



WELCOME

ASIG Community

Our monthly meetings are an opportunity to liaise and network

While we're waiting for everyone to join, please feel free to briefly introduce yourself in the "chat"

18/2/21 Authentic Assessment

Debbie Bartlett



Megan Klaar
University of Leeds



Patrick White
Edinburgh Napier
University



Sharne McMillan
University of
Hong Kong



Paul Rooney
Liverpool Hope
University



Debbie Bartlett
University of
Greenwich



John Rose
Sheffield Hallam
University



Liz Lakin
University of
Dundee

Research interests...

- landscape ecology
- coastal dune ecology; geomorphology
- forestry; sustainable intensification in farming systems
- natural flood management; hydroecology; water resource management
- avian, mammal, herpetofauna ecology & conservation
- invasive species ecology & risk analysis
- climate change mitigation; nature based solutions
- detection dogs; camera trapping; eDNA methods
- outdoor learning/ teaching; nature connectedness
- environmental impact assessment

Poll 1

What is your primary roll?

- Academic
- Consultant
- Environmental professional
- Students
- Other

Contents

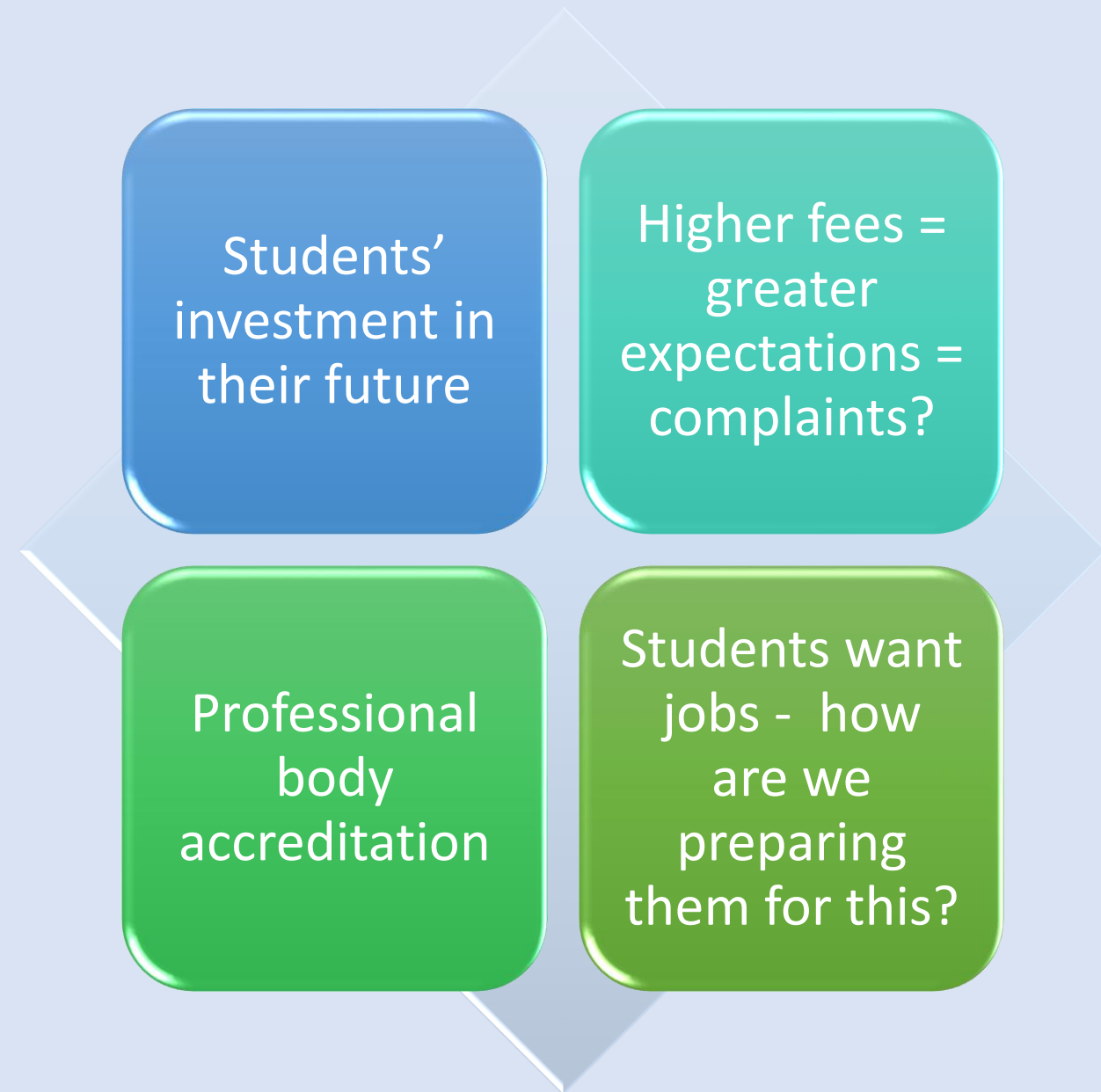
- Authentic Assessment
- Context in which we work
- Research

