

Higher education

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Overview

In the UK, the career guidance services in Higher Education have a strong evidence base and are innovative. The context is also clearly set by more than half of students believing 'all university courses should be designed mainly with future employment in mind'. Past studies provide a strong body of evidence for the impact of services on both students' career capabilities and their employment outcomes. Work by Agcas continues to steer progress, demonstrating families of case studies and best practices whereby careers services are tackling various contemporary issues in innovative ways, ranging from social mobility to AI, as well as delivering continuous improvement.

Headlines

The academic literature, think tanks and membership bodies have cited the importance of continuing to invest in career services. For instance:

- More than half of students use their career services in the UK ([Freeman and Hillman, 2021](#)). That said, students are not engaging as fully as they could with career services to gain the benefits, but both process improvements and technology can achieve sizeable benefits ([Agcas and Symplicity, 2022](#))
- Students with lower social capital have historically faced disadvantages in the labour markets (e.g. [Greenbank, 2012](#)). While widening participation to Higher Education aids social mobility, it is not enough by itself to overcome disparities and career services need to play a further role in these challenges ([UPP Foundation, 2017](#))
- Economic conditions affect perceptions of the value of completing a degree ([Donald, 2018](#))
- Demands of employers are changing with changing labour markets, creating the onus on careers services to equip students with contemporary knowledge of how to succeed (e.g. [Institute of Student Employers, 2024](#)).
- There are arguments that career services are a critical differentiator for higher education institutions, who are often judged on employability outcomes (e.g. [uConnect](#), [Aza Associates](#))
- Career interests and motivations of students change during the period of doing a degree (e.g. [Quinlan and Corbin, 2023](#))
- The scenario whereby practitioners receive sustained complex client cases, in uncertain times, risks “a diminution of guidance counselling skills” and “disaffection” from the professional practitioners due to the nature of work it creates. ([Hearne, 2009](#)).
- Historic policy changes had mixed effects on higher education career services, with some flourishing but others became at-risk of being marginalised ([Barbour, 2016](#))

Evidence for the impact of services includes:

- Career services have been measured as being valuable to UK Higher Education students for at least two decades, as described by, for instance, [Crust \(2005\)](#)
- Literature reviews of evaluation studies show an emphatic positive impact of career services on students’ personal career motivations and behaviour and employment outcomes e.g. more than 90% of studies showing positive effects from 1976 to 2019 ([Reardon et al, 2021](#)).
- US evidence shows that graduating students who use career services get 24% more job offers ([National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2022](#)),

Landscape & contexts

Selected publications, listed below, cover literature reviews and specific studies that help to make the case for careers investment by describing the context in which it operates, and reviewing literature to show the overall impact.

Publications tend to provide one or more of the following types of insight for practitioners, decision-makers or policy makers, denoted in the "Purpose" column below: U = Understanding users, needs and experiences, P = Practices and their evaluation, C = Supporting or informing the investment case for careers, E = Understanding enablers of success in systems, processes and workplaces, T= Developing and criticising theories and frameworks.

NB: We have generally tried to include resources that are free to access, but have included a few important studies that require payment. These are denoted by "(Paid)" next to the URL link in the title column.

Case studies are described in the section below, also denoting studies where theory has been applied to the design of a service, to generate particular outcomes.

Title	Purpose	Brief description	Location
International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (n.d.), Posts - by specific groups (Link)	P	The ICCDPP publishes articles and research announcements into different segments, including Higher Education.	International
Bimrose, J., Barnes, S.-A. and Brown, J. (2005). A Systematic Literature Review of Research into Career-Related Interventions for Higher Education. Manchester: Prospects. (Link)	C	The paper provides a literature review of evaluation studies into the effects of career guidance in higher education. The report showed that although there is substantial literature on different curricular and extra-curricular interventions, evidence related to their impact was limited.	International
Allen, J. et al (2007). Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market Maastricht University, The Netherlands (Link)	C E	The REFLEX project (acronym for 'Research into Employment and professional FLEXibility') was a large scale international project that has been carried by surveying 70k higher education students across a range of different countries (including the UK). It focuses on evaluating whether national education systems lead to graduates that have specific skills demands that the modern knowledge society places on higher education	International

		graduates to have, and the degree to which higher education equips graduates with the competencies to meet these demands.	
Bimrose, J., & Artess, J. (2007). Research into career-related interventions for higher education. What do we know and what do we need to know?. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 17(1), 12-15. (Link)	C	The paper updates and discusses the results of the 2005 literature review by Bimrose et al. The review provides a milestone in evidencing careers research, talking of both evaluations that have been positive to date but limitations in the evidence base.	UK
Hansen, M., & Pedersen, J. (2012). An examination of the effects of career development courses on career decision-making self-efficacy, adjustment to college, learning integration, and academic success. Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 24(2), 33-61. (Link) (Paid)	P C	This study investigated the effects of career development courses on various aspects of a student's motivations and capabilities: Improvements were found across a number of outcomes including adjusting to a new college environment and retention rates.	US
Meijers, F., & Kuijpers, M. (2014). Career learning and career learning environment in Dutch higher education. Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 6(2), 295-313. (Link)	C E	This paper reviews the career capabilities of Dutch higher education students, and uncovers a series of important relationships that demonstrate the value of developing career competences: Firstly, career competencies contribute to career identity, learning motivation, certainty of career choice and drop out probabilities. The learning environment also contributes to these outcome variables. Students who participate in a practice-based and inquiry-based curriculum, and who have helping conversations about their study with their teachers, feel more	Holland

