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**Title:** *Exploring the Lived Experiences of Foundation Year Students in Allied Health and Nursing: A Longitudinal Qualitative Study*

## **Aims**

To explore how Foundation Year (FY) students in allied health and nursing experience academic, personal, and professional development as they transition into higher education and progress through their BSc programmes. This presentation focuses on emerging insights from the first year of data.

## **Overview and Rationale**

Although FY pathways are critical for widening participation, research has primarily focused on quantitative outcomes such as attainment (Spicer-Cain, 2025). Qualitative studies often capture only snapshots of transition (Shepperd et al., 2023). This study addresses these gaps through a longitudinal qualitative design using interviews to capture evolving FY student experiences, placing student voice at the heart of understanding their experience. Ethical approval was gained from the UoW, and the first year of data collection has been completed.

Preliminary findings have revealed the challenges and support shaping FY students' early time at university and have highlighted what matters most to them. Findings will form the basis for identifying practical improvements to teaching and support.

## **Impact**

This presentation may interest colleagues involved in widening participation, offering insight to inform pedagogic and support practices that respond to the needs of learners entering HE through alternative pathways.

Shepperd, E. *et al.* (2023) 'The Wellbeing Experience of FY Students Transitioning to the FY in a Higher Education Institution', *Journal of the FY Network*, 6, pp. 113–125.

Spicer-Cain, H.M. (2025) 'Foundations of success: Former FY students on a health sciences course show equivalent module marks and degree completion rates to peers from more traditional entry routes', *Journal of the FY Network*, 7, pp. 3–17.