

SRHE

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Students' sense of belonging in higher education: the impacts of social class, locality and institutional habitus

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1. Research backgrounds

Research on inequality in UK higher education is dominated by class-based assumptions about traditional and non-traditional students. Students from non-traditional backgrounds are closely related to notions of working-class, local, living at home, and being relatively immobile and are often described as ‘disadvantaged’ (Christie 2007; Reay 1998; Reay 2002; Wakeling and Savage 2015). Many studies (e.g. Keane 2011; Reay 2002; Patiniotis and Holdsworth 2005; O’Donnell and Tobbell 2007; Lynch and O’Riordan 1998; Platt 2007; Mallman 2017) argue that students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to display lower engagement and belonging, which in turn affects their retention and success in higher education. Widening access policies in higher education have developed in this context.

Despite the importance of on-going debates about social and geographical mobilities in the transition to and belonging in higher education, this binary distinction between middle class and working class poses potential risks from two perspectives: over-simplification and incompleteness. Firstly, the dichotomous approach oversimplifies the complex nature of inequality in the educational context, since students’ purposes, expectations, and perceptions of higher education have been changing rapidly (Thomas, 2012). Secondly, this approach has a limited view of other crucial factors such as locality and institutional habitus. Locality implies a wide range of individual, regional, and social interpretations based on place, language, cultural and historical backgrounds, natural environment and even national identity, which substantially affect students’ perceptions of their social position. This inclusive meaning of locality has been rarely investigated in the higher education context. Institutional habitus, stemming from Bourdieu’s cultural capital and habitus, is interpreted as class-based influences and milieu generated by the higher education institution (Reay et al., 2001).

One study which began to address this issue is the project on Students’ Sense of Belonging at Bangor University in 2014. The data collected from around 800 participants for the mixed methods research revealed the complexity of students’ belonging (Ahn, 2017). One finding was that 150 self-identified Welsh students showed the weakest belonging and participation in comparison with other groups (e.g. English, white, even other disadvantaged groups). It seems counterintuitive, especially considering the character and reputation of Bangor University, which is often regarded as the ‘(authentic) Welsh University’ in ‘the heart of Wales’. It provides compelling evidence with which to address the multi-faceted nature of social inequality in higher education, drawn from tensions between perceptions of socio-economic, institutional, cultural and national identities. This finding requires further study on a wider scale to examine which factors lead to alienation, since the class-centred theory can provide only a limited explanation.

The project examines whether Welsh students’ belonging and participation in HE institutions in Wales is stronger than other groups in the same institution because Welsh students tend to select HE institutions in Wales, based on cultural and geographical familiarity, and emotional

benefits from family and friends (Hinton, 2011; Donnelly and Evans, 2016). It uses the Welsh example to evaluate the relationship between institutional and local belonging, and its impact on engagement on the institutional and national levels. This approach will reveal how these crucial factors affect social inequality in higher education other than social class.

Therefore, the research questions of this project are:

- Is belonging and participation of Welsh students in universities in Wales stronger than among other students in the same institutions?
- Is there any difference in belonging and participation of Welsh students across selected institutions in Wales?
- Is there any difference in their institutional and local belonging (sense of belonging to the institution and place)?

This project selected three distinctively different higher institutions based on their socio-economic, cultural, and institutional features: Bangor University, described as a ‘Welsh University in the heart of Wales’; Cardiff University as a cosmopolitan university in the Russell group in the ‘English Welsh’ area; and Third University¹, one of the post-1992 institutions emphasising vocational aspects. Bangor University in north Wales, founded in 1884, is one of the middle-ranked (39th) institutions according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2018. One of the Russell group, Cardiff University in south Wales, was established in 1866, and has the highest student population of 31,935 according to the Welsh Government Statistical Bulletin 2017/18, compared to Bangor University (11,155) and Third University (10,435). Third University was chosen for contrast, being one of the ‘new universities’ in south Wales which aims to provide work-based learning (see Appendix 1).

¹ The institution originally selected as Third University declined to participate in the study, so a close equivalent was found and neither is named in order to preserve anonymity.

2. Research design

2.1: Instrument

The study design is comparative and cross-sectional, involving two forms of data collection. Stage 1 used the '10 Words Question' and a short survey questionnaire. The 10 Words instrument, used in previous research, is a single open-ended question asking participants to write down up to ten words about anything that comes to mind when they think about belonging to their university. The survey questionnaire consists of two sections, which are Belonging and Demographic Information. The belonging questions include participants' belonging to their institution (Institutional belonging) and local community (Local belonging) on a 5-point Likert scale. Demographic information is itemised under Welsh domicile, national identity and socio-economic indicators (e.g. first university entry in family, receiving university bursaries¹).

2.2: Sampling & data collection

The initial invitation to recruit lecturers for the data collection was sent to all three universities early in 2019. However, as the third institution did not accept the invitation, alternative institutions with similar profiles were searched and a suitable alternative was found. Neither is named in order to preserve anonymity. The negotiations led to an unavoidable delay. As students were no longer around at the university campus during the summer (June- August), alternative ways to approach students (i.e. online recruitment and email data collection) were considered, but rejected due to the administrative difficulties. The total number of participants in the second- choice Third university is, therefore, fewer than the original target.

The participants were drawn from the current undergraduate student populations at Bangor University, Cardiff University, and Third University. A purposive, non-random sampling strategy was used to recruit a maximum-variation sample including Welsh medium students. Based on previous experience of a similar research process, assuming a response rate of 50% during term-time, a sample size of 150 (50 participants from each institution) was anticipated for stage 1 (margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%); and 9 participants for stage 2. The recruitment occurred in scheduled lectures in order to maximise response rates. The data was collected from 192 participants in Bangor, Cardiff and the third university mainly between the 4th March and 13th May in 2019.

Participants were given an information sheet with a consent form to ensure informed consent and were offered the choice to opt out of the research at any time and without giving a reason. Responses were anonymous, and individual sheets will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Data is stored on a secure, encrypted and password protected university server. Ethical approval was granted by Bangor University.

3. Findings

The data analysis of the 10 Words Question was conducted in a series of steps (namely In Vivo coding, systematic coding, thematic analysis, and contingency analysis). The questionnaire data was summarised using frequencies and percentages, followed by statistical analysis methods. The interview data was analysed thematically.

3.1: Participants

As shown in Table 1, female participants outnumber males by a wide margin (85.9%). The average age of participants is 23.5, where mature students² account for 45.3% of the total number of participants. Almost half of them are studying Healthcare (48.4%), followed by Social Sciences (28.6%) and Education (17.2%). More than one in two identified themselves as Welsh (53.1%), where the majority (90.2%) have lived in Wales before they started university. Two socio-economic indicators reveal that slightly less than half (44.8%) are the first person in their family who entered higher education, and more than half (61.5%) are receiving university bursaries. The high proportion of female and mature students reflects the general patterns of recruitment in healthcare and education. Welsh identities are declared by participants themselves.

