create Listening Lunches and to gain an understanding of what matters to students has been key to the overall success of the approach. Giving students an opportunity to be heard, and where engagement is not just measured in attendance but in participation is part of the way that the university is reframing the conversation around commuters.



**Carolyn Moir**  
**Head of Student Evaluation & Enhancement, University of Worcester**

As the Head of Student Evaluation & Enhancement at the University of Worcester, Carolyn is responsible for managing and coordinating student surveys across the institution, supporting the annual evaluation process for courses, and providing analysis and reporting on key data. With over 20 years in project and operations management roles she has extensive experience of working to develop new processes, networks, and reporting structures across organisations. She works with colleagues across the University on a range of quality enhancement projects focused on the student experience and supporting the wider goals of the institution.



**Val Yates**  
**Director of Access & Inclusion, University of Worcester**

Val is Director of Access and Inclusion at the University of Worcester where she leads on the development and delivery of the universities Access and Participation work. Val is also the management group chair for the Aimhigher Plus Uniconnect Partnership and the West Midlands Aimhigher Impact Evaluation Group. Prior to working in Universities Val worked in Students Unions and retains a strong connection through her role as deputy returning officer in the sabbatical elections.

Title	Reimagining Student Voice: An Integrated Approach to Academic Enhancement and Service Delivery in Scottish Higher Education
Speakers	Dr Andrew Struan, Director of Academic Services, University of Glasgow Dr Jennifer Boyle, Head of Student Learning Development, University of Glasgow Dr Scott Ramsay, Deputy Head of Student Learning Development, University of Glasgow

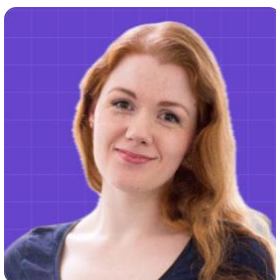
This paper explores a conceptual framework for enhancing student voice mechanisms within higher education. We examine the advantages of integrating academic and service-level feedback through a student-led Student Advisory Board (SAB) structure, while applying Kirkpatrick's evaluation model to deepen our understanding of student reflection and engagement. The discussion critically analyses how traditional feedback mechanisms might be transformed through this integrated approach, considering both the opportunities and challenges of combining disparate feedback streams into a cohesive governance structure. By examining the theoretical intersection of student voice, institutional governance, and evaluation methodologies, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions about meaningful student participation in higher education development. The framework presented offers insights into how institutions might reconceptualise their approach to student feedback, moving beyond traditional course evaluation towards a more holistic model of student engagement in institutional enhancement.



## Dr Andrew Struan

### Director of Academic Services, University of Glasgow

Dr Andrew Struan is the Director of Academic Services at the University of Glasgow. Andrew has responsibilities across student learning development, academic development, registry, quality assurance and enhancement, and transnational collaborations. He has worked across the globe in academic literacies and in political history. His PhD is in political history: he researches the linguistic history of parliamentary debate and the role of language in shaping ideologies.



## Dr Jennifer Boyle

### Head of Student Learning Development, University of Glasgow

Jennifer is Head of Student Learning Development at the University of Glasgow, where she has worked since 2012 after completing her PhD in Medieval History. She manages Student Learning Development, an award-winning, multi-disciplinary team, which works to develop students' academic literacies across all subjects and at all levels.

Jennifer leads the SLD Evaluation Subgroup. This subgroup is currently facilitating the University of Glasgow's Student Voice pilot scheme, which is taking a student-led approach in order to find authentic and innovative ways to engage with Student Voice and provide examples of best practice for the institution.



## **Dr Scott Ramsay**

### **Deputy Head of Student Learning Development, University of Glasgow**

Scott is Deputy Head of Student Learning Development at the University of Glasgow, where he has worked since 2012 after completing his PhD in Molecular & Cellular Biology. He manages a team of advisers in delivering academic development lectures, online resources and 1:1 appointments to any students across the scientific subject areas at the university.

He has been involved in strategic, institution-wide conversations with the Students' Representative Council over several years about a wide range of issues affecting students, as well as being deeply involved in performing analysis of service usage and evaluation data from his department locally.

