Foreword

SDS established its sponsored PhD programme to deepen our links with the academic community and to bring fresh thinking to skills policy and delivery. I was pleased to see this programme identified as a model of collaborative good practice in the Bartholomew Report. The Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences (SGSSS), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and all the universities, students, supervisors and sponsors deserve great credit.

Workforce skills are a critical asset for firms in today’s rapidly changing and globalised markets. And individuals’ skills help them prosper and flourish in today’s economy and society. Ensuring that Scotland’s skills provision is relevant, responsive and forward-looking requires robust research, deep learning and keen insight. Scotland’s education and skills system is unique. Learning from good practice and innovative thinking from elsewhere is a must – but it must be transferable.

Our PhD programme heralds the emergence of a ‘new cadre’ of high-quality researchers with a deeper understanding of the Scottish skills system. Engaging with their academic supervisors has also brought significant experience to bear in tackling entrenched issues in the skills system.

Through the collaborative PhD programme SDS has supported 17 students in undertaking rigorous academic research into important skills issues, made possible by our special partnership with SGSSS. Each student has academic supervisors and an SDS sponsor – a true marriage of sage advice and practical experience. SDS has recently established its PhD Internship programme, again in collaboration with SGSSS. This has brought fresh thinking into SDS whilst also giving students a taster of the world of work in a policy and delivery setting.

Working with employers and other partners, SDS has a key role in the national skills agenda. The academic community has an increasingly important role to play in helping us to find out ‘what works’ in making a real difference in supporting the people and businesses of Scotland.

I commend the PhD programme to you. I hope you find the insights from our PhD students and sponsors provide food for thought and action.

Damien Yeates, CEO, Skills Development Scotland
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What is the PhD Programme?

The SDS PhD programme is a partnership initiative between Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It was established to engage the academic community in Scotland to support policy-relevant skills research. The focus of the research is to examine key questions in skills policy, skills delivery and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG). The programme will produce a new body of research aligned to the evolving skills agenda in Scotland. It will also help to develop a new group of researchers with an in-depth understanding of the unique Scottish skills landscape.

How does it work?

Up to four sponsored SDS PhD studentships are enrolled each year. SDS identifies important skills-related topics and works with SGSSS to invite PhD proposals from academic supervisors. SGSSS and SDS then select the most suitable proposals received. Successful PhD proposals are co-funded by SDS and the ESRC.

SDS works closely with the host university, academic supervisors and the student to support successful completion of the PhD. Each PhD student has an SDS PhD Sponsor who links the student into SDS and the wider skills community. The SDS Sponsor also has an important role in promoting the PhD research to relevant SDS teams, ensuring that key findings from the research are embedded in the policy and practice of SDS.
The SDS sponsored PhD programme has also evolved over time and now includes the opportunity for some students to complete a fully funded Masters year prior to starting their PhD.

The SDS PhD programme aligns existing and future PhDs to the new Centre for Work-based Learning (CWBL). The Centre is a partnership between SDS, the University of Strathclyde, Heriot-Watt University and Robert Gordon University. Its goal is to influence policy and practice and to enhance the perception of work-based learning. This alignment will further seek to develop new and innovative, high-quality research that is more closely linked to skills policy and practice.

David Coyne, Director of Centre for Work-Based Learning says:

‘The Centre for Work-Based Learning is committed to producing, collating and sharing evidence to drive the change needed in Scotland’s learning and training system. The Collaborative PhD Programme is an excellent way for new researchers to develop their practical skills and knowledge, whilst giving the Centre access to high quality research. It’s exciting to see this programme’s blend of academic expertise and practical experience, used to facilitate knowledge transfer and innovation in Scotland’s work-based learning system.’

Benefits of the PhD Programme

The SDS Collaborative PhD Programme has many benefits for SDS and its stakeholders:

- Increased awareness of the value of academic research within the skills policy community
- New opportunities for doctoral candidates to develop their knowledge and understanding in a policy context
- A new cadre of high-quality academic researchers with a deep knowledge of the Scottish skills landscape and system
- New opportunities for PhD students to develop their skills and expertise within a workplace setting through PhD internships
- New investment in high quality skills research, providing a robust and rigorous approach to tackling key skills policy questions.

Watch our short video, produced by one of our PhD students Gabi Lipan, to find out more about the programme.

Watch video here
Zinat Asif

Innovative workplace practice and potential in Scotland: ‘what works’ in a key sector

Academic Supervisors: Professor Patricia Findlay and Dr Colin Lindsay
SDS Sponsor: Derek Cairns

Zinat is in her third year studying innovative workplace practice and potential in Scotland. Her research explores workplace innovation in Scotland and other EU states from an industry perspective. It will look at the organisational and institutional factors underpinning successful workplace learning and innovation. This will focus particularly on Employee Driven Innovation (EDI) and identify what policy lessons can be drawn from leading European evidence. It will also consider how key stakeholders can best support EDI and workplace innovation in ways that are sensitive to sectoral issues. Zinat uses a mixed method (both qualitative and quantitative) to investigate her topic, employing statistical analysis of large datasets and stakeholder interviews.