Table 1: Participants demographic information

Variable	n = 192 (%)
Gender	
Female	165 (85.9%)
Male	22 (11.5%)
Age	Range : 17 – 62 IQR: 19, 20, 24 M=23.5 SD= 8.170
Female	M=23.6 SD= 8.163
Male	M=23.2 SD= 8.617
Academic Discipline	186 (96.9%)
Healthcare	93 (48.4%)
Social Sciences	55 (28.6%)
Education	33 (17.2%)
Others	5 (2.6%)
Welsh National Identity	192 (100.0%)
Welsh	102 (53.1%)
Not Welsh	90 (46.9%)

² Mature students are defined as any student aged 21 or over at the start of their studies.(UCAS Mature student guide <https://www.ucas.com/file/35436/download?token=2Q6wiw-L>)four

Welsh Domicile	188 (97.9%)
Have lived in Wales before HE	154 (90.2%)
No	34 (7.7%)
First in Family to HE	187 (97.4%)
Yes	86 (44.8%)
No	98 (51.0%)
Don't Know	3 (1.6%)
University Bursary	187 (97.4%)
Yes	118 (61.5%)
No	63 (32.8%)
Don't know	6 (3.1%)

(Due to missing data, the sum might not be always 100%)

3.2: 10 Words Question data- overall

'Friends' is the most important word, as it accounts for 6.5% (63 times) of the total 976 words data that 162 participants wrote down for the 10 Words Question; followed by 'education' (38 times), 'support' (36 times) and 'community' (32 times). Almost half of the whole word data items are related to social engagement (463 times, 47.4%), followed by academic engagement (25.3%), personal spaces (19.8%) and surroundings (7.5%), as shown in Figure 1. The social engagement domain includes friends, university clubs and societies, community feelings ('home', 'included', 'respected', 'welcoming', 'connected', 'together'), support, and socialising.

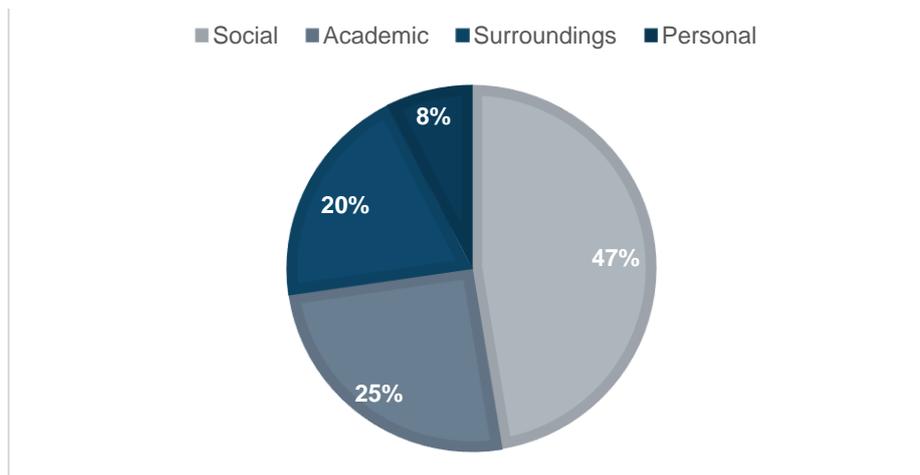


Fig 1: Four domains of students' sense of belonging³

³ The four domains of students' sense of belonging in higher education have been established in the author's previous research. For further details, see Ahn & Davis (2019) Four domains of students' sense of belonging to university. *Studies in Higher Education*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1564902>

The 162 participants wrote down on average 6 words in the *words data* form, whereas 16 participants (9.0%) responded in the *narrative data* form (longer responses such as phrases and sentences). Out of the total 178 participants, almost everyone (116 participants, 91.6%) mentioned at least one response about social engagement, then 65.2% for academic engagement, 61.8% for personal spaces, and 30.9% for surroundings.

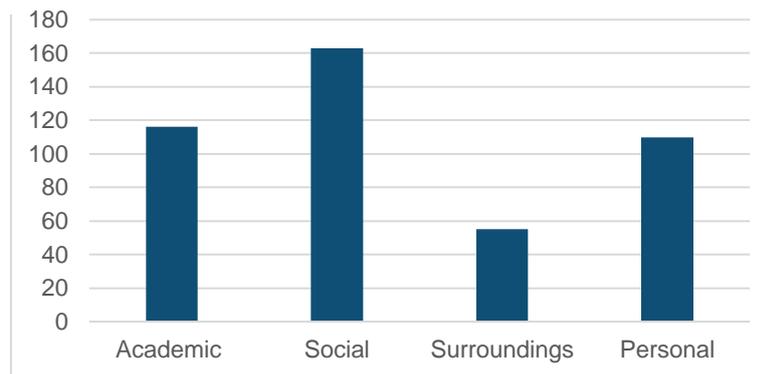


Fig 2: Four domains of students' sense of belonging by participants

37 participants (20.8%) mentioned negative feelings about their belonging such as 'excluded', 'separated', 'stress', 'struggle', and 'debt'. The entire *words and narrative data* fitted completely into the four domains of students' sense of belonging, namely academic engagement, social engagement, surroundings and personal spaces (Ahn and Davis, 2019) (See Appendix 4).

3.3: 10 Words Question data- by institution

The data analysis by institution reveals the distinctive characteristics of Bangor University (N=76), Cardiff University (N=86) and Third University (N=16).

Bangor University shows strong vocational aspects of students' belonging, particularly related to their professions (i.e. 'nursing', 'uniform', 'placement', 'NHS', 'April intake') from the 76 participants. Some participants tend to regard university symbolically ('uni logo', 'uni merch (merchandise)', 'hoodies'). Most importantly, there are many negative comments found throughout all four domains ('disorganised', 'excluded', 'homesick', 'stress', 'loan', 'debt') from 27.6% of the participants.

Cardiff University shows the lowest data related to academic engagement (46 participants, 53.5%), compared to Bangor University (75.0%) and Third University (81.2%). There are many words expressing community feelings such as 'repected', 'involved', 'belonging', 'common

interest', 'friendly', 'home', and 'understanding'. In addition, many participants expressed positive emotions ('happy', 'enjoy', 'safe', 'comfortable', 'free'), with few negative comments.

Third University contains relatively homogeneous responses, as the most data was collected from one subject cohort. The majority of the 16 participants mentioned some words related to surroundings (93.8%) such as 'Welsh', 'Welsh group', and 'living away'; or academic engagement (81.2%) like 'opportunities' ('equal opportunities').

The summary of the complete data analysis results of three institutions is attached in Appendix 3.

3.4: Questionnaire data – belonging

The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data reveals that participants tend to agree that they belong to their university (University Belonging, $M=3.76$, $SD=1.039$) and Wales (Wales Belonging, $M=3.87$, $SD=1.443$), whereas their belonging to local seems to be neutral (Local Belonging, $M=3.17$, $SD=1.248$). Interestingly, their belonging to Wales is higher than their institution.

Table 2: Students' belonging to university, local and Wales

	University Belonging	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
N	189	187	189
Mean	3.76	3.17	3.87
SD	1.039	1.248	1.443

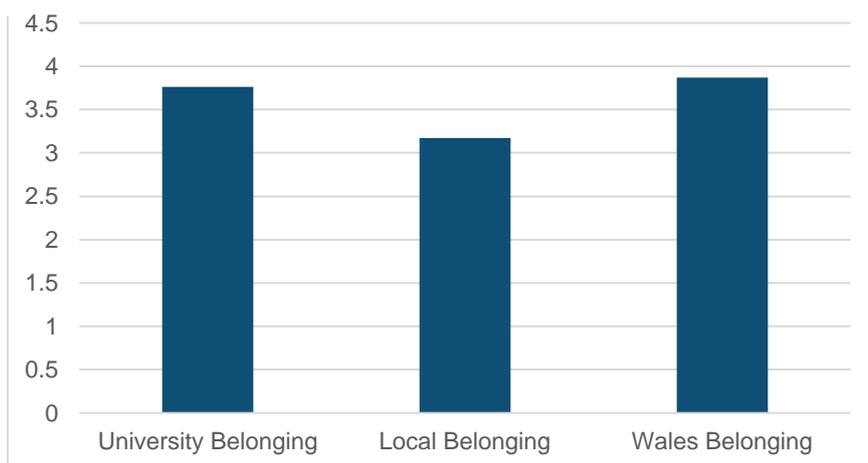


Fig 3: Students' belonging to university, local and Wales

The correlation analysis confirmed that there are moderate associations between the three types of belonging.

