



Participant Information Leaflet for
Futuretrack Stage 6 participants

Study Title: Degrees of Advantage? A longer-term investigation of the careers of UK graduates (Futuretrack Stage 6)

Investigator(s): Professor Peter Elias (Principal Investigator), Professor Kate Purcell, Ms Gaby Atfield, Dr Erika Krispeter

Introduction

You are invited to continue to take part in the above research. Before you decide, we would like to remind you why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. You can contact members of the research team via Futuretrack2006@warwick.ac.uk

Who is organising and funding the study?

This study is funded by the Nuffield Foundation and is organised by a research team at the University of Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER), headed by Professor Peter Elias.

What is the study about?

'*Degrees of Advantage?*', or *Futuretrack Stage 5*, aimed to find out how the 2009/10 graduates' careers had progressed some 9 to 10 years after graduation, and how earlier higher education and labour market experiences had contributed to these outcomes. It was the latest wave of *Futuretrack*, a national study that had followed 2005-06 applicants to full-time higher education in the UK through undergraduate study and into their early careers (the 'Futuretrack cohort'). It was carried out in 2019, when most participants were in employment. A report has been prepared from that stage but given the Covid-19 pandemic and its ongoing impact, the research team concluded that it would be important to return to the respondents to find out how far their 2019 responses and perceptions of the opportunities available to them might have been modified in the light of this. The findings of our research will inform the development of higher education policy, employment policy and will raise awareness of the impact of the pandemic on graduate careers more generally.

This current, much smaller Covid-19 codicil study for '*Degrees of Advantage?*' is being conducted in three parts: a short exploratory online follow-up enquiry, a telephone

interview programme with a very small sample of survey respondents, and a second, slightly longer online questionnaire that you will be invited to complete at the end of 1 November or beginning of December. You can choose whether to take part or not in each part, but it is important that we obtain the most comprehensive and representative response possible, so we hope that you will be willing to participate. The research team and the university take your privacy and our commitment to research ethics and data protection very seriously indeed, and at no stage will information you supply or personal details that you provide be stored or shared in an identifiable way accessible to any third party.

The online follow-up enquiry should take no more than a few minutes to complete and the short survey, in September, around 15 minutes to complete. Both will be hosted by *Qualtrics* software and you will receive personal invitations to join them. The telephone interviews will take between 30-45 minutes and will be arranged at a time convenient to you. We will only be contacting those graduates who gave us explicit permission in the Stage 5 survey for us to recontact them

What would taking part involve?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to continue to take part in this study. This information sheet details the methods we will use to request information from you and the nature of the consent we will ask you to give us.

Online follow-up enquiry and short survey: Please note that by returning a completed online follow-up enquiry form and the short survey, you are giving your consent for the information that you have supplied to be used in this study. An electronic signed consent will not be collected where online surveys are concerned.

Telephone interview: If you indicated that you would be willing to be interviewed by telephone at Stage 5, we may contact you to ask your permission to interview you at Stage 6. If you choose to participate, we will ask you to sign an electronic consent form to confirm that you have agreed to take part. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

If you participate, the following steps outline the research process.

Online follow-up enquiry and short survey

1. When you choose to take part in the online follow-up enquiry or short survey by clicking on the link in the invitation email, you will be taken to a website, hosted by *Qualtrics*. You will be able to access both from a computer or from a mobile device such as a tablet or smartphone.
2. The front pages of the online follow-up enquiry and the short survey will explain the format of each. The online follow-up enquiry will take 5 minutes to complete. The short survey will take around 15 minutes to complete. You will then be guided through the survey.
3. You will be able to save your answers and return to the survey at any time.

Telephone interview

1. If you give us permission to contact you for a telephone interview, and if you are subsequently contacted, we will first ask you to complete an electronic consent form granting us permission to interview you. We will then make arrangements for the

interview to take place at a time convenient for you. The interview will take place by telephone.

2. Please note that any one of the Futuretrack project team members named above may conduct the interview with you.
3. The interviewer will contact you at the arranged time and will guide you through the interview. The interview should take no more than 45 minutes.
4. You will be able to ask questions at any time, and, should you choose to do so, to stop the interview at any time.
5. After the interview, should you wish to make any further statements or any changes, or ask any further questions, you will be able to contact the researcher by email.

Your data will be stored securely on Warwick University servers and in compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2017 (GDPR) and the related 2018 Data Protection Act (DPA).

We will analyse the data you provide via the online follow-up enquiry and the short survey, and transcribe and code the interviews. We expect results to become available at the end of January 2021. We are still discussing with the Nuffield Foundation whether to publish the findings from the 2019 survey at the end of September 2020, as originally planned, but it is our preference to publish a full report covering both Stages 5 and 6 together in January 2021.

