

Poulter, Grace D. (2017) *The learner identities of older adults engaged in higher degree programmes*. PhD thesis.

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/8847/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk



University
of Glasgow

The Learner Identities of Older Adults Engaged in Higher Degree Programmes.

Grace D Poulter B.Ed (Hons), MSc.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of PhD

School of Education, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow

November 2017

Abstract

Doctoral students are often popularly portrayed as early career researchers and/or academics, engaged single mindedly in esoteric research projects; in other words, they are perceived as boffins. However much this may have been true (or not) in the past, this is certainly not the case in the 21st century. New routes to doctoral qualification have proliferated in recent years and with this growth and diversification the learner identities of the participants engaged in doctoral programmes has also broadened and diversified.

Adopting a case study approach, based upon the narratives of 15 professional doctorate students who entered the programme over the age of 40, this study aimed to critically explore the reality of learner identities of these older adults engaged in higher degree study.

This qualitative study has explored in depth and detail, the motivational factors driving this student group to embark upon a professional doctorate in mid- to later-life. The identities of these candidates have also been explored through the rich, qualitative data collected in the one-to-one semi-structured interviews that formed the basis of the project.

Five significant findings resulted from the analysis and discussion of the qualitative data. The first was that a strength of the particular doctoral programme examined in the case study was that it offered people in mid- to later-life educational opportunities that may have been denied to the, for various reasons, at an earlier stage in the life-cycle. A second finding was that the professional doctorate was attractive to professional people because it provided a staged entry into academia and allowed the professional experience and competences of the candidates to become an integral part of the admissions procedures. The third finding related to the diverse learner identities of the participants. The fourth finding suggests that postgraduate study in general, and doctoral study in particular, can be life enhancing and provide measures of inclusion and social justice that may have been denied to people in earlier life. The study concluded on the fifth finding, that the professional doctorate would be improved by being embedded more firmly in a work-based or workplace learning approach which would further support the strong professional identities of the project participants.

Contents

Abstract	2
List of Tables	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Author's declaration	8
Abbreviations.....	9
Chapter 1 - Introduction	11
1.1 Background to the study	12
1.2 Rationale	16
1.3 Positionality: an insider researcher	18
1.4 Organisation and Presentation of the Thesis.....	19
1.5 Location of the study in higher education research	20
1.6 Conclusion and Chapter Synopsis	21
Chapter 2 - Literature Review	22
2.1 Chapter Overview	22
2.2 What is meant by doctoral study?	23
2.3 Doctorateness.....	26
2.4 Who are Professional Doctorate candidates?.....	31
2.5 Lifelong Learning.....	36
2.6 Work-based/workplace learning	39
2.7 Credentialism	41
2.8 Motivation and Identity	44
2.8.1 Motivation.....	46
2.8.2 Identity	49
2.8.3 Identity and the Professional Doctorate.....	55
2.9 Widening Participation	58
2.10 Construction and Development of the Research Questions from the Literature Review.....	66
Chapter 3 - Methodology	68
3.1 Chapter Overview	68
3.2 Introduction.....	68
3.3 Traditional Methodologies within this Field	70
3.4 The Case Study	75
3.4.1 Case Study Methodology	76
3.5 Epistemology.....	78
3.6 Theoretical Frameworks	80
3.6.1 Bourdieu and Educational Research.....	81
3.7 Theorising the Self	84

3.8 Context(s)	85
3.9 Sample: Who were the participants?	86
3.10 Data Collection.....	87
3.11 Data analysis	87
3.12 Ethical considerations.....	90
3.13 Conclusion	91
Chapter 4 - National and Institutional Contexts	92
4.1 Chapter Overview	92
4.2 National Context	92
4.3 Institutional Context.....	95
4.3.1 Admission Requirements	99
4.3.2 Motivation for developing the professional doctorate programme ...	100
4.4 The Participants.....	100
4.5 Who are the participants, and how did they describe themselves?	101
4.6 The importance of Professional Identity.....	105
4.7 Conclusion.....	109
Chapter 5 - Motivation.....	111
5.1 Chapter Overview	111
5.2 Introduction.....	111
5.3 Why choose a professional doctorate rather than an alternative doctoral programme?	114
5.4 Why doctoral study?	121
5.5 Motivation: What is the motivation of these students to achieve doctoral status?	122
5.6 Combination of Extrinsic Professional Continuation (Type ii) with Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation (Type iv)	128
5.7 Combination of Extrinsic Professional Alteration (Type iii) with Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation (Type iv)	132
5.8 A Note on Funding	139
5.9 Conclusion	140
Chapter 6 - Identity	144
6.1 Chapter Overview	144
6.2 Introduction.....	144
6.3 Complexity	146
6.4 The significance of the personal narrative in the construction of identities	147
6.5 The influence of compulsory education on the participants' understanding of their own identity	150
6.6 Change and its origins: The multi-faceted, unfixed, plural and fluid nature of identity in the older adult learner.	168

6.7 The conflicted identities of the full-time professional workers engaged in academic study.	176
6.8 Liminality in the shifting identities of older adult learners.....	177
6.9 Conclusion.....	180
Chapter 7 - Conclusions	184
7.1 Chapter Overview	184
7.2 Introduction.....	185
7.3 The wider context of widening participation	187
7.4 Widening participation to doctoral education and research degrees	188
7.5 Do the participants fall into the category of those traditionally least likely to proceed to higher degree study?	190
7.6 What are the influences of social class background and the differential contributions of cultural, social and economic factors on candidates' decisions to choose (i) to pursue a doctoral programme; (ii) through a professional doctorate route?	192
7.7 What is the relationship between age, the life-cycle and doctoral education?	195
7.8 What does the data from this study tell us about the widening participation implications for the doctoral curriculum?	198
7.9 Contribution to policy and practice	200
7.10 Contribution to knowledge and theory development.....	200
7.11 The research questions revisited	202
7.12 Self-reflection	202
7.13 Directions for future research	203
References	205
Appendix 1 - Pilot Interview Schedule	218
Appendix 2 - Post Pilot Interview Schedule	220
Appendix 3 - Consent Form.....	222
Appendix 4 - Ethics Application	223
Appendix 5 - Plain Language Statement	224
Appendix 6 - List of Participants	228
Appendix 7 - Professional Doctorate Framework	230

List of Tables

Table 1: Motivational Influences	141
Table 2: List of Participants	228

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to the 15 participants who gave their time, enthusiasm and narratives to bring this project to life. It has been a privilege to work with them over the past five years.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisory team, Doctor Muir Houston and Professor Mike Osborne, for their guidance, patience and understanding throughout the course of their involvement with the project.

I should also like to thank my colleagues in the Graduate School in which I work, Professor Bonnie Steves, Dr Amy Cartwright, Dr Lindsey Carey and Dr Keith Halcro, for their support. They all, in different ways, provided me with encouragement, space and strong academic role models.

I owe a great deal to my friends Chris, Morna and Natalie; when all else failed, they were always there. It was an honour to share this doctoral journey with them.

I thank my son James for his belief in me and his constant support and love.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the wonderful women in my life of whom I am proud to be a part: my grandmother Gracie Docherty, my mother Isa McCahon and my daughter Katie Poulter.

Author's declaration

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.”

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Abbreviations

ACE	Adult and Continuing Education
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CRAC	Careers Research and Advisory Centre
DACE	Department(s) of Adult and Continuing Education
DBA	Doctorate of Business Administration
D.Ed	Doctorate in Education (Ireland)
EdD	Doctorate in Education (UK)
EngD	Engineering Doctorate
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LAE	Liberal Adult Education
LLL	Lifelong Learning
NCCPE	National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement
NPC	National Postgraduate Committee
PD	Professional Doctorate
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SG	Scottish Government
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
UK	United Kingdom
UKCHNM	UK Centre for the History of Nursing
UKCGE	UK Council for Graduate Education
US/USA	United States of America
USP	Unique Selling Point
WAP	Widening Access and Participation

WBL	Work Based Learning
WP	Widening Participation
WPL	Workplace Learning

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I didn't leave school with the qualifications... I developed them over night-school and things like that... I left school a numpty... ¹[but] I have never allowed my background to limit what my expectations are... the one thing my father put into me - my father was a trade unionist - was that remember where you come from, but do not be restrained by it... if you want something, go for it.... one other ethos that he put through me was that you don't have to live like this, and the way out of this is through education... now that's not that 'this' was bad.... as the social worker said to me, you know, you don't know you're poor until the social worker tells you... everybody was the same... but I think what was different was the aspiration... so, I've never allowed my background to limit me in where I want to go... and the fact that I do a job now where I have hob-nobbed with government ministers and been invited by government ministers abroad, and things like that would suggest that that's been relatively successful...

(James, Senior Lecturer in Nursing Education)

I came out of school with no...well, I had qualifications - I had O levels - and I did not, I was not encouraged... I came from a working class background... I wasn't encouraged to go to university, I didn't know if I was intelligent... I knew that I actually had my own thoughts and I was a confident person... so I never went to university until I was 27 and I already had two young children at the time... so on a personal level it's [a doctoral qualification] a personal challenge for me... it's not something that I would say really drives me [doctoral study] and there's no room for relaxation or anything like that.... it's actually quite the opposite... it's just a personal achievement that I would like to gain... I don't want to get out of it great recognition, one article after the next; I just want to get to the end of it, and if I get to the end of it I'll be absolutely delighted...

(Miranda, NHS Health Services Manager)

While the two extracts set out above are not typical of the narratives of most students engaged on traditional doctoral programmes, they are representative of many students engaged in professional doctorates. They are particularly reflective of the experiences of the older adult students, those over the age of 40 years, who form the core of this study.

¹ Scottish usage:

Someone who (sometimes unwittingly) by speech or action demonstrates a lack of knowledge or misconception of a particular subject or situation to the amusement of others.

1.1 Background to the study

This project grew out of a need identified a number of years ago to develop an academic literacies strategy and a framework to assist in meeting the diverse writing challenges faced by older adults returning to, or embarking upon, study in a post-1992 university in Scotland. As a lecturer in academic writing who was supporting the academic development of these undergraduate students it became clear to me that the traditional approaches of learning development departments - those with a skills' based focus - could not address the difficulties that these students faced when writing for assessment. This was particularly true for those students who had a largely instrumental motive for study; these were students who had returned to university to upgrade their professional qualifications in order to keep in line with revised regulations within their sectors. In the institution in which I worked, this mainly involved health care workers, social workers and nursing professionals. These students were all people who were required to work full-time in highly skilled posts, study part-time in a relatively unfamiliar context, and adapt quickly and successfully to all the challenges that this involved. The requirement to write in an academic context for assessment was the greatest challenge that most of this student group faced. They were all able to write in a professional context - it was not that 'they could not write' as their course tutors often erroneously reported - it was simply that they could not overcome, or sometimes even understand, the very significant dissonance between the writing 'skills' or competences they used in their professional lives and those that they were expected to acquire in order to meet the assessment criteria for their course.

All these students could spell, write in sentences and paragraphs, and had a reasonable grasp of grammar and technical vocabulary, but they struggled to meet the other essay literacy practices with which they had to grapple (Burke and Jackson, 2007). According to their tutors, they could not 'discuss', 'critically analyse', 'evaluate' or 'develop a line of reasoning'. Consequently, the writing requirements of the course professionally deskilled these students,

and their failures to meet these assessment criteria resulted in alarming drop-out rates for their courses. However, the failures faced by this particular student group also had the potential for far greater repercussions, as some of them at least, in failing to complete their 'up-skilling and up grading' for the purposes of professional development, were liable to lose their position of seniority within their organisations or even lose their posts altogether. Consequently, a number of these students considered 'jumping before they were pushed,' and saw resignation or retirement as a better outcome than the humiliation of ending a long and often distinguished career in Community Health, for example, as a result of failing their written assessment. The university was alarmed and embarrassed by the fact that the courses they had carefully designed to support the achievement of best practice in professional contexts were apparently just as likely to result in humiliating failure as to achieve the original desired outcomes. I completed a research project entitled: *Bridging the Practice-Theory Gap: would an academic literacies framework assist in meeting the diverse academic writing challenges faced by post-registration nurses initially trained in the 'traditional schools' but studying in Higher Education today?* The academic literacies framework that was put in place to some extent averted the most catastrophic outcomes, and resulted in significant changes in the construction of subsequent modules for continuing professional development and post-registration education.

As a result of this initial investigation, I embarked upon a PhD project which set out to investigate the wider nature of the experience of older adult learners in Higher Education (HE). I had observed that issues of professional and student identity, and the ways in which these manifested themselves in assessment procedures, were critical to the resolution of the problems that the student groups in the initial project faced. I also concluded that there were interesting and significant conflicts between the constructed and actual learner identities of this student group. I identified these conflicts as barriers to learning and to the successful achievement of a positive learning outcome. The original intention, therefore, was to consider barriers to learning (Archer et al., 2003; Blanden and Machin, 2004; Burke and Jackson, 2007; Bowl, 2003; Mann, 2001; Mann, 2008; Noble and Davis, 2009; Taulke-Johnson, 2010; Thomson and Quinn, 2007). The first working title of this doctoral study was: *How might non-traditional students*

be assisted in negotiating a successful path through the constraints of Higher Education? The particular barriers which interested me most were those involving assessment and academic writing and the possible conflict created by constructed learner identities. The advent of the Academic Literacies tradition (Lillis and Scott, 2007) and the focus on academic writing as a critical factor in student success, particularly in the success of older adult students, was central both to the work that I did and to the context in which I wished, as a teacher-as-researcher, to position my research (Harland, 2014).

Throughout the period of the first project I was involved in academic development in a central service in a post-1992 university where I had developed an interest in the experience of older nurses returning to HE in order to update their training and upgrade/up-scale their qualifications. As described above, I had completed a small-scale research project in this area which suggested that it would be useful to develop an academic literacies framework to assist this student group in overcoming the anxieties and challenges they faced when confronted with written assessments. It therefore seemed natural to extend this work to consider a wider student group and a greater variety of constraints. I completed an initial literature review which considered the following questions:

- Who are non-traditional students and what makes them ‘non-traditional’?
- What is meant by a successful path through HE?
- What are the constraints of HE, generally and for this student group specifically?
- What is the reality of Widening Access and Participation (for this student group)?
- What are the issues that determine ‘choice’?
- Does the constructed learner identity of older adults returning to study in higher education reflect the reality of their situations?

This initial review was very positive, and while it confirmed that a great deal of research already existed within the field of widening access, barriers to entry to HE and the student journey for the so-called non-traditional student, there still seemed scope for my project, and a sufficient research gap, that I could fill by

researching the experience of older adult learners in particular. However, while I was engaged in the initial stages of researching and reviewing the literature, and designing the project, a reorganisation of the central service within which I worked took place. Although this eventually worked to my advantage, it did mean that I was removed from dealing directly with the student group which I had originally intended to involve in my research project. Therefore, after some consideration and when I had gained some experience of working with the new student group to which I had been assigned, I changed and narrowed the focus of my project.

As I had relocated to the Graduate School in the same institution, I was not expecting to draw as heavily as I initially expected upon the academic literacies approach that I had previously developed because I assumed that students engaged in research degrees would have largely overcome the challenges presented by writing in academic contexts by this stage in their education. I assumed this for two reasons: first, because unlike my previous undergraduate student groups, they would have a history of successful academic writing; and second, because they would not choose a study route that would present them with the need to foreground an expertise that they did not already have. To some extent this was true, among the mainstream PhD students for example, but it proved not to be true for two significant student groups: those whose first language was not English and/or who had come from an academic environment that was not rooted in the traditions of the United Kingdom; and those who were part-time students working on degrees that had a professional context. The first group of students are well recognised within the context of higher education in the United Kingdom; international students are a significant income stream and because of this financial imperative, and because they have difficulties that are recognised as legitimate and that are visible, they are well tolerated and have access to resources, such as language support, that other student groups do not. Whether or not these support mechanisms for international students are appropriate or effective is a subject for another discussion, but at least their 'shortcomings' are explicable and therefore institutionally acceptable. However, for the part-time students engaged in research programmes this is not always (and, in fact, is hardly ever) the case.

When I joined the Graduate School a number of measures were already in place to support the academic writing development of doctoral students. These consisted mainly of a series of three-hour workshops designed to meet the perceived needs of PhD students at particular stages in their 'student journey'. They covered topics such as 'How to Write a Literature Review', 'Writing for Publication' and 'Final Year Writing Activities'. These workshops were only open to PhD students, were delivered in daytime teaching hours, and were not deemed suitable for students whose first language was not English. There was no provision for one-to-one appointments with individual postgraduate research students, nor was there any recognition of the needs of part-time students who were also full-time workers. There was very little embedded teaching of academic literacies in either of the programmes that were attached directly to the Graduate School: an MRes, and the suite of Professional Doctorate programmes. I quickly discovered that my appointment had been made to meet the need to fill the gaps that the existing academic writing programme had left. I was happy to pick up that remit, which fitted very well with the work I had done before. It was as a consequence of these circumstances that I came to know of the challenges faced by the cohorts of professional doctorate students who became my responsibility.

1.2 Rationale

When I joined the Graduate School, among other responsibilities, I became part of the Professional Doctorate Programme teaching team. The Professional Doctorate Framework is a suite of part-time programmes aimed at working professionals seeking to complete a doctoral thesis (Appendix 7). The Professional Doctorate is studied part-time in two stages. Students enroll on a taught 21-month programme - Stage 1 - prior to progressing to doctoral thesis at Stage 2. Stage 1 consists of a blended learning and teaching model where teaching is blended between 5 one-week on-campus teaching blocks and the delivery of online materials to assist in the completion of a range of written assignments. Research methods, research project management and design proposal writing are significant elements in the Stage 1 curriculum. Success at Stage 1, defined by completion of the taught coursework elements at pass level,

is required for candidates to be admitted to Stage 2. On becoming familiar with this set-up, I designed and embedded sessions into each of the five on campus teaching weeks offering a series of academic writing sessions and one-to-one online appointments to students who had progressed to the thesis writing stage. I employed an academic literacies approach to the materials I designed to support the students in this suite of programmes (Lillis and Scott, 2007; Street, 2005; Lea, 1998, 2004).

My inclusion in the programme team initially seemed a positive move by the university and the professional doctorate programmes leaders, and also proved to be fairly straightforward from an administrative and institutional point of view. However, as I worked my way into the programme and became familiar both with the approach taken and the people involved, I discovered that the initial presentation of the professional doctorate was not all that it seemed. A number of problems were hidden, although not deliberately, within the structure that had been devised for the programme. Three issues gradually became clear to me. The first was that although initial admission to the programme in almost all the cohorts was healthy and generally met set targets, as the cohorts progressed through Stage 1 and into Stage 2, student numbers dropped dramatically; in some intakes (cohorts) this was by as much as 75%. Second, although the progression and completion statistics appeared at first to reflect a very healthy success rate, with almost no student failing to complete their doctoral programme, these statistics were distorted by the fact that students who did not progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 were absent from the figures. Therefore, although there was a significant dropout rate, it was not recorded because there was no mechanism to measure initial intake with successful completion as there is within the PhD by Research programmes. The third issue that became clear very early in my association with the programme was that the students were very different from traditional PhD students; they were faced with a wide range of writing challenges associated with their part-time status, full-time professional standing, and their inability, in many cases, to find a niche for themselves within the university at which they were studying. Although many of these challenges involved time management, meeting deadlines, and coping with the new experience of study at the highest level, the academic literacies challenges and identity conflicts which they faced were

similar to those that I had encountered with the initial cohorts of undergraduate students who had first sparked my interest in academic literacies. Moreover, although I had anticipated that I would be dealing with a very different type of student when I moved into the field of postgraduate teaching, I found that the profile of the majority of professional doctorate students was similar to that of the participants in my original research project. The professional doctorate candidates tended to be older than traditional doctoral students; they came from professional/vocational backgrounds rather than progressing straight from, or out of, academia; they appeared to encounter problems dealing with the academic writing demands of their coursework, or so their tutors reported; and they often professed to lack the self-confidence in their doctoral study that they perceived themselves to have in their professional lives.

1.3 Positionality: an insider researcher

As a lecturer on the Professional Doctorate programme, I am an insider. I know the institution well, I am immersed in the teaching and learning strategies employed on the PD programme and if challenges exist for this student group then I could be seen as part of the problem rather than a solution.

Furthermore, I have an insider's knowledge of the students' profiles and the many issues and personal challenges they face. However, I also have an ethical sensitivity and an empathy with the participants; I share a student profile with the project participants as I am an older adult learner engaged in higher degree study in a Scottish HEI. This positionality as an insider has both positive and potentially negative aspects. I have had to consider very carefully how I might strike a balance between the objectivity required of a research project and the inevitable subjectivity that I have acquired as a consequence of my position and experience within the university. To retain as much objectivity as possible I designed the project within a tried and tested analytical framework which I believed would enable me to avoid the imposition of my own preconceptions on the data. Analysing the data using an IPA strategy ensured that a degree of objectivity was always observed because of the rigour this approach demands.

Subjectivity can impact upon both the interpretation of data and the way in which participants are viewed within the research. The issue of the interpretation of the data is addressed above, however that of participant involvement is more complex. As I knew the students involved in this study so well, and as I had conducted a smaller scale but similar project in the past, I was bound by my preconceptions. To address this problematic area I employed two strategies; the first was an in depth consideration of current research relating to older adults in higher education, thus neutralising the impact of my previous conclusions by bringing wider empirical and theoretical perspectives to bear on my understanding. The second was to use as much empirical data, in the form of direct quotations, as I could to both explain and illustrate the findings of the project. I believe that this study provides a voice for the participants rather than for the researcher.

1.4 Organisation and Presentation of the Thesis

This thesis may be regarded as unconventional in terms of its organisation and presentation. However, in order to address the research questions posed by the project it was necessary to design a format that would enable the participants to be as present as possible in the discussion. In terms of the organisation of the project, it is typical of other qualitative PhD studies in that it follows a recognised chapter pattern: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Context, Analyses and Conclusions. Where the unconventionality may be seen is in the organisation of the analysis chapters and in the conclusions which contain extended participant quotes. My writer's rationale for employing this technique was based upon the belief that I conducted this research project 'with' rather than 'on' the participants. This rationale was further informed by my research stance. This stance proposes that in a study of this nature, which includes a cohort of participants who have a wide range of life experience and multiple perspectives on lifelong learning, it is essential to provide as many opportunities as possible to enable the voice of the participants to shed light upon the issues of motivation and identity. The length of the quotes was critical in presenting a

context within which these informed views and observations could be understood and which truly reflected the richness of the project data.

The inclusion of quotation at length in this study reflects the approach van Manen (1990:115), when writing on researching lived experience, described as ‘Anecdote as a Methodological Device’. He suggested that,

Anecdotes, in the sense that they occur in the phenomenological writings of, for example, Sartre, Marcel and Merleau-Ponty are not to be understood as mere illustrations to “butter up” or “make more easily digestible” a difficult or boring text. Anecdote can be understood as a methodological device in human science to make comprehensible some notion that easily eludes us. (van Manen, 1990:116)

In this thesis the extended quotations act as anecdotes that ensure that the experiences of the participants are as fully present as possible.

1.5 Location of the study in higher education research

Having already considered the application of an academic literacies framework to the teaching and the learning of academic writing in higher education, I neither had the wish nor the imperative to focus solely upon that specific issue in a further project. However, one of the limitations identified in my previous research project had been that I did not have the opportunity to explore issues of identity with the post-registration undergraduates with whom I had worked. I had felt then that there was a considerable gap between the constructed learner identity of that student group and the reality of their multiple identities as students, workers, family members, carers, and so on. I determined that a fuller understanding of the issues of identity would have added a great deal to the application of the outcomes, and thus to the impact of the research. I therefore decided that my involvement with this new student group afforded an opportunity to investigate this observed dissonance between the construction and reality of learner identity, and should be borne out by further research. It was for these reasons that I chose to investigate the research question:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Having arrived at a question, I embarked upon an extensive literature review.

1.6 Conclusion and Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 2 critically reviews the research literature to address the project's central research question relating to issues of identity and older adult doctoral students. It explores the major themes uncovered in the literature: the meaning of doctoral study, the identities of professional doctorate candidates, aspects of lifelong learning, work-based/workplace learning, credentialism, motivation, and unanticipated issues around the widening of access to, and participation in, doctoral study. Chapter 3 explains and justifies the qualitative methodology adopted in this study as well as exploring epistemological and theoretical issues. A breakdown of the participants within the study is provided, along with an explanation of the chosen data collection and data analysis methods and procedures. Chapter 4 contextualises the study within a national and institutional framework and further explores the profiles of the people involved in the project. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 follow up the two major themes of the literature review that were deemed most pertinent to the research question: motivation and identity respectively. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the study by merging the themes of identity and issues of widening participation in postgraduate study in order to situate the learner identities of the participants in a new context.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Overview

Having decided, as the thesis introduction explained, to focus upon a case study of professional doctorate students over the age of 40 years in exploring the issues of learner identities and constructed learner identity, I embarked upon a comprehensive literature review. This chapter is an account of that review of the research literature. I had already decided upon a question that was suitable for investigation and I was aware that the literature review would be necessary to accomplish the key tasks that Kamler and Thomson (2006: 28) elucidate: providing an outline of the nature of the fields relevant to the inquiry, identifying the major debates in the context into which the study is placed, defining any specialist or contentious terms, and considering the work of the most prominent researchers, thinkers and writers in the field. Additionally, the literature review identifies gaps within the field of research and identifies the contribution that the new research will make, thereby justifying the overall rationale for undertaking this PhD project.

A literature review should also justify the methodology used in the research project. In this respect, I had already decided that I would adopt a qualitative approach towards the collection and analysis of the data in this study. This decision was made early on for pragmatic as well as academically sound reasons. First, I wanted to communicate with the participants in my study in a face-to-face context; I wanted to interview them to enable them to participate actively in the research and so that I might gather rich data that reflected their feelings and beliefs about themselves, their identities and their motivations for study. Second, I am not personally disposed to quantitative research designs. Although I acknowledge that a positivist approach has a role to play in the multi-patterned approach towards educational research, this approach would not have enabled me to fully answer the initial question (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The positivist paradigm aligns itself closely with the model of the natural sciences and, as such, gives great emphasis to the search for objectivity in understanding phenomena. As a result, it employs quantitative methods and analyses data to explain behaviour and find causes for effects (Fraenkel and

Wallen, 2008: 5). In this research, I was not seeking objective data from a large sample; I sought the words of the participants that would create a narrative upon which I could build a case. A qualitative approach presents the best option for these outcomes (Bryman, 2012: 330ff).

Furthermore, I wished to recognise that I was positioned within the research myself and to make that connection with the participants. I am an insider-researcher not only because I work in the institution in which the research was based, and because I was a lecturer on the programme in which the participants were engaged, but also because as an older adult doctoral student, I wished to acknowledge common cause with the participants. I agree with the approach that Burke (2012) discusses when she recommends that we theorise ourselves. She suggests that from consideration of Jane Miller's concept of the autobiography of the question,

‘...the researcher's relationship to the questions she's exploring, requires careful consideration of the experiences, identities and perspectives she brings to the research process and asks her to make connections between herself, the research participants and other voices in the field’ (Burke, 2012: 63).

I concluded that a qualitative approach was the best option to enable me to accomplish these connections. I was keen to use this approach to explore my role as a researcher. A further exploration of this approach is set out in Chapter 3. An initial review of the literature provided the sub-headings under which the following systematic review is organised.

2.2 What is meant by doctoral study?

A doctoral degree usually implies a PhD, although that is not always the case in contemporary higher education (HE) contexts. The PhD, still often referred to as the ‘gold standard’ of academic research, and therefore by extension an appropriate qualification for HE staff (particularly ‘lecturers’), has been joined, in recent years, by other types of doctoral award. In this section, I debate the historical and emerging contemporary contexts of doctoral study. I argue that the changing face of university education in the 21st century has led to the

development of many varied routes to doctoral qualification that are significantly different from the traditional PhD by research, but that are still in many respects judged by the criteria developed for the award of a doctorate by research alone.

In his discussion paper *Redefining the Doctorate*, produced for The Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2007, Park summaries the most common types of doctoral award in the 21st century as follows: the traditional PhD, PhD by publication, new route PhD, the professional doctorate, and the practice based doctorate (Park, 2007: 33). Scott and Morrison (2010) later added a sixth category to the list which they term the work-based doctorate. Before proceeding to ask why the provision of doctoral education has become more diverse over the last quarter of a century, it is useful to consider first what is meant by the term 'doctorate', even now still most commonly used to describe the award of a PhD. Surprisingly, the earliest doctoral degrees or PhDs could be classified as having 'an explicit professional orientation' (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012: 345). They were designed as awards as early as the 12th century in the practice fields of law, theology and medicine that allowed admission to the guilds which governed those professions (Buchanan and Herubel, 1995). So, while in the modern educational context the PhD became associated with a thesis that was grounded in research, these earliest awards were seen as focusing on practice; what Park (2005) describes as 'a license to teach'. The contemporary PhD emerged from the revolutionary changes in education that took place as a result of industrialisation and the growth of European nationalism in the 19th century (Ruegg, 2004; Neave, Bluckert and Nyborn, 2006). The traditional PhD as we know it today was defined as the result of the creation of the 'Modern University' of the European post-Napoleonic age (Pietsch, 2013; Neave, Bluckert and Nyborn, 2006; Ruegg, 2004).

Rothblatt (2000: 6ff) suggests that 'the adoption of a research mission' is a characteristic in defining the evolution of the modern university. He further asserts that 'the adoption of a research mission challenged the supremacy of the historic teaching mission and eventually profoundly transformed the interior culture of universities, the nature of knowledge production and dissemination, the criteria for measuring academic success, models of organisation and

governance, funding and physical appearance' (Rothblatt, 2000: 7). In this historical elevation of the discovery of knowledge over the transmission of knowledge, the research ethic determined the highest form of academic success, resulting in the gradual spread of the award of PhD degrees throughout European and North American universities in the 19th century. The UK was a notable exception to this trend in the awarding of higher degrees, as the first PhD by research in the United Kingdom was awarded by the University of Oxford as late as 1920 (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001). Therefore, the traditional PhD, although certainly regarded today as the highest degree which the academy may confer, is not the result of a linear progression from medieval universities to the present day; it is, like all other degrees, an award that was created in a specific context, relatively recently, in response to societal change and the demands of various forces, usually economic and political, as well as social. We may assume, therefore, that the creation of new forms of doctoral degree programme has also been prompted by the response to a demand for change coming from the same, or at least a similar, set of forces.

The addition of new forms of doctoral programme has changed and broadened the definition of doctoral study. There have been many drivers of change in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) over the past 25 years, but perhaps the most significant of these in terms of changes in doctoral study has been the growing emphasis on skills and training throughout all sectors in post-compulsory education. This notion is often summarised in the suggestion that whereas the traditional PhD is characterised by its mission to produce 'professional scholars' the Professional Doctorate (PD) is distinguished by its emphasis upon producing 'scholarly professionals'; thus, the distinction is made that one has a purely academic or theoretical focus, while the other has a largely practical emphasis (Fenge, 2009). The practical element of the PD is an essential characteristic that separates it from the awarding institution in a way that never, or at least hardly ever, applies to the traditional PhD by research. This practical emphasis has been particularly significant in the development of the knowledge economy (Ball, 2013: 23; Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012: 358). As Evans (2002: 157) has suggested, 'because the new economy requires tradeable knowledge, the traditional PhD is scrutinized because it focuses on the production of significant knowledge to a discipline, rather than new tradeable

knowledge’. Another characteristic that is often used to illustrate the unique attributes of the PD, rather than the PhD, is that while the PhD is designed to contribute to the wider field of knowledge, the PD is ‘concerned principally with the production of knowledge from practice, for application back into practice’ (Mellers-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe, 2016: 12). The PhD and PDs may differ in their purpose, research focus and structure ((Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 14) but their outcomes are the same in that they all lead to a doctoral qualification and all contribute to the diversity that is now part of doctoral study. Therefore, if there is no single simple answer to the question of what doctoral study is, it might be more constructive to look at what ‘doctorateness’ might mean (Wellington, 2013).

2.3 Doctorateness

There is a large body of research and consequent published academic literature on the subject of ‘doctorateness’. Some of this is implied in questions relating to issues of assessment, programme design and pedagogy (Boud and Tennant, 2006), some around areas of the student experience (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Fenge, 2009; Loxley and Seery, 2012; John and Denicolo, 2013), while much of it consists of discussions focussed around institutional and governmental policy and standards (Park, 2007; Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016). Many issues have also been raised around discussions which focus upon the tensions between the product and the process debate on doctoral study (Lester, 2004; Park, 2005; Trafford and Lesham, 2009). While, as Park (2005) points out, there have always been debates about issues of quality and standardisation of PhD programmes, especially dealing with assessment methods and the requirements for examination - both in terms of the written thesis and the oral defence/viva-voce - this debate has been changed, and some might say invigorated, by the introduction of new routes to doctoral qualification in the 21st century in particular (Park, 2005). Some discussion has been much more explicit and has focussed quite specifically and directly on the concept of ‘doctorateness’ itself (Trafford and Lesham, 2009; Wellington, 2013). The concept of doctorateness is considered in different geographical areas and academic traditions and contexts, but in this study the focus is mainly on how these deliberations affect the

provision, construction, assessment and delivery of doctoral programmes in the UK.

Before examining the concept of doctorateness itself, it is useful to this study's aims to consider why this issue is significant. Wellington (2013: 1490) poses the question: 'Is the discussion of the question of 'what a doctorate is' just some sort of semantic exercise? He goes on to claim that it is not, and further suggests that one of the reasons that it is a significant question, and not simply playing around with words, is because...the actual interpretation of what a doctorate is, or is deemed to be, is a matter which directly affects student outcomes and students' lives...' (Wellington, 2013: 1491). He suggests five possible areas that might be explored in seeking a meaning for the concept of doctorateness: purpose, impact, regulations, assessment and participants' voices. For the purposes of this review, the two most significant areas are the first and the last - purpose and voice. The first is important because it refers to issues of major concern for this study - particularly those of motivation and choice; the second because it enables us to explore issues of identity through the words of the participants themselves.

The question of purpose has two factors: the first is concerned with the purpose of a doctorate from the point of view of the academy and the wider society. In other words, what does a doctorate bring to the world? The second concerns the purpose of the doctorate for the individual student, or candidate, as they are more often termed in PD programmes. Taking this teleological approach also raises questions of motivation from both perspectives: why do universities award doctoral degrees, and why do students undertake study at this level? Recent research on the provision of professional doctorate programmes (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 50) has suggested that candidates are most likely to embark upon PD programmes for reasons which can be grouped under the heading of 'professional extension' (Costley and Lester, 2012: 258). The Careers Research and Advisory Centre Report (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016) also draws upon earlier research (Scott *et al.*, 2004) to provide classifications for extrinsic and intrinsic factors that could affect students' decisions to embark upon a PD; these are considered in detail later in this review chapter.

Wellington (2013) concludes that there are five possible purposes for doctoral study that might begin to answer the question of doctorateness, both from the point of view of the student and the wider world. These five purposes can be summarised as: academic apprenticeship, career development, skills development, personal development, and finally, he suggests that the purpose could be the product itself - an original contribution to knowledge. To most people, both inside and outside academia, the fifth point would be accepted as the measurement of doctorateness; that is, the achievement of a thesis that makes an original contribution to knowledge, or what Wellington (2010: 1502) calls 'adding a brick to the wall'. Therefore, the definition of doctorateness is the achievement of this goal - a thesis that meets the requirements laid out in the Qualifications Framework (2014: 30): 4.18 Descriptor for a higher degree qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ, and SCQF level 12 on the FQHEIS: doctoral degree:

4.18.1 Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/ or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.

Although this may adequately describe the product of the traditional PhD by research, it does not take account of the professional context of the new routes to doctoral qualification which have been gaining ground in recent years. In the PD, it could be argued that the process is just as important a part of the programme as the product. In summarising the most common types of doctoral award in the UK, Park (2007: 33) highlights this distinction when he describes the traditional PhD as:

'Based largely on the supervised research project, examined on the basis of the thesis.' and describes the Professional Doctorate as a programme that, 'Includes a significant taught element, and as such most have specific 'learning outcomes'. Based on a combination of taught modules (which are examined and must be passed), and the supervised research project, which is often smaller than the traditional PhD, is more applied and is work-based or -focused'.

In this context, as Wellington (2013) accepts, it is difficult to find the essence of doctorateness. For this reason, he suggests that doctorateness is not a question

of finding exact similarity but rather one of looking for ‘family resemblances’. This proposition, however, has not gone unchallenged. Poole (2015) has most notably called into question Wellington’s (2013) conclusions, suggesting that while we may not yet have an answer to what doctorateness consists of, we should not give up the search but should instead keep on looking for its definable qualities.

In their study of doctorateness as a threshold concept, Trafford and Leshem (2009) raise several interesting questions concerning the difficulties faced by PhD, EdD and MPhil students in progression and completion. They suggest that there are two significant areas that may present doctoral students with real dilemmas which the students do not fully comprehend when they embark upon their studies. The first of these is the nature of the process and technique of research required at this level, which they term doctorateness; they describe this as having a dual function combining ‘doing’ and ‘achieving’ (Trafford and Leshem, 2009: 305). The second is the notion of threshold concepts, which they describe as representing ‘a gateway to learning and understanding through which candidates have to pass...’, and which they may not fully understand, or have explained to them, before they embark upon doctoral study (Trafford and Leshem, 2009: 305). The recognition and resolution of these difficulties represent critical points that determine a candidate’s ability to develop an intellectually coherent and methodologically plausible doctoral thesis. The same two features regularly require the attention of supervisors, and they also prompt examiners to follow a particular trajectory of questions in doctoral vivas. In summary, therefore, they are proposing that before starting and during the research journey, as the PhD process is commonly viewed today, candidates neither understand the skills required of them nor grasp the intellectual challenges and obstacles that they will have to overcome in order to write a plausible, and therefore acceptable, thesis. It is entirely possible that PhD students who have embarked upon doctoral study in the conventional sense of a full-time course of research based study, lasting 3-4 years and generally following on from the successful completion of a master’s degree, might not be aware of the implications of a research skills deficit and the challenge of the threshold concepts.

In my teaching experience in Researcher Development programmes and with reference particularly to the academic literacies framework within which I practise (Lea and Street, 2006), I have noticed that the issues described above may not be the case for PD candidates, who might well be aware of these challenges; indeed, that awareness may be a significant driver for choosing the PD over the PhD. The PD candidates I have taught rarely simply take up an opportunity of postgraduate study without researching the nature of doctoral study itself. This does not mean that they fully comprehend the progression, process and product elements of what lies before them, but they do give these elements due consideration before they commit to a course of study. Many, if not most, PD candidates I have taught have indicated, in some respect or another, that they did not choose the traditional PhD option because ‘they couldn’t do it’; meaning they did not have the pre-requisite research skills to start a thesis writing research only based project. While recent developments in doctoral training in HEIs have provided many opportunities for PhD students and other PGRs to engage in research and doctoral training, this is not always obvious to the candidate who stands outside academia. The myth of the lonely PhD student who is left to their own devices and is judged on their ability to produce independent research without support still stands (Loxley and Seery, 2012). Indeed, this lack of access to information that fully explains the expectations of candidates on particular programmes at postgraduate level in HEIs has recently been identified as a significant barrier to widening access to postgraduate study (SG/SFC, 2015). The chief area in which they feel deficient is often academic writing, and the prospect of writing a full thesis without the scaffolding of Stage 1 of the PD ‘is overwhelming’ (Ivanič, 1998: 75).

The search to fill these gaps and provide what we might term ‘scaffolding’ for doctoral researchers has taken several forms. To serve the needs of the traditional PhD students, Graduate Schools, supervisory training, skills development and research training and departments for researcher development have proliferated throughout UK HEIs (Park, 2007:28). Organisations like Vitae have become part of academic life for doctoral and other research students, and the Research Councils, the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE), the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) have made many inroads into training for both candidates and

HEI staff. On the other hand, the growth of the PD has seen these developments, particularly those around skills training, integrated into these programmes of study (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016). I would suggest here that these issues of doctorateness and threshold concepts might come close to explaining the reasons why students choose a Professional Doctorate over the traditional PhD by research. In many cases, the typical PD candidate profile is quite unlike that of the typical PhD student. A great deal of evidence that indicates these profile differences (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016); for example, PD candidates are hardly ever what we might term ‘early career researchers’. They are, by definition, people who already have their feet firmly planted in a field outside the academy. Therefore, PD candidates might be expected to be older than students on PhD programmes. Furthermore, they are frequently required to have a minimum of at least five years of work experience before applying; they are thus more likely than other doctoral students to skip the masters stage; they are frequently self-funded; they are, as Wildy, Peden and Chan (2015) suggests, most likely to be ‘time-poor and experience-rich’; and they are (with two notable exceptions in the DEng and DCounPsy¹) part-time. So, in the broad spectrum of learner classification, it is interesting to question where PD candidates might most effectively be placed, and what new understandings of doctorateness they bring.

¹ These two doctoral degrees, the Doctorate in Engineering and the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, are available as professional entry qualifications and therefore are often offered as full-time courses and do not require the same depth of professional experience that other PDs stipulate as an entry requirement for the course of study.

2.4 Who are Professional Doctorate candidates?

It may be more straightforward and appropriate to understand the identity and motivation of the PD candidate if we consider what type of students they are, rather than simply what type of doctoral students they represent. In the first instance, they are clearly adult learners; many of them could be classified in the ‘older’ adult learner category in HEIs. This is an important distinction because there is considerable evidence to suggest that the pressures upon older adult learners are much greater than those felt by younger students in HEIs (DiSilvestro, 2013: 79). This pressure and the toll it takes on doctoral candidates

aged 40+ raises the question - why would they bother? This, in turn, could raise issues around the massification of HE and the concept of creeping credentialism in the workplace.

Furthermore, older adults in HE are subjects of the concept of a constructed learner identity (Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007). This often affects funding and support, and influences the construction of the types of courses that are thought to meet the needs of older adults. This has resulted, in the past, in an emphasis on courses that foster skills development (often at relatively low levels) and has largely ignored the growing cohorts of older adults - in line with the reality of an ageing population, the withdrawal of pension provision and the requirement to work longer - who take up study (and will continue to do so) 'to prove themselves at the highest levels' (Leonard, Becker and Coate, 2005: 135). I would suggest that the PD candidates, for the most part, and certainly those around whom this study will focus, meet the criteria for description as older adult learners. This is particularly important because, as Rogers (2003: 90) points out, '...the uniqueness of adult teaching lies not in the different ways in which adults ... learn, but in the sense of identity that learners bring to their learning...'. PD students answer both to the identities they construct for themselves, and those that are constructed for them through policy, procedures, pedagogical discourse, and the norms and practices of HEIs.

So, we might then ask: what criteria define an older adult learner, and what significance do they have? The ability to create abstract meaning from their life experience is a key feature of adult learning and educational experience (Jarvis, 2010; Tennant, 2006; Rogers, 2002). It could be argued that this desire to create meaning from experience could be a key motivator for professional doctorate candidates. This may be even more true for candidates who have spent a greater part of their life outside the theoretical world of academia and instead engaged mainly in the practical world of professional practice. There could, then, be two strong motivators for this group of students, that is, those who are fully engaged in the world of work, are over the age of 40, and are studying part-time on a professional doctoral programme. They could be looking for a way in which to enhance their experience of work by gaining greater insight into their professional field of expertise, and could then be intending to

use that either to enrich their career or, as might be expected given the degree of effort that doctoral study demands, to improve their career trajectories by using their doctorate as a mechanism to improve their career prospects. They could also be using the opportunity to change career or escape a career path or workplace situation that is not their long-term ideal. However, the older the candidate is, the less likely they are to be using their doctoral study as a means for career enhancement or change. It may simply be the case that towards the end stage of a long career in a particular field, the candidate wishes to bring together everything they have learned, and to use that to underline the working life they have had, draw value from that life, and underscore their intellectual progress through attaining a doctoral qualification (Wellington, 2013). There are certainly grounds in the limited prior literature and research on PD candidates for consideration of this option.

The ability to learn from each other, as well as from formal programmes and educational institutions, is another feature that distinguishes adult education (Rogers, 2003). While every doctoral programme must include an element of co-operative learning at some stage (e.g. graduate/researcher training programmes, group supervision, conference attendance, etc.), the cohort experience of a professional doctorate programme does appear to be an attractive prospect for older adult candidates (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016; Loxley and Seery, 2011). Although the stereotype of the PhD student is one of an individual closeted in a room or a lab pouring over text or tests in a solitary pursuit of new knowledge, the picture of the professional doctorate student - or at least the one that most publicity seeks to project wherever possible - is quite different. The desired and projected profile of the professional doctorate candidate is that of the scholarly professional, working as part of a team (the members of which could be operating at a number of different levels) from which the student is drawing upon this group practice to create new knowledge and theoretical perspectives with which to enhance their own practice both generally and personally (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016). Whether this is the reality for the professional doctorate student remains to be seen, but this is the image that HEIs like to project. It is not difficult to recognise the appeal of such a programme to those who seek to realise their potential on the basis of what

they have already done rather than the potential they seek to fulfil in the future.

It is worth noting here that this study is not interested in the differences between how children and adults learn; it is not a study of andragogy for its own sake. However, an examination of the ways in which adults choose to learn and pursue postgraduate study, and the impact that these have upon their identities and motivations, might have useful outcomes for this study of PD students. Therefore, a further feature of the older adult experience of later life learning might be described as their width of experiential learning (Kolb, 2015; Rogers, 2002). It may be that the range of life experiences that older adult doctoral students (defined as those over the age of forty-five years for the purposes of this study) bring to their programmes gives them the confidence and provides the motivation for them to embark upon the doctoral journey. Poor initial educational experiences, a lack of opportunity for post-compulsory study and the consequent loss of confidence in their abilities to make sense of the world through formal learning often feature in the narratives of older adult learners (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012). However, if this is matched with career success and recognition by the student and others of their abilities beyond the practical, then the wish to prove this in some tangible way could be a strong motivating factor in taking the first step towards seeking a doctoral qualification. The influence of other factors outside the world of work and formal education can also provide the impetus to 'improve oneself' through achievement of a doctorate. The overcoming of a negative self-image in later life, the achievement of a stable family whose success - educational or otherwise - reflects upon the parents can all be found as features of the profile of the older adult learner engaged in doctoral study (Scott *et al.*, 2004; Burgess and Wellington, 2010). Learning about one's own potential, desires for learning, and capabilities can be achieved through observation over the life course, thus representing learning that is lifelong and lifewide, not just preoccupied with the learning of younger, under 25-year old cohorts.

The QAA descriptor for a higher degree qualification: doctoral degree, states that:

4.18.2 Holders of doctoral degrees are able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2014)

This statement is, of course, an outcome of doctoral education and not a prerequisite for embarking upon a programme. However, as has been suggested above, it may be that older adults are attracted to professional doctorate programmes by the recognition of the ability to achieve this outcome, reflected in their existing professional success. Furthermore, a key feature of the older adult learning experience - that of having the ability to critically reflect upon their experience and redefine this experience as legitimate learning - may also play a role in encouraging the older adult student to take up study at the highest level. The practice of critical reflection has become common in many occupations and professions in the contemporary workplace. In the fields of health, education and business management, a great deal of the continuing professional development (CPD) provision is designed around critical reflection. While 25 years ago the works of Schön (1983), Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), and latterly Brookfield (1998) were confined to the academy and were applied in very particular and often specialised fields, it is commonplace in the contemporary CPD climate to discover critical reflexivity as one of the most highly-valued and stated intended learning outcomes. In their recent report on the provision of professional doctorates in English HEIs, Mellers-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) found that one of the most highly-prized outcomes for successful professional doctorate candidates in terms of their skill and knowledge development ‘...was the development of an understanding of the importance of reflection and becoming a reflective practitioner...’. These authors go on to point out that the ‘...development of a critical and reflective mindset appeared to be a main feature of learning throughout the PD programme’ (Mellers-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 54). I would suggest that the ability to critically reflect is not only an outcome or impact of doctoral study, but that it may be the acquisition, through experiential learning, of the capacity to act as a critically reflective professional that turns the older adult learner towards the

formalisation of this skill, capacity or ability through a formal doctoral qualification.

2.5 Lifelong Learning

For many HEIs and educational professionals, what was once described as adult education has now become absorbed under the ubiquitous heading of ‘lifelong learning’. Lifelong learning is concerned with the concept of learning over the life course and the ways, means and opportunities that are both taken and provided to create a lifelong learning experience. In their introduction to *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*, Slowey and Schuetze (2012: 3) offer a comprehensive definition of this contested concept, suggesting that:

‘...lifelong learning is built around two axes: a vertical one which relates to the truism that people learn not just while they are young, but over the whole of their lives; and a horizontal axis which relates to the fact that active and purposeful learning takes place not only in formal educational institutions such as schools and universities, but also in the workplace, in the community, in different social environments as well as through individual non-formal study’.

This definition of the lifelong learner certainly would appear to apply to the PD candidate. However, they also point out that ‘...the implications of this concept for higher education have remained underdeveloped’ (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012: 4). This raises important questions for the present study concerning the accommodation (or not) of these subjects of lifelong learning in the academy.

The debate around lifelong learning, its definition, its value and its outcomes therefore certainly bears reconsideration in terms of its impact upon how we understand older adults engaged in higher degree programmes. In the introduction to *Learning Through Life*, the report into the future of lifelong learning in the UK, which was to become widely commented upon and thus quite controversial, Schuller and Watson (2009:2) make two important statements. In the first line of the introduction, they emphasise that the inquiry begins ‘...from the premise that the right to learn throughout life is a human right.’ They then go on to provide their broad definition as follows:

‘Lifelong learning includes people of all ages learning in a variety of contexts - in educational institutions, at work, at home and through leisure activities. It focuses mainly on adults returning to organized learning rather than on the initial period of education or on incidental learning’ Schuller and Watson (2009: 2).

While in the context of this study, the broad definition fits and sits well with that of Slowey and Schuetze (2012), the implications of their claims are far from clear or certain. One of the most-cited discoveries of their research project was that the vast majority of the UK education budget was spent on under-25s. The report’s moment in the sun (mainly in the educational press throughout 2009) brought to light many issues thought to have significance for policy development. Four of the most interesting aspects of the inquiry to the general public, if news coverage can be used as a gauge, were that 1% of the educational resources of the country were allocated to the oldest 33% of the population; that increased life expectancy and inevitable increases in retirement ages had both social and economic implications; that there was an ever-increasing need to change, enhance or alter career expectations in the post-50 age group, and that the implications of all of this called for recognition of the need for a ‘midlife review’ (Schuller and Watson, 2009). The implications of this for older professional doctorate students are clear. However, in this construction of the dangerous implications of not engaging in the dilemmas and realities of lifelong learning, it is not lifelong learning as a ‘human right’ that is emphasised but, rather, that of learning as a ‘human resource’.

