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Developing Career Supports for Chemistry Students from Minority Ethnic Groups through Cocreation

It had been noted that our chemistry graduates from under represented ethnic groups often had greater difficulties gaining relevant employment. This observation is supported by national and international studies.(1,2) Increased diversity of backgrounds and ideas in the workplace is recommended as it brings a broader range of perspectives and expertise into play.

It was concluded that there was a need to develop appropriate career supports in our institution for our minority ethnic chemistry students. It was decided to do so in partnership with students and graduates from under represented ethnic groups to ensure that the resources were fit for purpose.

The first component of the supports is a careers toolkit that maps out career journeys of minority ethnic chemistry graduates from our university. The second component, not yet begun, will be a mentoring scheme.

Five undergraduate students from minority ethnic backgrounds were recruited as hourly paid assistants to contribute to developing the career profiles. They were then each introduced to a graduate who had agreed to contribute a career journey profile for our website. The undergraduate students discussed between themselves which questions would be used in the interviews with the graduates about their career journeys. They then arranged a time for the online interview with the graduate they were working with. The next stage is that the undergraduates will draft career profiles based on their interviews and these will be edited by the author and reviewed by the relevant graduate.

The career profiles prepared will have been completed by August and a short evaluation from the graduates and undergraduate students on their experience of the career journeys project will be presented, along with any lessons learned and guidance on how a similar initiative could be implemented elsewhere.

- 1.Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market, McGinnity, Grotti, Groarke & Coughlan, 2018
- 2.The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM, Dahlberg & Byars-Winston, 2019

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