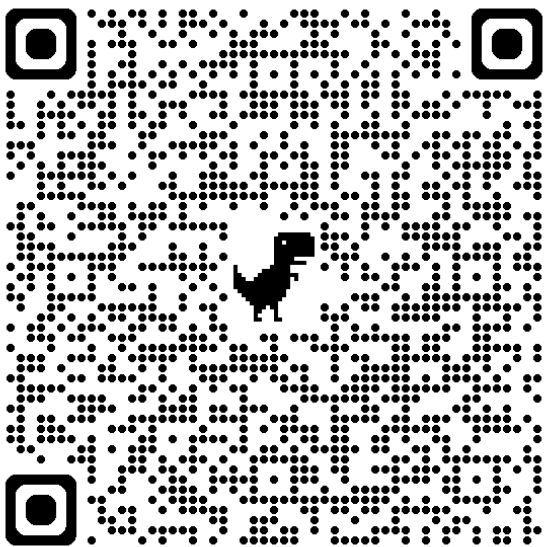
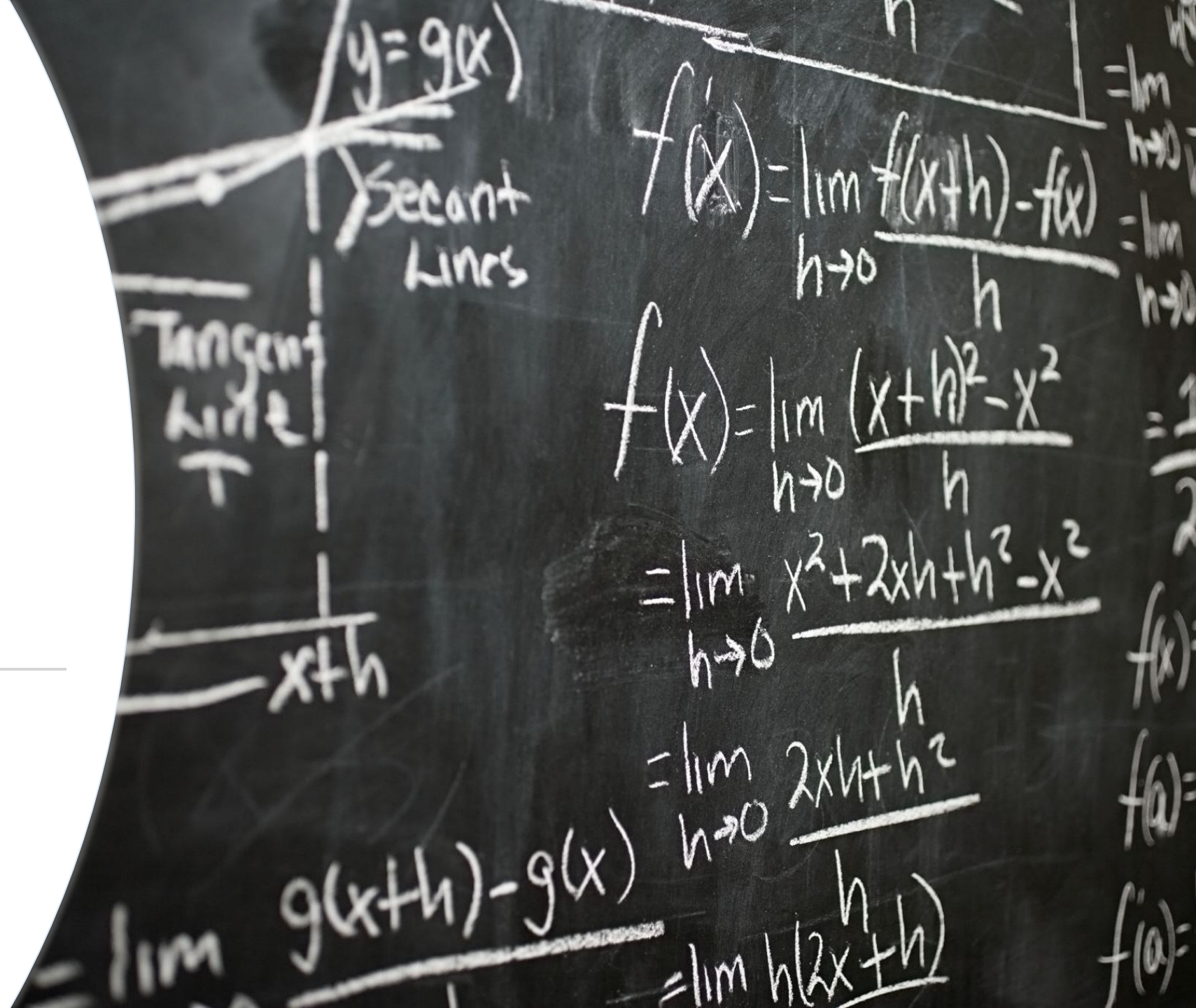




