



Project Report

University Access and Student Life in the Aftermath of the Great War: Local, National and Transnational Dimensions of the Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students (1918)

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1. Project Team and Duration

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Project Partner: Dr Sarah Hellowell (Sunderland University)

Research Associates: Dr Lara Green (now Durham University), *February–November 2019*

Dr Sophie Cooper (now Leicester University), *November–December 2019*

The project was funded through a 2020 Anniversary Grant from the Society for Educational Studies (SES) and ran from 14 February 2019 to 31 December 2019. The two research associates were employed by Northumbria University for their work on the project and line-managed by Daniel Laqua.

2. Project Aims

Our project sought to highlight and investigate a transformative moment in the history of British higher education. In 1918, the Board of Education launched its Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students. This bursary programme was facilitated by the provisions of the Fisher Education Act; it was hence intrinsically connected to a major piece of educational reform legislation. At the same time, the genesis of the ex-service scheme can only be understood within the wider context of post-war reconstruction in Britain. In a nutshell, our project examined a specific reform measure in the field of higher education (the bursaries for ex-servicemen) while exploring a wider phenomenon (the legacies of the Great War).

Between 1918 and 1923, grants were made to nearly 28,000 English and Welsh students who had undertaken wartime service. Separate arrangements applied in Scotland but were based on broadly similar principles. At many universities and university colleges, around half of the male student population received an ex-service award during the early post-war years. These arrangements exceeded all prior initiatives in the realm of student funding. Local Education Authorities had been able to fund university students since 1902, yet such provisions remained inconsistent and were subject to major regional variations.¹ Before 1918, the only nationwide scheme to fund students individually was confined to a discrete field, namely teacher training. By contrast, the ex-service scheme was not limited to any one area of instruction; as such, it constituted a pioneering venture.

¹ On this subject, see G. S. M. Ellis, *The Poor Student and the University: A Report on the Scholarship System, with Particular Reference to Awards made by Local Education Authorities* (London: Labour Publishing Company, 1925).

Our project aimed at advancing both academic understanding and public awareness of the ex-service scheme, highlighting its importance as well as examining the broader national and international issues to which it related. In particular, we sought to address four major questions.

i. How did the Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students operate at a local level?

As part of an earlier research and public engagement project, members of the project team investigated the origins of the ex-service scheme as well as post-war student life in London and the North East of England.² However, our previous work did not extend to tracing the local operation of the bursary programme. It was a considerable achievement for university officials and the Board of Education to make the ex-service scheme fully operative so shortly after the end of the war, especially in the face of the sheer numbers involved. What kinds of structures were put in place to handle funding requests? Which criteria were considered crucial when assessing applications? How did administrators run a scheme that catered for a sizeable share – in some instances, the majority – of the student cohort at their institution? By answering such questions, we sought to make an original contribution to the history of student funding in Britain.³

ii. What was the impact of the post-war grant scheme for ex-service students?

In 2008, David Fowler suggested that the ex-service scheme resulted in a ‘staggering social transformation in the British university system that has never been properly investigated’.⁴ After 1918, universities and colleges experienced a major influx of students. The rise in student numbers can be attributed to the arrival of men whose higher education had been interrupted or postponed by their participation in the war effort – yet the funding arrangements evidently helped to support this expansion. By examining student records and funding decisions, we intended to investigate whether the scheme opened up higher education to individuals who would have otherwise been unable to enter university. Did the scheme – if only temporarily – diversify the social profile of university students in Britain? A consideration of this question evidently ties in with wider reflections on the relationship between higher education and social mobility. Moreover, the large-scale provision of grants also points at the importance accorded to university education as an

² For the findings from this project, see Georgina Brewis, Sarah Hellawell and Daniel Laqua, ‘Rebuilding the Universities after the Great War: Ex-Service Students, Scholarships and the Reconstruction of Student Life’, *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, vol. 105 (2020) [in press] as well as Daniel Laqua and Georgina Brewis (eds), *Students in England and the Legacy of the First World War* (pamphlet, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018).