		motivated towards learning, and less likely to quit.	
Christie, F. (2016). Careers guidance and social mobility in UK higher education: practitioner perspectives. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 44(1), 72-85. (Link)	U P C	This paper reports on a small-scale research project which explored how university careers advisers experience their role in guiding clients within a labour market where barriers to social mobility prevail. The research discovers that advisers' daily work gives them a depth of insight into social mobility. The professional turbulence in which advisers operate and the evolution of their role from in-depth work to a focus on breadth is chronicled. University environments vary with regard to the scope advisers have to impact lives, but a strong set of values anchors them. Recommendations are made with regard to how high quality careers information, advice and guidance can support social mobility for traditionally disadvantaged students into the labour market.	UK
Donald, W.E. (2017), Students' perceptions of graduate employability: a sequential explanatory approach. Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Link)	U	The thesis included a comprehensive literature review and primary survey research into attitudes and perceptions of HE students. "This research validated protean and boundaryless career measures in an undergraduate population.... Tuition fee increases, interest rate increases, and modest salary expectations meant that the majority of students did not believe they would repay their university debt in full. Whilst students perceived the benefits of higher education to outweigh the associated costs, the gap is narrowing."	England
O'Reirden, D. (2017), Does careers education work? Measuring the impact of credit bearing	P C	The results of a 10 module taught career learning programme were found from evaluation at the University of	Scotland

<p>careers education and considering the motivations of students for choosing such learning. HEA Annual Conference 2017 - Generation TEF: Teaching in the spotlight (Link)</p>		<p>Dundee. The evaluation showed a strong shift in capabilities and confidence of those undertaking the modules e.g. scores out of 5 typically doubled for statements such as "knowledge of what a good application form should contain" and "understanding what happens at interview and how to turn it into my advantage." Employment outcomes were also assessed: If a student had taken a careers module, the odds of them reaching a positive destination were 21.9% higher than if they had not taken a careers module.</p>	
<p>UPP Foundation (2017), Social Mobility and University Careers Services. Report by the Bridge Group for the UPP Foundation (Link)</p>	<p>U P C E</p>	<p>This report was written to investigate the role of careers services in closing socio-economic gaps. It was noted that, although participation in higher education had widened, it was a myth that mere entry to HE overcame existing disadvantages. This paper describes practitioner the strategies and initiatives that were being deployed at the time to address social mobility challenges.</p>	<p>England</p>
<p>Langher, V., Nannini, V., & Caputo, A. (2018). What do university or graduate students need to make the cut? A meta-analysis on career intervention effectiveness. Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies (ECPS Journal), (17), 21-43. (Link)</p>	<p>P C</p>	<p>A meta-analysis was conducted on studies published between 2000 and 2015 which complied with the following inclusion criteria: university or graduate students as target population, the evaluation of specific career-related interventions or programs, and an experimental or quasi experimental design. The selection procedure resulted in 9 eligible studies out of 823 examined articles. The results indicated, on average, a large effect whereby better outcomes were found from from socio-constructivist interventions compared to those based on social cognition theory and</p>	<p>International</p>

		person-environment fit models. Benefits included reductions in career indecision more than increases of decision-making self-efficacy. Implications are discussed for practice.	
Anthology (2019), Career Services Could be the Most Valuable Part of a Modern Post-Secondary Education (Link)	C E	The article is a discussion and argument for career services in US colleges, drawing from labour data. It includes evidence for strong employment outcome differences of students that found employment had visited (67%) vs not visited (59%) their college career services.	US
Donald, W. E., Baruch, Y., & Ashleigh, M. (2019). The undergraduate self-perception of employability: Human capital, careers advice, and career ownership. <i>Studies in Higher Education</i> , 44(4), 599-614. (Link)	U C	Running a set of studies at a UK university on n=387 undergraduate students, the authors find that human capital, careers advice, and career ownership are important components of self-perceived employability	UK
Hubble, S. and Bolton, P. (2019), The Post-18 Education Review (the Augar Review) recommendations. Brief Paper Number 8577, 30 May 2019. House of Commons Library (Link)	E	In February 2018, the Prime Minister announced a wide-ranging Review of Post-18 Education and Funding led by Philip Augar. The publication provides context for HE career services. The Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding was published on 30 May 2019. Several accompanying documents were published alongside the report. Headlines from the report included a) the need to bolster FE, b) reduction in debt levels are needed for disadvantaged students, c) there will be a “crackdown” on low value HE, d) the recommendation for a lifelong learning loan.	UK
Jackson, D., & Tomlinson, M. (2019).	U	Based on the idea that “career values prioritised by individuals	UK Australia