Table 3: Correlation analysis results of University, Local and Wales Belonging

	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
University Belonging	.382	.276
Local Belonging		.294

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

In order to investigate participants who regard themselves as Welsh, the whole data was divided into two groups of Welsh (N=102) and Not-Welsh (N=82, including British, English, Scottish, Irish, northern Irish, and European). The data analysis shows that there is no significant difference between these two groups in their belonging to university, while there is a large gap in their belonging to Wales. Self-identified Welsh students tend to strongly feel belonging to Wales (M= 4.53), whereas non-Welsh students have the lowest level of belonging to Wales (M=3.09), even compared to their belonging to university (M=3.75) and local (M=3.13). The same analysis of Welsh domicile reveals a larger gap (2.38) between students who lived in Wales before university (N= 154, M=4.29) and those who did not (N= 34, M=1.91), compared with the figure for Welsh national identity (1.44). Welsh nationality and domicile are important factors to participants' belonging to Wales, but not or a little to their belonging to local and universities.

Regarding socio-economic indicators and academic disciplines, participants receiving a bursary show higher University belonging (M=3.98) than those who don't (M=3.41), while there is no difference found by discipline and by first in family in higher education.

3.5: Questionnaire data – belonging by institution

Cardiff University shows the highest institutional belonging (M=3.92), followed by Bangor University (M=3.66) and Third University (M=3.44), where the gap between the highest and the lowest is less than 0.5 (Table 4).

Table 4: University, Local and Wales Belonging by institution

		University Belonging	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
Bangor University	N	87	85	87
	Mean	3.66	2.87	3.74
	SD	1.108	1.270	1.528
Cardiff University	N	86	86	86
	Mean	3.92	3.48	3.94
	SD	.936	1.155	1.392
Third University	N	16	16	16
	Mean	3.44	3.06	4.19
	SD	1.094	1.289	1.223

Overall, there are the smallest differences between three types of belonging in Cardiff University, where belonging to their university (M=3.92) and Wales (M=3.94) are higher than local (M=3.48). University belonging and local belonging in Cardiff University is the highest of all three institutions.

Third University shows the largest gap between belonging to University (M=3.44) and Wales (M=4.19), and their belonging to Wales is the highest of all three institutions.

Although belonging to Bangor University (M=3.66) is higher than Third University, participants' belonging to local (M=2.87) and Wales (M=3.74) are the lowest.

Next, Table 5. University, Local and Wales Belonging by Welsh identity and institution, reveals that Welsh students in Bangor and Third universities seem to have slightly higher belonging to their universities (Bangor 3.76 & Third 3.46) and local (Bangor 2.98 & Third 3.15) than non-Welsh (Bangor University belonging 3.54, Local belonging 2.76 & Third University belonging 3.33, Local belonging 2.67). However, Welsh students in Cardiff University (M=4.70) show the highest belonging to Wales (non-Welsh= 3.19).

Welsh students' belonging to Wales in Third University (M=4.15) is the lowest in Welsh students in all three universities, although the sample size is small (N=13).

Third University is often excluded, due to the difficulties to run the analysis effectively with a small sample size.

Table 5: University, Local and Wales Belonging by Welsh identity & institution

Institution	National Identity		University Belonging	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
Bangor University	Welsh	N	46	44	46
		Mean	3.76	2.98	4.48
		SD	1.079	1.267	1.090
	Not-Welsh	N	41	41	41
		Mean	3.54	2.76	2.90
		SD	1.142	1.280	1.530
Cardiff University	Welsh	N	43	43	43
		Mean	3.86	3.44	4.70
		SD	.966	1.315	.741
	Not-Welsh	N	43	43	43
		Mean	3.98	3.51	3.19
		SD	.913	.985	1.484
Third University	Welsh	N	13	13	13
		Mean	3.46	3.15	4.15
		SD	1.198	1.281	1.281
	N	3	3	3	

Not-Welsh	Mean	3.33	2.67	4.33
	SD	.577	1.528	1.155

Similarly, the analysis by Welsh domicile confirms that Welsh domicile students tend to have higher Wales Belonging than those who did not leave in Wales, across three institutions. Besides, the gaps (2.33 in Bangor University & 2.49 in Cardiff University) are larger than the Welsh identity (1.58 in Bangor University & 1.51 in Cardiff University).

The analysis by university bursary reveals that students who receive bursaries tend to have higher belonging to university, local and Wales than those who do not.

3.6: Synthesis of analysis results from both 10 Words Question and Questionnaire

Welsh students

102 participants identified themselves as Welsh, where 89.2% (91 participants) are female. The average age is 21.8, which is lower than the total sample (23.5). Healthcare students account for 43.1%, and 45.1% are in Bangor University. Half of the Welsh students are the first member of their family to enter university, and more than half (61.4%) receive a means-tested university bursary. Almost all of them (99.0%) have lived in Wales. For the 10 Words Question, 30 participants wrote down some words related to surroundings, where 26 participants specifically mentioned Welsh, Welshness or Wales.

The further analysis of Welsh students by maturity in Table 6 shows that Young Welsh students tend to have higher belonging to university (M=3.82), local (M=3.49) and Wales (M=4.70) than mature Welsh students (3.69; 2.78; 4.29). Wales belonging is the highest in both groups.

There is no or little differences in University and Local Belonging between young and mature students who are not Welsh, while mature non Welsh students seem to have higher belonging to Wales (M=3.42) than young non Welsh (M=2.74).

Table 6: University, Local and Wales Belonging by Welsh identity and maturity

			University Belonging	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
Welsh	Young	N	60	59	60
		Mean	3.82	3.49	4.70
		SD	1.066	1.318	.788
	Mature	N	42	41	42
		Mean	3.69	2.78	4.29

		SD	1.024	1.151	1.195
Not- Welsh	Young	N	42	42	42
		Mean	3.71	3.02	2.74
		SD	.835	1.000	1.515
	Mature	N	43	43	43
		Mean	3.79	3.19	3.42
		SD	1.226	1.367	1.435

Regarding socio-economic indicators, amongst Welsh students, those who receive bursaries show higher University Belonging (M=4.1) than non-recipients (M=3.29), while little difference is found between non Welsh students. There are minimal differences in belonging between the first in family to HE and not, regardless of Welsh nationality.

There are no significant differences between young and mature students in University, Local, and Wales Belonging, nor between healthcare students and other disciplines.

Participants with low University Belonging but high Wales Belonging

20 participants who responded with low University Belonging ('disagree' & 'strongly disagree') are selected for the further analysis. The average age is similar to the total average (23.6); 90.0% are female; 55.0% are mature students and studying Healthcare; 60% are Welsh and Bangor University students.

The average University Belonging is low (1.65) (Table 7), while Local and Wales Belonging is much higher (2.60 and 3.00); 10 participants show the lowest belonging across all three (strongly disagree or disagree), while the rest 10 participants show higher local and/or Wales belonging (agree or strongly agree) than University belonging (Disagree or strongly disagree).

Table 7: University, Local and Wales Belonging of participants with low University Belonging

	University Belonging	Local Belonging	Wales Belonging
Mean	1.65	2.60	3.00
SD	0.489	1.536	1.806

Half of the 20 participants responded with negative words such as 'debt', 'money problem', 'isolation', 'stress', and 'afraid'.