John Evans

Apprenticeships: filling the middle skills gap?

Academic Supervisors: Professor Dora Scholarios and Dr Pauline Anderson
SDS Sponsor: Terry Dillon

John is currently in the third year of his PhD, examining the extent to which apprenticeships are meeting changing ‘middle skills’ demand. Drawing on insights from stakeholder theory, his research takes an in-depth view of the skills ecosystem. This includes drilling down to the level of strategic stakeholders who influence the nature and shape of apprenticeship provision. The research approach adopts a comparative case study design looking at engineering apprenticeships in Scotland and England. John is coming to the end of his data collection period and hopes to finish his fieldwork in March 2018. John has begun data analysis with a view to completing this phase in the spring of 2018, moving onto write up in the summer.

This year, John was selected to attend the Transatlantic Summer Institute in Qualitative and Mixed Methods in Glasgow, a collaborative project between New York University and University of Strathclyde. John presented his research to a range of early career researchers from across the social sciences disciplines.
Karen Gilmore

The impact of Graduate Apprenticeships on social mobility

Academic Supervisors: Professor Abigail Marks and Professor Mike Danson
SDS Sponsor: Mairi Rule

Karen is a second year PhD student examining the impact of Graduate Apprenticeships (GAs) on social mobility, viewing this from an inter-generational perspective. The research will explore the following questions:

- What ‘type’ of individual undertakes a GA and how does this differ from individuals enrolled on equivalent full-time degree programmes?
- What are the motivations and aspirations of those undertaking GAs?
- What support do these individuals require?
- What are the outcomes, benefits and limitations of undertaking a GA?

The study will take a mixed method approach to data collection and will involve a longitudinal perspective over the three years of the study. Firstly, quantitative data will be gathered to capture data on characteristics of GAs such as age, gender, race, education and qualification history, family and social background. Next, in-depth interviews with apprentices will allow for further probing into their motivations, aspirations and sense of social class and position. Karen is completing her literature review and has also conducted some initial interviews. Karen plans to attend the Work, Employment and Society Conference in September 2018.

Magdelina Gilek

The impact of job quality on mental health among young workers in the UK

Academic Supervisors: Professor Patricia Findlay and Professor Dora Scholarios
SDS Sponsor: Malcolm Greig

Magdalena is currently in the process of writing up her PhD thesis. This focuses on the impact of job quality on the mental health of young workers in the UK. This study uses large-scale surveys to examine how young workers evaluate the quality of their jobs in the contemporary labour market. This includes examining the most significant factors which enable or challenge young adults in achieving or sustaining a high quality of working life. It also includes the impact that job quality has on their mental health. This research makes new contributions in three key areas of job quality: its components, predicting factors, and outcomes.
Stephen Hughes

Work-Based Learning (WBL) for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Academic Supervisors: Dr Pauline Anderson and Professor Dora Scholarios
SDS Sponsors: Suzie Bowman and Jonathan Clark

Stephen is undertaking his MRes in Business and Management as part of a 1+3 PhD. He holds an undergraduate degree with a BA (Hons) in Business. Before starting his course, Stephen was part of QA Apprenticeships in which he was an assessor and trainer for the MA programme.

Stephen’s research will explore the pedagogical practices at work in WBL programmes aimed at producing an Industry 4.0 ready workforce. It will consider the role of key stakeholders in developing and delivering WBL curricula, the learning process and student experience. It will assess how effective these WBL models are at mitigating the threat of machine-human substitution. With a particular focus on the Scottish economy, his research will consider the wider policy conditions required to make WBL an attractive and realistic proposition for more people.

Daniela Latina

Models of collaborative working in employability

Academic Supervisors: Dr Colin Lindsay and Professor Dennis Nickson
SDS Sponsor: Mike O’Donnell

Daniela is currently writing up her PhD and plans to submit her thesis this summer. Her research explores the Scottish approach to collaborative working on employability and skills. Daniela aims to identify the strengths and limitations of the Scottish Employability Framework and Strategic Skills Pipeline models in aligning the work of partners in support of collaboration in the delivery of employability services.

Daniela also looks at what works well and why in the management and delivery of collaborative employability services that provide sustainable outcomes for users. Her research seeks to identify effective practice and critical success factors in the governance of employability collaborations. Her research explores:

- How conceptual models can help us to understand Scotland’s framework for collaboration on employability at local and national level
- how best to identify good practice in collaboration on employability, and
- how the outcomes produced by effective collaboration can be measured and evidenced.
Gabi Lipan

Mind the GAP: An investigation into the factors influencing student, academic and employer perceptions of Graduate Attributes.