<p>Career values and proactive career behaviour among contemporary higher education students. Journal of Education and Work, 32(5), 449-464. (Link)</p>		<p>determine their career decision-making, career choice, and career outcomes”, the paper describes a survey to measure them and analysis to relate to behaviour. Values can be intrinsic (e.g. interest, learning potential) or extrinsic (e.g. pay, prospects). The research in this paper was carried out on n=413 UK higher education students. Results suggested higher education studies tend towards exhibiting greater intrinsic values, such as purpose-seeking and making a societal contribution. Results also contradicted the finding that males are more extrinsically motivated. The survey helps to understand the motivations from careers of this group, and how this might lead to deficits in preparing for a career.</p>	
<p>Ozlem, U. K. (2019). The effects of career interventions on university students' levels of career decision-making self-efficacy: A meta-analytic review. Australian Journal of Career Development, 28(3), 223-233. (Link)</p>	<p>P C</p>	<p>The paper examines 20 studies that meet criteria of research quality, and have examined the effect of career services on self-efficacy. The results show strong, positive results. The importance of self-efficacy is also described for being a predictor of the career success of students.</p>	<p>International</p>
<p>Cockett, J., Pollard, E. and Williams, M. (2021), The professional careers adviser Workforce (Link)</p>	<p>E</p>	<p>This report sought to use various data sources, mainly the census data, to estimate the size of career guidance professionals in education (Secondary, FE, Vocation/Technical) in England. Trends were drawn from 2021. HE is found to be a major employer of career advisers. For instance, in the 2011 census in England and Wales, 4,741 individuals were career advisers, accounting for 53% of careers advisers working in education and 22% of all careers advisers in work.</p>	<p>England</p>

<p>CMI (2021), Work Ready Graduates: Building employability skills for a hybrid world (Link)</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>This report, in the wake of COVID, covers research into the skills that employers would like to see from graduates, the new behaviours that characterise work in more digital workplaces, and the career management skills that graduates will need to navigate the labour market. This research showed that Many employers still believe that graduates lack the 'basic' work-ready competencies that make up employability skills, there continues to be a skills gap, graduates from all disciplines need career management skills (not just business).</p>	<p>UK</p>
<p>Reardon, R. C., Peace, C. S., & Burbrink, I. E. (2021). College career courses and instructional research from 1976 through 2019. Scholarship of teaching and learning in psychology. (Link)</p>	<p>P C</p>	<p>This article examines 208 published articles from over 45 years about the development and effectiveness of career development courses in college / higher education settings, with special attention to those appearing in the five years before publication. The research found 93% of studies gave positive outcomes for positive psychological changes and 95% positive for outcomes such as graduation rates. Although the study's interest is focussed on the psychology discipline, the analysis and learnings are largely transferable.</p>	<p>Internat'l US</p>
<p>Arslan, Ü. (2022). Relation between Career Decidedness and Subjective Wellbeing in University Students: Does Hope Mediate the Link?. Participatory Educational Research, 9(2), 103-117.</p>	<p>C</p>	<p>This study showed the role of hope in the link between career decidedness and subjective wellbeing through a study of n=376 Turkish university students. Several instruments were used to elicit results and explain these effects: The Career Decidedness Scale, the Dispositional Hope Scale, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, the Satisfaction with Life Scale and a demographic information form used as</p>	<p>Turkey</p>

		measurement tools. Results indicated that "career decidedness and hope showed a direct effect on subjective wellbeing" demonstrating how careers services that help students to become more decided also help with their wellbeing.	
Donald, W. E., & Jackson, D. (2022). Subjective wellbeing among university students and recent graduates: Evidence from the United Kingdom. <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i> , 19(11), 6911. (Link)	U C	This study provides insight into the impacts of COVID on wellbeing amongst higher education students. Most saw wellbeing reduce, but a smaller group saw it increase. The authors invoke the "Conservation of Resources" theory to help explain some of the findings. The report also provides more general contextual insight on wellbeing amongst students. Access to counselling and career guidance were proposed amongst several mitigating interventions.	UK
Freeman, J. and Hillman, N. (2022), How can you help me?: Students' perspectives on careers services and employment. Higher Education Policy Institute. (Link)	C	The research polled 1,105 students online through the National Union of Students (NUS) to enquire about their experiences with careers services and their perspectives on graduate employment. Results showed student expectations and satisfaction with services received. For instance, in terms of expectations, students are split on whether or not they regard it as the responsibility of their higher education institution to find them a job, with one-third (34%) believing it is and only a slightly lower proportion (30%) saying it is not. A majority of students (53%) think 'all university courses should be designed mainly with future employment in mind'. About half (49%) of polled students had used their career services.	UK

<p>Reid, E. R. (2022). Impacts of shortening the length of career guidance: implications for practice, professionalism, service delivery and social justice. <i>British Journal of Guidance & Counselling</i>, 50(1), 95-109. (Link)</p>	<p>U P</p>	<p>This research explores the impact of making career guidance interviews shorter. "Career guidance is found to be effective, but negatively impacted by these time constraints. The shortening of guidance means cutting valuable time for careers practitioners to undertake diagnostic work, which results in students leaving with unmet needs. Students have limited expectations of the service, and are overawed by the guidance they encounter, driving further demand for the service."</p>	<p>England</p>
<p>Simmons, J., Wolff, H. G., Forret, M. L., & Sullivan, S. E. (2022). A longitudinal investigation of the Kaleidoscope Career Model, networking behaviors, and career success. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>, 138, 103764. (Link)</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>The paper provides a contemporary model with which to understand the development of career planning strategies amongst higher education students: The Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) was developed to explain the nature of peoples' careers within today's complex, dynamic workplace, and is particularly useful for explaining strategies like networking behaviour. The development of higher education students' networking behaviour of students was tested seven years apart at a US university.</p>	<p>US</p>
<p>Soares, J., Carvalho, C., & Silva, A. D. (2022). A systematic review on career interventions for university students: Framework, effectiveness, and outcomes. <i>Australian Journal of Career Development</i>, 31(2), 81-92. (Link)</p>	<p>P C E</p>	<p>This study represents a large-scale literature review of guidance initiatives into Higher Education, covering 596 articles which were filtered down into 26 studies that met a criteria. These studies are cited and summarised. Analysis provided themes for the focus of the studies based on four question: (Q1) "What are the theoretical frameworks behind university students' career interventions?"; (Q2) "What is the structure of these interventions?"; (Q3) "How the quality of these interventions have been evaluated?"; and (Q4)</p>	<p>International</p>

