

The Value of Second Chances

Reflections of current undergraduate students on their
Foundation Year experience

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Research Context

Government Proposals

The 2019 Review of Post-18 Education and Funding concluded that higher education institutions were using FY to create four-year degrees to 'entice students that would otherwise not meet their standard entry criteria' and result in 'poor value for money for both government and some students' (Augar, 2019, p. 101).

Sheffield Hallam University

Develop a compelling and authentic narrative for Foundation Year at SHU in line with the corporate strategy, policy drivers, the Access and Participation Implementation Plan, and the findings of the most recent portfolio review.

Research Question

1. How does foundation year provision prepare students to progress and succeed in their chosen degree pathways?
2. How do those that have completed a foundation year value the experience?

Interview themes covered

- Transition
- Motivation
- Academic experience
- Academic, professional and personal development
- Readiness for undergraduate study
- Career goals
- Value

Sample

18 students interviewed, Two from each subject area, with additional students from business and biosciences, 9 level 4, 7 level 5, 1 level 6 and 1 placement student, 9 female and 9 male, 8 BAME 10 White, 3 mature students, 3 students disclosed a disability, 12 were or had been commuter students, 3 'none' A-level students

Four Domains

Functional Value

Psychological Value

Social Value

Monetary Value

Functional Value

Functional value is what an offer, service or product does, or the solution an offer provides to any given circumstance.

For art... most students do a foundation year before doing it just to definitely solidify your choice and get a year to experiment and try loads of different practices before you decide on your final degree.

(Art & Design)

My only focus was to get onto my proper course, and I would have done anything necessary to do that.

(Health, Sport, & Social Care)

I haven't got A-Levels and obviously I haven't done science for years... that [FY] was given to me as an option. It just sounded like quite a good option really, rather than having to go back to college and study A-Levels.

(Biosciences)

Related themes

- Motivation and engagement with study
- Choice
- Previous attainment/education
- Attendance

Psychological Value

Psychological value relates to a products ability to allow an individual to express themselves, feel better, or achieve their goals.

[FY] was a nice kind of in-between, and it kind of restored my confidence... I found the FY course not as challenging as A-Levels it... restored my confidence... that I could actually do a bachelors course.

(Health, Sport & Social Care)

It's developed me... it's put me in good stead... it's honed... my technical skills... it's also honed me... practically and personally... I figured out how I learn, how I study better, when I study better, what conditions I can study in.

(Engineering & Maths)

it's another minimum wage job, do I want to just carry on doing these or do I want the opportunity to maybe go to university and maybe have a better chance at doing well?

(Business - Other)

Related themes

- Self-efficacy
- Individual and group aspiration
- University systems and processes
- Prepared for undergraduate study (Advantage)

Social Value

Social value relates to the connections that can be made to others, places or experiences through a product.

I wanted to move away and to meet some new people... I wanted some more autonomy... I felt more confident going into a FY at a university... I think I would have been miserable for a year there (college) compared to the FY, which I think was a much better choice.

(Computing)

I had my friends on the course as well, so I wasn't alone. I had company and if I struggled I'd always ask them for help... My friends... [from the] FY,... we're still together. We all chose to study the biomedical course.

(Biosciences & Chemistry)

Well I'm from Sheffield anyway and so I had always planned to go to Hallam... I... wanted to stay in Sheffield... because I like it here and my family's close and I don't really have to worry.

(Engineering & Maths)

Related themes

- University experience
- Location and reputation (status)
- Peers and networks
- Facilities/opportunities

Monetary Value

Monetary value relates to the perceived/experience worth of something relative to the price paid.

I think it should have been a bit cheaper because, as I said earlier, we were only in two days a week really, compared to my current course which is in every day of the week.

(Media, Arts & Computing)

I didn't really think about the money to be honest. At the end of the day, if it's going to help me get to where I want to be, then I don't mind. I couldn't care less about the money, but obviously I need the money to study.

(Biosciences & Chemistry)

[don't] understanding why it's the same price because it's not actually going towards your degree realistically is it at the end of the day? You can get your degree without it can't you? It's not like it's a compulsory thing to do...you've kind of wasted nine and a half grand there really.

(Business)

Related themes

- The university view of FY
- Funding/Fees/Loans/Bursaries
- Social inequality
- Academic experience

Transforming learning: Pedagogy

- Content and Challenge
- Motivation and engagement with study
- Attendance
- Academic experience
- Value

Education is important not only for gainful employment but also for creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously.

(Giroux, 2011, p. 4)



**Questions, Comments or
Thoughts?**