Academic Supervisors: Dr Amy Irwin and Dr Emily Nordmann
SDS Sponsor: Terry Dillon

Gabi is the SDS PhD Programme’s first 1+3 student who is currently in the first year of his PhD after recently completing his Masters degree at the University of Aberdeen. Gabi’s research examines the factors influencing student, academic and employer perceptions of Graduate Attributes. Gabi aims to create a model of core Graduate Attributes and assess whether there are any differences in perceptions of these between students, academics, employers and university type. Gabi will aim to gather these perceptions through the use of semi structured interviews. Gabi has visited SDS to present the findings of his Masters work and spoke with key colleagues in the business about the practical implications of his findings. He plans to present his work this year through a poster presentation at the Higher Education Academy Annual Conference.

Louise Macauley

Overcoming barriers to Labour Market entry amongst people with disabilities and long-term health conditions and their unpaid carers

Academic Supervisors: Professor Paul Lambert and Dr Alasdair Rutherford
SDS Sponsor: Karen Kerr

Louise is undertaking her MSc in Social Research and Social Statistics as part of a 1+3 PhD at the University of Stirling. Prior to this she worked as an Evaluation and Research Graduate Intern for Skills Development Scotland.

During her PhD Louise will undertake an analysis of secondary longitudinal data examining labour market entry for those with disabilities and long-term health issues and also those providing their unpaid care. The research will capitalise on rich, large scale survey resources with coverage of Scotland. The analysis will focus on the ways in which employment outcomes in Scotland are influenced by experience of disability or long-term health problems whether directly or as an unpaid carer. This analysis will be compared against current policy initiatives to identify potential areas for improvement.
Alana McGuire

The impact of Big Data on skills requirements

Academic Supervisors: Dr Alasdair Rutherford and Professor Paul Lambert
SDS Sponsor: Derek Hawthorne

Alana is in the third year of her PhD. Her research looks at how Big Data may have affected labour market skills in Scotland, focusing on the tourism and life sciences sectors. She explores how important Big Data is becoming within organisations and how this may be changing employee job roles and skills demand. Alana is using a mixed methods approach, including analysis of large-scale surveys such as the Employer Skills Survey and the Labour Force Survey in addition to case studies with employers in the life sciences and tourism sectors.

Alana’s research will identify the combination of underlying skills that are needed to be able to work with Big Data and will identify the differences in required skill levels between sectors. Alana’s research will also explore whether there is evidence of social/gender/ethnic inequalities in Big Data skills.

Lyndsey Middleton

Enhancing the capacity for workplace learning an innovation in Scotland

Academic Supervisors: Professor Hazel Hall and Professor Robert Raeside
SDS Sponsor: Kirstine Hale

Lyndsey is in the third year of her PhD. Her research investigates innovation and best practice in skills development in the workplace in Scotland, drawing comparisons both across the UK and internationally. Lyndsey looks at the factors that support innovative work behaviour and explores how employee-led workplace learning can be encouraged to deliver innovation.

From both information science and organisational studies perspectives, Lyndsey considers the specific requirements for individuals to develop innovative work behaviours. Her work also looks at how organisations can support the enhancement of such behaviours through workplace learning. Collecting data from organisations within Scotland, England and Finland, she examines how successful workplace learning in relation to innovative work behaviours can be both determined and identified within organisations. Lyndsey’s research will lead to the development of a framework to explain how workplace learning can support innovation in the workplace, drawing upon aspects of organisational culture and strategy.
The role of networking and social media tools during job search: an information behaviour perspective

Academic Supervisors: Professor Hazel Hall, Professor Robert Raeside and Professor Pete Robertson
SDS Sponsor: Keith Falconer

The project is about how young jobseekers network in order to acquire information on job opportunities, and the role of social media tools have during this process. In doing so, the nature of job search networking and social media use are explored, including their various antecedents and outcomes. How this information can be used to inform careers advice and guidance is also considered. A mixed methods approach was adopted for the study, in a three-stage exploratory design. The data collection took place between March 2016 and November 2017. Initial findings from his research show that:

- Increased networking behaviours is associated with better job search outcomes
- Social media helps young people to create, maintain and use network contacts
- Social media is important for young people in building knowledge of their networks and in accessing important industry figures.

John’s thesis will be submitted shortly in the spring of 2018

Work readiness; understanding its complexity

Academic Supervisors: Dr Scott Hurrell and Professor Dora Scholarios
SDS Sponsor: David Coyne

Rachael is a second-year PhD student investigating work readiness. Her PhD seeks to understand work readiness across a range of stakeholders, identifying both barriers and enablers in developing individuals’ work readiness. During her research, Rachael will draw together the views of employers, out-of-work individuals and those involved in support roles. Her research will look at the efficacy of current policy interventions for removing barriers and how best to support individuals into work.