		“What outcomes have been produced?”	
VanDerziel, S. (2022). The value of career services. National Association of Colleges and Employers. (Link)	C	The article reviews work by the NACE in the US that shows that career services has a quantifiable effect on students and their entry into the world of work: "Overall, analysis of results from our Class of 2022 Student Survey found an astounding correlation between career services and use of those services by graduating seniors: Graduating seniors who used at least one service—any service—received an average of 1.24 job offers. And, for every additional service they used beyond just one, their average number of job offers increased 0.05."	US
Hughes, H.P.N., Mouratidou, M. and Donald, W.E. (2023), "Exploring the impact of an industrial placement year on students' competency development: a three-cohort, longitudinal study", Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, Vol. 13 No. 6, pp. 1218-1233. (Link)	U C P	"Drawing on human capital theory and sustainable career theory, this paper aims to explore the impact of undertaking an industrial placement on the 'Great Eight' competencies as perceived by university students and line managers." Results of surveys with n=610 students and their line managers were that "the impacts of undertaking a placement were highly variable for different competencies"	UK
Kozhuk, D. (2023), Why Higher Ed Should Invest in Career Services, Not Abolish It. Go U Connect (Link)	P C	The article is from the US and describes the case for career services to defend against challenges that they may be pared back. The article also includes several international examples of innovative career services that are argued to show the “outsized impact” that they can have on attracting students.	US Internationa l
Pirsoul, T., Parmentier, M., & Nils, F. (2023). Emotional Intelligence Profiles and Job Search Correlates in the Context	U C	This study provides some insight for tailored career guidance interventions for higher education students: It measures emotional intelligence and career	Belgium

<p>of the School-to-Work Transition. <i>Journal of Career Development</i>, 50(5), 1038-1057. (Link)(Paid)</p>		<p>preparation activities amongst n=1,582 university students. Four distinct profiles emerged for the women and men. The profiles predicted job search self-efficacy for women and men, but only job search clarity among men. These results provide evidence about the importance of differentiating profiles of emotional intelligence between women and men and to be particularly attentive to gender stereotypes. Results opened new avenues for tailor-made career counselling interventions.</p>	
<p>Roberts, S., Lyall, B., Trott, V., Foeken, E., Smith, J., Robards, B., ... & Wright, B. (2023). Young Australians Navigating the 'Careers Information Ecology'. <i>Youth</i>, 3(1), 300-320. (Link)</p>	U	<p>The paper explores young Australians' (aged 15–24) career behaviour and particularly the navigation of careers information through a nationally representative survey (n = 1103), focus groups with 90 participants and an analysis of 15,227 social media comments. The authors suggest that the variety of formal and informal sources pursued and accessed by young people forms a relational 'ecology'. This relationality is twofold. First, information is often sequential, and engagements with one source can inform the experience or pursuit of another. Second, navigation of the ecology is marked by a high level of intersubjectivity through interpersonal support networks including peers, family and formal service provision. The authors discuss the challenges this research presents to classic views of how young people go about career choices, with particular issues noted for disadvantaged groups.</p>	Australia
<p>Universities UK (2023) (Link)</p>	E	<p>The articles review recent data that shows universities are increasing graduate employment outcomes for their students. Interviews with successful</p>	UK

		universities cite “whole university” approaches to achieving their results, which have transformed career services.	
Agcas (2024), New Agcas research reveals careers and employability service trends for 2023-24 (Link)	U C	This article summarises the main findings from a report that surveyed 115 members’ career services, to understand usage trends. The report found growth in use and a particular trend for international students to be using the services more. Services across the UK expect to be using more digital technology, delivering more in person events, and further adopting AI (which is already used by 49% of services at the time of the research).	UK
Agcas (2024), Social mobility. Phoenix, the Agcas journal (Link)	P C	The report covers case studies of career service initiatives through the UK to address social mobility challenges	UK
Prospects Luminate (2024), Early careers survey (Link)	U P C	The survey measured responses from over 6,000 young people - from secondary school age to early adulthood - on their career plans and the sources of support that they received. Results were unfortunately not all split out by different career stages. However, for higher education students, the most useful sorts of guidance were considered to be: 1) Talks by staff about courses, 2) Career events, and 3) Help with applications and CVs. The survey also showed that work experiences could not be found by 40% of students, and it highlighted the broad goals. Financial concerns provided a prominent theme across the survey.	UK

Case studies

Some case studies, and collections of case studies, that show outcomes from different practices are listed below (We denote cases where the study represents the explicit application of a theory to the design or interpretation of a practice).