<b>Title</b>	Alternative Ways of Engaging Student Voice – Exploring Belonging, Empowerment and Decolonising
<b>Speaker</b>	Sami Safadi, Senior PG Academic Tutor & Academic Student Success Lead, Salford Business School - University of Salford

The current frameworks of student voice structures are limited and don't always see the best engagement. The session will unpack alternative methods to student voice including two approaches tried in the Business School/Uni of Salford to explore authentic and empowered student voice.

The first was introducing students to a decolonised approach to education including student voice through 4 seminars.

The second will unpack a podcast series called Belonging in a Business School (<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/sysafadi>) which involves staff and students sharing authentic experiences and stories – still in line with a decolonised approach. The podcast episodes cover a range of areas tied to Belonging from identity to employability and how these authentic, personal, and lived stories tie to perceptions and concepts of Belonging. We are currently in Season 2. The session will delve into the podcast including some key moments, learning, impact, and next steps.

The session will summarise both approaches as well as feedback and highlights, areas for improvement/challenges, and next steps as well as focusing on the theme of Student Voice.



## **Sami Safadi**

**Senior PG Academic Tutor & Academic Student Success Lead,  
University of Salford, Salford Business Schools**

Over the past 15 years, I have had the privilege of working in higher education (HE) across various countries and institutions. My diverse experience encompasses quality assurance in HE, EFL & EAP, learner academic and skill development, inclusivity in HE, decolonizing HE, enhancing student experience and belonging, and data-driven decision-making in HE. My educational philosophy is rooted in the belief that education is an act of activism. I firmly advocate for engaging in decolonial approaches to knowledge and education as the path to achieving a truly equitable and just education system, from research to teaching. This conviction has led me to focus on decolonizing education and empowering students in higher education for equity.

<b>Title</b>	A Familiar Survey Tool: An Introduction to Explorance Forms
<b>Speaker</b>	Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance

Discover how Explorance Forms can transform feedback collection at your institution, whether it's for academic research or satisfaction surveys. This versatile and user-friendly survey software empowers every department, school, and discipline to easily gather meaningful insights. With its intuitive design, anyone on campus can create surveys in minutes.

Join this session to explore the capabilities of Explorance Forms and see how it simplifies feedback gathering while delivering real-time insights to drive informed decisions.



**Chris Slack**  
**Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance**

Chris is a Senior Solutions Engineer at Explorance, specializing in supporting institutions across the EMEA region. With over a decade of experience in higher education, Chris has been dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning through innovative technologies.

A graduate of the University of Huddersfield (2012), Chris holds a Senior Fellowship from Advance HE in recognition of his contributions to advancing educational practices. Before joining Explorance in 2022, he spent more than ten years at the University of Leeds as a Learning Technologist, where he managed key systems, including the institution's central course evaluation platform.

At Explorance, Chris leverages his extensive technical expertise and deep product knowledge to help institutions optimize their use of Explorance solutions, aligning them with institutional goals and enhancing the overall learning experience.



<b>Title</b>	<b>Panel Discussion: Measuring the Impact of Student Feedback Initiatives</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<b>Moderator: Phil Smith, Independent HE Consultant</b> <b>Claire Hamshire, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford</b> <b>Kathryn Woods, Pro-Vice Provost (Student Academic Engagement), University College London</b> <b>Carolyn Moir, Head of Student Evaluation and Enhancement, University of Worcester</b> <b>Daniel Morton, Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, The University of Sheffield</b>

This panel discussion will explore effective strategies for measuring and enhancing the impact of student feedback initiatives in higher education. Panelists will examine key questions around defining success beyond response rates, balancing qualitative and quantitative measures, and ensuring that feedback leads to real institutional change. The session will highlight best practices for closing the feedback loop, including improving transparency and fostering student-staff partnerships.

Additionally, the discussion will cover the role of technology and AI in analysing feedback, the challenges and benefits of benchmarking student voice initiatives across institutions, and strategies for engaging underrepresented student groups. Panelists will also consider the role of student unions and representatives in validating and acting on feedback and the balance between continuous improvement and high-stakes evaluation. Attendees will leave with practical insights into making student feedback more actionable, inclusive, and impactful.