You can stay informed with the latest developments on our dedicated project website: <https://go.warwick.ac.uk/ier/futuretrack>.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

We hope that by participating in the survey and interview, you will have an opportunity to reflect on your own journey through education and employment, and to take stock of your experiences and achievements to date.

By your taking part in the study, we expect to find out more about the longer-term outcomes for graduate employment, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on graduate careers, and use this to inform policymakers and career practitioners.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

As the short follow-up enquiry and the survey are conducted online and will be smartphone or tablet accessible, and the interviews are conducted by telephone (or other secure online media, if you prefer), this study has been designed to minimise any possible disadvantages, side effects, risks, and/or discomforts to you. We are however aware that for some of you, we will be asking about sensitive issues; actual or potential unemployment, job insecurity, financial problems associated with reduced income – and asking at a time when some of you may have experienced a difficult period where you or those close to you may have experienced illness or distress. All members of the research team are experienced and sensitive analysts and interviewers, and as at previous stages of the survey, the questions you are asked will relate solely to higher education, employment and career-related issues. You will be free to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the research at any time, and your data will be stored and used in a way that does not compromise your rights in any way, as outlined below.

Questions relating to your Covid-19 situation, in terms of jobs and career prospects may provoke or add to any anxiety or concern you may be experiencing. The NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/> lists a number of organisations that offer support. Additionally, if you feel at any stage that participation in this study puts you under emotional strain, please feel free to contact the study team at the following email address: Futuretrack2006@warwick.ac.uk. We undertake to address any concerns you have with sensitivity and in complete confidence. We hope that you will feel able to communicate directly with the team if you have any concerns about the research, but if you experience any discomforts that we have not foreseen and would like to register a complaint, please see the end of the form for details. Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed.

Expenses and payments

No expenses or payments will be made as a result of taking part in the study.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. We will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. We will not reveal any information that identifies you, including that you have participated in Futuretrack, unless you give us explicit permission to do so. This undertaking might only be breached in the unlikely event of you disclosing issues that pose a risk of serious harm to you or another person.

The following details explain how your survey and interview data will be kept confidential.

Stage 6 Short follow-up enquiry and Online Survey

Your responses to the short follow-up enquiry and the online survey will be hosted by *Qualtrics* on a secure server, meeting requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2017 (GDPR) and 2018 Data Protection Act (DPA) regarding the legal grounds for data processing and the preservation of the confidentiality of personal data.

To undertake statistical analysis of the survey data, the IER research team will download data from this server, remove any obvious identifying information (e.g. name, address, date of birth, etc.) and label individual records with a unique numeric identifier. The survey dataset resulting from these deletions is termed a '**pseudonymised**' dataset, which will be stored securely. The removed personal identifiable data, as well as the key linking it to the identifiers, will be stored separately, on an encrypted non-networked computer kept in a locked room at the IER. Only selected members of the Futuretrack project team would have access to these personal details, to be used only as needed (e.g. conducting geographical analysis at the postcode level, contacting selected participants for follow-up research, etc.).

The pseudonymised dataset will be stored securely on University of Warwick servers, accessed by the project team alone using University-managed computers protected by password access and complying with University of Warwick regulations on information security. The electronic folder containing the pseudonymised survey data will be restricted to the project team members. No-one outside the project team

will have access to the pseudonymised data. No personal data you supply will be held on any devices other than the above.

As with previous stages, any reporting of the Stage 6 survey statistics will be done in such a way that no individuals will be identifiable from published data (e.g. reporting at group levels, ensuring that no small groups of survey respondents are identified, not identifying higher education institutions or names of organisations).

Upon project completion, further data will be removed from the pseudonymised dataset (for instance: the name of the institution at which you studied, your job title, and other sensitive and potentially personally identifiable information). This will be done so that an **anonymised** copy of the data without personal information can be deposited in the UK Data Archive (UKDA) within a year of project completion, following the same principles as when Futuretrack waves 1-4 were deposited in the UKDA. The UKDA-deposited Futuretrack Stage 5 data will have identifiers consistent with UKDA-deposited Stages 1-4 data, but *not with the IER-stored Futuretrack data*. As such, there will be no link between the anonymised data deposited in the UKDA and the pseudonymised data stored in the restricted folder on the University of Warwick systems.

Stage 6 Telephone Interview

If you agree to take part in the telephone interview and are contacted to arrange an interview, we will ask you to read and electronically accept a consent form before the interview is conducted. This consent form will be returned to the researchers using University of Warwick email. The consent forms will be stored securely in the project subfolder at the IER and will be password protected.