Slowey and Schuetze (2012) also examine this theme. In discussing the slow pace of change, both in relation to government policy and HEIs, in responding to calls for the development of ‘knowledge-based economies’ and ‘learning societies’, they cite two possible contributory factors which might explain this tardy response. The first is the complexity of the process of change that a swift response would require. The second, and perhaps more significant factor as far as this study is concerned, is that of the perceived motivation for change. There are, they suggest, two conflicting motivations for adopting a model for lifelong learning: on the one hand, a model can be based upon the principles of social justice and equity, and on the other, a model can be based ‘on a human capital

perspective'. Therefore, while the first model may play well in some sectors, for example community education, Slowey and Schuetze (2012: 4) argue strongly that: 'In relation to higher education, the dominance of the neoliberal perspective has, inevitably, resulted in the latter perspective being pre-eminent'. A wide body of research supports this conclusion (Ball, 2013). This point again raises questions regarding the identity of the PD candidate: they appear to be lifelong learners as their profiles fit the criteria for inclusion in this category, but they are engaged in higher degree study in HEIs. How does this apparent contradiction contribute to their learner identities and their constructed learner identities?

In Slowey and Schuetze's volume, Osborne and Houston (2012: 112ff) examine the issues raised by lifelong learning in higher education in the UK context. They provide a brief but comprehensive historical background to the development of lifelong learning in UK universities. Their overview charts the tradition of adult education through the university extension programmes of the 19th century and the Liberal Adult Education (LAE) initiatives of the pre-1992 universities, and indicates how these gave rise to the creation of Departments of Adult and Continuing Education. While these developments took place within the context of higher education, they were not part of what would be termed mainstream academic life. Alongside many others, Osborne and Houston make the point that lifelong learning only became part of the discourse in the academy in the 1990s. The changes to higher education funding and the focus of student provision in the 1990s led to discussions about access, social justice and issues of equality and inclusion, all concepts which we have come to know as the core elements of the widening participation agenda.

Together with the growing concern for a specifically vocational purpose in adult education and access programmes and the inclusion of new groups of students on vocational courses that had not previously required a degree qualification - particularly in teaching, nursing and social work - by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, UK universities were quite different institutions from what they had been previously. The creation of the post-1992 university sector allowed for the inclusion of larger groups of so-called non-traditional students who, for various reasons, would not have been able to access undergraduate

degrees in the pre-1992 HE context. These new universities were also able to provide much of the vocationally-focused undergraduate degree education that had become a requirement of the rise of credentialism. However, in their conclusions, Osborne and Houston (2012) make a number of points of specific interest to the present study. They suggest that since the beginning of the 21st century, despite the ubiquitous use of the concept of lifelong learning goals in virtually every walk of life, ‘...the position of adult lifelong learners in higher education has declined considerably’. They point out that opportunities for adult and continuing education have declined across the sector, that widening participation policies support a focus upon the young, and that the percentage of mature learners in undergraduate courses has declined. They pose the question: if adults are the losers in the new landscape of lifelong learning in higher education, then who are the winners? This question is of significance for this study of professional doctorate candidates; certainly, it would be worthwhile to discover whether they have won or lost as a result of the recent changes in HE.

2.6 Work-based/workplace learning

In an institutional context, raising questions of where and how PD students are positioned as older, adult, lifelong learners in contemporary HE, the descriptors of work-based learning present a very attractive proposition in terms of categorising this student group. While, as Burke *et al.* (2009) point out, ‘...defining work based learning is challenging as the literature is often vague and contradictory’, the starting points of what Malloch, Cairns, Evans and O’Connor (2011: 5) describe as ‘the two fundamental human and social processes of working and learning’ can both be identified within the professional doctorate framework. In fact, for many student groups who under earlier and less market-driven policies, lifelong learners would have been the most convenient banner heading, ‘workplace/work-based learners’ has now become the preferred description. This focus upon the instrumental nature of older adult learning, where the ‘pay-off’ can be conceived as the development of human and economic capital, is part of a neo-liberal discourse that has come to feature in

many aspects of lifelong learning and work-based learning in the 21st century (Malloch *et al.*, 2011).

From the point of view of course creators and HEIs, the temptation to describe the professional doctorate candidate as a workplace/work-based learner is understandable. The concepts involved in the exploration of the relationship between work and learning are current and ever-evolving, so creating a programme that puts this relationship at the apparent heart of its construction must present recruitment opportunities. Within such a programme of WBL, the motivation for learning is easy to pin down, and the response to the concept of the knowledge economy is comforting (Malloch *et al.*, 2011: 5ff). However, describing the PD students in this study as work-based learners would be stretching the concept too thinly. They are all workers, they all have workplaces (bases), they all situate, for the most part, their research at thesis stage in a context that relates to their professional standing/role, and in the taught elements of the course they are asked to draw upon their workplaces and their professional contexts to design, plan and construct their assignments around their organisations. Yet, they need not apply any of this learning practically; it is all theoretical. Furthermore, their major research project, the thesis, is not supervised nor examined by anyone external to the academy unless it is conducted within HE as the workplace. No employer is involved in negotiating any aspect of the professional doctorate student's learning, nor are they expected to take ownership of any product of the programme. Fundamentally, the professional doctorate programme still perpetuates the division of theory and practice that has been a bone of contention within the work based learning debate since the earliest days of its introduction to the UK in the 1980s (Malloch *et al.*, 2011). While the structure of the thesis stage - Stage 2 - remains as an equivalent, just as it does for the PD students in this study, to the traditional PhD by research, theory will remain privileged over practice and therefore the work-based element of the doctorate will play second-fiddle to the theoretical engagement with the thesis topic.

The attributes assigned to the classification of 'older adult learners' can be seen in the necessary attributes of a successful professional doctorate candidate: the ability to create abstract meaning from their life experience, the will and

capacity to learn from peers, the depth and breadth of their experiential learning and their scope, and the opportunity to reflect upon their practical learning over their life course. Therefore, given these attributes, it is likely that it is not simply the wish to acquire them as an outcome of doctoral training that leads the older adult learner to professional doctoral study programmes; perhaps it is also the realisation that they already have these qualities that drives them to prove their capacities at the highest level. While the more traditional PhD student may embark upon a programme of learning that leads towards the goal of a career researcher and the outcomes that signify doctorateness discussed above, it may be that the professional doctorate student understand these attributes of doctorateness and the threshold concepts that have to be met in order to achieve a doctoral degree and recognises this as their readiness to receive the imprimatur of the qualification. This is not to claim that the professional doctorate route is easier because candidates, especially those who fall into the category of older adult learners, already possess or recognise in themselves the attributes of doctorateness; doctoral study is difficult for everyone, even the brightest and the best. However, traditional doctoral students may start a course of study knowing that they have a lot to learn, while professional doctorate candidates may start their doctoral journey because they know they have already learned a lot.

2.7 Credentialism

It is no coincidence that the proliferation of routes to doctoral qualification has taken place within a period of great debate around the reformation and reshaping of higher education policy. The concepts of credentialism in, and the commodification of, higher education have been debated alongside the impact of massification upon degree quality and delivery; much of this has been researched and reported within what has come to be known as the ‘neoliberal agenda’ (Ball, 2013). Within the education policy debate, neoliberalism might be defined by what Shamir (2008: 3) describes as a concept which ‘is treated neither as a concrete economic doctrine nor as a definite set of political projects’. He goes on to explain that he treats neoliberalism as ‘a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are

organised around a certain imagination of the “market” as a basis for the universalization of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives of the discourse and/practice of commodification, capital accumulation and profit making’. Whether the professional doctorate is the product of, or the basis for, this debate is an issue that cannot be ignored here. To the outside observer, it would be logical to assume that credentialism, in some form or another, is a key motivating factor in the choices older adults make in deciding to pursue a course leading to a doctoral qualification.

Although much of the earliest research into the concept and consequences of credentialism focused upon undergraduate education (e.g. Fuller, 2001), it does consider issues that are appropriate for the archetypal professional doctorate student. In what she termed her ‘Quantitative Snapshot’, Fuller (2001) identified several features of the student product of credentialism that might also be considered significant in the professional doctorate student profile. She suggested that research into the take-up in HE programmes might usefully focus not on explaining changing patterns on institutional change and development, but instead on the importance of qualifications to the individual. She then went on to illustrate that most students who benefited from credentialist agendas were ‘mature’ (in this case over the age of 30), part-time, self-funded, and motivated not only by the need for career progress but, especially for older students, also the wish to access qualifications that had not been available to them previously. Within this context, she makes a clear link between the concepts of credentialism and the widening access initiatives being developed by the government(s) of the day. She does recognise the disadvantages of credential inflation; however, her research presents a rather benign, uncritical and unproblematic definition of credentialism overall, that has not been carried forward into more recent research and enquiry. She justifies her rather optimistic approach towards the outcomes of credentialism in her conclusion by suggesting that:

‘The promotion of a credentialist model of educational reform by policy makers has become well established in the UK and enjoys support from politicians across the main political parties. While I acknowledge that the fundamental tenets and effects of credentialism merit serious

discussion...the focus of this paper has been more pragmatic. By pragmatic I mean it has been less concerned to identify and debate the advantages and disadvantages of the credentialist approach that to highlight and understand why higher education level qualifications have grown in importance for adults. I have suggested that mature student demand for higher level qualifications is evidenced by the rise in take up of part-time HE: the majority of which is self-funded. The paper has argued that changes in the socio-economic context and the extension of individual decision making to new areas of activity over the past 20 years or so can help explain why large numbers of older adults are pursuing qualifications in HE when in previous generations they have not' (Fuller, 2001:244).

While Fuller hints at the connection between social stratification and credentialism, more recent research has made much more overt claims of an intimate association between the two. In a special issue of *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* entitled "New Directions in Educational Credentialism" (2011), the authors pursued a much more robust line in defining both the concept itself and the outcomes it sought and produced (Bills and Brown, 2011). Although viewed from a US rather than a UK context, they suggested three definitions of credentialism that might usefully be employed in discussion. Their first is that '...credentialism can refer to the extent to which societies allocate individuals to slots in the occupational hierarchy on the basis of the educational qualifications that the candidates present at the point of hire'. Their second definition is a '...conceptualization of educational credentialism [which] sees it as a persistent trend towards ever-increasing educational requirements for jobs', which they call 'credential inflation'. Finally, they construct their third definition within the second by suggesting that credential inflation has led to the creation of artificial professional differences between individuals where those who hold qualifications are unduly rewarded for educational achievement that has no impact upon enhancing productivity in a particular profession or occupation. They associate this final definition with the argument that within credentialist educational agendas there is a serious issue of 'social waste', in that the funding invested in education which has no real economic or social impact would be better invested elsewhere in society. I propose that each of these definitions, together with Fuller's more pragmatic search for the key motivations for taking advantage of the credentialist agendas, can be usefully employed in shedding light upon both the constructed and actual

identity of the professional doctorate students involved in the present research project.

The debates around the massification and commodification of higher education may also have a place in this examination of the identity of professional doctorate students. However, rather than simply seeing these as a means to explain greater uptakes in doctoral programmes by older adult students, it may be more useful to place these concepts within the greater field of developing educational policy. To this end, examining the educational debate, often constructed with what have come to be termed neoliberal policies, may also be constructive (Ball, 2013).

2.8 Motivation and Identity

Along with the growth of the professional doctorate, both in terms of numbers of candidates, and the proliferation of programmes and HEIs offering courses, there has also been a concomitant growth in the research into this new or alternative route to doctoral qualification. This research has been conducted in many international sites, and has looked at various aspects of programme growth in terms of the institutional experience, and at programme impact in terms of the student experience. From the perspective of the UK, two seminal projects could be said to bookend this research. The first was the Scott *et al.* (2004) project entitled *Professional Doctorates: Integrating Professional and Academic Knowledge*. This text had its origins, as the authors acknowledge, in an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) project (Scott *et al.*, 2004). They set out, as their title suggests, to specifically investigate the relationship between the professional context of the PD and the way in which this was contextualised within universities. In their initial research for the ESRC, they focused upon four main questions which might be summarised as investigating the influence of the PDs chosen on the candidates' professional practice; the impact of the development of professional knowledge on employment culture; the HEI structures for the delivery of the programmes; and definitions of the nature of an appropriate relationship between professional and academic knowledge, and how universities could develop practice which best reflected

this relationship. Their research represents an attempt to move beyond these initial questions and explore the emergence of the PD more fully both from the perspectives of the universities and the workplace, and of the student experience.

The second bookend in the UK PD research project is the report for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) which was published in January 2016. The aims of the CRAC Report, taken here for the executive summary, were to:

- Examine existing PD provision and understand models used in PD programme delivery to contribute to the development of a more robust typology;
- Consider HEIs' strategies for PD provision and how this might change in future amidst an evolving postgraduate research context;
- Explore the skills and attributes that PD programmes seek to develop in response to employers' and professional demands, and how these are delivered;
- Explore the impacts of PD programmes on graduates, their employers and professions, and provider institutions.

(CRAC, 2016: iii)

Taken together, these two projects represent a comprehensive overview of the PD and of the questions, issues and concerns that have arisen over the last 25 years since the emergence of these doctoral programmes. They are, at the same time, both different and similar to each other. While the Scott *et al.* (2004) project reported upon the existing nature of the PD by considering three specific programmes and speculated upon future developments in the light of their findings, the CRAC report focusses almost entirely upon the current PD landscape. However, the conclusions they draw and the issues they raise for future research and discussion are similar: both identify a need for clarity on the relationship between the workplace and the university, draw upon their research to highlight the discrepancies between different types and purposes of programmes, and stress a need for further research into the student experience.

Within the extensive literature reviews for each project, the context and nature of the development of the programmes received considerable attention. The key issues that arise from these reviews are also similar: they both raise questions regarding the differences between the traditional PhD route by research, and they both ask questions about the distinct nature and character of the different PD routes. Implied in these discussions are the two key questions that are most frequently applied to qualitative studies of the student experience on PD programmes: why are you doing a doctorate, and why have you chosen a PD rather than a PhD? For our discussion here, these give way to the examination of two critical concepts: motivation and identity.

2.8.1 Motivation

As Breen and Lindsay (1999) and Scott *et al.* (2004) each point out, ‘Debates concerning learner motivation in general are complex’ (Scott *et al.*, 2004: 113). From a psychological perspective, motivation can be seen as the energiser of behaviour, whereas from the sociological perspective of adult education there may be a greater focus upon motivation as the fulfillment of needs that are perceived by the learner in a particular context, or sets of contexts, that change and adapt over the life course (Rogers, 2002). However, regardless of the way in which we might define motivation or the particular lens through which we may wish to view the concept, it is generally accepted that the identification of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational impulses may be usefully employed to analyse motivating factors in determining student choice in higher education. Scott *et al.* (2004: 114) proposed three classifications of the motivational factors for candidates undertaking professional doctorate programmes. Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016) also drew upon these categories in compiling their CRAC report. They added a fourth category (Extrinsic Professional Alteration) and summarised the four category types as follows:

- (i) **Extrinsic Professional Initiation**, those who directly identify their doctorate with career development and accelerated promotion.
- (ii) **Extrinsic Professional Continuation**, where a candidate is reasonably experienced and established in their professional field but wants to

further develop their professional career either in line with existing work or by providing new opportunities for diversifying career options.

- (iii) **Extrinsic Professional Alteration**, where the candidate views the doctorate as a vehicle for changing, affecting or making a contribution to an aspect of their practice.
- (iv) **Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation**, characterised by those placing an emphasis on the PD for providing intellectual stimulus and personal fulfillment.

Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016: 50)

Although these categories have not been exclusively used to measure or assess motivational factors in PD candidates, they have been widely drawn upon by studies considering perspectives on student choice in doctoral programmes (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Loxley and Seery, 2012; Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012).

The main findings of Scott *et al.* (2004) in terms of motivation were arrived at with reservations, but were nonetheless well defined. These authors had considered the views of students from three distinct professional doctorate programmes: the EngD, the DBA and the EdD, and found that the motivations for taking up programmes were connected closely to the programmes themselves. As the EngD was viewed as an early career option by most candidates, in contrast to the other two programmes, these candidates expressed goal orientated motivational factors that drew on the Type 1 category of extrinsic professional initiation. They were able, in this instance, to make a direct connection between the design and purpose of the programme and the instrumental motivation of candidates. The same was true for the EdD and DBA programmes, for which a correlation was apparent between the programme design and purpose and the type of motivational classification identified with the candidates; however, here the Type 1 factor was entirely absent. As the DBA and the EdD drew upon candidates who were most likely to be established professionals, their need for career initiation was absent. The DBA and EdD candidates fell largely into the Type 2 and 3 categories. This finding also draws attention to the aspect of age and career stage in motivating candidates to join professional doctoral programmes. Their findings were that, while the question

of typology and categorisation of motivational factors was most likely to be a matter of emphasis rather than one of a simple, single categorisation, older adults were more likely to be drawing upon motivations that focussed upon the quality of their professional and personal development rather than opportunities for 'upward career mobility' (Scott *et al.*, 2004: 125). Their conclusions also indicated that programmes like the EngD were in place to develop expertise while also providing opportunities for the acquisition of experience, and therefore they would necessarily motivate choice from a different category of candidate. The EdD and DBA candidates were motivated largely, in professional terms, by the ability to use their experience and expertise to acquire the qualification, rather than the other way around.

Mellors-Bourne, *et al.* (2016: 51) suggest that their findings on 'individuals' rationales for participating in a PD correspond well with Scott *et al.*'s groupings (ii), (iii) and (iv)' as they had summarised them. However, it should also be noted that although their report (CRAC 2016) covers a wide range of PD programmes, including those that are described as qualifying candidates for direct entry to a profession such as the DClinPsy and, at a stretch, the EngD, they did not interview candidates from these programmes about their motivation, instead assuming that they would fall largely into the Type 1 category. They identified their candidate range from their review of the literature, and made a number of assumptions based upon these initial findings. They draw upon the work of Powell and Long (2005) to identify the typical PD candidate as 'typically, although not always, senior professionals who have accrued considerable professional expertise' (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 50). They further construct the identity of candidates as those seeking 'professional extension' (Costley and Lester, 2012) by using their expertise and existing knowledge to research issues that had a direct bearing upon their professional practice and context. They arrive at these conclusions by drawing upon the previous literature in this field (Costley and Armsby, 2007; Costley and Lester, 2012; Doncaster and Lester, 2002; Wellington, 2013). Thus, for these candidates, falling within the identity constructed above, they found a great deal of evidence for the extrinsic professional continuation and alteration categories, supported by a professed desire held by the majority of candidates to deepen their academic interest, therefore indicating the intrinsic affirmation

in their category (iv). An interesting additional finding in this report is that most of the candidates had considered other forms of doctoral qualification, most likely the traditional part-time PhD by research, but had been motivated to choose the PD model 'for the practical reason that it had been specifically designed for professionals to study part-time while in employment' (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 52). They suggest that the specific structure of the PD model enables the candidates to achieve a doctoral qualification which the PhD route would not, because the nature of the PD programme supports them through the taught stage (scaffolding their learning and/or return to learning), enables them to carry out research in a field about which they already know, and thus subverts the lonely existence of the typical part-time PhD student by enabling them to be part of a cohort of students from whom they can draw support and who are in a similar position. This finding has certainly been confirmed in recent research and is recognised as an extrinsic motivating factor in students choosing between a PhD and a PD programme, especially in the case of older adult learners returning to HE study (Ellis and Robb, 2014; Halcro, Robb and Poulter, 2016).

The literature on the development of the professional doctorate and its impact upon the candidates also focusses upon the key concept of student identity. Student identity is critical to any examination of the student experience for many reasons but for the purposes of this study it is essential in answering the research question that interrogates the possible difference between constructed learner identity and the reality of the learner identity of the older adult student engaged in a doctoral programme in HEIs in Scotland.

2.8.2 Identity

The nature, acquisition and impact of aspects of human identity constitutes a vast field of study in both psychology and sociology. Studies on, and research into, identity have shown the impact that class, race, gender ethnicity, sexuality and, of course education, among other issues, can have upon individuals, groups of individuals, their life experiences and their life chances (Archer, Hutchins and Ross, 2003; Bowl, 2003; Vincent, 2003; Bottero, 2005; Reay, David and Ball,

2005; Burke and Jackson, 2007). From the 1960s up to the present day, seminal research and the work and publications of public intellectuals have drawn upon theories of identity to attempt to explain who we are, as individuals, groups and societies. National identities, class associations and the active identification with social and special interest groups are a significant part of 21st century life. Individuals routinely discuss their personal identities and the concept, in its many forms, is discussed in the media on a daily basis. Concepts which were once considered significant and understood only in theoretical and academic traditions - for example those of 'self' in terms of how the individual perceives him- or herself and 'person' as the role(s) society assigns to individuals and groups - now form part of social discourse. However, this familiarity with the concept of identity can lead to a simplification of the complexity of the nature of identity.

Identity, particularly through the works of public intellectuals like Bourdieu, Foucault and, in a British context, Hall (2000), has come to be recognised as an essential element in the work of social and cultural theorists. Identity is now viewed as fluid, un-fixed, multi-faceted and consisting of both the ways people see themselves and the ways in which they are seen by others (Hall, 2000; Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007). While the term is usually viewed positively in contemporary contexts, in the past it has often been associated with social construction and constraint. However, within modern scholarship the agency of the individual and groups of individuals has been recognised as a force for change and the notion of a singular, fixed identity has been replaced (Vincent, 2003; Burke, 2012). The concept of plural identities, in which multiple identities are possible at different times over the life course, and where multiple identities are present in the individual but change emphasis depending upon contexts, has gained ground (Burgess and Wellington, 2010).

The concept of identity has a long history in the development of the sociology of education, and I have been interested in the nature and impact of issues of identity since my initial teacher training in the 1970s. The work of Paul Willis (1977), my contemporary at the University of Birmingham, Bowles and Gintis (1976) in the USA, and Bernstein (1975; 1996) have shaped both my own pedagogical practice and my identity as a teacher. However, it was through the

work of Ivanvic (1998) that I first became interested in the impact of identity upon the success or failure of older adult learners in HE. Her work provided a framework into which I could place my own teaching of academic writing to older adults returning to HE to upgrade their initial qualifications. These groups of students - mainly senior nursing professionals within the NHS - had trained under the old nursing school system and, as a result of Project 2000 (UKCCNM, 1986) and the credentialism at play within the NHS, then found they had to return to HE to convert their SRN qualifications into degrees. I was co-opted to teach on this programme because, after an initial run of students, the failure level for written assignments was found to be very high. In getting to know these groups of students, I discovered several areas that impacted upon their academic writing and engagement; many if not most of which were caused by the conflict between their professional and student identities. As health professionals they were confident, successful, and well respected within their chosen fields; as students, in contrast, they were construed as deficient, failing and othered. This conflict was reflected in their assignment writing - mainly because the writing required of health professionals usually demands a skill set that is diametrically opposed to the skills seen as necessary for academic writing. This crisis caused by conflicting identities threatened both the professional and student careers of these learners. In short, many considered resigning from their posts or accepting demoted grades because they could not cope with the stress of writing essays. Ivanic's (1998) work, along with that of the new literacies studies (Street, 2005), helped me to construct an academic literacies project that resolved these issues for these groups of students. The significance of issues of identity in older adult students has been reinforced within my pedagogy since then.

The PD student/candidate has many of the profile characteristics of these initial student groups whom I taught. They are older adult learners, part-time students, and professional people who spend the greater part of their lives in their workplace rather than studying. The possibility for conflicted identities in the case of the PD candidate is clear: they are older adults engaged in a study environment where students under the age of 25 are the norm. They are also engaged in a doctoral programme that is very different in form and content from the traditional PhD by research in which most of the graduate student body is

engaged. They are part-time students; therefore, by necessity, they are not in the mainstream of campus activity. They are professional people with well-honed skill sets that have carried them through their careers thus far, and upon which they have depended for a living. As PD students, they are required to adjust their priorities to foreground skills, such as proficiency in research methods and academic writing, which may have played little or no part in their professional lives and, therefore, in which they have to return to novice status. With these complex identities to juggle, they are then confronted with a constructed learner identity or identities which may not reflect this complex profile (Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007). They are, to a greater or lesser extent, a group who are recognised by their difference and diversity, rather than by their similarity to other groups of students, including students on other doctoral programmes. As Hall suggests, identity is not only defined by what we see as being the same but is also, and perhaps most frequently, defined by what makes us different. He writes:

‘Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modulations of power, and thus are more than the product of the marking of difference and exclusion. Above all ... identities are constructed through, not outside, difference’ (Hall, 2000: 17).

Older adults engaged in higher degree programmes could be viewed as the archetype for students who are shifting from an ‘ascribed status’ to an ‘achieved status’. I am concerned with exploring the reality of this archetype. It is safe to assume that higher education always has an impact on identity development. Sometimes it reinforces an accepted set of prerequisites for an accepted class, ethnic or gendered identity. Alternatively, it can transform an ascribed identity. This can be through the acquisition of a disciplinary or subject identity, a professional identity or it can be something altogether different. In the case of this project, it could be viewed as seeking or achieving a doctoral identity (Scott and Morrison, 2010).

Identity is, therefore, a complex issue. It is fluid, but it depends upon not only the perception of the individual and how he or she perceives his or her own

identity, but also upon the perceptions of others: as Holmes (1995: 7) suggests, identity ‘...must always be subject to affirmation by others’. In the context of this study of PD candidates, this issue of affirmation is very significant. Identity, therefore, as we have already seen, is a negotiated entity. As Brennan *et al.* (2010: 138) point out, ‘It must be personally and socially owned socially recognized’. This raises the question of whether or not ‘becoming a doctor’ is a main focus for the PD candidates, rather than the perceived notion of becoming a better professional. Which identity is stronger? Brennan *et al.* (2010: 139) suggest that students have a considerable degree of choice over the identities that they take with them into the world beyond higher education, but this may not be true for the identity that PD candidates take with them into doctoral study.

One aspect of the identity that could be ascribed to the PD candidate is that of ‘a subject of widening participation’. The PD could be viewed as an access route to doctoral study that circumvents the requirements of the traditional PhD by research. Therefore, the connection between identity and widening participation could be of critical significance. This connection is central to this study because older students are often ‘othered’ in HE (Vincent, 2003; Burke, 2013: 58), and following a non-traditional route to doctoral qualification results in what might be best described as ‘double othering’. This brings the discussion around to considering issues not only of identity, but also to those of subjectivity. Being ‘divided’ or separated from PhD students both by the design and the delivery of their doctoral programme may result in a form of objectification in which the PD candidates are ‘made objects that can be known’, as Fejes (2008: 90) describes the process. This process could construct the PhD students as ‘normal’, while the PD candidates could be viewed as ‘abnormal’ (Fejes, 2008: 90). There appear, at this stage, to be rich grounds for investigating whether this division happens to, or is felt by, the group of participants within this study, and whether or not they recognise the impact of such a division.

Burke (2012: 59) writes very convincingly about the notion of difference in widening participation. She states unequivocally that:

‘As widening participation is about redressing historical exclusion and inequalities, it must grapple with the politics of social relations, including the intersections of difference, inequality and identity across age, class, dis/ability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion and sexuality’.

As difference is at the root of social and educational inequalities, it is important to explore it here. There could be grounds for considering whether or not the PD candidates in this study are subjects of social injustice and exclusion, and that their motivation for pursuing a doctoral qualification could be that they wish to minimise these impacts.

Older adult learners are often quoted as describing themselves as late starters, or as realising that they had potential that they had thus far failed, for various reasons, to fulfil. The concepts of identity, the individual and the self are frequently drawn upon by students to tell or re-tell their personal narratives (Morgan-Klein and Osborne, 2007). This location of identity within the self and the recognition of personal agency fits well within the discourses of neoliberalism. The recognition of aspiration and potentials meets the needs of policy makers who constrict society around the notion of the individual and their place within it (cf Ball, 2013). It is these concepts that construct learner identities.

Universities, most particularly in contemporary HE those which are involved in WP agendas (mainly the post-1992 group) describe their aims, to various extents, as involving ‘unlocking potential’. Through espousing these beliefs, they may claim centrality as professional and pedagogical agents of change. In turn, they are entrusted with creating equality, reducing inequality and serving the ends of social justice (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012). The post-1992 universities particularly claim this ground as their territory; their sphere of expertise and special interest; their USP. While the Russell Group may have its research remit and the 1960s universities their innovation in teaching, learning and curriculum design, the post-1992s have been entrusted with bringing on board the excluded. However, there is much more to university choice than the individual university’s notion of its aims and objectives in a neoliberal world, and much more to how student identities construct that choice (Reay, David and Ball, 2005).

Burke (2012: 61), in theorising difference and diversity in the formation of student identities, points out that: 'Difference and differentiation, linked to discourses of diversity are central in understanding the formation of student identity in higher education and in relation to struggles over access and participation'. Although she is mainly concerned with undergraduate students, much of the research regarding the diversification of doctoral study, with the introduction of a widening variety of PD programmes, also to some extent expresses concerns about the impact that this diversity will have upon the traditional doctoral study. As Burke (2012: 61) goes on to suggest:

'As higher education is becoming increasingly characterized by diversity, the anxiety about closeness of the 'Other' to those deemed to be worthy of higher education participation is expressed through narratives about contamination by the lowering of standards and the 'dumbing down' of university curricula and pedagogical practices'.

It would be interesting to discover whether any of the participants in this study have been subjected to the constructed identity that this set of beliefs suggests.

2.8.3 Identity and the Professional Doctorate

Moving on from general issues around student identity, a systematic literature search using the keywords 'identity' and 'professional doctorates' provides an interesting, if predictable, landscape of how this debate has developed. Following on from the establishment of PD programmes in the 1990s, the first raft of research largely considered the nature of the degree itself. There were reviews of the qualification and its purpose in its various forms (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001; Tennant, 2004; Lester, 2004; Scott *et al.*, 2004; Boud and Tennant, 2006). This initial phase could be said to have begun the benchmarking process that followed (Scott *et al.*, 2004; Park, 2007; Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016). These initial studies, published between 2001 and 2006, looked at the distinct identity and characteristics of the PD (Bourner *et al.*, 2001), the shifting identity of doctoral education, reflected in the growth of doctoral programmes (Tennant, 2004), the gaps that still existed in doctoral education that were not entirely filled by the PhD and new PD programmes

(Boud and Tennant, 2006) and the justifications for the academy engaging ‘in practice, rather than (or in addition to) engagement in academic research’ (Lester, 2004: 768). This phase of the research which connected the PD and the concept of identity largely agreed that the creation of the degree raised a number of issues that caused both confused doctoral identities for the academy and shifted the focus of doctoral student identity, to a greater or lesser extent, ‘from that of *the autonomous student* to that of *the enterprising self*’ (Tennant, 2004: 421). Therefore, shifting identity caused by the introduction of PD programmes, in a number of forms, was highlighted.

By 2007 the discussion around the nature of the doctorate, its form, function and value had progressed far enough for the HEA to sponsor ‘a national debate in the UK on the nature of the doctorate, given the multiple drivers for change, multiple agendas at work, and the multiple stakeholders with an interest in both the debate and its outcome’ (Park, 2007: 2). This discussion paper set out largely to examine the nature of how the PhD had developed and changed in the 21st century, but it was inevitable that the debate would also include questions raised around the current and future development of PD programmes. The initial stages of the debate were framed around responses to drivers of change which were identified as (i) sustaining the supply chain of researchers, (ii) preparation for employment and (iii) internationalisation. One of the key ways in which the UK was identified as adapting to these drivers of change was ‘through the emergence of an increasing diversity of doctoral awards in the UK, with a particular emphasis on the development of professional doctorates’ (Park, 2007: 3). However, although this may have led the reader to assume that the PD might form a central pillar of this national debate, that was not the case. The introduction to the framework around the discussion of a ‘Diversity of Awards’ did not take place until very near the end of the original paper and was framed, for the most part, around ‘challenges for the sector in terms of ensuring compatibility of quality and standards, particularly because some of the new doctoral models incorporate elements such as taught modules, work-based learning, and novel forms of output rather than relying solely on the traditional thesis’ (Park, 2007: 32). There then followed eight reasonably short paragraphs drawing upon the research mentioned above, and raising issues relating to the nature of the professional doctorate and, by extension, the doctoral identity of

the candidates pursuing these programmes. The issues raised by Park (2007) thus problematised the identity of the PD as a doctoral qualification.

Unsurprisingly, research projects involving the concepts of professional doctorates and identity that followed this debate raised by the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the Research Council UK, the National Postgraduate Committee (NPC), the UK Council for Graduate Education, Universities UK and other organisations concerned with HE and graduate study, focused largely upon ‘doctorateness’ and the identities created by doctoral study. One article in particular, Scott and Morrison’s 2010 investigation into the making and taking of doctoral identities, points to the characteristics that shape doctoral identities. They considered issues of doctoral identity mainly, although not solely, from the perspective of the impact of the introduction of new routes to doctoral qualification upon the conflicts created in various PD programmes by how students, institutions and workplaces were impacted by ‘professional and work-based knowledge... being reconstructed within the academy, the profession and the workplace’ (Scott and Morrison, 2010: 15). Their conclusions, that doctoral identities are fluid, subject to change throughout the process of study, conflicted by the academic and professional identities that PD candidates are required to juggle, and dependent upon a variety of factors which are unpredictable and over which the candidate has little control, are reflected in a good deal of the subsequent research. They make the point that ‘...a homogeneous model of doctoral study is misleading, and, furthermore, misconstrues the experience and the doctoral identity that derives from such experiences’ (Scott and Morrison, 2010: 22).

Within the last five years, the research focus on the PD and issues of identity has shifted towards the student experience and the impact and outcome of the various PD programmes, both upon the individual and upon the workplace. Another interesting point of note here is that the research appears to shift away from the mainstream journals concerned with a specific focus upon the academy and moves towards publications involved with work based learning. Most of these studies (e.g. Burgess and Wellington, 2010; Burgess, Weller and Wellington, 2011; Smith *et al.*, 2011) shed light upon the multi-faceted identities that PD candidates acquire as a result of their study and focus upon

the professional and personal metamorphoses that individuals undergo. However, more importantly for this project, they raise as many questions as they answer, and while they shed a great deal of light on doctoral identity, they do not provide conclusive evidence on the student identities of PD candidates; they imply a great deal by indicating how identities change, but they do not consider the concept of student identity from the perspective of this project. All three of the studies mentioned above conclude that further research is needed to identify and clarify issues concerning the student identities of PD candidates. Barnard (2011), in his paper on professional doctorates in social sciences, also concludes that further research into the characteristics of the PD candidate would be useful in developing 'scholarly professionals' as opposed to 'professional scholars' (Fenge, 2009). He also introduces the next area of consideration here when he poses the question of whether or not '...the growth and diversity of different generational doctorates is a result of the widening participation agenda and growth in the higher educational experience of previously marginalized or excluded groups...' (Barnard, 2011: 270).

2.9 Widening Participation

Since the educational reforms of post-war Britain took place, issues of widening participation to HE in the UK have been part of every government's political agenda. The changes brought about by the recommendations of the Robbins Report (1963) led to the creation of new types of HEIs, offering a wider scope for engagement in HE and a wider range of options, both academic and vocational, than had previously existed in the sector. The advent of the Open University in 1969 heralded even greater opportunities for new groups of undergraduate learners and for the first time offered open access to graduate education for students without the conventional matriculation requirements. The Open University also embraced new types of students by enabling older adult learners and part-time learners in full-time employment to take advantages of the courses offered to obtain degree qualifications. Throughout the 1980s, the availability of Access routes to HE grew, and HEIs were encouraged and enabled to reach out to new groups of learners, particularly those designated as mature students. However, it was the publication of the Dearing Report in 1997 that

really heralded the initiatives around widening participation as it is understood today. Successive Labour administrations, as Parry (2010: 36) suggests, placed policies for increased and widening participation ‘at the heart of [New Labour’s] policies for creating a learning society’. Specific groups were targeted in these initiatives and funding was put in place to support the engagement in HE by these disadvantaged groups. Young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, prospective students from disadvantaged localities, and those with disabilities, were singled out for the greatest initial attention (Fuller, Heath and Johnston, 2011). Along with the funding put in place to support these initiatives, ‘a wide variety of activities directed at encouraging ‘non-traditional’ entrants [to HE] were introduced, the scope of the target group interpreted largely in terms of social class background and principally aimed at ‘standard age’ entrants’ (Fuller, Heath and Johnston, 2011: 3). Later initiatives were also designed to include older adults and those who had pursued vocational routes to professional qualification, for example the Lifelong Learning Networks. These moves towards widening access and increasing participation in HE were driven by a range of motives and expected outcomes. The creation of a learning society in which human capital gave the UK standing in global markets was certainly a prominent feature of party and governmental statements from Blair’s ‘education, education, education...’ pre-election speech in 1996 onwards, and has continued into the present day (Ball, 2012). The Scottish Government have espoused this same rhetoric in their references to the ‘learning journey’ (Arnott and Ozga, 2010). Social inequality has been a key concept in WP initiatives which have been used both as a measurement of the extent of its existence and as a means whereby inequalities might be reduced and social justice restored, to a greater or lesser extent (Archer, 2007).

As a consequence of this WP project, a huge field of study has grown up around the impact of these policies on students, institutions and the wider society. The international comparisons it invites have been investigated (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012); issues of class, race, ethnicity and gender have been investigated (Reay, David and Ball, 2005). Age and access have been widely considered, and disability (David, 2010) and equality have been widely investigated (Burke, 2012). The whole WP project has come under scrutiny within HEIs and has become a vibrant area of research which continues to

develop. However, the vast majority of the research into WP has focused on undergraduate study. There is a real paucity of research into widening participation in postgraduate study, and virtually none into widening participation in doctoral study (McCulloch and Thomas, 2013).

Stuart *et al.* (2008), with the assistance of a grant from the HEA, undertook a research project in 2006-2007 that set out to investigate widening participation to postgraduate study, with the subtitle *Decisions, deterrents and creating success*. The project consisted of a mixed methods study and involved analysis of questionnaires from 1073 respondents and follow up interviews with 20 participants. They set out upon this project in recognition of the limited nature of the prior research in this field. This research project was followed in 2010 by a study commissioned by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC), which focused on widening participation from undergraduate to postgraduate research degrees (Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010). This was not an empirical study but, rather, a synthesis of the existing literature, mainly from the UK but with an international focus where considered appropriate, for example when making comparisons of policy outcome and impact. However, although both the empirical study (Stuart *et al.*, 2008) and the extended literature review (Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010) draw conclusions that are useful for this review, neither project included professional doctorate students in their research. Stuart *et al.* (2008) investigated students who were part of the WP project to undergraduate degrees and were progressing (or not) to postgraduate degrees and, therefore, generally to taught masters programmes. Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) deliberately excluded PD programmes from their review, explaining that:

‘There are now a range of doctorates offered, typically in professional subjects, which are not assessed wholly or mainly on the basis of a research-based thesis. So-called taught or professional doctorates are common in education (EdD), engineering (EngD), business and management studies (DBA), law (LLD), medical subjects (MD, DClinPsych) and so on. These are often taught part-time to practising professionals and incorporate advanced-level taught courses and an extended study of some description, but the thesis element is usually much shorter’
(Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010: 17).

Oddly, although PDs were excluded or deemed ‘out of scope’, the study included a range of master’s degrees that were considered research focused such as the MPhil. This inclusion criterion seems odd, as the thesis/dissertation required for a PD would be at least equivalent in length to the thesis submitted for any MPhil. This raises issues around the widespread mis/conceptions of the PD and the fears that have been expressed concerning its place and in HEIs, whereby the PhD by research may still be considered the only qualification worthy of a doctoral award.

There are areas of synergy (and some areas of divergence) in the findings of these two projects. In terms of impact, Stuart *et al.* (2008) found that those least likely to progress to postgraduate study were those who had studied vocational or practical courses at undergraduate level, those who were concerned about debt and/or funding, those who were child free, and White first in family entrants to HE. Therefore, it follows that the groups most likely to proceed were identified as those on theoretical courses, those who were less risk averse to debt, those with children, minority ethnic students, and those who were not first-in-family entrants to HE. Overseas students, including those from mainland Europe, were also included in the ‘most likely’ group. Age, class and actual debt were identified as having no main effects on intentions to pursue postgraduate study by Stuart *et al.* (2008). Women were also identified in the ‘more likely’ category.

In posing their first research question - Are postgraduate research students drawn disproportionately from certain backgrounds or groups? - Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) could be said to be seeking similar data to Stuart *et al.* (2008) in terms of considering impact of WP on students’ intentions to proceed to PG study. They reported that the status of the first degree, reflected in the classification, the subjects studied, and the awarding institution, appeared to have an impact upon students’ progression to research degrees. Although they do not point directly to differences between vocational/practical degrees and the theoretical/non-practice based alternatives, it could be reasonable to assume that this correlates to Stuart *et al.*’s (2008) finding that the type and nature of an undergraduate degree is likely to influence choices for postgraduate study. It is worth noting here that Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) largely discuss progression to full-time PhD study and therefore there may be implications here

in the form of counter indications for PD candidates. Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010: 6, and Section 8) also raise the issue of ethnicity; their findings suggest that although the representation of minority ethnic groups decreases as the level of study increases, ‘...not all ethnic groups are underrepresented at postgraduate research level compared to the [W]hite group’. They also suggest, in common with Stuart *et al.* (2008), that there is no direct correlation between levels of student debt and progression to post graduate research degrees; they do not assess this as risk acceptance or aversion as the 2008 study did. Findings that contradict those of the earlier study are that there is clear underrepresentation of women in postgraduate research degrees and that there is some evidence that socio-economic class does matter in some circumstances. While Stuart *et al.* (2008: 4) suggested that ‘...class alone was not a sufficient factor to affect intentions to undertake postgraduate study’, Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010: 5) state that ‘It is reasonably well-established that socio-economic class has no direct effect on immediate progression to postgraduate research study once academic factors are taken into account. However, there is some suggestion that class inequalities re-appear in later entry to postgraduate research study, with those from lower socio-economic classes being disadvantaged’. This finding may also be of significance in the particular case of professional doctorate candidates.

Both projects show considerable synergy in findings related to possible motivations for HEIs pursuing WP to postgraduate study, and indications for future research. These issues are also well documented in an article by McCulloch and Thomas (2013), which takes the conclusions drawn by Stuart *et al.* (2008) and Wakeling and Kyriecou (2010) into account while also focusing quite specifically on widening participation to doctoral education and research degrees, but with an emphasis on the research agenda for this emerging policy issue. They concur that most of the research into widening access has been at undergraduate level, but indicate the emergence of a second phase of contemporary research into WP policy and practice at postgraduate level. They also suggest that although there is an emerging agenda for this research focus, there remains a paucity of research in this field. In common with the two earlier studies explored and compared above, they look at possible motivations for HEIs pursuing widening participation at postgraduate and particularly

doctoral level. From the students' point of view, they indicate motivations that stem from the proliferation of undergraduate qualifications in the workforce, suggesting that there is room for widening participation to postgraduate study, both at masters and doctoral level, by tapping into groups of professionals who may wish to give themselves a competitive edge by moving on to postgraduate study (McCulloch and Thomas, 2013). This was also indicated in the findings of Stuart *et al.* (2008), where students who had achieved a professional qualification - that is, an entry to an occupation - were less likely to proceed to postgraduate qualification immediately, prioritising work experience over further academic study. It may, however, be the case that once this work experience is achieved, this group may then wish to pursue further qualifications at postgraduate level. This may be an indicator of programme choice at doctoral level.

From the point of view of HEIs, many indicators are contained in the two projects above, McCulloch and Thomas' (2013) article, and other research on HE recruitment and policy (Marginson, 2016; Servage, 2009; Brown, 2001) that there are drivers underpinning the wish to expand doctoral student numbers. There is a powerful financial incentive regarding the recruitment of both international and home domiciled postgraduate students, and this is particularly true for doctoral programmes. Not only do these programmes command high fees, particularly from non-EU candidates; they also have longer fixed terms of study than other PG programmes: a full-time PhD is generally completed in a minimum of three years, and part-time PhDs over at least five years. It is worth noting here too that professional doctorates, although always part-time and generally with very significant distance learning elements, consist of an average of four years of study. In post-1992 universities in particular, it would be reasonable to assume that PD programmes offer a significant recruitment stream. Additionally, there is also a driver from universities in terms of quality as well as quantity. McCulloch and Thomas (2013: 215) point out that: 'A further institutional driver is the contribution doctoral students make to the regular assessments of UK institutions' research quality'. Clearly, widening the net of possible research students also increases recruiters' chances of obtaining the best quality researchers. At present, this driver does not apply to most PD students as taught programmes are not included in the REF, and the close link

between professional practice and the research elements of candidates' theses does not provide the same opportunities for collaboration with HE staff.

The third set of drivers which can be seen at play in the project to widen participation to doctoral level is that of the policy implications of recruitment to the highest levels of study. While accepting that the assumption is frequently challenged, McCulloch and Thomas (2013) raise the question of the role of doctoral-qualified workers as a key element in the pursuit of the knowledge society and the human capital prestige that this brings. They suggest that there are sufficiently strong indications in government policy to conclude that '...a potential shortfall in doctoral entrants is likely to be addressed, in part, through WP and providing access to research degrees to members of under-represented social groups' (McCulloch and Thomas, 2013: 216). Furthermore, they point to the continuing significance of equity and social justice as drivers of HE policy, both governmentally and institutionally. As has been discussed above, addressing inequality and improving social justice are key elements of the widening participation agenda; these are both believed to be measured and addressed by widening participation policy. Addressing inequality in the present HE climate is not simply a humanitarian concern: all universities and public sector organisations must show that they are meeting their legislative obligations under, for example, the Equalities Act 2010. Widening participation helps HEIs to meet these requirements and allows them to tick all the Equality and Diversity legislative boxes. It will be interesting to discover how far, if at all, the professional doctorate candidates in this project meet the criteria for qualification as groups or individuals protected under the Equalities Act 2010.

The Scottish Funding Council, in response to the initial success of measures taken to widen access at undergraduate level, commissioned a report on widening access to postgraduate study in Scottish universities (Scottish Funding Council, 2015). This report pointed to the many advantages of postgraduate education. It cites the economic advantages of postgraduate education both to the individual and to society, and draws attention to the significance of the need for greater cooperation between higher education institutions and 'key growth industries' (SFC, 2015: 20). It also indicates strong evidence for a clear link between 'higher education qualifications and improved social outcomes' (SFC,

2015: 22). Barriers to access to postgraduate programmes are also considered and the conclusions are drawn that attention needs to be given to access to course information, financial barriers, the impact of prior post-compulsory education and the limited flexibility of postgraduate programmes. However, although this report highlights many of the issues that are pertinent to all postgraduate students, it focusses entirely upon postgraduate taught programmes at masters level; it does not consider the issues at stake in widening participation to research degrees and doctoral study.

The greatest area of agreement in all these studies of widening participation to postgraduate, and specifically doctoral, qualifications, is that there is very little existing research in this field, and therefore that research agendas have to be set and met. Stuart *et al.* (2008: 75) identify three key areas: the sociology of choice, influences on student decision making, and issues regarding the stress and anxiety related to study in HE as a barrier to choosing to progress to postgraduate programmes. Wakeling and Kyriecou (2010: 8) recommend eight areas for future research, which could be summarised as: (i) student characteristics and motivations, (ii) the application process, (iii) the mobility of students across subject disciplines and institutions, (iv) finance and funding, (v) the influence of social class on non-contiguous entry to doctoral programmes and issues of diversity in the research workforce, (vi) ethnic inequalities, (vii) gender, and (viii) the impact of 'other factors' on the take-up of postgraduate research (e.g. family commitments, disability, and sexuality). In other words, they suggest further research into every issue that has been explored in the widening participations project for undergraduate entry. Many of these areas are important for the research aims of the present project. However, it is the impact of the questions raised by McCulloch and Thomas (2013: 222) which have had most influence on the research aims and objectives of this project.

McCulloch and Thomas (2013) have developed an agenda with three key focuses, and with an additional section that draws attention to research issues that may not have been included in the three main sections. The three areas are: research items related to the student, those related to the institutions, and areas related to policy. Each of these strands raises a series of questions that could be answered to fill the research gaps McCulloch and Thomas (2013)

identify. Every question they raise and every perspective from which they view this research agenda makes a great deal of sense, on the basis of their review of literature. However, for the specific purposes of this research project, the following questions have been taken from their summary and will be woven into the analysis of this study to better fulfil its desired aims and objectives. From McCulloch and Thomas's (2013: 222ff) fifty or so questions and sub-questions, which I have adapted somewhat to fit the brief of a study focused upon Professional Doctorate candidates rather than PhD students, I have chosen the following as critical to this study; five are from the section entitled *(1) Student focused (a) Access and participation-related items*, and the sixth is drawn from *(4) Other items*:

- What are the influences of social class background and the differential contribution of cultural, social and economic factors on candidates' decisions to choose a (i) to pursue a doctoral programme (ii) through a professional doctorate route?
- What is the relationship between age, the life-cycle and doctoral education?
- What is the motivation for entry to doctoral programmes?
- What is the impact of previous educational decisions or experiences on the decision to pursue a professional doctorate programme?
- What are the reasons for the different periods of time that elapse between initial higher education entry (if any) and entry to the professional doctorate?
- Does widening participation have implications for the doctoral curriculum?

2.10 Construction and Development of the Research Questions from the Literature Review

This review has sought to summarise the existing research on professional doctorate programmes and the students who choose to pursue these courses of study. The major issues that have arisen concern (i) the nature of doctoral study, (ii) the concept of doctorateness, (iii) the specific profile of the PD student/candidate, and (iv) the significance of the concepts of motivation and

identity in arriving at a full understanding of the possible conflict between the constructed and actual identity of PD students. That there is a clear gap in the research agenda for widening access to doctoral education, and by extension therefore the consideration of professional doctorate programmes should be carried out as a means of accomplishing this end, has emerged as a significant conclusion to this review. Therefore, the review provides overwhelming evidence of the need to consider whether the constructed learner identity reflects the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes, or in this case, specifically, professional doctorate programmes. As the lack of qualitative data on the identity of PD candidates as possible subjects of widening participation is frequently alluded to in the existing research, there is evidence to suggest that a qualitative project would sufficiently add to the existing body of research to justify this methodological approach. Therefore, the research questions which are fully explored in the chapter that follows (Chapter 3, pp68ff) were developed and constructed on the basis of the findings from this literature review. Taking an overview of all the issues, the main research question became one of interrogating the reality of the learner identity of older adults engaged in higher degree programmes in Scotland. In order to address this main issue, several objectives and subsidiary research questions were arrived at; each of these is outlined and explained in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

Crotty (1998: 4) recommends that four elements are present in the construction of a methodology for social science research. He suggests that the discussion of an epistemological position, the exploration of a theoretical perspective, the explanation of a methodology and a description of the methods used for data collection are essential to the foundations of any worthwhile and robust research project. This chapter explains the design of this study within the framework that Crotty (1998) recommends. Additionally, issues of the positioning of the researcher as an 'insider' are considered under the heading of 'Theorising the Self', and the ethical procedures and principles followed are outlined and evidenced.