**Phil Smith**  
**Independent HE Consultant**

Phil is a specialist independent PR, communications and stakeholder engagement consultant. With over 20 years’ experience, Phil provides reputation management services to universities and businesses supporting the higher education sector. He previously worked for Kingston University and the University of Lincoln. For Explorance, Phil has authored a number of insight publications, including *The Student Voice: How can UK universities ensure that module evaluation feedback leads to continuous improvement across their institution?*



**Claire Hamshire**  
**Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford**

Dr Claire Hamshire is a Professor of Higher Education and the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience, at the University of Salford, UK. She is also an Advance HE National Teaching Fellow and Principal Fellow. Throughout her career Claire has been instrumental in ensuring that universities develop quality processes with students’ perspectives at the centre, with the goal of ensuring student success. Her research interests include first- generation students’ experiences, quality enhancement and learning transitions and she has published and presented research about students’ learning experiences for the last seventeen years.



## **Professor Kathryn Woods**

**Pro-Vice Provost (Student Academic Engagement), University College London**

Kathryn works with the senior education team on all aspects of education and the student experience. Her areas of focus are personal tutoring, partnership with UCL Students' Union, student voice, student engagement, and student life and wellbeing.

Kathryn is the lead for UCL's programme excellence project and personal tutor review, and co-lead of the student life strategy. Kathryn has a PhD in History from the University of Edinburgh. My current research explores the history of student voice in UK higher education.



## **Carolyn Moir**

**Head of Student Evaluation and Enhancement, University of Worcester**

As the Head of Student Evaluation & Enhancement at the University of Worcester, Carolyn is responsible for managing and coordinating student surveys across the institution, supporting the annual evaluation process for courses, and providing analysis and reporting on key data. With over 20 years in project and operations management roles she has extensive experience of working to develop new processes, networks, and reporting structures across organisations. She works with colleagues across the University on a range of quality enhancement projects focused on the student experience and supporting the wider goals of the institution.



## **Daniel Morton**

**Surveys and Data Insight Analyst, The University of Sheffield**

Daniel is a Surveys and Data Insight Analyst at The University of Sheffield, working within a team dedicated to supporting education and academic quality. With five years of experience using Blue as the university's internal tool for module and degree programme surveys, he has played a key role in developing and refining the institution's approach since its implementation.

Keynote Title	Effectively Bridging the Secondary and Tertiary Education Divide: Supporting Students to Succeed Using their Voice via a Pre-arrival Academic Questionnaire
Keynote Speaker	Michelle Morgan, Dean of Students, University of East London

The leap in learning and personal development between school, college and higher education can be enormously rewarding, but is also a transition beset with a variety of challenges. We know that early experiences of higher education can be somewhat uneven, and that this can be impacted by level and mode of prior study and a range of personal and contextual factors. More than ever, if we are to keep students (prospective and current) engaged in their learning, improve and support their experience, it is essential that we understand prior learning experiences, student study expectations and financial, emotional or personal concerns. This session will look at how we can effectively bridge the secondary and tertiary education divide through using the student voice via a pre-arrival academic questionnaire.



**Michelle Morgan**  
**Dean of Students, University of East London**

Dr Michelle Morgan is a national and internationally recognised Student Experience Transitions Specialist across all levels of study and is extensively published in the area. She is currently Dean of Students at the University of East London. Michelle is a Principal Fellow of the HEA, Fellow of the AUA , an elected council member of UKCGE and Student Minds Mental Health Charter Assessor. During her varied career, Michelle has been a faculty manager, lecturer, researcher and academic manager. She describes herself as a ‘Third Space Integrated Student Experience Practitioner’ who develops initiatives based on pragmatic and practical research. Michelle has over 50 publications and has presented over 100 national and international conference papers (including 52 keynotes and 30 invited papers). She has developed a free portal for staff which provides a range of information and links for anyone interested in improving the student experience in higher education [www.improvingthestudentexperience.com](http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com)

In 2024, Michelle was awarded the European First Year Experience Leadership Award and the SRHE Contribution to the Field Award for her work in L&T and Student Transitions.