Educational Gains for all

Understanding, supporting, and measuring the broader value of higher education

Jen McBride, Kelly-Ann Mallon, and the UoM Educational Gains working group



Journey from “Learning gain” to “Educational Gain”

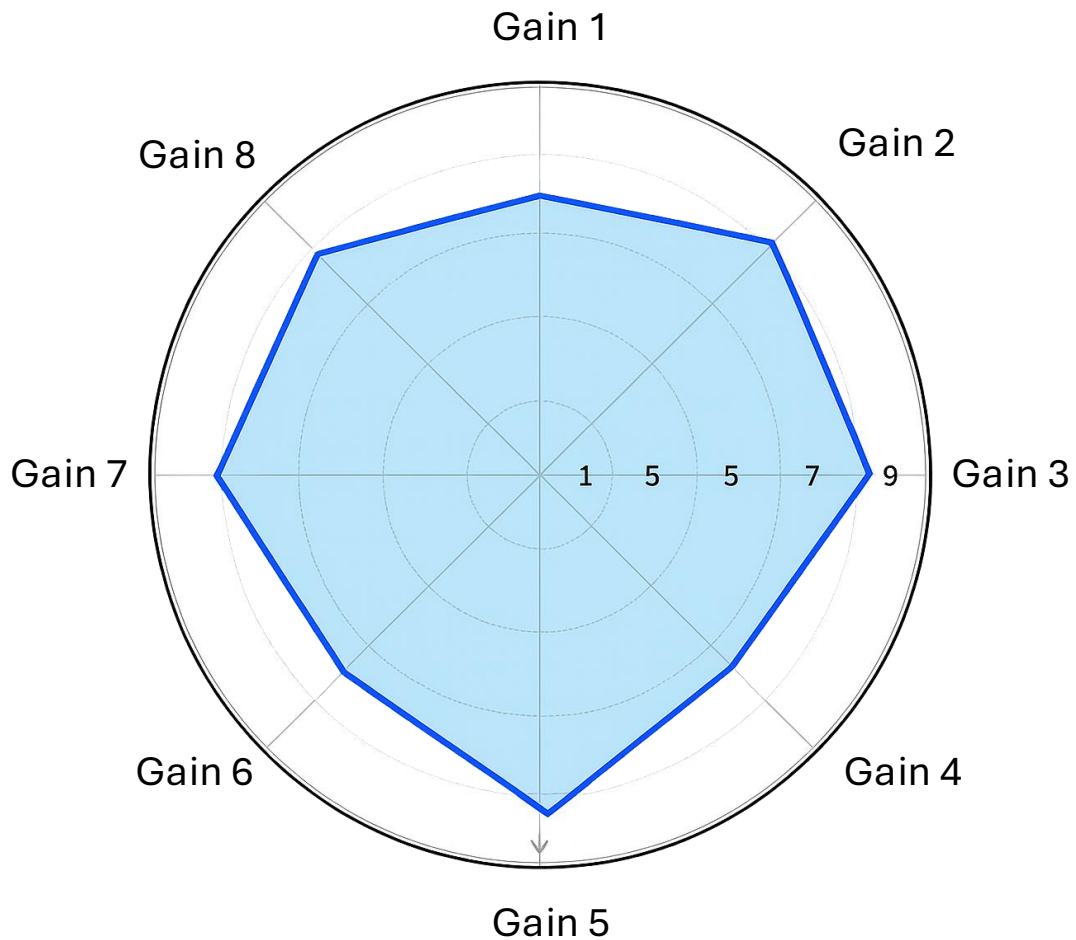
- HEFCE – “Learning Gain” [pilots](#)
- [Pearce Review](#) – “Educational Gain”
 - *“what our students gain from our educational experience and how we evidence that”*
- TEF 2023
 - *“[...] establish their practice in measuring and evidencing educational gains, which could then become the focus of assessment in subsequent TEF exercises.”*

Policy driver... but real educational value?

Underneath that policy intention are more interesting questions...