Rachael’s research will include interviews with employers, support staff and out-of-work individuals. A key element of the research will be understanding any differences in perceptions amongst stakeholders about what constitutes effective support in getting back to work. Rachael is currently completing her literature review, which has involved a review of relevant theory but also of policy related employment support and skills over the last few decades. Next, Rachael plans to conduct preliminary research interviews with people involved in delivering employment and skills policy support in Scotland in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the current landscape.
Kane Needham

The role of social networking sites in career management

Academic Supervisors: Dr Dave Griffiths and Professor Paul Lambert
SDS Sponsor: Keith Falconer

Kane is in the final year of his PhD. Kane’s research looks at the role of engagement in Social Networking Sites (SNS) in career attainment and aspiration. He analyses large-scale survey data to map internet and SNS usage by demographic characteristics for a range of social groups including: students in further education, people who have been made redundant and parents of young children.

In addition to large-scale survey research Kane is also conducting three case studies aligned to the survey populations which will provide detailed snapshots of SNS usage throughout the life-stage. A substantial element of Kane’s research focuses on the uneven distribution of digital skills amongst the Scottish population, and how this influences labour market outcomes. The findings of Kane’s PhD will provide detailed evidence towards targeted interventions by protected characteristics and occupational class.

Petri Simonen

The effects of lifelong learning policies and how they support young adults

Academic Supervisors: Dr Oscar Valiente and Dr Oscar Odena
SDS Sponsor: Andrea Glass

Petri is completing an MRes in Public Policy Research as part of a 1+3 PhD. Before enrolling in this course Petri had completed an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a MSc in Education, Public Policy and Equity. During Petri’s studies, he found an interest in how learning is facilitated by society and shifted his research focus into policy. During his MSc he gained an interest in the knowledge economy and lifelong learning.

Petri is interested in examining young adults’ engagement with lifelong learning. Petri’s PhD research will examine in particular, who are the key influencers in their decisions and how does this influence manifest? His research will consider how these key influencers affect the choices young adults make between competing lifelong learning opportunities. This research will focus on the Glasgow and Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire areas, providing direct comparison and contrast.
Gaile Siusyte

Supporting the key influencers on young people’s career development

Academic Supervisors: Dr Dave Griffiths and Dr Marina Shapira
SDS Sponsor: Ken Edwards

Gaile is currently completing her MSc in Social Research and Social Statistics as part of a 1+3 PhD. Before joining the PhD programme Gaile graduated with a BA (Hons) degree in Psychology. She discovered the PhD Programme during her undergraduate degree and wanted to pursue this opportunity to expand her knowledge and skills further, while working on a topic that interests her.

Gaile was attracted to this PhD topic as it is closely related to her previous research interests that include social stratification and inequality related to gender, education, class, access and social mobility. This studentship will involve quantitative analysis of secondary datasets (such as PISA, EYT and Youth Cohort Studies), primary questionnaires and interviews with young adults and the identified ‘key influencers’.

Bozena Wielgoszewska

University graduates career pathways: how does the route affect the outcome?

Academic Supervisors: Dr Zhiqiang Feng and Dr Darja Reuschk
SDS Sponsor: Tony Coultas

Bozena is currently writing up the final chapters of her thesis and will submit in the Summer of 2018. Her research focuses on graduate career pathways and the relationship between these, circumstances in early life and social mobility. Bozena used data from the 1970 British Cohort Study and employed a range of statistical techniques in order to explore this. Bozena has been involved in many dissemination events which have included presenting her research to the SDS Evaluation and Research team as well as senior SDS staff and directors. Bozena has a range of conclusions that SDS is interested in exploring further, including the finding that career type is the missing link in understanding social mobility.
Key Achievements and Learning

Outcomes

This year, our first cohort of students are preparing to submit their thesis and complete their PhDs. Our very first student, Dr Mark Egan, has already completed.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>PhD Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Egan</td>
<td>Childhood psychological predictors of unemployment: evidence from four cohort studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magdalena Gilek</td>
<td>The impact of job quality on mental health among young workers in the UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniela Latina</td>
<td>Models of collaborative working in employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mowbray</td>
<td>The role of networking and social media tools during job search: an information behaviour perspective</td>
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<td>Kane Needham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bozena Wielgoszewska</td>
<td>University graduates career pathways: how does the route affect the outcome?</td>
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Mark was the Collaborative PhD Programme’s first student who started his PhD in 2013. He submitted his thesis at the end of 2016 and was awarded his doctorate in 2017.