4. Discussion

4.1: Four domains, complexity and institutional influence

The analysis results of the 10 Words Question confirm that responses fit into the four domains of students' sense of belonging in higher education, namely academic engagement, social engagement, surroundings and personal spaces (Ahn and Davis, 2019), as the previous Bangor Research argued. It also strongly supports the finding that social engagement is the most salient expression of belonging.

The complexity of belonging in higher education is particularly noticeable throughout the findings of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For instance, the 10 Words Question responses from three institutions contain distinct differences, highlighting the importance of the institutional atmospheres and institutional habitus. In addition, the analysis of the questionnaire data shows that the levels of students' sense of belonging to their universities can vary. The investigation of three types of belonging to the university, local and Wales leads to the other influential factors such as locality and disadvantages.

Firstly, institutional aspects seem to be crucial to students' sense of belonging to their university. The analysis shows that there is no significant difference between Welsh and non-Welsh students in their belonging to university. Even for the further analysis within the institution, little difference was found. Instead, there is a noticeable difference between the institutions; belonging to Cardiff University is the highest, followed by other two universities, which is likely to be associated with the rankings of these three institutions. Students in Third University seem to be the lowest ('neutral' to their belonging) to the university, while they show the highest level of belonging to Wales.

According to the HESA data (see Appendix 1), Bangor University has the second largest number of students (1,540 13.8%) who enrolled in some teaching through the medium of Welsh amongst 12 higher education institutions in Wales in 2017/18; followed by Cardiff University (4th) and Third University. Cardiff University has student population (31,935) nearly three times larger than other two universities; but the lowest numbers in students Welsh domiciled (33.7%), as fluent Welsh speakers (5.2%), and taking modules through the medium of Welsh (1.6%). There are also the lowest numbers of mature (11.4%) and under-represented students (mature 15.6%, young 9.5%). Mature students are proportionately more numerous in Bangor and Third Universities than Cardiff University. More than half of the students in Third University have been living in Wales (54.3%), with the highest proportions of students in under-represented groups (mature 19.9%, young 17.7%) and the highest non-continuation rate (10.2%). The non-continuation rates of those mature students in Bangor and Third Universities are lower than the HESA bench marks.

The students' experiences of feeling isolated and disconnected as an individual or as Welsh in higher education might vary depending on the institutional atmospheres. For instance, being a Welsh student in Bangor University, where strong bilingual and bicultural policy are encouraged, might not be same as the one in Cardiff University, where only 1.6% are taking any Welsh-medium modules, located in the large metropolitan city.

4.2: Locality or Welshness

This leads to the next research topic, *locality*, or in the present research, *Welshness*. Whether participants have lived in Wales before the university, and they identify themselves as Welsh or not, seem to be the critical factors to their belonging to Wales. As previous Bangor Research revealed, the meaning of locality is expanded to a wider spectrum including living spaces (i.e. student halls, flats), location (i.e. city, town, natural environment), and cultural elements (language, history). More than one third of participants including non-Welsh mentioned one or more words about Welshness or Wales. In addition, Welsh identity seems to be critical, as young Welsh students show higher belonging to university, local and Wales than mature Welsh students. Wales belonging is the highest in both groups than local and university. No or little differences are found between non Welsh students, regardless of their maturity and bursary status.

Despite existing debates about social and geographical mobilities in HE transition, there is a lack of research about regional factors such as national identity (i.e. Welsh) and locational attachment derived from language, cultural and natural environments; and their impact on sense of belonging in the higher education context. In the case of Scotland (Christie, 2007), HE transition of local students to local universities is more likely influenced by financial benefits and emotional attachments to family and friends, which are likely to be salient issues among those from non-traditional backgrounds. In the case of Ireland (Keane, 2011), the separation between different student groups based on social class is identified, which leads to the lower social capital of working class students. In the case of Portsmouth (Holton 2015a, 2015b), inequality between local and non-local students exists; local students often suffer from the tension between their local and university friends, which affects their sense of place.

There are two interesting studies about Welsh students in higher education by Hinton (2011) and Donnelly and Evans (2016), arguing that Welsh students tended to choose universities based on cultural familiarity. One study reveals that there is a strong tendency amongst Welsh students to stay in the space where they feel a sense of belonging as Welsh (Hinton, 2011). It seems natural that Welsh students' belonging to Wales is higher than non Welsh students, where the gap is large (1.44), as shown in the present research. On the other hand, if Welsh students tend to choose their university based on cultural familiarity, Welsh students' belonging and participation in HE institutions in Wales should be stronger than other groups in the same institution; as well

as other Welsh students in HE institutions in England. However, the present research reveals that there is no significant difference in belonging to the university between Welsh and non-Welsh students.

The total number of Welsh domicile students who enrolled in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) in 2017/18 is 34,300, where 25,590 selected HEIs in Wales (74.6%); 8,525 in England; 165 in Scotland; and 25 in northern Ireland, according to the Higher education student record, Higher Education Statistics Agency. The proportions of Welsh domicile students who chose universities in Wales have been slowly declining for the last five years from 78.7% in 2013/14 to 74.6% in 2017/18 (see Appendix 2). This figure seems to be particularly low, compared to England (96.0%) and Scotland (95.5%). It is comparable with Northern Ireland (74.3%).

Table 8: Numbers of students who live and enrolled HEIs in the UK by region in 2017/18 (HESA)

	Wales	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Students domiciled	34,300	455,310	51,620	19,445
Students enrolled HEIs in the region	25,590	436,940	49,320	14,445
%	74.6%	96.0%	95.5%	74.3%

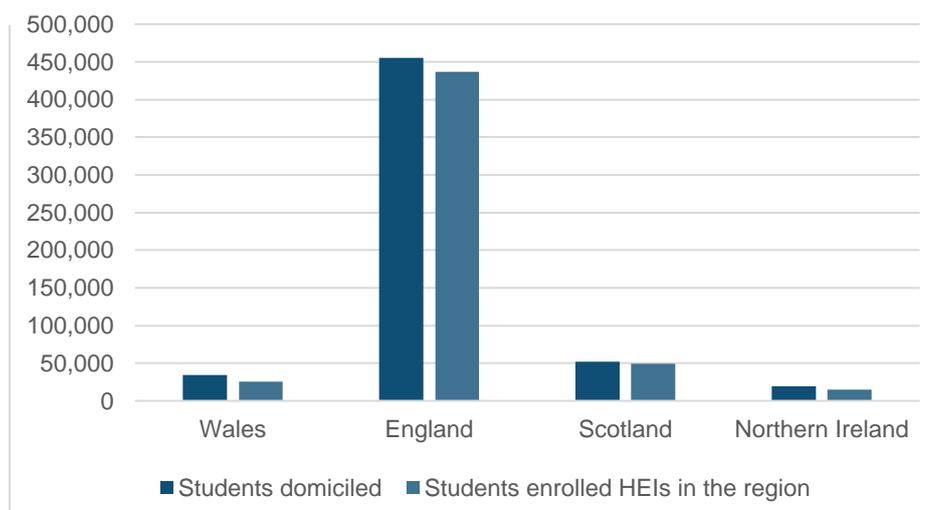


Fig 4: Numbers of students who live and enrolled HEIs in the UK by region in 2017/18 (HESA)

The notion that Welsh students select their university in Wales mainly based on cultural and environmental familiarity might cause confusion that Welsh students might prefer universities in Wales. However, as HESA statistics reveal, the ratio of students who live in Wales to choose universities in Wales is not relatively high, compared to other regions. In addition, it might give a false impression that transition to higher education is determined mainly by individual preferences, ignoring structural factors such as inequality, social mobility and institutional habitus.

