

SKOPE Research Centre

Quarterly Newsletter

Early 2020 saw the world change and as we embark on 2021 the effects of the pandemic are impacting in ways that we could not possibly have considered twelve months ago. Many aspects of daily life have altered, for some irreparably, and yet the expectation to continue as much as normal remains. To that end, within SKOPE we have spent the last 12 months building on the work and legacy of the Centre's founding directors, Professor Ken Mayhew and Professor Ewart Keep. Ewart retired in April 2020, although he is still heavily involved in a number of SKOPE research projects and bids, for which we are grateful. Once we are able to hold in-person events, we will continue with plans for an event to mark and celebrate Ewart's contribution to academic life and SKOPE.

In the meantime, this new quarterly newsletter endeavours to keep you abreast of activity in the Centre. While we continue to maintain our research focus on policy and practice at the intersection of education, skills, and employment, we do so under four new themes:

- Sustainability;
- The changing nature of work;
- Employability; and
- Practice.

These themes represent the research focus and interests of SKOPE's staff drawing on the plethora of work conducted throughout the 23 years SKOPE has been in existence. We are working on a wide range of projects, as well as grant applications under review, that fall within the four themes. Not least we have a diverse range of research topics under study by our doctoral community, which currently stands at 15 students.

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Moving with the times, the SKOPE website has been redeveloped. Alongside these new quarterly newsletters, it will be our main vehicle for communication: www.skope.ox.ac.uk. This new interface more clearly outlines the work we do, our people, and our achievements. In addition, links to the new Skills Observatory Podcast – SkOP – are easily found. Season 1 was a tremendous success and Season 2 promises the same high-level engagement and candour on topics relevant to the skills, education and training landscape. I hope you do, and have, enjoyed listening to these as much as me.

Taking over the Directorship of SKOPE during a pandemic has brought many challenges but also many rewards. I do believe that any organisation is only as good as its people. Dr James Robson became the Centre's Deputy Director in 2020 and his insight and leadership have been invaluable. Ashmita Randhawa continued to perform to an exceptional standard the role of SKOPE Administrator and now moves into a Research Officer role (having successfully completed her DPhil earlier this month) as we look to appoint a new administrator. My huge thanks to James and Ashmita for their support. And we have a number of new SKOPE Fellows, Honorary Fellows and Associates alongside our existing colleagues, that we are excited and delighted to work with in equal measure.

As we continue to navigate 2021, amid many tensions with home working, caring responsibilities, the online world, and the challenges academia faces with Brexit, I thank you for your continued support of SKOPE. Many of our associations are very long-standing and it is the nurturing of these, alongside new connections, that is the centre's mainstay. We look forward to staying in contact through these newsletters.

Susan James Relly
Director



[@SKOPEOxford](https://twitter.com/SKOPEOxford)

News

New Deputy Director - Dr James Robson

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr James Robson @elpug to the role of Deputy Director of SKOPE. James has been an integral part of the SKOPE team serving as its Associate Director. He will work closely with Centre Director, Dr Susan James Relly to create and execute the research strategy for the Centre.



Ewart Keep appointed to Skills and Productivity Board

Professor Ewart Keep was one of six board members appointed to the DfE Skills and Productivity Board. The Board's work will play a significant part in addressing the most pressing gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the labour market, helping to rebuild the economy post-Covid-19 and deliver a bold skills agenda.

Yidan Prize Conference Series: Europe 2021

SKOPE is organising the Yidan Prize Conference Series: Europe 2021. The conference will be held virtually on the 28th May. It is a partnership between the Yidan Prize Foundation and the Department of Education, University of Oxford. This year's conference will focus on the overarching theme: 'What is innovation in education?' The conference will honour the achievements of the Yidan Prize for Education Research Laureate 2020, Professor Carl Wieman, and the Yidan Prize for Education Development Laureates 2020, Ms Lucy Lake and Ms Angeline Murimirwa from CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education). Further details can be found here: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/yidan-prize-conference-series-europe-2021/>

In addition, the first international Yidan Prize doctoral student conference will be held on the 27th May as a precursor to the main conference. The themes are:

- How will education be delivered in the future?
- What are the skills young people need [in order] to pursue challenges they have? .