- *What do our students gain from their time at UoM?*
 - *How do we measure that so that we know whether they really are gaining it?*
- *How can we help students to recognise, articulate, and build on their development?*
- *Can we use all this to support academic advising?*
- *Can broader data collected be used to support programmes and the wider university?*

The Vision:



Personal to each student

Measurement completed in
?Registration/Welcome – repeated each
year of study (at a minimum) – means we
can track distance travelled

Provides structure for conversations with
academic advisors – reflective/articulation

UoM has access to all the data to help
inform support priorities

What DO students (want to) gain from their time at UoM?

- *What do students want to gain from their time at UoM?*
- *What do our alumni feel they DID gain from their time at UoM?*
- Stakeholder Engagement with students and alumni
 - Surveys created, tested, and launched - 385 students, 247 Alumni
 - Personas exercises with students
 - Focus groups with students
- Thematic Analysis revealed 7 themes; **Proposed framework** developed, and tested with students

Views of current students and alumni – the 7 themes

1. **Academic and Practical Experience (Discipline-Specific Learning)** – Students gain knowledge and expertise in their chosen field, taught by leading academics and shaped by world-class research - a tradition grounded in over 200 years of innovation and discovery.
2. **A future-ready skillset** – Students gain wide-ranging skills - from critical thinking and analytical skills, to communication, problem-solving, and leadership - opening doors across industries and sectors. They graduate equipped for success and a strong awareness of career pathways and opportunities.
3. **Broadened Horizons** – Students gain global insight, new perspectives, and opportunities to engage with the world beyond the university - all within one of the UK's most diverse and welcoming cities and student communities.
4. **Personal growth and sense of self** – Students gain confidence, resilience, independence, and a stronger sense of identity, inspired to grow both intellectually and personally
5. **Friendships, connections, networks, and belonging** - Students gain lifelong friendships, professional networks, and a sense of belonging in one of the UK's largest, most diverse student communities.
6. **Ethics and Social Responsibility** – Students gain the values and awareness to lead ethically, act responsibly, and contribute to a better society. All activity is enriched by a commitment to social responsibility and the positive impact we bring to society and the environment
7. **Lifelong connection to Manchester** - Students graduate with a degree from England's first and most eminent civic university, a world-leading institution shaped by research excellence, and gain inspiration and opportunity from Manchester's rich heritage of radical thinking, social change, and pioneering spirit

My Manchester Experience - Framework

Students gain discipline knowledge, skills, and experience, taught by experts in their field, and shaped by world-class research.

Discover –
your discipline
to new depths

Build –
your skills and
experience

Students develop a broad set of transferable skills and capabilities that prepare them to thrive in a rapidly changing world. They graduate equipped for – and with awareness of – diverse career pathways and opportunities.

**Confident,
critical
thinker
equipped for
a changing
world**

Students develop a stronger sense of who they are and what matters to them. They explore complex ethical questions, and consider their role in creating a fairer, more sustainable, world.

Grow –
understand who
you are and what
matters to you

Connect –
with new people
& perspectives

Students will belong to one of the UK's most diverse and welcoming cities and student communities. They will engage with new perspectives, interdisciplinary opportunities, build connections, and develop their sense of their place in the world.

Self-reflection tool – co-created & tested with students

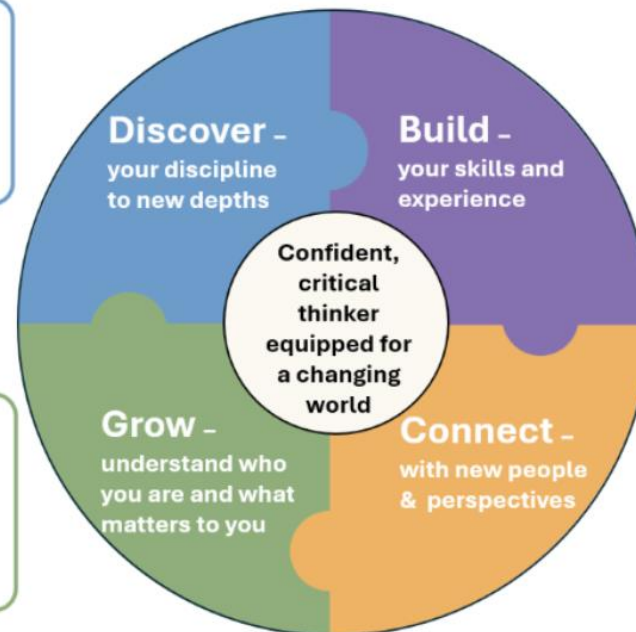
Self Reflection for Jennifer McBride

Hi Jennifer,

Studying at University provides a chance to grow, discover new opportunities, and prepare for your chosen future. In consultation with current students and recent graduates, we have developed a framework that highlights where students hope to develop, and where graduates felt they gained the most from their time at the University of Manchester

Students gain discipline knowledge, skills, and experience, taught by experts in their field, and shaped by world-class research.