3.2 Introduction

As explained in the introduction, having been assigned the post of Lecturer in Academic Writing in the Graduate School of the university, I developed an interest in the students studying for Professional Doctorates. I was interested in this student group for two reasons: first, because although they were studying for higher degrees, they very closely matched the student profiles of the undergraduate students that I had originally intended to research; second, when teaching on the contact blocks, I realised that academic writing and a number of other challenges provided real barriers to progress for this student group. In a post-1992 university context, where widening access and participation are part of the project, it is not at all unusual to find undergraduates and taught postgraduate students who have to overcome very significant barriers to learning as part of their degree journey (Read, Archer & Leathwood, 2003). However, it might be assumed that this is more unusual among doctoral students.

This being the case, I began to look more closely at particular student groups, rather than at particular student issues, and found that there were significant gaps in the research into the experiences of older adult learners who were engaged in doctoral study. Professionally, I teach two groups of students who fall into this category. I deliver academic writing development to part-time and full-time PhD students who are described as ‘traditional’, in that they are writing theses by research, and I also teach on a Professional Doctorate (PD) programme. The PD student profile is quite different from that of the traditional PhD student, and that difference became the central focus of my interest in the experience of older adult learners engaged in higher degree programmes. From the consideration of these differences, and an extensive review of literature, I decided to focus upon issues of learner identity, and thus arrived at the question:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Research aims and objectives were then drawn from this question, as follows:

Objectives

- To reach a critical understanding of the concept of learner identity for older adults in HE;
- To understand and critique constructed learner identity as it applies to this student group;
- To identify critical differences between traditional PhD students and non-traditional doctoral student cohorts, in this case Professional Doctorate candidates, in order to isolate and identify any issues that may specifically affect PD students as older adult learners;
- To assess how the PD students might be, through this better understanding of their reality, best supported in their endeavours to achieve successful doctoral outcomes.

Therefore, the central research questions derived from these objectives are:

- How do the PD students describe themselves as people, professionals and students?
- How is the PD learner constructed by HEIs?
- What is the motivation of the PD student to achieve doctoral status?
- What are the differences, if any, faced by the PD student, as opposed to the PhD student?
- How can this inform programme design and delivery for PD students?

This project began from the assumption that considerable barriers face older adult students engaged in HE programmes. This was developed to focus upon the challenges encountered by part-time students who are older adults engaged in higher degree programmes in HEIs in Scotland. It was further assumed that a conflict between the constructed learner identity generally applied to this student group, and the reality of their identities, may cause conflict through the unrealistic expectations that further impede the successful completion of doctoral study. This being the case, two methodological approaches were possible: a case study approach, and an interpretative investigation based upon a qualitative design.

3.3 Traditional Methodologies within this Field

As the previous chapter indicates, it is possible to classify older adults engaged in higher degree programmes in several different ways. They meet the criteria for lifelong learners, they are clearly adult learners, and they could possibly be identified within the contemporary research on widening access and increased participation. In respect of the participants in this research project, as students in a professional doctorate programme, they are part-time students engaged in work-based learning. They might also fall into the broader field of adult and continuing education. They are certainly engaged in higher education, and are therefore part of that research tradition. While a narrow classification of the participants in this project is not strictly necessary, it is useful to consider how these groups or categories of students have been researched in the past.

Tight (2013: 136) suggests that: 'Higher education research is a multidisciplinary field engaging researchers from across the academy who make use of a wide

range of methodological approaches'. Tight (2013) goes on to point out that the massification of HE over the last thirty years or so has led to the growth and scope of research into HE. This research has originated from policy makers, funding bodies, governmental enquiries, and from university teachers and researchers. This has focused on the quality of programmes, the cost of provision, the balance between research and teaching, the nature of the outcomes of HE, and the nature of, and impact upon, the students and learners. Large-scale statistical analyses related to the practice and outcomes of HE is now commonplace and widely used for which, at the time of writing, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) was still a useful resource. Institutional analyses, both externally and internally imposed, are a key part of HE working life from the perspectives of both managers and academics. Small-scale research projects, both qualitative and quantitative in nature, have proliferated in the same period as a consequence of a renewed focus upon the pedagogical demands of the ever-growing student population and the diversity that this has brought to the academy (Harland, 2014; Tight, 2013).

There are, therefore, many research projects that provide examples of the three key approaches used in research in general, and in Higher Education in particular: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. These three approaches have been used, both in past and current research, to provide an overall view of educational fields and areas of specific interest: lifelong learning (LLL) (e.g. Schuller & Watson, 2009; Morgan-Klein & Osborne, 2007; Burke & Jackson, 2007), Higher Education (HE) (cf Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia[HERDSA]), Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) (e.g. Zawacki-Richter *et al.*, 2014; Burke, 2012), and Widening Access and Participation (WAP) (e.g. McCulloch & Thomas, 2013). However, while all these approaches are possible in the field of enquiry into the nature of HE, not every approach is suitable for answering the particular questions that this study sets.

Quantitative research projects do not ask or answer the type of questions that I pose here. Quantitative research in general terms and also in an educational context, as Punch (2009: 211) indicates, fulfils three main functions:

- it conceptualises reality in terms of variables;

- it measures these variables; and
- it studies the relationships between these variables.

Therefore, if the object of this project had been to consider how effective higher degree programmes are in enabling older adult to move through their professional fields from middle to senior management, a quantitative design would have been suitable. Age, the nature of the higher degree programmes, the success or failure of the students, and their subsequent promotion to senior management posts would all be variables; large cohorts of participants would be possible, statistical analyses would be indicated and the outcomes would be identifiable by numerical data. Indeed many quantitative studies already exists for the professional doctorate student group, not necessarily measuring the variables identified here, but asking similar questions. The most recent report for the Higher Education Council for England, conducted by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC), *Provision of Professional doctorates in English HE institutions* (2016), asked many of these questions. The report adopted a mixed-methods study design in order to ‘...obtain [a] variety of perspectives’. The quantitative elements of the study were concerned with statistical analyses of the similarities and differences in the nature of the PD, the extent of provision, the characteristics common to PD programmes, and the connection between candidates’ academic and professional contexts (CRAC, 2016: 12ff). On the other hand, when the researchers came to focus upon questions of experiences, both of students and staff, and the challenges that the PD presented in terms of completion, purpose, impact and motivation, they chose a qualitative approach. Their paradigm shift is a good illustration of why I have chosen to conduct a qualitative design and a case study approach. The CRAC Report (2016) is discussed extensively in the previous chapter.

My methodological decision making was also influenced by the identification of this cohort of students as one which appeared to share many characteristics with other groups of research participants I had met when considering widening access and increased participation, as was mentioned above. The case for considering the relationship between doctoral education and issues of widening access and participation is a field attracting growing interest and research attention (McCulloch & Thomas, 2013). It is perhaps logical that the initial

focus upon access to HE, inclusivity and widening participation in relation to undergraduates would widen to take those cohorts of students going beyond their first experiences of tertiary education. It is perhaps equally logical to assume that once the issues pertaining to so-called non-traditional students' access, progression, transition and retention were uncovered and integrated into educational policy agendas at governmental and institutional levels, the focus would shift to include post-graduate research students on masters and doctoral programmes. However, this research agenda, in common with almost every area in the public sector, is complex and riven with questions concerning funding, political strategies, and institutional perceptions, preferences and demands; in other words, it is not simply concerned with equity in education. The reasons and motivation for increasing numbers of doctoral places being made available in UK universities and the changes, shifts and accommodation of new programmes that this has involved, has been explored in the previous chapter (e.g. Park, 2007; Scott & Morrison, 2010; Chiteng Kot & Hendel, 2012; Wildy, Peden & Chan, 2014; CRAC, 2016). It is sufficient to say here that a research agenda for widening participation to research degrees, focusing on research students, HEIs and policy-makers, is outlined in current research (McCulloch & Thomas, 2013), and that: 'The conclusion calls for this agenda to be pursued at institutional, national and cross- national levels so that future policy can be made and implemented on the basis of a robust evidence base' (McCulloch & Thomas, 2013: 214). I believe that answering my research question(s) could contribute meaningfully to this current and innovative area of HE and WAP and that the issues raised by other researchers in the field support and justify the approach I chose and the design I adopted.

In placing this study within the field of widening access and participation, my research has also been influenced by the epistemological, ontological and methodological positions proposed by Penny Jayne Burke (2012; Burke & Jackson, 2007). She contends that much of the research in the field of Widening Access and Participation (WAP) has been undertaken to serve instrumentalist discourses that are 'underpinned by neoliberal perspectives' (Burke, 2012: 69). She further suggests that, while this research has been useful in providing a statistical database for institutional and governmental use, it has not provided the means 'to fully tackle deeply engrained historical inequalities and

misrecognitions at play in higher education’ (Burke, 2012: 70). Therefore, she concludes (and my literature review supports the conclusion) that there has been an overemphasis on the collection of quantitative data at the expense of ‘methodologies that engage the subjective experiences, identities, relations and inequalities in different educational and pedagogical contexts’ (Burke, 2012: 70). I believe there is a need to explore the learner identities of this group of students by enabling them to speak for themselves and to voice their experiences.

The PD programme is, in many respects, a work-based course associated with vocational rather than academic aspirations. As research has shown, in the UK for example, these types of courses are often identified as the best suited to students from so-called non-traditional backgrounds (DfES, 2003). It could be construed, as the previous chapter suggests, that part of the motivation for creation of the ‘alternatives doctorates’ was not only to enable new cohorts of students to access doctoral qualifications, but also to safeguard the traditional PhD by research. In the previous chapter, the findings of the literature review suggest that there are complex politics of identity at play in higher education, both in Scotland and across the UK, and that these shape the discussions and decision making involved in access and participation in relation to divisions between academic and vocational forms of higher education in general, and in this particular instance, higher degree study quite specifically. The previous research strongly suggests that there is a justification for interrogating the taken-for-granted assumptions, meanings and practices that might exacerbate rather than challenge exclusions and inequalities in higher education (Burke and Jackson, 2007). While it is extremely unlikely that the participants in this study would identify themselves as the objects of WAP policy, or in need of special consideration in terms of access to doctoral study, there is a sufficiently strong case for applying a methodology that is conducive to illustrating, through their own voice, how the identity of these learners is constructed, and to question whether or not that constructed identity is a true reflection of this particular student group. That is why I chose to adopt a project design informed by a case study methodology and leading to an analytical framework for the empirical data that is devised around the parameters of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

3.4 The Case Study

The subject of the present case study was a particular group of PD students at one Scottish HEI. The basis of the qualitative investigation was to interview a group of older adult students from the case study cohort. My previous project had been designed around the latter type of investigation: it was to have been a naturalistic enquiry in which the analysis would have been inductive. The data was to have been collected, analysed and presented from a holistic perspective. I intended to collect rich, qualitative data that would generate inquiry in depth using people's own words to capture their personal perspective and experiences. That I could place myself as an insider in the research and provide personal insights from my own experiences and the interpretation of these, was a very important part of the enquiry for me and critical to the understanding of the real lived experiences of these students. It was always my intention to place the findings in a specific social, historical and temporal context. Although I recognised my position within the research as an 'insider', I also accepted the need to strive for empathetic neutrality. As Fraenkel and Wallen (2008: 111) suggest:

'Whilst complete objectivity is impossible in this project, it is also clear that unadulterated subjectivity would totally undermine the quality of the research. Therefore a position is taken that admits the researcher's 'passion' for the project, but also emphasises that the aim of the enquiry is to reach an understanding of phenomena not to prove points or justify pre-existent beliefs'.

Therefore, I had already designed a qualitative study within an interpretative paradigm that would explicate data from the themes generated, and draw upon a critical perspective within the analysis. However, as my question focus changed and as my participant group became more specific, I decided that the design I had originally arrived at would still to a large extent be possible, but that it would be better placed within a Case Study design (Yin, 2014). This approach was particularly appropriate because the participant group with which

I had decided to conduct the research now fitted the criteria for Case Study selection in that they represented what Merriam (1998) described as ‘...a bounded unit’.

3.4.1 Case Study Methodology

Creswell (2013: 99) suggests seven defining features of case studies. These involve the identification of a specific case, the intent of the research, the depth of understanding implicit in the case to be studied, the selection of a system for data analysis, a description of the case, the ability to generate and analyse themes across cases for similarities and/or differences, and the possibility for the case study to ‘end with conclusions formed by the researcher about the overall meaning derived from the cases(s)’. He goes on to explain that he considers this last feature as ‘...the general lessons learned from studying the case(s)’ (Creswell, 2013: 99). These features can all be clearly identified in the case study which I chose to research.

In choosing a case study methodology I was also influenced by the popularity this approach has acquired in Higher Education (HE) research (Tight, 2012). Harland (2014) proposes that this popularity has arisen from the growth of university teacher-as-researcher roles in contemporary HE. He further suggests that the inter-connection between theory and practice, and the iterative process that this can involve in the delivery of good quality teaching in universities, has found a base in case study research in that the results and recommendation of case study research can be applied and re-evaluated throughout the teaching and learning process, thus meeting the contemporary HE desire for quick-fix responses to the ever-changing landscape of HE, both in the UK and elsewhere. He cites Rogers (2002) in emphasising that case study research can have very practical applications in an education context in that learning needs to influence action. This, once again, fulfils a key ambition for my research. I hope that my case study will be a ‘method of learning’ (Flyvbjerg, 2006) that will influence and change practice.

Case study research, in common with other designs within the qualitative paradigm, has come under criticism from those who believe that qualitative research generally, and case study research specifically, cannot be sufficiently generalised to make a significant contribution to knowledge (Harland, 2014). However, since the 1970s, even in the face of these criticisms from those who favour the 'scientific' methodologies of positivist paradigms, case study research in social sciences, and particularly in the contribution to educational contexts, has made great strides forward. In a move against what Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013: 5) describe as a scientific approach which 'ignores the complexity of education settings and the significance of the diverse individuals and organisations that enhance that complexity', qualitative research has been recognised as filling this void. Case study research in particular has emerged as a means of empowering the individuals at the centre of education systems and processes (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Hamilton, 2011). However, there is no one definition of a case study.

As mentioned previously, Creswell (2013) highlights features of what could, or even should, be present to make a good foundation for case study research. Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) also attempt various definitions through an historical review of the development of case study research since the 1970s. From their explanations, and from Yin's (2014: 16) definition that: 'A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real word context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident', I developed a description of my case study that I believe fits both the definition and the criteria for a case study research design. In summary, I chose to use a case study design because it is suitable for enhancing our understanding of a particular group of students (here, older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes) in a particular community (this post-1992 university), and in a particular context (engaged in Professional Doctorate programmes). I consider this as the best way to challenge the existing perceptions and policies (constructed learner identity) in HE which, within the context of governemental policy, are largely based on positivist statistical analyses. I consider my participants as representing the previously mentioned 'bounded unit' and therefore a suitable subject for case study research. Of the three types of case study that Merriam (1998) describes,

I consider mine to be heuristic in that the intent is to increase understanding of the case. As Merriam (1998: 30) indicates, heuristic case studies ‘...can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience or confirm what is known’. Given my experience of this student group, I believed this is what my research project would produce. My case study is also based within what Merriam further describes as those ‘borrowed from other disciplines’. My study is taken from a sociological perspective in that the objective is ‘to address the larger social structure and its effects on individuals’ (Merriam, 1998: 34-7).

3.5 Epistemology

The philosophical assumptions that underpin research are critical to an understanding of the research design (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). Creswell (2013) suggests that there are four key philosophical assumptions that should be clarified by any researcher undertaking qualitative research. These are, he suggests, ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological (Creswell, 2013: 21). Crotty (1998) also conveniently suggests that there are four elements that are significant in the design of a research project. He frames these as questions:

- What methods do we propose to use?
- What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
- What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
- What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?

Both Creswell (2013) and Crotty (1998) suggest a justification of the research project framed within the context of the stance of the researcher. Here, I consider the issues around my epistemological position first and then deal with the theoretical frameworks I have chosen by illustrating how these have grown out of my epistemological stance.

My ontological position is that there is no single reality; that there is no simple or single truth that is discoverable. I believe that reality is a concept that must be viewed through multiple lenses, and that our personal circumstances,

experiences and convictions frame our perspectives. This view, in turn, is reflected in how I understand what counts as knowledge. While the first beliefs might be framed as ontological (Creswell, 2013), what counts as knowledge is epistemological. Crotty (1998) describes an epistemology as ‘...a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know’. Therefore, epistemological questions are concerned with the nature of knowledge, and how we acquire that knowledge, or come to know. This is clearly important in terms of the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched. From this position, or what Creswell (2009: 5) refers to as my philosophical worldview, the choice of a qualitative paradigm is clear, as is my epistemological position which is founded in social constructionism.

Crotty (1998; 64) points out that: ‘It has become something of a shibboleth for qualitative researchers to claim to be constructionist...[but]...We need to ensure that this is not just a glib claim, a matter of rhetoric only. If we make such a claim, we should reflect deeply upon its significance. What does it mean for our research to be constructionist...? What implications does being constructionist ... hold?’. I should now like to relate these questions specifically to the present research.

I am not approaching this study from an objective point of view; I am acknowledging that subjectivity will be present in the design of this study and in the interpretation of the data. However, I am not espousing an entirely subjective point of view either, as I recognise that I am working with objects in the world and that therefore, as Crotty (1998: 44) points out, I ‘...have something to work with’. Therefore, in constructing meaning from the reality of the lived experiences of the project participants, and in the interrogation of the policy surrounding the programme in which the participants are engaged, I am attempting to bring objectivity and subjectivity together; I believe this is the aim of constructionism. However, I also acknowledge that in espousing social constructionism, I am also rejecting the notion that the individual only constructs meaning from their experiences, as I am also recognising that in the role of researcher, I must deal with the social origins of meaning (Crotty, 1998). In summary, therefore, I am suggesting that in asking the question:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

a construction of learner identity already exists, and that it has meaning outside of that which is given by the learners (and their teachers). However, I am also suggesting that the reality of learner identity and what it means for an individual or group of individuals is constructed by those human beings and their world, and is created, reinforced and constructed and re-constructed within a social context.

3.6 Theoretical Frameworks

Theory applied to research must be determined, or at the very least influenced, by the methodology chosen. Harland (2012) makes the important point that the application of existing theory, when used as an integral part of a case study, enables the researcher to make a critical contribution to the wider field of knowledge. As an educational researcher, as a teacher-researcher and as an insider researcher espousing social constructionism, I have chosen an interpretative paradigm to frame my theoretical approach. I am interested in the practicality of understanding and interpreting the communications of 'speaking and acting subjects' (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). However, given that I am also interested in education as a process/concept which, as Giddens (2009: 846) proposes '...is central to cultural reproduction which connects economic position, social status and symbolic capital with cultural knowledge and skills', I also wish to incorporate Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital as a means of explaining the real life experiences (and perhaps the learning journeys which have given rise to the decisions to pursue doctoral study) of the participants in this project. I have been guided by the work of educationalists such as Burke (2012), who applies a Bourdieuan perspective to widening participation, and Murphy *et al.* (ed. 2013), who write persuasively on the benefits of applying social theory to educational research.

3.6.1 Bourdieu and Educational Research

I have tried to find a way to apply the central concepts of Bourdieu's social theory to the analysis of the data in this project in order to explain the ways in which the lived experiences of the participants have contributed to their identities. In one respect, this is an attempt to explain the importance of power in development and social change processes, where the concept of a constructed learner identity is culturally and symbolically created outwith the control or influence of the learner. In another respect, the application of social theory to this analysis of empirical data is an attempt to understand the lived experiences of the individuals in this study in terms of how evidence of the influence and interplay of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital may be seen to be present in their learner journeys.

Habitus

This study defines 'habitus' as Bourdieu explained it, where:

'The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application - beyond the limits of what has been directly learnt - of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions. That is why an agent's whole set of practices...are both systematic, inasmuch as they are the product of the application of identical (or interchangeable) schemes, and systematically distinct from the practices constituting a different life-style'

(Bourdieu, 2010: 166).

Bourdieu (1986) therefore explains habitus as the socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking within a given social group. Within the context of the data set for this study, the concept of class habitus was clear in the participants' responses throughout the interviews. Wacquant (2005: 316) explores Bourdieu's explanation by describing habitus as 'the way society

becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determined ways, which then guide them'. Although habitus is embedded it is not necessarily fixed, and can be changed by circumstances and situations or over a historical period (Sarojini Hart, 2013). Within this project there is considerable evidence that supports the view that habitus, created as it is through social rather than individual processes, can lead to patterns that are enduring but that can be transferred from one context to another, and that may shift in relation to specific contexts over time (Navarro 2006). I would suggest that, as will be shown, the data for this study suggests a strong influence of class habitus; that is, 'the structural affinity of habituses belonging to the same class, capable of generating practices that are convergent and objectively orchestrated outside of any collective intention or consciousness' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 125). If we accept that the prevailing social conditions that were in play when our participants were in compulsory education favoured a middle-class habitus, and therefore predispose middle-class young people towards opportunities that included participation in HE, we can see how significant their personal narratives are in analysing 'the links between social structures and individual actions and personalities' (Giddens, 2009: 846). If, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggest, the education system is a necessary agency in social reproduction, then this goes some way to explaining and analysing the participants' choices to take up doctoral study at a later stage in life, rather than at an earlier age.

Capital

In the context of this research project I am defining 'capital' in its social, cultural and symbolic forms (Navarro, 2006: 16). In considering Bourdieu's concepts of capital in these forms, I recognise that the shift from material forms of capital - in terms of wealth and economic privilege - can be used to hide the causes of inequality. In this consideration of inequality, I have tried to incorporate an analysis of both the inequalities that were present in the life narratives of the participants as they told them, and also in the perceptions of inequality that may have existed for these participants in their post-compulsory educational choices. Bourdieu (1986) argues that the social position of an individual is not only influenced by economic capital but also by other forms of capital. These include social, cultural and symbolic capital, as well as academic

capital which Bourdieu (1984) discusses at length, especially when considering 'The Entitlement Effect' (Bourdieu, 1984: 14). Bourdieu's (1984; 1986) work on capital is useful in this project in considering social difference in complex terms.

Field

In her text on Bourdieu's concept of Field, Thompson (2008: 68) explains that the term is translated from the French term 'le champ', which can mean 'an area of land, a battlefield and a field of knowledge'. In this project, the middle definition best fits the context of how it is defined, not simply because field is an area that is contested but also because it is an area which can be viewed as fluid and changing, and as an arena in which tensions, such as those of structure and agency, are played out. Sarojini Hart (2013: 57) explains that:

'Bourdieu identified his concept of field in part as 'a configuration of relations' between individuals and institutions which are essentially mediated by different forms of capital'.

She goes on to suggest that:

'Bourdieu's notion of field is helpful in conceptualizing the nature of the field of higher education. He proposes that, 'There are as many fields of preference as there are fields of stylistic possibilities ... the total field of these fields offers well-nigh inexhaustible possibilities for the pursuit of distinction' (Bourdieu, 2010: 223). Thinking about the range of institutions, courses, places and spaces of HE, Bourdieu's description of the field highlights the distinctions to be made and the possibility that individuals select particular features of HEIs in order to reflect their tastes and preferences'.

This concept of field, therefore, would be useful in theorising the participants' motivations for choosing a professional doctorate rather than a traditional PhD by research, for example, and could be equally useful in helping to determine aspects of how the professional doctorate candidates identify themselves within the HEI in which they are pursuing their doctoral studies. It is also worth noting that in the context of Bourdieu's concept of field, widening participation policy

as an intervention goes against the natural order of the dominant fields of power and education.

3.7 Theorising the Self

Burke (2012) also recommends the practice of 'theorising the self'. She suggests that from consideration of Jane Miller's concept of the autobiography of the question,

'...the researcher's relationship to the questions she's exploring, requires careful consideration of the experiences, identities and perspectives she brings to the research process and asks her to make connections between herself, the research participants and other voices in the field' (Burke, 2012: 63). I aim to use this approach to explore my role as a researcher. There is no doubt that I am drawn to this research from my interest in the widening access and increased participation agenda; I come from a typical West of Scotland, Irish immigrant family, and was the first person in my immediate family to graduate from university. I empathise with the participants in my research because I took the vocational route to degree status through an initial teacher training course in an English Russell Group university, the B.Ed, having had neither the matriculation requirements nor the confidence to apply for an undergraduate course without this caveat. I further identify with this student cohort in that I myself am an older adult learner engaged in part-time study for a higher degree in a Scottish university, albeit not on the same vocational route as the project participants. I have had, and continue to have, a successful career in teaching, both in the compulsory and post-compulsory sectors; it could be argued, as it is for many of the people I teach, that at my age, doctoral study perhaps constitutes a waste of time and resources. Therefore, questions concerning age, engagement with research, and the pursuit of doctoral study are as important to me personally and professionally as I believe they are to the participants in this project. I therefore accept that I have as great a personal as a professional investment in the outcome of this research, and I further acknowledge through my own experiences that I embarked upon this research with some pre-conceived ideas

about the answers I would find to the questions I asked. However, it would be entirely unrealistic to believe that a researcher engaged in a qualitative research project could be neutral within the research process; this is particularly the case for this research design which adopts a case study methodology, within a social constructivist paradigm, and which is theorised around an interpretive perspective. I claim neither total objectivity nor neutrality, because I believe that these are impossible; however, I do seek balance. Therefore, within a social constructionist epistemology, I acknowledge that the researcher influences the research. Yet, while this can be seen as a limitation, the role of the researcher as an insider also has strengths. I share a generic learner identity with the participants, I also experience and live in the world as an older adult, and I literally, as well as figuratively, ‘speak their language’.

This practice of ‘theorising the self’ as recommended by Burke (2012:63) has thus allowed me to acknowledge where I sit as a researcher within the HEI in which the study is located. This exercise has also enabled me to acknowledge how I might recognise and address areas of potential bias, and how my positionality as a researcher and my role as an experienced lecturer impacts upon the research. I have scrutinised my findings and conclusions through the lens of this personal theorisation perspective and have achieved, as far as possible, an objectivity that outweighs the potential tendency towards subjectivity through which every insider researcher must navigate a path. These notions of subjectivity, objectivity, insider experience and ethics are considered in subsequent chapters. A self-reflection on how the process has changed me personally and professionally is included in the final chapter (Chapter 7, p202).

3.8 Context(s)

This study was set entirely within one institution and within one particular Higher Degree Programme. The institution is a Scottish post-1992 university. The degree programme is the Professional Doctorate programme which has seven strands. The programme is currently in its tenth year of delivery and is advertised as:

‘...a part-time distance learning programme which offers professionals an exciting and challenging alternative to the traditional PhD. It has been

designed to support the personal, vocational and intellectual development of professionals, equipping them to take demanding leadership roles in an era of evidence based joint practice. Students admitted to the Professional Doctorate programme will normally be middle to senior professionals within their organisations. The programme will enable these professionals to conduct research at doctoral level that has relevance both to professional interest and organisational context'

(Appendix 7).

There is no requirement for a master's level qualification for entry, but there is a statement that applicants will 'be expected to have a 2.1 honours degree or equivalent plus five years' relevant experience'. Admission is by interview, and at the discretion of the Programme Leader. I have been part of the team who deliver this programme for three years at the time of writing. A fuller analysis and description of the context(s) of the project is provided in chapter 4.

3.9 Sample: Who were the participants?

To meet the parameters of the research for the empirical element of this study I used purposive sampling (Cohen, 2000). I applied for and received ethical approval from both the participating institution and from the University of Glasgow. I first accessed a small group of four part-time PhD students, by opportunistic means, in order to pilot, refine and adapt my interview schedule. This data also served later as a useful comparison of the experiences of the two different student groups. I then accessed the student records of the PD student group and contacted all the students who met the study's inclusion criteria, which were that the student should be engaged in the PD at the time of interview and that they should be aged 40+. The exclusion criterion was only that they should not be classified as international students. I then contacted all suitable students by email and sent them a plain language statement outlining the key areas of the project. I received twenty-three positive responses to my call, of which, by the end of the data collection phase, I had interviewed fifteen. Again, a fuller analysis and description of the participants is provided in chapter 4.

3.10 Data Collection

I used a semi-structured interview schedule which I had redrafted based on what was learned from the pilot project. Each interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes. I digitally recorded the interviews and transcribed them verbatim.

The pilot interviews and the fifteen student interviews comprise the empirical data component of the study.

Secondary data sources include institutional and governmental policy reviews, and an extensive literature review, presented above. I gathered observational data and field notes from my involvement in the delivery of the programme over three years. A fuller analysis and description of the data collected and the procedures for collection is provided in chapter 4.

3.11 Data analysis

In keeping with the procedures recommended for case study analysis, I analysed the secondary data to provide a detailed description of the context, the case, the setting and the possible perspectives of the individuals involved in the study, followed by an analysis of the empirical data for themes (Creswell, 2009). To enable the closest possible analysis of the empirical data, the framework suggested by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used.

A number of different approaches towards the analysis of the data in this project could have been used. I considered discourse analysis (Huisman & Tight, 2013) and a narrative enquiry approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Whilst neither of these was rejected for negative reasons - either could have interpretative possibilities for the type of qualitative data I collected - neither had the appeal that IPA had when combined with a Case Study methodology. The very structured strategies (see p 89) allowed me to operate within a field that I could clearly understand and which I came to realise would leave me a great deal of scope for positioning the participants at the centre of the analysis. Discourse analysis would have been more appropriate had I been considering issues of policy development; narrative enquiry would have been entirely appropriate had

I been using qualitative strategies in a life histories orientated study rather than a bound case study.

The origins of IPA lie in the discipline of psychology where it was developed in order to provide a context and framework for the analysis of qualitative data (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). IPA studies and the techniques they use for the analysis of qualitative data are now increasingly being used in the design of contemporary social science research (Smith, 2009). This approach to the analysis of the data collected in this study is particularly appropriate because, as Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009: 1) indicate, 'IPA is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences'. This emphasis is important for this project because engaging in study for a doctoral degree is, in itself, a major life decision, and this is particularly true for those who are in midlife. In designing the project, it was assumed based on previous studies and the literature review that this major life decision was, to some extent or another, the end stage in a series of life experiences, some of which might be classified as major life experiences.

The chosen method of data collection, through semi-structured interviews, is entirely in keeping with the methodology of IPA where the theory of the interpretation of the spoken word of the participants themselves leads to an understanding of the central phenomenon which, in this case, is the identity and motivation of older adult learners in higher education. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009: 3) further emphasise this by stating that: 'IPA shares the view that human beings are sense-making creatures and therefore the accounts which participants provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of their experience'.

The character and nature of the purposive sample obtained for this project also supports an IPA informed analytical framework as most IPA studies are conducted on relatively small sample sizes where the aim is to discover a homogeneous sample, which allows for the examination of convergence and divergence of themes, experiences and descriptive content. That said, researchers who use IPA and authors who write about its application agree that there are no hard and fast rules for developing the stages of an analytical

framework for an IPA study. They suggest that there are some key elements that must be present, but they also suggest that these do not represent single linear methods that have to be adopted. A number of researchers observe that the value of an IPA approach lies in its flexibility and in its analytical focus, which always ‘directs our analytical attention towards our participants’ attempts to make sense of their experiences’ (Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009: 79). With a suggested set of processes in mind - moving from the particular to the shared, and from the descriptive to the interpretative - and bearing in mind the particular analytics focus of IPA, a set of strategies were chosen for the interpretation of the qualitative data in this project. These consist of six strategies which could be described as follows:

1. Line by line analysis of the interview transcripts;
2. Identification of emergent themes;
3. Development of a dialogue with the data that leads from the descriptive content to an interpretative account;
4. Development of a structure which illustrates the relationship between themes;
5. Organisation of the data into manageable components;
6. The development of a full narrative.

The practical application of these strategies provided the staging of the analysis of the data, which could be described as follows:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Step 1. | Transcribing the full set of interview transcripts; |
| Step 2. | Reading, re-reading and re-listening to the data; |
| Step 3. | Initial noting of the data, illustrating; |
| Step 4. | Developing emergent themes; |
| Step 5. | Identifying and convergence and divergence across emergent themes and looking for patterns across cases; |
| Step 6. | Composing the narrative. |

These strategies and stages, in conjunction with the material provided by the literature review (chapter 2) and the analysis of the secondary data (the documentation provided within the national and institutional contexts) have

been used to provide the material presented in the final four chapters of this study, which were written in the full understanding that ‘...the end result is always an account of how the analyst thinks the participant is thinking... Thus the truth claims of an IPA analysis are always tentative and analysis is subjective. At the same time that subjectivity is dialogical, systematic and rigorous in its application and the results of it are available for the reader to check...’ (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009: 80).

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was applied for and granted by The College of Social Sciences of the University of Glasgow (Appendix 4). This application was also recognised as meeting the ethical requirements and guideline procedures of the HEI in which the research was conducted. To address the ethical issues involved in conducting the research with the students who agreed to participate in the project, each participant was issued with a Plain Language Statement prior to their agreeing to be interviewed (Appendix 5). On agreeing to be interviewed, they were required to read and sign a Consent Form (Appendix 3). At the time of the interview, each participant was reminded of the statements, declarations and assurances made in the Plain Language Statement.

Each participant’s interview was digitally recorded and stored in a password-protected file. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and similarly, these transcripts were stored in password-protected digital files. Paper copies of the transcripts were made for the purposes of analysis and were destroyed when the analysis was completed; the voice recordings and digital transcripts have been retained and will remain password-protected until this study is complete, whereupon they will also be deleted.

Each participant was given a pseudonym which attempted, as closely as possible, to reflect their gender, age and ethnicity without revealing information that could lead to identification. I was aware of the close connection that I had with a number of the participants, both as a member of the PD teaching team and, in some cases, as a colleague. This being the case, I allowed a period of one week

of reflection to elapse between the interview and its transcription, so that each of the participants had time to contact me and request to withdraw from the project. This was explained to each of the participants upon the completion of their interview. I also offered each of them the opportunity to view their transcripts before I began the data analysis. No one withdrew from the project, and no one requested to view their transcript.

Measures were also taken to redact identifying features from the institutional documentation which has been included as an appendix (Appendix 7).

3.13 Conclusion

This project has three key strands to the methodology: an approach informed by case study methodology, an analysis of the qualitative data developed around the framework suggested by IPA, and a theoretical stance on the interpretation of the data structured around the principles of social theory. Drawing upon these three traditions, which are evident in a good deal of contemporary research in the social sciences, has enabled the present study to provide a coherent attempt to answer the question:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Chapter 4 - National and Institutional Contexts

4.1 Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 reviewed the current research literature on the development of the professional doctorate in the UK and internationally. That literature review attempted to explore the themes of the research question - *Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?* - and situate these in a broad context. This chapter looks at the specific national and institutional contexts of the delivery of the Professional Doctorate and its development generally, and more specifically within the HEI from which this case study is drawn. Institutional motivations for the adoption of the programme are explored and the nature of recruitment to the programme is touched upon through consideration of the admission requirements for prospective candidates. Additionally, in order to contextualise this study as fully as possible, a detailed profile of the participants is provided. This chapter is intended to reinforce, but not to repeat, the themes visited in the literature review.

4.2 National Context

The first professional doctorates, as distinct from PhDs by research, were developed in the United States in the 1920s, have remained a key element of doctoral programming throughout US and Canadian HEIs (Maxwell, 2004), and have not caused the same degree of debate that the introduction of Professional Doctorate programmes in the 1990s in UK has raised (Servage, 2009). This is possibly because north American doctoral programmes developed a diversity in design and delivery earlier than the British universities, particularly in the creation of specialist Graduate Schools, and therefore their perspective on doctoral education was already different from the more traditional view of PhD study that persisted in the UK system (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012). This may also be because there has been a dearth of research into professional doctorate programmes in the US, and they remain an under-investigated area in the north American context, as Chiteng Kot and Hendel (2012) suggest. Nevertheless, while professional doctorates have experienced growth and have become an

increasingly popular alternative to traditional PhD study (Smith *et al.*, 2011), the debate around their rationale, purpose and impact within the British and Irish contexts has also expanded (Burgess *et al.*, 2011). This debate is characterised by discussions of the massification and commodification of HE (Miller, 2010), credentialism (Brown, 2001; Servage, 2009; Margison, 2016), the high participation systems (HPS) of HE (Margison, 2016), the nature of the 'taught' elements of the degree, and the necessarily part-time mode of study (Evans, 2002).

From the perspectives of HEIs themselves, the relationships between the knowledge economy, industry, academia and government policy have been used both negatively and positively to assess the contribution that professional doctorate programmes offer (Servage, 2009; Margison, 2016). Each of these issues and the arenas in which they have been developed are highly contentious, but essentially incorporate an argument which Miller (2010: 199) encapsulates by suggesting '...that an increased emphasis on the commercial relevance of university courses is anathema to the values of the academy, resulting from the widespread adoption of neo-liberal policies towards education'. The rationale for the development and incorporation of professional doctorates into the landscape of HEIs forms part of the much wider debate on the commercialisation of learning, and the point of view taken depends on the lens through which the debate is viewed. From the perspectives of governmental policy and institutional recruitment, professional doctorates are an addition to the growing knowledge economy that constitutes an appropriate 'response to the need for a variety of professional skills, which... the conventional PhD does not emphasise' (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012: 349). In other words, the professional doctorate satisfies a gap in the offering of HEIs that has been identified and responded to by both governmental and institutional policy initiatives. From the perspective of those who critique the growth of the knowledge economy and the changing role of higher education in a neoliberal context, the reading of the motivation to produce programmes that appeal to previously excluded student groups is more sceptical. While HEIs and governmental policy promote the proliferation of new routes to doctoral qualifications as measures taken to address economic, and possibly social, problems in wider society through better education of the workforce, these new programmes are viewed by the critics of the knowledge

economy as a simple means of increasing revenue streams both nationally and internationally (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012; Bollag, 2007; Dorsey, 2006).

Therefore, from the point of view of the HEIs offering professional doctorate programmes, the public presentation of the rationale behind their adoption is very firmly rooted in the understanding that a need to produce ‘scholarly professionals’ rather than ‘professional scholars’ (Gregory, 1997), or ‘researching professionals’ rather than ‘professional researchers’ (Bournier *et al.*, 2001) has been identified. Therefore, it has been argued that HEIs have reactively responded to the call for a new route to doctoral qualification rather than proactively devising programmes that they then sought to populate. However, the identification of this need is undoubtedly beneficial to HEIs, who seek firstly to increase the number of doctoral students on their books (particularly in the post-1992 sector), and secondly to increase revenue and income streams from the introduction of new courses that can be identified with a new and diverse student group. A third reason, which is conspicuous in the data reported back from particular HEIs, is the requirement to devise and deliver a course of in-house doctoral training that would meet the specific needs of the university staff to up-skill and up-scale their qualifications (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016). That over half of the participants in this study work in the university that delivers the professional doctorate programme which they are following apparently bears this out.

There is no single structure for the delivery and assessment of professional doctorates; instead, considerable variation is evident across HEIs (Mellor-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 16). That said, a two-stage model is most typical, where the first stage consists of taught elements and assessments, and the second stage involves an independent research project - the thesis - and a viva-voce examination. Progress to Stage 2 is generally dependent upon a successful outcome from the Stage 1 assessments; it is also often possible to exit the programme after successful completion of Stage 1 with a Professional Master’s degree. Although there are full-time professional doctorate programmes which take 3 to 4 years to completion, generally in those fields where the PD is regarded as an initial entry qualification (e.g. the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and the PD in Engineering), the overwhelming majority of

professional doctorates are offered on a part-time basis only, ranging between 4 to 8 years in duration, and offering considerable flexibility around the needs of the individual students and the many other calls upon their personal and professional time. Although there is considerable variation among fees, they are comparable to part-time PhD study; as such, the professional doctorate is not a cheaper alternative to the traditional PhD by part-time study.

Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016: 19) point out that ‘...relatively little has been published in relation to supervisory practice within PD provision’, but it is reasonable to assume that as there is wide variation in the construction, assessment and delivery of professional doctorate programmes, there is also variation in thesis supervision. From the perspective of the professional doctorate representing ‘the coming of age of work-based learning within the higher education curriculum’ (Bareham *et al.*, 2000), there might be an expectation that this close link would require an industry-based specialist as part of a supervisory team. However, recent research in England suggests that although there may have been intentions to draw supervisors from industry when the professional doctorate programmes were initially developed, this aim has remained largely unfulfilled (Mellors-Borne, 2016: 60).

4.3 Institutional Context

The institution within which this project is situated and from which all the data were collected, is a post-1992 HEI in the central belt of Scotland. The university has a strong vocational orientation, and has adopted a clear and widely publicised commitment to widening participation (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2017). The vocational nature of the university is reflected in its development of the three major academic Schools which oversee and deliver their undergraduate and taught masters programmes, which form the substantive business of the institution. These three Schools - Engineering and Built Environment, Health and Life Sciences, and the School for Business and Society - all contribute to the teaching and supervision of the Professional Doctorate programme, but the Framework was developed and is administered and directed by the institution’s Graduate School. All research programmes in

the HEI are overseen by the Graduate School, and at the time of writing approximately 550 students are engaged in postgraduate research degrees: MRes, MPhil, PD, and PhD. These 550 research students form a very small proportion of the university's student body: the total number of students in 2015-16 was 16,930, of whom 14,095 were undergraduates and 2,840 were studying postgraduate programmes, the majority of which are classified as 'taught' (Appendix 7). It is the stated wish of this HEI, as their policy and planning documentation confirms, to double their number of doctoral students within the next five years; the Professional Doctorate Framework is an important element of this strategy. There may be a two-fold rationale for this intention in that the up-scaling of staff qualifications enables the supervisory capacity of the institution to grow, thus fostering the recruitment of greater numbers of doctoral students than capacity presently allows.

The professional doctorate programme followed by all the participants in this project largely fits the overall two-stage model descriptor outlined previously in Chapter 1, on p 16. The programme was established in January 2007, was reviewed and re-approved in 2012, and is presently undergoing review, restructuring and re-approval for validation in October 2016, for delivery in January 2017. According to the institutional documentation (Appendix 7), the professional doctorate framework was developed to provide what Fell, Flint and Haines (2011: 11) describe as 'a programme of advanced study and research which, whilst satisfying the university criteria for the award of a doctorate, is designed to meet the specific needs of a professional group, external to the university, and which develops the capability of individuals to work in their professional context'. The framework descriptor further clarifies this intention by stating that although professional doctorates across the UK and in this HEI in particular have changed and developed significantly since their introduction in the 1990s, the focus of this professional doctorate 'remains upon scholarly analysis, evaluation and implementation of change in the world of work' (Appendix 7). This original framework offered six distinct pathways to doctoral qualification: Professional Doctorates in (i) Health, Social Care and Nursing; (ii) Justice, Welfare and Policy; (iii) Built Environment; (iv) Business Administration; (v) Management; and (vi) Engineering. The most recent review proposes to expand this framework by offering a further three qualifications: Professional

Doctorates in (vii) Public Policy and Management; (viii) Clinical Health; and (ix) Applied Practice. The Professional Doctorate in this HEI services the whole university, is offered in all three Schools - Health and Life Sciences, Business and Society and Engineering and Built Environment - and is hosted, led and delivered by the Graduate School. This is not the sole function of the Graduate School, but it forms a significant part of its day-to-day business. Academic staff from across the university contribute to the delivery of Stage 1 modules (Appendix 7) and supervision is provided across the three Schools for Stage 2. No distinction is made in the allocation of hours/teaching time for staff who contribute to PhD and PD supervision: the thesis submission process and vice-voce arrangements at Stage 2, were exactly the same for both the PhD and PD programmes for the cohort of participants in this study. The expected thesis length is also the same: 40,000 words for those engaged in experimental scientific programmes, and an upper limit of 80,000 words for those engaged in social science and business research. This aspect of the programme, however, is currently under review (Appendix 7).

The institution presents a rationale for offering this variant on the traditional PhD by suggesting that, as research by Powell and Long (2005) confirms, there is evidence that ‘there was dissatisfaction with the PhD as a qualification appropriate for advanced professional work outside academia’ (Appendix 7). They argue that there is a distinct market for professionals who wish to develop their learning and research within a more structured programme than a traditional part-time PhD by research would offer, and that would be more firmly rooted and relevant to their practice (Deher and Smith, 2011). The institutional documentation states that:

‘These characteristics [of the Professional Doctorate in this HEI]: common interests, defined community, and shared resources i.e. experiences, effectively align to Lave and Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice philosophy. Using this philosophy within a supportive environment Burmeister (2015) maintains, accelerates learning and ultimately leads to higher order affective and cognitive abilities, because it is viewed as more relevant to the learner’s needs. Others (Morley and Petty 2010; Yam 2005) also highlight the benefits of learning Communities of Practice,

particularly its role in aiding retention and ultimately improving completion rates’.

A separate rationale is offered for each of the different pathways towards the award of the professional doctorate, each of which emphasises the integration of proven professional practice and academic knowledge. Thus, for the participant cohort in this study, the HEI was targeting senior managers, senior practitioners, health professionals and scientists who were experienced professional people seeking to apply research to their own specific contexts. The framework documentation directly stated that ‘The qualification assesses the ability of the student to perform at the level of expert within a chosen field’ (Appendix 7). This separates the professional doctorate from the PhD by placing an emphasis upon the assessment of performance as well as the ability to research effectively. This assessment forms the core of the Stage 1 delivery. The philosophical underpinnings of the programme are also clearly stated within the institutional documentation, which proposes that:

‘The philosophy of the programme is based upon the principles of lifelong learning with the aim of creating scholarly practice and facilitating the development of a professional researcher who can apply higher order analysis and reasoning skills within their own practice. What constitutes a contemporary professional practitioner and how professional knowledge is generated is critically analysed within every module. In this respect, practice can be located in the public, voluntary and private sector and it is subjected to in-depth exploration of the context of practice and the practical or conceptual drivers for change. Advanced skills and knowledge about reflective practice is also a distinguishing feature of professional doctorates and in the programme at [this institution] this is facilitated both individually and collectively. Critical reflexivity also underpins the notion of communities of scholars and communities of practice which draws on the work of Wenger (1998). The theory contends that students develop higher order affective and cognitive abilities that accelerate learning within a supportive environment. It also provides an interagency model of professional collaboration which can last throughout careers’.

This documentation both indicates the perceived motivations for students' course choice, and constructs a learner identity around the desired or targeted audience for recruitment.

4.3.1 Admission Requirements

Admission requirements emphasise the diversity expected within the cohort of students recruited to the professional doctorate. Formal entry requirements are listed as a 1st class or 2:1 Honours Degree in a relevant subject and a minimum of five years' work experience in a relevant field. However, the requirements also clearly state that candidates who lack the formal academic qualifications for entry may also apply for admission to the programme through the university's flexible entry policy, '...which considers credit transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including work-based experience and credits from recognized professional bodies'. There is also a statement making it clear that 'non-standard entry profiles will be considered on an individual basis'. In addition to the facility for RPL at admission, there is also an arrangement whereby candidates may claim exemption from modules at Stage 1; for example, there is an automatic exemption from having to take the Stage 1 Research Methods module if the applicant has an MRes or an MPhil, and it is possible to be exempted from the Stage 1 Professional Development module if the candidate has an MBA. Therefore, it is perfectly possible to apply for admission to the professional doctorate programme without any prior experience of formal study in higher education, and it is equally possible to see the doctorate as a straight progression from masters to doctoral study. The admission requirements encourage and achieve a wide range and diversity within the cohorts recruited. Although it is perfectly possible to be admitted to any doctoral programme, including a PhD, without formal qualifications, it is extremely unusual for mainstream doctoral candidates to be admitted to a programme without completing a Master's degree; but this is not the case for the professional doctorate. This flexible entry policy could be an opportunity to widen participation in post-compulsory learning, thus reducing the impact of educational inequality, or it could be seen as an instrument whereby the

university is enabled to recruit students from the widest possible field thus increasing student numbers and the concomitant fee income.

4.3.2 Motivation for developing the professional doctorate programme

As the introduction to this chapter indicates, the development of alternative routes to doctoral qualification in this HEI, and in others, should be seen within the wider structure of increasing student numbers in fee paying categories. The strategies of internationalisation, transnational work-based education, the policy of developing satellite campuses and an increasing interest in the delivery of fully online degree programmes through a virtual learning environment, which have been developed as innovations by this HEI, have all been generated from the same policy development that has given rise to the promotion of the professional doctorate programmes. While the official policy documentation discusses the production of new qualifications in terms of a response to the market, many motivational factors are invested in the development of new courses.

From the perspective of critical educational policy studies, the proliferation of new routes to doctoral qualification in the post-1992 university sector is an aspect of ‘the global neo-liberal deformation of education and society’ which is ‘part of the ideology and policy offensive by neo-liberal Capital’ (Hill, 2002: no page number listed). However much this may be the case, it is unlikely that these motivational factors for delivery would have formed part of the decision-making processes of the participants in this research project. The participants’ motivations for choosing a specific course in a particular institution are most likely to be connected with the factors explored in the literature review in Chapter 2 (pp42-45).

4.4 The Participants

The participants in this project were all recruited to the professional doctorate under the arrangements outlined above. At the time at which the data were collected, there were candidates from six cohorts engaged in completing their

doctoral studies. Here, a cohort refers to an intake of candidates onto the PD programme; as the programme began in 2006, Cohort 1 refers to the 2006 intake; Cohort 2 to the 2007 intake; and so on. Students from Cohorts 2 to 7 were listed with the university registry at various stages of study, from first year in Stage 1 of the programme to those who were near completion, mainly from Cohorts 2,3 and 4. Given the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this project, 19 students were deemed eligible for inclusion. All 19 candidates were approached, and 17 initially agreed to participate; two withdrew from the programme before the data collection, so the final data set consisted of 15 participants. The final group comprised eleven women and four men. The age profile of the group was: two women aged between 40 and 45 years, four women and one man aged 46-50, four women and two men in the 51-59 category, and one man and one woman over the age of 60. Seven of the interviewees were employed in one capacity or another in the HEI offering the doctoral programme, and eight worked full-time in a professional capacity outside the institution. The fifteen interviews were conducted over a three-month period. Each interview lasted for an average of 40 minutes, and generated an average of 6,000 words in transcription, resulting in approximately 90,000 words of transcribed text for analysis. There were no participants from the School of Engineering and Built Environment; two participants were in the School of Business and Society and the remaining thirteen were in the school of Health and Life Sciences. This School distribution profile reflected the composition of the overall professional doctorate student body at the time of the data collection, although this has since changed considerably in more recent intakes.

4.5 Who are the participants, and how did they describe themselves?

Although originally referred to in the analysis by their coding profile labels (e.g. P1), first name pseudonyms were assigned to the participants in order to humanise the way in which their interview data is presented. The names assigned, although anonymised, reflect their gender and other profile characteristics (e.g. ethnicity).