4.3: Disadvantaged backgrounds and institutional habitus

The findings of the present research reveal that students' sense of belonging to their university (M=3.76) is slightly lower than the previous Bangor research (M=3.96) on average. The average of Bangor University Belonging (M=3.66) is even lower. Amongst Welsh students, in the previous Bangor research, 138 Welsh students, which account for 36.3% of the total participants, showed lower belonging (M=3.78) than English students (M=4.27). However, the average level of belonging of the current Welsh students is 3.76, which is nearly same as the rest of non-Welsh students (M=3.75). How can we make sense of it?

One of the main differences between the current and previous belonging research is participants' profile, as participants were recruited only from three disciplines, namely Education, Social Sciences and Healthcare. Most participants are studying the subjects heavily focusing on vocational aspects (i.e. teaching, social work, and nursing). In general, the 10 Words Question data contains few ambiguous, abstract, literary or figurative response. Most responses are rather straightforward and literal, compared to the previous Bangor Research.

In addition, the ratio of Welsh students is quite high; more than a half are self-identified as Welsh, where 9 in 10 have been lived in Wales before starting the university. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that the average of Welsh domicile students in three institutions is 41.2%, with low proportions of fluent Welsh speakers (9.0%) and those who take the Welsh medium modules (6.0%). The total number of students who enrolled in any first year undergraduate programme in the total 12 higher education institutions in Wales in 2017/18 is 45,050, while Welsh domicile students are 25,590 (56.8%).

The ratio of female, mature, and socio-economically disadvantaged students is very high. 85.9% are female participants, compared to the average of three institutions (58.1%); 45.3% are mature students (the average age is 23.5), compared to 17.7%. Participants who are the first in family to enter the higher education institution account for 44.8%, whereas the average of low participation neighbourhood proportions of mature students in three institutions is 17.6%.

Existing research about non-traditional or disadvantaged students in HE reveals that students in this group generally are less likely to be engaged academically and socially, which often leads to weak sense of belonging to their institution. Students from non-traditional backgrounds are generally understood to be local, living at home, mature, less geographically and socially mobile, and working class.

The current research selected two socio-economic indicators that are often applied in higher education research; receiving university bursaries and the first person in family to enter the university. The analysis results seem controversial, as participants who receive the means-tested bursary tend to show higher University Belonging than those who do not. The second indicator, First in family to HE, also leads to no differences.

It might be a positive sign of the policy for non-traditional students in higher education, known as widening access policy. Closely related to cultural capital, institutional habitus in higher education is often adapted in order to explore the impact of social class in terms of students' selection of institutions, their belonging, academic and social experiences, success and retention. Institutional habitus is 'the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation' (Reay et al. 2001, para. 1.3). Their study reveals that cultural capital, which is likely to be mainly determined by social class, matters for university selection and development of belonging as well as identities to working-class students. Students from socio-economically disadvantaged might find it difficult to feel being part of the institution, especially in the social and cultural spheres. Therefore, the focus of the widening access policy has been shifted to this disadvantaged group.

On the other hand, it might be a failing sign as an ineffective indicator. For instance, as the population to enter higher education has been increasing dramatically, it is not exclusive any more. In addition, the definition and boundary of the family can cause confusion, failing to reflect a biographic trajectory. In terms of means-testing, the cutoff points might be inaccurate to capture the current status of social class.

4.4: Vocational dimension

The analysis also highlights the vocational dimensions in the higher education belonging. Responses of the 10 Words Question contain frequent references to educational purposes and professions. Yet, there are quite distinctive differences to be found between healthcare students in Bangor and Cardiff University. Healthcare students in Bangor University tend to consider their belonging more linked to their profession, showing vocational aspects explicitly, such as nursing, uniform, placement, and NHS. On the other hand, Cardiff university healthcare students tend to express their thoughts about belonging through positive emotions such as happy, fun, safe, secure, respected, trusted and valued, without mentioning their nursing degree.

Further statistical analysis reveals that the opinions of healthcare students in Bangor and Cardiff universities seem to be opposite; participants in Bangor university show lower University Belonging, but higher Wales Belonging than non healthcare students. In contrast, students in Cardiff university express higher University Belonging, but lower Wales Belonging than non healthcare students. As the gaps are less than 0.5, the aggregated data obscure the differences, which were not captured in the whole data analysis.

Existing research shows that belonging is likely to be expressed and interpreted differently by groups of students in various academic schools such as medicine (Arulampalam et al. 2007), nursing (Levett-Jones et al., 2008), and engineering (Holmegaard, et al. 2014). Unlike other indicators such as social class, age, and ethnicity, there is lack of conceptual and empirical evidence to understand how professional attachment and commitment functions, and how it

relates to other relevant concepts such as satisfaction, belonging, participation, and engagement. Vocational aspects are less developed in most measurement instruments of belonging in higher education due to the lack of conceptual foundation as well as difficulties of evaluation.

4.5: Limitations & further study

There were some difficulties in the data collection, particularly recruiting institutions and participants. Under the current economic climate and intense competition in the UK higher education, some institutions may be disinclined to share internal information, especially if it involves risks to reputation. Despite unexpected difficulties in the data collection, the first stage data collection was completed successfully according to the plan in both Bangor and Cardiff universities. As planned, participants from three academic departments (education, social sciences, and healthcare) were all recruited, exceeding the expected numbers (approx. 90 responses from each institution), although 50 participants were planned. Many academics in three institutions appreciated the values and potential of this research, and were willing to share their teaching time for the data collection. Their support has been invaluable.

However, the rejection from one first-choice institution at the beginning of this research raised a question about institutional sensitivity. Sense of belonging to the institution can be a sensitive issue, since it is connected to students' satisfaction, and by extension, to university rankings. It impacted the current study significantly, as it caused unexpected delay of the entire data collection procedure, eventually with the result that students had left for the vacation. A second stage of the data collection was initially planned: a small number of de-briefing interviews with selected participants from Stage 1, based on their socio-economic background, belonging to institutions, and Welsh identities. After repeated attempts to recruit participants over a few months turned out to be unsuccessful, the plan had to be canceled. Despite this obstacle, the 10 words data analysis reveals interesting results. In addition, there were no semantic problems during the data analysis, as most responses are straightforward to interpret. The main purpose of the second stage data collection was to validate the meanings of the 10 words data.

Secondly, as a scoping study to explore students' sense of belonging in higher education in Wales, this study conducted mixed methods research using both qualitative (10 Words Question, de-briefing interview) and quantitative (the survey questionnaire) approaches. Some improvements to the survey questionnaire could be made in the future. A revised survey design should include more refined questions about belonging; local belonging can be potentially a problematic question, as local could mean different things to different participants. For someone who was born and raised in Bangor, studying in Bangor University might feel completely differently about Bangor, from the one studying in same Bangor University, but born and raised in Cardiff or the Valleys.

Speaking Welsh or not should be itemised as an indicator for Welsh identity in a future study, alongside self-identified national identity, Welsh medium modules and domicile. These two dimensions (i.e. Welsh medium and domicile) were newly added for this research, since only self-identification of Welsh nationality was applied previously. Speaking Welsh language was not used, as self-assessed language competence in a single question is unlikely to be accurate, and linguistic competence is not the focus of the current study. Instead, studying through the medium of Welsh is assumed to involve proficiency and strong attachment to the language and national identity. The method to measure socio-economic status realistically might need to be improved, as the existing indicators appear unrefined.