Students develop a stronger sense of who they are and what matters to them. They explore complex ethical questions, and consider their role in creating a fairer, more sustainable, world.

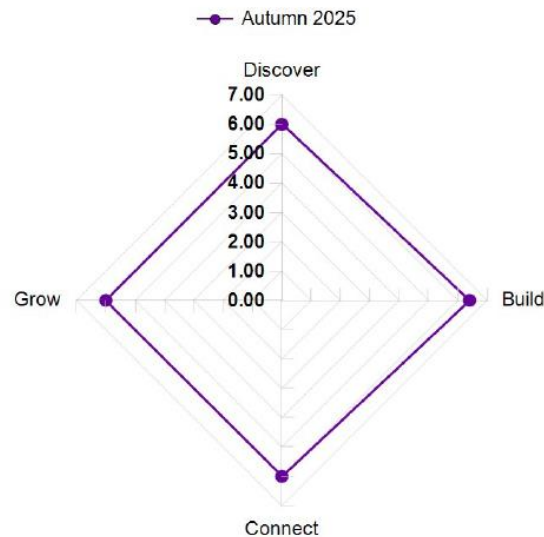


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Personalised Report – sent directly to the student by email

Radar Plot - Your Self-Reflection



Competency

Discover

Build

Connect

Grow

Users Name:

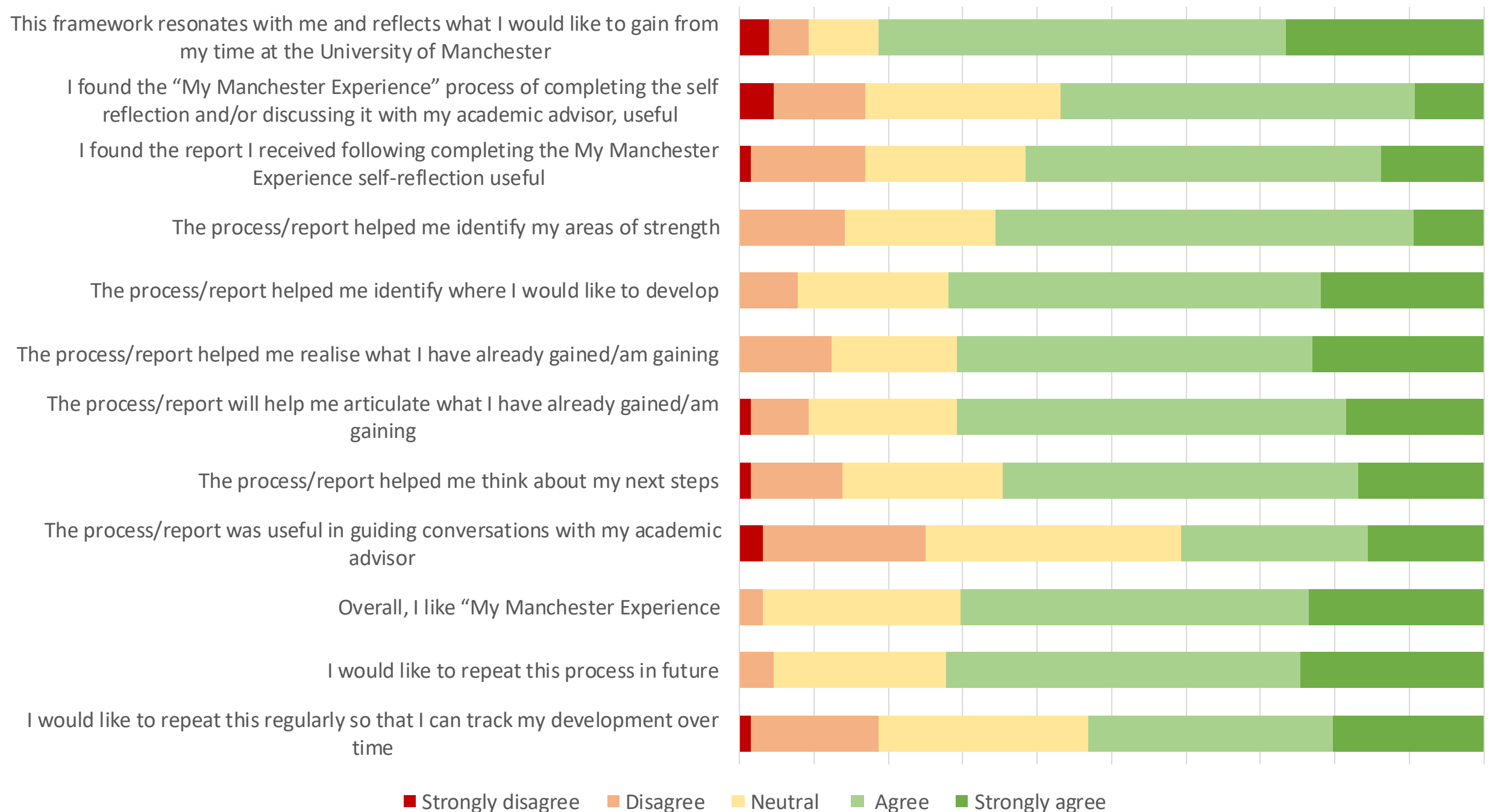
1. Thinking about your development so far – which will be different for each student and according to their own experiences – please rate your agreement with the following:

