

# Breaking Barriers Reflections on an Inclusive Clinical Lecturing Internship in Speech and Language Therapy: One Year on

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# Opening Up Academic Pathways in Speech & Language Therapy

- Brief background on Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and access barriers.
- Purpose of the pilot: supporting underrepresented students in academia.
- Funding source: FBMH Access & Success widening participation budget.

# Internship Structure and Aims

- Duration: 3-month paid internship.
- Participants: two second-year SLT students.
- Core aims: to provide opportunities for SLT students interested in a potential career in academia, and to create inclusive mentorship offered to students for diversity to be represented amongst SLTs.

# Real-World Academic Exposure

Key responsibilities:

- Gathering and analyzing student experiences: assessment feedback questionnaire.
- Supporting admissions and outreach events.
- Delivering lectures to Year 1 students.
- Curriculum development: assessment and learning.

# Interns Experience and Development

- Personal growth and confidence in academic spaces.
- Insight into academic career pathways.
- Achievements: involvement in further initiatives (e.g., AFHEA applications).
- Overcoming barriers to access (e.g., imposter syndrome, lack of representation).

# Lecturer perspectives

- Goals for the first funded internship met
- Also developed a protocol for subsequent internships
  - Second year underway
  - Significant contributions to admission practices
- Longer term goal: to see more under-represented groups in clinical academic setting.
  - Can we do more?

# Lecturer perspectives

- Provides structured **route for co-production** within the programme
- Increases opportunities to develop **academic leadership** and **mentoring skills**
- Greater insight into the **individual journeys** of our students from WP backgrounds
- Increased appreciation for the **importance** of this work

# Impact and the Road Ahead



- Intern-led changes in course delivery and engagement.
- Contributions to:
  - **UN SDG 4: Quality Education**
  - **UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**
- Future plans: expanding the internship programme, integrating it into department strategy.



# Key Takeaways

- Inclusive internships can inspire career aspirations.
- Embedding student voices improves equity in higher education.
- Call to action: diversifying clinical academic settings

# Questions?