Michelle was creator and PI/Project Lead of an innovative, £2.7 million, 11 university collaborative HEFCE grant, looking at the study expectations and attitudes of postgraduate taught (PGT) students. The project report received praise from across the sector including UKCGE, OFFA, the HEA and the Engineering Professor’s Council and helped introduce the PG Loan Scheme. [http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/PG\\_documents/Postgraduate\\_Experience\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com/library/PG_documents/Postgraduate_Experience_Report_Final.pdf)

<b>Title</b>	Smart Feedback: Using Explorance MLY to Decode Staff and Student Comments
<b>Speakers</b>	Kirsty Scanlan, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance & Projects, Heriot-Watt University Chris Slack, Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance

This session will introduce Explorance MLY, an award-winning, AI-powered solution designed to extract actionable insights from qualitative feedback. Through a live demonstration, attendees will explore MLY's key features, including sentiment analysis, crowdsourced recommendations, and alerts on sensitive matters from qualitative feedback. Built with specialised machine learning models for Higher Education, Human Resources, and Learning & Development, MLY empowers institutions and organisations to better understand and respond to feedback effectively.

You will also see how Heriot-Watt is using Explorance MLY software to gain rapid insights from open comments in both staff and student surveys across our global operation to provide insight to relevant staff, turning weeks of work into minutes.

**Key outcomes**

- Explorance MLY demonstration including key features
- Background of surveys at HWU – Students/Staff
- Scale of comments vs. effort and value
- Initial insights and distribution at HWU.



**Kirsty Scanlan**

**Director of Strategic Planning, Performance & Projects, Heriot-Watt University**

Kirsty Scanlan has had a long career in the Higher Education data field and is the Global Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and Projects at Heriot-Watt University. She has a wide ranging remit with data at the core, delivering on all aspects of the University's strategic plans and is leading the development of the new University Strategy 2035. She has a passion for making data accessible and useful, providing insight to decision makers at all levels of the organisation.



**Chris Slack**

**Senior Solutions Engineer, Explorance**

Chris is a Senior Solutions Engineer at Explorance, specializing in supporting institutions across the EMEA region. With over a decade of experience in higher education, Chris has been dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning through innovative technologies.

<b>Title</b>	Engaging Students as Partners: Applying UK Quality Code to Enhance Student Voice
<b>Speaker</b>	Ruth Burchell, Quality and Standards Officer, QAA

This interactive session will offer participants an overview of the 2024 UK Quality Code Principle 2 – Engaging Students as Partners, discussing ways it can be used to enhance student voice as part of quality assurance and enhancement activities such as monitoring and evaluation and student representation.

We will also undertake a practical exercise that will enable participants to feed into the development of the advice and guidance that underpins this principle due to be published in June 2025.



## Ruth Burchell

### Quality and Standards Officer, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

Ruth’s HE career spans 30 years, during which time she has forged strong networks across the sector working in different types of HE provider and sector organisations. She has developed HE administrative processes, developed national advice and guidance and training; set up student representation systems and offered academic and pastoral support to students. This wide-ranging experience gives Ruth a unique overview and perspective of UK HE at micro and macro levels.

A strong professional interest in the promotion of an enhancement-led quality culture her specialisms; include quality enhancement in practice, student engagement, student experience, HE administration, programme coordination and admissions. Most recently, Ruth was a team lead on the redevelopment of the 2024 UK Quality Code and is currently leading the development of the underpinning advice and guidance. Ruth is a recent graduate, having obtained her MA in Student Engagement with Winchester University in June 2024.

<b>Title</b>	Applying Our Research on Amplifying the Student Voice to Large Class Teaching
<b>Speakers</b>	Fiona McNeill, Reader of Computing Education, The University of Edinburgh Nikola Popovic, Senior Lecturer in Applied and Computational Mathematics, The University of Edinburgh Daisy Bao, PhD Student, The University of Edinburgh

Over the last three years, we have been working towards building a cross-university Student Voice toolkit with a particular focus on large-class teaching. At last year’s Student Voices in Higher Education Conference, we presented data gathered from staff and student views across the university to feed into the toolkit. This year, we will discuss how we have used that data to synthesise a framework for our toolkit, as well as a number of feedback tools (including various AI tools) to suit different student needs, teaching requirements, and feedback phases. We are currently launching our pilot implementation of a variety of tools from our framework in multiple courses. We will discuss what these will look like, how we will be evaluating them with staff and students to ensure they address the needs of all stakeholders while integrating into existing work patterns, and how they will inform the resulting toolkit.



