

## Special Project Grant awards – March 2023

Title of proposal	Investigating and improving induction training for CS work-based learning workplace mentors, especially to ensure inclusion
Name(s) and institution(s) of Awardee	Ella Taylor-Smith, Edinburgh Napier University
Date of Award	16 May 2023
Amount of Award	£4,925.50
Description	Workplace mentors have a crucial role in supporting Computing students and degree apprentices undertaking work-based learning (WBL) and University Computing departments provide induction training and resources to help mentors fulfil this multi-faceted role. This study investigates training for workplace mentors, especially to ensure inclusion. Mentors need to work with diverse students and make them welcome. However, the tech sector suffers from a lack of diversity, such as gender imbalance, and could benefit from positive action to promote inclusion. So, the extant training provided by UK Computing departments will be reviewed and the needs of workplace mentors will be explored to identify best practice and any training gaps, with a focus on inclusion. The study will create outputs which will be useful to both university departments and employer mentors directly.

Title of proposal	Understanding the role models that inspire women to study Computing Science
Name(s) and institution(s) of Awardee	Matthew Barr, University of Glasgow
Date of Award	16 May 2023
Amount of Award	£4,615.19
Description	<p>This project will explore what makes an effective role model, documenting the characteristics of individuals that have inspired female Computing Science students to take up the subject.</p> <p>Data will be collected by means of an initial online survey, followed by a series of more in-depth interviews with a sub-set of survey respondents. The lack of women in CS is an issue relevant to many of us, and the results of the study will be disseminated via a number of academic and non-academic avenues, including a paper submitted to CEP 2024 and a more accessible case study published on the host institution's website. Identifying role models that have inspired women to study CS, and – crucially – understanding how and why such role models have been effective, is a key mechanism by which we can help to address gender imbalance within the CS education community (Grande, et al., 2018; Taylor-Smith et al., 2022). It is hoped that the results of this work may inform institutions' efforts to improve gender balance, particularly with respect to outreach and recruitment.</p>

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Title of proposal	Learning Professional Skills with Algorithmic Essays
Name(s) and institution(s) of Awardee	Michel Wermelinger, The Open University
Date of Award	16 May 2023
Amount of Award	£4,750.00
Description	This project will create and evaluate resources for CS1 and CS2 students to write and critique algorithmic essays that explain and compare alternative algorithmic approaches to solving a computational problem. Writing such essays promotes communication, problem solving, algorithm design and analysis, testing, and other skills. In the process, students also learn to use Jupyter notebooks, code formatters, linters and version control tools. The resources and approach will be discussed with a focus group of UK educators before being improved and made freely available.

Title of proposal	Policy Workshop on Assessment Redesign in the Era of Large Language Models
Name(s) and institution(s) of Awardee	Matthew Shardlow, Manchester Metropolitan University
Date of Award	16 May 2023
Amount of Award	£2,838
Description	<p>This project seeks funds to host a 1-day workshop bringing together educational leaders in Higher Education computing departments. The workshop will collaboratively explore and develop policy guidance on the usage of large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT within the assessment of technology-focused degree subjects including, but not limited to, coding assignments. The output of the workshop will be (a) a set of policy recommendations to be published as a white paper (b) Equipping attendees to communicate the risks and rewards of LLMs in computing education and (c) the development of a professional network of technology educators to collaborate on further research and grant applications arising from this workshop.</p> <p>The workshop was scheduled for Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July and the report was published in December 2023: <a href="#">ChatGPT in Computing Education – A Policy White Paper</a> edited by Matthew Shardlow and Annabel Latham (Manchester Metropolitan University)</p>