More details can be found here: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/1st-international-yidan-prize-doctoral-conference/>

Research Projects

- *Driving teaching excellence in technical education: international perspectives, funded by Worldskills UK.*
- *Green skills and the construction sector: building back better?, funded by and in conjunction with The Edge Foundation.*
- *Climate Change Education Futures in India, funded by the GCRF*
- *Unlocking the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for English Law, funded by the ESRC*
- *Mapping the UK Educational Research Landscape, funded by the British Academy and The Royal Society*
- *Narrative and narrative skills in Business, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council*

Susan James Relly appointed to the Advisory Board of Becoming X

Dr Susan James Relly was recently appointed to the Advisory Board of Becoming X, an organisation which aims to raise the aspirations of young people helping to build their skills and confidence to attain their dreams. www.becomingx.com

SkOP - The Skills Observatory Podcast

Season 1 of the SkOP podcast launched in July 2020 with seven episodes covering higher education, vocational education and training, the green economy and Covid-19, and a response to the Education Secretary's FE speech, culminating in a reflection podcast. Season 2 will cover the following topics:

- Episode 1: The importance of science education & skills
- Episode 2: The employability agenda in higher education
- Episode 3: The future of technical education
- Episode 4: Teacher education and professional development
- Episode 5: The future of work
- Episode 6: Narrative and narrative skills in business
- Episode 7: Reflections

New Website launched

The new website for the SKOPE Research Centre is now live! As our research strategy has evolved in the past few years, it was time for a new, fresh look for our website. Our research projects and activities are grouped by theme: **Sustainability, Changing nature of work, Employability, Practice**



<https://skopecentre.org/>

Recent publications

James Reilly, S. (2021). 'The political rhetoric of parity of esteem', *Oxford Review of Education*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1866522>

James Reilly, S. (2020). 'Moving from competence to excellence: mainstreaming excellence in technical education', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2020.1812548>

Keep, E. (2020). 'COVID-19 – Potential Consequences for Education, Training, and Skills', *SKOPE Issues Paper 36*

Keep, E. (2020) Employers, the ghost at the feast, *Journal of Education and Work*, 33:7-8, 500-506, DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2020.1852501>

Denton-Calabrese, T. & **Randhawa, A.** (2020). 'Tackling digital exclusion: The role of supportive informal education settings', *BERA Research Intelligence*, (145), pp.16-17.

O'Sullivan, K, Byrne, D, **Robson, J**, Winters, N (2019) "Who goes to college via access routes? A comparative study of widening participation admission in selective universities in Ireland and England", *SOCIAL INCLUSION*. 7(1) 38-51.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v7i1.1647>

Robson, J. (2020) 'Online Educational Research Methods', in S. Delamont and A. Jones (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Elliott, V., **Randhawa, A.**, Ingram, J., Nelson-Addy, L., Griffin, C. and Baird, J.A. (2020). *Feedback: Practice Review*. London: Education Endowment Foundation. The report is available from:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Evaluation/EEF_Feedback_Practice_Review.pdf

Robson, J., Randhawa, A., and Keep, E. (2019). Implementing employability skills frameworks in schools: Learning from the CREATE framework. <https://skopecentre.org/publications/implementing-employability-skills-frameworks-in-schools-learning-from-the-create-framework/>



PhD completions

Congratulations to two of our SKOPE students who successfully defended their doctorates in January 2021:

- **Ashmita Randhawa** | STEM and the Studio: Understanding the role of Studio Schools in English Education
- **Gary Morris** | Learning Through Knowledge Exchange: Case Studies from the University of Oxford

If you're interested in participating in our podcast, or would like to share some news, do let us know: [skopecentre@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:skope@education.ox.ac.uk)