³ In this respect, the project offers a fresh perspective on existing work in the field, for instance the discussion of student funding in Carol Dyhouse, *Students: A Gendered History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 13–33.

⁴ David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c. 1920 – c. 1970: From Ivory Tower to Modern Movement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 10.

element of post-war reconstruction. The latter line of enquiry can add to existing research on the relationship between British universities and the state.⁵

iii. To what extent did the British initiative mirror developments elsewhere?

Comparative approaches to the question of university access are well established in the field of educational research⁶ Meanwhile, recent work by historians has highlighted the Great War's impact on universities in different countries.⁷ Our project therefore contained a comparative strand: it sought to consider how policymakers in Belgium, France, Germany, the United States and Australia approached the question of student funding. In this context, we were particularly interested in provisions that supported the education of ex-servicemen and that helped to extend educational access more generally. Such comparisons allowed us to determine what was distinct about the British scheme, yet they also offered pointers towards a broader international history of students and universities in the aftermath of the First World War.

iv. What was the role of ex-service students in promoting internationalism?

Despite wartime antagonisms and the rise of ultra-nationalist currents in many countries, internationalism enjoyed significant resonance during the interwar period.⁸ Significantly, veterans' associations were actively involved in promoting internationalism.⁹ We sought to analyse how the cohort of ex-service students debated the remaking of the international system and the work of bodies such as the League of Nations. Earlier research by members of the project team has testified to the resonance of internationalism both within British universities and at an international level.¹⁰ Through our SES-funded project, we aimed to explore this aspect in greater depth, in particular by considering how debates about peace and international cooperation played out within individual university settings. An investigation of such issues in connection with the ex-service scheme

⁵ Appropriately, the ex-service scheme is mentioned in Keith Vernon, *Universities and the State in England, 1850–1939* (Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004), 190.

⁶ See e.g. Ted Tapper and David Palfreyman, eds, *Understanding Mass Higher Education: Comparative Perspectives on Access* (Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005).

⁷ Tomás Irish, *The University at War, 1914–25: Britain, France, and the United States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Marie-Eve Chagnon and Tomás Irish, eds, *The Academic World in the Era of the Great War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

⁸ See e.g., Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism, c. 1918–45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹ See e.g. Julia Eichenberg and John Paul Newman, eds, *The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013);

¹⁰ Georgina Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond, 1880–1980* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Daniel Laqua, 'Activism in the "Students' League of Nations": International Student Politics and the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants, 1919–1939', *English Historical Review*, vol. 132, no. 556 (2017), 605–37.

required us to consider the characteristics of a generation that entered higher education in the immediate aftermath of military conflict.

3. Methodology

This project was run by a team of historians and largely based on archival research. In order to answer our research questions on the grant scheme's local operation and its impacts, we identified three case-study institutions on which we focused our archival work: the University of Oxford, the University of Liverpool and the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. A clear rationale underpinned the selection of these institutions:

- As one of the two 'ancient' universities, the University of Oxford played a major role in national debates on higher education. In connection with the Royal Commission on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (Asquith Commission, 1919–1922), it redefined its relationship with the British state in the period under consideration. With the exception of Cambridge, Oxford hosted the highest number of ex-service students, with 1,519 grant recipients by 1920. For our project, we selected Oxford, rather than Cambridge, for two reasons. First, Oxford had long and close association with the adult education movement.¹¹ Many key figures involved in such ventures participated in the wartime debates that helped to produce the Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students. Second, Oxford played a significant role in the transnational ventures of the British student movement, for instance hosting an important meeting of the International Confederation of Students in 1923.
- The University of Liverpool was chosen to represent the 'red brick' universities – civic institutions whose distinct role in the history of British higher education has been subject to recent reappraisal.¹² Our analysis of the Board of Education records revealed that the University of Liverpool had the third highest number of ex-service students after Cambridge and Oxford. By using the university archives at Liverpool, we were able to obtain a large sample of grant recipients. Moreover, research on these records allowed us to identify for potential explanations for the preponderance of ex-service students at specific kinds of institutions.
- We selected the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth as our third case-study institution because the ex-service scheme covered Wales as well as England. Well before the Asquith Commission discussed Oxford and Cambridge, the future of the University of Wales had been

¹¹ Lawrence Goldman, *Dons and Workers: Oxford and Adult Education since 1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹² William Whyte, *Redbrick: A Social and Architectural History of Britain's Civic Universities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

subject to the work of a Royal Commission (also known as the Haldane Commission, 1916–1918). Of all Welsh institutions, Aberystwyth attracted the highest number of funded ex-service students. Moreover, the college was important for our research strand on students and internationalism, as it played a prominent role in British interwar internationalism, exemplified by the creation of the Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics in 1919.