Mark Egan

Childhood psychological predictors of unemployment: evidence from four cohort studies

Academic Supervisors: Dr. Michael Daly and Professor Liam Delaney
SDS Sponsors: John Dalziel and Sandra Cheyne

Mark’s research examined how certain non-cognitive skills (e.g. self-control) and different levels of mental health in early life predict future unemployment. His research used British and American data from four cohort studies. This examined how later unemployment was affected by childhood capacity for self-control. It was found that self-control, conscientiousness, and mental health all play a role in future unemployment. Mark’s results demonstrated that children with poor self-control were more likely than more self-controlled children to experience unemployment during the UK’s 1980 recession and the US’s 2007 recession.

After completing his PhD, Mark moved to London to work with The Behavioural Insights Team. Working here has given him an opportunity to directly apply his PhD research. For example, he has worked on a program to help people with poor mental health find employment.
Internship Opportunities

PhD students in Scotland have the opportunity to complete an Internship as part of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Internship Scheme (including employers such as the Scottish Government, the National Health Service and Skills Development Scotland). SDS piloted an internship scheme with two of our students in 2016. In total, seven of our PhD students have completed internships, as detailed in the following table.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Internship Project</th>
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<tr>
<td>Magdalena Gilek</td>
<td>Long Term Outcomes of Modern Apprenticeships: OECD framework</td>
<td>SDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniela Latina</td>
<td>Employability Fund: Successful Transitions</td>
<td>SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mowbray</td>
<td>Social Media Strategy</td>
<td>SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bozena Wielgoszewska</td>
<td>Assessing the Suitability of the Customer Support System for the Apprenticeship Long Term Outcomes Project</td>
<td>SDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kane Needham</td>
<td>Inequalities in the Labour Market</td>
<td>SDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alana McGuire</td>
<td>A Culture Strategy for Scotland</td>
<td>Scottish Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachael Murphy</td>
<td>The Challenges and Opportunities of Localised Employment Support</td>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
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“In the context of the academic ‘impact agenda’, an internship at Skills Development Scotland provides a bridge between the work that we do at university, and how it is applied outwith. The programme will develop your skills at communicating to a more broad audience too, and allow you to become more familiar with different dissemination styles”

Kane
3rd year PhD Student
University of Stirling
The SGSSS-SDS Internship Scheme is also open to PhD students who are not sponsored by SDS. In 2017, in partnership with the Centre for Work-based Learning, SDS hosted three PhD interns from various Universities.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Brannigan</td>
<td>How do we measure the skills for the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilay Balkan</td>
<td>Neurodiversity and skills for the future - widening access to Work-Based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obafemi Olekanma</td>
<td>Structures and Partnerships for Work-Based Learning Standards</td>
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Watch our short video to listen to the experiences of our PhD interns and to find out more about the scheme.
A Closer Look at Nilay’s Internship

My internship at SDS was to conduct a literature review which will assess neurodiversity within a workplace and learning context, and to evaluate the barriers and opportunities presented by the various strengths and weaknesses of the neurodiverse spectrum for work-based learning.

This was particularly interesting for me as it’s very different to my PhD (which looks at social media usage in small firms!). This is one of the great things about the SDS-SGSSS internships; they look for your qualities and what you can bring to the internship, rather than what subject knowledge you have. My project at SDS is in a relatively new area. Whilst there is research on learning requirements and Human Resources practices to accommodate neurodiverse needs, there is limited information about widening work-based learning for neurodiverse individuals. It’s been interesting to compare how policy makers and academics respond to new research areas.

My project at SDS has been mostly explorative, reviewing the current literature regarding neurodiverse skills and employment and offering recommendations for both management practices and further research. However, it makes me proud to think my work will guide the direction for SDS’ own research and future projects – all of which assist in policy-making decisions. This is the most exciting thing about my project. Although I am only at SDS for a short duration, my work will be one of the many building blocks towards a bigger impact for society!

The impact of this project isn’t just on a policy-level. As someone who wishes to stay in academia and continue lecturing after my PhD, having the chance to develop my understanding of neurodiversity has been incredibly valuable. I have a better understanding of neurodiverse student needs and more confidence in delivering effective lessons. Moreover, I’ll be giving my PhD colleagues at Glasgow Caledonian University a talk about what I’ve learnt and how to implement effective learning strategies. Having the new generation of academics understand neurodiversity can only be a good thing for the students entering further and higher education.

“Pausing my PhD research to do an internship with Skills Development Scotland gave me an opportunity to collaborate with people working in a policy oriented environment, which helped me to better understand the practical impacts of my work”

Bozena
3rd year PhD Student
University of Edinburgh
Dissemination Events with SDS Colleagues

SDS sponsors work closely with our students throughout their research to ensure that key insights and learning from the PhD are captured and fed-through to policy and practice within SDS. This is achieved through the support of our PhD sponsors and by organising dissemination events for SDS colleagues.

A sharing of learning event was held where a number of 2nd year students presented their research topics to members of the SDS Executive Leadership Group, including the Chief Executive, SDS delivery and operational teams and fellow sponsored PhD students.