The interviews will last between 30-45 minutes and will begin with the researcher reading out the purposes of the study and asking if you are happy to continue with the interview. With your permission, interviews will be digitally recorded, and the researchers will be responsible for writing up detailed notes afterwards. You can decline interview participation and/or voice recording at any stage of the interview.

All data and summarised notes will be pseudonymised and will be stored securely in a password-protected folder at IER. If anything you have said is reported verbatim, your quotation will be given a pseudonym for the purposes of reporting, and any identifiers will be removed to ensure confidentiality unless we specifically ask you for permission to cite them, and you give us permission to do so.

All contact details will be stored safely for the follow-up interview phase for 10 years, and then reviewed. If no longer needed after 10 years, your contact details will be destroyed securely.

What will happen to the data collected about me?

As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. We are committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation. The University of Warwick will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished. Two versions of the data will be stored: a pseudonymised version of the data held at the IER, University of Warwick, and only accessible to the Futuretrack project team, and an anonymised version of the data that will be deposited with the UK Data Archive (as was the case with Futuretrack Waves 1-5). The difference between the pseudonymised version and the anonymised version of the data is explained below.

Research data will be **pseudonymised** as quickly as possible after data collection and will be stored at the University of Warwick. This means that all direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from the research data and will be replaced with a participant number. The key to identification will be stored separately and securely to the research data to safeguard your identity.

As mentioned above, further identifiable information will be removed from the pseudonymised dataset, and an **anonymised** version of the research data will be deposited in the UK Data Archive within a year of project completion. There will be no link between the anonymised data deposited in the UKDA and the pseudonymised data stored in the restricted folder on the University of Warwick systems.

You may ask for data stored about you to be withdrawn from the study. To ask for data stored about you to be withdrawn from the study, please send an email to the research team at Futuretrack2006@warwick.ac.uk, with the subject line: "Request to withdraw my data from the Degrees of Advantage study". You can send this email at any time, but if you do not wish anonymised data about you to be deposited in the UK Data Archive, please ask for your data to be withdrawn within a year of the research project completion (before December 2021). After the anonymised data have been deposited with the UKDA, we will no longer be able to remove your data from the anonymised dataset. We will, however, be able to remove your data from the pseudonymised version of the dataset held at the IER at the University of Warwick at any time.

Data Sharing

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe.

This data may also be used for future research following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

Please refer to the University of Warwick Research Privacy Notice which is available here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/idc/dataprotection/privacynotices/researchprivacynotice> or by contacting the Information and Data Compliance Team at GDPR@warwick.ac.uk.

Please note that identifiable data about you and the pseudonymised version of the dataset will **not** be shared outside the University for this study. However, an anonymised version of your data will be deposited with the UK Data Archive (as with

previous Futuretrack Waves 1-5), that may be accessed by researchers from other research institutions.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. This will not affect you in any way. You may withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by study staff after you withdraw. To do this, please send an email to the research team at Futuretrack2006@warwick.ac.uk with the subject line: "Request to withdraw from Degrees of Advantage study". You can send this email at any time.

Please note that withdrawing participation is separate to withdrawing data that has already been collected during the study. You may ask for data stored about you to be withdrawn from the study following the process described above.

If you withdraw from the study, **consider whether this is necessary**: it will often not be possible to withdraw your data which has already been collected, after it has been anonymised. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible and keep the data secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

All research results pertaining to the research project will be added to the dedicated project website Findings page (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/futuretrack/findings/>) and will be shared through the Futuretrack Twitter account (@Futuretrack2006) and other social media channels.

You will receive a copy of the findings in an accessible 20-page online report.

We envisage the following outputs from the study:

- Project report, including an accessible 20-page online report that you will be able to access from our website that will summarise the key findings.
- Short topical media briefings on salient issues
- Academic papers, submitted to Work, Employment and Society, the British Educational Research Journal and Studies in Higher Education.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by reviewers appointed by the Nuffield Foundation and has been funded on the basis of favourable reviews. It has been scrutinised by the University of Warwick's Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC): Reference number **HSSREC 66/18-19 AM02**.

Whom should I contact if I want further information?

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Professor Peter Elias, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL, Tel: +44(0)24 76 523286; Peter.Elias@warwick.ac.uk

Whom should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study: Head of Research Governance

Research & Impact Services

University House

University of Warwick

Coventry

CV4 8UW

Email: researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk

Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University of Warwick Data Protection Officer to investigate the matter: DPO@warwick.ac.uk.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet

