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SWANSEA - ABERTAWE

**An analysis of the impact of
financial uncertainty for mature
students to enter Higher education:
A case study of undergraduate
accountancy programmes**

By Samantha Hopkins

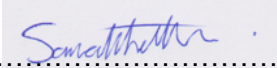
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(Hons) Accounting

2022

DECLARATION

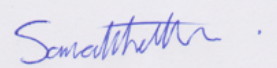
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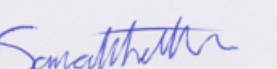
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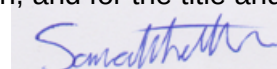
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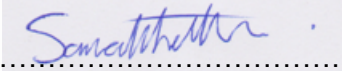
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Acknowledgements

I dedicate this dissertation to my son, Logan Hopkins, as the main reason I studied Accountancy was to build a better future for him. I thank him for all his support and understanding.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my partner, David Hill. He has supported me in my decision to attend university as a mature student and has been an absolute rock throughout my journey. He believed in me and has been by my side every milestone mark of celebration and even pushed me to carry on when things got too much.

I would also dedicate this dissertation to my Nana, Pauline Larsen, who passed away during my first year at university (November 2019). She was my world and would be incredibly proud of what I have achieved.

A massive thank you to Gareth Hughes, my supervisor for his advice and constant support throughout the writing of this dissertation.

Thank you to all my participants and everyone who shared social media posts, for me to gather the data I needed. Thank you to my parents for their support on my journey to attend university as a mature student and taking the time to make financial uncertainty easier during my first year by letting me live with them.

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation was to discover what financial uncertainties there are for mature students studying accountancy at university level or higher. Financial uncertainty, financial support, impacts and motivation cover key areas of this research.

The researcher evaluated academic literature on financial uncertainty, higher education and the accountancy sector. These provided a baseline for a thematic approach to then evaluate literature regarding financial uncertainty for mature students, students' motivation to study an accountancy programme at higher education level and the impact of affordability for accountancy programmes. A gap in literature was discovered when looking for literature regarding financial uncertainty for mature students studying accountancy at university level or higher. The findings and themes that emerged from the literature review were used to underpin interview questions.

A mono-method approach was used in the form of semi-structured interviews. After posting on social media platforms and emailing universities and local accounting firms, seven participants responded and were interviewed. The findings support much of the literature and themes outlined in chapter two. The first being that there is a lack of knowledge around financial support for mature students. The second was the cost benefit of studying weighing against future career opportunities. The third was negative views on student loans.

Lastly, there is a need for further knowledge and understanding surrounding student finance to be aimed at mature students and further finance or benefits available for those with lifestyle factors.

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Abbreviations

HE: Higher Education

BA: Bachelor of Arts degree

ACCA: Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

CIMA: Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

ICAEW: Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

UK: United Kingdom

HMRC: HM Revenue and Customs

Chapter One - Introduction

This dissertation will look at the possible financial uncertainty of studying Accountancy as a mature student in university or higher. The results will be analysed to see how much financial uncertainty makes an impact on mature students deciding to take that leap in to higher education (HE) in Accountancy. It will consider backgrounds of mature students that have dependents, rent or have a mortgage, are a carer or have a partner and their decision to study Accountancy at HE from prospective, past and present students. This chapter provides some background to the researcher and a rationale.

1.1 Background

Accounting is a specific subject and skill set that is used in every business. Businesses use accountants to monitor daily cash flows, submit readings to HMRC annually, create annual reports to present to shareholders and potential investors and much more. Studying a degree in accountancy can open more doors into a career in Accountancy (UCAS, 2021).

Motivation or self-concept is psychological relating to self-beliefs. Motivation to study in HE comes from the need to achieve a result to expand knowledge, succeed more in life with a career and expand personality and emotional development (Marsh et al. 2019).

According to Rolfe (2003), the number of mature applicants that apply to university in general to study HE has decreased due to fees and the concept of a huge student loan can feel overwhelming to those that are from the working class or reliant on benefits. These potential applicants could be working on hourly pay, renting or even have a mortgage, have dependents or care for vulnerable relatives. All these factors come in to play when deciding to enter higher education in general.

Student Finance Wales (2021) offers a figure in the shape of a loan for the HE course and then help with living costs which can be depending on the total household income how much is a grant and how much is a loan, which needs to be paid back. For those with children there

is additional grants available depending also on household income. Rent and mortgage should be covered by the grants and loans.

Mature students with dependents would potentially find it harder to get a part time job alongside raising their children and studying full time. Multi-tasking and organisational skills are required but as soon as a dependent is sick or is off school, pressure and stress is added on top.

Key questions to address from literature:

- What funding is available to mature students studying an accountancy degree? – Oliver (2020)
- Comparison of mature students applying for HE compared to those coming straight from college. – Office for Students (2021). HESA (2021).
- Is there enough motivation to study HE for mature students? Jabal (2021).
- What benefits are there to mature students studying an Accountancy degree? – Kaplan (2020).
- How much information on finances is out there for mature students wanting to enter HE? – Nidirect (NA).

