

Session Title:	Supporting Applicants: A Teachers' and Advisers' Perspective
Speaker(s):	Smita Chohan Jo McLaughlin
Chair:	
Reporter:	Susie Kilburn

Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	SMRS Culture, brand, and communications business working with universities on various recruitment and marketing projects, including subject portfolio reviews and annual syndicated research
Overview/Aim of session:	Research by SMRS (end of 2023): Examining changing behaviours of undergraduate applicants and the role of careers advice in schools.
Workshop Content	<p>Setting the Scene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volatility in the sector, especially with admissions. • Gap between student expectations and realities. • Role of clearing. <p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative and Quantitative Study: Focus on teachers and advisers responsible for careers guidance in UK schools/colleges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative: Analysis of UCAS application data. • Qualitative: Online focus group and survey with careers practitioners (293 responses). <p>Key Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Russell Groups (RG) Appeal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing appeal among students. • Mixed views on impact: Raised aspirations vs. risk of no offers and lack of preparation for clearing. • Awareness of Oxbridge and RG, but not other categories like MillionPlus or GuildHE. 2. Reasons for Applying to RG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked with high ranking and status. • Parental influence is strong. • Perceived prestige and employability.

	<p>2. Impact of Employability and Finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping adviser conversations. • Focus on university type and graduate employability over course content. • Parental influence and risk of misinformation. <p>2. Challenges for Careers Advisers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students ignoring advice. • Tackling misinformation from parents. • Lack of funds for schools and students. <p>2. Need for More Resources and Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities can help by showing advantages of all types of institutions, aiding student engagement, and providing communications for parents. • Funding transport to events and valuing activities and resources provided by universities.
<p>Case Studies/Examples:</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:</p>	<p>How does your activity stack up?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What's your development story? - Engaging with parents - Communicating affordability - Brand and offer alignment - Your offer the Schools and Colleges
<p>Questions and Answers:</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>Summary/Key takeaways:</p>	<p>Research Insights: The study highlights the increasing appeal of Russell Group universities among students, driven by perceptions of prestige and employability, and influenced by parents.</p> <p>Challenges: Careers advisers face challenges such as students ignoring advice, misinformation from parents, and financial constraints.</p> <p>Support Needed: Universities can support schools by providing resources, engaging activities, and clear communication to both students and parents.</p>

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