Keele student personas

What are student personas?
Sixteen student personas have been developed to represent, at the time of writing, 10,734 undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) students (headcount; Qlikview, accessed 22.10.20). These personas are fictional characters representing, as closely as possible, the full range of personal, family, academic circumstances and characteristics that we see in our whole student body, across all types and levels of study.

How have they been developed?
These personas were initially developed by students, then refined by academic and student support staff as well as KeeleSU and KPA representatives, using their considerable experience of students' circumstances and issues so that, while fictional, they reflect many of the real-life experiences and concerns that we know our students have experienced. Finally, the draft personas were sent out to all students over the summer of 2020, asking "*Do you feel represented by these personas? If not, what's missing*?". The final version of these personas has incorporated as much of this student feedback as possible, while recognising that not every permutation of circumstances can be accommodated in a limited number of personas.

How closely do they match the whole student population? Will every student recognise themselves?
The range of personas is intended to reflect as closely as possible the demographic make-up of the whole student population (Table 1), although compression of scale (i.e. over 10,000 individuals represented by just 16 personas) inevitably distorts some of the proportions when trying to maximise diversity. Where the proportions diverge between the personas and the whole population, it has been done to take the opportunity to increase intersectionality and to build in as many as possible of our real-life students' experiences and personal circumstances. In response to our students' feedback, the personas have increased in diversity in age, gender, sexuality, religion and disability as well as personal and family circumstances. The number of personas has also been expanded to accommodate this increased diversity and intersectionality. Although 16 is a large number for a set of personas, the benefits of the expanded detail they contain outweigh the potential complexity when in use.

Despite the relatively large number of personas in this set, the ratio of Keele students to personas is still substantial - approximately 670 to 1 - and so, inevitably, not all elements of our students' experiences will be represented. However, all of our students should be able to recognise many elements of their own experience across a number of personas, if not all in one. For example, not all courses can be represented in 16 personas, but broad subject areas within healthcare subjects, sciences and humanities, and modes of study, are represented and experiences presented in one subject area may be common to those in similar, or even very different, subject areas.

How will we use the personas?
Personas are commonly used when designing or planning a product or a service, for example, to help ensure that the needs and perspectives of all the potential users are met and their behaviours and goals are better understood. We have used the draft personas over the summer to test our planning for the 2020/21 academic year, with all the changes in delivery and support that the Covid-19 crisis has imposed on us all, to try to ensure that the student experience is as good as we can make it.

The personas can be re-purposed many times to focus on whatever aspect of the student experience is under consideration. The issue log that accompanies every persona can be adapted to reflect the particular use of the persona set, while the details of the personas' characteristics will continue to reflect the breadth of our students' lives and circumstances (and periodic review will ensure that they remain fully representative). The personas will be circulated to all schools, professional service areas and our students' unions so that they can play their role in helping us to develop policies and practices that best fit our diverse student body. A summary of the personas is provided at the end of this document, for ready reference. The unabridged set of personas is provided separately for general use.

Table 1: Demographics: personas vs whole student population: whole student population figures are taken from the University's information database, Qlikview (accessed 22.10.20). Percentage representation of the personas is calculated as a proportion of the 16 personas.

Characteristic	% representation (NR = not recorded)		Comment
	Personas	**Student population**	
Age range			Representation of ages in the personas is broadly in line with the whole student population although the need to represent all ages means that 18-29y range for personas is 6% below whole population (equivalent to 1 persona)
18-29y	81	87	
30-39	6	7	
40-49	6	4	
50+	6	2	
Gender			Female and male % representation is approximately balanced. Qlikview only records M/F or unknown so non-binary % in the whole student population is unknown.
Female	56	60	
Male	38	40	
Non-binary	6	NR	
Ethnicity*			The proportion of overall BAME personas is higher than in the whole student population, approximately equivalent to 1 persona. This divergence from the proportions of the whole population is to provide scope to enhance intersectionality (e.g. gender, disability) within the personas.
Asian	25	21	
Black	13	8	
Mixed	6	4	
White	56	62	
Overall BAME	44	35	
Disability**			2 personas have visible physical disabilities. Five have invisible disabilities – asthma, ASD, anxiety, anxiety & depression and dyslexia. While personas' disabilities appear over-represented compared to the whole population figure, they include undeclared, undiagnosed disabilities while the latter only represents declared, known disabilities.
Disability	44	18	
No disability	56	82	
Study level			Representation is balanced. Within each category, there is also a range of levels, inc FY, and part-time/full-time PGT.
UG	81	83	
PGT	12	12	
PGR	6	5	
Domicile			International and EU are over-represented compared to the whole student population. This is partly the fact that 1 persona = 6% (i.e. a lower % is not possible while representing a small group of students) and partly to ensure different study modes/countries are represented.
UK	75	93	
EU	6	1	
International	19	6	

*Qlikview figures for UK and non-UK ethnicities have been combined. Only categories represented in personas have been quoted in whole population figures (remaining 5% in latter includes 'unknown').