Discussion

How did this start?

- Industry background
- CIEEM Competency Framework
- Degree accreditation
- Skills Gap
- Apprenticeships

Need to deliver benefits for students, employers and admission numbers!



Traditional view of University education

Knowledge for knowledge's sake

All degrees provided a basis of transferable skills

Only a few 'vocational' subject areas have defined career paths

Degree as jumping off point for deciding on your career

US graduation as 'commencement'

But does this provide the
**Knowledge, Skills and
Behaviours** required by
professional bodies and
employers?

What does the literature say?

Mueller (2005) raised the need for 'authentic assessment' to measure students knowledge and skills.

Higher Education need to look as developing learning rather than just measuring it **Fook & Sidhu (2010)**

Morini (2019) student's focus on attainment rather than improvement impacts mental health and retention

Haak (2019) Focusing on summative assessment ignores decades of research on how formative feedback can enable genuine transformative learning, key to professional success.

THE TimesHigherEducation 
@timeshighered

Follow

Does university assessment still pass muster? Most universities continue to rely on exams and assessed essays to grade students. But many experts suggest that assessment must more closely resemble real-world tasks. [@annamckie](#) marks the arguments bit.ly/2LWe3I8



4:32 PM - 22 May 2019

What do I mean by 'authentic assessment'?

- Moving away from standard assessment tasks – essays and exams – towards competency based assessment.
- Standard in medical disciplines - acronym CBME
- Focusing on the **Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours** needed in the professional context
- Using tasks similar to those experienced in the workplace
- Emphasising formative rather than summative assessment
- Requires assessment literacy

What do the Students think?

"a particular highlight was the phase 1 / management plan, EIA critiquing published environment statements and Law scenario advising clients"

"This was the best coursework we'd done all year"

"The visit was incredibly informative, we were walked around the site and all our questions were answered in depth."

"Through this task the group learnt new things about the industry."

"assessed work has given me great grounding and the confidence for my future career"

"exams aren't representative of employment related activities"

What do our graduates think?

"The assignment that really helped me get work as an ecologist was my portfolio – it demonstrated my surveying experience and made it easy to display my competency to employers" **Emma Griffiths Ecologist, Bioscan UK**

"Evaluating an Environmental Statement for the EIA module has been invaluable as I now assess environmental project cases at the Ministry of Defence" **Alex Gazi Defence Maritime Regulator**

"I found it really helpful doing a practical skills based MSc programme because it meant at a job interview I could say what I've done, instead of just knowing the theory"
**Sylvia Myers Manager, Wildlife Garden,
Natural History Museum, London**





“Learning key practical field skills such as bottle trapping, method statements and phase 1 habitat surveys, with opportunities for work placement has led me to my current role as an assistant ecologist”

