

## *Introduction*

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Welcome to the first issue of the *Journal of the Foundation Year Network*. This issue is a form of conference proceedings from the Foundation Year Network Annual Conference held at the University of Nottingham on 5-6 July 2018 on the theme of 'Unity and Diversity in the Foundation Year Experience'. At first sight it is perhaps easier to recognise the diversity in the Foundation Years represented in the articles here than it is to draw out the things that unite them. However, a closer reading reveals some important themes emerging – as they have over a number of Annual Conferences – including a commitment to: widening participation in Higher Education; supporting student development in a way that recognises transition to HE is more than adjusting to new academic approaches; and the continual development of curriculum design and teaching practice to improve the experience and outcomes of Foundation Year students. It is also striking how the articles contribute to a picture of Foundation Year practitioners as characteristically reflective in their approaches and appropriately attentive to the student voice in all they do.

The production of any new journal requires a firm rationale and I hope it will become clear on reading these articles how this publication might contribute to the aims of the Foundation Year Network, particularly in promoting and supporting i) good practice in Foundation Year provision and ii) the development of academic and scholarly activities of Foundation Year practitioners. The order of the articles reflects the aim of sharing good practice, with over half of the journal dedicated to the evaluation of a variety of approaches to Foundation Year teaching and learning with examples and insights from a range of disciplines and institutions. Beyond this there is a focus on questions surrounding Foundation Year recruitment before the final two papers explore some of the 'big questions' that inform our practice in a variety of ways, namely 'what is a university?' and 'are Foundation Years value for money?'

In an ever-more competitive Higher Education landscape it is important to continue to foster collaboration that serves the development of Foundation Year teaching and learning for the benefit of our students. It is our intention that the research and evaluation of approaches shared here might provide helpful evidence to inform teaching innovation across disciplines and institutions. So too, we hope this new journal will provide an impetus for the development of shared research projects with a view to sharing the results in this context in a subsequent issue.

Editors:

Sarah Hale (s.hale@sheffield.ac.uk)  
University of Sheffield

Doug Ingram (doug.ingram@nottingham.ac.uk)  
University of Nottingham

Peter Watts (peter.watts@nottingham.ac.uk)  
University of Nottingham