The group consisted of a nurse/lecturer (James, aged 57), a nurse/researcher (Justin, aged 47), a marketing lecturer (Sarah, aged 51), a social worker/lecturer (John, aged 58), a therapeutic radiographer/lecturer (Kate, aged 57), a podiatrist/lecturer (Val, aged 50), a lawyer/lecturer (Christine, aged 52), two occupational therapists in full-time practice (Andrea, aged 42; Fiona, aged 59), a mental health nurse/lecturer (Diane, aged 42), a dietician/lecturer (Brenda, aged 50), a dietician in full-time practice (Catriona, aged 46), a counsellor in full-time practice (Fergus, aged 60), a Health Visitor working full-time in the NHS (Miranda, aged 48) and a lecturer involved in staff development in HE (Jessica, aged 60). The names in brackets are not the real names of the participants, but are used to identify them in this research project (see Table 2, Appendix 6).

After the initial introductions and the collection of bio-data, the first question asked of all the participants was: How would you describe yourself? (Appendix 2). This question was designed to be an easy-to-answer, icebreaker question that would start the dialogue of the interview, but that would also provide data that might indicate elements of balance in the candidates' own perceptions of their identity or identities. In the four pilot interviews I conducted with part-time PhD students, described above in Chapter 3, this question had been easily and comfortably answered and appeared to place no stress upon the interviewees; however, this was not the case with the main cohort of participants. Seven participants questioned the question, and the other eight answered without further enquiry but took some time to think about and frame their answers. Of the seven who asked for clarification of the question, six asked in what terms I intended them to describe themselves, and one asked for 'pointers'. The response to the request for clarification was answered by an expansion of the questions from 'How would you describe yourself?' to 'How might you describe yourself personally, professionally or as a student?'.

Despite the prompt unavoidably given to the group who asked for clarification, none of the participants described themselves as students. Six described themselves entirely in terms of their professional lives and undertakings, four provided very personal descriptions of themselves often referring to their values or personal qualities as, for example, being 'hard-working' or 'organised', and

the remaining five provided descriptions of themselves that blended elements of their professional and personal identities. Overall, however, the professional identities of the group provided the main theme for this initial section of the interview. As the group consisted of seven participants who were employed within the HEI in which their study took place, and a further two who had responsibilities for teaching in other institutions, there was some merging and mixing of their professional identities. However, regardless of their roles as lecturers, facilitators and/or educators, as they variously described themselves, their professions, rather than their roles with HE/FE, were uppermost in their descriptions of their working lives.

John, for example, having taken quite a long time to frame his answer, said:

‘...I suppose I’m a social worker to trade, and I regard myself as such, possibly above other things...so social worker first, but laterally, I’ve been in education now for four years formally [as a lecturer/practitioner] and I suppose I would now regard myself as an educationalist...’.

(John)

Justin, who works for NHS Scotland and has a research grant from the Scottish Government unrelated to his thesis, described himself:

‘As a nurse and, I suppose, more recently as a researcher or as an academic...’.

(Justin)

Val explained that she was ‘...a podiatry educator’. She went on to explain how she had reached this conclusion:

‘When I came into education, I came from a clinical background of podiatry and I thought I was going to be a podiatrist who taught a bit... and then when I came into education I suddenly realised that I was actually going to be an educator who has to educate in the subject specialism... so, that has been an evolving process and a continual learning process to learn more and more about education...’.

(Val)

Christine was very certain that she would foreground her professional life in any description of herself:

‘I would describe [myself] as I introduced myself [to you]: I am Subject Lead for Law, I would then probably go on to say that I’m a Convenor for the Health Committee for the Law Society of Scotland, and a lot of my work is involved in the political, civic arena in Scotland... I would tend to talk about the prof doc last, if at all. It would not occur to me to describe myself as a student’.

(Christine)

Miranda, the Health Visitor, kept her description brief, but to the point, stating:

‘I’m a confident, strong, professional woman’.

(Miranda)

Diane was equally pithy, saying:

‘I’m a nurse first and an academic second... so, my professional identity is one of a nurse...’.

(Diane)

She did not attempt to define any other type of identity.

Brenda pitched herself as ‘a good teacher’, while Fergus provided a description of himself over the years by listing the many and varied careers he had pursued before arriving at the decision to focus on his present post as a counsellor.

Among the remaining participants who did not describe themselves entirely in personal terms, their approach towards juggling the many different roles they had to carry in their complex professional, personal and part-time student lives formed the basis of their descriptions. Fiona spoke about being a very structured person, which she explained thus:

‘I have systems, I have routines... my life is sort of compartmentalised quite nicely... I would have a work compartment, my personal compartment, my studies compartment, my extended family compartment and so on... I couldn’t do anything or be anything unless I was able to compartmentalise it... I would say that has evolved as a coping strategy over the years’.

(Fiona)

Catriona used a similar approach and described herself as:

‘... keeping things in boxes to manage it all [work, family and study]...’.
(Catriona)

The finding from this initial section suggests that in terms of their personal identities, these older adults, in the context of professional doctoral students, foreground their professional lives over their personal identities, and place little (if any) significance upon their student identities.

4.6 The importance of Professional Identity

Given the predominance of this professional focus, the next questions from the semi-structured interview schedule led quite fortuitously into the next section of the dialogue. The participants were asked to describe and explain their professional roles. There was no explicit prompt or encouragement to point the interviewee towards positive or negative conclusions, nor was there any direction to comment upon whether the students intended their doctoral qualification as a change of career direction or as an exit strategy from their current post. However, strong indications of these issues were evident in all the responses.

In describing their professional roles and explaining their positions within their organisations, every candidate spoke to some extent or another about their feelings, and some about their hopes, fears and intentions. Of the 15 participants, only three explicitly expressed anxiety and/or discontent with their current posts. Of these three, Kate and Val used the phrase ‘exit strategy’ when referring to their professional doctorate in the context of their present employment. Kate, who is nearer to retirement age than Val, said that she would like to escape from the managerialism and operationalisation of her role as a senior lecturer within the HEI in question. She expressed fears and some regret that she has become so institutionalised and has been so long out of practice that she would be unable to return to her first career in therapeutic radiography as a practitioner. However, she felt that her doctoral qualification would give her the opportunity to engage in clinical research rather than practice, and enable her to return to her professional body - the Society and

College of Radiographers - in an academic, rather than a clinical role. She would not be able to take up that role without a doctoral qualification. She believes that the Professional Doctorate is highly valued within her professional body because it accounts not only for a degree of research capability, but also demonstrates the practical experience of the holder. She was advised of this by a leading figure in her professional sphere before she made the decision to take up her present course, and therefore sees her Professional Doctorate as an escape route from, rather than into, academia.

Val also feels that she has drifted far from her original professional role. She has fewer regrets on this front than Kate, and has tried hard to embrace her role as a 'professional educator' with the same determination that she showed in her earlier career choice as a podiatrist. She was a very reluctant participant in the professional doctorate programme, and made clear that she felt pressured into joining the course. She had been looking for opportunities to research student engagement and teaching and learning issues, but had not been able to access funding. She stated quite emphatically:

'I am doing a professional doctorate because I was advised that it might be a good avenue of study for me to undertake... when I originally joined the organisation I had no desire to undertake doctoral study... to the point that I even verbalised - I am not going to do a doctorate - and I wanted to undertake... I mean, I had a project [on teaching and learning] and I went seeking support for that as a [university]scholar [in-house funding system for small scale research projects] and I was advised that I wouldn't get support for [university] scholar, but I would get support if I did a professional doctorate'.

(Val)

She later added:

'...one of the things that keeps me going with it [the PD] is the fact that I can use it as an exit strategy... I may not use it as an exit strategy, but it gives me that'.

(Val)

These issues are explored more fully in Chapter 5 which considers the participants' motivations behind their decisions to pursue doctoral study.

However, while Kate and Val both enjoy aspects of their current posts, most particularly the teaching elements of their jobs as lecturers in HE, Andrea is the only participant pursuing a professional doctorate with the express intention of quitting her present post and moving on to something completely different. She expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the way in which her professional role is now perceived within the National Health Service generally, and within the service region in which she works, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, in particular. She identifies very strongly with the ethos and professional ethics of her post as an Occupational Therapist (OT) and feels that she can no longer work happily or comfortably within a practice field which is under-valued and subsequently under-funded in relation to other health related professions. She feels that while a doctoral qualification would give her greater credibility, and therefore greater status, within her NHS team, it would not materially alter the conditions and professional constraints under which she currently works. She also feels that as she works in the field of geriatric and dementia care, the stresses of the job will have long-term effects upon her health and well-being, so she is looking for a way out of the position in which she finds herself. She is quite definitely using the doctorate as a means of career change. She said:

‘It will be lovely to have the doctorate... at the end of the day, I would love to eventually go into teaching and learning in education somehow... thereafter, who knows, I would be quite happy to reach there and I think that would be a very positive career move... I would hope to be in some form of teaching, whether it is through ongoing in the NHS or maybe through university... in OT or allied health fields’.

(Andrea)

She therefore sees her PD as an escape route out of practice and into academia, or at least into practical academia.

The remaining twelve participants all expressed various degrees of satisfaction within their current posts, and said that the professional doctorate is part of their ongoing professional development. All of them see it as leading to greater personal understanding of their professional roles, or as providing opportunities within those roles to develop different, and more influential, pathways. For some, the prospect of promotion as a result of enhanced qualification was attractive, but for most it was the intrinsic learning about their current practice that was most significant and, possibly, the means of proving that publicly by

acquiring a doctoral identity. Again, these issues are more fully explored in the succeeding chapters.

The data suggests that the professional doctorate candidates are wedded to their professions, and that what they 'do' has become very much part of 'who they are'. Many participants spoke of how their professional development had contributed to their overall personal and doctoral student identities. Diane, who early in the interview described her 'present job' as 'a gift', was very clear about what her professional life had given her:

'I was the first person in our family to do a degree, both sides as well, and I still am, actually. So that [HE] was quite an unfamiliar pathway and nursing gave me that pathway. Other nurses said, go and get your degree, and then other nurses said, go and do your masters, so it was the profession that gave me that and raised my expectations...'

(Diane)

John also attributed his engagement in the doctoral programme with the opportunities that his profession has given him:

'...a colleague of mine, who was a [social work] training development manager at that point, had registered for a professional doctorate and I was chatting to him and he said well what about [it]?... I [asked]... well the Executive Director, at that point, was very supportive, very research minded, recognised the importance of research for the organisation, and lo and behold, he said, yes...'

(John)

Justin, who switched from an undergraduate medical degree (an MB ChB programme) to a nursing degree (BA Nursing Studies) had made significant personal sacrifices to retain his identity as a medical professional, but as a nurse rather than a doctor. He said:

'...when I said to my dad that I was going to do nursing he almost had a stroke... it was not a job for men in those days...'

(Justin)

He later explained:

'I thought, why am I doing this horrible course [the MB ChB programme], which doesn't seem to get any better, speaking to my friends above me, and for a job that seems to be equally terrible at the end [as a junior doctor] and then you progress into these little narrow sectors, being a surgeon, being a GP or whatever, when I met a person who had done nursing who seemed to have a much broader job, seemed to have much

broader training and seemed to be really enjoying what he was doing... I thought, well it's related, it's in the area of healthcare and the course itself seems much more interesting and the job seems much more interesting... I became a nurse... I have no regrets... my wife has got great regrets because she compares the salaries... I really enjoy my job... I find it really worthwhile and I'm really happy to be a nurse'.

(Justin)

It is reasonable to assume that the strength of the participants' professional identity might have had an impact upon why they opted for a Professional Doctorate rather than another route to doctoral qualification. This issue is explored in Chapter 5.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to set the present study in both a national and an institutional context by considering issues of policy, recruitment and institutional motivation. It has proposed that there is more than one lens through which these issues may be viewed, but has also shown that the HEI in question, and HEIs generally, have much to gain by introducing new routes to doctoral study. The subsequent chapters explore what the participants have to gain from these programmes. This chapter has also provided an overview of these participants and considered how these people view themselves and their engagement in doctoral study. This data has led to the conclusion that for the most part these candidates have little or no identity as students; in every case, they presented themselves as professional people engaged in professional doctorates that they have described as professional training and/or development rather than as programmes of academic study. This dichotomy is explored in greater depth in subsequent chapters. If we take the participants at their word, then they do, thus far, fit the constructed learner identities that the programme literature suggests; they are managers, practitioners, health professionals and scientists, although not all of them have achieved the 'senior' prefix that the institutional documentation suggest (see Appendix). One aspect of their involvement that is clear, however, is that for the most part they are not pursuing doctoral study as a means of escape from their present posts; in describing themselves, 80% of the cohort drew upon very positive aspects of their professional lives and their current posts to reveal their identities. The

next chapter picks up this thread by examining their motivations for choosing to study for a higher degree and for choosing the professional doctorate route specifically.

Chapter 5 - Motivation

‘I'd like to have developed my research skills and abilities through the programme, so I'd like to have an increased level of confidence and competence... I don't have the level of confidence I think that academics should have, or I perceive they should have, in research... so, that would be a positive outcome: that I felt more confident and competent in that part of my job...’.

(Diane)

‘I think, whether or not I pass it, I know that I'll have given it my best shot and I will have pushed... I've pushed myself to the limit really, and I question at all stages, whether I'm up to it, but I'm pushing myself to that level, and if I don't quite achieve it, well, at least I tried. So, in that respect, I'll have assessed where I am, in that scale of things, if you like’.

(Fiona)

5.1 Chapter Overview

In expressing their ambitions of what they would like to have achieved by the end of the course, Diane and Fiona are also shedding light upon their motivation for taking up the professional doctorate course in the first place. Each of the participants in this study had outcomes that were connected to their reasons for joining the programme. This chapter considers how the participants themselves describe their motivations for pursuing doctoral study, and analyses these within the context of the full set of rich data generated by each of the individual interviews. Motivational factors are then categorised using a framework suggested by Mellers-Bourne, Robinson, & Metcalfe in the 2016 report *Provision of professional doctorates in English HE institutions*, which was produced for the HEFCE & CRAC. Conclusions are then drawn from the data that attempt to provide an overview of how, and why, the older adults in this project were drawn to doctoral study in mid-life.

5.2 Introduction

Why would a mature person embark upon doctoral study? The course is invariably long, whether taken part-time or full-time, the task is arduous, and the expectations of themselves and others are high. Given the levels of commitment of time, money and sheer effort required to complete a doctoral

programme while working full-time, the casual observer would expect there to be great material rewards that would eventually justify the effort that the individual has made to achieve doctoral status. As one of the participants in this study suggested:

‘...people not in the public sector all assume you’re going to be paid a fortune when it’s finished. When I say, oh no, I have no idea how really it will impact on my career at all, they look at you as though you’re completely mad’.

(Catriona)

Career progression, professional enhancement, and intellectual stimulation may constitute rewards for the achievement of a doctoral qualification, but for the candidates in this study, who are all already in professional posts within an acceptable salary bracket, the qualification is unlikely to bring a great deal of financial benefit. For younger PhD students, those who are using their doctoral qualification for entry to a profession, and might best be described as early career researchers, there may be financial rewards for successful completion, but that is frequently because they require nothing greater than professional security, often in academia, and a decent basic salary which is a step up from the post-doctoral stipend that they may have had to survive on for several years after completing their PhDs (Chiteng Kot and Hendel, 2012). The needs of the professional doctorate candidate are quite different.

However, the needs of an individual in a particular situation are not the only factors that influence the direction that a professional doctorate student, or any student for that matter, decides to take. Choice is a significant issue when considering the concept of motivation. However, the choice of programme, HEI, and mode of study, and the decision to pursue doctoral study itself are each to some degree affected by the constraints that impinge upon individuals’ freedom of choice. Therefore, the decision to study a particular course at a particular institution is not completely open and the motivation to choose a specific route to a doctoral qualification, and indeed the motivational factors involved in choosing to study for a higher degree, are as much defined by extrinsic and intrinsic limitations on choice as they are by the positive motivational forces that draw students towards doctoral study. Chapter 4 (p93ff) in attempting to

contextualise this study and provide a profile of the participants by describing them and documenting how they describe themselves, showed that several factors play a part in the varied reasons for choosing a particular degree course: the particular age of the participants in this study, the professional and family responsibilities that this life stage brings, funding opportunities and pragmatic decisions that have to be made on the mode of study, the convenience of the HEI, the ability to juggle the demands of a part-time degree with full-time work, and the academic demands that inevitably foreshadow doctoral study. Social class, gender, and early educational experiences also impact upon an individual student's motivation and course choice (Reay, David and Ball, 2005).

A great deal of the research to date which has evaluated issues of choice in higher education has focussed on the range of choices open to school leavers for undergraduate study (Reay, David and Ball, 2005). Class inequalities, gender discrimination, disability and race have all been analysed within the context of the 'complex stratification and differentiation of HEIs' (Reay *et al.*, 2005: 19) that has been created by the shift from elite to mass higher education throughout the twentieth century, and most particularly from the 1990s onwards. Much of this research has been conducted under the umbrella title(s) of widening access and increased participation. Broad findings have shown that although participation in higher education has risen dramatically, in absolute numbers, and some inequalities, particularly in terms of gender, have been presented as showing significant change, in fact the playing field remains far from even. The limitations imposed upon students by the choices available to them are important in reproducing inequalities (Vincent, 2003; Bowl, 2003; Reay *et al.*, 2005; Bottero, 2005; Burke, 2012). For the participants in this study, their range of options and choices played an important role in how they discussed their motivation for embarking upon the professional doctorate programme; the restrictions on their ability to choose a study programme were as much shaped by their life stage as by any other aspect of the intersectionality of their social and academic identities.

In considering concepts of motivation and the range of issues raised by the literature review (Chapter 2), the participants were asked about the choices they had made: why they had chosen to study for a higher degree, and why they

had chosen to study for a professional doctorate rather than taking a different route, e.g. an EdD, or a traditional PhD by research. The interview responses generally, in conjunction with those elicited by these direct questions, provided a great deal of data on the factors that might have affected the choices the participants made in terms of the HEI in which the study is based as well as their choice of programme. The first question: why they would choose to pursue a higher degree programme at this stage in their life and career, involves the larger concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors. It is the distinction between the types of degree programme chosen that reveals most about the limitations placed upon their true range of choices and options.

5.3 Why choose a professional doctorate rather than an alternative doctoral programme?

Of the participant cohort, two students had embarked upon PhD programmes previously and had not completed them, and one student had interviewed for a PhD place on completing her master's degree, but had been unsuccessful. The initial forays of these three students into higher degree study had left them feeling rather negative about the traditional PhD. While it should be taken into account that some degree of post-hoc rationalisation will be at play when the participants recount their negative experiences of previous doctoral study at PhD, nonetheless, their interpretation of these negative experiences did have a positive impact upon their decisions to pursue a Professional Doctorate as an alternative to a traditional PhD by research, as they had gone into the process looking for an alternative to what they had tried before. Apart from the three students who started on the PhD route, of the remaining twelve participants in this study, half had considered a PhD route to qualification before deciding upon the professional doctorate pathway. This finding supports Loxley's and Seery's (2012) study of professional doctorate candidates at an Irish university. They found that over half of their participants, all of whom were enrolled in a DEd programme, had considered a conventional PhD by research, and one had written a proposal for a prospective study but had failed to find suitable supervision. Upon the basis of their data they speculate that many of their interviewees might well have embarked upon a PhD had the DEd route not been available (Loxley and Seery, 2012: 11). This, however, was certainly not true for

the participants in this study, as for most of them, the decision to embark upon doctoral study had been related to the professional doctorate programme itself. This data would suggest that had it not been for the discovery of the professional doctorate route, most of them would not have engaged in doctoral study.

Although the responses to the question of why choose a professional doctorate over another route to doctoral qualification often cited more than a single reason, when considered in terms of emphasis, four participants focussed almost entirely upon the professional aspects of the programme and how it was related to their everyday work, and the remaining eleven discussed their interest in the appeal of the structure of the professional doctorate programme. This finding which formed a clear and strong thread through the interview data, while confirming the evidence of Wellington and Sikes (2006), contradicts Loxley and Seery (2012: 11) who state that: 'The evidence suggests that, for the most part, the participants had no prior knowledge of the nature and structure of a professional degree...'. This contradiction with Wellington and Sikes (2006: 729), who point out specifically that: 'Structure is important to our informants because it gives them a better sense of how they can fit their studies into the rest of their lives...', is all the more interesting because both studies were conducted at roughly the same time, each with groups of EdD/DEd students who might therefore be expected to share a common profile. However, as the institutional contexts were different - one was English and the other Irish - we might speculate that the ways in which the programmes are presented and advertised to prospective students were different; any number of differences may have been brought about by the national context.

The question of the rationale for choosing this particular PD rather than a traditional PhD by research or publication, or another PD like the EdD, was put to all participants. Some of the responses could be summarised as a rationale based partly on negative views of the nature of a part-time PhD. A number of participants expressed views of PhD study that could be said to be based upon what Loxley and Seery (2012: 12) term 'academic folklore', and that were, for the most part, erroneous in a modern context. However, these beliefs - that PhD study is really only designed for full-time students, and that the PhD student

is typically a singleton entirely dependent upon the whim of their supervisors, were a powerful determinant of some participants' choices. However, there were also many positive responses to the route to qualification offered by a PhD programme.

James, Christine, Justin and Miranda focussed particularly on the relationship between the professional doctorate and their work. James and Christine not only work in the HEI in which their programme is situated, but had also taught on the course and had been involved in its development for the university. James implied that if he had gone for a PhD he may have been pressured to do something multi- or inter-disciplinary, which he did not want to do and would not have done. However, of the professional doctorate itself he said:

‘...one of the reasons I did the prof doc is that obviously it has to do with a work-related issue... and that seems to me common sense, and you can do that within a PhD as well [but] I think where the professionalism came in is in terms of the piece of research that I’m going to do, that I was very single minded from the start that I wanted to do a project that was related to nursing in some way...’.

(James)

Christine certainly felt that she had a range of options for doctoral qualification, but that her choice of the professional doctorate was one of convenience and due to a wish to put her money where her mouth was and support a product that she believed in, offered by the institution that she believed in. She also pointed out that she benefitted from and valued the taught elements of the course, saying:

‘The prof doc was going to allow me to make a contribution to the law and society which sits very well with the whole public policy type thing, but it also gave me a chance to refine those research skills... you’re being taught how to research, you’re having to test yourself, your writing, so there’s an opportunity many of those would not have been available in a traditional [part-time] PhD’.

(Christine)

Justin gave three reasons for his course choice; one was the accessibility of HEI in that ‘...it’s quite easy to get to Glasgow...’, while the second was:

‘ ...because I felt that it had this link between, this close link with practice and with professional development and certainly the way it was

sold was that this is a doctorate for people who want to stay as practitioners rather than people who want to move into academia and that's what I wanted to do'.

(Justin)

For Miranda, the choice was quite straightforward; she stated that she chose a professional doctorate because:

'...it was profession-specific and I thought if I'm going to do anything at a higher level it has to be something that interests me and that I want to do. I don't like research... it's [research] a means to an end for me...'.
(Miranda)

Of the remaining eleven participants, that is, those who emphasised their choice of the programme for its structure rather than anything else, the two years of teaching, training and assessment that led to the thesis research and writing at Stage 2 were very significant. However, this was often not only reflected in a positive view of the professional doctorate structure but also, again, in a negative view of what the participants understood as the potential or possible experience of pursuing a PhD programme. Sarah expressed this contrast when she said she chose the professional doctorate rather than a PhD because:

'I see the Prof Doc in chunks, in stages, and I understand that you could take a PhD [and] break it into small parts... but it seemed to me that the road was long and tipped over the horizon for a PhD, and it's kind of like all or nothing, there were no interims... no, just seemed too frightening for me'.

(Sarah)

John placed a great deal of emphasis upon the opportunity he had to do the PD, rather than a PhD - he had not considered doctoral study until he thought about this particular programme - and he also placed some emphasis on the cohort experience of the PD rather than what he described as 'the singleton experience of a PhD':

'I think that what the initial phase of the Prof Doc programme does - the cohorts - the working with students the year above you, the kind of presentations at mini-conferences, I think that what that does is it kind of helps you grow that doctoral identity... that a traditional [part-time] PhD role might not have done... no, I don't think I would have done a traditional PhD'.

(John)

He then went on to explain this further by saying:

‘I’m one of these people that suffers from what I call imposter syndrome... I was a professional advisor for the Scottish Government on child protection... and I constantly expected the tap on the shoulder that says - we’ve found you out boy, right, go back to wherever you came from... I don’t know quite what that’s about but it is there... you’re going to get caught, you’re going to get sussed... it has been something that has been part of my professional persona. I don’t know whether suffering from that makes you want to be a social worker, or maybe just being a social worker makes you suffer from that... and that’s not something that’s uncommon for us [social work professionals]... but there’s no doubt that what the Prof Doc does is frontloads that confidence - you can do this - you are capable of doing this. Maybe that was a misconception on my part, but I don’t think a part-time PhD programme could have done that for me’.

(John)

This feeling of fear, as expressed by Sarah, and the sense of ‘imposterism’ and lack of confidence evident in John’s account are common characteristics in these professional doctorate candidate profiles; further evidence and analysis of these concepts is provided in Chapter 6. To many participants, the fear of not being capable of self-reliant study was a strong determining factor in their choice of the professional doctorate. As Kate said:

‘The reason I wasn’t keen on doing a PhD is that I like... see when I’m on my own, I procrastinate and I felt that [with] a PhD I’d be procrastinating all the way through... [with the PD] what I liked about it was the fact that the first two years were taught and you’d have a cohort of people like yourself. So, if the Prof D hadn’t come up I wouldn’t have done it [a doctoral degree]’.

(Kate)

This sentiment of a traditional PhD requiring a degree of discipline of which she was not capable was echoed in Val’s explanation when she suggested that:

‘The traditional [part-time] PhD by research was never something that was going to work for me... to try to do that very self-guided study was just never going to work for me, and I was just never going to do it...’.

(Val)

Andrea was very clear about her motivation for choosing the professional doctorate over a traditional PhD by research. She said:

‘I know with a PhD I would have drifted into the abyss and I think with the peer support that the [professional] doctorate was going to give as well, I thought that would be good... I liked the fact that we had assignments... it was a step-by-step process... I think the first two years give you that sort of ongoing confidence and motivation to keep going’.

(Andrea)

So, the element of supported assessment and research training was significant both in providing a ‘try-it-and-see’ opportunity for the candidates, which mitigated against their perceptions of the traditional part-time PhD by research as a solitary experience, and provided a professional justification and hook upon which to give the candidates some degree of confidence (back-up) in undertaking higher degree study. They felt, to a large extent, that if they had achieved the status of successful professionals, this would give them a head start in doctoral study because they would be embarking upon a project that did not require them to adopt a wholly academic identity.

A commonly-acquired belief or misconception displayed by the majority of the participants was that a PhD by research, even in a part-time mode, was a solitary experience, as we have shown above, and also one that would not have resulted in a thesis outcome that would have had any practical bearing upon their professional practice. As Brenda put it:

‘...the Prof Doc has this wonderful two-year structure when I learned so much about strategic management, about all of the different types of research, more about statistics, more about writing up, there was just lots and lots of information there that you were guided through, you could share with people at the same stage as yourself, because I think quite often with a PhD you go down a borehole, and your borehole is so specific... how useful is that in your job?’

(Brenda)

Tom, who had already started a PhD at another university but had had a bad experience and left the programme, also expressed concerns about the applicability of a PhD to his practice:

‘I wanted a [project that had a] practical application rather than [to] develop a theory... to me a PhD would develop a theory...’.

(Tom)

Diane, who had been in a similar position to Tom in that she had embarked upon a PhD at an earlier stage in her career and had given up, expressed a similar belief when she proposed that:

‘... I’d started to talk to people about PhDs and it all felt a bit loose, a bit like there wasn’t a pathway that I could follow to get on and get registered and get a supervisor... people would just go, yes, that’s fine, on you go... and that’s not a way I work particularly well. Then I looked for something more structured... I’m sure the structure would have come with the PhD maybe, maybe not... A lot of my colleagues are doing [part-time] PhDs, and I look at them and I think, it does feel a bit - and I know that’s part of being a PhD student, where you have to be a self-starter and self-directed - but it feels just a little bit too loose for me’.

(Diane)

The teaching approach adopted in the professional doctorate, the availability of a specific person to supervise a practice-based thesis, and the necessarily part-time primary focus of the professional doctorate over the traditional route to PhD were also given as reasons for choosing one route over another. Jessica chose the PD rather than any other route towards doctoral qualification because the teaching approach was familiar. She wanted training on integrated research methods, and to refocus her professional role to include a wider understanding of issues around strategic change management; she felt that the PD would give her these things. Fiona chose a professional doctorate rather than a traditional PhD by research firstly because she was attracted by the professional reputation of the person who was a key player in the programme, and also because she wanted to have the opportunity to work with other people in her field of practice. Catriona, who had applied for a funded PhD place earlier in her career and had not been successful, was attracted by the necessarily part-time nature of the professional doctorate which she saw as something that directly afforded a structure that not only fitted with her work patterns and professional role, but required her to be in full-time employment so she had more faith in her ability to complete. Of a PhD, she said:

‘I think if I was doing a PhD I would have downed tools and done it full-time and thought, this is a total change for me in terms of career, which I don’t think was the right thing, and I just felt I liked the idea of the professional doctorate because I could see what they were doing, I could see how that could be a really useful set of skills to go forward... it really maps in well with my current [professional] role...’.

(Catriona)

These findings bear out the main conclusions of the Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016) report that the structure of professional doctorate programmes and, most particularly, their part-time nature, have a profound affect upon candidates' decisions to opt for a professional doctorate rather than a traditional PhD.

When using the categories that first Scott *et al.* (2004: 113ff) and later Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016: 50) developed to analyse the motivational factors affecting professional doctorates candidates' choice of doctoral study, *Type (iii) - Extrinsic Professional Alteration, where the candidate views the doctorate as a vehicle for changing, affecting or making a contribution to an aspect of their practice*, the category that was added to the later study and absent from the first, is the most prevalent. However, in looking closely at the participants' stated reasons for choosing to study for a doctoral degree, Type (iv) takes centre stage in that element of the discussion

5.4 Why doctoral study?

All the present research's participants gave clear responses to the question of why they had chosen to study for a doctoral degree. These responses have been coded and analysed using the Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016: 50) four-category typology (Chapter 2: 43). Although this is widely used in the literature that seeks to explain the complex motivational influences in choosing a professional doctorate programme, it is drawn from the wider field of adult learning theory (Scott *et al.*, 2004). This analytical framework provides a wide lens through which to view the motivation of older adult learners, not only those involved in specific programmes. As the literature review attests, motivation is a complex and multi-factored concept, and seldom provides a single reason for why an individual might choose to pursue one type of behaviour over another, or in this case to decide to pursue doctoral study. However, in looking at this multi-factorial concept through the voices of the participants, we can also determine not only areas of commonality and difference, but additionally, the emphases that participants place on one factor over another. For this reason, extracts from the transcripts of each of the fifteen participants in this project are

included in the discussion that follows. An overview of the overall motivational traits is underpinned by a discussion of how each of the candidates explains their personal view of what motivated them to take up doctoral study in mid-life.

5.5 Motivation: What is the motivation of these students to achieve doctoral status?

As briefly mentioned above, when asked about their decision to pursue doctoral study, almost all the participants - in fact all except Andrea - gave Type (iv) [Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation] reasons as the major motivational factors for reaching their decisions. For James, Justin, Christine, Jessica and Fiona it was not just a major factor; it was the single factor that their data revealed. They cited other reasons that informed their decision making, some of which do not fall under the four-part criteria, but generally they were very focussed on emphasising the reasons associated with intrinsic personal fulfilment and professional affirmation.

Scott *et al.* (2004: 121) define the student motivated by intrinsic personal and/or professional affirmation as one whose 'professional career is more likely to be already established when they begin the doctorate, and therefore the age and professional experience of the learner is greater than for those that are motivated by extrinsic professional initiation'. They go on to suggest that two key factors characterise this type of motivation: 'personal fulfilment and professional credibility'. Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016: 50) concur with this definition, but also emphasise the candidate's desire to achieve 'intellectual stimulus' from the professional doctorate. Evidence of these characteristics and key factors can be found in the responses of each of the participants who fall into this category.

James cited three main reasons for taking up a professional doctorate; his first, he said was that:

'...all the planets were in alignment and it's the first time in my life where I actually thought I could do it for enjoyment...'.
(James)

He was at pains to emphasise that he was not doing the doctorate from a sense of being compelled by professional reasons, such as promotion, to keep his job, or pressure from management. The second reason that he gave was also very personal; he explained that he was very familiar with the course, having taught on it for several years, and felt that that if he could teach others to achieve recognition through the qualification then he should also be able to avail himself of that recognition:

‘...the second reason was that I’ve helped so many other people get theirs that I don’t actually think - well I do actually think - that I’m very capable of doing it and I don’t see why I shouldn’t do it now’.

(James)

The third reason was one of bloody mindedness - which was entirely personal. He applied for funding for the course, and was told that he could not enrol on the course because of ‘resource issues’:

‘...as soon as they told me I couldn’t do it, I decided that I would do it...’.

(James)

He also cites boredom with his present role as a Senior Lecturer and the need to find something ‘different’, which would represent ‘a challenge’. This is in keeping with Mellors-Bourne *et al.*’s (2016) suggestion that the need for intellectual stimulus can be an important motivational factor in pursuing doctoral study, especially at a later career stage. James mentioned his age incidentally throughout the interview but did not make it a central issue in any part of the discussion. His motivations are mixed, but the emphasis is clear; his personal intrinsic motivation for pursuing a doctoral qualification overrode any extrinsic motivation that might have been connected to promotion or upward career mobility. A lack of concern for professional ambition is particularly evident in older doctoral candidates, as much of the previous research attests (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016; Scott *et al.*, 2004).

For Justin, who is younger than James and perhaps at a less secure and less senior point in his career, a great deal of personal achievement and personal affirmation was nonetheless invested in his successful completion of doctoral study. When asked directly why he was doing a higher degree, he replied:

‘...for a number of reasons... I think to prove to myself that I could...’.

(Justin)

When this brief explanation was probed further with the simple question: ‘Did you think you couldn’t?’ He replied at some length:

‘No, I thought I could. I thought I could and I wanted to demonstrate I could. I suppose in some ways to prove to other people that I could and those people really don’t matter at all because they are people I’ll probably never see again but to some extent, I suppose, I felt there were people, teachers at school who weren’t positive about my ability and to some extent, so I think well, even these years later I want to show them wrong (sic), that after all these years I could reach what I think is quite a high level of academic ability’.

(Justin)

Although when discussing his move from medicine to nursing earlier in the interview he had seemed quite relaxed about that decision, despite the reservations of his family and friends, when it came to focussing upon issues around self-belief and self-esteem, he seemed less certain and more fragile in his responses. However, he did also emphasise his need for professional affirmation, both personally and for nursing generally, quite clearly when he said:

‘[I chose doctoral study] to demonstrate, I think professionally, that nurses have got the capability as a profession, that the profession itself has got things to say and has got a degree of knowledge and intelligence and thoughtfulness that they’re maybe not given credit for because, I suppose, I feel as a professional quite belittled and quite marginalised, and to an extent because I come across a lot of things that I find interesting’.

(Justin)

He summed up this part of the interview himself in the following way:

‘So, a lot of it is about self-esteem either personally or professionally, and some of this is saying, well, all the time I’m asking questions about practice I’m doing or I see around me, and I want to have both the ability to answer those questions but also, to some extent, sort of, you know, the acceptance that I am the person to answer those questions’.

(Justin)

Justin represents a clear example of a PD student who wants to bring together aspects of his personal and professional life where the research journey is

undertaken to provide professional affirmation. Scott *et al.* (2004: 123) found that many professional doctorate candidates display a ‘need... to gain recognition of their professional excellence from an external, validating source (in this case the university) which may stem... from negative past educational experiences and therefore result in a perceived need to prove their own personal and professional self-worth. In such cases, the status of the doctorate is important...’. These conclusions were confirmed by the qualitative data produced by Bourne-Mellors *et al.* (2016). Evidence of poor early educational experiences and feelings of low self-esteem and unrealised potential appeared throughout the interviews of all 15 participants in this project, much of which is investigated in the next chapter when considering identity. However, Justin’s responses provided a clear statement of how his motivation to prove himself through successful doctoral study was connected to his sense of how others perceived, and still perceive, him.

Christine showed little of the self-doubt and low self-esteem that Justin suggested, but had more in common with James when describing her motivation as entirely generated out of the wish to participate in that particular programme. She was in a similar position to James within the programme in that she had taught on the programme since its inception, as a Senior Lecturer. However, her participation in the professional doctorate became even more complicated a few months into her professional doctorate, when she achieved professorial standing within the university as a result of her very prestigious and widely-publicised work for the Scottish Government. She had acquired an academic title, irrespective of her formal qualifications, and it was widely thought that she would drop out of the programme as a result of her professorial promotion, yet she did not. She stated repeatedly that she did not need a doctorate, but admitted that it would not do her any harm to achieve the title. Her motivation, she suggested, above all was that the professional doctorate was:

‘...something I would like to have for myself... to have a doctorate... just for me, and secondly, it’s a great way to be able to know what it’s like for students on the programme’.

(Christine)

It is worth noting too that although she was fully funded, she was not given any time in her existing schedule for study, and when she applied for APL and RPL on the basis of her external work, she was denied any remission of credits. Again, this would have provided a reasonable excuse for her to leave the programme, but she persevered. Her intrinsic motivation was evident in everything she said; she is certainly intellectually curious about her ability to complete the programme and what she might learn from it, but she has none of the feelings of entitlement somewhat evident in James' responses, and she certainly does not suffer from a sense of low self-worth like Justin. In some respects, she sees the work that she does as being for others; even the research and collaborations which resulted in her promotion she sees as belonging to, and being led by, forces external to herself - the university, the Law Society of Scotland, and the Scottish Government. In contrast, she views the professional doctorate as a project which belongs to her alone, and in which she can pursue an interest in whatever she chooses.

Jessica was one of the oldest participants, and took a relatively light-hearted approach towards the questions around motivation; her motivational factors were quite difficult to tie down. She stated quite clearly in the early part of the interview that she was doing the course for herself - not for professional reasons, not for promotion and not for any incentive that came from her wish to remain in HE. However, throughout the course of the interview she mentioned her age repeatedly - suggesting that it would be foolish to believe that she had anything to gain from further study 'at her age' - but she also dwelt on various previous professional disappointments that she had had, and implied that she did have something to prove to others, not just to herself. She also openly professed a huge personal investment in her present post in that she was on secondment from FE and did not want to return to what she had done before. This had encouraged her to apply for a number of posts in HEIs that would have negated her secondment and left her in the HE sector, but she had been unsuccessful in all her applications. She also professed an overwhelming feeling of 'imposterism' on the course, and implied that this carried into her professional life at the university. She gave the impression that she would rather have avoided talking about her motivation for taking up the professional doctorate because she did not want to admit that she hoped it would give her

credibility within the HEI to which she was seconded, and that it would perhaps extend her professional life in the HE sector. In this respect, although she was very reluctant to admit it unequivocally, her motivations were very similar to those of Justin. She was certainly looking for external validation and the status that the doctorate might bring, both for personal validation and to confirm her role in the HEI in which she worked.

Fiona described her motivation to pursue doctoral study almost entirely in terms of the personal challenge that it represented for her. She recognised that the attainment of the qualification and the title that went with it at the age of 60+ might enhance and lengthen her professional practice as an occupational therapist working in the field of disability, but she was very clear that that was only a symptom of the qualification, not the motivation for taking up the professional doctorate:

‘If you’ve got that sort of qualification people see you differently, and it might help in terms of long-term aspirations for independent practice... but it wasn’t really the driving factor... really, it was purely the personal challenge’.

(Fiona)

She described herself as a latecomer to education:

‘So, I sort of studied quite late on, I graduated [with her first degree] at the same time as my daughter graduated’.

(Fiona)

She talked at some length about her earlier educational experiences and it was clear that she felt was only able to realise the full potential of her intellect in later life:

‘...I’ve always been quite insecure about my academic career. I think as a young person I probably had some sort of learning difficulty that was never diagnosed and I really struggled academically when I was at school... it wasn’t until later, when computers came into being, everyday use, that I was able to write something... I was able to get sentences and paragraphs together. It’s not dyslexia because I can read... I can understand what I read... but quite often, it takes me a long time to take it in... and then I used to get all my ducks in a row as I call it, so I can’t really articulate what I know without really, really rehearsing in advance. So, in that way, word processing has revolutionised my learning. So, I was

sort of starting to make up for lost time, I suppose, when my children were young...’.

(Fiona)

Personal ownership of her degree, the qualification and her research project were all of paramount importance to Fiona, which is why she was one of only two self-funded participants. James, Christine, Justin and Jessica all prioritised their personal motivation and relegated any professional motivations to a very low status, but Fiona had no extrinsic professional motivation at all. The other four candidates all had a connection to the institution - three as lecturers and one as a part-time researcher - which, while it may not have been high on their list of reasons for choosing doctoral study, must still have presented an opportunity that had an impact upon their decision. The other four candidates who shared her intrinsic motivational profile were also fully funded; three by the HEI itself, and the other by the NHS. Fiona did not have this; she invested everything in the professional doctorate - her own money, her own effort, and all for her own well-defined personal outcomes.

5.6 Combination of Extrinsic Professional Continuation (Type ii) with Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation (Type iv)

Four of the participants, Sarah, Kate, Diane and Val, outlined their motivation in terms that fitted a combination of Types (ii) and (iv) in the Scott *et al.* (2004) and Mellors-Bourne *et al.* (2016) framework. As the literature review shows and many studies have confirmed, no single framework can provide a catch-all explanation of motivational factors; however, the combination of these two ‘Types’ does provide a starting point for an analysis of these participants’ motivations. While these three participants, in common with the majority of the cohort, cited many reasons related to personal fulfilment and intellectual stimulus, their data reveals motivations related to their current posts and career ambitions. The Type (ii) category is characterised by candidates who are ‘reasonably experienced and established in their professional field but want to further develop their professional career either in line with existing work or by providing new opportunities for diversifying career options’ (Mellors-Bourne *et al.*, 2016: 50). As there is no category which includes participants who need to upscale their qualifications, or who believe that they need to acquire a doctoral

qualification, in order to retain the post that they already have, data relating to this has been included here on the understanding that 'further developing your career' may also include remaining in full-time employment in the face of staff cuts and redundancy. Each of these participants expressed fears over the security of their posts.

Sarah chose to take up the professional doctorate to try to finish off a research degree that she had previously started and failed to complete; she was able to use the credits as APL on the professional doctorate programme. She was also determined to have external recognition for the career of over 20 years which she had already had in academia:

'...there's all these little pockets of things that you... that I have gathered in my experience and my journey, and it's [the professional doctorate] putting it all together and...'.
(Sarah)

She did, however, also express anxiety about her position in the university in a different section of the interview when talking about protecting her role against redundancy:

'probably there is a bit of anxiety about that, because I don't have anything specifically unique that nobody else has... I'm without a doctorate... I don't stack up well, and I understand that scenario, but I also know that I could walk away... I'm in a very fortunate position...'.
(Sarah)

She mentioned age as an issue a number of times when speculating on the worth of her study to the institution and her employers, and when discussing the perceptions of others:

'...somebody in the organisation said: 'I thought about doing a PhD in my 30s', and she said: 'when I missed that cycle of opportunity, I realised I was too old'. I was horrified, absolutely horrified, but that was the end of her learning opportunity... it made me think about my own situation... when I'm 55, what value will a 55-year-old prof doc be to the world... so that's where I decided that, yes, it is valuable to the organisation, but more importantly, it's valuable to me, it's valuable to me because it is about credibility...'.
(Sarah)

Sarah thus saw a chance to keep her job in the current insecure climate in her HEI through achieving a doctorate, but also saw the qualification as an affirmation of her professional self. Kate's motivation, on the other hand, was initially entirely opportunistic. She was not really driven by the professional or personal need to achieve a doctoral qualification until she was aware of the structure and nature of the professional doctorate programme. She said:

‘...if the Prof Doc hadn't come up, I don't think I would have done it [doctoral study]...’.

(Kate)

To some extent or another, Kate could be seen as a victim or product of relatively aggressive internal recruitment to the programme in its earliest stages, either to swell the numbers, or to increase the number of Senior Lecturers qualified to doctoral level in her School. She knew the course leaders very well, was line managed by the programme director, and later in the interview she admitted that one of the advantages of being on the programme was that it enabled her to (unsuccessfully) apply for promotion:

‘The other thing that appealed to me was that I thought for, at that time, it seemed to me that if you would be considered for a promotion, you had to have a doctorate, or be studying for one... and I thought, I'd like to have the potential for one more step up from, well I was a lecturer at the time, really I was thinking about, it might have been nice to have been a head of department... I've kicked that into touch now, but at the time, and I thought, well it'll make it easier for me if I've got a doctorate or I'm working on one. So, that was a secondary but nonetheless still quite important thing for me to do... and the third one... I'm saying third... for my own benefit as well... because I do see the way my thinking has changed since I embarked on a doctorate... I would go as far as to say that I think everybody should be doing a doctorate, simply to expand their horizons and to [learn] to think differently, and for the students' benefit as well; ultimately... when you're teaching them... it's changed me for the better, and I think in that sense, that has a knock-on effect on the students’.

(Kate)

Kate's responses not only show how motivations are mixed, but also indicate how, as previous research (Keefer, 2015; Beech, 2011) has shown, the stage that a candidate is at in their doctoral study can affect a change in their motivation. She began her programme intending to develop her career, but later found value in the self-development she had achieved by engaging in the programme. While

Kate's choice was influenced by her line manager, she saw her study as an opportunity that she took but that she could equally well have rejected; Diane is very clear that she did not make a choice to take up further study, but that that choice was made for her. She said, in response to the question: 'Why would you choose to do a higher degree?' '...not a choice...', elaborating that:

'...it was get a PhD, or your career prospects are severely limited...'.
(Diane)

She had withdrawn from a PhD programme at another university six years earlier, so chose the professional doctorate rather than a traditional PhD by research because her previous choice had been the wrong one for her. She regarded, and suggested that her employers regarded, the PD and the PhD as equally worthwhile qualifications for the continuation of her post as a Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing. While Diane's motivation was initially all extrinsic in that she felt compelled to upscale her qualifications for her post in HE, in other parts of her interview she expressed strongly held beliefs that in completing the doctorate she will be fulfilling her potential, acting as a role model to her family, and proving that, despite poor early educational experiences, she was worthy of high academic achievement. These intrinsic motivational features were expressed as strongly as those which were extrinsic.

Val is one of the few participants that feels that she was pushed into the doctoral programme, and had also felt compelled to take up the professional doctorate as a means of securing her post in HEI. Her motivation, initially at least, came from a push from her line manager and head of department, and was also largely opportunistic; she was offered incentives both in terms of funding and time for study. She gives the impression that she did not really want to look a gift horse in the mouth, even although three years later, she is still unconvinced that doctoral study is the right thing for her. Her motivation to finish (rather than her motivation to start) is to be able to use the qualification as a possible exit strategy, should the need arise. It would be reasonable to say that Val has regrets about her decision, and is the least positive about the course, her decision to join the programme, and its potential outcome among all

the participants. Her motivation was originally extrinsic, and has remained so throughout the period of her doctoral journey.

5.7 Combination of Extrinsic Professional Alteration (Type iii) with Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation (Type iv)

John, Miranda, Catriona, Brenda and Fergus provided explanations of their motivations that markedly emphasised Types (iii) and (iv). The Type (iii) category was added to the original framework (Scott *et al.*, 2004) by Mellors-Bourne *et al.* in compiling their report for CRAC in 2016. Although little explanation is given in their report for the additional category, we can assume that it was developed out of the data collected in the 12 years of professional doctorate delivery that followed the publication of Scott *et al.*'s (2004) findings. The distinction between Types (ii) and (iii) is a useful one, and is certainly borne out in the data collected for this study; while Type (ii) deals with extrinsic motivational factors that are related to using doctoral study for career development, Type (iii), while also dealing with extrinsic factors related to candidates' professions, relates to 'making a contribution to an aspect of their practice' (Mellors-Bourne, *et al.*, 2016: 50) rather than altering their career.

John, a qualified social worker for 32 years, has motivations that are as complex as any of the participants. He was, as he said, 'in the right place at the right time', so there was an element of opportunism in his decision. He was also encouraged by previous study success:

'I did my MSc in local government management three or four years ago and the marker said: 'this candidate should consider the doctorate...'. I thought... fat chance, that's not going to happen'.

(John)

He was then offered a professional doctorate opportunity through work; this was unrelated to the MSc marker's advice, although that positive advice had had a profound effect upon John's confidence and had started the ball rolling. He also confessed to a feeling of 'imposterism', and a strong motivation for taking up the professional doctorate was that it would give him the opportunity to believe that he had equal standing to those with whom he worked in the Scottish

Government. He also suggested that the professional doctorate was instrumental in bringing about a significant shift in his thinking about his professional role. When asked if doctoral study had contributed to a sense of satisfaction that he had referred to in a previous question, he replied:

‘Oh, absolutely, I just think that it... well, the prof doc programme is very different from a PhD, I’m not doing a PhD as a 25-year-old, right... my oldest son is just starting his PhD, and for him it would be a gateway to his academic career, hopefully, but for me, in a sense, the prof doc is a kind of acknowledgement of what I’ve done... it’s a consolidation, and an acknowledgement of my career to date. So, I think, it’s much... it’s not quite closure, but it is much more about, well, here’s recognition... you’ve put a shift in. I do think ‘what if I’d done it a few years earlier?’, but you can’t... well you can’t rewind that... you just make the best use of what you have in front of you’.

(John)

When considering his role in the university and his preferred shift to full-time academic life, he said:

‘The tag I put on myself for making the point sometimes [in his role as a researcher] is I describe myself as not so much an early career researcher but as a late onset academic... and I think that’s me... that covers it perfectly adequately and I’m comfortable with that’.

(John)

It is difficult to prioritise one aspect of John’s motivation over another. He had just successfully completed his professional doctorate and was, understandably, very enthusiastic about his new status and the journey that had led to this achievement. An emphasis upon professional affirmation is clear in John’s responses, but there is also a recognition of extrinsic professional alteration in his changing role to a ‘late onset academic’ rather than his previous role as a practising social worker teaching in HE. The achievement of the professional doctorate seems to have provided a new identity for John; this will be explored in the next chapter.

Miranda was quite straightforward in recognising that she had both personal and professional motivations for taking up higher degree study. On a personal level, she felt that she had been somewhat short-changed (in common with many of the other candidates) in compulsory education:

‘[I’m doing this present professional doctorate course] for a personal challenge because it is good... I came out of school with no... well, I had qualifications - I had ‘O’ levels - and I did not... I was not encouraged. I came from a working-class background... I wasn’t encouraged to go to university... I didn’t know if I was intelligent... I knew I had my own thoughts and I was a confident person, so I never went to university until I was 27, and I already had two young children at the time, so on a personal level it’s a personal challenge for me...’.

(Miranda)

She went on to describe her reasons for deciding to pursue doctoral study:

‘The other side of that is I did it for my professional career because not enough, and I do really, really believe that not enough nurses, and we’re now at an academic level where a degree is the norm and masters for some other courses, but I actually just think that it [doctoral study] should be done to prove our professional identity... I want to go right up the ladder... I don’t want to be stuck...’.