- ◇ I am gaining transferable skills relevant to my future (for example teamworking, problem solving, adaptability, effective communication or leadership).
 - Strongly Agree
- ◇ I am gaining experience that will help me in my future (this could be through my course, part-time work, volunteering, societies, internships or something else).
 - Strongly Agree
- ◇ I am gaining understanding of the diverse opportunities / career pathways available to me after graduation.
 - Agree
- ◇ I am gaining the digital skills I need for my learning and studies.
 - Strongly Agree
- ◇ I am gaining the digital skills I need for my future and life after university.
 - Somewhat Agree

This area focusses on transferable skills that will be helpful for anyone from any area of study, and there is lots of support available through the University to identify and develop these skills. The [University's Careers Service](#) is excellent with lots of help and support available. The Careers Service has a really useful [Skills Audit](#) which goes into detail about the skills that might be most useful, and helps you reflect on your own transferable skills development and provides support to develop your skills if you wish to. You can also develop [professional connections](#) through using online [communities](#).

Pilots (Academic Year 2025-26)

- **Pilots in 2025-26; ~2400 students were eligible, across all faculties**
 - **BMH** – UG Optometry, UG Psychology, SBS UG, UG Public Health, PGT Deaf Education
 - **FSE** – Fashion Business Technology (all UG & PGT programmes)
 - **HUMS** – UG Liberal Arts; MEC (individual units)
- **Evaluation**
 - Self-reflection completion rates (**~900 students / ~36%** completed the tool)
 - Students' experiences and perceptions
 - Data from the self-reflection tool
 - Academic Advisors' / Programme team experiences and perceptions (this summer!)



Pilots – Evaluation – Students' Voices



Pilots – Evaluation – free text and focus group responses

1. **Strong agreement with the model** from students
2. Students perceive real **value to them as individuals** (near-immediate results, personal relevance)
 - Personalised report sent directly to the student
 - Links to students' motivations and provides links to resources for support/development
3. **Low-friction engagement** enables participation
 - Short time to complete; in-class delivery boosted engagement
 - Welcome week might not be best!
 - Multiple Choice (Likert-scale) reduced cognitive load, though some preference to add free-text also
4. Want to see it **embedded** and have ownership
 - Into **Academic Advising** with the option to share directly with the advisor (or keep private)
 - Embed process, report and resources in e.g. **My Manchester**, with the option to track over time

Pilots – data from the self-reflection tool itself – programmes/schools

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Educational Gains Self Reflections Spring 2026 - Programme Report