The class-based assumption in inequality in higher education should be re-examined, as the present research reveals that students' socio-economic status, locality and national identity can explain educational inequality only partially. Vocational dimensions will be useful, since it will help to identify how vocational identities and belonging, namely professional attachment based on academic disciplines, are conceptualised and measured. Nonetheless, it is the institutional aspect, which stands out for further investigation. The present research reveals that the levels of belonging to the university correspond to the rankings of these three institutions. This institutional aspect is established by various elements including institutional history, academic performance, professional outcomes, and even university rankings, and shaped as social recognition or reputation. It is symbolically inherent in the institutional atmosphere, which affects students' emotional attachment, and is often presented as sense of pride. New research questions developed from the literature review and findings of this project will be shaped into a proposal for grant funding for more extensive empirical investigation on a large scale across the UK.

Project outputs to date:

Inequality in higher education in Wales: local and institutional belonging, WISERD 2019 Annual Conference – 'Civil Society and participation', Aberystwyth University

The impacts of social class, locality and institutional habitus on students' belonging in higher education, BERA conference 2019, Manchester University

Planned outputs:

A journal article will be submitted to BERJ or SRHE within 2020.

Seminars/ networking opportunities: Informal research seminars with intermediaries and key informants from the three institutions will be organised throughout 2020 (subject to funding availability).

5. Conclusions

The scoping project addressed the problem of inequality in higher education with new evidence on the meaning of locality using data from comparative studies of HE institutions. Locality is interpreted as an inclusive concept capturing place identity as well as local attachments based on language, culture, and natural environment. It challenges the notion of a disadvantaged background by conducting mixed methods empirical research. The qualitative and quantitative data was collected from three distinctively different higher institutions in Wales, which were purposively selected according to socio-economic, cultural, and institutional indicators. The results provide limited or no support for the notion of disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular, the class-based assumption about higher education inequality.

By examining Welsh students' belonging in different HE institutions in Wales including a Russell group university, a middle-ranked institution, and a post-1992 university which provides work-based learning, it answers a critical question about the relationship between institutional and local belonging, and its institutional, national impact on engagement. It reveals how cultural and geographical familiarity, and emotional benefits from family and friends affect social inequality in higher education other than through social class. It provides an empirical and methodological basis from which to further explore the key determinants in the future research.

Specifically, it facilitates consideration of the ways in which the experience of HE provides a basis for distinctive contribution to understanding organisations, whilst also addressing critical questions concerning the role of higher education in inequality, specifically, the socially uneven distribution of cultural capital in UK society. By doing so, it will help to advance current debates about students' belonging, success, and retention in higher education.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the SRHE for the scoping award. I would also like to thank Prof Howard Davis for his support with developing this project. I would also like to thank Prof Chris Taylor, key informants, colleagues and all the participants in three institutions for their support.

Appendix 1. HESA Statistics: demographic information in Bangor, Cardiff and Third University

	Bangor University	Cardiff University	Third University
Total population	11,155	31,935	10,435
F-M ratio*	Female 6,616 (59.3%) Male 4,540	(other 35) 19,020 (59.6%) 12,880	(other 5) 5,775 (55.3%) 4,655
First year*	3,035	9,790	3,345
Welsh Domicile* 41.2%	3,985 35.7%	10,765 33.7%	5,665 54.3%
Welsh speakers (fluent)*	1,623 (14.5%)	1,670 (5.2%)	760 (7.3%)
Taught through some Welsh medium*	1,540 (13.8%)	505 (1.6%)	265 (2.5%)
Mature student**	22.7%	11.4%	19.2%
Under-represented mature and young*** UK 11.6% Wales 15.7%	17.2% (16.3%) 14.3% (13.3%)	15.6% (11.9%) 9.5% (9.3%)	19.9% (13.3%) 17.7% (14.5%)
Non-continuation rate (bench mark)** UK 6.4% Wales 5.9%	5.3% (7.6%)	4.2% (4.7%)	10.2% (9.5%)
Non-continuation mature (bench mark) and young**	6.5% (10%) 5% (6.8%)	10.4% (9.4%) 3.4% (4.1%)	10.9% (12.4%) 10.1% (8.8%)

* Students numbers by HE provider and sex, domicile 2017/18, the Higher education student record, Higher Education Statistics Agency

**Table T3- Non-continuation following year of entry, UK domiciled full-time undergraduate entrants 2016/17

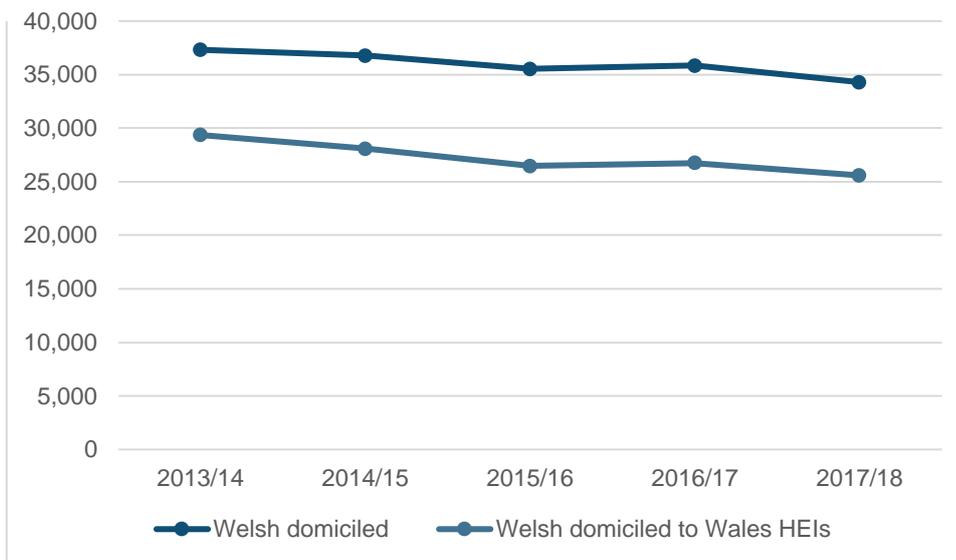
*** Under-represented groups (low participation neighbourhoods POLAR3) 2017/2018

Appendix 2. HESA Statistics: HE student enrolments

HE student enrolments by domicile, first year, undergraduate (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>)

Domicile UK 2017/18	
England	455,310
Wales	34,300
Scotland	51,620
Northern Ireland	19,445
Other UK	1,125
Total UK	561,800

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Welsh domiciled students	37,320	36,760	35,525	35,835	34,300
Welsh domiciled students who entered HEIs in Wales	29,360	28,075	26,470	26,755	25,590
%	78.7%	76.4%	74.5%	74.7%	74.6%



Appendix 3. 10 Words Question data analysis results

	Bangor University	Cardiff University	Third University	Total
Total N participants	89	87	16	192
N of 10 Words participants	76	86	16	178 Missing= 14
N of Words data Participants	70	77	15	162 (91.0%)
N of words data	421	472	83	976
Academic	129 (30.6%)	100 (21.2%)	18 (21.7%)	247 (25.3%)
Social	185 (43.9%)	240 (50.8%)	38 (45.8%)	463 (47.4%)
Surroundings	28 (6.7%)	25 (5.3%)	20 (24.1%)	73 (7.5%)
Personal spaces	79 (18.8%)	107 (22.7%)	7 (8.4%)	193 (19.8%)
Average N of words data	6.0	6.1	5.5	6.0
Negative responses				