Title	Themes	Brief description	Location
<p>Koen, J., Klehe, U. C., & Van Vianen, A. E. (2012). Training career adaptability to facilitate a successful school-to-work transition. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>, 81, 395–408. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2012.10.003 (Link)(Paid)</p>	<p>Career adaptability Transitions</p>	<p>The paper recognises the importance of capabilities - specifically adaptability - in the transition between school and work. This study in Holland tested a careers training intervention that taught career adaptability skills, which produced a positive outcome for the students who took it.</p>	<p>Holland</p>
<p>do Céu Taveira, M., & de Nazaré Loureiro, M. (2014). Higher education quality and guidance: Efficacy of a career self-management seminar for undergraduates. <i>Revista electrónica interuniversitaria de formación del profesorado</i>, 17(3), 93-104. (Link)</p>	<p>Self management Career Exploration Survey Carer Development Inventory My Vocational Situation</p>	<p>This publication reports on the results of a career self-management programme delivered to Portuguese students, with n=208 in an experimental group and n=220 in a control group. The programme spanned 9 weeks of 120 minute small-group sessions, and was found to produce medium scale impacts.</p>	<p>Portugal</p>
<p>Wright, T. and Frigerio, G. (2015) <i>The Career Adapt-Abilities Pilots Project</i>. York: Higher Education Academy (Link)</p>	<p>Career adaptability Equalities</p>	<p>This report argues for the importance of career adaptability to manage a career, and details a project that aimed to integrate the concept of career adaptability into the career development and employability activities of six HE institutions, using six pilot studies. The study produced</p>	<p>England</p>

		a series of findings for the applicability of the concept, with it deemed to help with a series of challenges, ranging from “unifying discussions between academic and administrative colleagues” through to evaluating cases of students that are at risk. Students also perceived the concept of career adaptability as useful for evaluating their progress,	
McMahon, M., Watson, M., Hoelson, C.N., & Chetty, C. (2016). Story telling, career assessment and career counselling: A higher education case study. South African journal of higher education, 26.	My System of Career Influences (MSCI) Narrative approaches Self-knowledge	This article presents a case study of a Xhosa-speaking woman who presented for career counselling in a South African higher education career service. It describes how career assessment can be incorporated into a story telling approach, using both an instrument called "My System of Career Influences (MSCI) (Adult)" and a career values card sort within a career counselling intervention. The researchers find that the process emphasises the role of the client as the story teller whose life is multistoried. The client was assisted to better understand herself in a "more personal, integrated, connected and storied way".	South Africa
Dozier, V. C., & Osborn, D. (2018). Cognitive information processing theory: Applications in research and practice. Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 41(1), 39-47 (Link)	Cognitive information processing theory Career thinking	The authors review the research on cognitive information processing theory, which has produced over 150 evidence-based articles. The evidence for its effectiveness is discussed. The application to career decision making is outlined and two brief case studies are then provided to show how it can be used to support undergraduate students. One has made a decision to	US

		pursue a degree that they then feel uncertain about, whereas the second is satisfied with their decision making but the second had only focussed on job opportunities gained through personal connections and not yet engaged in the job market	
Maree, J. G. (2018). Advancing career counselling research and practice using a novel quantitative or qualitative approach to elicit clients' advice from within. South African Journal of Higher Education, 32(4), 149-170 (Link)	Development and implementation of a novel career counselling technique aimed at finding meaning in study and future life.	This article reports on the results of providing career counselling to a purposefully selected first year university student experiencing career indecision. The student is engaged in a series of conversations, reflections and reflections on how to find meaning and purpose in his current studies and also in his future career-life.	South Africa
Molyn, J. (2018), The role of coaching in increasing career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and employability efforts of higher education students. PhD thesis submitted at the University of Greenwich, UK (Link)	Career coaching	This is a longitudinal mixed method approach to examine the effects of coaching on higher education student career motivations and planning behaviours. It also examines which effects were most important in affecting the outcomes. Students reported many benefits of the coaching exercise, despite the lack of a statistically significant impact. The study leads to a proposed framework for post 1992 universities to adopt and concurrently tackle groups with protected characteristics.	UK
Clayton, K., Wessel, R. D., McAtee, J., & Knight, W. E. (2019). KEY careers: Increasing retention and graduation rates with career	Career programmes	This study showed how promoting participation in a career intervention program increased 1-year retention and 4-year graduation rates compared to nonparticipants at a singular institution. Archival data of 14,099 were used from 2011–2014.	US