Raters

Responded

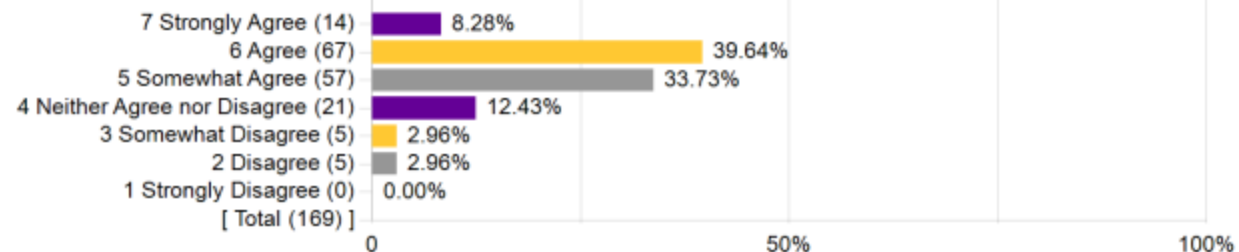
Invited

Response Ratio

This report summarises and visualises
BSc(Hons) Psychology



2. I feel part of a community of staff and students.



I am gaining understanding of the diverse opportunities / career pathways available to me after graduation.

WP_Flag	Resp	Mean	Freq(1,2)	%(1,2)	Freq(3)	%(3)	Freq(4)	%(4)	Freq(5)	%(5)	Freq(6,7)	%(6,7)
Y	15	4.73	3	20.00%	6	40.00%	4	26.67%	2	13.33%	0	0.00%

I feel confident to continue my learning, and that I know what to expect next in my studies.

UK/OS	Resp	Mean	Freq(1,2)	%(1,2)	Freq(3)	%(3)	Freq(4)	%(4)	Freq(5)	%(5)	Freq(6,7)	%(6,7)
EU	4	5.75	3	75.00%	1	25.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
OS	34	5.44	20	58.82%	9	26.47%	3	8.82%	1	2.94%	1	2.94%
UK	131	5.70	87	66.41%	36	27.48%	6	4.58%	2	1.53%	0	0.00%

Conclusions and next steps

- There is **no other institution-wide mechanism** providing a consistent framework for students to reflect on their wider university experience and track their progress
- Students see the **broader value of their higher education**, and perceive benefit from a mechanism like this that supports their individual journey, reflection, and links them to resources quickly
 - Speed, ease, and personalised benefit are important
- Students would like to **repeat the process** (within limits) and see it **embedded** in Academic Advising and My Manchester
- Programme / School / Institution – level data can be used to **highlight areas of good practice**, and areas where **focus/support may have the most impact**
- Ongoing engagement with staff for their perceptions

**Four themes
stand out as
particularly
important, as
shared by
members of
the group**

"The most important shift was moving from measuring outcomes to understanding students' growth and the distance they've travelled."

"Rather than trying to second-guess TEF, we focused on defining something genuinely meaningful for students."

"Educational Gain extends far beyond subject knowledge, it reflects the breadth of the whole higher education experience."

"The focus was never simply on getting it done, but on getting it right."

Enormous thanks to the Educational Gains Group

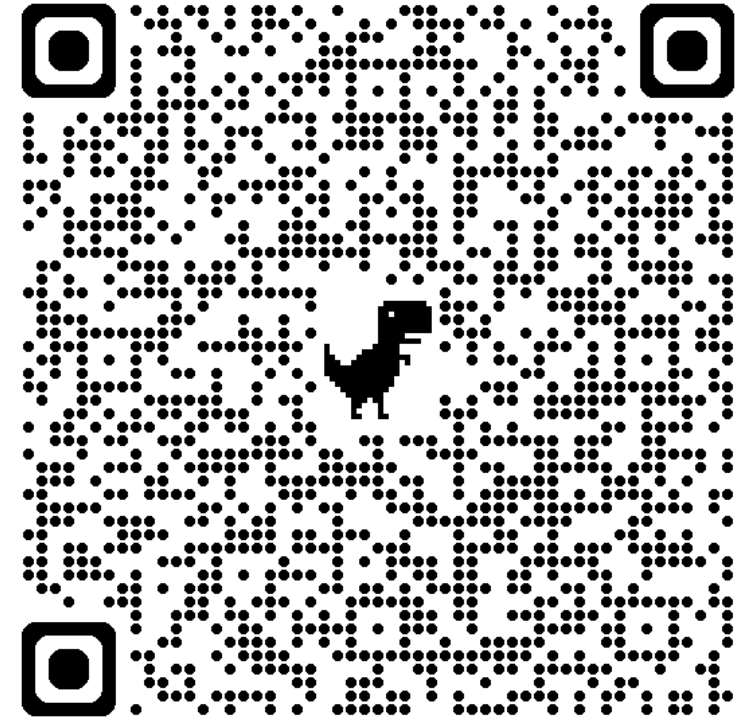
The Educational Gains Group

Co-chairs: Jen McBride and KellyAnn Mallon

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