While a large part of our activities focused on these case-study institutions in Britain, we also adopted comparative approaches. To this end, we conducted archival work in France, Belgium and Germany. France was selected as a former war ally that faced significant challenges in post-war reconstruction. As a victim of German aggression and occupation, Belgium's fate attracted widespread international attention – and universities featured prominently in several wartime controversies, including Germany's destruction of Louvain library as well as the opening of a Flemish university in Ghent by the German occupiers. Finally, we considered Germany to see how debates about higher education and student funding unfolded in a former enemy country. Before the war, German universities had enjoyed considerable international prestige, with the country's higher education system often being evoked as a model. Our interest in the German case was also vital for the project strand on internationalism. After all, during the early post-war years, Germany remained excluded from many international ventures – not only political ones such as the League of Nations but also scholarly ones such as the International Union of Academies.¹³

Towards the end of the project's life span, one of our research associates undertook preliminary work on the United States and Australia. We were interested in potential similarities and dialogues with regard to student funding. The wartime alliance with the United States as well as Australia's Dominion status facilitated the development of distinct links in higher education. Transnational links were exemplified by student mobility connecting these places.

As the latter remark indicates, our project was sensitive to transnational approaches, which have become a prominent field of historical enquiry.¹⁴ Transnational history is concerned with the movement of people, goods and ideas. The dissemination of knowledge and expertise across national borders has emerged as a particular field of research in this regard.¹⁵ As Joëlle Droux and

¹³ Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus, 'Pas de Locarno pour la science: la coopération scientifique internationale et la politique étrangère des états pendant l'entre-deux-guerres', *Relations Internationales*, no. 46 (1986), 153–17.

¹⁴ For an overview, see Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

¹⁵ See e.g. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck and Jakob Vogel, eds, *Shaping the Transnational Sphere: Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s* (New York: Berghahn, 2015); Jessica Reinisch and David Brydan, eds, *Europe's Internationalists: Rethinking the History of Internationalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

Rita Hofstetter have argued, ‘the field of education’ is well suited ‘for an analysis of transnational dynamics’.¹⁶ Indeed, researchers such as Joyce Goodman have demonstrated the involvement of British educators in a variety of transnational networks.¹⁷ In undertaking our research for this project, we considered the importance of transnational factors from different angles: student mobility in the aftermath of war; the interest of ex-service students in international matters; and the extent to which ideas about student funding could be shaped by examples from other countries.

All this meant that our research was both locally rooted and international in scope. Between February and December 2019, members of our team visited nineteen different archives in seven different cities and three different countries.

- (1) University Archive, Aberystwyth: e.g. correspondence with the local committee that administered the grant scheme ex-service scheme; minutes of committees and the Council of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth; student record cards; college prospectuses.
- (2) National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth: e.g. issues of the student magazine *The Dragon*, minutes of the Senate of the University of Wales.
- (3) University Archive, Liverpool University: minutes of the local committee that administered the grant scheme for ex-service students; funding applications received at Liverpool; minutes of student debates; minutes of the council of the Guild of Students, Liverpool University; minutes of the Council, Senate and Finance Committee of Liverpool University; student magazine *The Sphinx*; student handbooks.
- (4) Bodleian Library, Oxford: e.g. student newspaper *Cherwell* and *Isis* magazine; papers of the university’s Hebdomadal Council; minutes of the Socialist Society.
- (5) Balliol College, Oxford: e.g. JCR minutes; minutes of the Brackenbury Society; student files.
- (6) Christ Church, Oxford: e.g. correspondence with the Board of Education.
- (7) Jesus College, Oxford: JCR minutes; *Jesus College Magazine*.
- (8) Mansfield College Oxford: reports; *Mansfield College Magazine*.

¹⁶ Joëlle Droux and Rita Hofstetter, ‘Constructing Worlds of Education: A Historical Perspective’, *Prospects*, vol. 45 no. 1 (2015), 6.

¹⁷ See e.g. Joyce Goodman, ‘Working for Change across International Borders: The Association of Headmistresses and Education for International Citizenship’, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2010), 165–180; ‘Cosmopolitan Women Educators, 1920–1939: Inside/Outside Activism and Abjection’, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 46, no. 1/2 (2010), 69–83; idem, ‘Education, Internationalism and Empire at the 1928 and 1930 Pan-Pacific Women’s Conferences’, *Journal of Educational and Administrative History*, vol. 46, no. 2 (2014), 145–159.

- (9) New College, Oxford: printed catalogue.
- (10) Wadham College, Oxford: e.g. Warden Wells papers; Debating Society minutes; *Wadham College Gazette*.
- (11) British Library, London: *Headway* (magazine of the League of Nations Union); publications from the early years of the NUS.
- (12) Archives Nationales (Pierrefitte), Paris: government files on scholarships; documentation on higher education legislation.
- (13) Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris: publications of the *Association Générale des Étudiants* of several French universities (e.g. Lyon, Rennes).
- (14) Archives de l'État, Brussels: files of the higher education administration (Jules Destrée ministry).
- (15) Fondation Universitaire, Brussels: annual reports relating to the post-war scholarship scheme established by the *Fondation Universitaire* (University Foundation).
- (16) Archives du Palais-Royal, Brussels: correspondence of King Albert I's private secretary with university officials, the *Fondation Universitaire* and student representatives.
- (17) Bundesarchiv, Berlin: records of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*, the national union of German students.
- (18) Staatsbibliothek, Berlin: periodicals of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* and of the general student committee of the University of Berlin.
- (19) Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin: documentation on the international activities of the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*.

A final dimension of our project methodology involved the collaboration with external partners, especially with a view to integrating creative practice into our dissemination activities (see section 5 of this report). In this respect, we built on our existing links with both the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and NUS.

4. Findings

Given the breadth of this project, our findings cover a range of different areas. Our forthcoming publications will communicate these findings in greater depth. The below points provide an initial overview of key observations that we made in the course of this project.

- *The local operation of the Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students*: our work has demonstrated the importance of local committees that administered the ex-service scheme. These bodies were based within individual universities; they assessed applications, engaged in

detailed correspondence with the applicants and made recommendations to the Board of Education. Although the Board occasionally overturned their assessments, our research highlights considerable local agency in the implementation of this national scheme. Moreover, it also notes that these committees served as funding ‘hubs’ that also covered students from other institutions (beyond the one in which they were based).

- *Social dimensions of the ex-service scheme:* our detailed analysis of the surviving records shows that, with few exceptions, the ex-service grants provided full fees coverage regardless of parental income. By contrast, the maintenance grants were means-tested. On the whole, grant provision was generous, with substantial maintenance funding even for students who had access to parental support. In other words, the ex-service scheme was not treated as a social reform measure; instead, it rewarded wartime service and construed higher education funding as a contribution to post-war reconstruction.
- *Funding for specific activities:* material from our case-study institutions suggests that many grant recipients enrolled on courses that seemed to meet the needs of reconstruction, for instance engineering, medicine and teacher training. Yet such funding was not purely utilitarian – there is no evidence that particular subject areas were being privileged when local committees assessed the funding applications. Grant recipients studied a breadth of different subjects, including those in the arts and humanities.
- *Impact of the ex-service generation:* the records of our case-study institutions highlight the distinct contribution of ex-service students. Our reference to an ‘ex-service generation’ within the universities is not a retrospective assessment; instead, it echoes contemporary accounts that noted the role of ex-service students within their institutions and later commented on their departure.
- *Distinctness of the ex-service scheme:* at first sight, the ex-service scheme was fleeting: indeed, as our research for this project has shown, some local committees wound up their work long before the scheme ended in 1923. Moreover, other funding measures of the era – for instance the State Scholarships – never reached the scale of this temporary scheme. Yet the provision of grants for veterans was revived after the Second World War and thus amounted to more than a one-off experiment.
- *League of Nations and internationalism:* our work at case-study institutions in Aberystwyth, Liverpool and Oxford suggested that many ex-service students had a sustained interest in international cooperation, particularly in the League of Nations. It was often at the local level, within individual universities, clubs and societies, that internationalist enthusiasms manifested themselves. In the early post-war years, *Headway* – the magazine of the League of Nations

Union (LNU) – only sporadically commented on university-based efforts, indicating that many of these ventures were not yet connected to the national structures of liberal internationalism in Britain. Indeed, it was *after* the generation of ex-service students had left university that the LNU began to develop firmer institutional arrangements for its university-based efforts.

Our work on international dimensions is ongoing, as the initial emphasis of our project was on the British scheme. Below are some initial notes.

- *Germany*: German students faced significant economic hardship in the aftermath of the First World War. The *Deutsche Studentenschaft* – the German students’ union – did not promote the creation of a bursary programme; instead it focused its energies on self-help measures and support for ‘working students’. At the time, the organisation of such efforts attracted considerable interest among students, academics and university officials. Some of the discussions surrounding self-help also generated dialogue with student leaders from other countries. In general, both the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* and local student committees steered a staunchly nationalist course which produced obstacles for their relations with student organisations from other countries. Nonetheless, our research has highlighted their participation in a variety of transnational ventures and exchanges.
- *France*: we could not identify any large-scale ex-service scheme comparable to the British case. Yet an analysis of relevant legislation suggests several measures aimed at facilitating the integration of ex-servicemen into French universities. As far as student life is concerned, our initial work has highlighted French participation in international student ventures. Further work is necessary to trace the local manifestations of wider national or international debates.
- *Belgium*: the successful fundraising efforts of the Hoover Commission for Relief of Belgium meant that by the end of the war, this body still had a sizeable amount of money. Such funds helped to support academic reconstruction, reflected in a major one-off donation to Belgian universities as well as the creation of *Fondation Universitaire* (University Foundation). The latter exists to this day; it was established through national legislation in 1920 and ran student mobility programmes as well as a scholarship programme. Our analysis of annual reports means that we can provide a detailed picture of the operation of this post-war scholarship scheme and its recipients.
- *Australia and United States*: we have identified substantial differences in comparison with Britain, for instance with regard to the war’s impact on universities and student numbers. There were Australian and American equivalents to the Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Service Students – albeit not in the aftermath of the First World War but in connection with the

Second World War: the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (Australia) and the G. I. Bill (United States). In this respect, the British legislation of 1918 can be placed within a wider context of veterans' education. Furthermore, preliminary work on both cases has highlighted the prominence of schemes that supported transnational student mobility (including specific arrangements for American soldier-students in Britain and France). These are but some examples of potential comparisons and transnational connections that we intend to explore further.

5. Dissemination

The project team disseminated its findings in a number of different forms: presentations, publications and public engagement activities. On several occasions, we combined our participation in specific events with team meetings, helping us to plan future activities as well as ensuring the smooth running of our project.

Academic Conferences

- Annual conference of the Social History Society, held at Lincoln University, 10–12 June 2019: the project team convened a panel on 'Youth, Citizenship and Internationalism after 1918'. Lara Green chaired this session, which featured papers from team members Georgina Brewis, Sarah Hellowell and Daniel Laqua. A fourth speaker, Susannah Wright (Oxford Brookes University), shared her research on the Junior Branches of the League of Nations Union; her presentation offered an effective addition to our project's strand on university students, internationalism and support for the League.
- Annual colloquium of the Society for Educational Studies, held at Oriel College, Oxford, 20/21 September 2019: we ran a special panel at the SES colloquium on 'Educational Reform Legislation in a Changing Society'. Sarah Hellowell served as chair, with Georgina Brewis, Lara Green and Daniel Laqua giving papers that introduced the audience to different aspects of our SES-funded project.
- In addition to these two panels with several team members, Daniel Laqua presented the project as part of his keynote lecture at the international colloquium of the Association Transdisciplinaire pour les Recherches Historiques sur l'Éducation (an event with the overarching theme of 'passages, transferts, trajectoires en éducation'), held at the University of Geneva on 24/25 June 2019.
- Georgina Brewis discussed the project in her contribution to a symposium on 'Family Histories of Internationalism, Education and Activism' (also featuring Susannah Wright from Oxford

Brookes University and Mary Clare Martin from the University of Greenwich), held as part of the Annual Conference of the History of Education Society, University College London, 8–10 November 2019.

Writing

- In December 2019, Lara Green, Daniel Laqua and Georgina Brewis submitted an article on ‘Student Funding and University Access after the Great War: The Scheme for the Higher Education of Ex-Servicemen at Aberystwyth, Liverpool, and Oxford’ to the *British Journal of Educational Studies*.
- Daniel Laqua, Georgina Brewis and Sarah Hellowell are currently working on a second article, examining the post-war student generation and its attitudes to the League of Nations and internationalism more broadly. We aim to complete this piece in the first half of 2020, with anticipated submission to a major history journal.
- Sophie Cooper provided the project team with a 29-page paper summarising relevant literature on the United States and Australia. This review will inform our future work on comparisons between these countries and Britain.

Public Engagement

- On 28 April 2019, we staged a performance entitled ‘Student Voices after the Great War: Commemorating Conflict, Building Peace’ as part of the ‘Commemoration, Conflict and Conscience Festival’ in Bristol. Our contribution combined short academic presentations with creative/drama elements – the latter based on the project team’s work with student volunteers. The bulk of the funding for this activity came from another source, namely seed-corn funding provided by the World War One Engagement Centre at the University of Hertfordshire. However, our performance was underpinned by research we had undertaken for our SES-funded project.
- In November 2019, we organised an exhibition at the University Gallery of Northumbria University (Gallery North), entitled ‘Living Legacies of the First World War: The North East and Beyond’. We produced new pop-up banners for this exhibition, with Lara Green summarising findings from her archival research. An opening reception took place on 11 November, featuring short talks by team members Daniel Laqua and Sarah Hellowell as well as James McConnel (Associate Professor of British and Irish History, Northumbria University). The exhibition itself ran from 12 to 22 November. Our exhibition showcased our work alongside the findings from other First World War-related projects; as such, it also

connected our work to ongoing community initiatives such as the HLF-supported Northumbria World War One Commemoration project.

- We further developed plans for a 'Studies in the History of Students' working paper series, with an editorial board in place and two working papers scheduled for publication in 2020.

6. Future Plans

We intend to continue with our project-related activities in 2020 and are currently seeking further funding to this end. There are three strands to our planned work. Firstly, we intend to organise public events in Aberystwyth and Liverpool – places where we conducted extensive research as part of our SES-funded project. We have already established links to potential local collaborators. Secondly, we intend to hold a workshop to discuss 'Comparative Perspectives on University Access, Student Funding and Educational Reform in the Aftermath of the Great War' at the UCL Institute of Education. Through this event, we seek to consider wider implications of our research on student funding, developing the international comparative dimensions of our project. Thirdly, we intend to prepare a funding bid on 'Students, the Reconstruction of University Life and the Making of Post-War Societies in Western Europe between 1918 and 1923'. The anticipated bid will seek funding for an ambitious, multi-researcher project that examines developments in Britain, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany and Austria. Prior to make this bid, we intend to undertake some preliminary groundwork exploring the experiences of women students, as this will help to complement our previous work on male ex-service students.

As these plans indicate, support from the SES has not only allowed us to undertake research and disseminate our findings to different audiences – it has also opened up further avenues of enquiry. The work undertaken in 2019 has thus served as a launching pad for a range of new ventures. We are therefore grateful for the funding provided by the SES.