N of Negative words	32 (7.6%)	15 (3.2%)	3 (3.6%)	50 (5.1%)
Academic	7	1	0	8
Social	12	3	3	18
Surroundings	0	0	0	0
Personal	13	11	0	24
Narrative responses				
Narrative data participants	6	9	1	16 (9.0%)
Participant analysis				
Participants N	76	86	16	178
Academic	57 (75.0%)	46 (53.5%)	13 (81.2%)	116 (65.2%)
Social	69 (90.8%)	78 (90.7%)	16 (100%)	163 (91.6%)
Surroundings	19 (25.0%)	21 (24.4%)	15 (93.8%)	55 (30.9%)
Personal spaces	48 (63.2%)	58 (67.4%)	4 (25.0%)	110 (61.8%)
Participants Negative responses	21 (27.6%)	13 (15.1%)	3 (18.8%)	37 (20.8%)

Appendix 4. The four domains of students' sense of belonging framework

Table 1 Four domains of belonging with 13 sub-domains and 28 categories (Ahn and Davis, 2019)

Domains	Sub-domains	Categories
Academic (541)	Academic engagement	Curriculum, University, Lecturer Education purpose, Important
Social (1,289)	Social engagement	Societies Participation Friends, Friendship, Pubs, Socialising
	Network Solidarity	Communication Community feeling, Support, Team
Surroundings (320)	Living space Geographical & cultural location	Accommodation Locality, Culture
Personal space (464)	Life satisfaction	Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, Living essentials
	Life attitudes	Attitudes towards goals, Pride, Respect, Challenge, Independence
	Identity Personal interest	Student Personal interest

Appendix 5. Survey questionnaire (English & Welsh versions)

SRHE

Society for Research into Higher Education
Advancing knowledge Informing policy Enhancing practice



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Students' Sense of Belonging Research Information Sheet

What is the purpose of the study?

We are conducting this research to better understand students' sense of belonging. This research will be used to improve the experience of future students. It also aims to address the problem of inequality in higher education on the meaning of locality and challenge the notion of a disadvantaged background. This research is funded by the Scoping Award from the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE).

What data do we need?

We are interested in your thoughts on the concept of 'belonging' to the University. We define 'belonging' to mean a feeling of 'connectedness' to the University. To do this we are issuing this questionnaire which consists of two parts: a 10 Words Question and belonging questions.

What will be done with the data?

Your participation is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any time whilst completing the survey. If you choose not to complete the survey, this will have no impact on your course or degree. The data will be anonymised and your responses will not be linked to you as an individual. Individual response sheets will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Data will be stored on a secure, encrypted and password protected University server and will be erased after completing publications. This research has gained ethical approval from the CABH Research Ethics Committee.

Research findings will be shared with staff members and students of the University to enhance the student experience. Data will also be used for research publications. If the data are used for articles or reports, you will not be identified as an individual.

Thank you for reading this information. For further information about this study, please contact: Dr Mi Young Ahn (m.ahn@bangor.ac.uk)

Your Consent

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

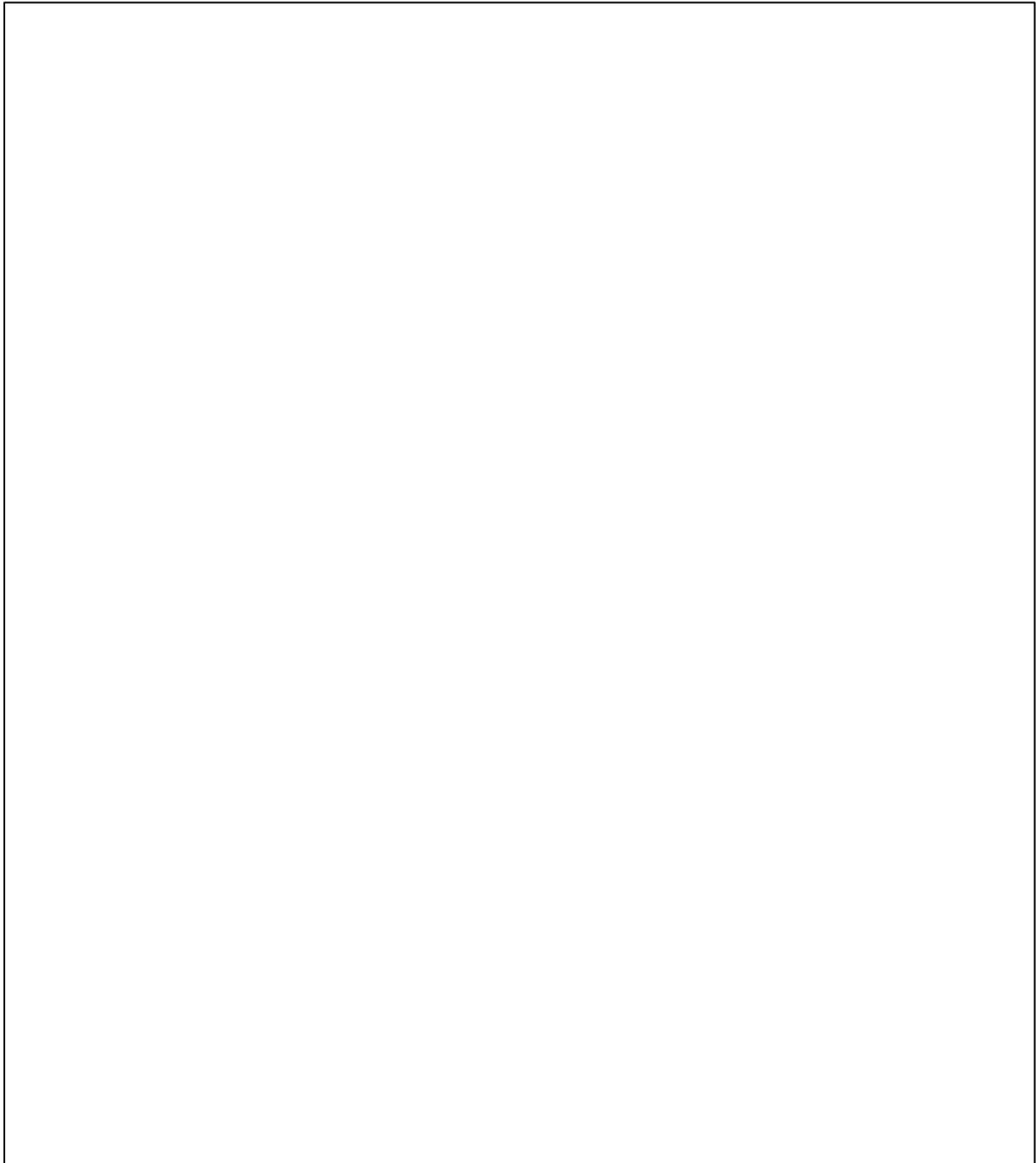
Date

Signature of participant.....

PART 1. 10 Words Question

This survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

TASK: please write down up to 10 words that come to mind when you think about *belonging* to your university.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to write down up to 10 words related to the task.

PART 2. Belonging Questionnaire

A. Sense of Belonging

Please place a cross in the box for the answer that you feel is most appropriate on the scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = 'strongly disagree' and 5 = 'strongly agree'.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I belong to Bangor University	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. I belong to Bangor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. I belong to Wales	<input type="checkbox"/>				

B. Demographic Information

4. How old were you on your last birthday? _____

5. What is your gender? _____

6. Which course do you study? Education Social Sciences Healthcare Other _____

7. Which of the following categories describes the way you think of yourself? (please choose as many or few as apply)

British English European Irish Northern Irish Scottish Welsh Other _____

8. Have you lived in Wales before you started your study in university? Yes No Don't know

9. Are you the first generation in your family to attend university? Yes No Don't know

10. Do you receive a Bangor bursary? Yes No Don't know

Further Research

It would be really helpful to understand the student experience if we could follow your progress at university.