<p>interventions. Journal of Career Development, 46(4), 425-439. (Link) (Paid)</p>		<p>Impacts were investigated by demographic group, and results found independent of race.</p>	
<p>Agcas and Symplicity (2022), The opportunities and challenges of student engagement in careers and employability provision (Link)</p>	<p>Engagement with CEIAG Digital technology Equalities</p>	<p>Symplicity and Agcas collaborated to carry out a study to understand barriers to student engagement with services. Symplicity found that technology and process improvement could yield “a 75% increase in student engagement through automation and simplification of process from appointment bookings and reporting, helping students navigate a blend of in-person and online support and resources. This report provides research findings from students and practitioners that includes the most and least engaged-with and valuable aspects of service, and the main challenges faced by career professionals. The report culminates in recommendations that include developing resources for micro-engagements, increased resourcing and engagement strategies.</p>	<p>England</p>
<p>Nie, Z., & Zarei, H. (2023). A cross-cultural study on the career counseling service ecosystem: implications for higher education marketing. Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, 1–27. (Link)</p>	<p>Service design Career systems</p>	<p>The motivation for the study is that “the body of knowledge in the higher education domain is scant on how a career counselling service (CCS) is created and delivered to suit the needs of students and the wider society.” The authors review practices for service creation in three nations: UK, Italy, and China. “The role of the CCS is transitioning from a mere job placement service to a strategic and administrative function, which</p>	<p>UK Italy China</p>

		interacts with and influences various actors in the higher education ecosystem.”	
Robertson, C., & Abkhezr, P. (2023). Reconstructing Stories of Career Adaptability Through the Integrative Structured Interview for Undergraduate University Students. <i>Journal of Career Assessment</i> . (Link)	Career adaptability	Citing the importance of career adaptability, the authors develop and evaluate the use of a narrative career guidance interview that allows higher education students to “tell and connect with their stories of career adaptability”. Benefits for the career clients are described.	Australia
Universities UK (2023), Universities improving graduate employment: case studies (Link)	University employability strategies and initiatives	This article from Universities UK describes how universities are operating that have proven particularly successful at increasing student outcomes. Examples are provided from eight university careers service teams in universities that have seen a significant improvement in graduate employment: either in the proportion of graduates entering high skilled jobs going up, or in graduate unemployment rates going down according to Graduate Outcomes data.	UK
Mate, S., Gregory, K., & Ryan, J. (2024). Re-authoring career narratives: exploring identity in contemporary careers practice. <i>British Journal of Guidance & Counselling</i> , 52(1), 7-18. (Link)	Narrative career approach Identity development	The authors describe the “narrative career therapy” approach to careers counselling, in a study on higher education student clients. The process is outlined and benefits are found for helping students understand and develop identity.	Australia

Future research questions and gaps

The CDI discuss research questions and gaps with expert academics. Amongst the common topics that have been proposed for future research studies, to close gaps in our knowledge, include:

- Destinations of students by undergraduate qualification to inform practitioners
- Destination of students by postgraduate qualification to inform practitioners
- Revisiting the model of work placements, to maximise their value
- The loss of summer jobs as a career-development vehicle
- The incentivisation of earlier engagement in career services during a degree.

Related research agendas in associated areas of education or human development, which share concerns with career guidance, include:

- A research agenda for global higher education ([Huisman et al, 2022](#))
- The intersection of graduate and employability research ([Akkermann's et al, 2022](#))

Relevant institutions

To understand more about this area, it is worth reviewing the work of the following organisations who are active in commissioning or producing research.

These are organisations who regularly conduct or commission research related to career and/or CEIAG for this group.

Where content is restricted to memberships or requires payment, this is noted next to the name of the organisation in the first column.

Name	Description
AdvanceHE (Link) (Paid/Restricted)	Advance HE is a member-led charity of and for the sector that works with partners across the globe to improve higher education for staff, students and society. Seeks to: a) Enhance confidence and trust in HE, b) address systematic inequalities, and c) support the work of members. The website contains a knowledge hub.
Association of Graduation Careers Guidance Advisory Services (AGCAS) (Link) (Paid/Restricted)	AGCAS is the expert membership organisation for higher education student career development and graduate employment professionals. The body is concerned with career outcomes from higher education for individuals, institutions, society and the economy. It produces reports and its own research publication, Phoenix (see below).
Cedefop (Link)	Cedefop is a decentralised agency of the European Union that supports the development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation. As such it publishes a large number of papers and reports – both pan European and into member countries – across most aspects of CEIAG, but particularly covering policy and system level issues.
Centre for Global Higher Education (Link)	The Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) is an international partnership of higher education researchers, with activities ongoing from 2015. The current programme is divided into 10 streams, and tends to have local, national and global themes covering education, employability and the economy. In 2021, they hosted a talk on the literature for higher education employability and careers research (Link).
Euroguidance Network (Link)	The Euroguidance Network is a network of national resource and information centres for guidance. It is a co-operation of centres throughout European countries which link together the Careers Guidance systems in Europe. The main target group of Euroguidance is guidance practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors in EU and EEA member states and in candidate countries.
GuideHE (Link) (Paid/Restricted)	GuildHE is a representative body for UK Higher Education, championing distinction and diversity in the sector. Particularly, it represents interests of 60