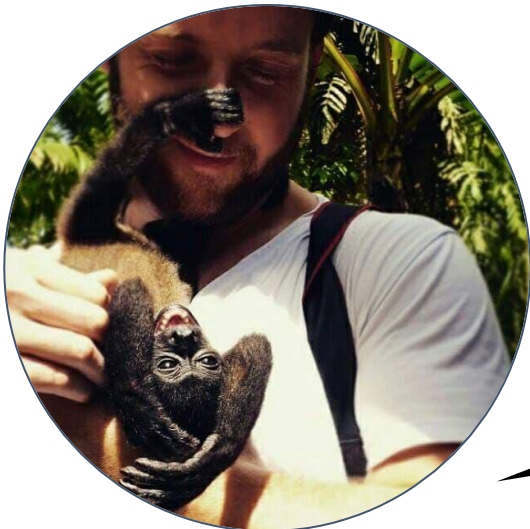
Kieran McGranaghan Ecologist, Ecology Partnership

“Report writing, presentations and critical analysis has been far more valuable than just testing how much I have remembered in exams”

Kirsty Lee Natural England Complex Case Officer

“Developing public speaking and presentation skills has been invaluable - employers are increasingly looking for evidence of social skills and confidence in interviews”

Kyle Cullen Environmental Advisor, Metropolitan Police



The Five Stages of Change



© 2014 Aronson, Ltd.

**WHY IS
CHANGE
SO DIFFICULT?**

Context in which Universities work



Document

Subject Benchmark Statement for Environmental Sciences

File type: PDF Publication date: 30 Oct 2019 File size: 1.2 MB

What if a university or college doesn't have a TEF rating?

Research Excellence Framework

The REF is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions.

Within the University

- Quinquennial reviews
- Any change must be notified at least a year in advance
- Production of module handbooks using proscribed wording
- Learning outcomes – ditto
- Online marking/feedback
- External examiners
- PSRBs