This allowed for the PhD students to not only network with fellow students, but also their sponsors and SDS senior staff. It also provided them with the opportunity to share their research findings with a senior policy audience and receive feedback on their work to date.

SDS staff were also able to learn more about the SDS PhD programme and consider the research finding’s implications for policy and practice.

In addition, there have been opportunities for our PhD students to further disseminate their research findings with senior SDS staff during their internship with SDS. For example, Bozena took the opportunity to discuss her findings and engage in discussion about what they might mean for future delivery.

SDS will be hosting more sessions like these, in our forthcoming Knowledge Exchange Sessions. These sessions will provide an opportunity for all of our sponsored PhD students to present and discuss their research to relevant SDS senior staff and directors.
Wider Networking Events

In December 2017, we held a networking event to welcome the new students and SDS sponsors from our 2017 cohort. The festive themed event allowed new students to meet their SDS sponsors and fellow students whilst learning more about SDS and the collaborative PhD programme.

Policy Impact and Relevance

A key strength of the PhD programme is linking research evidence with policy and practice. A good example is the work that sponsored PhD student John Mowbray has completed on social media networks and its use in job searches. John’s research has been used by SDS’s National Operations team in shaping delivery on the ground. It has also been used within the SDS Digital Marketing Team, informing and influencing social media strategies within SDS.

Another example is from Daniela’s research. Daniela’s PhD has examined the benefits and limitations of the Scottish Employability Framework and Strategic Skills Pipeline models in aligning the work of partners working collaboratively in the delivery of employability services.

In discussing the policy impact and relevance of the research, Mike O’Donnell, Daniela’s sponsor and Head of Partnerships in National Training Programmes said that:

“Daniela’s PhD was about how we can get the best for our customers from employability partnership models in Scotland. Her research came at an opportune time as I was able to facilitate her introduction into the key policy forums looking at how Scotland would deliver new employability services following the devolution of some welfare-related activity to Scotland. This was an excellent opportunity for Daniela to influence the employability agenda through direct engagement with stakeholders, and she did an excellent job carrying out focus group work and analysis which fed into the decisions of these forums.

As a bonus, Daniela also did an Internship based in NTP to look at the impact of the Employability Fund (EF). This work benefited both her PhD as it was related to her studies, and SDS, as it gave us an independent assessment of the workings of EF. Throughout her PhD, Daniela has been a delight to work with. I look forward to reading her final thesis and I’m sure her research will continue to be of importance to the skills policy world.”
Highlights of the Past Year

Student Progress

1 student completed and awarded doctorate
4 students writing up thesis
1 Masters Degree Awarded

Where students are working

- University College London
- Behavioural Insight Team UK Government
- NHS Scotland
- Education Scotland

Conferences attended

The International Society for the Quality of Life Studies Annual Conference
Information: Interactions and Impact (i3)
British Society for the Psychology of Individual Differences Annual Conference
Royal Statistical Society International Conference
Society for the Longitudinal and Lifecourse Studies Conference
NCRM Research Methods Festival

Awards and achievements

- Students have had researched published in the Journal of Career Assessment

PhD Students Internships completed

- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Government
- University of Sheffield
Highlights to Look Forward to

Events

**Student Seminar Series Launch**
The Student Seminar Series builds on the earlier sharing of learning event. This series will allow SDS sponsored PhD students to present their work in a constructively challenging environment, involving fellow PhD students and other interested SDS colleagues. SDS will be holding the first event in the Summer of 2018 and further information will be provided on these events shortly.

**Knowledge Exchange Events Introduced**
Knowledge exchange events allow PhD students to present their work directly to key influencers in the organisation. This would involve a presentation to senior staff to discuss the policy implications of the research. These events are ongoing, driven by the SDS sponsor and the student’s progress. Further information will be provided on these events in due course.

Student Progress

- Students completing and to be awarded doctorate
- New students to welcome
- Master degrees to be awarded

Conference attendance

The International Society for Quality of Life Studies Annual Conference

Work, Employment and Society Conference

Higher Education Academy Annual Conference

Internships

- More students starting internships
A more in-depth look at...

John’s PhD Journey

John Mowbray is one of our final year doctoral candidates based at Edinburgh Napier University and is currently writing up his thesis. John’s research is about how young jobseekers network in order to acquire information and the role that social media tools have in this process. He looks in-depth at the nature and extent of job-search networking and social media-use and draws out lessons for policy in relation to the provision of careers information advice and guidance. John asks the following questions to focus his research:

1. What are the key job search networking behaviours employed by young jobseekers based in Scotland?
2. What role do social media platforms have in the job search networking behaviours of young jobseekers based in Scotland?
3. How can knowledge gained from (1) and (2) be incorporated into careers information and guidance services in order to improve employability levels amongst young jobseekers in Scotland?