(Miranda)

She does not wish to leave the sphere of nursing, and she definitely does not want an academic teaching post, but she does want the professional recognition that she believes a doctorate should bring with it - both within and outwith the NHS. There are elements of extrinsic professional continuation, alteration and strong notions of intrinsic personal and professional affirmation in Miranda’s narrative of her professional doctorate journey.

Catriona’s motivational profile is also complex. She is a dietician working in a service (part of Glasgow Children’s Services) which specialises in treating and supporting young people, from nought to 18, suffering from eating disorders. She enjoys her job very much, although she did explain that it is unusual for a dietician to be given the clinical lead in an eating disorders unit; it would usually be headed up by a psychologist. This may reflect a lack of confidence in her professional role, although she did go on to state that her work is very well regarded and is valued by herself and by the service and service users. She was the participant who had considered a full-time, funded, PhD on completion of her first degree. She had applied, but failed to get the place. She was not really disappointed at the time, she said, but believes that the seed of the doctoral qualification had been sown by that early interest. Now, 20+ years later, her motivation for taking up the professional doctorate is quite complex

and she is not sure that she understands it herself. When asked: 'Why are you doing a higher degree?' She laughed and answered:

'That's a good question, and one which I often ask myself. I know it sounds completely mad, and I think it changes over time, so it is very difficult to give a straight answer because people often ask me that, and they all assume - people not in the public sector - all assume you're going to be paid a fortune when it's finished... when I say no, no, I have no idea how really it will impact upon my career at all, they all look at you as though you're completely mad...'

(Catriona)

Her motivation, thus, is not monetary. Later, in response to the question of whether or not there were any professional considerations in her decision to study for a higher degree, she explained that:

'In terms of where I am, I suppose it [the professional doctorate] partly cements where I am in terms of the job I've got because in a sense I always feel that... this is maybe a lack of confidence, but I feel that I probably got the job because people knew me because it was a job within my own area and they respected what I had done... but whether that would be transferable if I was looking elsewhere... having this kind of degree [a doctorate] stabilises that... but also it does potentially open - I don't know what they are, because I don't know what I'd be looking for at this point - I think it does, in the future, open up a lot more interesting avenues potentially, but I guess that's not the chief motivator for me because I'm not clear what they would be... I suppose professionally, I think, especially within dietetics, very few people do that kind of... there's not that many people around, but I don't think that a professional doctorate leads you into a pure research field. I guess for me, it's not the context of my profession, it's more in the context of this kind of leadership role within a specific clinical area, so coming out of a dietetics role, really, is what it is about for me. It's getting the enhanced qualification that allows you to really quite confidently step out of a role...'

(Catriona)

In these responses, Catriona indicates both extrinsic professional continuation, in that she is hoping to diversify her career options, but is equally certain that she would like this to come about as a result of her taking one area of her practice - a leadership role in a specific clinical area - and applying it to a different context. Catriona, like Miranda, is at the younger end of the participant cohort, and like her, might be described as a mid-career professional with 15 to 20 years of professional life still ahead of her. It is therefore likely that they are both thinking about how they might use the doctoral qualification

to shift from one professional role into another. Although not entirely absent in the discussions with the older age groups, this is not a common motivational factor among the majority of the participants.

Brenda and Fergus also provided reasons that could best be classified as Types (iii) and (iv). Brenda, a Senior Lecturer in Nutrition and Dietetics, started her professional life in nursing, through the nursing college route, later retrained in dietetics, and then moved into HE teaching through the reputation, contacts and skillset she had acquired through practice. She had come to value her role as a teacher and put a high price upon how she was perceived by her peers and students in the university. Her motivation was partly personal, partly professional - from the point of view of 'keeping up with the Dr Jones', as she put it, and from the point of view of becoming the best possible teacher/educator she could be; she was also partly driven by a wish to fulfil a potential that she believed she had. She spoke for quite some time about how she believed people perceived her as unintelligent, and reacted and responded accordingly:

'...it's quite frustrating because I am not a stupid person... and so I want it [a doctorate] so that when people treat me like that and refer to me as Mrs, I can say 'excuse me, it's not Mrs xxx, it's Dr xxx'... that's one reason for doctoral study that I cite quite often which partly true, well hugely true... the other reason, I think, is that when I started here I felt a wee bit on the back foot in that the majority of biological and biomedical sciences [people] are doctors... it's different from some of the other departments'.

(Brenda)

When asked why she had taken up the professional doctorate, she responded:

'I would have loved to do a PhD; it was always something I would have liked to do. Certainly, when I got my post here [in the HEI in which the study took place] they said 'oh, it is quite likely that you will be able to do that'. Of course, it wasn't happening, it wasn't happening. And then, you come to traditional doctorates [by which she means a full-time, funded PhD¹] where you really need to be... I would have had to leave my current post in order to take up a doctorate¹. So, when the Professional Doctorate came up, I thought - this is fantastic, because I will be able to do it alongside my job'.

(Brenda)

1 Brenda's understanding of the PhD that she would 'have loved' to have done would have been a full-time, fully funded university studentship for which she would have to have made a full-time commitment to the awarding HEI and for which she would have had to resign from her full-time post.

Brenda's responses overwhelmingly suggested that she was pursuing a doctoral degree to boost esteem, both with regard to her own self-esteem, and to the esteem of her peers and colleagues. She did not mention age as an issue in terms of achieving her doctoral degree, and implied that because of her rationale for study, age was largely irrelevant. Although Brenda's motivations are certainly mixed, she places the greatest emphasis on her need to acquire professional affirmation and extrinsic professional alteration in that she wishes to use her doctoral study to help her be 'the best lecturer that she can become'. Her thesis study is focussed upon teaching and learning, thus shifting her focus from dietetics to an HE teaching context.

Fergus was another of the three students in the cohort with previous doctoral aspirations who had embarked upon, but failed to complete, a doctoral degree before taking up the professional doctorate. The main reasons he gave for terminating his PhD programme were disagreements with his supervisory team over the nature of his research methodology and what he described as the impracticality of a 'wholly theoretical project'. He cited the 'practical nature' of the professional doctorate programme as a main motivation for joining the programme. He had also had a complicated route towards his present occupation as a counsellor, having started off as an electrical engineer before becoming a tutor in engineering, moving on to electrical design engineering, going on to production management, and at the same time studying to become a Christian minister of religion, eventually becoming a fully qualified counsellor. He stated that he had twin motives in taking up the professional doctorate: the first was to enhance his professional life by giving him the necessary skills and insight to keep up to date with his continuing professional development. The second was to bring together what he called the 'little islands of his life's learning' into one qualification that would validate the lifelong learning journey

that he is on. He therefore displayed quite a measured balance between personal and professional motivations.

Andrea provided only Type (i) motivational explanations and was quite distinct from the other participants in that she appeared to have very little intrinsic motivation for study. Therefore, Andrea's motivation is perhaps the clearest and easiest to determine of all the candidates. It is worth noting that she is the youngest of the participants, and therefore has a significant part of her career ahead of her; at the age of 42, she envisages at least another 20 years of professional life, and quite openly hopes to use the professional doctorate as a means of career shift, at least, and perhaps even a change. She responded to the question: 'why are you studying your present course and working full-time?' by saying:

'I think it is a motivation and a desire to strive to do something better. I do try to stick up for the NHS, and particularly where I work because the perception of where I work can be quite negative both within staff and within (sic) the public... it's a bit of a sticky point for me...'.
(Andrea)

In response to the question: 'Do you have career ambitions around the successful achievement of the title doctor?', she said quite emphatically:

'Yes, I do! I would like to get into teaching, or there's practice and developments through the NHS as well...'.
(Andrea)

By teaching, she meant university teaching. Although her responses might indicate extrinsic professional continuation in that she is hoping that the professional doctorate will lead to new opportunities, these would not be in her current field of practice. She definitely wants to use her doctoral qualification as an entry into HE teaching; therefore, she sees it as extrinsic professional initiation in the same way that students pursuing a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology or a DEng might view their qualifications as entry requirements to their professional practice.

5.8 A Note on Funding

Only two of the fifteen participants were self-funded. The other thirteen, as the participant data table shows (see Appendix 6), were fully funded. The ability to obtain funds for a recognised course of study can be a strong motivator for choosing a specific course at a particular institution. The fact that the professional doctorate appears to be ‘free’ to the participants who also work in the HEI which delivers the programme seems, on first reading, to provide a motivational factor that might outweigh every other consideration. However, this is not as straightforward as it seems, because although the HEI in question fully funded six of the participants in this project, they denied funding to the seventh, so she was ultimately self-funded. So, their funding policy is not automatic. Furthermore, of the six fully funded HEI staff in the participant cohort, only one was specifically directed towards funding for a professional doctorate; the other five were offered funding for doctoral study, would have been supported to undertake a part-time PhD in the HEI and, perhaps more importantly for our purposes here, would have been equally eligible to apply for funding for a PhD in another institution. The six remaining participants appeared to have little difficulty in obtaining funding for their studies. These candidates were funded by another HEI, the Social Work Department, The Scottish Government, two were supported by grants from Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Services (NHS Scotland), and the Institute of Counselling sponsored the sixth. All thirteen fully-funded participants pointed out that funding was a very important factor in their decision to pursue doctoral study, but that their funding was not linked to a particular programme. The fact that full funding was available from one source or another for 87% of this cohort of participants, all of whom are in stages of mid-life, is interesting. It may tell us something about how the programme is perceived by employers, and it perhaps casts doubt on the widespread belief that the only route to a post in academia, particularly in the post-1992 sector, is through the traditional PhD route. Further, it perhaps also sheds light on the investment that employers are prepared to make in the practical and applied aspirations of their employees.

A number of studies have shown that it is far easier for younger employees to gain access to training and further qualification in the workplace than older ones

. However, as Schuller and Watson (2009) point out, the occupational sector in which an older worker is employed is influential in enabling him or her to access training opportunities. In the public sector, as retirement ages increase, a shift is apparent in what is now seen as the suitable cut-off age at which investment in training and work-based qualification might be given or denied. Perhaps what Whithall (2016) suggests is true when they observe:

‘...[that] there is growing interest in investing in skill development for older people remaining in the workplace as their value to the economy becomes more apparent. This suggests that we need to be ready to be flexible in our understanding of what learning is and to be prepared to incorporate a range of views into our discussion as perceptions change. Similar debates prevail over the interpretation of education in this context; as discourses of lifelong learning come to replace the more traditional thinking about the education of adults, it has already been suggested that we need to move towards talking about ‘longlife learning’ to acknowledge the ageing of the population and the need to rethink the provision of learning opportunities for older age groups’.

5.9 Conclusion

As the summary table relating to motivational influences below shows, most of the participants in this study (87%) cited intrinsic personal and professional affirmation as a factor in choosing to pursue doctoral study. It is not the only reason, but the narratives of each of the 13 participants whose data suggested this was a significant factor placed personal satisfaction as highly influential in their decision to pursue a doctoral degree. This can be explained partly by the age and career stage that the participants have arrived at: they are not new entrants to a profession, they are not mid-career professionals seeking promotion, nor are they primarily concerned with changing their practice. With the exception of Val, who felt compelled to take up the professional doctorate, and Andrea, the youngest of the participants who is actively seeking a new career path, they are people who are already successful in their chosen careers. However, it appears that the primary motivation for these students is the recognition of that success, and that the means they have chosen to gain public recognition for their professional and personal learning journeys is through study at the highest level - doctoral study. Their motivation to choose the professional doctorate route rather than a PhD by research is so that they can build upon the scaffolding that has raised them to their current level of success - their professional lives as expressed through their personal narratives.

Table 1: Motivational Influences

Name	Type (i)	Type (ii)	Type (iii)	Type (iv)	Type other
James (57)				X	X
Sarah (51)	X			X	X
John (58)		X		X	
Justin (47)				X	X
Kate (57)	X			X	
Val (50)	X	X			
Christine (52)				X	X
Andrea (42)		X			
Jessica (60)				X	
Miranda (48)		X		X	
Diane (42)	X			X	
Brenda (50)			X	X	
Fiona (59)				X	
Fergus (60)			X	X	
Catriona (46)		X		X	
	4	5	2	13	4

- (i) **Extrinsic Professional Initiation:** those who directly identify their doctorate with career development and accelerated promotion.
- (ii) **Extrinsic Professional Continuation:** where a candidate is reasonably experienced and established in their professional field but wants to further develop their professional career either in line with existing work or by providing new opportunities for diversifying career options.
- (iii) **Extrinsic Professional Alteration:** where the candidate views the doctorate as a vehicle for changing, affecting or making a contribution to an aspect of their practice.
- (iv) **Intrinsic Personal/Professional Affirmation:** characterized by those placing an emphasis on the PD for providing intellectual stimulus and

personal fulfillment.

Mellors-Bourne, Robinson and Metcalfe (2016: 50)

Were we to use a traditional psychological theoretical perspective to analyse which motivational influences were strongest in this dataset, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1968: 25) might be suggested as a suitable framework. The descriptors of the 4th and 5th levels of his hierarchy include a number of keynotes that could conveniently be matched to the interview data. Level 4, *Self-esteem needs*, describes motivation that is characterised by 'the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery of competence, for confidence in the face of the world, independence and freedom, reputation and prestige'. At Level 5, *Self-actualisation*, the individual is motivated towards 'the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities... Achieving this level may mean developing to the full stature of which they are capable'. However, I think this would be taking too simple a view of the complex lives and narratives of the participants. For Maslow's theoretical perspective to provide a valid analysis of the participants motivations, the lower levels of his hierarchical structure of needs would also have to be seen to be met (Tennant, 2006); that is not the case in this data set. Furthermore, although they seem a convenient set of parameters, Maslow suggests that these needs are a requirement to be 'psychologically healthy'; I do not accept that interpretation of the data in this project. The participants' motivations are more fluid and complex than the search to realise psychological well-being.

At the time of writing, this group of students formed a substantial cohort within the overall group of professional doctorate candidates, but they do not entirely reflect the criteria of the constructed learner identity of the professional doctorate student as typified by the institutional documentation, which states that:

'...the Professional Doctorate... aim[s] to develop the students' knowledge and skills in preparation for and through doctoral research. The Professional Doctorate's work-based learning approach and the need for

the thesis to be embedded in practice means employability and career development are explicit throughout the student's learning journey. It is acknowledged that the Professional Doctorate differs in that all our students are already employed, but feedback does indicate that many students see the Professional Doctorate as a pre-requisite to promotion or a different career'.

(Appendix 7)

Their identities, as the next chapter indicates, like their motivations for study, are not what might be expected from the constructed learner identities of the student profiles described in the institutional documentation.

Chapter 6 - Identity

6.1 Chapter Overview

Drawing upon the major themes that were explicated from the data, using the techniques outlined in the data analysis section of the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3: 82-82), this chapter explores the rich data of this study in order to provide an in-depth analysis of the nature of the identity of this group of students. The significance of personal narrative, the influence of compulsory education, the fluid and unfixed nature of the identity of the older adult learner, and the concept of conflicted identities are all explored before conclusions are drawn in an attempt to answer the original research question concerning the reality of the identity of older adult learners studying for higher degrees in Scotland.

6.2 Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 have shown that the participants in this study identify very strongly with their professional personas. Many of the participants attribute their ability and opportunities to pursue doctoral studies to their career success, and to the scaffolding and confidence building that their professional lives have provided. However, the concept of identity, as Chapter 2 indicates, is multi-faceted, and seldom, if ever, has a single focus for any individual. The evidence of the data in this project suggests that professional doctorate candidates have multiple identities, some of which live comfortably together, while others suggest a conflict. Furthermore, although this project has used data collected exclusively from professional doctorate students from a particular university, this investigation is not only about the professional doctorate identities of the participants. The people who have contributed the qualitative data for this project are of interest as older adult learners engaged in higher degree study; they are not just viewed through the lens of their professional doctorate identities.

This project was designed to explore whether the constructed learner identity of older adult learners engaged in higher degree study reflects the reality of their individual and collective learner identities as they experience them. This exploration of identity is undertaken in a context that Burke (2008: 202) suggests ‘...is intimately tied to the complex processes in which people are *made subject* of regulatory discourses and practices...’. As subjects, the participants are seen through the lens of their constructed identity, but I am also interested in how we might view them as agents moving beyond an ascribed identity and, through doctoral study, towards an acquired identity. We should also always be aware of the nature of identity itself where, as Hall points out,

‘...fully unified, completed secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with - at least temporarily’ (Hall, 1992: 227).

Therefore, while the aims of this investigation are wider than those that would confine it to a study of the identity of the professional doctorate student, there can be no simple or single answer to the research question.

The literature review in Chapter 2 suggests a number of themes that might be examined to usefully analyse these professional doctorate student identities. Furthermore, a structured framework for analysis is provided by the questions raised by McCulloch and Thomas (2013: 222); I return to this framework in the concluding chapter to examine whether or not the participants in this study might be constructed as subjects of widening participation rather than designated solely as doctoral students. The themes illustrated by the literature review can be summarised as: (i) the nature of doctoral study; (ii) the concept of doctorateness; (iii) the particular profile of the PD student/candidate; and (iv) the significance of the concepts of motivation and identity in arriving at a full understanding of the possible conflict between the constructed and actual identity of PD students. All these themes are evidenced in the data set. The themes of the literature review set the scene and provided a rationale and a background for this project, but they cannot alone provide a framework for the analysis of the question of identity. In addition to the literature review themes,

the significance of class, personal narrative, questions of identity change, the multi-faceted, unfixed, plural and fluid nature of identity in the older adult learner, the significance and recognition of a doctoral identity, and the extent to which the concepts of aspiration and potential are present in the responses of the participants are also present in the data. An additional theme also present in the data is the importance of liminality in the shifting identities of these older adult learners. Each of these areas is considered in this chapter.

6.3 Complexity

Researching the ways and means by which to interpret the qualitative data from this project in order to build a realistic, believable and original interpretation of the identity of these participants proved extremely challenging; the process was fraught with uncertainty about whether or not any conclusions could be drawn, or useful observations made about the learner identities of the participants and the group of people that their data represent: older adult learners engaged in doctoral study. The reason this project has been so difficult is that both the data as evidence, and the concept of identity, are extremely complex. The word 'complex' is not used loosely here; it is used specifically to discuss outcomes that are difficult and sometimes impossible to predict. It is not used as a pseudonym for 'complicated', where 'complicated' is at the opposite end of the continuum from simple. In a 'simple' versus 'complicated' analysis it is the number and complication of the steps required to arrive at a conclusion that determine whether the process of evaluation is simple or complicated, but outcomes of both simple and complicated processes are predictable and achievable. The outcomes of complex procedures are not predictable (Clark, 2013). Therefore, although there are several aspects of the identity of these participants which are simple to enumerate: they are all over the age of 40, they are all engaged in doctoral study, they are all part-time students, and they are all in full-time employment, these descriptive elements tell us little or nothing about the complex learner identity/ies of the group. Simple descriptive statistics lead to very simple conclusions. The process by which the participants were recruited was also simple, although there were complicated procedures that had to be observed in order to collect the data; semi-structured interview

schedules are complicated to devise and test, and the interviews themselves are complicated to conduct. The process of applying for ethical approval is complicated, because there are many stages and steps to be undertaken to achieve the desired outcome of permission to proceed. However, these complications are as nothing compared to the complexity of analysing the data. Addressing the complexity of these problems has provided the framework for the data analysis. The themes identified in the data have been explicated to address the research aims, objectives and questions relating to issues of identity, as outlined in the methodology explained throughout Chapter 3.

Using the analytical steps outlined in the methodology in Chapter 3, five themes emerged as the most important in considering the learner identities of the participant group. Each of these forms a section in the chapter that follows.

6.4 The significance of the personal narrative in the construction of identities

‘Identity is a continual process of becoming through identifications, a discursive project that is, however, always linked to personal and social histories and experiences that are connected with deeply embedded social and material inequalities and difference’ (Hall, 2000).

Burke (2012: 55) also suggests that:

‘narratives are used in the everyday lives of people as a tool to interpret and re-interpret their memories and experiences and to give meaning to their identities and lives’.

The stories of our lives and those of others in our lives are central to how we see ourselves, as both Hall (200) and Burke (2012) indicate in the quotations above. Narrative identities form the core of who we are, or at least how we see ourselves and our stories, and how we represent ourselves to others. This project draws upon narratives in order to attempt to understand and illuminate the learner and personal identities of older adults undertaking doctoral degrees. As such, the analysis considers issues of educational equality/inequality, access, learning experiences, and how what might be described as the learners’ journeys brought the participants to the formation of the identities that they have now embraced, and that might now be used to describe them. However, the analysis

also takes into account the fact that how the learners view their changing identities, and the agency that has brought them to where they are now, is not necessarily the same as the analysis here would suggest. The data indicates that the participants are experienced in constructing the narratives of their educational lives and experiences and in using these narratives, as Burke (2012: 55) deduces in her research, 'as a tool to interpret and reinterpret their memories and experiences and to give meaning to their identities and lives'. An example of this was provided by Diane when she discussed how important values have become to her, and how she has learned from experience to identify with different ways of relating to ethical issues and values:

'My values have certainly developed since being a practitioner... there were values that I'd got in my upbringing about respecting older people and doing the right thing very generally, but those have been developed far more specifically in working with people in an accepting, non-judgmental way that was definitely in the nurse education... actually, certain people in my practice may have really honed those in terms of demonstrating how to translate values into practice, so there are people that I could very specifically say, individuals in my nurse education and upon qualifying, that did it... they probably have the biggest impact actually, working in a team of people with a very, very strong person-centred ward manager... as a nurse that had been qualified for about two years, I had two years with a team that was functioning at an incredibly high level and there it was probably where everybody in that team contributed to the development of those values and that's quite rare... in my experience, working with a team that good, that's only happened once in my career... but it changed my life and the person I became...'.
(Diane)

Diane not only attributed her professional ethical standards to those who taught her about values, but she went on to recount the ways in which this had changed her outlook in many different ways and, by extension, brought her to the stage in her career and her life where she is undertaking doctoral study.

The data in this project suggest that the older learners are, the more likely they are to be experienced in interpreting their educational journeys, both because these are long and because they have brought them to places that they may not have considered possible in their earlier lives. In other words, the data suggest that the older learners are, the more likely they are to have come to points in their lives that were not planned from the outset.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the participants in this project are skilled at recounting their personal narratives. If, as Lawler (2014: 26) proposes in her consideration of sociological thinking about narratives, narratives or stories are central to Western culture, and these stories have characteristics that we draw upon not only to recount a plot or fiction, but also to interpret the story of our own lives, then the longer the life that is lived, the greater the resources there are to construct a narrative around the transformation of that life from one thing to another. Lawler (2014) therefore suggests that narratives are not simply the retelling of a list of biographical facts, but that in telling and retelling the narratives of our lives, 'identities are produced through the autobiographical work in which all of us engage every day'. In other words, not only do we know what our experiences have been, but in retelling these experiences over and over we also all engage in an analysis of these experiences which reinterprets them and gives them meaning. This meaning is drawn from the overall plot(s) of our lives. If narratives are an integral part of the culture which we inherit, and they necessarily involve action or transformation and characters (Lawler: 2014), then the key element of producing those narratives - to indicate action by characters and their transformation - then the plots of the narratives are the means by which the outcome - in this case the current identity of the participants - is produced.

This explanation seems to suggest that the stories and memories that constitute the narratives we recount of our lives necessarily create an identity that is fictitious. However, the question of how individuals might otherwise construct an identity for themselves, and how we might glean this information from them, is equally valid. I believe that this contradiction in the present research is the key element in our enquiry into the identity of these older adult learners; identity is a concept that is produced, it '...is not something that is foundational and essential...' (Lawler, 2014: 30). The key task for this project is therefore to consider the identities that these older adult doctoral students construct for themselves and to place this against the identity that has been constructed for them. Another critical question in this debate on identity concerns the role played by the individual (as agent) and therefore the extent to which we, as individuals, have something that separates us from others, makes us different,

and therefore unique. Lawler (2014: 15) interrogates this question by asking whether or not there is a 'unique kernel of identity'. It is clear that we might like to believe that there is something in us that makes our identity unique, and it is also obvious that everyone is different; however, in examining the identities that the participants in this project have constructed for themselves, the question that Lawler poses also arises: is there something in us that is so unique to us as individuals that it exists outside the reality of the social world, and that is able to exercise agency, and therefore effect transformations that depend only upon the person and not upon the constraints and realities society or societies of which they are part? We will begin to consider this by looking at the influence the participants attribute to their early and compulsory educational experiences.

6.5 The influence of compulsory education on the participants' understanding of their own identity

The semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 2) did not contain any specific questions related to the early educational experience of the participants. The issue arose either from the conversations that the interview schedule gave rise to, or from the unprompted wish of the interviewees to place their motivation for study, or some other issue, into an historical context. Of the 15 participants, 11 stated either directly or indirectly that their experience of compulsory education had had an impact upon their decision to study for a doctoral degree in midlife. The remaining four participants, Andrea, Val, Christine and Jessica, did not attribute any or much significance to their early learning experiences in their interviews. Andrea gave the impression that her choice of doctoral study at her stage of life and career was a natural progression through what she described as 'the route I went down'; she did, however, suggest that her choice of a social sciences degree was not a wise decision, and would offer the advice to others coming after her that they should 'do a degree where there's something practically involved in it as well, nothing airy fairy'. However, she does not attribute her decisions on leaving school to anything other than her own preference and volition. She appears to see her decision to pursue the professional doctorate as a career move that has grown out of her earlier choices in shifting from social sciences to occupational therapy.

Val, as one of the small minority of participant students who felt compelled to undertake the professional doctorate, also sees her decision to pursue doctoral study as relatively unrelated to anything which preceded this stage in her educational journey. She did not mention school at any point in her interview, even when referring to the qualifications she achieved prior to entering her present course of study. It would be reasonable to assume from her interview that she sees her present course not as part of a continuum in her educational growth but, rather, as an unwelcome interruption in a career that she already saw as fulfilling without the addition of a research degree requirement. This is also reflected in how she discussed her motivation for pursuing the professional doctorate:

‘I felt I was pushed. Yes, I felt I was pushed. And I then had to deal with the issues of being pushed. Of allowing myself to be pushed. And it’s been... it has been, actually, quite a battle, personally, about all of that, and I’ve only relatively recently resolved that in my head...’.

(Val)

Jessica also volunteered little about her experience of compulsory education, but focussed most of her discussion upon the development of her career. She sees her doctoral study as significant, and would see the successful completion of the programme as a tremendous achievement; however, she attributes the route she has taken to the point at which she has now arrived entirely from the point of view of how she has struggled as an adult to achieve her ambitions. For Jessica, her educational narrative began when she shifted from using her secretarial skills as a worker to using that same skill set as a teacher, initially in FE and subsequently in HE. She attributes her career success to her career itself, and to her abilities as an individual to use her practical resources to build an academic career. Nowhere in her narrative did she suggest that she could have come to the position that she is currently in through any other route than that which she has chosen. Christine’s responses suggest a similar satisfaction with the route she has pursued, but for different reasons. She did not mention school or early educational experiences - indeed, she hardly mentioned university or any qualifications that she has achieved. Again, her focus is upon her career, the success she has achieved to date through her legal and academic career, and it appears from her responses to the interview questions that she

had a seamless progression through school, to university, to a career in international law, and then on to a career in academia, where she still identifies very strongly as a legal professional.

None of these four participants suggest that there was any conflict within the educational field. Indeed, they seem to perceive the field of education in general, and higher education in particular, as learners at least, as a non-contested arena for them. None of these four women suggested that at any stage in their lives they had been subject to deprivation or hardship. They do not deem themselves disadvantaged by their habitus. If habitus is constituted by ‘an individual’s embodied dispositions manifested in the way they view the world’, as Sarojini Hart (2013: 50) suggests, then the view of the world that these individuals espouse is reflected in a lifestyle which is compatible within the field of education. In highlighting two key aspects of habitus which are particularly relevant to higher education, Bourdieu (1984: 166) proposes that:

‘It is in the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works, and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (tastes), that represent the social world, i.e. the space of lifestyles, is constituted’.

In this respect, lifestyle and habitus are interrelated, and as Hodgkinson (1996: 147) points out,

‘...one is the manifestation of the other. They evolve, partly through choice and partly through changing circumstances as life progresses. They are constrained and enabled by the social and cultural conditions within which a person lives, which are in turn, influenced by the actions of the individual’.

Of all the participants in this project, these four women appear to have had the least chaotic trajectories through life, and while it would be overstating the case to suggest that their habitus has been the single determining factor in their individual future directions, their early lives, educationally and otherwise, are represented by them as having featured fewer twists and turns than the other participants.

Each of these four students exhibits a sense of belonging within their professional fields and within the field of higher education. They seem to have

had little difficulty in recognising their place within the institution, for three of them as members of staff, and as a student and practitioner in Andrea's case. Val is different from the others in that she feels compelled to complete her doctoral study, but despite the age and stage of their careers that they are at, the others see it as something of a natural progression. When discussing their motivations to pursue doctoral study, Andrea cited professional reasons, Val indicated an element of compulsion, and Jessica and Christine advanced personal satisfaction rather than professional promotion or career building as a justification for study. Their doctoral identities are constructed around the difference between a traditional PhD and the professional doctorate, but their personal identities seem to have remained unchallenged by the journey they have taken to their present course and stage of study. Overall, they do not question nor attempt to explain how they have got to this advanced stage of study. None of these four women have experienced the sense of 'imposterism' that is evidenced in the data from the other participants; they have expressed doubt about whether or not they might eventually complete their doctorates, but they do not connect that doubt to their own perceived inadequacies. They appear to be secure in themselves, and as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 127) suggest, are like 'fish in water', because through the acquisition of social and cultural capital over their life periods as their narratives suggest, they have evolved a habitus which operates in a social world which the agents themselves understand. These students have acquired the rules of the professional and educational environments in which they are required to interact, and are therefore secure - or at least project themselves as secure within their identities as professional people in a scholarly context. They have not looked to their early educational experiences to provide a rationale for their present position; they have explained their pursuit of doctoral study by discussing who they are in the present, but not what they were in the past. Of all the participants in the project, then, these four are the most like the constructed learner identities that are promoted within the professional doctorate programme. Although Jessica could not be described a mid-career professional because of her age, she, like the others, still defines her identity within the context of her professional self.

Early educational experiences were perceived by the remaining 11 participants to have had an impact upon their later educational choices, and how they understand and articulate their present identities. For most of the project participants this stemmed from negative experiences of school life. All 11 participants felt that their early educational experiences had contributed, to a greater or lesser extent, to the formation of their present intersecting personal, professional and doctoral identities. These 11 participants fall into three categories: those who accept that their early education prepared them for a future within the class to which they were born; those who perceived a mismatch between their compulsory education and their personal goals and ambitions; and those who feel let down and disappointed by the education they were offered, and the low expectations that were invested in them both by their schools and their families.

James and Fergus construct themselves as practical working-class Scottish men who expected little from their compulsory education in an academic sense, and show little resentment or regret about the expectations that they would work in practical, even menial, manual trades for their adult lives. As Fergus explained, when he was young, ‘when you grew up you just followed your parents’. Both James and Fergus cite their fathers as their role models, and although they have taken very different paths through life, they both transfer the values that they believe their fathers to have held to themselves and their present situations. James stated quite clearly at the beginning of the interview that he:

‘... didn’t leave school with the qualifications. I developed them over night school and things like that. I left school a numpty...’.

(James)

He thus identifies very closely with his father’s values. and also commented that:

‘I have never allowed my background to limit what my expectations are. The one thing my father put into me - my father was a trade unionist - was that remember where you come from, but do not be restrained by it. If you want something, go for it. One other ethos that he put through me was that you don’t have to live like this, and the way out of this is through education. Now, that’s not that this was bad. As the social worker said to me, you know, you don’t know you’re poor until the social worker tells you. Everybody was the same. But I think what was different

was the aspiration. So, I've never allowed my background to limit me in where I want to go. And the fact that I do a job now where I have hob-nobbed with government ministers and been invited by government ministers abroad and things like that, would suggest that that's been relatively successful'.

(James)

He also suggests that he knows he has done well:

'It kind of amazes me, to be perfectly honest. I don't know about feeling good, because it's a job and I'm good at it. I've got a friend of mine who came from a very similar background, and he's done very well in life. And every so often we'll have a pint and we'll say we done no bad for a couple of wee boys from Springburn. So, the journey has been good. Does it make me feel good? I don't think about it most times. The journey has been about being able to achieve something and to live relatively comfortably. I mean, I'm not doing it for the money, so to speak. So, aye, I suppose it does make me feel good in a way, but not conceitedly good'.

(James)

James therefore presents himself through his narrative as a man - an individual - whodespite adversity and being born into relative poverty and deprivation has overcome this adversity through his own efforts. He neither blames society, his working-class roots, nor the inadequate early educational experiences that led him to leave school as a 'numpty'. His story, and the identity that it embodies, is one that we see played out over and over again in Scottish working-class culture (Tett, 2000).

James reiterates this theme of starting from nothing and building something worthwhile and good throughout the narrative of his journey through life, even going so far as to include the story of how and why he built his own house, in the following exchange:

James: 'I get mentally bored quite easily, and I don't always do academic things. Obviously, I've built my own house, so I went and read the books and thought I could build my own house'.

Interviewer: 'You've actually built it yourself?'

James: 'Yes, everything'.

Interviewer: 'Brick by brick?'

James: 'Brick by brick, electrics, plumbing, roof tiles'.

This metaphor of the self-made man who in turn makes things happen for himself was a strong theme throughout James' interview.

Fergus also constructs his identity through stories of his father. When asked whether there was a history of higher education in the family, he replied:

'No, my father became chief engineer of a power station, but he did it the old way with an apprenticeship and then just gaining experience, in fact, he's got lots of stories, I need to tell you one story, it'll give you the context. He was a chief engineer and he used to get these BScs and, you know, in engineering and power engineering from The University of Strathclyde generally, and they would come in with great ideas, you know, no idea of budget or manpower, but a great idea how you could solve things'.

(Fergus)

He then went on to describe how his father's practical skills and training were better suited to the job of engineering than 'these BScs'. Again, Fergus constructs his story around the pattern of that of his father, a working-class man who, through his own efforts, built something worthwhile.

While in the cases of the four students who dwelt not on their pasts but foregrounded their present circumstances we can suggest that they have found a resonance with the fields in which they now operate, this is not the case for James and Fergus. Their espousal of a working-class habitus indicates an identity that is still not entirely at one within the field which it now encounters: higher education. In their study of young working-class students in an elite university, Reay *et al.* (2009) interrogate the impact and effects of situations where habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar. They reveal that 'the resulting disjunctures can generate not only change and transformation, but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty' (Reay *et al.*, 2009: 1105). The data from the present study suggest that this the case for both James and Fergus. The transformational nature of their educational and

professional careers is clear both in their wish to pursue doctoral study programmes, and also in their successful negotiation of a poor experience of compulsory education which they overcame to achieve considerable personal success in their later lives and chosen careers. However, neither of them is comfortable with attributing their success in life to the educational structures with which they have engaged. Instead, they associate their success with the retention of their class identity and values, and the way in which they have managed to use their own agency to circumvent the obstacles that might have been put in their way had they pursued a more conventional or traditional route to doctoral study. As a senior lecturer in higher education, James is familiar with the social conventions of the field, and with the social and cultural capital required to move comfortably through this context, but he is also highly critical of the institution and all its trappings. He also gives the impression throughout his narrative that he fell into the path of nursing and then higher education, rather than making it a positive choice. At times, he appears to be excusing himself for taking the primrose path to teaching rather than remaining in the nursing role that he moved on to from his menial position as a hospital porter. James tries to underplay effort and ambition and overplays casual choice, chance and convenience; this certainly could be the ‘ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty’ that Reay (2005) discusses when observing the conflict of habitus and field. This is a central tenet of James’ identity.

The undermining of the importance of higher education is also expressed by Fergus through his familial anecdotes about how much better practical engineering is than the ‘book-learning of a BSc’. In describing his own experience of study, he said:

‘...I see learning not as an event, but as a journey and a long winding complex journey...’.

(Fergus)

And, in espousing this view, he constructs his studies in the context of lifelong learning and, in some respects at least, as life-wide learning. He does not privilege one type of learning over another, and he expresses a sense of insecurity within the HE environment and admits to a sense of ‘imposterism’ at times, but he attributes his own abilities to overcome adversity as the solution

to the problems which ‘imposterism’ presents. Like James, his self-belief and sense of agency are central pillars of how he constructs his identity.

Neither James nor Fergus would suggest that traditional PhD study was beyond them; Fergus had previously embarked upon a PhD by research and James emphasises the fact that he could have gone down that route had he chosen to. They claim to have made an informed choice of the professional doctorate route because it fitted with the strongest, or at least predominant, construction of their identities as working men; not ‘working-class’ now, but still steeped in that ethic. As each of these men has gained his social, educational and professional status ‘the hard way’ as James put it and ‘through an apprenticeship of sorts...’ as Fergus put it, it is unsurprising that they do not construct identities for themselves that are entirely related to their present positions but rather see themselves as at a point in their learning journey which has been a natural progression and represents the reward for their stoicism and their ability to persevere as hard working, working-class men.

Do James and Fergus fit the constructed learner identity of the professional doctorate candidate, or even of the older adult in higher degree study? They do not fit easily into either niche. They cannot be constructed as mid-career professionals as the professional doctorate literature defines its learners; they both state quite clearly that they have no career aspirations that are tied to their studies, and their ages further suggest that they would be inappropriately described as ‘mid-career’. They are also far from typical of the average doctoral student, who is generally an early-career researcher, as the literature has shown. They do share characteristics with older adults engaged in higher education in that they have ambitions to achieve qualifications that would underpin a lifelong learning journey, but I suggest that their profile is most like those of the mainstream widening participation candidate. They are not subjects of the widening participation policy, because that is not currently available for doctoral study, and they are not presently seen as excluded from access to higher education, but that is not to say that in the past they have not been excluded. Their narratives reveal exclusion on the basis of class, and lack of access to a supportive and positive compulsory educational experience that would have enabled them to realise their intellectual and academic potential at

a much earlier life stage. They have constructed access to higher education, and ultimately to study at the highest level, through a long ladder of self-designed inclusion measures. I return to this analysis later in the chapter.

The third group of participants, described above as those who saw a mismatch between their compulsory education and their personal goals and ambitions, consists of Kate, Catriona and Justin. In stark contrast to the narratives recounted by James and Fergus, none of these students mentioned their class status, past or present, as part of their story. When discussing their early educational experiences, they focussed upon their parents, their homes lives and/or themselves. Kate constructs her learner identity as one of a competent person who, through her own perceived faults, which she sees as weakness and laziness, has come late to the type of study of which she has always known herself to be capable. When asked what a successful outcome to her course would mean to her, she replied:

‘It’ll be... I will be on cloud nine, I can actually feel myself well up a wee bit if I... cause I cannot wait! It will be a fabulous, personal achievement, it will be my personal best. Because when I was at school, I was lazy, I was always being a procrastinator, and I wanted to be a medical doctor... and I was too damn lazy to work... you know. So, and of course this is an entirely different thing, but it’s the Doctor thing, it will be fabulous, personally. Then, and I think, although I’m long in the tooth, it’s still, it gives you a kudos, it gives you a certain gravitas as well... do you know what I’m trying to say?’

(Kate)

Catriona, who from the context given obliquely in her interview, appears to have come from what might be popularly described as a well-educated middle-class family, describes herself and her failure to fulfil the potential that she had as an academic earlier in life due to her lack of self-belief. When asked if she came from a family where education was valued, she replied:

Catriona: ‘...both my parents went to university. I didn’t actually do that well at school. I didn’t try as hard as I might have done. I guess my mum came profoundly [from] where she really valued education because of her background and had nagged me madly to work harder, and it didn’t really work. Then we had some family difficulties, and they all went a bit off the rails, really. I do laugh that if she was alive now, she would laugh at how hard I’m working now. I do the same to my own children. Do it now. Don’t be an idiot like me’.

Interviewer: 'Do you feel, in some respects, you're making up for potential that you had that you didn't realise earlier?'

Catriona: 'I suppose if I was being a bit psychiatric about it, I probably am, yeah. That has occurred to me, obviously that that might be something, and my siblings - I've got two brothers. One's a doctor, but a medical doctor and my younger brother he's actually an occupational therapist, but he has quite profound dyslexia, so that impaired his education quite a bit actually... I suppose there's another point when I was in my sixth form that when things were falling apart quite a lot at home and things like that that one of my teachers said to me - It occurs to me when thinking these things through - she said to me that how was I getting on with my other subjects because she was thinking that I should be thinking about Oxford or Cambridge. I almost just fell off my chair laughing, and I just thought, she's mad. I walked out of the room, but I hadn't forgotten that when I was thinking about these sorts of things'.

Justin expressed a similar feeling towards his school experience; he felt that his teachers underestimated him, but he does not blame the school he attended nor the education system of which he was part. When asked whether he felt he had underachieved, because he said that one of his motivations in pursuing a doctoral degree was to prove what he could achieve, he replied:

'I don't know if I achieved less than my ability. My A levels, which I did a long time ago, I got two Bs and a C, which wasn't great A levels but wasn't terrible... but, I suppose, I was in a school where some people got three or even four As, but in those days B,B,C was enough to get you into pretty much any university to do pretty much any course. So, it was a reasonable set of A levels. So I got good enough A levels, but I think I felt a bit of a dismissive attitude, or you know, a belittling attitude sometimes and that was maybe just individual teachers who I didn't get on with very well, you know, who were a little bit bullying and I had very good teachers who really supported what I did but I think to some extent there is a feeling that I could have done better at school, maybe, and I could have made more of myself, and maybe it's lived with me all these years. It's like therapy, isn't it?'

(Justin)

Kate, Justin and Catriona do not attribute any failure to achieve earlier ambitions to anyone other than themselves and the mistakes they feel they have made; to paraphrase Justin, they felt they could have made more of themselves and have lived with that doubt up to the point where they took up their professional doctorate programmes. All three of these students give the impression that they are entirely comfortable with the system in which they are

operating. They are familiar with both the educational ethos that they rejected - or did not take advantage of - in their earlier lives as learners, but that they have consciously decided at this later stage to fulfil their earlier potential. All three work in health related disciplines where 'becoming a doctor' has a different resonance than it may have in an academic context. Kate feels that she could have been a medical doctor, as she says above; Justin studied medicine previously; Catriona has a brother who is a medical doctor. The data suggest that none of these participants have any great difficulty constructing their own doctoral identities - they present as people who have simply been waiting for their time to come.

In many respects, Kate, Justin and Catriona, provide the best illustrations of how opportunities for lifelong learning can result in transitions that enable learners to achieve ambitions that they recognise, or perceive, were denied to them by their earlier circumstances and dispositions (Evans, Schoon and Weale, 2013). In this respect, their biographical narratives tell of missed opportunities and failures to realise potential. The analysis of their accounts of their earlier educational experiences reveals evidence of their failure to acquire the cultural capital, in its institutionalised forms, which would have enabled them to achieve their ambitions and potential (Giddens, 2009: 847). Their responses suggest that they are anxious to shift their ascribed identity, as health workers or health professionals, to the acquired status of doctors. Although it may be giving too much significance to the fact that each of them has had an association with medical doctors (as an early ambition in Kate's case, as a medical student in Justin's, and as the sister of a doctor for Catriona), it is nonetheless noticeable that these three participants exhibit the strongest doctoral identities. The constructed learner identity of the professional doctorate student embodied in the institutional and research literature as 'the scholarly professional' rather than the 'professional scholar' (Fenge, 2009: 165) does not describe these three students. Although they profess to have chosen the professional doctorate course because it is rooted in their practice, scholarly progression within their professional fields is not their main objective.

Unlike James and Fergus, Kate, Catriona and Justin do not cite obstacles other than their own intransigence to their inability to achieve academic or

professional excellence at an earlier age. They do not construct their identity around class origins, nor around a journey that has taken paths other than those that they have chosen for themselves. While James and Fergus discuss constraints outside their control, connected particularly with their upbringing in working-class Scottish families, Kate, Catriona and Justin do not recognise any limitations having been put upon them by their compulsory educational experiences. Like the first group of participants - Andrea, Val, Christine and Jessica - they do not see their educational experiences, both compulsory and post-compulsory, as open to challenge; they were not uncomfortable with their place in the system, nor with their treatment as students. The educational fields in which they operated were in keeping with their habitus, and have remained so. The greatest difference between this third group and the two that preceded them is that while the others identified closely with their professional identities and their class identities respectively, Kate, Catriona and Justin's strongest identification was with their ambition and ability at this midlife stage to 'become doctors'. Their doctoral identities take precedence over all else; they see themselves in the right place, doing the right thing, but possibly not at the right time. Their habitus, cultural capital and field are thus in alignment.

The remaining six participants' memories of their early school careers, and to some extent their understanding of their parents' expectations of them, are less benign. As older adults, they are less likely to accept responsibility for poor academic achievement and more likely to apportion blame to the educational structures and systems in which they found themselves, or to the social class to which they believed they belonged, and with which they identified themselves and their parents. Sarah, John, Brenda, Diane, Fiona and Miranda all left school with a view to pursuing jobs in a sector where if training were required, it would be delivered in post. None of them viewed entry to university either as a goal or an opportunity.

Sarah constructs her identity as a young person around adversity in much the same way that James does; she attributes her academic success in later life to her own efforts to rise above the lot she was given by strength of her own efforts and determination. However, her story was quite unlike James's account in that she did not draw upon her family and class circumstances for role models

but, rather, constructed her narrative around overcoming adversity despite her family. When asked to describe her journey through school, she said:

‘I was really good at multitasking, and I was really good at lots of different things, and I was really good at being able to see that I might make a difference’.

When asked why she did not consider university after secondary school, she replied:

‘...why did I not? Well, I left with seven ‘O’ levels, I was halfway through fifth year doing Highers at a time when employment was nose diving, and I saw this job for a technician at the vet school, and I applied for it and I got the job, and I left school pretty early in that year, 1979’.

(Sarah)

When asked whether her family were happy with that decision, she responded:

‘...my family are so pulled apart and in a complete mess that... mother and stepfather too, half-brother, half-sister, ghastly mess... my mother would not have noticed if I had gone to another planet, never mind giving up my job (sic), and I was in a bedsit at that age’.

(Sarah)

When asked to identify what had enabled her to go from her first job as a vet school technician to her current post as a senior lecturer in HE, she responded:

‘I sometimes wonder about those sorts of things... because when I look around at my family and I hear things my mother says... she was - it’s not worth doing it - but she’s always amazed. When I was at school, my mother was told of my older brother, this is a flyer and she was told not to expect very much of me. My brother got no ‘O’ levels and I got seven straight ‘O’ levels. I didn’t do Highers then, I went back and did Highers at night class, so I sometimes wonder, there’s six siblings and I’m the only one with a degree, and I’m the only one with the higher degree, and I’m the only one with... so I just think probably... aspects of characteristics. Some of my siblings look back and say, oh, if we hadn’t had this terrible childhood, we’d be something else. Like you I think, well, we had no control over it, I took control of what I could take control of, and just damn well got on with it myself and made the most of it, so I think there is something for some people, and for me it’s a kind of drive to be as good as I can be, I suppose’.

(Sarah)

Sarah constructs her identity around her ability to be practical, multi-task, be determined and self-starting, but unlike James and Fergus, she does not attribute this positively to being working-class, or to any values that she might have acquired when growing up in that environment. She constructs her identity as one of triumphing over the adversity that the circumstances of her life created. She prioritises individual agency over the constraints of the social and cultural conditions within which she lived as a young person. She is an example of what Sarojini Hart (2013: 51) describes as Bourdieu's suggestion 'that individuals could escape their habitus by seeing chances and taking them'. Like many of the participants in this study, Sarah's acquisition of institutionalised forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984: 75) from her first set of formal educational qualifications up to and including her doctoral study was instrumental in her achievement of her present identity (Richardson, 1986: 248).

The remaining five participants, John, Brenda, Miranda, Fiona and Diane, grew up in what they represented as a more supportive family environment, but nonetheless felt that to some degree their potential had never really been realised until it was shaped by the experiences of their post-compulsory education adult lives. All five come from what they describe as working-class families, two use the term aspirational working-class families, but none of them held an academic career, even in terms of university entry post school, as part of that aspiration. The familial aspirations for all five revolved around the prospect of getting a good job that brought in a decent wage, and had some kind of built-in future-proofing. Diane, Miranda and Brenda went into nursing.

Diane, who has a young daughter and step children, was at pains throughout her interview to stress the importance of her doctoral study as career role model for her children. As this focus of her aspirations was so identifiable, she was asked whether she felt that her choices in life had been constrained by her schooling experience and the lack of awareness of university options within her family. She responded by saying:

'Significantly... I was the first person in our family to do a degree, both sides as well, and I still am actually... so, that was quite an unfamiliar pathway and nursing gave me that pathway... I was actually turned down for A Levels at 16 because the school that I was in was very elite. So,

although I came out with the equivalent of eight Standard Grades A-C now, they said that wasn't sufficient for me to go on and progress to A Level. That was in Derbyshire. So, I trotted off to the local technical college and did a BTEC in caring and things were really positive in those days because they took the BTEC in caring as an equivalent of three A Levels and that meant that most of my peers did go on to university, despite having similar experiences. But at that point I went on and did nursing...

...I think when I decided that I wanted to do mental health nursing that was on the back of a placement from school. I met somebody with dementia, and thought gosh, this is a bit wild and quite interesting. The first thing that actually stimulated me as a very young adult and I thought, this is really interesting. When I actually said: I'd like to do mental health nursing, I think my parents were so relieved I'd made some kind of decision. I think the A Level is an important issue to me as a person in terms of, again, working really hard but still being rejected, that's an important integral identity issue. I think what actually influenced me the most was a lack of chat about jobs.

...even before I made the decision [to go into nursing], there was very little in terms of talk about what people did as a job or wages. That's probably something that I remember the most that I didn't understand, apart from some people had nice houses and cars and things and people earned lots of money, but I actually didn't understand the key difference between what it meant to be a public-sector worker, or perhaps go into business or law or medicine. No real concept of the difference of that, even at 16 and maybe even at 18, there wasn't those conversations that weave in lots of different information that enables you to make a decision. I think my parents were just so relieved that I'd made some kind of choice and wasn't just going to sit at home and do nothing'.

(Diane)

Miranda's interview narrative was similar:

'I came out of school with no... well, I had qualifications - I had O levels - and I did not, I was not encouraged. I came from a working-class background, I wasn't encouraged to go to university, I didn't know if I was intelligent. I knew that I actually had my own thoughts and I was a confident person, so I never went to university until I was 27, and I already had two young children at the time, so on a personal level it's a personal challenge for me. It's not something that I would say really drives me and there's no room for relaxation or anything like that. It's actually quite the opposite. It's just a personal achievement that I would like to gain. I don't want to get out of it great recognition, one article after the next; I just want to get to the end of it and if I get to the end of it I'll be absolutely delighted'.