## **Fiona McNeill**

### **Reader of Computing Education, The University of Edinburgh**

Fiona McNeill is a Reader of Computing Education and Director of Students in the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh. She received the EUSA Teacher of the Year Award (College of Science and Engineering) in 2022 and the Principal's Medal for Outstanding Contribution for her work supporting students in 2021. She is an FRSE and a PFHEA, both based on her contribution to access to CS and STEM education for typically excluded students. She has broad experience of student-staff partnership projects and student-focused research.



## **Nikola Popovic**

### **Senior Lecturer in Applied and Computational Mathematics, The University of Edinburgh**

Nikola Popovic is a Senior Lecturer in Applied and Computational Mathematics in the School of Mathematics at the University of Edinburgh. He was PI on the recent Principal's Teaching Award Scheme-funded project "Amplifying the student voice: co-creation of resources to facilitate student feedback on learning and teaching across the University" and Director of Quality in the School of Mathematics. He has a keen interest in course design and innovative teaching and learning techniques. He has received multiple Teaching Award nominations.



## **Daisy Bao**

### **PhD Student, The University of Edinburgh**

Daisy Bao is a mature PhD student in higher education, with research in student learning experience, student engagement, power, and social justice in HE. She has explored teaching-related topics, such as effective student feedback, curriculum co-creation, and student-staff relationships, and has taught at the University of Edinburgh. In addition to her experience in teaching and learning, she has expertise in research design, mix-method, and qualitative and quantitative analysis, based on her experience as a student lead in several research projects.

<b>Title</b>	The Listening Matrix
<b>Speakers</b>	Claire Hamshire, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford Seán Taylor, Student Voice and Engagement Manager, University of Salford Lauren Beckett, Director of Advocacy, Salford Students' Union

Listening to and valuing the perspectives of our partners enables us to take a collaborative and nuanced approach to co-create actions and build trust in the cultural changes needed for long-term improvements. Fundamental to this process is the development of trustful spaces in which all voices are heard and valued. At the University of Salford, we are working collaboratively with our Students' Union to develop a matrix of insight activity to better understand our students' lived experiences and develop targeted action plans.

This session will explore how we have worked together to build a holistic calendar of activity to facilitate long term, effective changes using course evaluations, focus groups, thematic listening events and a student perspectives group. This matrix of activity is designed to provide opportunities to give feedback across our diverse student population and ensure that we actively close the feedback loop with our students.



**Claire Hamshire**  
**Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Salford**

Dr Claire Hamshire is a Professor of Higher Education and the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor, Education and Student Experience, at the University of Salford, UK. She is also an Advance HE National Teaching Fellow and Principal Fellow. Throughout her career Claire has been instrumental in ensuring that universities develop quality processes with students' perspectives at the centre, with the goal of ensuring student success. Her research interests include first- generation students' experiences, quality enhancement and learning transitions and she has published and presented research about students' learning experiences for the last seventeen years.



**Seán Taylor**  
**Student Voice and Engagement Manager, University of Salford**

Seán is the Student Voice and Engagement Manager at the University of Salford. Joining Salford in 2019, Seán has over fifteen years' experience of working in the Higher Education sector, previously having worked in a number of other English universities, including King's College London and University College London, in roles related to student experience and engagement. Seán is a passionate advocate students' voices and placing this at the centre of Higher Education Institutions' decision making. Seán holds a BSc in Biochemistry, and is currently working towards an MSc in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of Salford, alongside his role.



## Lauren Beckett

### Director of Advocacy, Salford Students' Union

Lauren is the Director of Advocacy at Salford Students' Union. With over 15 years of experience in the Higher Education and Students' Union sector, Lauren has held roles at several organisations, including Edge Hill SU, UCLan SU, and Liverpool John Moores University. Lauren's work has consistently focused on enhancing the student experience, amplifying the student voice, and driving student-led change. Passionate about empowering student leaders and fostering meaningful change, Lauren combines her expertise with a commitment to supporting student success. Lauren holds an LLB in Law and is working towards an MSc in Human Resource Management at the Open University.

Title	From Feedback to Action: Harnessing NSS Insights to Maximise Change
Speakers	Sarah Williams, Teaching and Learning Manager, The University of Manchester Daniel Bayes, Teaching and Learning Officer, The University of Manchester

This is the second academic year that the University of Manchester have been using Explorance MLY and it has been a rewarding journey. We are already using MLY for bespoke surveys, mid-semester surveys, unit surveys, and NSS. This equates to over 135,000 comments analysed through the system so far.