Empirical Research and Methods

Following an exhaustive literature review, which included SDS support in accessing key policy documents, John conducted extensive empirical research using a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative), in a three-stage exploratory study. The data collection took place between March 2016 and November 2017. The overall approach included the following stages:

- **Seven interviews** and a focus group with 16-24 year old jobseekers based in Scotland, to gather qualitative data. The participants’ qualifications ranged from no school qualifications to postgraduate qualifications. The data were then analysed and used to inform a survey questionnaire.

- **A survey of 900** 16-24 year old jobseekers based in Scotland. Around 750 university educated respondents, and 150 non university educated.

- **A focus group with SDS careers advisers**, to understand how they advise young people about using networks and social media during job search. Key results from the interviews and survey formed the basis of discussions. This stage was intended to provide insight into how the research findings could inform careers services, to improve employability levels amongst young people.

Through John’s sponsor, SDS was able to support the research at relevant stages. SDS Area Managers and Team Leaders facilitated John’s access to SDS local offices to invite young people to take part in his stage-one interviews, and supported him in organising focus groups with young jobseekers and careers advisers.

Internship with SDS

John also did a 3-month internship with the Marketing Team at SDS, working on a project to refresh the organisation’s Social Media Marketing Strategy. As part of the internship, he conducted research with different SDS customer groups to find out their views on SDS social media services and how they use social media. His work helped to ensure that the refreshed strategy was firmly based on real audience insights.

During his internship, John worked full-time from SDS offices, was warmly welcomed to the organisation as a new colleague, with access to an SDS laptop, email account and other employee resources, and participated fully in SDS Marketing Team activities. John says:

“I enjoyed the opportunity to apply the knowledge I’ve gained from the PhD process whilst extending this knowledge by focusing on the behaviours of different user groups.”
Dissemination Activities

Since starting his PhD, John has taken part in a number of dissemination activities presenting his research to a variety of audiences, including:

- SDS Evaluation and Research Team
- SDS Marketing Team
- Senior SDS staff including the Director of Operations and Head of Marketing
- Student networking events

Preliminary Findings/ Policy Impact

John is in the process of finalising his thesis, which he plans to submit before the end of March this year, but has already provided valuable insights and robust new evidence about the relationship between Social Networking, use of Social Media and Career Management Skills. Of the findings that John has fed-back so far, SDS is particularly interested in further exploring the following:

1. Increased networking behaviour is associated with better job search outcomes
2. Networking with employers face-to-face and acquaintances (i.e. people not seen very often) are both also conducive of positive outcomes
3. Networking with family members frequently is strongly associated with receiving job interviews and the feeling of making progress
4. Social media makes job search continuous, and can be a very good tool for receiving information/ being accessible to contacts
5. Using Facebook is strongly associated with positive job search outcomes

SDS will explore these and other findings and recommendations in John’s completed thesis through our knowledge exchange and dissemination activities.

Further Information

John currently works full time with the Statistical Governance Team at NHS Scotland.

If you would like to find out more about John’s research please visit the following links:

IIDI profile:  www.iidi.napier.ac.uk/j.mowbray
PhD blog:  www.johnmowbray.org
LinkedIn:  www.linkedin.com/in/jmowbray
Twitter:  @jmowb_napier
Email:  j.mowbray@napier.ac.uk
Bozena Wielgoszewska is a final year PhD student who is currently completing her thesis. Bozena’s research focuses on University graduates’ careers: the relationship between factors observable in an individual’s early life, characteristics of career pathways and outcomes in terms of social mobility. Bozena’s research seeks to answer the following questions:

• What are graduates’ typical career pathways, their intra-generational social mobility trajectories, and what are the relationships between these two life course trajectories?
• Can these relationships be explained by the attributes and circumstances observed in their early life?
• What is the role of higher education and internal migration in the context of different career types?

Research and Methods

Bozena’s literature review set the context for her project and refined her research questions. Her literature review states that the labour market has changed dramatically over the past few decades. The main changes include destandardisation of life course, occupation restructuring, and expansion of higher education. In the past, education was considered a distinct stage of early career, typically followed by full-time paid employment, during which an individual ascended the occupational ladder. More recently, the notion of a “job for life” has been replaced with a notion of “boundaryless career”, which is less dependent on the traditional organisational career principles. Bozena then adopted quantitative methodologies to investigate her research questions. This was conducted in the following steps:

• Information about a sample of 1080 graduates was extracted from the 1970 British Cohort Study, and their economic activity histories were reconstructed.
• Sequence analysis was used to derive a typology of career pathways, which distinguishes between stable careers, part-timers, self-employed and fragmented careers. A similar method was used to derive the typology of these graduates’ progression via social classes, distinguishing between lateral linear, lateral non-linear, upward linear, upward non-linear, and downward social mobility trajectories.
• A set of logistic regression models was fitted to test whether graduates’ career type can explain their social mobility trajectories.
• Having established statistically significant relationship between these two concepts, the investigation was expanded by incorporating additional factors, which included the social, geographical and individual attributes observed in the to-be graduates’ early life, as well as the characteristics of their higher education, and their internal migration trajectories.