(Miranda)

As was Brenda's:

'I was painfully shy as a youngster, my boyfriend... my husband, it was my boyfriend in primary five, so we've been married 30 years next year, and he went to university at 18 as did all our friends, and I didn't... I felt I'd aspire to be like them and yet I now have better qualifications than them, because effectively I've got the masters, professional masters. So... but at the time, no, I was so shy I went into nursing but I was... I never dreamed of going to university.

...it was a personal issue. Nobody in my family had ever gone to uni. My mum and dad were delightful, they support me I took Type 1 diabetes when I was nine and they supported me so, so well, and there's nothing wouldn't have supported me to do whether it was brownie camp or horse riding or whatever. But it would never have dawned on them to think about university, so it never dawned on me'.

(Brenda)

Fiona, who left school in England at 16, reflected at length on her experience of secondary school, the sense of failure that she experienced there, and the repercussions that her early educational experiences had for her. At 62, Fiona was one of the oldest project participants, and acknowledged in her interview that she frequently thought back to her childhood and life in her family to try to explain to herself how she had arrived at the decision to pursue a doctoral degree in mid-life. The story of her earliest educational experience was included in her response to the simple question of why she was doing a doctoral degree, and so it was unprompted by a direct reference to school. In summary, she attributed her late entry to doctoral study to the need 'to make up for lost time'. She said:

'...as an individual, I've always been quite insecure about my academic career. I think, as a young person, I probably had some sort of learning difficulty which was never diagnosed. And, I really struggled academically when I was at school. It wasn't until later, when computers came into being, everyday use, that I was able to write something... So, I was sort of starting to make up lost time, I suppose, when my children were young. So, I started off doing lots and lots of different things, and it got to the point where it just seemed a natural progression to go on and keep doing it.

...I came out [of school] with CSEs, Certificates of Secondary Education. And they wouldn't let me do O Levels because I wasn't quite bright enough. But I came out, in the end, I got five Grade Ones, so something clicked at that point, and I was able to do reasonably well at that level.

And then a few years later, I went on and did an O Level in English, and I got Grade A for that. So, something happened and I was able to then do stuff’.

(Fiona)

Like Diane’s parents, Fiona’s family were keen that she got a job and earned a living. When asked about her first experience of employment, she replied:

‘[it was] secretarial work, because that’s what my parents saw when they looked through the Situations Vacant in a local rag. Nothing but secretarial jobs. That’s a good job for a woman to do. So, and nothing could be further removed from what would be appropriate for me’.

(Fiona)

She then went on to describe her family as working-class, and their ambitions for her as those in keeping with their own aspirations:

‘My father was a car fitter, I suppose. He worked in a motor manufacturing company. And my mother never really worked in a career as such. She had various part-time jobs over the years. So, she’d do cleaning and she did pub work, things like that, and child minding. She did child minding for a while... don’t get me wrong. They did encourage us to do as much as we could at school, and they wanted us to go to college, but the expectations weren’t that college would be an academic environment, it would be a means to an end, which would be, for them, secretarial work for me’.

(Fiona)

John, at 61, also seemed to fall into a role straight from school that did not suit the skills that he later discovered in his professional life. He, along with Diane, was the participant who described himself as coming from an aspirational working-class background. In response to the direct question of how he would describe his class background - a question that seemed natural at that point in the interview - he said:

‘I was the first from my family to go to university. My class background is complex in that my old man was in the Air Force, right. He wasn’t an officer, and so we were... so I, certainly, I can’t do the full Yorkshireman, Monty Python, with a hole in the ground kind of thing, but neither were we middle-class, at that point. I suppose, aspirational working-class, is that the kind of term that we were. That was something that my parents... who unfortunately both died when I was doing my social work programme, but, I think, we would, probably, be defined as aspirational working-class, at that point. So, education was important, certainly, I was encouraged educationally at school, and I had a very brief career as

an electronic engineer, which was a really stupid thing to do, before moving into the caring professions, but, no, I think, probably, aspirational working-class is how I would describe it’.

(John)

So, for the eleven participants for whom early educational experiences form a central part in their narratives, three categories could be created: The first, consisting of James and Fergus, who strongly identified with their working-class origins to which they attributed their later academic success. The second, consisting of Catriona, Kate and Justin, whose relatively middle-class status was taken for granted as ‘good’, and which they believed, to some extent or another, they had let down by not taking full advantage of the opportunities this offered. Then, the third and largest group, consisting of five participants who all described themselves as working-class, but whose social status left them without the resources that they felt they later developed themselves.

As has been evidenced above, the narratives of each of these participants have more common features than differences.

6.6 Change and its origins: The multi-faceted, unfixed, plural and fluid nature of identity in the older adult learner.

The previous section identified how compulsory education contributes to early identity formation, and also informs the later narratives of the participants in how they constructed their professional lives. The narratives of every participant tell the story of how, as adults, and generally through means of self-accessed educational resources and training, each of the participants moved from one job or profession to another. For some, this shifting professional identity was more dramatic than for others. For Christine, Kate and Val, the shift of focus remained within the original professional subject field in which they had started; they moved from being practicing professionals - in the law, radiography and podiatry respectively, to becoming higher education educators in these fields. By contrast, James rose to senior lecturer in HE from starting out as a hospital porter, and John shifted from electronic engineering to social work and then to his present post in HE. For all the participants, the journey towards their doctoral identities has been one of self-discovery, and in some

cases even trial-and-error. For James, the journey from ‘numpty’ to Senior Lecturer in HE and subsequently to embarking upon doctoral study was achieved through success in one field that built the platform for success - or at least potential success - in another; each incrementally shifted him from his working-class persona towards his acquired middle-class status as an academic whose three children are all successful, or potentially successful, graduates themselves. His own metaphor, which he perhaps inadvertently used to underline his slow shift to doctoral qualification aged 60, was that of building his own house, brick by brick, and is a metaphor that could be applied to a number of the doctoral students in this study.

This trial-and-error approach towards building a doctoral identity through ‘baby steps’, as one of the participants observed, is a common theme for those whose journeys have taken the most spectacular, or at least unusual, shifts. Sarah, who went from lab technician to food scientist through home economics to become a Senior Lecturer in HE, sees the shift through these occupations as a matter of taking opportunities when they presented themselves. In contrast to James, who constructs himself as a decision maker, Sarah constructs herself as an opportunist, commenting that ‘I just make the most of what’s around me and sometimes the way things move... sometimes I haven’t had a decision to make, things have happened and I’ve gone with them...’. The opportunities she took advantage of were not always determined by her professional life; she also had to take decisions in her personal life that affected her career and academic aspirations. As mentioned above, when asked why she did not go to university after leaving school, she responded:

‘Golly, why did I not? Well, I left with seven ‘O’ levels, I was halfway through fifth year doing Highers at a time when employment was nose diving, and I saw this job for a technician at the vet school, and I applied for it and I got the job, and I left school pretty early in that year, 1979...

...my family are so pulled apart and in a complete mess that... mother and a stepfather too, half-brother, half-sister, ghastly mess...

...my mother would not have noticed if I had gone to another planet, never mind giving up [school], and I was in a bedsit at that age’.

(Sarah)

Nevertheless, although she sees herself as an opportunist and James sees himself as a deliberate decision maker weighing up options and making distinct choices, they both also see themselves as reversing these roles at some points in their lives. For James, the decision to take up a career direction that took him towards nursing education was not planned, but based upon taking an opportunity that arose. When asked whether he felt he had a vocational calling towards nursing or whether his choice was just coincidental because he became a hospital porter, he replied:

‘For me, it was coincidental. There was no vocational calling in it, but I found out that I was good at it... it wasn’t difficult to be good at it and better at it than other people. It was when there weren’t a lot of males in adult nursing and it didn’t seem to me a difficult job.

I found a niche very quickly, yes. I mean, I went up through the ranks very quickly, and it seemed to me that it wasn’t just a practical experience. It was a common-sense approach, so I got invited on to a lot of hospital committees, because I had a practical brain about problem solving. So, I tended to move relatively quickly, and I didn’t stay in too many jobs for too long. The reason I went into education was the head of education at the time in the hospital came to me and offered me [nurse] teacher training. And the only reason I took it was that it was a full-time course at Jordanhill, and I got three months off in the summer. As a youngster, I thought it was great. I was away back to Europe again. That’s why I ended up in education, so totally unplanned’.

(James)

As this quotation demonstrates, for the decision maker coincidence was important, as was taking control for Sarah, the opportunist. When asked what characteristics she had that took her from where she started to where she was now - studying for a doctoral degree - she replied:

‘Some of my siblings look back and say, oh, if we hadn’t had this terrible childhood, we’d be something else... I think, well, we had no control over it, I took control of what I could take control of and just damn well got on with it myself and made the most of it, so I think there is something for some people, and for me it’s a kind of drive to be as good as I can be, I suppose...’.

(Sarah)

This shifting personal construction of identity over a life course in itself indicates and underlines the multi-faceted, unfixed, plural and fluid nature of identity in the older adult learner; they change, but also identify as being

different and having different motivations and personal characteristics at different times over their life course.

Fergus and John's identity shifts took them from men who had pursued careers in engineering - the former electrical and the latter electronic - into careers in what might be called caring professions. Fergus became a minister of religion and then a counsellor. He describes himself as:

‘A person that's come through various professions to get where I am as chief executive, so the professions include electrical engineering of power stations, senior tutor with international correspondence schools, electrical design engineer, production manager, and it goes on and also on a parallel, minister of religion; I'm also the minister of a church...’.

(Fergus)

John in his own words,

‘...had a very brief career as an electronic engineer, which was a really stupid thing to do, before moving into the caring professions...’.

(John)

He made his transition by volunteering in social work contexts while still an engineer, then shifting wholesale to a degree in Social Work followed by thirty years of practice.

All the men in the project have children and discuss their career trajectories as, at some point or other, connected to their roles as fathers, husbands and partners. They also discuss the influences of their families, most particularly their fathers, on their life-choices in terms of post-school decision making and career options. Of the eleven women in the project, ten have children and/or step-children; they also refer, to some extent, to their family lives and their roles as carers and role models when discussing the impact of their careers, and decisions to pursue a doctoral degree. For some participants, both women and men, the wish to provide a role model for their children that represented a type of ‘sky's-the-limit’ thinking was important. However, for three participants - Fiona, Brenda and Miranda - their identities as wives and mothers, and therefore as independent women capable of making wise choices and providing for and managing their families, were an important element in defining them as capable of achieving more than they had ever thought possible. Fiona did not take up degree study until she had taken her son and daughter to that threshold. As she pointed out:

‘My son is 35, or something like that. My daughter’s about 33. So, they’re grown up. They’ve moved on, they’ve got their own careers. So, I sort of studied quite late on, as you can work out, probably. In fact, I graduated at the same time as my daughter graduated’.

(Fiona)

Fiona had been involved in volunteering and a number of administrative jobs when her children were younger, but it was only when she had learned how to get her children into university that she was able to take that step for herself. Brenda and Miranda’s engagement with degree study came earlier, but was nonetheless intimately connected with their roles as wives and mothers (or as these roles are frequently termed now in popular literature, ‘homemakers’). Brenda gives over quite a section of her narrative to her family life, and directly points to her growth in self-confidence and her ability to overcome her fear of academic study, as expressed earlier in her interview. When asked what had motivated her to overcome this lack of self-belief, she replied:

‘I think the turning point for me was having our son; I think that makes you grow up quite fast, makes you... protect them and in doing so I think you grow personally. So after... I could only have one baby, so Pete... when Pete was five and started school, I started uni, and it was lovely because he was in 1b and I was in 1b and then 2b, 2b, and it worked out really well... so, I was ready for learning at that point, that it was no problem... I had Pete when I was 22... 21, 22; and I went to university when I was 26.

(Brenda)

Miranda’s story is very similar to Brenda’s. When asked about her original motivation for degree study, she replied:

‘I came out of school with no... well, I had qualifications - I had O levels - and I did not, I was not encouraged... I came from a working-class background, I wasn’t encouraged to go to university, I didn’t know if I was intelligent until I was a mother. I knew that I actually had my own thoughts, and I was a confident person, so I never went to university until I was 27, and I already had two young children at the time, so on a personal level it was a personal challenge for me, and it is a personal challenge for me’.

(Miranda)

For all three women, their roles as mothers contributed to their gaining the confidence to move towards university study as the first step on their doctoral journeys. They identified motherhood with ‘growing up’, and used this rite of

passage to access a further stage in the adult world - their move into higher education.

Catriona and Diane's access to HE was not represented as dependent on family life or of being a mother, but their roles as professional, well-educated women were critical factors in their decisions to juggle the responsibilities of motherhood and the demands of their doctoral programmes. They both expressed fears and guilt about the time taken up by study:

Catriona: 'Being a mother with youngish children, getting older now, you feel quite guilty, and I guess you feel guilty about taking time away from them...'.

Diane: 'I want to do it in a way that doesn't hurt [my daughter] particularly...'.

However, they also both expressed the hope that the time and effort they invest would have positive benefits for their children and step-children, particularly their daughters:

Catriona: 'You work harder [when you are a mother of young children, a full-time worker and a part-time doctoral student]... I think what's interesting as a mother is that I am certainly giving them a good role model for the guilt... it appeases the guilt... the fact that I spend a lot of time trying to fit this all in to family life... I think it does actually give quite a good role model to them of hard work...'.

Diane: 'I want to do it [be a mother of young children, a full-time worker and a part-time doctoral student] in such a way that she sees this kind of education as positive, and that it would be something that if she wished to aspire to that; she saw it as a good experience'.

[Interviewer] 'So, do you see yourself as a role model then for her?'

Diane: 'Yeah... to make sure that she has lots and lots and lots of doors to consider, not a limited number, but to actually see that this could be quite a normal thing for her to do...'.

For Jessica and Andrea, respectively the oldest and the youngest of the female participants, 'family life' was not about children. They both pointed to the disruption that full-time working and part-time doctoral study had brought to their personal lives, but this was in a social and professional context; both these

participants focused upon personal cost balanced against personal satisfaction and professional achievement, recognition and credibility.

The journeys and the shifting identities that these have brought with them for all the participants in this study are constructed around their own abilities to respond to changing environments, to seek out and take up the opportunities offered, and, perhaps most importantly in this project, the self-determination that each of these individuals believe they possess to take themselves to the highest academic levels in the achievement of doctoral status.

The constructed learner identity of a doctoral student is generally centred on the concept of the early career researcher engaged on a course that will take them towards a career in the larger world of commercial research, or in academia. This identity is generally constructed around the young 30-something who has already achieved academic success at undergraduate and post-graduate level and who, simply by embarking upon a course of doctoral study at PhD level, has a promising career path ahead of him or her. None of the present participants fall into that category, nor would they be expected to, as they are all embarked on professional doctorate programmes, the requirement for entry to which are quite different from a PhD by research. The constructed learner identity of the PD student, present in all the policy and publicity documentation, is one of middle-to-senior professionals who seek to pursue doctoral study in order to gain insight into, and theoretical perspectives on, critical professional issues. The PD programme documentation, recently commended in the Programme Review of October 2016 (Appendix 7), clearly states that:

‘The philosophy of the programme is based upon the principles of lifelong learning with the aim of creating scholarly practice and facilitating the development of a professional researcher who can apply higher order analysis and reasoning skills within their own practice’.

There is, however, no clear definition of how the term ‘lifelong learning’ is to be understood here except for the implication that the PD students will be older than the ‘traditional’ doctoral student, that they will already have ‘learned’ in an occupational context, and that in seeking to develop their learning, they are themselves committing to a concept of lifelong learning that is defined by their

stage of career development and age. Yet, embarking upon doctoral study in mid-life does not necessarily define a student as a lifelong learner in a wider context, nor is it the case that the participants in this study would necessarily define themselves in these terms. The data suggest that they present themselves as individuals who have reached a stage in their personal, professional and intellectual development that has enabled them to take up a particular course of study. However, most of the participants do not identify themselves as learners; they more closely identify with gaining the qualification as an accreditation of what they have already learned. This, as the literature review indicated, is one of the most significant differences between traditional PhD students and professional doctorate candidates. It may be caused by the ages and stages of the participants in this project, rather than the nature and structure of the programme, but the fact that they construct themselves as professionals rather than learners is significant in itself. The data suggests that they are looking for recognition of what they have already learned - an external seal of approval for who and what they are.

From the perspective of the university, they can be constructed as subjects or products of a learning society where lifelong learning is, as Leathwood and Francis (2006: 9) suggest, 'about learning to be, learning to do, learning to work and learning to learn' (Delors, 1996). They can also be categorised as capitalising on the opportunities presented by a knowledge economy in which an educated elite - a category into which a traditional PhD student may fall - is being usurped from power by those who are taking their practical knowledge and skills from the real world of work and converting these to a higher, theoretical skills base comparable with that of the elite, which can be used to compete effectively with this elite in a post-industrial economy. This has a significant feel-good factor for all concerned - the institution, policy makers and funders included, but it is not how the professional doctorate students in the project construct themselves. Constructing the identity of the professional doctorate student around the concepts of lifelong learning is similar to the convenience, often employed, of constructing the professional doctorate programme around the concepts of work-based learning. They are tags of convenience that, in this instance at least, tell us little about the actual substance of the claim. As chapter 7 seeks to explore, a better fit for these students, in terms of their

constructed learner identity, might be found within the field of widening participation in higher education.

6.7 The conflicted identities of the full-time professional workers engaged in academic study.

As this discussion has already proposed, no single identity can be used to describe the professional doctorate student; they have their own individual identities. However, that does not mean that these identities always exist comfortably side-by-side. As the previous sections indicated, family life, for example, does not always prove straightforward for the doctoral student who is also a full-time worker, carer and/or parent; this conflict is not exclusive to professional doctorate students, but is a feature of the experience of many older adults engaged in higher education or, indeed, in many other forms of lifelong learning and workplace/work-based learning. The professional identities to which all the participants subscribe can intrude upon and conflict with their doctoral student identities. This is nowhere clearer than in the context of assessment and the demands of academic writing. Lawyers, nurses, counsellors, occupational therapists and all other professional people have to write as part of their everyday practice, but they do not write every day in academic contexts. The struggle to change writing habits acquired long ago in professional fields in order to produce acceptable, conventional academic text that shows critical awareness, theoretical understanding, and fluent use of high-order academic writing techniques is one that many work-based and work place learning students have to confront as full-time workers and part-time students, including professional doctorate students (Lillis, 2001; Ivanic, 1998).

These difficulties of negotiating academic literacies manifest themselves in two major areas for professional doctorate students, especially for those who have been away from formal university study for a considerable time. The first of these is the conflict that is created between the proficiency and recognition that some students have attained as writers within their professional fields - which they expect to carry forward into their doctoral studies - and the often very different requirements of academic writing. It is not uncommon for highly skilled professional people to become de-skilled, and consequently demotivated,

by their failure to adapt to the requirements of academic writing for assessment. This problem is most acute in Stage 2 of the programme: the thesis writing stage. Although students were not directly asked for evidence of how they dealt with assessment procedures and the development of the required proficiency in academic writing, these issues were referenced in their responses to other questions. Several of the participants had failed assessments and had to re-submit; they were very reluctant to discuss these problems, and as I am their main resource, as the lecturer in academic writing on their programme, I was similarly reluctant to draw them out further on these sensitive issues. However, I suggest here that for some participants at least, the failure to recognise the need to engage with new forms of academic literacies and to embark upon new learning that would underpin their research, underlines their rejection of an academic identity in favour of that of a professional and/or expert identity.

The second problem area in this respect is that of the ‘insider academic’ - the student who is also a lecturer in the institution in which he or she is studying. While these students understand the conventions of academic writing, they have a great deal to lose by displaying their competencies in this field to peers and colleagues who are also their assessors. Both these academic conflicts have implications for the delivery and design of the professional doctorate curriculum.

6.8 Liminality in the shifting identities of older adult learners

Only one of the fifteen participants in this study had completed the professional doctorate programme; he was about to submit his thesis the week after his interview. The situation for all the others might best be described as one of liminality. In considering liminality and the practices of identity reconstruction, Beech (2011: 299) describes this state as ‘the phase of in-between-ess in identity construction’. While all the participants expressed an overwhelming desire to get to the end of their doctoral studies, they were, for the most part, happy to be identified as doctoral students and did appreciate the, albeit liminal, status that it gave them. For those working in higher education, where a doctoral

degree is now part of the necessary criteria not only for promotion but also for an initial application, it served to relieve some of the anxiety they had previously felt at being under-qualified for their posts. Some even felt that they had been overlooked for promotion because of their lack of doctoral status:

‘...the other thing that appealed to me was that I thought for, at that time it seemed to me that if you would be considered for a promotion, you had to have a doctorate, or be studying for one... and I thought, I’d like to have the potential for one more step up from, well I was a lecturer at that time, really I was thinking about, it might have been nice to have been a head of department... I’ve kicked that into touch now, but at that time, and I thought, well it’ll make it easier for me if I’ve got a doctorate or I’m working towards one...’.

(Kate)

Some expressed the belief that they had little credibility as academics because they were, as they saw it, under-qualified. As Brenda pointed out:

‘...when I started here I felt a wee bit on a back foot in that the majority of biological and biomedical sciences are doctors... I would see doctor this, doctor that, doctor this, doctor that and Mrs, and I thought, I’d really like to have a doctor...’.

(Brenda)

However, she felt that once she had embarked upon the professional doctorate, she was already closer to the status of her colleagues.

Those outside academia had a more diverse liminal state, with different degrees of impact. However, for them, like Brenda and Kate, the award of a doctorate was also about status and credibility, and an underpinning of what they knew they were capable of, but which had not yet proven or publicly acknowledged. As Miranda said, while she was motivated by a wish to fulfil a personal desire to achieve all that she could, she recognised that her doctorate would give her an enhanced status:

‘...and, I hope, to actually have done that [achieved the award], and just really to enjoy that at the end of it... but on a professional level, then, I want to get what I believe should come from that, which is a higher position and to continually move up the ladder maybe at a more rapid pace, and maybe not necessarily in the NHS... so, I suppose I would, for remuneration I think as well, but not just that; for the satisfaction. I now know what I can do and when I achieve the doctorate I will have done it!’

(Miranda)

However, the concept of liminality is not only about being in-between one state and another; it is also about thresholds, and the recognition of readiness to move from one state to another. In this respect, the participants in this study had reached thresholds from which they moved forward when they embarked upon the professional doctorate programme - many of them talk about 'being ready', or 'being in the right place at the right time'. As one student put it:

‘...all the planets were in alignment, and it’s the first time in my life where I actually thought I could do it for enjoyment, and that it wouldn’t impinge overly much on things that I do outside of work...’.

(James)

In his interview response, James implies that he had been thinking about doctoral study for some time, but had been constrained by his responsibilities and commitment to his family.

In the cases of many of the participants, their age is associated with their readiness to pursue a doctoral degree, specifically a professional doctorate, because they see the experience they have accrued over their careers as the jumping off point for advanced study. This is closely associated with the motivational factors evidenced in Chapter 5.

The recognition of liminality and how it is experienced as a conceptual threshold, as Keefer (2015) describes it, is implicitly (if not explicitly) recognised within the professional doctorate framework and is, in itself, one of the major reasons why the participants in this study chose the professional doctorate programme rather than a traditional PhD by research. Keefer (2015) identified a number of liminal experiences undergone by the PhD student participants in his study; these comprised a sense of isolation, a lack of confidence, the experience of imposter syndrome, and problems of research misalignment. To some extent or another, all the participants in my study either predicted these experiences as a likely outcome of doctoral study outwith the professional doctorate context - expressed in their rationales for choosing a professional doctorate rather than a PhD by research - or found that in the structure of the professional doctorate programme, strategies could be found to mitigate the impact of such experiences. A number of participants in my project cited the cohort

experience of the professional doctorate programme as a key factor in their decision making. Both issues of lack of confidence and imposter syndrome were alleviated by the students' belief and understanding that they were starting their doctoral journey from the firm and secure base of a successful career. This was further reinforced by the Stage 1 phase of the programme, where the students were in a 'taught' mode that led towards graded assessment, both of which - when successfully completed - reinforced their confidence and self-determination. Although a sense of imposterism was evidenced in the data, it was recognised as being eroded by the progress made through doctoral study, which was seen as a validation of the self-belief that had been trying to push through the imposterism.

However, the experience of research misalignment, which Keefer (2015: 7/20) describes as '...real or perceived supervisory, paradigmatic, or methodological differences between the student and the supervisor or programme...', is an issue that individual professional doctorate students, their supervisors and the programme directors, can face. Notions of this misalignment, and predictions of misalignment, can be seen in the present study's data and can be predicted in the context of the conflict within the structure of the programme that constructs itself as 'work-based', but which for the participants in this study, is supervised entirely within the university. Therefore, there are many implications here for the construction and reconstruction of the doctoral curriculum.

6.9 Conclusion

Again, we return to the question of who the professional doctorate candidates in this study are. They are not early career researchers embarking upon a PhD to secure a future in academic or commercial research; neither are they typical of the expectations of a professional doctorate student engaged in a programme of workplace learning for the purpose of professional enhancement. They are not typical of the constructed learner identity of the mid-career professional who seeks to enhance her career through doctoral study. They are older than the institutional literature on the professional doctorate framework would suggest,

and they are, for the most part, not motivated by career ambition nor by a drive to solely contribute to their practice, although their professional practice does form the context of their doctoral journey.

They are a group of people in mid-life who have, for the most part, not had positive experiences of compulsory education. James and Fergus described a school experience which quite overtly prepared them for the class into which they were born - the working-class - and this identity has remained with them and been important to them throughout their lives both as people, and as learners. Sarah, John, Miranda, Diane, Brenda, and Fiona also described their early family lives as situated within the working-class. They contextualise this by describing their school lives as being marked by low expectations and a lack of opportunity. None of these eight participants considered entry to university as a natural post-school option, and all began to earn a living in manual trades or through vocational routes into careers such as nursing. All these participants were the first members of their families to enter university, and they all entered university as 'mature students' through routes other than standard matriculation. Their lives have been marked by self-accessed lifelong, learning and by the wish to build upon the achievements of their working adult lives. They have acquired academic identities other than those to which their early lives as learners ascribed them.

Justin, Kate and Catriona, although not ascribing a working-class ethos to the context of their early educational experience, quite clearly reveal in their data that they perceived a mis-match between their early educational experiences and their personal goals and ambitions. Although they do not describe social deprivation as a root cause of their failure to realise their personal goals which they felt they were capable of achieving, they certainly express the strongly-held opinion that they only came into their real learner identities as adults. They describe themselves as having access to opportunity, but also as having lacked the motivation when younger, for a variety of reasons, to fully achieve that which they came to consider themselves as capable of in later life. Although they had a range of post-school educational options open to them, these were not the routes they have chosen as adults. They are, perhaps, what John described himself as - 'late onset academics'.

The other four candidates did not discuss their early educational experiences in any detail nor relate their later choices as adult learners to any influences in their early lives. Each of them spoke as though the routes through education and training that had brought them to this point in their lives had been natural. They gave the impression that they were not the first members of their families to enter university, and if they were, they certainly did not consider that to have been of any particular import. Their personal narratives tended to construct their identities very strongly around their professional selves rather than a learner identity. While each of the other eleven participants drew upon all their lifelong learning experiences to describe themselves, these four participants focussed almost entirely upon their present experiences as learners in a professional context. They seemed altogether unwilling to enter into a discussion about how their prior experiences had impacted upon their decisions to pursue doctoral studies. Val felt that she was compelled to follow her present doctoral course, and was therefore rather resentful of any implication that she was a 'learner'. Andrea expressed very clear career goals attached to her professional doctorate; she wanted to move from practice into academia, and therefore again, did not really construct herself as a learner, instead seeing herself as a qualification seeker with a set goal in mind. Jessica and Christine were also both focussed upon the outcome of their studies, and the satisfaction that they expected to gain from the doctoral qualification, but neither of them referred to their experience as one of learning.

The data from this study indicate that each of the candidates has undergone changes in their identities throughout their lives as professional people and, for the most part, also as students on the professional doctorate course. They have shown evidence of conflicted identities as professionals and as learners, and have drawn upon the narratives of their lives as individuals, professional people and learners to provide evidence of how they see themselves now, and how they would construct their own learner identities. They were, of course, all in a liminal state at the time when the data were gathered, which would have affected how they saw and described themselves. However, all this being the case, there is strong evidence in the data to indicate that the reality of the learner identity of this group of participants is different from the constructed

learner identity of the older adult engaged in higher degree study. The next chapter considers how these participants might be repositioned within the older adult learner, lifelong learning, and widening access debates.

Chapter 7 - Conclusions

7.1 Chapter Overview

The data analysis, results, and discussion of identity in the previous chapter have given an account of what these students are not, identifying that they do not fit the constructed learner identity of the older adult learner in higher education, nor the constructed learner identity of a doctoral student. They are not older adults upskilling to keep up with the shifting, fluid and changing nature of employment in the knowledge economy (Olssen and Peters, 2005); nor are they preparing for a productive retirement, pursuing new interests, or keeping up with the technological advances of the modern world, as many older adults are often portrayed as doing in higher education contexts. They are doctoral students, but not on the traditional route to PhD by research. They are professional doctorate candidates, but even in this context, their age and career stage, for the most part, still makes them anomalous. They are not typical subjects of the current widening access and participation agendas, because they are on programmes that are excluded from these WP contexts. They have had access to higher education, they have successfully completed undergraduate degree study and, for the most part, they have gone on to achieve master's degrees within their professional fields. They appear to be far from the constructed learner identity of the usual target group for WP policy, but it seems that we still have much to learn about WP from the lived experiences of these people.

Were James, Sarah, John, Jessica, Miranda, Diane, Brenda, Fiona and Fergus school leavers in 2017, their life chances and opportunities would be very different. We can learn a great deal from their narratives of how they have accessed the educational resources, and cultural and social capital over the life course to bring themselves to the status of doctoral students. Their narratives show how valuable the extension of higher degree study is to people in mid-life, no matter what the motivational factors are that drive them towards this choice. By being offered the opportunity to participate in the professional doctorate, they have been able to take their learning journey - no matter how convoluted, complex, chaotic or long - to the highest level. From the other

participants, Justin, Kate, Val, Christine, Andrea and Catriona, we have seen how doctoral study has given them a sense of themselves and their self-worth that they have not been able to access from other resources. The professional doctorate has provided them with an opportunity, as Costley and Lester (2012: 256) put it, to use their professional lives to achieve ‘professional extension at the highest levels’. To some extent at least, this second group of students could be constructed as those who have been given a second chance to achieve the potential that they believed they had failed to achieve in earlier life. All the participants in this study have had the benefit of a university education, they are all in full-time employment, and live far from the social, emotional and economic deprivation that for some of them characterised their younger lives; and therefore, they are not viewed as subjects of WP policy themselves; nevertheless, we have a great deal to learn from their personal and learner histories. Their experiences have much to contribute to the research base for widening access to doctoral study, both in terms of justification for policy changes and implementation, and also in the construction of a framework into which widening participation to doctoral study might be delivered.

7.2 Introduction

The final section of the literature review for this study provided a strong case for extending the research agendas in postgraduate education into the field of widening access. As the review indicates, a great deal of research has explored the issue of increasing the participation of identified disadvantaged groups into higher education in the United Kingdom, but little research has been done on how to extend this by widening access to postgraduate study with a view to increasing participation in, for our purposes here, doctoral education. The latest statement on widening access to be produced by the Scottish Government, *A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access* (2016), suggests that a strong focus remains upon inclusion and widening access as far as Scottish Government policy on higher education is concerned, but the report focuses almost exclusively on the experiences of, and expectations for, Scotland’s ‘young people’. This is perhaps to be expected

because, as the Chair's Forward points out from the very beginning of the report:

'The task set to us by the government was to advise on the steps necessary to achieve the First Minister's ambition that a child born today in one of our most deprived communities will, by the time he or she leaves school, have the same chance of entering university as a child born in one of our least deprived communities'.

(Scottish Government, 2016: 2)

This theme of serving the needs of the nation and the demands of social equality through education, and especially through higher education, is a thread that runs through the political debate of recent Scottish history. In his eloquent Rectorial Address delivered at the University of Glasgow in 1972, Jimmy Reid foreshadowed the sentiments of widening participation when he stated that:

'To unleash the latent potential of our people requires that we give them responsibility. The untapped resources of the North Sea are as nothing compared to the untapped resources of our people. I am convinced that the great mass of our people go through life without even a glimmer of what they could have contributed to their fellow human beings. This is a personal tragedy. It is a social crime. The flowering of each individual's personality and talents is a pre-condition for everyone's development. In this context education has a vital role to play'.

(Reid, 1972)

The 45 years from 1972 to 2017 have seen significant change in Scotland, but not such educational change and reform that we need no longer draw attention to the gulf that still exists between the socially advantaged and disadvantaged people of Scotland.

The Silver report (2016) makes important points and outlines extensive recommendations for future widening access policy and practice. However, 'the challenging objective', as the Chair terms the project, is based upon data which show that:

'18 year olds from Scotland's 20% least deprived communities are more than four times as likely to enter university as those from the 20% most deprived communities ... for those who wish to enter the most selective institutions the position is considerably worse.

(Scottish Government, 2016: 7)

This latest Scottish Government report (2016) signposts inequality, styles fair access as more than a social policy by pointing to the economic advantages to be gained from higher education both for individuals and society as a whole, and discusses the intergenerational value of higher education in breaking cycles of deprivation. Although the report draws these conclusions based on how a landscape for widening access might be envisaged, and from examining how widening access for young people has been effective to date, if the achievement of these aims is a measure of success for widening access then the professional doctorate participants in this project meet the criteria and can be constructed as past subjects of widening access.

The Scottish Funding Council has also been considering issues of widening participation, in their case in relation to postgraduate taught programmes as well as undergraduate degrees. The ‘Taught Postgraduate Review: Working Group Final Report’ was published in December 2015 (Scottish Funding Council, 2015). As the literature review in Chapter 2 (p60) indicates, although many very pertinent questions and issues are raised by the working group report, these do not yet include recommendations on widening participation to postgraduate research degrees. However, the focus of the report does indicate a willingness by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to continue the discussion of issues of access to Higher Education, and to widen the net to include postgraduate study. In this respect, the outcomes of the present study could contribute to this ongoing debate.

7.3 The wider context of widening participation

Widening participation policy constructs learner identities (Burke and Jackson, 2007). In the case of the Fair Access Report, for example, the learner identity is constructed around the inequality of deprivation. In other instances, for example entry to vocational courses as opposed to academic courses, learner identities are also constructed around problematic hierarchies and divisions in higher education (Reay *et al.*, 2005). As Burke (2010) points out, although policy makes a commitment to groups who are under-represented in higher education,

closer analytical attention raises questions about what forms of higher education are being made accessible, to whom, and in what ways. The constructed learner identity of the professional doctorate student shares at least some of these characteristics. The division between academic and vocational forms of higher education, for example, can be seen in the description of the professional doctorate candidate as a ‘researching professional’ rather than a ‘professional researcher’ (Bournier *et al.*, 2001). Although this distinction has some descriptive merit as a soundbite, and is perhaps a snappy slogan with which to advertise a particular programme, it does still embody a particular set of values in a context where academic, or theoretical, knowledge is still prized above the worth of vocational skills. Even if the scholarly professional is intended as a neutral term, it will never be afforded the same value as the professional scholar - the professor. The broader context of widening participation, although it is not specifically focused on post-graduate higher education programmes, does pose two interesting questions for the group of students represented in this study. The first is, can this group of students already be identified as subjects of widening participation through routes other than the current policy agendas? Second, if doctoral study is a suitable field for widening participation policy, what implications does this have for HEIs and the programmes they deliver?

This project, designed around the narratives and experiences of fifteen older adult professional doctorate students, provides a strong case study evidencing how participants who may otherwise have been excluded from doctoral study have been through the professional doctorate programme. I intend the answers to these questions also to provide a persuasive foundation for the argument that PD students can be repositioned within, and thus offer challenges to, current WP policy, practice and theorisation.

7.4 Widening participation to doctoral education and research degrees

Three main studies on widening participation to postgraduate education were considered in the literature review: those of Stuart *et al.* (2008), Wakeling & Kyriacou (2010), and McCulloch & Thomas (2012), the latter specifically investigating widening access to doctoral education and research degrees. Each

of these studies had an impact upon the analysis of the data in this project. The criteria for identifying the people least likely to proceed to postgraduate study are identified by Stuart *et al.* (2008) as: i) those who pursued vocational/practical courses; ii) those concerned about debt; iii) those who were child-free; and iv) those who were the first in their family to enter university. These criteria informed both the data collection stage and the analysis in this project. Wakeling and Kyriacou's (2010) identification of: i) the status of a first degree; ii) gender; and iii) class were also taken into account throughout the project. However, it was the set of questions raised by McCulloch and Thomas (2013) that most closely guided the project, and which, while somewhat adapted, led to the thematic analysis presented in the previous two chapters, Chapter 5 - issues of choice and motivation, and Chapter 6 - questions of identity. These questions were:

1. What are the influences of social class background and the differential contribution of cultural, social and economic factors on candidates' decisions to choose a (i) to pursue a doctoral programme (ii) through a professional doctorate route?
2. What is the relationship between age, the life-cycle and doctoral education?
3. What is the motivation for entry to doctoral programmes?
4. What is the impact of previous educational decisions or experiences on the decision to pursue a professional doctorate programme?
5. What are the reasons for the different periods of time that elapse between initial higher education entry (if any) and entry to the professional doctorate?
6. Does widening participation have implications for the doctoral curriculum?

Questions 3, 4 and 5 from the list above have already been fully covered in the preceding chapters: the motivation for entry to doctoral programmes is fully explored in Chapter 5 (pp. 135-139), and the impact of previous educational experiences is examined in some detail in Chapter 6 (pp. 145-163). The reasons for different periods of time elapsing between initial entry to higher education and entry to the professional doctorate programme are discussed throughout both Chapters 5 and 6, and are drawn from the individual narratives of each of

the participants. Therefore, this chapter revisits and answers the first, second and sixth of these questions. Before doing so, I would like to consider what the criteria identified by Stuart *et al.* (2008) and Wakeling & Kyriacou (2010) tell us about the students in this case study.

7.5 Do the participants fall into the category of those traditionally least likely to proceed to higher degree study?

Of Stuart *et al.*'s (2008) four criteria, two are clearly evident in the data, one is implied, and one is absent. All the participants in this project pursued vocational courses at university; 14 as undergraduates, and one as a postgraduate following a first degree in the social sciences. Two of the participants studied what are considered elite vocational courses in the professions - law and medicine, while the others studied nursing, social work, secretarial studies, home economics, occupational therapy, dietetics, social work, radiography, and electrical engineering. Not only are these vocational courses, but they are occupational fields, with the exception of medicine and law, in which it was possible until relatively recently, to qualify for entry without a university degree. Therefore, many of these professional doctorate students entered the world of adult work as non-graduates. As Brenda put it:

‘I went into nursing but I was... I never dreamed of going to university... it would never have dawned on them [her parents] to think about university, so it never dawned on me’.

(Brenda)

For others, the need to get a job was more important than a university education because of their life circumstances, Sarah's account being an example:

‘I was halfway through fifth year doing Highers at a time when employment was nose diving, and I saw this job for a technician at the vet school, and I applied for it and I got the job, and I left school pretty early...’.

(Sarah)

For others, like Fiona, early learning experiences had left her without the resources or self-belief to consider a place in higher education. She explained that:

‘I think, I have... I don’t... I think, as an individual, I’ve always been quite insecure about my academic career. I think, as a young person, I probably had some sort of learning difficulty which was never diagnosed. And, I really struggled academically when I was at school. It wasn’t until later, when computers came into being, everyday use, that I was able to write something. I was able to get sentences and paragraphs together’.

(Fiona)

These extracts are representative of the limited options that most of the participants had in their earlier lives. With the exception of Christine who studied Law, Andrea who did a Social Sciences degree following a short gap period after leaving school, and Justin who started out as a medic before switching to nursing, none of the remaining participants even considered an undergraduate degree on leaving school. Therefore, all the participants meet Stuart *et al.*’s (2008) first criterion for the people least likely to proceed to postgraduate study. For the most part, they also meet the fourth criterion: the majority of the participants were the first in their family, or the first generation, to enter higher education. Stuart *et al.*’s (2008) other two criteria do not apply to this particular group of students because they are really only applicable to the students those authors interviewed who had only recently graduated from university, and whose age, stage and life circumstances therefore had a bearing upon family life and a fear of incurring debt that the present participants’ profiles do not reflect. However, it is possible to conclude that most of our participants can find a niche within the parameters of what Stuart *et al.* (2008) defined as those traditionally least likely to proceed to higher degree study.

The present participants also, both as individuals and as a group, flag up the issues that Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) identify as barriers to higher degree study: the status of a first degree, gender, and class. As holders of vocational degrees rather than those grounded in more traditional academic subjects, the status of their degree would be more likely to impact upon both their application for, and acceptance onto, a traditional research degree. As a group

consisting of a ratio of roughly 4:1 women, they would have been affected by Wakeling and Kyriacou's (2010) finding that although gender is not a barrier at masters level, access to the highest echelons of research is still dominated by men. The third barrier, that of class, would also impact upon this group, as the majority identify as working-class people from working-class backgrounds. Therefore, if the evidence obtained from the studies of Stuart *et al.* (2008) and Wakeling and Kyriacou (2010) were used here, we would have to conclude that the present study's group of participants is largely composed of people who would be least likely to proceed to higher degree study, and that they are therefore a group who might well have benefitted from consideration in terms of widening access policy. Having reached this conclusion, it follows that attempting to answer the questions sourced from McCulloch and Thomas's (2013) paper may lead to suggesting how the narratives and experiences of this case study of older adult doctoral students might be best applied to the larger question of how widening access policies might be extended to doctoral study.

7.6 What are the influences of social class background and the differential contributions of cultural, social and economic factors on candidates' decisions to choose (i) to pursue a doctoral programme; (ii) through a professional doctorate route?

The influence of social class background is evident in the narratives provided by the students in this study. In Chapter 6, some identification with a social class was shown by all the participants. In all, 11 out of the 15 participants clearly identified themselves as coming from a working-class background, and attributed their early career decision-making quite specifically to their class origins. As Brenda said:

‘I went into nursing but I was... I never dreamed of going to university... It wasn't for us’.

(Brenda)

James also highlighted his expectations of working in the manual trades, as he referred to them, due to his expectations of himself and his future prospects as a young man:

When I left school, I worked in the manual trades for a while, in the steelworks, and did a couple of things like that. Then I had - way before its time - a year out touring Europe, hitch-hiking, doing all the various part-time jobs. Came back, I became a hospital porter, because I ran out of money and that was the only job I could get. Somebody persuaded me to do the nursing programme in the hospital, and I only did the nursing programme because it guaranteed me summer work, then I went to university...’.

(James)

The comments by Brenda and James on their expectations upon leaving school are representative of all those who described themselves as working-class; in other words, there was an expectation that they would work rather than study. A significant finding in this study is that for all the participants, the impetus for them to choose doctoral study through the professional doctorate route was provided by the success that they had managed to build within the careers that they initially chose - or that they opportunely entered. As Diane put it:

‘I was the first person in our family to do a degree, both sides as well, and I still am, actually. So, that was quite an unfamiliar pathway, and nursing gave me that pathway. Other nurses said, go and get your degree, and then other nurses said, go and do your masters, so it was the profession that gave me that and raised expectations’.

(Diane)

Of the 15 participants in the project, 12 were also the first members of their families to enter higher education, or were in the first generation of the family to enter university. As the research on first in family entrants to higher education shows, ‘...the debates on social capital are apposite to the discussion of first generation entry [to higher education]’ (Thomas and Quinn, 2007: 58). Bourdieu’s position on social capital and its application to education, and the impact of the family upon post-compulsory education decision making, is useful in analysing the routes to university that the participants in this project took. The social capital acquired by Justin and Catriona, for example, where they respectively discuss their worlds of private education and parental encouragement and disappointment, provide very different perspectives from those of James, Brenda and Diane.

In discussing his early educational experiences, Justin explained that:

‘I went to an independent school. As it happened, it was actually through my dad’s work [that] I got a very generous scholarship, not

really based on academic ability, but based on just the employment sector he was in, and had an uncle who was a single entrepreneur in those days, and had no family of his own and so he paid the rest. I went to an independent school not necessarily on very good academic merit, so I didn't win an academic scholarship but I had an opportunity'.
(Justin)

Catriona openly discussed her mother's encouragement to progress to university when she finished school:

'...both my parents went to university. I didn't actually do that well at school. I didn't try as hard as I might have done. I guess my mum came profoundly [from] where she really valued education because of her background, and had nagged me madly to work harder, and it didn't really work'.

(Catriona)

So, for Justin and Catriona, the expectations that they would simply go to university as a natural progression from school stand in stark contrast to the parental expectations felt by James, Brenda and Diane. The different expectations of the families of these participants reflect Bourdeiu's (1986) argument that the nature of social capital is determined and shaped by the material, cultural and symbolic status of the family (Richardson, 1986). However, membership of a family is 'a group membership' - a concept which Bourdieu alludes to a great deal in his writings on social capital (Richardson, 1986: 248) - that to some extent, we can see as replicated in professional terms by those who have found access to social and cultural capital through success in their chosen careers. Diane's comments that 'university was an unfamiliar pathway' for her family, and that it was nursing that gave her that pathway are also reflected in observations made by Miranda. When discussing why she had chosen the professional doctorate, having already explained that she had left school, she said:

'...with no... well, I had qualifications - I had O levels - and I did not, I was not encouraged. I came from a working-class background, I wasn't encouraged to go to university'.

(Miranda)

She also said:

My line manager [encouraged me to take up the professional doctorate] because she was on the first cohort, and she saw in me maybe something, whatever that was, and I think we're very alike and maybe I'm a younger version if you like and she knows what makes me tick, and the things that I like, so she was very encouraging. I think she was either the first or the second cohort - yes, she was just before me - and I had went to her to say, look, I want to be doing something else, something much more in depth to challenge my brain... and she said, I'm doing this, I would support you if you want to do this... I think you could do it... and I looked into it and thought, well, that looks great, and so the NHS have funded me, so I've had all this paid'.

(Miranda)

The sense of belonging to a professional group which has provided support and encouragement to progress to, and through, higher education generally and the professional doctorate particularly, has been central to these participants, most particularly to those who were first generation entrants to university and to those who perceived themselves as working-class.

A further distinction for this group of students in terms of progression to university, is that for the most part (with the exceptions of Sarah and Christine because of their particular posts in HE, and Andrea because of her age and the stage at which she entered her profession), none of the remaining 12 participants had chosen professions that required graduate status when they embarked upon the career. As mentioned above, at the time of their entry into their careers, nursing, social work, radiography, podiatry, occupational therapy, secretarial studies teaching/instructing, dietetics, and counselling were not necessarily graduate occupations. This goes some way to explaining how and why their 'professional families', rather than their kinship circles, were so significant in their later choices to pursue higher education. It also goes some way to explaining the relationship between their ages, life-cycle stage, and pursuit of doctoral education.

7.7 What is the relationship between age, the life-cycle and doctoral education?

This project has defined 'older adult learners' as those over the age of 40. This cut off point, although in many respects quite artificial, was arrived at because of the general perception, often quoted in the institution in which the case study is situated, that if you have not achieved a doctoral qualification by the time you reach 40, then you might as well not bother. One of the participants, Sarah, mentioned this in her interview:

‘Well, I met somebody the other day who will remain nameless, but somebody in the organisation who said: ‘I thought about doing a PhD in my thirties’, and she said: ‘and when I missed that cycle of opportunity, I realised I was too old’... I was horrified, absolutely horrified, but that was the end of her learning opportunity then, and I don’t mean that she hasn’t done other things. and she’s an absolutely great person and a respected colleague, but it kind of made me parallel that against my own situation, given that I’m 51 and wondering in four years’ time when I’m 55, what value will a 55-year-old Prof Doc be to the world?’

(Sarah)

She answered her own question by saying:

‘...so that’s where I decided that, yes, it’s valuable to the organisation, but more importantly, it’s valuable to me. It’s valuable for me, because it’s about the credibility, I think, for myself...’.

(Sarah)

For Sarah, and all the other participants in this project - where the average age is 50+ - time, age and place in the life-cycle were critical, first to their decision to pursue a doctoral programme at their age and life stage, and second, to being able to pursue that programme as full-time workers and part-time students. For the 13 of the 15 participants who went to work, rather than to study, straight from school, the progression to initial entry to higher education was by necessity later than that of the traditional undergraduate. All but two of the participants have children and family responsibilities that have demanded their time, attention and economic resources over the years: this, too, accounts for the later phase in the life-cycle at which they chose to take up doctoral study. However, above all, the data suggest that the phase in their professional lives was most significant factor in motivating their decision to take up the professional doctorate.

For James, Sarah, John, Kate, Christine, Jessica and Brenda, their professional positions in the HEI in which they were both working and studying enabled them to pursue the professional doctorate. Their enhanced qualifications (albeit with an average age of this group of 55), were seen as valuable to them and, for the most part, to the university in which they worked. A doctoral qualification for the individual, as the data show, gave them increased credibility and enabled them to realise ambitions that they felt had gone unfulfilled in their earlier lives; the qualification itself represented a life marker. Val was the odd-woman-

out in this group, because although she was fully funded, she felt that she had been pushed into the course; and therefore because she felt she had not been a free agent in her choice, she did not value either the course or the expected outcome of the qualification. From the point of view of the HEI, they were able to increase their numbers of doctorally-qualified staff at very little cost to the institution, which benefitted the university in a number of ways, not least of which was in terms of their standing in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the increase in their supervisory capacity to support the drive to increase the number of postgraduate students they could take on.

For the other candidates, that is, those not employed by the HEI in which they studied, the achievement of a doctoral qualification was also a life marker. For those at the younger end of the group (Andrea at 42, Justin at 47, Catriona at 46, Diane at 42, and Miranda at 48), it marked what they perceived as a turning point in their professional lives. They had reached a stage where they were looking for greater fulfillment than their professional lives offered in mid-career. For those at the older end of this age range (Fiona at 59 and Fergus at almost 60), the professional doctorate marked the culmination of their professional lives. As Fergus put it:

‘...because, to me, it’s the, sort of, peak of my journey in education, and also all of the experiences I’ve had, I’m 59, so I started my journey when I was 18; it can all start to come together and I can, if you like, what would you say, reflect on it, process it, bring it together for the benefit of others. Before, it was just all little islands everywhere, as you probably noticed, as I said, but doing my studies, it’s starting to come together...’.
(Fergus)

Fiona agreed in expressing the hope that the achievement of the doctorate would lay to rest the ghosts that haunted her past:

‘I think it’s a hugely complicated thing. I think there’s huge... there’s lots of baggage from my past, which affects, I suppose, the way I see myself. But I think there’s probably a lot of stuff out there, which is also looking at how women generally see themselves in society, and how OTs see themselves in the overall scheme of things. I think, as a woman, as an OT, given my background, I think there’s an enormous amount of stuff that serves to implant that little seed of doubt, self-doubt’.
(Fiona)

From the data in this project it can be concluded that, for the candidates in this case study at least, the relationship the professional doctorate has with age and the life-cycle is very significant. These students have used their doctoral study to mark important transitions and turning points in their lives; it could be said that the professional doctorate was in the right place at the right time, or as James suggested, it was there when:

‘...all the planets were in alignment, and it’s the first time in my life where I actually thought I could do it [study] for enjoyment, and that it wouldn’t impinge overly much on things that I do outside of work [family life]’.