As part of this session we will outline our approach to utilising MLY for NSS. Our journey began by using the consultancy service to analyse our 2023 results. This moved to analysing our own results for 2024 as well as presenting key data insights on the day the results were released. Following results day, the data was released to Faculties and Schools to consider the system recommendations (stop, start, continue, change, do more, do less etc.) when developing their NSS action plans.

We will consider the impact this has had on responding to student feedback through the NSS and how this has been utilised during the academic year. We will also showcase how what we have learned will be used as we prepare for NSS 2025.



## Sarah Williams

### Teaching and Learning Manager, The University of Manchester

Sarah Williams (she/her/hers) is Teaching and Learning Manager (Programme Enhancement) at the University of Manchester and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Advance HE. She has worked at the University since August 1999 in various Teaching and Learning professional services roles including coordinating the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission for the University in 2023. As part of this Sarah is committed to ensuring the student voice is central to all programme enhancement activity.





## Daniel Bayes

**Teaching and Learning Officer, The University of Manchester**

Daniel Bayes (they/them/theirs) is Teaching and Learning Officer (Student Voice and Feedback) at the University of Manchester and is an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Advance HE. They have worked at the University since September 2019 in student engagement roles. They are responsible for taught programme surveying activity at the University including reporting through MLY. They are passionate about ensuring student representation is embedded in all aspects of the student life cycle.

<b>Title</b>	Unheard, Unmeasured: Podcasting as a Platform for Student Voice
<b>Speaker</b>	Dr Elliott W. Nikdel, Student Voice Manager, University of Sussex

Traditional surveys have become crucial platforms for student voice. However, surveys not only carry the worrying potential to marginalise certain voices, but they also dehumanise our most vulnerable and misunderstood students, shrouding their stories and lived experiences behind a mirage of data. The Student Engagement and Enhancement team at the University of Sussex is developing a new podcast to amplify the voices of students from underrepresented backgrounds. This not only provides a platform for students to share their lived experiences, but it also reflects a radical and de-colonised way of rethinking how we evaluate student voice practice. In this student-led discussion, we explore how we evaluate student voice without 'measuring' it and consider the role of podcasting as a more authentic way of capturing student voice. We also listen to two of our students who share their experience of developing the podcast.



## Dr Elliott W. Nikdel

**Student Voice Manager, University of Sussex**

Dr Elliott W. Nikdel is Student Voice Manager at the University of Sussex. Based in the Student Engagement and Enhancement team, Elliott has direct oversight of a number of activities and interventions outlined in the University's Access and Participation Plan that explore methods of capturing student voice, particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds, such as the APP Student Panel. Elliott previously held teaching positions at University of the Arts London and the University of Southampton.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Engagement Through Meaning - #SaveUoAlanguage</b>
<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Christina Schmid, Student President, Aberdeen University Students' Association</b>

Our session will start by giving an overview and timeline of events. This will be followed by looking at some of the major events of student engagement during this time: Our AGM and Focus Groups. The campaign wouldn't have been possible without student voices. The campaign regularly engaged with various stakeholders and student representatives on Senate, Court and other Committees always made sure the student voice is heard. On the other side, affected students were part of the campaign team and as such could communicate directly with the wider student body. The balance between well-coordinated internal work and petitions, public engagement events like protests and rallies made the campaign tangible for a large group of students. The session will go into detail about the strategy to engage students and how giving students a meaningful task to do is the best measure to secure success and engagement in a campaign.



**Christina Schmid**  
**Student President, Aberdeen University Students' Association**

Christina Schmid is the Student President of Aberdeen University Student Association, representing over 15,000 students. She graduated in June 2024 with a degree in Politics, Spanish, and Latin American Studies. An experienced activist, Christina played a key role in last year's successful student protest, strengthening collaboration between students, the Students' Union, and university staff. Now, as President, she is dedicated to advocacy, leadership development, and creating positive change within the university community.