	smaller-universities, university colleges, further education colleges and specialist institutions.
Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) (Link)	HEPI is an independent think tank which carries out policy-level research and analysis on the higher education sector. It produces around 20 reports a year, covering diverse topics spanning student experience, funding, and the role of technology in degrees.
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (Link)	HESA publish statistics on all aspects of higher education in the UK, including students, staff, finances, and graduate outcomes. There are also reports giving analysis and perspectives on key issues facing higher education. The website includes a library for reports back to 1996.
Institute of Student Employers (ISE) (Link) (Paid/Restricted)	The ISE works to “empower organisations to maximise the success of their business by recruiting and developing students transitioning through a range of education pathways.” Aims of the organisation include promoting excellent and innovation in resourcing, provide expert insight, invest in the professional development of members and influence policy. The ISE publish “insights” and “reports”, including those into skills in demand.
International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) (Link)	The Centre was established in 2004 to promote policy sharing and learning internationally through making international knowledge and expertise available to policy makers, researchers and career development professionals. The centre links to articles for new key research and policy announcements. and also provides examples of good practice.
International Centre for Career Guidance Studies (iCeGS) (Link)	iCeGS have conducted a high volume of critical national and international studies, specifically into the areas of careers: education, development, and policy etc, for both academic journals, policymaking bodies and careers service providers. Consequently, their research library contains relevant papers and reports to this area, as well as many related topics.
National Centre for Universities and Businesses (Link)	The centre works on the shared agenda of businesses and universities, with goals that include ensuring the UK universities deliver students with the requisite skills for industry.
Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (Link)	A European network of career academics and practitioners who collectively work to promote excellence and innovation in academic, research-based training of career practitioners in Europe. NICE periodically produce articles and reviews.
Office for Students (Link)	The Office for Students is the regulator for higher education in England. It represents interests of students, promoting quality, diversity and inclusion and the good running of institutions. The Office produces insight briefs on contemporary issues and links to key data.

Prospects Luminate (Link)	Prospects Luminate provides data, trends, best practice and thought leadership on careers guidance, early careers recruitment, and student and graduate experience. Launched in 2018, it is aimed at universities, careers professionals, graduate recruiters, and anyone else interested in employability and labour market information.
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Link)	An independent charity, used by government and institutions that offers impartial regulatory quality assurance and enhancement advice and consultancy. Operates in the UK and internationally to the ends of maximising quality standards in education.
Society for Research into Higher Education (Link)	A UK-based international learned society concerned to advance understanding of higher education, especially through the insights, perspectives and knowledge offered by systematic research and scholarship. Produces a series of journals (e.g. "Studies in Higher Education") as well as articles, podcasts and events.
Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TAS) (Link)	TASO is an independent charity that inequality in higher education. They publish reports at regular intervals, with themes of widening participation, practice evaluation and gaps in transitioning processes for students to the work force.
Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) (Link)	This organisation provide an independent hub for higher education professionals to access research, toolkits and evaluation guidance to eliminate equality gaps.
The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (Link)	UCAS is a charity and private limited company. While best known as the UK's undergraduate admission service, it also provides advisory services for potential undergraduates, practice-based arts and apprentices. It published regular statistical reports on applications, as well as student reports on subjects like student experience and for specific vocations..
UKRI (Link)	The organisation is a UK research and innovation hub that coordinates interests of government, business and academia. Strives to direct research funds "to enrich lives, drive economic growth, and create jobs and high-quality public services across the UK." It also acts as an umbrella to seven research councils, with careers work most often relevant to the ESRC . The website includes information on current and past projects, as well as lists of priorities.
Universities Scotland (Link)	Universities Scotland is the representative body of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions. It develops policy on behalf of the university sector and campaigns publicly on higher education issues. Publishes reports on contemporary issues in HE.
Universities UK (Link) Scotland (Link) Wales (Link)	Universities UK are the "common voice" of UK universities, championing the sector and highlighting challenges. As such, Universities UK carry out policy analysis and

	research studies, support members, represent members abroad and maintain working relationships with Parliament.
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Journals/publications

To explore this topic further, research related to this group of people is disseminated in the following publications.

Name	Description
Australian Journal of Career Development. (Link)	The journal covers current theory, practice and policy relating to the career development and work education field. The audience for the journal includes professionals in educational and academic settings, community and government agencies, business and industrial settings
British Journal of Guidance and Counselling (Link)	The aim of the British Journal of Guidance & Counselling is to publish work that sets trends and provokes fresh thought and innovation in the practice and understanding of counselling, psychotherapy and career guidance. The journal seeks to communicate, enrich and advance theory, research, policy and practice in these fields.
Canadian Journal of Career Development (Link)	An open access peer-reviewed publication of multi-sectoral career-related academic research and best practices from Canada and around the world.
Career Development International (Link)	Formerly the International Journal of Career Management, this journal covers career topics with a particular bias towards careers in the workplace, rather than guidance per se.
European Journal of Education Studies (Link)	The journal covers “a wide range of thematic areas from traditional to contemporary, from formal education to alternative, examining and comparing various education policies, trends, reforms and programmes from different countries and cultures.”
European Journal of Social Sciences (Link)	Covers social sciences, natural science and humanities: An international peer-reviewed academic research journal, which has a particular interest in policy-relevant questions and interdisciplinary approaches. Addresses “fundamental challenges for policy, politics, citizenship, culture and democracy that European integration and enlargement pose”
Higher Education for the Future (Link)	A bi-annual journal that is designed to shape the new generation of higher education, based on national and international challenges. It seeks to address a wide spectrum of issues including policy, pedagogy, and research. The relevance to careers comes from both broader discussions on the role of higher education in society and specific focussed areas, like the implications of adopting digital technology.
Industry and Higher Education (Link)	Is dedicated to the relationships between business and industry and higher education institutions. With a strong emphasis on practical aspects, the journal covers organizational, economic, political, legal, and social issues relating to developments in education-industry collaboration, Relevance to career comes from a body of