(James)

7.8 What does the data from this study tell us about the widening participation implications for the doctoral curriculum?

This project has presented a snapshot in the form of a case study involving 15 participants in one HE institution in Scotland. The impact of this study lies in the contribution it can make to illustrating the benefits of extending doctoral study to a greater and more diverse group of people. While there is no suggestion that the results of this project can be generalised to a wider population, a number of significant findings can be brought to bear upon future research and policy formation regarding the extension of widening participation agendas, already in place for undergraduates and targeted taught masters programmes, to doctoral study. This, in turn, will have implications for the delivery and diversity of doctoral programmes.

The first significant finding resulting from the analysis and discussion of data in this project is that the professional doctorate programme considered here is already offering opportunities for doctoral study to people who, in their earlier lives, were subject to social and educational disadvantage. A strength of the programme is that it is offering these opportunities to people in mid- to later life at a time when they are able to take advantage of opportunities for doctoral study that would have been denied to them, for various reasons, at an earlier stage in their life-cycle.

A second finding is that the structure of the professional doctorate is attractive to professional people for two main reasons:

- i. It provides, in its first stage, scaffolding for the uncertain or novice academic to build confidence and to test the water before committing themselves to thesis writing, therefore it appears to represent less immediate pressure to succeed academically than the traditional PhD by research and,
- ii. It allows the professional experience and competence of the applicant to become an integral and important part of the admissions procedure.

These two factors are important for prospective candidates who have previously had a negative experience of compulsory education.

A third finding is that the group of participants in this study was very diverse, and expressed their needs and aspirations in very different ways. No single label would have described this participant cohort; they were older adults engaged in higher degree study, but they were from a wide range of professional, social, economic and political backgrounds. This study suggests that diversity in the student body can only benefit from the diversity of routes to doctoral qualification.

Fourth, this study has found that although barriers to extending postgraduate study to a wider social population do exist - the most recent Scottish Funding Council (SG/SFC, 2015) report has delineated these as access to course information, financial barriers, poor undergraduate/post 16 education and limited course flexibility - when they are addressed, as they have been by the professional doctorate candidates in this study, postgraduate and doctoral study can be life enhancing, and provide measures of inclusion and social justice that have been denied to people in earlier life.

The fifth and final significant finding of this study is that the learning experiences and doctoral journeys of the participants in this project might have been enhanced if the professional doctorate had been more fully rooted in a work-based and/or workplace learning tradition. The most significant weakness of the programme is that although the professional doctorate in this HEI was presented embedding a WBL approach, this was not evidenced in the assessment procedures of the suite of degrees offered. As each of the candidates identified strongly with their professional practice, and in fact, their learner identities

were almost entirely constructed around their professional personas, it was disappointing to discover that they were not assessed on this basis.

7.9 Contribution to policy and practice

The impact of this study lies in the contribution it makes to the development of policy and practice in widening access to, and increasing participation in, doctoral study. As the literature review in Chapter 2 (p. 53ff) has shown, although the results of the implementation of the widening access policy agenda have been widely contested, the philosophies and ideologies that underpin the concepts of inclusion and social justice are recognised as valuable in a higher education context. There is a great deal of research illustrating the effects of widening participation to young people, with a strong focus upon school-leavers, undergraduate courses and access issues around marginalised groups. However, there is a recognised gap in the extant research on older adults and widening participation to doctoral research degrees; this project goes some way to filling that gap.

Furthermore, a great deal of the current research into widening participation is situated in an English, rather than a Scottish, context. This project also helps to address that imbalance. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council have recently published reports on widening access. *A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report on Widening Access* (SG, 2016) addresses the contemporary context of inclusion in higher education for young people, particularly those who are born into, and grow up in, the least affluent areas of Scotland. The most recent report from the Scottish Funding Council on widening access, published as the working group paper *Taught Postgraduate Review: Working Group Final Report* (SG/SFC, 2015) in December 2015, also addressed issues of inclusion, but in the context of access to taught postgraduate courses. This project builds upon and extends these research agendas.

7.10 Contribution to knowledge and theory development

In terms of making a contribution to knowledge, this project adds to the field of theory development and to our understanding of the reality of older adults engaged in doctoral study in Scottish universities. The detailed explication of the rich qualitative data which forms the bedrock of the project sheds light upon a section of the higher education landscape; that is, the experience of older

adults engaged in professional doctoral programmes. This, in turn, raised issues around how professional doctorates could be used to extend widening participation to a much greater cohort of prospective doctoral candidates, particularly if the programmes were developed around a stronger work-based or workplace learning focus.

Bourdieu's theoretical perspective presents many challenges to the researcher in the field of education. His writings are dense and complex and often have to be carefully mined to be understood and applied. However, for this study this effort was well rewarded. This thesis has shown how aspects, if not all, of Bourdieu's Social Theory can be applied usefully to illustrate the impact of inequality upon the educational experience of older adults engaged in higher degree programmes and casts much light upon the processes whereby these inequalities have eventually been challenged, addressed and overcome. Using the concepts of field, habitus and capital in this study has shown that even although the full array of Bourdieu's work may be daunting, specific use of aspects of his particular perspective is very effective in raising new areas for discussion and enquiry around, for example, the issue of widening participation to older adults in higher education. As such, the contribution of this study to theory development is that it both stands as an example of how social theory can be employed to highlight the injustice of inequality and under-privilege and advances the interpretative possibilities to new themes, previously unexplored. As Murphy (2013:133) explains, '[Bourdieu's] insistence on research and scholarship with commitment is attractive...as is his account of how researchers can be political without succumbing to the distorting logics of practice in the field of politics and the field of journalism'; I would suggest that the application of Bourdieu's theoretical perspective to the analysis of this qualitative project has shown the value of both these observations.

In terms of theory development, this study contributes a small-scale example of how social theory can usefully be employed to provide a critical understanding of educational contexts and research, especially around issues of inclusion and exclusion, to the growing body of social theory and education research. The application of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital has shown how social theory may provide a useful and useable analytical framework for the

careful examination of social phenomena in an educational context, both within higher education and in exploring the impact of educational experiences over an individual's life course.

7.11 The research questions revisited

The research questions derived from the objectives of this project were:

- How do the PD students describe themselves as people, professionals and students?
- How is the PD learner constructed by HEIs?
- What is the motivation of the PD student to achieve doctoral status?

Each of these questions were addressed and answered within the main body of the study. However, in answering the original question posed by the research project:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

The overall conclusion of this study is that for the students on this programme, the realities of their identities as older adults engaged in higher degree study were rooted in their professional practice, and were not constructed around a doctoral student identity.

7.12 Self-reflection

The outcomes of this project have had an immediate impact upon my pedagogical practice. On the one hand, a number of my pre-existing insights into the effectiveness of an academic literacies approach, in the widest sense, to the teaching of older adults have been confirmed. I am now certain that the identity of older adults who are in full time employment and studying part-time for a doctoral qualification have very different teaching and learning needs, expressed through their identities, from the learner identity that is ascribed to a traditional PhD student. The extent to which the participants in this project

revealed learner identities that might be considered typical of students with widening access profiles has been enlightening and has informed the reconfiguration of my academic writing programme for this doctoral route. As a result of my findings the final assessment procedures for professional doctorate students have been significantly modified in order to take account of their extensive experience of lifelong learning. While previous cohorts of students were required to submit a thesis of equivalent length to a traditional PhD by research, i.e. up to 80,000 words, new cohorts are now required to submit a final thesis of between 55,000 and 60,000 words with an additional reflective account of 5,000 words that enables them to foreground the significance of their life experience to their journey as doctoral students.

This, in turn, has impacted upon my attitude towards the effectiveness of empirical educational research. I did not, at any point in my career, set out to become a researcher. I joined the academy as a university teacher and simply became, as I initially saw it, a victim of credentialism; I could no longer justify my position with the institution without completing a doctoral degree. As participation in a suitable PhD programme was made relatively straightforward for me by my employers, I was taken beyond this initial view of my victimisation and now identify myself as a practitioner informed by research; a significant shift in my sense of self. Furthermore, through the very intimate interrogation of the data I collected I realised that my journey towards a doctoral qualification was one that is shared by many older adults engaged in full time employment and part-time study. This has underwritten the new identity that I have developed and has increased my awareness of, and empathy towards, the sacrifices and challenges that mature adult learners face.

7.13 Directions for future research

This study has indicated a number of directions for research in the future. Gender has not been considered here as a specific area of interest because the wide-scale investigation this perspective would demand was beyond the scope of this thesis. The ways in which learner identities are impacted by gender was considered within the thesis, but was not able to be fully developed within the confines of the research. Nonetheless, the data suggests that this would be a

fertile area of enquiry for future research. Moreover, as the methodology chapter suggests, the data could be analysed through a number of different theoretical lens. Adopting a narrative approach towards the analysis of this type of qualitative data, employing a critical feminist analytical framework and drawing upon the field of current research in the area of work-based learning would all be recommendations for future research. These approaches would certainly yield deeper insights into the experiences of older adult learners engaged in higher degree programmes. Issues of liminality and intersectionality are also touched upon in this thesis. However, these two contemporary concepts, intimately connected with the educational focus upon motivation and learner identity, would also benefit from further investigation.

References

- Archer, L. Hutchings, M. & Ross, A. (2003) *Higher Education and Social Class*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Arnott, M.A & Ozga, J. (2010) 'Education and Nationalism: The Discourse of Education Policy in Scotland', *Discourse*, 31(4), 335-350.
- Ball, S.J. (2012) *Global Education Inc.* Abingdon, Routledge.
- Ball, S.J. (2013) *The Education Debate* (2nd ed). Bristol, Polity Press.
- Ball, S.J. (2013b) *Foucault, Power and Education*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Barnard, A.M. (2011) Professional doctorates in the social sciences, *Work Based Learning e-Journal*, 2 (1), 259-275
- Beech, N. (2011) Liminality and the practices of identity reconstruction, *Human Relations*, 64(2), 285-302.
- Bennet, Y., Savage, M., Silva, E., Warde, A., Gay-Cal, M. & Wright, D. (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. (1975) *Class Codes and Control*. London, Routledge & Keegan Paul.
- Bernstein, B. (1996) *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*. London, Taylor & Francis.
- Bills, D.B. & Brown, D.K. (2011) New directions in educational credentialism, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 29 (1), 1-4.
- Blair, T. (1996) Pre-election Labour Party Leader's Speech, available at: <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=202>

- Blanden, J. & Machin, S. (2004) Education Inequality and the Expansion of UK Higher Education, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 51 (2) 230-249.
- Bottero, W. (2005) *Stratification: Social Division and Inequality*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Boud, D. & Tennant, M. (2006) Putting doctoral education to work: challenges to academic practice, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25(3), 293-306.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R. & Walker, D. (1985) *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997) 'The Forms of Capital' in Halsey, A.H., Lauder, H, Brown, P, and Stuart Wells, A. (eds) *Education, Culture, Economy and Society*. Oxford, OUP.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J-C. (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London, SAGE.
- Bourner, T., Bowden, R. & Laing, S. (2001) Professional Doctorates in England, *Studies in Higher Education*, 26:1, 66-83.
- Bowl, M. (2003) *Non-Traditional Entrants to Higher Education: 'They Talk About People Like Me*. Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham.
- Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Breen, R. & Lindsay, R. (1999) Academic Research and Student motivation, *Studies in Higher Education*, 24(1), 75-93.
- Brennan, J., Edmunds, R., Houston, M., Jary, D., Lebeau, Y., Osborne, M. & Richardson, J.T.E. (2010) *Improving What is Learned at University*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Brookfield, S.J. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, D. K. (2001) The Social Sources of Educational Credentialism: Status Cultures, Labor Markets and Organizations, *Sociology of Education*, 74 (Extra Issue), 19-34.
- Buchanan, A.L. & Herubel, J.P. (1995) *The Doctor of Philosophy Degree*. Michigan, Greenwood Press.
- Burgess, H. & Wellington, J. (2010) Exploring the impact of the professional doctorate on students' professional practice and personal development: Early indications, *Work Based Learning e-Journal*, 1(1), 160-176.
- Burgess, H., Weller, G. & Wellington, J. (2011) Tensions in the purpose and impact of professional doctorates, *Work Based Learning e-Journal*, 2(1), 1-20.
- Burke, P.J. & Jackson, S. (2007) *Reconceptualising Lifelong Learning: Feminist Interventions*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Burke, P.J. (2012) *The Right to Higher Education: beyond widening participation*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Chiteng Kot, F. & Hendel, D.D. (2012) Emergence and growth of professional doctorates in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia: a comparative analysis, *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(3), 345-364.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education*. London, Routledge Falmer.

Costley, C. & Armsby, P. (2007) Research influence on a professional doctorate, *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 12(3), 343-355.

Costley, C. & Lester, S. (2012) Work-based doctorates: professional extension at the highest level, *Studies in Higher Education*, 37(3), 257-269.

CRAC (2016) Mellors-Bourne, R., Robinson, C. & Metcalfe, J. *Provision of professional doctorates in English HE institutions: Report for HEFCE*. Cambridge, CRAC.

Creswell, J.W. (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. London, SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. (2014) *Research Design*. London, SAGE.

Crowther, J., Galloway, V. & Martin, I. (2005) *Popular Education: Engaging the Academy*. Leicester, NIACE.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research*. London, SAGE.

David, M. (ed) (2010) *Improving Learning by Widening Participation in Higher Education*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Dearing Report (1997) *The National Committee of Enquiry in Higher Education*. London, HMSO.

Denzin, K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2008) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. London, SAGE.

DiSilvestro, F.R. (2013) Continuing Higher Education and Older Adults: A Growing Challenge and Golden Opportunity, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no.140, 79-87.

Doncaster, K. & Lester, S. (2002) Capability and its Development: Experiences from a work-based doctorate, *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(1), 91-101.

Evans, K., Schoon, I. and Wheale, M. (2013) Can Lifelong Learning Reshape Life Chances? *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61 (1), 25-47.

Evans, T. (2002) Part-time Research Students: Are they producing knowledge where it counts?, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 21:2, 155-165.

Fenge, L-A. (2009) Professional Doctorates - A Better Route for Researching Professionals?, *Social Work Education*, 28(2), 165-176.

Fieldhouse, R. (1996, 2006) *A History of Modern British Adult Education*. Leicester, NIACE.

Fell, T., Flint, K. and Haines, I., (2011) *Professional doctorates in the UK*. Lichfield: UK Council for Graduate Education.

Findsen, B. and Mark, R. (2016) Older adult education in two universities: A comparison in the New Zealand and Scottish contexts, *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 22 (1) 6-28.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006) Five misunderstandings about case study research. *Qualitative Enquiry*, 12 (2), 219-245.

Foley, G. (ed) (2004) *Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, N.E. (2008) *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. New York, McGraw-Hill.

Fuller, A., Heath, S. & Johnston, B. (2011) *Rethinking Widening Participation in Higher Education: The Role of Social Networks*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Giddens, A. (2009) *Sociology*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Hall, S. (2000) Who Needs Identity?, in du Gay, P & Redman, P. (eds) *Identity: a Reader*. London, SAGE.

Hamilton, L. & Corbett-Whittier, C. (2013) *Using Case Study in Education Research*. London, SAGE.

Hammersley, M. (2012) Troubling theory in case study research, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 31:3, 393-405.

Harker, R., Mahar, C. & Wilkes, C. (eds) (1990) *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu*. London, Macmillan.

Harland, T. (2014) Learning about case study methodology to research higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 33:6, 1113-1122.

Harrison, N. & Waller, R. (2010) We Blame the Parents! A response to 'Cultural capital as an explanation of variation in participation in higher education' [Noble, J. & Davis, P. (2009) *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30: 5, 591-605.] *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 31: 4, 471-482.

Hill, D. (2011) Educational Subversion and Global Neo-Liberalism: A Marxist Critique: available at: <http://clogic.eserver.org/2003/hill.html> [last accessed March 2017]

Holmes, L. (1995) 'Competence and capability: from confidence trick to the construction of the graduate identity', Paper presented at the Conference on 'Beyond Competence to Capability and the Learning Society', Higher Education for Capability, UMIST, Nov. 1995

Huisman, J. & Tight, M. (eds) (2013) *Theory and Method in Higher Education Research*. Bingley, Emerald.

Ivanic, R. (1998) *Writing and Identity*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins.

Jackson, S. (2004) *Differently Academic? Developing Lifelong Learning for Women in Higher Education*. Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Jarvis, P. (2010) *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Theory and Practice*. London, Routledge.

John, T. & Denicolo, P. (2013) Doctoral Education: A Review of the Literature Monitoring the Doctoral Student Experience in selected OECD Countries (Mainly UK), *Springer Science Reviews*, 1, 41-49.

Keefer, J.M. (2015) Experiencing doctoral liminality as a conceptual threshold and how supervisors can use it, *Innovations in education and Teaching International*, 52 (1), 17-28.

Kolb, D. (2014) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. London, Pearson.

Lawler, S. (2014) *Identity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (2006) *Gender and Lifelong Learning*. London, Routledge.

Leonard, D., Becker, R. & Coate, K. (2005) To prove myself at the highest level: The benefits of doctoral study, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 24:2, 135-149.

Lester, S. (2004) Conceptualizing the practitioner doctorate, *Studies in Higher Education*, 29:6, 757-770.

Lillis, T.M. (2001) *Student Writing*. London, Routledge.

Lillis, T. and Scott, M. (2007) Defining academic literacies research: issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1) pp.5-32.

- Loxley, A. & Seery, A. (2012) The role of the professional doctorate in Ireland from the student perspective, *Studies in Higher Education*, 37:1, 3-17.
- Malloch, M., Cairns, L., Evans, K. & O'Connor, B.N. (eds) (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Workplace Learning*. London, SAGE.
- Mann, S.J. (2008) *Study, Power and the University*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.
- Margison, S. (2016) High Participation Systems of Higher Education, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87 (2), 243-271.
- Maxwell, T. (2003) From First to Second Generation Professional Doctorate, *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(3), 279-291.
- McCulloch, A. & Thomas, L. (2012) Widening participation to doctoral education and research degrees: a research agenda for an emerging policy issue, *Higher Education Research and Development*, 32(2), 214-227.
- Mellers-Bourne, R., Robinson, C. & Metcalfe, J. (2016) *Provision of professional doctorates in English HE institutions: Report for the Careers Research & Advisory Centre, supported by the University of Brighton*. Cambridge, HEFCE & CRAC.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998) *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass.
- Morgan-Klein, B. & Osborne, M. (2007) *The Concepts and Practices of Lifelong Learning*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Murphy, M. (ed) (2013) *Social Theory and Education Research*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Neave, G., Bluckert, K. & Nybom, T. (2006) *The European Research University: A Historical Parenthesis?* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Noble, J. & Davis, P. (2009) Cultural capital as an explanation of variation in participation in higher education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30 (5), 591-605.

Olssen, M and Peters, M.A. (2005) Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: from the free market to knowledge capitalism, *Journal of Education Policy*, 20 (3), 313-345.

Osborne, M. & Houston, M. (2012) United Kingdom: universities and lifelong learning in the UK - adults as losers, but who are the winners? In Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. (eds) (2012) *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Park, C. (2005) New Variant PhD: The changing nature of the doctorate in the UK, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 27(2), 189-207.

Park, C. (2007) New variant PhD: The changing nature of the doctorate in the UK, *Journal of Higher Education policy and Management*, 27(2), 189-207.

Park, C. (2007) *Redefining the Doctorate*. Discussion Paper for The Higher Education Academy.

Parry, G. (2010) Policy contexts, differentiation, competition and policies for widening participation, in David, M. (ed) *Improving Learning by Widening Participation in Higher Education*. London, Routledge.

Pietsch, T. (2013) *Empire of scholars: Universities, networks and the British academic world, 1850-1939*. Manchester, Manchester university press.

Poole, B. (2015) The rather elusive concept of 'doctorateness': a reaction to Wellington, *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(9), 1507-1522.

Powell, S. & Long, E. (2005) *Professional doctorate awards in the UK*. Staffordshire, UKCGE

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (2011) *The UK Doctorate: a guide for current and prospective doctoral candidates*. Gloucester, QAA.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (2014) *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies*. Gloucester, QAA.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (2015) *Characteristics Statement. Doctoral Degree*. Gloucester, QAA.

Read, B., Archer, L. & Leathwood, C. (2003) Changing Cultures? Student Conceptions of 'Belonging' and 'Isolation' at a Post-1992 University, *Studies in Higher Education*, 28 (3), 261-277.

Reay, D., David, M.E. & Ball, S. (2005) *Degrees of Choice: social class, race and gender in higher education*. Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham.

Richardson, J.G. (ed) (1986) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, Greenwood Press.

Rogers, A. (2002) *Teaching Adults (3rd ed)*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Ruegg, W. (2004) *A History of the University in Europe (Vol 3): Universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Sarojini Hart, C. (2013) *Aspirations, Education and Social Justice: Applying Sen and Bourdieu*. London, Bloomsbury Academic.

Savage, M. (2015) *Social Class in the 21st Century*. London, Random House.

Schon, D.A. (1991) *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Schuller, T. & Watson, D. (2009) *Learning Through Life*. Leicester, NIACE.

Scott, D. & Morrison, M. (2010) New sites and agents for research education in the United Kingdom: Making and taking doctoral identities, *Work Based Learning e-Journal*, 1(1), 15-34.

Scott, D., Brown, A., Lunt, I. & Thorne, L. (2004) *Professional Doctorates: Integrating Professional and Academic Knowledge*. Maidenhead, Open University Press & SRHE.

Scottish Government (2015) Taught Postgraduate Review: Working Group Final available at:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/stakeholdergroups/PostgraduateReview/TaughtPostgraduateReviewFinalReport> [accessed 27th April 2017]

Scottish Government (2016) A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report on the Commission for Widening Access.

Servage, L. (2009) Alternative and professional doctoral programs: what is driving demand? *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(7), 765-779.

Shamir, R. (2008) The age of responsibilitization: on market embedded morality, *Economy and Society*, 37, 1-19.

Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. (2012) *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Smith, P., Curtis, H., Sanders, G., Kuit, J. & Fulton, J. (2011) Student perceptions of the professional doctorate, *Work Based Learning e-Journal*, 2(1), 135-154.

- Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. London, SAGE.
- Street, B.V. (ed) (2005) *Literacies Across Educational Contexts*. Philadelphia, Caslon Publishing.
- Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, S., Solomon, L. & Akroyd, K. (2008) *Widening participation to postgraduate study. Decisions, deterrents and creating success*. Project Report for The Higher Education Academy.
- Tennant, M. (2004) Doctoring the knowledge worker, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 26(3), 431-441.
- Tennant, M. (2006) *Psychology and Adult Learning*. Abingdon, Routledge.
- Tett, L. (2000) 'I'm working class and proud of it' - gendered experiences of non-traditional participants in higher education, *Gender in Education*, 12 (2) 183-194.
- Thomas, L. & Quinn, J. (2007) *First Generation Entry into Higher Education*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.
- Tomasz, J. and Denicolo, P. (2013) Doctoral Education: A review of the Literature Monitoring the Doctoral Student Experience in Selected OECD Countries (Mainly UK). *Springer Science Reviews*, 1: 41-49.
- Tight, M. (2012) Higher Education research 2000-2010: Changing journal publication patterns. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(5), 723-740.
- Tight, M. (2013) Discipline and methodology in higher education research, *Higher Education research and Development*, 32(1), 136-151.
- Trafford, V. & Leshem, S. (2009) Doctorateness as a threshold concept, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 46(3), 305-316.

United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing Midwifery and Health Visiting (1986) *Project 2000, UKCC: A new preparation for practice*. London, UKCCNM.

Van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching Lived Experience*. New York, SUNY.

Vincent, C. (2003) *Social Justice, Education and Identity*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Wakeling, P & Kyriacou, C. (2010) *Widening participation from undergraduate to postgraduate research degrees*. Swindon, UK : NCCPE and ESRC.

Webb, J., Schirato, T. & Danaher, G. (2002) *Understanding Bourdieu*. London, SAGE.

Wellington, J. (2013) Searching for 'doctorateness', *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(10), 1490-1503.

Wellington, J. & Sikes, P. (2006) 'A doctorate in a tight compartment': why do students choose a professional doctorate and what impact does it have on their personal and professional lives?, *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(6), 723-734.

Wildy, H., Peden, S. & Chan, K. (2014) The rise of the professional doctorate: case studies of the Doctorate in Education in China, Iceland and Australia, *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(5), 761-774.

Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labour*. Farnborough, Saxon House.

Yin, R.K. (2014) *Case Study research: Design and Methods*. London, SAGE.

Zawacki-Richter, O., Robken, H., Ehrenspeck-Kolasa, Y. & von Ossietzky, C. (2014) Research areas in adult and continuing education,. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 20(1), 68-86.

Appendix 1 - Pilot Interview Schedule



[Pilot] Interview Schedule

Grace D Poulter

0708687

Identity

Part of the aim of this research project is to allow me as the researcher alongside the participants to explore various aspects of adult/learner/student identity. — To that end, three aspects of identity would be useful to consider:

Personal identity

Professional identity

Student/learner identity

Sub-questions will be developed out of these broad themes.

Motivation

An assumption underpinning this research is that there will be a wide variety of motivational factors for the participants pursuing higher degrees. These may (or may not) be linked to the issues of identity outlined above, therefore it might be useful to view these under the same three headings:

Personal motivation

Professional motivation [credentialism/vocationalism]

Motivational factors stemming from a desire to 'be a student' [to move from 'ascribed status' to 'achieved status' through study]; study or academic success as a means of new identity formation and achievement of the affirmation of others;

Sub-questions will be developed out of these broad themes.

Speculation

A further assumption is that the participants will have entered higher degree study, in part at least, as an investment in their future personal and/or

professional ambitions and that the outcomes of their study will be linked quite specifically to these ends.

Sub-questions will be developed out of these broad themes.

Reasons for choosing a particular course/mode of study will be explored.

Participants will be asked, for example, to explain why they chose a Professional Doctorate route rather than a traditional part-time PhD by research route.

Appendix 2 - Post Pilot Interview Schedule



University of Glasgow | College of
Social Sciences

Interview Schedule (redrafted post-pilot: May 2013)

Grace D Poulter

0708687

Bio data:

Name

Age

Occupation

Current course of study

Identity: Personal

How would describe yourself?

Identity: Professional

How would you describe your job/professional role?

How do you think others would perceive your job/professional role?

Identity: Student

Can you tell me something about your present course of study?

Are you happy with your present situation or would you like it to be different?

If so, how?

Motivation

Why are you studying your present course?

Were there any professional considerations in making your decision to study for a higher degree?

Were there any incentives provided by your employer that affected your decision to study for a higher degree?

Using the metaphor of 'Were you pushed or did you jump?' How would you describe your decision to study for a higher degree?

Are you currently happy with the decision you made? Can you explain why/why not?

What do you want to achieve from your present course of study?

Speculation

Where do you hope to be, five years from now, as a person, as a professional and as a student?

...and finally... could you explain as fully as possible why you chose your present course of study rather than the other options that might have been available to you?

Appendix 3 - Consent Form



Consent Form

Title of Project:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Name of Researcher:

Grace D Poulter

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I *consent to any interviews I may give or any focus group contribution I may make being audio-taped, and understand that my anonymity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym.*
4. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
---------------------	------	-----------

Researcher	Date	Signature
------------	------	-----------

Appendix 4 - Ethics Application



University of Glasgow | College of
Social Sciences

Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Staff Research Ethics Application Outcome ☐

Postgraduate Student Research Ethics Application Outcome ☒

Application Details

Application Number: 400120020

Application Type New ☒ Resubmission ☐

Applicant's Name Grace D Poulter

Project Title Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Date application reviewed (d.m.yr) 8Apr13

Application Outcome Approved

Start Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 22 April 2013

(blank of if not approved)

End Date of Approval (d.m.yr) 01 September 2015

If the applicant has been given approval this means they can proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval.

Recommendations ☐ (where application is Not Approved)

Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. All resubmitted application documents should then be uploaded. You must include a covering letter in a separate document to explain the changes you have made to the application.

Major

Minor

| Comments — *(other than specific recommendations)*

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics Secretary.

End of Notification.

Plain Language Statement

Project title:

Does constructed learner identity reflect the reality of older adult learners currently engaged in higher degree programmes?

Researchers: Grace D Poulter

I am a part-time PhD student at the University of Glasgow. As part of my research project I would like to interview a number of students who, like me, are engaged in Higher Degree study (e.g. Professional Doctorates) in Scottish universities.

Your invitation to participate in this research

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand what your participation will involve. I have listed some FAQs below which I hope will answer any issues you might wish to have information on. If there is anything missing, or areas of uncertainty remain, please contact me directly. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish and please also feel free to take as much time as you require to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Why are you asking me?

You are being approached because you are currently a part-time student studying for a higher degree in a Scottish university.

How have I been selected for this?

I contacted senior staff within the management group for your Professional Doctorate or PhD framework to locate students who met the inclusion criteria for my project.

What will I have to do?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be interviewed by me about your experiences as a higher degree student. The interview will take about an hour and will be arranged for a time and place convenient for you. With your consent, you may also be invited to take part in a focus group with four or five other students. This will take up to one hour and will be arranged for a time and place convenient for all participants.

Will my interview and focus group contribution be kept confidential?

The interview and focus group will be audio taped and afterwards the content of both will be typed up. Freedom of Information means that there may be legal limitations to the confidentiality of the information provided. However, the original recordings will be destroyed once I have typed it up, and your name will be not be used in the written transcript of the interview or focus group, so you will not be able to be identified from it. I will write up a project report which includes an analysis section. Some excerpts from your interview and focus group contributions may be used in this section but your name will not appear anywhere. The final project report will be submitted as a thesis which will be read and assessed by members of Glasgow University staff. A copy of the analysis section and/or the thesis will be made available to you, should you request it.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is voluntary. Even if you decide to take part, you can change your mind at any time, and any data that you have already given can be withdrawn.

Will my decision whether to take part or not affect my relationship with you as a Lecturer in Academic Writing in the Graduate School at [redacted]?

No. Your decision whether or not to take part in the project will in no way affect our relationship nor the support to which you are entitled [\[redacted\]](#).

I can assure you also that steps have been taken to ensure that there will be no positive or negative impact upon the progress of your study by either your participation or non-participation in the research. Steps will be taken to ensure

that I am never solely responsible for the grading/marking of assessment material presented by you or any other participants in the project.

Who should I contact for more information?

In the first instance you should contact me by email or telephone:

[grace.poulter@\[redacted\].ac.uk](mailto:grace.poulter@[redacted].ac.uk)

01412731832

My project supervisors at Glasgow University may be contacted:

Professor Mike Osborne: Michael.Osborne@gla.ac.uk

Dr Muir Houston: Muir.Houston@gla.ac.uk

In addition if you have any general concerns remaining regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the School of Education Ethics Officer by writing to Irene McQueen at irene.mcqueen@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this plain language statement.

Appendix 6 - List of Participants

Table 2: List of Participants

Participant pseudonym	Age	Profession	Previous profession, if any	1st in family/1 st generation entrant to HE	Fully funded
James	57	Nurse/lecturer	Hospital porter	Yes	HEIa
Sarah	51	Marketing lecturer	Lab technician	Yes	HEIa
John	58	Social worker/lecturer	Electrical engineer	Yes	SW Dept
Justin	47	Nurse/researcher	Studied medicine	No	HEIa +SG
Kate	57	Lecturer in therapeutic radiography	Full-time radiographer	Yes	HEIa
Val	50	Lecturer in podiatry	Podiatrist	Yes	HEIa
Christine	52	Law lecturer	Lawyer	Yes	HEIa
Andrea	42	Occupational therapist	Insurance officer	Yes	NHS
Jessica	60	Senior lecturer in CPD in HE	Secretary/secretarial studies teacher	Yes	Self-funded
Miranda	48	Health Visitor/Senior Team Leader	'Wife and mother' until entering FE at the age of 27	Yes	NHS
Diane	42	Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing	Nurse	Yes	HEIb

Brenda	50	Dietician/Lecturer in Nutrition	Nurse	Yes	HEIa
Fiona	59	Occupational therapist	Secretary	Yes	Self-funded
Fergus	60	Counsellor	Power station engineer/minister of the church	Yes	Employer
Catriona	46	Dietician: clinical lead for Eating Disorders Service	Dietician	No	NHS

Appendix 7 - Professional Doctorate Framework

Redacted

Master of Research (MRes)

Professional Doctorate Framework (Prof Doc)

Programme Document

October 2016

Including:

Master of Research

Professional Doctorate (Health, Social Care and Nursing)

Professional Doctorate (Justice Welfare and Policy)

Professional Doctorate (Built Environment)

Professional Doctorate (Engineering)

Professional Doctorate (Public Policy & Management)

Professional Doctorate (Clinical Health)

Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice)

Doctorate of Management

Doctorate of Business Administration

General Programme Information

Programme Title	Professional Doctorate Framework
Exit Awards	Professional Masters
Final Award(s)	Professional Doctorate (Health, Social Care and Nursing) Professional Doctorate (Justice Welfare and Policy) Professional Doctorate (Built Environment) Professional Doctorate (Engineering)

	Professional Doctorate (Public Policy & Management) Professional Doctorate (Clinical Health) Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice) Doctorate of Management Doctorate of Business Administration
Awarding Body	Redacted
Approval Date	October 2006 (Approved) October 2012 (Re approved) October 2016 (Re-approval for January 2017)
School	Redacted
Host Division/Dept	TBC
Relevant professional bodies	United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education (UKGCE) The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Subject Benchmark Statement	Stage 1 (SCQF Level 11) QAA Masters' = degree characteristics Stage 2 (SCQF Level 12) QAA Doctoral characteristics - Category 3
Mode of attendance	Part-time (PT)
Duration of programme	4 - 6 years (PT) Stage 1: 21 months Stage 2: 27-48 months
Place of Delivery	Glasgow: All Professional Doctorates London: DBA and DMan Client's organisation: Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice)
Professional Doctorate Framework Leader	Redacted

(Programme Re-approval October 2016)

CONTENTS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION	
1.1 Professional Doctorate Characteristics	
1.2 Development of Professional Doctorate (UK)	
1.3 Development of Professional Doctorate (Redacted)	
2. FRAMEWORK PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENTS	
2.1 Professional Doctorate Framework Monitoring Processes	
2.2 Framework Viability	
2.2.1 Philosophy	
2.2.2 Aim	
2.2.3 Objectives	
2.2.4 Learning Outcomes	
2.2.5 Demand	
2.3 Admissions, Progression and Awards	
2.4 First Destinations	
2.5 External Assessor feedback	
2.6 Benchmarking of the programme against similar offerings elsewhere in UK higher education	
2.7 Student Feedback	
2.8 Success of enhancement plans since last review of programme	
2.9 SfL and curriculum development since last review of programme	
2.10 Other programme initiatives and developments since last review of programme	
2.11 Rationale for any proposed changes to the programme	
3. RESOURCES	
3.1 Physical Resources	

3.2	Library & Online Resources	
3.3	Human Resources	
3.4	University Central Support Services	
4. RESEARCH AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT		
4.1	Research	
4.2	Staff Development	
5. STRATEGY for LEARNING		
5.1	Introduction	
5.2	Enhancement Themes	
5.3	Learning and Teaching Approaches	
5.4	Programme Accessibility and Inclusiveness	
5.5	Internationalisation	
5.6	Management of Work Based/Practice Learning	
5.7	Engagement with External Stakeholders	
5.8	Supporting and Developing Students	
5.8.1	Student Induction and Transition	
5.8.2	Academic Support	
5.8.3	Student Performance Feedback	
5.8.4	Student Engagement	
5.8.5	Career Development & Employability	
5.9	Assessment Strategy and Loading	
5.10	Framework Specific Assessment Regulations	
5.11	Procedures for Doctoral Supervision	

Appendices

General Information

Following discussions with Governance & Quality Enhancement it was agreed so submit a single review document covering Master of Research and Professional Doctorate Framework. It was argued that this process would aid understanding and avoid repetitive duplication. The document is structured as follows; sections 1 and 2 focus separately on the two programmes' backgrounds, performance and development, whilst sections 3, 4 and 5 provide a single point of discussion regarding resources, research and staff development and Strategy for Learning.

The Professional Doctorate Framework is a suite of part-time programmes aimed at working professionals seeking to complete a doctoral thesis, although for this document's convenience suite is replaced by the term programme. The Master of Research is a taught, full-time Level 11(SCQF) research programme designed to prepare students for PhD. The two programmes are unique within the university in that they are Redacted, rather than individual School programmes and are therefore scrutinised by Research Degree Committee. Secondly the programmes are multi-disciplinary in delivery and receipt; in that staff from across the university are involved in teaching and supervision similarly students are recruited from across the university, rather than from a specific subject area. Thirdly the two programmes are research focussed and seek to prepare the student for a doctoral thesis, either in the form of PhD or a Professional Doctorate. Each programme is led by a director. The Directors are overseen by the University's three Associate Deans of Research, although ultimately the Directors are answerable to the Vice Principal Research. The programmes are scrutinised for quality control purposes by Research Degrees Committee.

The Professional Doctorate is studied part-time in two stages. Students are expected possess a Master's qualification or an Honours degree (1st/2.1) and have at least five years professional experience. Students enrol on a taught 21 month programme (stage 1) prior to progressing to doctoral thesis. The Master of Research is similarly designed to prepare a student for a PhD or work as a professional researcher following a 1 year + 3 year route. Entry qualification is

an Honours degree (1st/2:1/2:2), although many students possess a Master's degree. The Master of Research is available on a full-time or part-time basis and is designed to deepen a student's knowledge and skills of research methods. Both the Professional Doctorate and The Master of Research require non-native English speakers to possess IELTS 6.5 or similar.

The following section General Information is split 1.1 (Professional Doctorate) and 1.2 (Master of Research)

1.1 PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE FRAMEWORK

1.1.1 Professional Doctorate origins and characteristics

The Professional Doctorate emerged in the 1990s in response to middle-senior professionals' criticism that PhDs were ill suited to their needs (Powell & Long 2005). They argued that professionals wanted to develop their learning within a more applied, structured programme than that found in a PhD, but also one that was relevant to their practice (Deher and Smith 2011). These characteristics: common interests, defined community, and shared resources i.e. experiences, effectively align to Lave and Wenger's (1998) communities of practice philosophy. Using this philosophy within a supportive environment Burmeister (2015) maintains, accelerates learning and ultimately leads to higher order affective and cognitive abilities, because it is viewed as more relevant to the learner's needs. Others (Morley and Petty 2010; Yam 2005) also highlight the benefits of learning Communities of Practice, particularly its role in aiding retention and ultimately improving completion rates.

QAA (2015) and ESRC (2016) posit most professional doctorates include a taught or directed study element and invariably include research methods, as well as elements designed to broaden and deepen the students' understanding of the disciplines in which the student is researching. Common to all professional doctorates is that the thesis is rooted in the student's own organisation, but has relevance to wider professional practice; as the two professional bodies (QAA and ESRC) note The Professional Doctorate differs from a PhD in that it should contribute to both theory and practice.

1.1.2. Professional Doctorate development (UK)

Postgraduate Research provision within the UK has steadily increased from 98,910 in 2009/2010 to 111,495 in 2013/2014 (McGloin & Wynne 2015). The majority of this increase has been driven by international students who now represent 30% of the total, whilst the gender balance (men:women) is one of near equal distribution. PhDs dominate postgraduate research provision, but there has been significant growth in professional doctorates, albeit from a low level and now constitute more than 5% of the total student PGR population (McGloin and Wynne 2015). Burmeister (2015), Mellors-Bourne et al (2016) and O'Carroll (2014) all believe there is potential for further growth, because the majority of PhD graduates would be better suited to a Professional Doctorate as many will become practitioners, not Academics or Researchers. It appears that the post 92 universities have embraced Professional Doctorates more enthusiastically than their more traditional counterparts, perhaps because the Professional Doctorate emphasises CPD and work place learning. Mellors-Bourne et al (2016) identified several characteristics of the Professional Doctorate market. Firstly, four subjects dominate: education, business, psychology, and health and social care; although as more universities have entered and continue to enter the market there is an increasing proliferation of subjects. Secondly health and social care's popularity has waned over the last five years, because of constrained public sector funding. This may explain why many cohorts struggle to achieve 20 or more students. Thirdly universities have marketed the Professional Doctorate poorly perhaps fearful of undermining the PhD, but also their use of multiple qualification titles confuses the market and possibly diminishes its credibility.

1.3. Professional Doctorate development (Redacted)

Redacted launched its first Professional Doctorate programme in January 2007 focussed on health and social care. The programme was revalidated in 2012 and broadened to encompass five new disciplines to create a Framework. A sixth new programme: Public Policy & Management was subsequently validated in 2013. The Professional Doctorate Framework is one of only two taught university programmes available to all Schools, the other is Master of Research and both draw on lecturers from across the institution to support the two programmes. The Professional Doctorate's philosophy is based upon the principles of lifelong

learning. It aims to create scholarly practice and facilitate the development of a professional researcher who can apply higher order analysis and reasoning for the Common Good within their own organisation and their profession. In this respect, practice can be located in the public, voluntary or private sector.

The Professional Doctorate at Redacted is characterised by:

- structured development of communities of practice to support learning and the wider academic experience
- multi-disciplinary learning within Stage 1 modules to produce changes in practice or evidence to justify current practice
- clear emphasis upon professional development and the shift from operational to strategic thinking and leadership behaviours within a Social Good framework
- robust support systems to frame individual and cohort experience
- access to learning activities available for all doctoral students from the Graduate School
- clear communication with [REDACTED] researchers and employers to enhance the immediacy of research and practice.

Evidence indicates that [REDACTED]'s Professional Doctorate has continued to enjoy a strong reputation amongst students, employers and other providers in the sector, for example in rising student numbers, oral and written feedback from students and employers, as well as staff's involvement in the sector, for example examining students and presenting to peers. A repeatedly cited characteristic has been the role of the cohort in the learning experience. The use of 5 x 1 week on campus blocks distinguishes the Framework from many other universities which tend to favour shorter residencies and increasingly rely on technology to minimise class contact time. Evidence from students highlight the positives of the current structure:, for example Respondent 17 stated "*I feel I benefitted from the face to face delivery of the modules*", a point that Respondent 21 elaborated on, particularly regarding the benefits of week blocks

The format of stage 1 including the taught blocks. I really like the 5 day taught format, as it makes it easier when

travelling a distance - this was one of the main reasons I applied to [REDACTED] and certainly a strength of this programme #21

This pattern of repeated attendance allows deeper relationships to emerge between staff and students, but particularly between students. Respondent 20 highlighted *the developing structure within a strong cohort group* as important in the learning experience. A view echoed by respondent 11 who stated *“The cohort experience which has been so valuable in staying connected and supported.”* However maybe respondent 23’s succinct comment when asked to identify what they had enjoyed most about the Professional Doctorate was the most telling. He/she simply stated *“The cohort”*

A further strength is the involvement of academics across the university. This multi-disciplinary input is regarded as one of the Framework’s key strengths in fusing the intellectual demands of doctoral work with the demands of practice. Respondent 2 pinpointed the quality of the management and content of the modules, as well the lecturers’ enthusiasm *“I thought the modules were very well run and were both very interesting. The lecturers were all good and enthusiastic”* Students not only value the teaching staff’s academic knowledge, but their ability to translate academic thinking into the realities of the workplace, for example respondent 14 highlighted *The practicality of the teaching as it relates to our professional experience* Students argue the constant interaction of staff and students, especially within the week blocks enriches their learning experience and forces them to be more innovative in their thinking and practice, perhaps best summarised by Respondent 3 who cogently stated *“The campus classes and interaction with faculty and cohort. It gives a new perspective each time.”*

2. FRAMEWORK PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENTS

This section reviews the monitoring processes used to ensure the Professional Doctorate Framework and Master of Research align to University guidelines and more widely good sectoral practice. Discussion subsequently examines the

Framework's Viability, its philosophy, aim and objectives, before reviewing the two programmes' performance in the period 2012-2016 including the thoughts of external assessors and students. This information provides a platform to explain proposed changes to the Professional Doctorate Framework and MRes starting January 2017. The following section is divided 2.1 (Professional Doctorate) and 2.2 (Master of Research).

2.1.1 Professional Doctorate Framework Monitoring Processes

The Programme is monitored in a number of ways to ensure quality and consistency. Operational day to day matters are overseen by the Professional Doctorate Framework Director supported by a full-time administrator responsible exclusively for the Professional Doctorate Framework and the Masters in Research. This administrative focus is important, because of the unique nature of the Professional Doctorate Framework and its counterpart Research in Masters i.e university wide programmes. This unusual feature explains why the Professional Doctorate Framework and Research in Masters are overseen by the three Schools' Associate Deans Research, but ultimately the two Directors are accountable to the Vice Principal Research. This re-alignment took effect from 1 August 2016 and reflects the university's desire to promote and more clearly integrate the Professional Doctorate and Masters in Research within the University's Research portfolio. The University Executive envisages minimal operational change.

Internal and external processes scrutinise the Framework's activities to ensure it is managed and monitored in line with University Regulations and wider sectoral practices. Stage 1 committees annually include two Student Staff Consultative Committees, two Programme Boards and two Assessment Boards, all sitting in April and September. The Student Staff Consultative Group is convened by a student, the Programme Board by the Professional Doctorate Framework Director and the Assessment Board by the Programme Director, Master of Research. Membership of the Assessment Board and the Programme Board are open to all staff teaching on Stage 1, but specifically module and unit leads, as well as relevant support staff. The Student Staff Consultative Group comprises 2-3 class representatives, the Professional Doctorate Framework Director, and

invited academics and support staff. An External Assessor attends Assessment Boards. These various boards' minutes will feed into Research Degrees Committee, reflecting its position as a university research programme.

At Stage 2, the various Schools' Progression & Awards Boards will be responsible for quality controlling the students' progress in line with the regulations approved by the Higher Degrees Committee. The Higher Degrees Committee will continue to have overall responsibility for overseeing the quality of the entire programme. Annually submitted in October there is the submission of a Programme Analysis and Programme Improvement. The appointment of an external assessor who has specific knowledge and expertise of Professional Doctorate programmes to ensure the Framework operates in a manner akin to others within the sector. The assessor is Director of a comparable Professional Doctorate at Sunderland University and will demit in September 2017.

2.1.2 Framework Viability

2.1.2.1 Philosophy

The Professional Doctorate's philosophy is based upon the principles of lifelong learning to create a professional researcher who can apply higher order analysis and reasoning skills within their own organisation and their own profession. In this respect, practice can be located in the public, voluntary or private sector, but is subject to the idea that outcomes are conditioned by the principle of the Common Good.

2.1.2.2 Aim

The aim of the Professional Doctorate Framework is to provide middle - senior professionals with an academic framework to question the complex relationships between professional practice, theory, policy and research. The process will enable the student to synthesise their professional knowledge in a body of work, most notably their doctoral thesis that will impact positively on their organisation and the profession in terms of practice and theory. Underpinning this aim is a set of objectives.

2.1.2.3 Objectives

These objectives will enable learners through a rigorous academic programme to become scholarly practitioners capable of appropriate higher level cognitive skills relevant to the participating organization's goals and society more broadly, notably;

- 1 The ability to be an independent lifelong learner in a chosen field making an original and valuable contribution to knowledge and practice.
- 2 Provide a learning framework which enables students to develop critical and evaluative skills in research methodology.
- 3 Deepen their professional knowledge to more effectively engage and lead within their chosen sector
- 4 Demonstrate professional project management skills, including goal setting, prioritization, designing and executing data acquisition and collation, planning and organizing written work and effective time management;
- 5 High level competencies as an ethical professional, inter alia, ethics, health and safety, copyright, data protection, practice and intellectual property rights;
- 6 Skilled oral, written and IT ability to construct, sustain and articulate an argument to a diverse audience
- 7 Critically reflect and synthesise their learning experiences to improve individual and organisational performance.
- 8 Demonstrate through various learning activities the value of the social good to individuals, organisations and society

2.1.2.4 Learning Outcomes

On completion of the Professional Doctorate the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate reflective, self-critical, flexible and ethical working practices, challenging current professional policies and practice.
- Critically evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and data in a variety of practice settings
- Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry in their chosen area, and select appropriate methodologies for their study.
- Evaluate networking, team building and partnership working as tools in the context of effective professional practice.

- Design and execute a major project (for example research, intervention, development, service redesign, change management) demonstrating leading edge knowledge and understanding in creative and original work, that is relevant and contributes to practice.
Develop advanced skills relevant to professional practice, alongside learning achieved through applied research and service development.
- Achieve personal excellence, and influence the way in which organisations achieve sustainable, ethical change.
- Communicate at many different levels, for example through publication and transfer of knowledge and understanding in critical dialogue with others.
- Take responsibility for their own work and demonstrate leadership in team and group activity.
- Communicate the product of personal and group based learning activities in effective and innovative ways.

2.1.2.5 Demand

Evidence (QAA 2015) suggests that Professional Doctorate numbers continue to grow, although in absolute terms they are overshadowed by PhDs. It is calculated that Professional Doctorates constitute 5%+ of Post Graduate research market i.e. approximately 6,000 students in UK, but Mellors-Bourne et al (2016) CRAC report believe this is an under estimate given some universities do not categorise the different doctoral offerings. Data from England (Mellors-Bourne et al 2016) indicates that more universities are continuing to enter the market and feedback suggests those not already in the market are contemplating entry, this growth in supply suggests universities believe there is further potential Evidence from Scotland indicates all 19 HEIs bar UHI and Royal Conservatoire offer a Professional Doctorate. [REDACTED] offers the widest range of programmes, although a number of universities such as Queen Margaret University focus solely on one provision, namely health.

One hundred and sixty five students have enrolled on the Professional Doctorate since January 2007, cohorts have ranged from 13 to 27; although because of

transfers from one cohort to another, numbers fluctuate, so that for example in September 2016 will see the largest cohort, n=31.

2.1.3 Admissions

Professional Doctorate applicants must possess the same academic qualifications as PhD applicants i.e. a Master's or 1st or 2.1 honours degree, IELTS 6.5 or equivalent; but in addition, applicants must also have a minimum of five years professional experience and be working. The admission process aligns to PhD students, including face-to-face interview. All students are interviewed by Director of Programmes (ProfD) and an academic identified by a School Postgraduate Tutor. This academic will normally become the student's academic tutor and subsequently Director Studies. The presence of the Director of Programmes (ProfD) is to ensure the applicant's suitability, but also consistency in terms of selection and interviewing.