Title	Panel Discussion: Loud & Clear: Student Leaders on the Power of Feedback
Speakers	Moderator: Ellie Mayo-Ward, Campaigns & Influencing Manager, NUS Cymru Gareth Jones, Head of Student Voice, Open University Students Association Christina Schmid, Student President, Aberdeen University Students' Association Sal Fox, Vice President, Education And Welfare, Winchester Students' Union Abdullah Khan, President, Kingston Students' Union

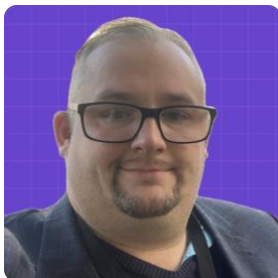
What does meaningful student feedback look like? How can institutions ensure student voices lead to real change? In this panel, student union representatives share their perspectives on feedback culture, the impact of student voice, and what they want to see from universities. Join for candid insights, lively discussion, and actionable takeaways on how institutions can better engage, listen, and close the feedback loop with their students.



### **Ellie Mayo-Ward**

#### **Campaigns & Influencing Manager, NUS Cymru**

Ellie works as the Campaigns and Influencing Manager for the National Union of Students (NUS) Cymru and is Vice Chair of the Researching Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) Network. Previously she has worked in various roles across the Welsh and English Higher Education sector, specialising in student engagement, including within institutions and with the Office for Students. Her passion for the student experience started as Vice-President Education and has continued throughout her career.



### **Gareth Jones**

#### **Head of Student Voice, Open University Students Association**

Gareth has been the Head of Student Voice at the Open University Students Association since December 2024, following his role as Volunteering and Representation Officer. His journey in student voice began as a school representative at the Open University, advancing to Deputy President. Gareth has actively contributed at both regional and national levels, serving as the part-time student representative at the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for three years. Nationally, he has championed the unique needs of OU students, including presenting evidence to the Education Select Committee. Since moving into a staff role, Gareth advocates for changes that ensure diverse student voices are heard, and that feedback leads to positive outcomes.



## **Christina Schmid**

### **Student President, Aberdeen University Students' Association**

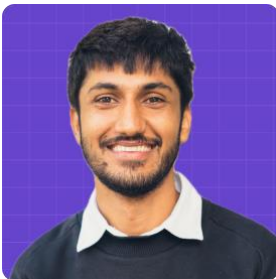
Christina Schmid is the Student President of Aberdeen University Student Association, representing over 15,000 students. She graduated in June 2024 with a degree in Politics, Spanish, and Latin American Studies. An experienced activist, Christina played a key role in last year's successful student protest, strengthening collaboration between students, the Students' Union, and university staff. Now, as President, she is dedicated to advocacy, leadership development, and creating positive change within the university community.



## **Sal Fox**

### **Vice President, Education and Welfare, Winchester Students' Union**

Sal is the Vice President, Education & Welfare of Winchester Students' Union, having been elected for two consecutive terms as Officer Trustee and Director of the organisation. Within her role, Sal oversees academic representation and policy work alongside the Union's welfare and wellbeing provisions for students. Prior to becoming a Sabbatical Officer, Sal was an elected Student Officer at Winchester and has experience representing students on the national stage as NUS National Conference Delegate. Sal's areas of interest include student voice, supporting students to navigate AI within higher education, and student welfare, including nighttime safety. Having graduated from the University of Winchester with a BA in Musical Theatre in 2023, once completing her final term in office as Vice President, Sal will shortly be commencing an MSc in International Relations at the University of Surrey. Beyond academic life, Sal is a National Champion in Cheerleading.



## **Abdullah Khan**

### **President of Kingston Students' Union 24/25**

Abdullah is the President of Kingston Students' Union (KSU) for the 2024/25 academic year and actively represents Kingston University students. Abdullah previously served as the Vice President of Education for 2023/24. After a successful year of student representation, he was re-elected as President and aims to enhance the student experience and foster an inclusive environment in his capacity.

As a Trustee on the Board of Kingston Students' Union, Abdullah plays a vital role in guiding the strategic direction of the union. Additionally, Abdullah is an active member as a Student Governor on Kingston University's Board of Governors, and University Senior Committee Meetings, where he provides student insights and addresses the needs and aspirations of the student body in decision making.

He is currently studying MSc in 'International-Business-Management' at Kingston University London.

"In my free time, I enjoy hiking, adventure sports, travelling, exploring architecture, and networking with people, reflecting my enthusiasm for exploring new experiences and engaging with diverse individuals."

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