Internship with SDS

Bozena also took part in a three month internship in the Evaluation and Research Team at Skills Development Scotland during the summer of 2017. Bozena’s internship involved investigating the use of SDS’s administrative dataset (Customer Support System) for supporting the Apprenticeship Long Term Outcomes (ALTO) framework. This is an important piece of work as part of the wider ALTO framework which was developed in collaboration with the OECD.

Bozena also took part in many other team activities, including team meetings, wider projects, presentations and event planning. Bozena fitted in with the Evaluation and Research team well and enjoyed her three months working at the Glasgow SDS offices.

Dr Lynne Robson, Bozena’s Intern Manager says:

“During her internship Bozena was able to apply her extensive analytical skills alongside academic rigour to construct and interpret longitudinal linked data sets. The outputs and recommendations from her internship research have made a valuable contribution to the ALTO framework and we will build on Bozena’s findings going forward. It was a real pleasure to have Bozena in the team.”
Bozena has taken part in a variety of different dissemination, supported by her SDS sponsor, Head of Service Innovation Tony Coultas.

- Presentations to the Evaluation and Research Team
- Presentations to senior SDS staff and directors
- Student networking events

SDS also supported Bozena in understanding the policy implications of her research in working to finalise her thesis.

Tony Coultas, Bozena’s sponsor says:

“Bozena has demonstrated the value of the joint SDS-SGSSS research programme, by providing increased understanding from a rigorous analysis of relevant data. SDS has been impressed by Bozena’s work and it will have implications for the practice and services that SDS provides”.

**Preliminary Findings and Policy Impact**

Bozena plans to submit her thesis in the spring of this year. It will include a number of interesting findings that SDS are interested in exploring further. These include:

- Social mobility is more complex than moving up or down
- The career type is the missing link in the understanding of social mobility
- Parental social class plays an important and persistent role
- A degree is the first “tick in the box”, and fields of study as well as the degree awarding institution play an important role
- Temporary migration to cities can be beneficial

**Further Information**

Bozena currently works full time as a Research Associate at University College London. Bozena’s work involves working with linked administrative datasets (including HMRC data, health data and education records) as part of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS).

You can contact Bozena through the following channels:

Twitter: @MeBozena

Email: B.Wielgoszewska@ed.ac.uk
Students, Topics, & Sponsors

**Zinat Asif, University of Strathclyde**

Innovative workplace practice and potential in Scotland: ‘what works’ in a key sector

SDS Sponsor: Derek Cairns

**John Evans, University of Strathclyde**

Apprenticeships: filling the middle skills gap?

SDS Sponsor: Terry Dillon

**Magdalena Gilek, University of Strathclyde**

The impact of job quality on mental health among young workers in the UK

SDS Sponsor: Malcolm Greig

**Karen Gilmore, Heriot-Watt University**

The impact of Graduate Apprenticeships on social mobility

SDS Sponsor: Mairi Rule

**Stephen Hughes, University of Strathclyde**

Work-Based Learnings for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

SDS sponsor: Suzie Bowman

**Daniela Latina, University of Strathclyde**

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SDS Sponsor: Mike O’Donnell

**Gabi Lipan, University of Aberdeen**

Mind the GAP: An investigation into the factors influencing student, academic and employer perceptions of graduate attributes

SDS Sponsor: Terry Dillon

**Louise Macaulay, University of Stirling**

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**Alana McGuire, University of Stirling**

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SDS Sponsor: Derek Hawthorne

**Lyndsey Middleton, Edinburgh Napier University**

Enhancing the capacity for workplace learning an innovation in Scotland

SDS Sponsor: Kirstine Hale

**John Mowbray, Edinburgh Napier University**

The role of networking and social media tools during job search: an information behaviour perspective

SDS Sponsor: Keith Falconer

**Rachael Murphy, University of Glasgow**

Work readiness; understanding its complexity

SDS Sponsor: David Coyne

**Kane Needham, University of Stirling**

The role of social networking sites in career management

SDS Sponsor: Keith Falconer

**Petri Simonen, University of Glasgow**

The effects of lifelong learning policies and how they support young adults

SDS Sponsor: Andrea Glass

**Gaile Siusyte, University of Stirling**

Supporting the key influencers on young people’s career development

SDS Sponsor: Ken Edwards

**Bozena Wielgoszewska, University of Edinburgh**

University Graduates Career Pathways: How Does the Route Affect the Outcome?

SDS Sponsor: Tony Coultas
For more information about our PhD programme or if you would like any information about any of the students in this brochure please feel free to email us.

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