

## [P18] Exploring the concepts of challenging and straightforward in undergraduate research

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The research reported in this poster forms part of an ongoing study into the undergraduate final year Honours research project in the School of Biomolecular Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University. It derives from our recent survey of undergraduate students and undergraduate research project supervisors (academic staff) in which the factors influencing students' choice of project were investigated, by using a structured questionnaire<sup>1</sup>. The survey indicated that there was good agreement between staff perceptions of what students were looking for and what students claimed had influenced their project choices, with one main exception. Staff thought that most students wanted a 'straightforward' project, while most students claimed to be seeking a 'challenging' project.

We are currently using a number of different methodological approaches to explore the concepts of challenging and straightforward with respect to the Honours project, in order to explain what this difference means. For example, we have conducted semi-structured, open interviews with a selection of project tutors and project students, all of whom had responded to the questionnaire. In addition, we have surveyed students and staff from another School at LJMU, using a similar questionnaire to that of our previous study. Preliminary results will be reported.

However, to gain a broader perspective, we aim to canvass the views of delegates at this conference through an interactive poster. Accordingly, we will be requesting descriptors and any other comments for the terms 'challenging' and 'straightforward' from readers of this poster. 'Post-it' notes will be available to write definitions and post them on the poster board.

### Reference

<sup>1</sup>Harland, J., Pitt, S. and Saunders, V. (2005) Factors affecting student choice of the undergraduate research project: staff and student perceptions. *BEE-j* 5 available at <http://www.bioscience.heacademy/journal/vol5/beej-5-3.pdf>