



Belonging for Warwick Scholars and Priority Groups

Project Aims

- Understand what it means to be a Warwick Scholar, care leaver, estranged student, or Sanctuary Scholar, and their sense of belonging across the student lifecycle, from applicant to alumni.
- Identify successes and best practice that enhance belonging, alongside systematic barriers or gaps in institutional provision.
- Engage with, and be led by, Warwick Scholars and Priority Group students to provide data and insight.



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This project has provided valuable insight into what helps widening participation students feel they belong, and this research is providing clear evidence and suggestions directly from students to shape more inclusive and effective support in the future. The Warwick Scholars and Priority Groups community form a significant part of our campus community, and if we can get it right for these students, we will get it right for everyone.

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Project Rationale

- Warwick Scholars and Priority Group students (estranged, care leavers, and Sanctuary Scholars) are key groups highlighted in the Inclusive Education and Experience framework, yet there's limited understanding of what drives their sense of belonging.
- With 447 Warwick Scholars and dozens of Priority Group students at Warwick, understanding their experience matters for equitable support and retention across the student lifecycle.

Current Progress and Reflections

- Completed two student focus groups in Spring, with nine participants across Warwick Scholars and Priority Groups.
- Preliminary findings show belonging is driven by relationships, trust, and community, with practical barriers including commuting, stigma, and access to opportunities.
- Students reported feeling more recognised and comfortable seeking help when staff knew them personally and maintained consistent, approachable relationships.
- Belonging isn't just about access to university, it also needs institutionally embedded, permanent inclusive spaces where diversity is actively celebrated
- Data analysis and the final report, including recommendations, are currently being written up.

Next Steps

- Disseminate findings to student-facing teams who support, build relationships with, and host events for these student groups.
- Explore embedding more in-depth belonging questions into the existing Warwick Scholars pre- and post-survey, to gather quantitative data reaching more students.



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Students involved in the development phase