

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2212

Title: Understanding non-continuation and degree transfer of undergraduates in London

Executive Summary:

Approval is sought to spend £30,000 on research to understand the reasons for higher rates of non-continuation in higher education – in particular for black students – and degree transfer in London. A secondary research objective is to identify the extent to which non-continuation and degree transfer is linked to students' socio-economic status.

The research will help understand barriers to social mobility; inform the Mayor's work on skills and careers guidance to increase the number and diversity of Londoners gaining the skills they need; and contribute to the delivery of one of the strategic objectives in the Mayor's forthcoming equality, diversity and inclusion strategy.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Communities and Social Policy approves:

1. Expenditure of £30,000 on research to understand the reasons for higher rates of non-continuation in higher education – in particular for black students.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT:

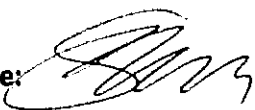
I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Sarah Mulley/~~Julia Slay~~

Position: Assistant Director of Communities and Social Policy

Signature:



Date: 21-03-18

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

London has been characterised as a social mobility ‘hotspot’. Students in London’s schools obtain the best GCSE results in the country while London has more of its young people in higher education than ever before. Compared to the rest of the country, London has higher levels of young people attending higher education institutions (HEIs) and also higher levels of diversity in terms of both the ethnic and socio-economic background of HE participants.

However, recent research suggests London’s success in supporting its young people to progress into higher education is not matched by its ability to retain them on their courses. London’s non-continuation rate is significantly above the national average. Research published by the Social Market Foundation has suggested there may be ‘London-specific’ drivers of this higher rate and that black students are more at risk of non-continuation. The research also suggested that lower-tariff institutions had higher rates of non-continuation, which may be of relevance given the diversity of London’s higher education sector.

The research we are commissioning would seek to fill an important evidence gap on what is driving the higher rate in London and why there are higher rates for certain groups of students – black learners, in particular.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

The overarching objectives of the research are to better understand the reasons for the higher rates of:

- non-continuation in London higher education
- non-continuation for black students in London higher education
- degree transfer in London and its relationship, if any, with non-continuation in London HE.

A secondary objective is to identify the extent to which 3.1 is linked to students whose parents work or worked in lower-level occupations (socio-economic classes).

The appointed researchers would be expected to deliver their findings in a final report with two presentations of findings.

3. Equality comments

This research is responding to evidence of a barrier that a specific group faces to benefitting from high quality adult education.

The Mayor’s forthcoming equality, diversity and inclusion strategy will contain a specific strategic objective on increasing the number and diversity of people gaining the skills they need, which includes progression through further/higher level learning and training. This research would directly contribute to that strategic objective.

4. Other considerations

As well as the equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, this research would be directly relevant to the skills strategy, the economic development strategy and the Mayor’s Vision for Young People. The Economic and Business Policy, Skills, and Education and Youth teams have all been consulted and approved the

commissioning of this research. The research will inform a sector approach, recognising the shared interest of higher, medium and lower tariff London higher education institutions in reducing the non-continuation rate.

Risks associated with this research include reputational risks resulting from findings of this research potentially being interpreted as labelling lower-tariff institutions as 'failing' their students, or from being perceived to place the 'blame' for non-continuation solely on certain groups of students. These risks will be managed through careful consideration of the framing of the research objectives and methodologies and the wording and presentation of the research findings.

5. Financial comments

The research would be funded by £30,000 from the social mobility budget.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract [for externally delivered projects]	Mid/late April
Announcement [if applicable]	Early May
Delivery Start Date [for project proposals]	Late March
Final report	Mid June

Appendices and supporting papers:

Invitation to tender

SMF research

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

Note: This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

Part 1 Deferral:**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? YES**

If YES, for what reason: To delay making public until after election period

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring) 4th May 2018

Part 2 Confidentiality: Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**Drafting officer:**

Dan Drillsma-Milgrom has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and – if relevant – Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.

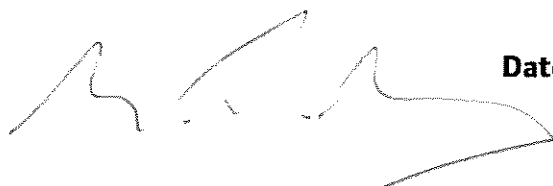
Corporate Investment Board:

The Corporate Investment Board reviewed this proposal on 19 March 2018

HEAD OF FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

19.03.18