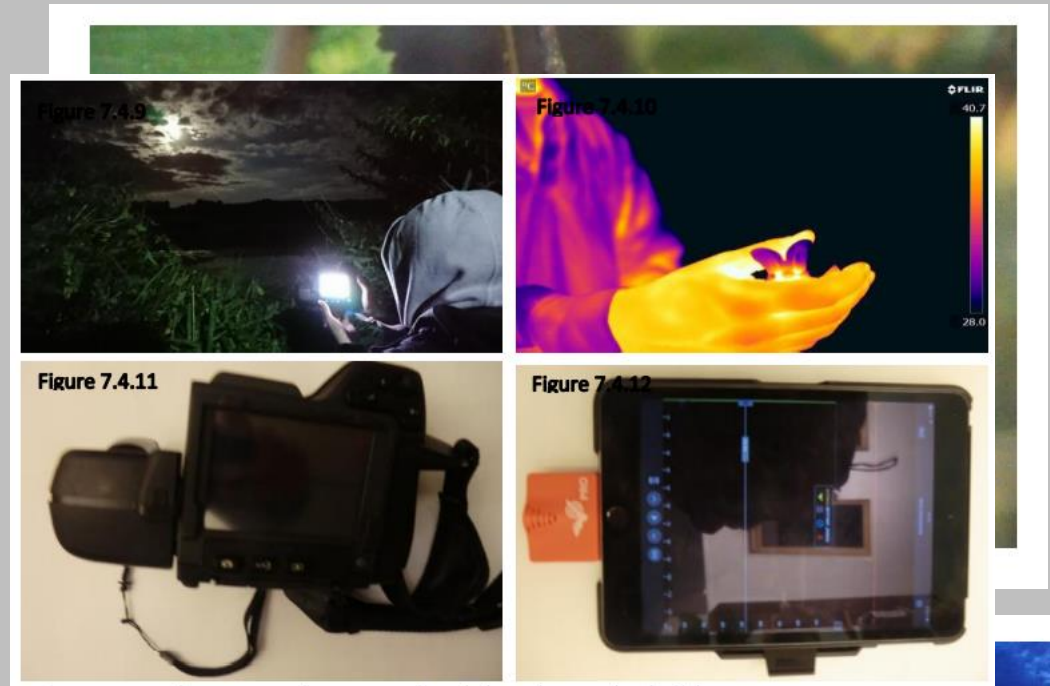
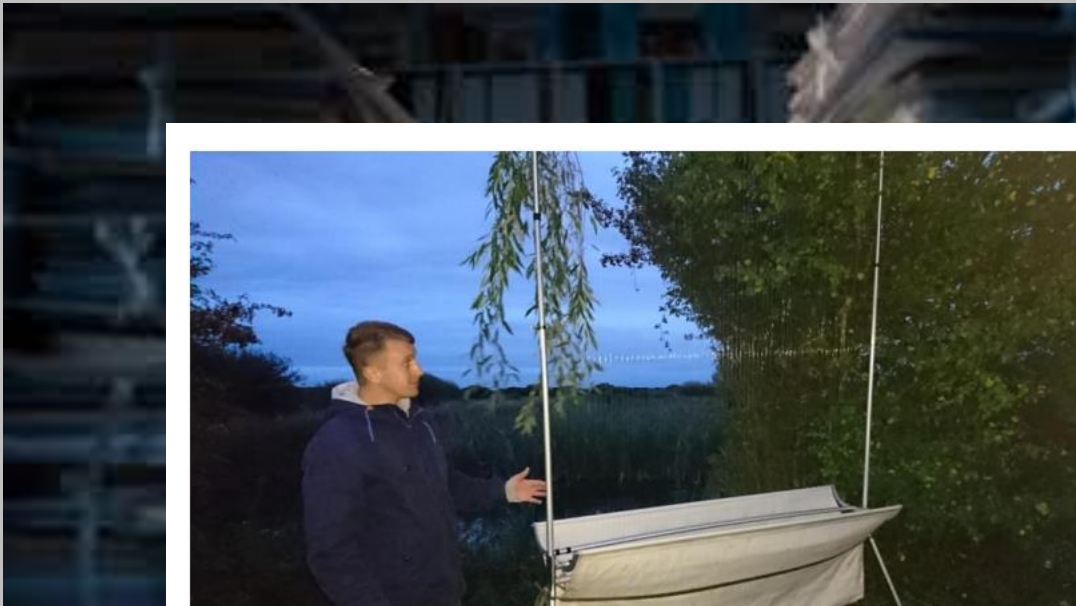
How is our success measured?

- Results!
 - Recruitment
 - Marks (should be a normal distribution – not too high or too low)
 - Student feedback
- Research Funding
- Publications

SO

Environmental Science BSc Dissertation Project

A Review of the 'Best Practice' Methods for Ecological Surveying of Protected Species within the UK



Source:
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/if-you-love-research-academia-may-not-be-you>



Included Phase 1 and standard write ups and data analysis

Poll 2

What mark would you give this project?

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass
- Fail

It can get a bit depressing



Deborah Sims Senior Lecturer Civil Engineering
Former Project Director for the Highways
Central team with the Mott MacDonald group

Vice President, Trustee, Fellow and Council
Member of CIHT.

- Close links to professional bodies
- Interest in authentic assessment

Method

- Professional bodies agreed to distribute questionnaires to graduates



Institution of Civil Engineers

- Research Ethics Committee approval
- Two separate questionnaires: one for recent graduates, one for employers
- Piloted on 12 recent graduates in February
- Revised and put into 'survey monkey' for distribution.

Graduate Survey Questions

- List of assessments types: how useful were these in preparing you for work?
- Did the feedback you received on your assignments enable you to improve?
- Did it prepare you for the type of feedback you have experienced in your job role?