If you would be willing to take part in some follow-up research, please leave your contact details below. Your contact details will be stored on a secure, encrypted and password protected university server.

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____ Telephone: _____

Taflen wybodaeth ar ymdeimlad myfyrwyr o berthyn i Brifysgol Bangor

Beth yw pwrpas yr astudiaeth?

Rydym yn cynnal yr ymchwil hon er mwyn deall yn well ymdeimlad myfyrwyr o berthyn i Brifysgol Bangor. Defnyddir yr ymchwil hon i wella'r profiad a gaiff myfyrwyr yn y dyfodol. Mae hefyd yn ceisio mynd i'r afael â phroblem anghydraddoldeb mewn addysg uwch o ran ardaloedd a herio'r syniad o gefndir difreintiedig. Ariennir yr ymchwil hon gan y Dyfarniad Cwmpasu gan y Gymdeithas Ymchwil i Addysg Uwch (SRHE).

Pa ddata rydym ei angen?

Mae gennym ddiddordeb mewn clywed beth yw eich barn am y syniad o 'berthyn' i'r brifysgol. Yr hyn rydym yn ei feddwl wrth 'berthyn' yw teimlad bod cysylltiad arbennig rhyngoch chi a'r brifysgol. I wneud hyn, rydym wedi paratoi'r holiadur hwn sy'n cynnwys dwy ran sef cwestiwn i'w ateb mewn 10 gair a chwestiynau am berthyn.

Beth fyddwn yn ei wneud â'r data?

Chi sydd i benderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan ai peidio. Rydych yn cymryd rhan o'ch gwirfodd, ac mae croeso i chi dynnu'n ôl ar unrhyw adeg tra ydych yn gwneud yr arolwg. Os dewiswch beidio â llenwi'r arolwg ni chaiff hynny unrhyw ddylanwad ar eich cwrs neu eich gradd.

Bydd y data'n ddienw ac ni fydd eich ymatebion yn cael eu cysylltu â chi fel unigolyn. Ni fydd taflenni ymateb unigolion yn cael eu rhannu ag unrhyw un y tu allan i'r tîm ymchwil. Caiff data eu cadw ar weinydd diogel o eiddo'r brifysgol, bydd y wybodaeth wedi'i hamgryptio a bydd angen cyfrinair i fynd ati. Mae'r ymchwil hon wedi cael ei chymeradwyo'n foesebol gan Bwyllgor Moeseg Ymchwil Coleg y Celfyddydau, Busnes a Hanes.

Caiff canfyddiadau'r ymchwil eu rhannu gydag aelodau staff a myfyrwyr y brifysgol i wella profiad myfyrwyr. Defnyddir y data hefyd ar gyfer papurau academiaidd. Os defnyddir y data mewn cyhoeddiadau, ni fyddwch chi'n cael eich enwi ac ni fydd modd eich adnabod mewn unrhyw ffordd.

Diolch am ddarllen y wybodaeth hon. Am fwy o wybodaeth am yr astudiaeth hon, cysylltwch â: Dr Mi Young Ahn (m.ahn@bangor.ac.uk), Research Associate, Ysgol Hanes, Athroniaeth a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas. Os ydych yn pryderu am unrhyw agwedd o'r project yma ac os hoffech siarad â rhywun, cysylltwch â ni, Professor Howard Davis (h.h.davis@bangor.ac.uk, 01248 382123).

Eich cydsyniad

Mae'r ymchwilydd a enwir uchod wedi rhoi gwybodaeth ddigonol i mi am yr ymchwil yr wyf wedi gwirfoddoli i gymryd rhan ynddi. Deallaf fod gennyf yr hawl i dynnu'n ôl o'r ymchwil ar unrhyw adeg. Deallaf hefyd y caiff fy hawl i fod yn ddienw a'm hawl i gyfrinachedd eu parchu.

Dyddiad Llofnod y cyfrannwr

RHAN 1. Cwestiwn 10 Gair

Bydd yr arolwg hwn yn cymryd tua 15 munud i'w gwblhau. Diolch i chi am gymryd rhan.

Mae cwblhau a dychwelyd y ffurflen yn awgrymu caniatâd i gymryd rhan.

Ticiwch y blwch hwn i gadarnhau eich bod wedi derbyn a darllen y daflen wybodaeth

TASG: ysgrifennwch hyd at 10 o eiriau sy'n dod i'ch meddwl pan fyddwch yn ystyried beth mae *perthyn* i Brifysgol Bangor yn ei olygu.

RHAN 2. Holiadur Perthyn

A. Teimlad o berthyn

Rhowch groes yn y bocs ar gyfer yr ateb rydych yn teimlo sydd fwyaf priodol ar raddfa o 1 i 5, lle mae 1 = 'anghytuno'n gryf' a 5 = 'cytuno'n gryf'.

	Anghytuno'n gryf				Cytuno'n gryf
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Dwi'n perthyn i Brifysgol Bangor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Dwi'n perthyn i Brifysgol Bangor	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Dwi'n perthyn i Gymru	<input type="checkbox"/>				

B. Gwybodaeth ddemograffig

4. Faint oedd eich oed ar eich pen-blwydd diwethaf? _____

5. Beth yw eich rhyw? _____

6. Pa gwrs ydych chi'n ei astudio? Addysg Gwyddorau Cymdeithas Gofal Iechyd

Arall _____

7. Pa un o'r categorïau canlynol sy'n disgrifio'r ffordd rydych yn meddwl amdanoch chi'ch hun? (dewiswch gymaint neu gyn lleied ag sy'n berthnasol)

Prydeinig Seisnig Ewropeaidd Gwyddelig Gwyddelig o Ogledd Iwerddon Albanaidd Cymreig

Arall _____

8. Oeddech chi wedi byw yng Nghymru cyn i chi ddechrau astudio yn y brifysgol?

Do Naddo Ddim yn gwybod

9. Ai chi yw'r genhedlaeth gyntaf yn eich teulu i fynd i'r brifysgol? Ie Na Ddim yn gwybod

10. Ydych chi'n derbyn bwrsariaeth o Fangor? Ydw Nac ydw Ddim yn gwybod

Ymchwil bellach

Byddai o help mawr i ddeall profiad myfyrwyr pe gallem ddilyn eich cynnydd yn y brifysgol.

Os byddech yn fodlon cymryd rhan mewn ychydig o ymchwil ddilynol, rhowch eich manylion cyswllt isod. Caiff eich manylion cyswllt eu cadw ar weinydd diogel o eiddo'r brifysgol, bydd y wybodaeth wedi'i hamgryptio a bydd angen cyfrinair i fynd ati.

Enw: _____

E-bost: _____ Ffôn: _____

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ⁱ There are means-tested bursaries available in all three institutions depending on house-hold incomes of £42,000 (Cardiff University), £40,000 (Bangor University) and £30,000 (third institution). The university bursaries often include other criteria such as carers, care leavers, estranged students, asylum seekers and/or Welsh-medium study.

Cardiff University Bursaries will be available in 2018 to provide financial support to those from households where the total assessed income is less than £42,000

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/funding/bursaries>

Bangor under £40,000; Welsh-medium study bursary

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/studentfinance/info/bangorbursary.php.en>

Third university less than £30,000; Welsh language provision scholarship

[http://www.\(university\).ac.uk/study/finance/bursaries/Pages/Clearing-Study-Pack.aspx](http://www.(university).ac.uk/study/finance/bursaries/Pages/Clearing-Study-Pack.aspx)