



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Study Information Sheet

What is the value of a PhD? Exploring the value of doctoral study and its fitness for purpose in the modern knowledge economy.

Return address:

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Sheffield S10 2RX

You are invited to take part in a research project about perceptions of value towards doctoral study. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important that you read through this information beforehand and have the chance to discuss it with the research team. Please take your time in deciding whether you would like to take part in the study.

What is the study about?

This project aims to address the underexplored concept of how current PhD students perceive the value of engaging with doctoral study, and compare this to how PhD graduates perceive the value. We aim to use a survey at this (and other Russell group) institutions to explore how current doctoral students perceive the value of their PhD and the factors affecting that perception. We also aim to interview recent graduates to get their perspective on PhD value after graduation in the job market. The whole project will last from January 2016 until October 2016.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen for this study because you are a current PhD student. Your insights into the process of studying a doctoral degree and your personal experiences during this time are really valuable in gaining perceptions of value of the PhD. You do not have to take part in this study but if you decide you would be willing you may access the questionnaire link sent to you over email to complete, the consent statement will be on the first page for you to consider and sign if you agree to participate. You may also withdraw at any time for any reason with no negative consequences.

What will happen if I take part?

You will have received an email containing a link to a questionnaire designed to explore your perceptions of value of your PhD. The questionnaire will incorporate open and closed questions on topics relating to your perceptions of value of your PhD and the factors affecting this along with some demographical questions. This will take around 10-15 minutes to complete and your responses will be anonymous so you cannot be identified. This data will only be accessible by the research team and will only be used for research purposes.

Are there any risks/benefits in taking part?

We do not foresee any physical risks in taking part in the study. During the questionnaire you may recall some negative or upsetting past experiences, if you wish to stop or cancel the questionnaire at any time you may do so with no consequences, if you do withdraw, your data will be immediately destroyed even after it has been analysed. Although there are no immediate benefits, many individuals

find recounting their experiences and giving their opinion on topics, such as their education and work, enjoyable and this may also be true for you. We hope that the findings of this work will raise awareness of the issues affecting the PhD learning experience, providing meaningful new guidance and support for students.

How will you use the data?

Any data we collect from you will be confidential. It will be anonymised in reports and used only for research purposes. This research will be written into a report and may be published in peer reviewed journals and/or presented at conferences and meetings. The final report will be made available on PGR relevant university webpages.

This research has been organised by Billy Bryan and Kay Guccione and has been reviewed and accepted by the University of Sheffield ethics committee.

If you wish to participate in this study, please complete the consent form provided.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. Please keep this for your record.

If you have any questions or complaints about this research project please contact:

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