Ranking the usefulness of assessment methods

Top 10

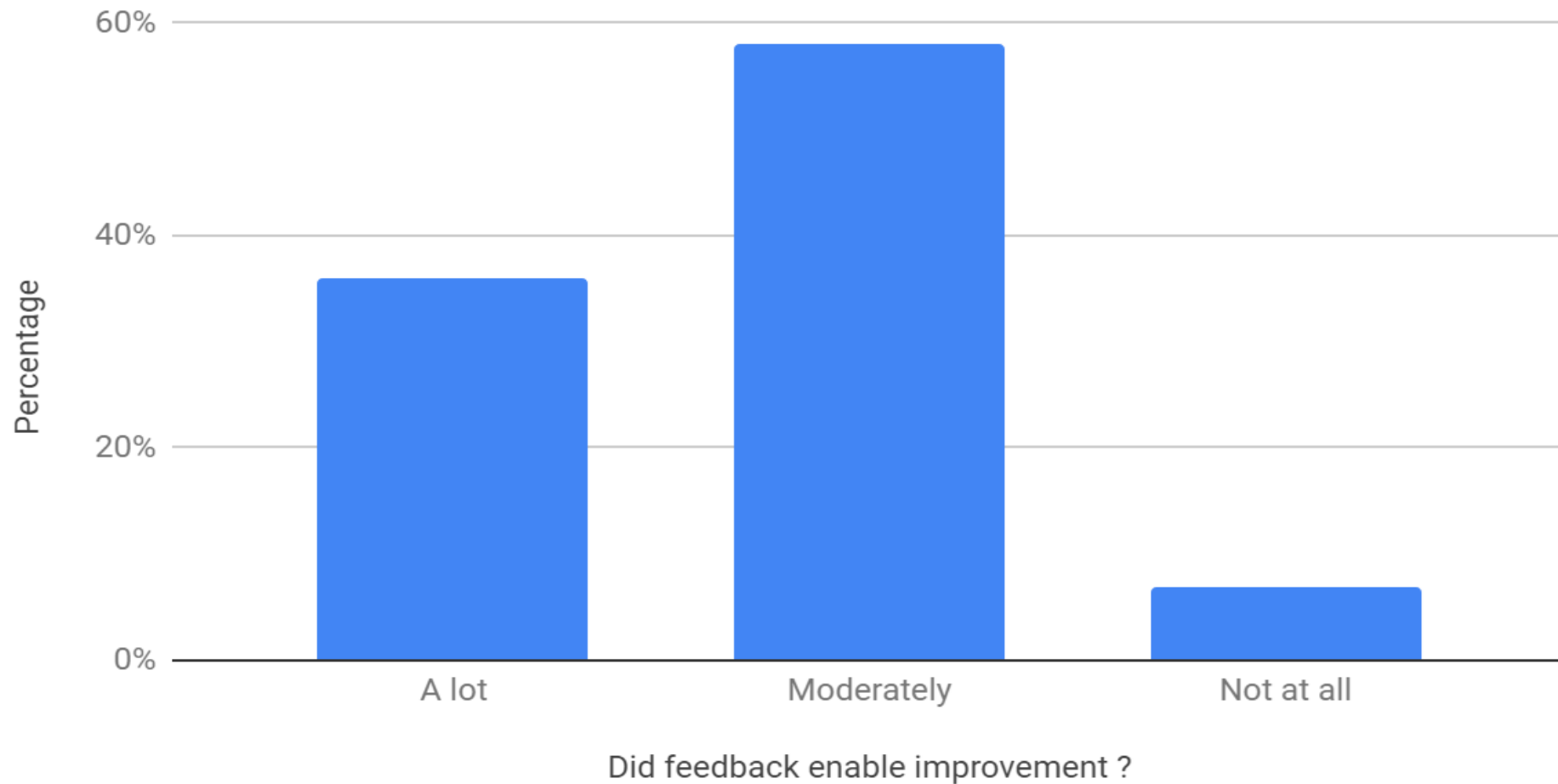
Practical Field Investigations	51
Presentations	51
Risk Assessments	48
Critical Review of Documents	47
Group Projects	45
Plant Identification	44
Practical Tests	44
Method Statements	42
Dissertations/ Research project	42
Phase 1 Habitat Survey	41

Bottom 10

Role Play	23
Prototypes	21
Exams	20
Contract Documentation	18
Videos	18
Writing Business Plans	18
Compiling Risk Registers	17
Mock Advice to Clients	16
Ecological Assessment	13
Computer Modelling	13

Responses on feedback were mixed

Did assignment feedback enable improvement?