** Disabilities in personas include undiagnosed, undeclared mental health and other disabilities, hence proportion is higher than recorded by Qlikview (figures represent declared only). The higher figure is also intended to reflect the high proportion of HE students nationally (42%) who report experiencing serious personal, emotional, behavioural or mental health challenges, for which they needed professional help (University student mental health survey (2020) The Insight Network & Dig-In)
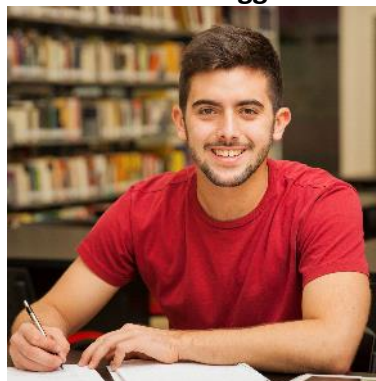
Summary of personas

Imani Adegoke

Demographics			
Age	21	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	A-Levels
Ethnicity	Black	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	Physical (visually impaired)	Faculty	FNS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; no dependants	Programme	Geography
Family circumstances	At family home out of semester	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Dependent on family	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Off-campus rental, shared	Year of study	3

Stuart Briggs

Demographics			
Age	20	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	A-levels
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	ASD	Faculty	Nat Sci
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; no dependants	Programme	Maths
Family circumstances	Lives with family in vacations	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Supported by parents	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	FY

Emily Bunn

Demographics			
Age	18	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	A-levels
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	Initially undeclared; invisible (anxiety and depression)	Faculty	Nat Sci
Personal circumstances	Bisexual; single; no dependants	Programme	Biology and Computer Science
Family circumstances	Lives at family home in vacations	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Struggling; needs P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	1

William Clarke

Demographics			
Age	52	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	A-levels
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	FMHS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, married; 2 dependants (16 and 15y)	Programme	Nursing
Family circumstances	Lives in family home with wife and children	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Self-funding	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Commuter (30 miles round trip)	Year of study	2

Veronica Cornette

Demographics			
Age	20	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	UG student
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	International
Disability	Declared invisible	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual; single; no dependants	Programme	Exchange student (range of modules)
Family circumstances	Family in USA	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Supported by family	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	3

Gabrielle Durand

Demographics			
Age	19	English as first language	N
Gender: identifies as:	Non-binary (preferred pronoun: they/their/them)	Entry level qualifications	European Baccalaureate
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	EU
Disability	Dyslexia	Faculty	FMHS
Personal circumstances	Pansexual; single; no dependants	Programme	Physiotherapy
Family circumstances	Lives with family in France during vacations	Study Level	4-year Integrated Masters
Financial circumstances	Financially supported by family but also works P/T to minimise dependency	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Off-campus, in shared accommodation	Year of study	2

Issac Honu

Demographics			
Age	18	English as first language	No (3rd)
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	IB
Ethnicity	Black	Home/EU/International	International
Disability	None	Faculty	FMHS
Personal circumstances	Gay, single; no dependants	Programme	Pharmacy
Family circumstances	Family in South Africa	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Dependent on family	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	FY

Samantha Jones

Demographics			
Age	35	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	Access to HE
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	Nat Sci
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; 1 child (4y)	Programme	Chemistry
Family circumstances	Lives at family home	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Supported by P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Commutes from home (60 mile round trip)	Year of study	1

Farhana Kayari

Demographics			
Age	19	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	A-Levels
Ethnicity	Asian	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; no dependants	Programme	Law
Family circumstances	Lives with family	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Dependent on family	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Commutes from home	Year of study	2

David Michelson

Demographics			
Age	21	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	BSc (Hons) Biochemistry
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	Nat Sci
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual; single; no dependants	Programme	PhD
Family circumstances	Independent of parental home	Study Level	8
Financial circumstances	Dependent on P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Off-campus rental, shared	Year of study	3

Sajid Rasheed persona

Demographics			
Age	22	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	BA History
Ethnicity	Asian	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; no dependants	Programme	MA Politics and International Relations
Family circumstances	At family home out of semester	Study Level	PGT
Financial circumstances	Works F/T for family business	Study Mode	P/T
Term-time residential status	Off-campus	Year of study	1

Louise Roberts persona
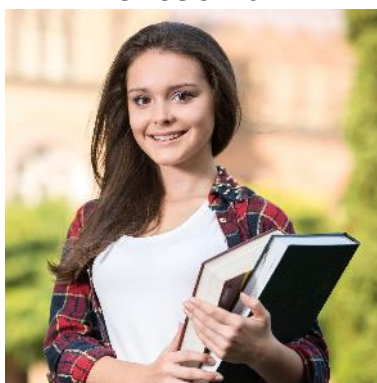

Demographics			
Age	42	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	BA (Hons) Business & Marketing
Ethnicity	Mixed race	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	undeclared, invisible	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, married; 1 child (10y)	Programme	Business MBA apprenticeship
Family circumstances	Lives at family home	Study Level	PGT
Financial circumstances	Supported by partner & P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	Commutes from home (40-mile round trip)	Year of study	1

Medha Singh

Age	21	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Male	Entry level qualifications	A-Levels
Ethnicity	Asian	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	Physical (wheelchair user)	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual, single; no dependants	Programme	Business
Family circumstances	At family home out of semester	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Dependent on P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	3

Chloe Smith

Demographics			
Age	18	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	BTEC
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	FMHS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual single; no dependants	Programme	Social Work
Family circumstances	Care leaver	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Dependent on P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus (51-week rental)	Year of study	1

Sky Williams

Demographics			
Age	19	English as first language	Y
Gender: identifies as:	Female (transgender)	Entry level qualifications	Level 4 completed elsewhere
Ethnicity	White	Home/EU/International	Home
Disability	None	Faculty	Nat Sci /HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Heterosexual; single; no dependants	Programme	Psychology/English
Family circumstances	Lives with family in vacations (may become estranged)	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Supported by P/T work	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	2

Xia Yu

Demographics			
Age	18	English as first language	N
Gender: identifies as:	Female	Entry level qualifications	A-levels
Ethnicity	Asian	Home/EU/International	International
Disability	None	Faculty	HUMSS
Personal circumstances	Lesbian; single; no dependants	Programme	Music
Family circumstances	Family live in Hong Kong	Study Level	UG
Financial circumstances	Supported by family	Study Mode	F/T
Term-time residential status	On-campus	Year of study	1