	papers on work transitions and organisations resourcing graduates.
International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance (Link)	The publication is dedicated to promoting the importance of educational and vocational guidance globally. It publishes articles related to work, leisure, career development, counselling, guidance, and education, so including but broader than career guidance.
International Journal of Higher Education (Link)	The journal seeks to publish original research articles that are hypothetical and theoretical in its nature and that provide exploratory insights in the fields of educational theory, teaching method, instructional design, students management, case studies etc. While covering careers guidance infrequently, there are a segment of papers about career development and outcomes, highlighting particular concerns for careers services.
Journal of Career Development (Link)	The Journal of Career Development (JCD) provides professionals in counselling, psychology, education, student personnel, human resources, and business management with the most up-to-date concepts, ideas, and methodology in career development theory, research, and practice.
Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education (Link)	An open access, independent, peer-reviewed international journal publishing original contributions to the field of comparative and international higher education. The journal serves as a place to share new thinking on analysis, theory, policy, and practice that relates to issues that influence comparative and international higher education. The JCIHE is the official journal of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) Higher Education Special Interest Group (HESIG) .
Journal of Education and Work (Link)	Examines how knowledge and skills about work and employment are developed in the education system. The journal also looks at industrial training and its relationship with the economy including changes in infrastructure.
Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management (Link)	This is an international journal of professional experience and ideas in higher education, particularly aimed at policymakers. The topics covered provide broad context to career services as well as providing papers on career guidance and development.
Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability (Link)	A scholarly forum for the dissemination of research and evidence-based practice in teaching and learning for graduate employability.
Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (Link)	The journal covers all areas of careers education, counselling and advice and careers work in schools, colleges, universities, training providers, in the workplace, in organisational and in community settings.

New directions for student services (Link)	Latest research on student services in the higher education field.. Covers specific themes in each edition, which can either relate to a specific student group, student service or theme.
Phoenix, The Agcas Journal (Link)	Phoenix is the AGCAS journal, usually published three times a year (spring, summer and autumn). The journal shows best practice in careers practice in higher education settings.
Research in Post Compulsory Education (Link)	Covers research in post-compulsory education, including vocational education, furthering education, higher education, lifelong learning, and mentorship. The library particularly includes a body of work on career choices of students in international settings, as well a number of career services.
Studies in Higher Education (Link)	Publishes international research on higher education issues including institutional management and performance, teaching and learning. Includes various papers on career motivations and outcomes of students.
The Career Development Quarterly (Link)	The Career Development Quarterly is the official journal of the National Career Development Association (NCDA), a division of the American Counseling Association. Contains articles on career counselling and development, work, leisure, career education, and coaching and management.
The Internet and Higher Education (Link)	A quarterly journal devoted to addressing contemporary issues and future developments related to Internet-enabled learning and teaching in higher education settings.
Times Higher Educational Supplement (TES) (Link) (Paid)	The TES covers news stories in higher education but also provides analysis and signals challenges in the sector relating to employability.

Data sources

Some contextual data sources are provided below. These are particularly useful for studying the prevalence of different situations, trends over time, or for comparing situations with different geographies or groups.

Name	Description
Cedefop (2022), Employment by field of study (Link)	This is an interesting data set for the EU which shows the relationship between employment outcomes and fields of study between 2016-22 (at the time of visiting the website). It sheds light on the extent by which people remain in professionals nominally similar to their education, or move into new fields. Data was sourced from the European Labour Force survey.
Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland - Destinations of leavers from higher education (Link)	The resource provides historical data from 1996-2016 for Northern Ireland in terms of destinations for higher education leavers. The reports were superseded by reporting by HESA (below).
European Commission (Link), Tertiary education statistics (Link)	Eurostat publish a wide range of statistics for the EU countries covering education and employment. This paper provides some HE participation data.
HESA - Graduate Outcomes survey (Link)	HESA works with UK universities and colleges to collect feedback from graduates using the Graduate Outcome survey. Results show the career destinations of those leaving Higher Education.
LEO Statistics (Link)	LEO Graduate outcomes provides employment and earnings outcomes of higher education first degree graduates by subject studied and graduate characteristics, with breakdowns by HE provider.
Prospects Luminate - <i>What do graduates do</i> series (Link)	Prospects Luminate produce various survey and data analyses on higher education and early career transitions. In their “What do graduates do” series, they report a statistical profile and analysis of the outcomes of the four nations e.g. Scotland . Other surveys ask question of students of specific disciplines to understand career motivations and progress.
OECD Data Explorer (Link)	The OECD measure a wide range of international economic and social indicators including education and employment values. (A portal is provided for high level tertiary education data)
The National Student Survey (Link)	The National Student survey was launched in 2005 and had collected 5.3m responses from all four nations in the UK by 2024 (where 0.5m invites were sent). The results cover universities, further education colleges in England and Northern Ireland and further education institutions in Wales which have directly funded higher education students. It provides a definitive view of student perception and experience across the UK. The survey is

		commissioned by the Office for Students on behalf of the UK funding and regulatory bodies – the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Department for Economy Northern Ireland (DfENI), and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Results are reported by institution.
UK (Link)	Government	These statistics show the percentage of level 3 pupils (e.g. those that studied A levels, tech levels and applied general qualifications) continuing to a sustained education or training destination at level 4 or higher (such as degrees, higher apprenticeships and higher national diplomas) in the two years after completing 16 to 18 study.