Employer survey questions

- Are graduate employees prepared adequately for the tasks you require?
- Are there any specific assessment tasks that would increase employability?

What do employers want?

Technical skills

- Surveys using professional kit
- Experience with up to date equipment
- Great crested newt and reptile surveys
- Designing mitigation
- Interpreting legislation
- Understanding the NPPF (planning)
- Understanding policy
- Health & Safety

Transferable skills

- Communication skills
- Project management
- Work-private life balance*
- Ability to set goals
- Basic office tasks
- Reporting progress to line managers
- Using initiative *
- Professional behaviour *
- Enthusiasm*
- Being present & leaving the phone alone*
- Delivering to deadlines
- Effective collaborative working

What do employers think?

"Wants to employ graduates with evidence of practical fieldwork and realistic expectations of the job"

Guy Newman, Director at Greenspace Ecological Solutions

"We look for evidence of competency across transferable skills, combined with common sense and most importantly - a positive attitude to developing technical skills"

Sam Bower Technical Specialist , Balfour Beatty

"When recruiting I'm looking for evidence of initiative and clear, concise, report writing. The ability to critically review policy documents and summarise the key requirements is particularly useful."

**Liz Fagg
Environmental Manager , Port of Dover**



Recommendations

- Teaching teams need up to date industry links or be supported by subject specific advisory groups
- Assessments should be based on real tasks likely to be encountered in the workplace
- Flexible Quality Assurance requirements to enable realistic assessments to be set
- Learning outcomes should make the links to KSBs explicit
- More emphasis on evidencing transferable skills
- Module content must be flexible enough to respond to new legislation/guidance
- Detailed feedback on formative assignments – are we scared of perfection?

Positive signs

Minister: strip degree powers if graduate employment falls short

Gavin Williamson tells English regulator it 'should not hesitate' to issue fines if planned absolute baselines are not met

Times Higher Education 9/2/21

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/minister-strip-degree-powers-if-graduate-employment-falls-short>

OFFICE FOR STUDENTS 'VALUE FOR MONEY' INITIATIVE

Does the [Office for Students 'Value for Money' initiative](#) pose a threat to environmental programmes?

The Office for Students (OfS) is the regulator for England (*apologies to readers from Ireland, Wales, and Scotland*) that has been leading the drive for registering Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and requiring them to demonstrate programmes that offer value for money from perspectives of both students and the taxpayer. The issue of exactly how “value” is measured has been under discussion with some feeling graduate earnings are not a good measure although this is obviously where the treasury is focused, to recoup investment in higher education via graduate income tax.

Poll 3

Should university assessment and feedback be based on industry requirements?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Should universities focus on traditional knowledge based assessment methods such as exams?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

But what do you think?

Wrapping up...

New ASIG members welcome

Sign in with your existing account

Email Address

Password

[Sign in](#)



Main

- [Dashboard](#)
- [Update personal details](#)
- [Update personal preferences](#)
- [Update work details](#)
- [Update Sub-Contractors Directory](#)
- [My invoices](#)
- [My events](#)
- [Change password](#)
- [Logout](#)



03 Special Interest Groups

- Academia



Megan Klaar
University of
Leeds



Patrick White
Edinburgh Napier
University



Sharne McMillan
University of
Hong Kong



Paul Rooney
Liverpool Hope
University



Debbie Bartlett
University of
Greenwich



John Rose
Sheffield Hallam
University



Liz Lakin
University of
Dundee



Join our committee

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Wrapping up...

ASIG Monthly Zoom chats – 3rd week of every month



March 18th – Patrick White – Edinburgh Napier University

Reflections on remotely supporting student fieldwork and research