Where there is inadequate documented educational experience, but extensive professional experience, the applicant may submit further evidence e.g. policy documents, other professional artefacts authored by the applicant, published work, national guidelines or evidence of patents and professional peer acknowledgement. When there are perceived gaps in knowledge or skill it may be necessary to request applicants to enrol on a related programme of study to attain baseline skills prior to submitting an application to the Professional Doctorate Framework.

Modules in Stage 1 of the programme encompass level 11 (Masters) and Level 12 (Doctoral) learning outcomes. Exemptions may be granted on following basis

- Exemption of Research Methods module (60 level M), if the applicant possesses a Masters in Research (M Res) or Masters in Philosophy (M Phil);
- Exemption of Professional Development (45 level M) if the applicant possesses a Master in Business Administration or Management degree which has a substantial content related to strategic visioning and leadership;
- Exemption from Professional Enhancement/Applied Practice/Independent Negotiated Study modules(45 level M) and Group Negotiated Study (15

level M) may be granted upon submission of a portfolio of evidence which will be reviewed by Professional Doctorate Framework Director and Module Leader

All exemptions will follow university procedures

All students must undertake the Project Development, Design and Management module, as the precursor to the doctoral thesis.

Admissions at 1 January of each year

Cohort	Health	Justice	Built	Eng	Policy	DMan	DBA	Total
6 (2012)	13	2	1	0	n/a	0	5	21
7 (2013)	5	1	0	0	0	0	6	12
8 (2014)	4	1	1	0	0	2	2	10
9 (2015)	14	1	1	1	3	1	5	26
10 (2016)	5	0	3	2	0	1	11	22

Health, Social Care & Nursing and DBA have proved the most popular programmes. Historically the Professional Doctorate (Health, Social Care and Nursing) has been the most popular admission route, although in 2013 and 2014 applications and admissions dwindled as NHS and other health organisations experienced financial strictures. A bounce occurred in 2015 through a combination of factors: renewed interest amongst School of Health & Life Science staff recently promoted to managerial positions, as well as externally better health funding in the public and voluntary sectors, however numbers again dropped in 2016. The data appears to mimic Mellors-Bourne assertion that health programmes are in long term decline. Growth in future may lie in the

DBA. It has recruited every year since its inception and in 2016 became the most popular doctoral pathway and the most nationally diverse. Students include British, Emirati, Italian, Nigerian and Omani. The DBA's profile in terms of nationalities, professional experience, age closely parallels Graf's (2014) research into the global DBA market i.e. 6 (Graf = 4) nationalities, cohort size 11 (13) and 64% (78%) international. Indications for 2017 suggest the DBA will again be the largest pathway and the most diverse.

The Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) builds on previous managerial/business knowledge to develop the professional's expertise, notably in strategy, human resources and innovation. These themes similarly underpin the DMan programme and is the bedrock for a further 5 programmes (Health, Social Care & Nursing; Justice Welfare; Built Environment, Engineering, and Public Policy & Management). These six doctoral pathways are aimed at professionals who have risen to middle-senior professional positions, but require academic managerial frameworks to critically understand and synthesise their professional experiences. Understanding and synthesising these professional experience within a single module (Professional Development) provides a number of benefits. It creates sustainability: academically and financially amongst a number programmes recruiting small numbers. Academically it allows the student to experience a broader range of contexts, but critically understand universal issues. Financially this model means economies of scale are created through the amalgamation of six programmes. All seven programmes' students undertake Research Methods. The rationale again is academic and financial which although instigated by the Programme Team/University was accepted and enjoyed by students. The students valued and enjoyed the benefits of this multi-disciplinary environment, for example respondent 12 stated, *"The introduction to research has been very good with the interaction with other students being very rewarding"*.

2.1.4 Progression and Awards

Students	Matriculated + tfr in	Reasons for withdrawal and	Time Out	Transfer to later	Asked to withdraw	Exiting with	Currently
----------	-----------------------	----------------------------	----------	-------------------	-------------------	--------------	-----------

	from earlier cohort	numbers		cohort		ProfM	under taking thesis
Cohort 6 (2012)	21	Personal, health, financial and work pressure = 5 Maternity leave = 1	0	0	3	3	7
Cohort 7 (2013)	12	Family ill-health = 2 students	1	1 (cohort 8)	1	0	7
Cohort 8 (2014)	10 + 1(c8)	Work pressure n = 3 1	1	1 (cohort 10)	1	0	5
Cohort 9 (2015)	26	Work pressure =2 Maternity leave = 1		8 (cohort 10)	1	0	0
Cohort 10 (2016)	22 +1(c8)+8(c 9)	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not applicable

The data reveals Cohort numbers have fluctuated in the period 2012-2016, but are generally larger than many other universities' professional doctorate programmes (Mellors-Bourne et al 2016). This reflects the fact that the cohort is housed within a Framework of 7 programmes. This encourages a richer learning experience, but also provides economies of scale. It is predicted that the Framework will witness its largest cohort in September 2016, n =31, following a significant number of transfers. A student may take time out and transfer to another cohort. These transfers arise due to three reasons: work commitments, family issues, funding difficulties. The Framework has recruited 165 students

since its creation in 2007. Thirty-one students have successfully completed their thesis, 20 have chosen to exit with a Professional Masters award, because of changing personal circumstances often as a result of organisational changes e.g. student's role and responsibilities have increased, organisation unable to keep funding, child born. Twenty-six students have withdrawn since 2007 primarily because of work commitments, family issues, and/or funding difficulties. A smaller number have failed to complete elements of the programme and been asked to leave the course; although discussions with the student invariably identify problems at work, in the family or with funding as playing a part in the student's academic failure. This skew identified in the first five years (2007-11) has been replicated in the second five years (2012-16). Fourteen students chose to withdraw, compared to 6 who were asked to withdraw. Hearteningly, no student has ever cited programme dissatisfaction for their departure. The Programme Director and the wider Programme Team recognise however that inevitably during a study period of 4-6 years competing demands (work/family/funding) will occur and lead to a student leaving. Currently 48 students are in stage 1 cohort 7 (1 student), cohort 8(1), cohort 9 (15) and cohort 10 (31). A further 40 students are undertaking their thesis (stage 2).

University data indicates that if a Professional Doctorate student enters Stage 2 (doctoral thesis), they will complete their thesis. In five of the last six years there has been a 100% success rate, the one blemish occurred when a student withdrew because of work/family commitments. This success rate is higher than PhD. Hefec suggests approximately 72.3%, of PhD students successfully complete, whilst [REDACTED]'s own PhD completion rate hovers around 66%. Students cite a number of reasons for their success: quality of supervisory team, strong family support, a keen belief in their self-efficacy, but repeatedly commented is the presence of a supportive cohort established at Stage 1 (Robb, Halcro & Poulter 2016). Students frequently use peer support and advice to problem solve issues encountered during their doctorate. This observation is re-enforced by anecdotal evidence from staff and supervisory teams.

2.1.4 First Destinations

Professional Doctoral students are already in employment and are pursuing their study on a part-time basis. Many are promoted or switch posts during the four

years that they are on the programme. Data from the first five cohorts of students following suggested nearly a third of students during stage one of their programme either gained a promotion or a secondment e.g. Scottish Government. In the second review period (2012-16) examples include Malaysian MP, Arsul Sani who stated “the Professional Development module helped me develop my campaign to become a MP in Malaysia”. Further evidence of The Professional Doctorate enhancing a student’s career is a cohort 10 student, who has secured promotion within Shell Nigeria, in part due to the Professional Doctorate. It is also evident that some students use their study and subsequent qualification to change career, for example 1 student left local authority social work to pursue a career in academe. An emerging trend is the entrepreneur either seeking to establish their own business or develop their business further, for example in cohort 9 two students run their own business; a number that has doubled in cohort 10.

2.1.5 External Assessor feedback

There have been two external assessors in the period 2012-2016. Firstly, Prof Melanie Jasper (2011-13) and then subsequently Prof Gail Sanders (2013-17) following Prof Jasper’s untimely death. Professor Gail Sanders is programme leader Professional Doctorate Sunderland University. She was appointed in November 2013 and her tenure will end in November 2017.

The externals have praised the Professional Doctorate for being “a very well-run and administered programme”. Prof Jasper cited the programme as a good example of interdisciplinary learning and teaching that enabled generic outcomes to be achieved, despite various different disciplines. She particularly praised the learning benefits to be gained in amalgamating the various programmes through common modules to enable wider and deeper learning. She saw this integration as an example of good practice, because it encouraged higher cognitive thinking, since it forced students to synthesise a myriad of experiences to their own experiences, but also wider academic thinking. Prof Sanders has similarly been very positive about the quality of the teaching, management and administration of the programme. She also highlights cites the

Framework's multi-disciplinarity both in terms of student profile and lecturer involvement. She argues "the curriculum design and the integrated nature of the cohorts reinforce the view of the course team and the students that there are more benefits to be gained from this multi-disciplinary approach". The programme team is pleased with the consistently positive feedback they have enjoyed, but where constructive criticism has occurred the programme/module team has sought to remedy.

An example occurred in Research Methods (2013-14) which Prof Sanders attributed to the assessment instrument's overly complex instructions. She accepted that the module team had provided further detailed verbal explanation, but suggested future assessments consider simplifying their language. This criticism was accepted and more succinct instructions provided for cohort 2014.

2.1.6 Benchmarking of the programme against similar offerings elsewhere in UK higher education

Stage 1 of the programme is benchmarked against the QAA (2015) Masters' degree characteristics. In Stage 2 it is benchmarked against QAA Doctoral characteristics - Category 3, as well as UKCGE criteria. Additionally it is benchmarked against other similar programmes across the United Kingdom through the judgement of the External Examiner and also through the activities of staff who act as external examiners for other Professional Doctorate programmes across the country, as well as involvement in UKCHE activities.

2.1.7 Student Feedback

Student feedback is routinely collected following each unit of study in Stage 1 of the programme. This is collated by the programme leader and used to inform the development of subsequent Units in the programme. It is also reported on at the Student Staff Consultative meetings, Programme Boards and is included in the Annual Programme Report where each module leader provides an analysis of their respective module over the course of that year. At the end of Stage 1, students are also asked to reflect upon the first fifteen months of their experience. Also, upon satisfactory conclusion of Stage 2 and the successful

defence of their thesis, students are again asked to comment upon their experience of supervision, support by the university and the development of their doctoral research.

More informal feedback on the qualitative nature of the collective learning experience is also provided in the form of a group reflective diary which offers an insight into each cohort's unique experience of the programme.

A survey (Appendix ?) was undertaken of current and past students in early Summer 2016. Using [REDACTED] email addresses 165 students were emailed of whom 28 replied (17%) response rate. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, 100% said they would recommend the Professional Doctorate. Recurrent themes highlighted many positive features:

- Excellent and engaging teaching
- The role of the cohort in creating communities of scholars, and friendships
- Excellent support systems for students to encourage personal and professional development
- Role of formative assessment in highlighting strengths and weaknesses
- Academic writing workshops in helping to understand how to write academically
- Positive reviews in terms of management of the programme:
- Strengthened critical skills and knowledge to the benefit of self and organisation

Areas that the Programme Team need to consider tended to be one off and few common criticisms emerged, although a number would like more academic writing workshops/retreats. Three also highlighted points regarding quantitative statistics either in accessibility to lecturer (lecturer retired) or wish for more advanced statistic course to be offered to those interested.

2.1.8 Success of enhancement plans since last review of programme

Agreement was obtained in 2012 from Learning, Teaching Quality Committee that the programme's Annual Programme Approval (APA) submission would switch from June to October to reflect the end of the 21 month taught period i.e. October submission. APAs are submitted in October.

Improvement plan objectives for 2012	APA Section	SMART TARGET	Outcomes
Introduce formative assessment in Research Methods to combat high fail rate			Feedback from students at SSCG was very positive about the benefits of the formative assignments.
Realign Research Methods so that qualitative and quantitative methods run in parallel, instead of in tandem			Feedback from students at SSCG was very positive about the restructuring of the module, because it demonstrated more clearly the symbiotic relationship of the two data
Development of doctoral writing skills.		Additional workshops were introduced to support students in the development of doctoral writing skills at key points during stage	Student feedback excellent
The introduction of module feedback via Survey Monkey			Resulted in more focused student feedback which could

following each teaching block			be directed in a more timely manner to the relevant staff.
Improvement Plan for 2013	APA Section	SMART TARGETS for	Outcomes
To evaluate the effectiveness of the academic writing programme in preparation for full implementation in 2015	Good Practice		
To establish a programme review/development group in January 2015 in preparation for a programme Re-approval in Easter 2016			Delayed following discussion with Director Graduate School regarding organisational re-structuring of the Graduate School
To enhance the marketing material by the inclusion of additional student podcast in the website	Admissions	To record an addition 5 student podcasts May 2015 and put these on the Graduate School web site.	
Improvement Plan for 2014	APA Section	SMART TARGETS for	Outcomes
Improvement Plan for 2015			
Director retired March 8 2015. The post was subsequently vacant for 8 months. No APA completed.			

2.1.9 SfL and curriculum development since last review of programme

Developments since the last review (2011) have included:

1. It was agreed to extend by one day, each of the teaching blocks to five day. This allowed additional classes, notably academic writing workshops, which the team now regard as core. This proposal came into effect from January 2015
2. To pull students requests the January teaching week was moved from the first week of January to the second week. This made it easier and cheaper for students to book airline seats and find accommodation. This proposal came into effect from January 2014
3. The appointment of a dedicated Academic Development Tutor responsible for developing students' academic writing skills through a series of group workshops, but also 1:1 support sessions. This proposal came into effect from January 2013
4. The decision to switch Quantitative and Qualitative Research from a tandem delivery to parallel delivery has helped students better understand and integrate the two arms of data. It emerged that tandem delivery encouraged silo thinking. This proposal came into effect from January 2013
5. Failure rate, especially in Quantitative data led to assessment re-write to simply and clarify what was required for the assessment. This proposal came into effect from January 2015

2.1.10 Other programme initiatives and developments since last review of programme

The Professional Doctorate programme has continued to build on the positive feedback it has received from students, staff and external examiners. It has sought to collaborate with stakeholders in adopting ideas it believes will

strengthen the experience and outcome of the programmes. An example is the collaboration with Sunderland university in January 2015 jointly hosting a conference of the two universities Professional Doctorate work. Unfortunately this could not be replicated in 2016 because Sunderland University was unable to financially support.

It should be noted that following the retirement of the previous Director Professional Doctorate Framework in early March 2016 the post remained vacant for nearly 8 months. This inevitably created difficulties, particularly in terms of student support and may help to explain the high number of student transfers from cohort 9 to cohort 10. Secondly it is too early to comment on the decision in August 2016 to transfer the administration and management of the Professional Doctorate to the three Associate Deans Research, but it is important to critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of this decision in the coming year.

2.1.11 Rationale for any proposed changes to the programme

It is proposed to retain many of the Professional Doctorate Framework's key features i.e. 2 stages; 4 taught modules at Master's level and a Project module at Doctoral level, as well as a thesis rooted in the workplace. The following Doctorates (Health, Social Care & Nursing; Justice, Welfare & Policy, Built Environment; Engineering, Public Policy & management will continue to follow the same programme as DMan at Stage 1 However, the programme team recognises that the Professional Doctorate Framework must continue to evolve in the wake of stakeholder feedback and what is seen as an increasingly competitive market. It is therefore proposed to change the following

Proposed Change	Rationale for change
To more explicitly align the Framework's content to Caledonian University's research strategy	To better reflect its status as a research degree To enact the Executive's decision to require all programmes to incorporate University research themes

<p>To offer two new pathways: Professional Doctorate (Clinical Health) and Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice)</p>	<p>Professional Doctorate (Clinical Health) Recognition that numbers have declined due to NHS funding strictures; however staff feedback indicates that there may be demand for a deepening specialist programme akin to principle found in EngD Some Health, Social Care and Nursing Professional Doctoral thesis have been more explicitly rooted in professional (clinical) practice, than in the Professional Doctorate's professional development principles and theories. This is a legacy of [REDACTED]'s professional doctorate originating in health</p> <p>Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice) This programme is designed as a business to business (B2B) model aimed at UK and International partners seeking a bespoke university level programme. This programme is only available where the University believes financially and/or strategically it is in the University's interests. The programme is delivered through the School for Work Based Education (SWBE). The expansion of SWBE's portfolio to incorporate Professional Doctorate aligns well to both SWBE's</p>
--	---

	<p>primary aim and Professional Doctorate philosophy i.e using work based experiences to inform learning and practice. It also supports [REDACTED]'s strategy to increase non-funding council income and further develop its Transnational Education growth. SWBE has discussed the Professional Doctorate with potential clients. Where it is agreed the delivery time and place may change to best accommodate the client and the other commitments of the University experts who will support the delivery.</p>
<p>To launch the DBA and DMan in London in September 2017</p>	<p>[REDACTED] London has the experience and capacity to deliver DMan and DBA programmes. Staff currently supervise 15 PhD students. [REDACTED] London believes offering the DBA and DMan will complement, but also further sustain its existing staff and associated resources.</p> <p>London and southeast is UK's most populous and richest area. It is home to some of the world's largest MNCs and at the same time the region also boasts the highest entrepreneurial in UK and more widely in Europe.</p> <p>The Professional Doctorate's emphasis on practice will allow [REDACTED] to broaden its range of offerings to</p>

	<p>existing and potential customers.</p> <p>Offered in September this start date will complement Glasgow's January start date. Currently some applicants are dissuaded from applying/re/applying given entry only occurs once a year (January) A September entry point should broaden the Framework's marketability.</p> <p>Offering the programmes at two different sites in two different cycles offers opportunities to students to attend missed teaching</p>
To rebrand Engineering Doctorate(EngD) as Professional Doctorate (Engineering)	<p>To more clearly reflect the reality of the programme's managerial and research methods content. Currently there are no specific engineering modules offered on the EngD.</p> <p>Mellors-Bourne et al argued although EngD led to a deeper knowledge of engineering, its lack of research methods invalidated its Professional Doctorate status</p>
<p>Thesis and viva</p> <p>a) To confirm thesis word count as 55,000 words (+/- 10%), although clinical professional doctorate would have a minimum word count of 30,000 words. This difference mirrors pro rata, [REDACTED]'s word count range</p>	<p>To more clearly differentiate the Professional Doctorate thesis from its PhD counterpart.</p> <p>Currently there is a degree of ambiguity surrounding word count, various documents list word count as anywhere between 50,000 and 80,000 words. The practice of 80,000 may in part reflect a</p>

<p>b) To introduce a critical 5,500 word self reflective report</p> <p>c) To add a practitioner to the oral examination team</p>	<p>desire to demonstrate quantitative comparability to a PhD; however sectoral practice is 50,000 - 60,000 words.</p> <p>Secondly the introduction of a self reflective report supports the thinking of the principles found in Community of Practice</p> <p>The appointment of a practitioner will strengthen the fundamental feature of the professional doctoral thesis that it should impact on practice AND theory</p>
Create new 45 credit module for DBA	<p>Student and staff feedback indicates that using Professional Development for DBA is flawed as it contains many elements that are common to an MBA. The increase in DBA applicants, many of whom studied an MBA weakens the intellectual rigour of the module. It is therefore proposed to create a new 45 credit Level 11 module, <i>Professional Enhancement</i> which will explore new areas of thinking in strategy, human resources and innovation.</p>
Create new 45 credit module for Professional Doctorate (Applied Practice)	<p>This Level 11 module will be constructed on a bespoke basis following discussions between SWBE and client. It is recognised that each client has different needs and therefore each 45 credit module may be unique. Each bespoke 45 credit module will seek approval following university guidelines on a case by case basis</p>

Create new 45 credit module for Professional Doctorate (Clinical Health)	This Level 11 module uses a long standing model from the School of Health & Life Sciences. This model is based on an independent negotiated programme of study agreed between the student and the Programme Team. It recognises that a number of professionals wish to deepen their knowledge in a specific health subject, rather than managerial. This subject area relates to issue(s) in the workplace. It arguably follows the principles of EngD i..e. deepening subject specific knowledge in relation to a work based problem; however it avoids Mellors-Bourne et al's criticism of the EngD's limited Research Methods
Create a new 15 credit module: Group Negotiated Study	Develop team working skills, a skill identified by UK doctoral students as a weakness To explicitly enact a project that reflects the University's mission of the Common Good and explicitly practices the philosophy of [REDACTED]'s Professional Doctorate
To re balance the Research Methods (70 credits) and Professional modules (50) to the Research Methods (60 credits) and Professional modules (60)	This tweaking reflects weighting of many other Professional doctorates, secondly the re-weighting mirrors Redacted's Masters modules use of modules divisible by 15 credits

3. RESOURCES

3.1 Physical Resources

The current Glasgow estate includes 105,000m² of buildings and 8.6 hectares of grounds.

- The Saltire Centre is the focus of learning and student services for all students in [REDACTED]. The 10,500 sq. m, five-floor facility houses the library and offers students and staff: 1,250 internet-connected study spaces; a 600-seat learning café; 360,000 tagged books; use of 360 computers; access to 23,000 journals and a wide range of databases; a laptop and software borrowing facility;
- Glasgow Campus has 98 lecture rooms, seating between 16 and 498 students. All rooms are equipped with data projection, internet-enabled computer, whiteboard and overhead projector (OHP);
- The campus is wifi enabled using a UK-wide HEI login system called Eduroam. In addition to this, there are 36 computer rooms (labs) with between 14 and 40 machines, all with a range of software and printing facilities;
- The Professional Doctorate's teaching and learning occurs in the Centre for Executive Education. This building is a dedicated space for Masters and Doctoral students, as well as small conferences. It comprises 8 teaching rooms a large break-out space, as well as a café. Rooms are configured to house between 15 and 60 students;
- [REDACTED] is currently investing £30 million in a major refurbishment of Hamish Wood and George Moore buildings. This refurbishment will lead to state-of-the-art academic teaching and research facilities, provide multi-purpose classrooms and a 500-seat flexible lecture theatre for exams, graduations and events.

3.2 Library & Online Resources

Our award-winning library, the Saltire Centre, gives access to more than 270,000 books, 350 open-access desktop PCs, laptops and other AV equipment, as well as providing access to a huge range of online resources including databases, e-books, journals and more. Students also have access to a variety of software packages such as Microsoft Office, SPSS and NVivo which are available to download onto their personal computer. The library is open seven days a week, with support available from staff at the library desk and throughout the building. Research students are supported by a team of academic librarians who offer tailored one-to-one support to help them make effective use of information resources, including databases and open access sources. They can provide advice and support by email, over the telephone and in person including copyright, citation searching and referencing. The library offers a variety of study spaces so that students can choose a place that best suits their needs, be it social and group study on the lower levels or individual and silent study on the upper levels. The library is also home to the Archives and Special Collections, which hold rare and unique items from [REDACTED]'s past together with other collections of national importance.

Research software such as NVivo 10 and SPSS 21, 22 and 23 are available for students to access from any PC on-campus via the “appstore”. For further information on the appstore please see: [http://www.\[redacted\].ac.uk/staff/it/\[redacted\]appstore/](http://www.[redacted].ac.uk/staff/it/[redacted]appstore/) and both NVivo and SPSS are available through the Work at Home website which can be accessed off-campus to allow users to download the software at home. For details of this service, please see: <http://servicedesk.gcal.ac.uk/software>.

3.3 Human Resources

The programmes have a multi-disciplinary faculty from all three schools of the university (Glasgow School for Business and Society (GSBS); School of Health and

Life Sciences (SHLS) and School of Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE), all of whom have a doctoral qualification or are in the final stages of submission. They all have international experience, many have full or part-time experience in the corporate world and the students are supported by a dedicated academic writing lecturer based in the Graduate School;

The majority of academic faculty have tenure and are appointed at one of nine levels of seniority, five grades of which have a portfolio that includes a mix of teaching, research and academic management; and four grades with a research focus. In addition to this, the programmes involve a small number of specialist adjunct faculty, most notably in the quantitative methods modules. Both, The Professional Doctorate Framework and the Masters of Research will be taught by GSBS and SHLS staff.

Redacted , the Blackboard virtual learning environment (VLE), is the core technology-based system for students and faculty. All modules have a presence in redacted. Students are attached through an automated process, which links redacted with ISIS, the student record system. Activity is monitored in order to inform the University's digital strategy and records show increases in adoption and usage.

3.4 University Central Support Services

Admissions handle enquiries and enquiries from prospective students. The Careers Service provides advice on possible careers, whilst The Alumni, Engagement & Operational team co-ordinates a range of activities that encourage former students to stay in touch with the University and keep them informed of what we are doing. Governance and Quality Enhancement provides a committee secretariat, academic regulations and quality assurance. Registry is responsible for Registration, Student Records, Exams and Assessments, Student Funding, Graduation. Facilities Management implements the University's estates strategy. Visa Immigration Support & Advice (VISA) is on hand to offer help to incoming international and outgoing home students. International Partnership Office (IPO) provides support and advice to all international students. The Finance Office provides a "business partner" to the various schools and links

each School with [REDACTED][REDACTED]'s finance functions. Strategy and Planning's role within [REDACTED] covers a range of activities related to the student journey and University performance. Marketing and Communications provides a "business partner" for the programmes and links them to the [REDACTED] marketing function. People Services provides a "business partner" and links to the [REDACTED] HR functions. The decision to transfer the two programmes to the academic schools in part reflects the belief that access to the Schools' various business partners will strengthen the programmes, particularly through improved marketing, an area that both programmes have perennially highlighted as a weakness.

5. STRATEGY for LEARNING (SfL)

5.1 Introduction

The University's Strategy for Learning (SfL) is informed by international and national developments and effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment. Inspired by the University's mission and vision and the changing HE landscape, the SfL will create successful graduates who are global citizens and who will contribute economically and socially to the communities we serve. The SfL supports the [REDACTED] Values of Integrity, Creativity, Responsibility and Confidence. Strategy learning reflects changing sectoral and societal demands and at its heart it seeks to develop graduates who will be :

'Proficient in their discipline, enterprising, responsible and capable of fulfilling leadership roles in different organisational and cultural contexts'.

The SfL ethos is to provide students with independent intellectual development within a structured and supportive academic environment and has its thinking has been integrated within this review. For the Professional Doctorate, the framework's structure is designed through the taught Stage 1 (SCQF Level 11) to prepare students for the Doctoral thesis at Stage 2. For the MRes, the SfL will inform the taught element of the programme (90 credits worth) and support the independent led element (90 credits worth) to enable students to engage with theoretical and practical social research issues.

Programme staff have extensive experience of learning and teaching associated with a broad range of full-time and part-time postgraduate courses, and thus wide experience of facilitating the learning of different types of student. The programmes seek to provide advanced knowledge and skills in scientific enquiry, strategic thinking and scholarship. This requires autonomous self-led learning, reflection on experiences and critical appraisal of working practices. To achieve this outcome there is a strong focus on learning through engagement in mini workshops and seminars to produce presentations and projects that demonstrate both subject knowledge and employability skills. This provides a challenging and creative learning environment that satisfies the needs of the individual student, enhances their effectiveness, and advances their ability to react to, and be proactive to changes to working practices and the development of research. The Programmes' teaching emphasises the role of academic staff is to facilitate the exchange of concepts, ideas and information that encourage the group to challenge non-evidence based and anecdotal practice. This learning process is integrated within a self-reflective framework designed to identify key learning points, which can then be transferred and applied when subsequently developing their research proposal.

This learning process is clearly demonstrated in the programmes' conferences. Both The Professional Doctorate and Masters of Research recognise that attending and presenting at a conference develops students' knowledge and employability skills. Professional Doctorate students in years three and four come together for two days each year for the Redacted Professional Doctorate Student Conference. This creates an invaluable opportunity for the student to present and defend their research projects in a supportive, yet constructively critical environment, as well as listen to a range of keynote speakers talking on research/project management topics. The conference also creates an invaluable opportunity to re-energise the motivational cohort effect which is very powerful during stage one.

The MRes students similarly have the opportunity to participate in a conference, the most recent one being the 15th Qualitative Methods Conference organised by the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology from the University of Alberta which took place in Glasgow in May 2016. This offers the students the

chance to immerse themselves in an academic context without having the pressure of supporting a poster or presenting a paper and deepening their knowledge of research methods following their particular methodological interests.

5.2 Enhancement Themes

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Enhancement Themes provide a means for institutions, academic staff, support staff and students to work together in enhancing the learning experience. The Professional Doctorate Framework and the MRes programme have many components from various enhancement themes embedded within them. Each theme facilitates both sharing and learning from current and innovative national and international practice. In addition, the themes promote the collective development of new ideas and models for innovation in learning and teaching.

Between 2011 and 2014, QAA Scotland's Enhancement Theme was Developing and Supporting the Curriculum. Work in this area aimed to 'make the learner journey more effective for students and more efficient for staff and institutions'. This theme complemented [REDACTED]'s approaches to widening access and maximising opportunities within the higher education systems, which is also characterized in both programmes by the diversity of the past and present student populations in terms of ethnicity, age, background and experience.

The current Enhancement Theme is Student Transition, which both programmes have engaged with to support the postgraduate research student experience. An illustration of transition practice was highlighted through the submission of a recent case study to QAA of non-credit bearing developmental workshops designed to help MSc Research Methods students transition into doctoral study (Lindsey to provide hyperlink).

5.3 Learning and Teaching Approaches

The Strategy for Learning (SfL) supports the programme teams to adopt a diverse range of learning and teaching methods. Teaching methods are developed by

module teams and individual teaching staff and are designed to support the achievement of learning objectives as well as promoting active, student-centred learning. The SfL outlines new initiatives in learning and teaching that are part of curriculum developments

A variety of approaches to learning and teaching are used:

Interactive keynote lectures will be used to introduce new concepts and will be led by experienced speakers some of whom will be external to the university and will be well known for their expertise in the particular area. These keynote lectures will be designed to stimulate debate and discussion, will have 'question time' built in and will form the basis of subsequent seminar sessions.

Student-led tutorials will provide an opportunity for students to raise issues of concern and to discuss them with their colleagues. These sessions will be facilitated by academic tutors.

Student-led seminars will form the basis of on campus teaching where debate discussion and exchange of ideas and concepts will be encouraged. Seminars will be formulated around keynote lectures and directed learning tasks.

Directed learning activities to be undertaken in the 'home/workplace/university' situation, which will be designed to enhance the student's knowledge base, encourage self-led learning, establish critical reading skills and improve information access skills.

Tutor/Student-led Workshops will provide an opportunity for students to work collaboratively on mini projects and then reflect as an individual and as a group on the key learning points and identify how these might apply to a supervised research project.

Podcasts will be used for all modules (within the Prof Doc Framework only) and it is anticipated that the student community will benefit from these although they have been specifically designed to meet some of the more specific challenges facing international students.

5.4 Programme Accessibility and Inclusiveness

The Programme Teams are committed to meeting its obligations under various internal and external regulatory bodies e.g. The Equality Act 2005, but also because the teams believe this commitment reflects the University's mission of The Social Good. The teams strive to embed equality in all functions and support the individual to overcome societal, attitudinal and physical barriers. In addition, the approach adopted by the programme team is welcoming, inclusive, individually student centred and supported by appropriate university central student support services.

Since the programmes' inception, a number of students with a variety of special needs have successfully been accommodated within the programme. Specifically for the Prof Doc framework, prior to entry, each student is encouraged to contact the Programme Director or visit the campus to meet and consider the nature and pace of the programme. This may take more than one visit prior to application to the programme. When the student is content that no constraint exists regarding their particular concern, they submit an application form. If the student is successful in meeting the academic criteria for the programme, all reasonable adjustments are then made to enable the student to fully access each component of the programme.

Prior to admission on to the programmes, any student who is concerned about accessibility is advised to contact the university's Disability Team and seek a full needs assessment. This service is part of learner support within the overarching Positive Living Services and provides students with any form of disability confidential support and advice. When a needs assessment is carried out it is then translated into a set of requirements for the programme team who ensure that either materials are made available prior to the module or steps are taken to ensure that learning is not compromised.

Each academic advisor or module leader (with the permission of the student) is advised of the nature of any reasonable adjustment made and this is monitored throughout the programme, subsequently the supervisory team is also advised of

any particular element that would be required to maximise learning and the execution of the doctoral thesis or in the case of the MRes, the Masters Project.

The programme teams strive to ensure that students are not discriminated against on any grounds and works hard to promote good relations between persons of different groups, cultures and nationalities through various formal and informal activities e.g. induction, discussion, pizza evening, creation of networks through social apps. The programme teams recognise that an effective cohesive cohort is instrumental in promoting inclusivity and therefore invest considerable time and effort in promoting the benefits of a positive cohort experience.

The Graduate School provides specific training to ensure that all staff and supervisory teams who work with doctoral students fully understand the academic and social issues involved in working with level 11 and 12 students, irrespective of their backgrounds, but also cognisant of their backgrounds.

5.5 Internationalisation

Re-validation in 2012 argued internationalisation was a key priority, both from a University perspective, but also from the programmes' perspectives. The University views internationalisation both as a means of enriching students' learning experiences and aligns to the university's mission of The Social Good. Both programmes are committed to reaching outward internationally in a professional, systematic and creative manner, to enhance cultural understanding, diversify the staff and student body and to advance a commitment to scholarship and learning, and equality of opportunity.

Professional Doctorate Framework - UK v non-UK student 2012- 2016

Students	UK	Europe	Middle East & North Africa	Africa	Rest of the World	Total (percentage non UK)

12/13 (cohort 6)	15	1	3	1	1	21(28.6%)
13/14 (cohort 7)	7	1	2	1	1	12 (41.7%)
14/15 (cohort 8)	7	0	1	1	1	10(30%)
15/16 (cohort 9)	21	2	0	3	0	26 (19.2%)
16/17 (cohort 10)	14	2	2	4	0	22 (36.4%)

MSc Research Methods - UK v non-UK student 2011- 2016

	UK	Europe	Middle East and North Africa	Africa	Rest of the World	total
11/12	10	0	1	1	0	12 (16.7%)
12/13	12	0	0	2	0	14(42.9%)
13/14	11	0	0	2	1	14(50%)
14/15	7	1	0	2	1	11(36.4%)
15/16	7	0	0	2	3	12(41.7%)

Non UK students normally constitute 30-40% of The Professional Doctorate and Masters of Research cohorts. Nigeria and the Gulf States tend to provide recurring intakes and are arguably two of Caledonian university's most popular student markets.

Internationalisation is a key strategic objective particularly for the Prof Doc Framework. We therefore aim to:

- sustain/increase our international student recruitment targets
- provide a world class student experience as evidenced by the International Student barometer
- internationalise the learning experience by increasing outward student mobility for our students
- increase our transnational educational provision
- embed internationalisation into the core activities of the schools

The Programme Teams work with various Central service units e.g. VISA to ensure that all students are integrated into the University environment. All [REDACTED] social and induction events are available to our all students on an inclusive basis. MRes students are encouraged to participate and maximise the benefits of university life. It is acknowledged that this is not always practical for Professional Doctorate students, due to the nature of the programme, the majority of our students tend not to be on campus during many of these initiatives and we tend to rely more on bespoke activities.

Redacted has been rated consistently as one of the UK's best universities for International students, a reflection of the University's integrated support networks stretching from Central services to individual programmes. Collectively, these activities embrace [REDACTED]'s commitment to the 'common good' by sharing knowledge for the greater good of society within the context of university teaching.

5.6 Management of Work Based/Practice Learning

The profile of the students on the Professional Doctorate, by their very nature, is work-based and the learning is structured in order to accommodate and enhance the student learning within this context. The MRes programme differs as the nature of the student is more varied and some students have come

directly from an undergraduate or another Masters degree. Many of these MREs students want to go on to do doctoral study and their practice learning is provided by mixing with PhD students in their classes, having the opportunity to attend researcher development workshops in the Graduate School and by attending the Research Methods conference which is offered as part of their programme. Some of the students have a similar profile to the Prof Doc students in as much as they are professionals, usually within an established research role in an organisation, and as per the Framework, the programme structure is designed to accommodate and embed this experience within their learning pedagogy.

5.7 Engagement with External Stakeholders

There is a significant link between employers, the university and prospective students, most vividly the requirement on the Professional Doctorate programme that all students must have the employer's permission for twenty-nine days attendance. Employers frequently wish to involve their staff in existing work projects which often requires sensitive handling, because of the nature of the research. The MRes will encourage engagement with external stakeholders. In terms of research activity, this is already embedded in the programme with the yearly opportunity to attend a research methods conference, but this is also pursued within a research professional context. In 2015/16 a scholarship for 1 student's full-time fees was secured for the MSc Research Methods programme from the Citizens' Advice Bureau in Drumchapel where a research project related to the needs of CAB was undertaken as part of the agreement.

5.8.1 Student Induction and Transition

Research (Ryan 2013) indicates that that a successful induction programme is invaluable in preparing the students for the demands of study, especially when dealing when practitioners who in many instances have been out of university setting for a number of years and are unaware and even fearful of the expectations placed on them.

The Professional Doctorate provides an induction programme in the first block of attendance to introduce staff, familiarise students with university resources, advise on part-time study and make clear the responsibility that students have

as adult learners. The skills required to undertake post-graduate study are also discussed. Students are introduced to the university based Positive Living Services, which organises and provides a wide range of services, including the chaplaincy, childcare, counselling, disability, funding, international student support, library services, student counselling and student enterprise.

The MRes students have a full induction day which is shared by the October intake of the PhD students as well as their own tailored induction session with the programme leader and administrator. During these sessions students are introduced to the centrally delivered Student Services including disability, international student support, ICT support, library services and student counselling. Online support resources covering all of these aspects are also available to students prior to, during and after the induction period via [REDACTED]Learn. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that students are not overloaded with information and that the induction process is student-centred.

5.8.2 Academic Support

These two research degree programmes view the delivery of a personalised, top quality, responsive and distinctive student experience as a responsibility that is shared by every single member of staff. With this in mind, the curricular approach is underpinned by a commitment to professional support service staff working in close partnership with teaching staff to nurture student belonging and participation within each programme and cohort. This thinking is practiced in various for a such as Student Staff Consultative Groups and Programme Boards, as well as team meetings prior to a cohort's launch. Each Director also chairs the other programme's Assessment Board which also enables the two Directors to identify common areas of concern, but also good practice that is transferable

In the Professional Doctorate, each student is allocated an Academic Advisor at the outset of their study. The Academic Advisor offers pastoral and academic support. Following an introductory meeting during induction, students will be formally invited to meet with their academic advisor at regular intervals. For the MRes, the programme leader acts as Academic Advisor to the students on the programme and academic guidance is provided by the module leaders on an on-

going basis. The programme operates a partnership between students and staff where expectations of both are clearly articulated including in the module handbooks. Students are encouraged to seek help and guidance if they require it from a range of staff including the Academic Adviser, the module leaders and the programme leader. Students are also made aware of the support available from other services within the university. Module handbooks are provided online and in paper copies with full details of delivery, learning, teaching and assessment approaches in addition to identifying the wide range of resources available to support students adopt a proactive approach to their learning.

In addition to the information provided in module handbooks, both Professional Doctorate and Masters of Research provide a programme handbook online containing details of the programme aims and structure, staff contact and other support information, together with essential regulations and an outline of student responsibilities.

There is a full-time Lecturer in Academic Writing based in the Graduate School. This person provides confidential, one-to-one, tailored student writing support, as well as embedded sessions in both programmes and a number of academic writing workshop series which are open to all students engaged in research. This post also includes a remit to work with Disability Services and the Equality and Diversity Officer, thus ensuring that students have the means for appropriate referral when necessary. Additionally, support may also be provided by Academic Development Tutors (ADTs) in the Learning Development Centres (LDCs) in the three Schools, who adopt a flexible and shared approach that allows students to identify the skills that they would like to develop e.g. essay-planning, note-taking, interpreting coursework feedback, balancing university with work and other commitments and revising effectively for exams.

The Graduate School also offers eWriting, an online writing software package to help Masters and Doctoral students develop their thesis and journal paper academic writing skills (www.ewriting.org.uk). Developed by a partnership of the Graduate School at Redacted ([REDACTED]) and the universities of Glasgow (GU) and Edinburgh (EU), it is a stand-alone programme, requiring no tutor support, and combines some underpinning research writing skills, such as

referencing and style, with generative writing techniques tailored around a developing research project. This is supported by a personal Learning Plan, containing: a diary to schedule writing activities; a personal journal to record reflections and encourage regular writing; and a record of achievement, storing and filing their completed work.

5.8.3 Student Performance Feedback

In line with [REDACTED] policy the staff aim to provide students with feedback on all forms of assessed work.

([http://www.\[redacted\].ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/theuniversity/gaq/gaqfiles/assessmentregulations/Student%20Performance%20Feedback%20Policy%20Oct2014.pdf](http://www.[redacted].ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/theuniversity/gaq/gaqfiles/assessmentregulations/Student%20Performance%20Feedback%20Policy%20Oct2014.pdf)).

Module teams employ a range of clear and constructive feedback mechanisms which are designed to facilitate the development of the individual's knowledge and skills by encouraging dialogue and clarifying good performance. Assessment and student feedback is monitored through Programme Boards, and the Student Staff Consultative Group

In line with University's policy, the precise nature of the feedback provided by modules is a matter for module teams. Modules therefore adopt a variety of methods, as considered appropriate to their module aims and assessments. A mixture of formative and summative assessments provides 'feed-forward' and feedback on students' work. This enables the student to better understand their assessments' strengths and weaknesses and has received repeatedly positive comment from the external examiners.

5.8.4 Student Engagement

The diverse learning and assessment methods that have been described in this document evidence a philosophy that recognises the value of student engagement in the classroom and promotes a vision of the learner as an active rather than passive participant in their own intellectual and practical development. This document has already highlighted that student responsibility and self-reflection is encouraged and promoted, for example, through the Professional Development module

The programmes have been designed using a student centred approach and strategies to develop students' independent learning, a particularly important requirement at Levels 11 and 12. Students are engaged in a wide range of activities designed to develop their skills as individuals and as team members and leaders, such as; group work, individual and group presentations, peer assessment, peer assisted learning, poster generation, practice based learning opportunities and the setting of independent learning outcomes in certain contexts (i.e. Independent Negotiated Study for the MRes and Group Negotiated Study for the Professional Doctorate)

A problem solving approach is utilised in seminars and practical sessions at all levels of provision. Web resources, video materials, case studies and research papers are used to encourage observation, problem solving, analysis, critical thinking and reasoning.

5.8.5 Career Development & Employability

Both the Professional Doctorate and the Master of Research aim to develop the students' knowledge and skills in preparation for and through doctoral research. The Professional Doctorate's work-based learning approach and the need for the thesis to be embedded in practice means employability and career development are explicit throughout the student's learning journey. It is acknowledged that the Professional Doctorate differs in that all our students are already employed, but feedback does indicate that many students see the Professional Doctorate as a pre-requisite to promotion or a different career. Students can discuss employment opportunities with his/her Academic Tutor, the Programme director and/or the University's Careers service.

The opportunity that MRes students get through the independent led research modules, namely the Research Design and Research Project Management (RDRPM) and the Masters Research Project (MRP) to produce either a dissertation, research report, research proposal, academic working paper or systematic review for the other produce concrete outcomes which the students can then build on to apply for further doctoral study, which many of them want to do. The 50% success rate of the programme graduates achieving a funded PhD

studentship (see section 2.5) following their Masters is testament to the value in terms of career development and employability of the programme.

5.9 Assessment Strategy and Loading

The modules' assessments have been designed to reflect the philosophy and learning outcomes of the programmes to ensure that the workload and intellectual demands on the students are comparable with modules at Masters level. Assessment and constructive feedback is seen as an important and integral part of the learning process. Quality assurance measures include the appointment of an external examiner to critically appraise all aspects of assessment and course development. Assessments are prepared by module teams and are passed to the appropriate External Assessor for scrutiny before being distributed to students or included in examinations.

Formative and summative assessment is achieved through a wide variety of mechanisms, including:

- Coursework
- Essays
- Oral presentations
- Work-based assessment
- Data analysis exercises
- Dissertations
- Research projects
- Oral examinations

Modules are presented using a range of teaching and learning strategies, with an emphasis on interactive learning, building upon the students' maturity and their ability to reflect on their own learning experiences. Formative assessment and feedback on both conceptual knowledge development and academic skills are provided utilising student led seminars, classroom discussions, data collection exercises and analysis of data.

All assessments are conducted according to the University Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations (see document at

[http://www.\[redacted\].ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/theuniversity/gaq/gaqfiles/ass](http://www.[redacted].ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/theuniversity/gaq/gaqfiles/ass)

essmentregulations/University%20Assessment%20Regulations%202015-16%20Taught%20Postgraduate.pdf).

5.9.1 Professional Doctorate Framework

The Professional Doctorate seeks to fuse this understanding with the knowledge and skills necessary to deepen the student's expertise within their senior professional practice. Table 2 shows that individual learning outcomes and the assessment strategies used to assess competence across a broad range of outcomes. Whilst students on the Professional Doctorate programme will have had several years of professional experience and may often be in senior posts, some will not have undertaken any formal education and assessment since their undergraduate studies. The first assessments are designed to provide support and constructive feedback on performance to date, but help to inform subsequent assessments.

The assessment, associated with the Level D module (Project Development, Design and Management) submitted in September of year 2, provides the opportunity for students to draw on their Level M modules to demonstrate multi-disciplinary thinking. In this piece of coursework they will be able to critically assess the potential of different methodologies to address a research question in their own area of professional practice.

Stage 2 assessment (doctoral thesis) conforms to the standard Doctoral philosophy i.e. written and oral defence of thesis. Crucially the thesis must demonstrate that it has added to knowledge and practice.

Professional Doctorate Assessment Calendar - Example cohorts 11 and 12

COHORT	Professional Development module or equivalent 45 credit module	Research Methods	Group Negotiated Study	Project Development, Design and Management	BOARDS

GLASGOW (January 2017)	Formative - July 2017 Summative 1 - Oct 2017 Summative 2 - Dec 2017 Summative 3 - Feb 2018	Formative - Mar 2017 Qualitative question May 2017 Quantitative question June 2017 Presentation - Nov 2017 CAT - Feb 2018	Summative - March 2018	Summative - Sept 2018	CIRCA 28-04- 2018 CIRCA 20-10- 2018
LONDON (September 2017)	Formative - July 2018 Summative 1 - Oct 2018 Summative 2 - Dec 2018 Summative 3 - Feb 2019	Formative - Mar 2018 Qualitative question May 2018 Quantitative question June 2018 Presentation - Nov 2018 CAT - Feb 2019	Summative - March 2019	Summative - Sept 2019	

5.9.2 Master of Research Framework

Diversity of assessment allows the programme and module teams to match appropriate assessment with the requirements of the module and level of study, enabling achievement of the learning outcomes to be measured. A major activity of this programme is the development of independent led research focused work, particularly through the modules: Research Design and Research Project

Management, Independent Negotiated Study and the Masters Research Project. Student performance in these will be assessed by the same means as used for standard masters programmes and for PhD. These will include consideration of generic skills (such as organisation, time management, data recording, use of IT), intellectual skills (data analysis, understanding of the project in the broader global research environment, synthesis, hypothesis development) and communication skills (research project presentation, seminar presentation).

Assessment Loading Matrix- MRes

Year 1: SCQF Level 11 - Trimester 1						
Mod .Cod e	Module Title	Cre- dits	Summary of Assessment	Assessme nt Weightin g (%)		Submission date (submissio n week)
				Cw1	Cw 2	
tbc	Nature of Research Enquiry	15	3000 word essay/critical evaluation of proposed philosophical approach	100		12
tbc	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods	15	3000 word essay/critical appraisal of qualitative study	100		5
tbc	Applied Skills in Qualitative Research Methods	15	3000 word essay/reflexive analysis of small research exercise	100		14
tbc	Critical Review of	15	.			

	Research					
Exit possible with Postgraduate Certificate in Research (PgC Research) - 60 credits						
Year 1: SCQF Level 11- Trimester 2						
tbc	Independent Negotiated Study	15	3000 word essay critical research review	100		11
tbc	Research Design and Research Project Management	15	Research proposal: 3000 word research proposal and project management plan	100		12
tbc	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods	15	Essay (3000 words)	100		5
tbc	Quantitative Data Analysis	15	Data analysis report (3000 words)	100		14
Exit possible with Postgraduate Diploma in Research (PgD Research) - 120 credits						
Year 1: SCQF Level 11 - Trimester 3						
tbc	Masters Research Project	60	One of the following: • Dissertation (12,000 word equivalent) or • Systematic Review (10,000 word equivalent) or • Research Report (12,000 word equivalent)	100 100 100		11

			or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Working Paper (6000 word equivalent) and associated Research Development Proposal (4000 word equivalent) 	60	40	
Exit possible with Masters of Research (MRes) - 180 credits						

5.10 Programme specific regulations

There are no programme specific assessment regulations applicable to the MRes. Similarly there are no no programme specific assessment regulations concerning the taught Masters modules at Stage 1

The module Project Design Development & Management module is doctoral level and will continue as previously to be graded as a pass or fail; in line with Doctoral Thesis grading

Students who fail Project Design Development & Management module will be reassessed in the period November of Year Two - February of Year 3. The mark will be considered at the April Assessment Board Failure in the re-assessment will require the student to withdraw from the programme with their level M credit.

5.11 Procedures for Project and Dissertation Supervision

5.11.1 Professional Doctorate Framework

The Professional Doctorate project (PDDM) is undertaken in the period May - September of Year 2. The project is 8,000 words and fulfils the same remit as the RDC2 i.e. the examiners' agreement that the student has the competence to investigate a suitable doctoral topic. The student's academic tutor will normally be the PDDM supervisor. All thesis topics must align to element(s) of the student's professional practice, as well as theories, concepts or issues explored in Stage 1.

On successful completion of Stage 1, a supervisory team will be appointed comprising a Director of Studies (normally the PDDM supervisor) and a supervisor initially identified by The Professional Doctorate Director, relevant Associate Dean Research and Director of Studies and then subsequently approved by the relevant School Progression and Awards Board. A third supervisor may be appointed to increase capacity and/or be mentored by an experienced member of staff. The team will support the student professionally and methodologically throughout the period of thesis completion. Each member of the supervisory team must attend relevant in-service training opportunities provided by the Graduate School. The duration of the thesis will normally be 27 -48 months.

5.11.2 Master of Research

The final module is critical for the course as it carries 60 credits and underpins the culmination of the student's independent research and learning journey. Students will prepare a research proposal following their discipline inclination in the Research Design and Research Project Management module (RDRPM). Based on this proposal, they will be allocated a supervisor whose research specialism matches with the student topic where possible.

The Masters Research Project should be up to a maximum of 12,000 words or equivalent, dependent on the professional discipline and the choice of undertaking either: dissertation, systematic review, research report or joint academic working paper plus associated research development proposal. It is anticipated that 1+3 mode students will have supervisors for the Masters project that will normally continue to be part of the PhD supervisory team.