1.2 Rationale

The researcher has chosen this area of research because the researcher is also a mature student in the final year of HE studying accountancy. The researcher delayed studying for several years because of financial uncertainty whilst raising a child. When the researcher finally took the leap to study an undergraduate Accountancy degree, motivation and family support helped the decision but financially the researcher has had a negative experience to the point of nearly dropping out of continuing to study. Referring to bullet point three of the objectives, the idea to explore what financial help is available to recommending to governing bodies could potentially help perspective accountancy students' that worry about the financial uncertainty.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the dissertation project is to research mature students' that struggle financially when undertaking HE in accountancy and analyse what financial uncertainty is there for mature students studying/delay studying accountancy in HE. For the aim to be obtained, objectives are stated as a checklist of tasks to be completed to achieve results. The objectives are very important as they help guide the researcher to the results (Farrugia et al. 2010).

1. Carry out a comprehensive literature review in reference to the higher education and accountancy sector to determine students' motivation to study, impact on affordability of studying accountancy and financial uncertainty.
2. Carry out qualitative research in the form of interviews to current, past and prospective accountancy students to establish whether or not financial uncertainty is a factor when deciding whether to study accountancy at higher level.
3. Make recommendations premised on the findings to higher education governing bodies and government agencies on how mature potential students can be sustainably attracted to an accounting course at university level or higher.

1.4 Structure

To successfully achieve the objectives of this dissertation, chapter two will carry out an evaluation of the available literature regarding the impact of financial uncertainty for mature students to enter HE in Accountancy. The literature review structure will be thematic and broken down into reviewing financial uncertainty, higher education and the accountancy sector.

Chapter three will look at identifying the appropriate method to conduct primary research in a form of a mono-method following a framework called the research onion (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

Chapter four will analyse the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and findings presented.

Chapter five will offer recommendations that can be taken and conclude the dissertation. It will also address limitations to the study and list any topics that have not been explored fully for future research.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the aim and objectives of this research. It has included some background regarding the topic and a rationale which explains the researcher's reason for choosing the topic. A detailed structure has also been presented to help achieve the aim and objectives.

Chapter two will look at the available academic literature surrounding the topic and critically analyse the findings.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation will carry out an evaluation of the available literature regarding the impact of financial uncertainty for mature students to enter HE in Accountancy. The literature review structure will be thematic and broken down into reviewing financial uncertainty, higher education and the accountancy sector. This will provide a baseline to enter the next evaluation stage of combining the three categories listed above into reviewing financial uncertainty for mature students, students' motivation to study an accountancy programme at HE level and the impact of affordability for accountancy programmes. Once evaluating the available literature, the researcher will determine if there is any gaps, themes and contradictions.

This literature review is important to complete the first objective of the dissertation:

Carry out a comprehensive literature review in reference to the higher education and accountancy sector to determine students' motivation to study, impact on affordability of studying accountancy and financial uncertainty.

To complete the first objective, the literature review will summarise and synthesise, analyse and interpret, and critically evaluate several sources including the university library for academic journals and textbooks, the internet for accounting websites, newspaper articles and peer reviewed journals. The literature should help the researcher find key criteria to construct for the methodology of collecting data in chapter three.

2.1 Financial uncertainty

Financial uncertainty is defined as looking at something that is happening currently or to come in the future with confusion or lack of full understanding to how it will affect someone financially (Fiksenbaum, Marjanovic and Greenglass, 2017). This can cause anxiousness and could also have an effect on motivation.

Van de Venter, Michayluk and Davey (2012), conducted a study into financial risk and financial risk tolerance. It is noted that single individuals from a younger age have a higher tolerance to take a financial risk as they have less responsibilities to weigh into the decision of accepting something that will cause financial uncertainty (Fan and Xiao, 2006). But for those that are older and have more commitments such as housing and dependents, the financial risk tolerance decreases and the responsibilities play a factor into the decision of accepting or declining financial uncertainty (Faff et al., 2009).

Office for national statistics (2019), shows many people live with financial debts, in 2016 to 2018 the average household financial debt was £4,500, over the previous years the debt has just increased over the years as shown in figure 2.1 below. According to the Mental Health Foundation (2021), Debts can result in mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and more. This can result in loss of sleep and concentration which then can turn into lack of motivation and self-belief.

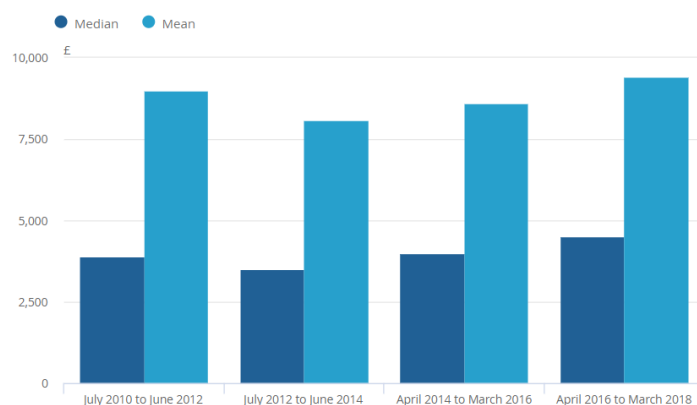


Figure 2.1 Median and mean household financial debt, Great Britain, July 2010 to March 2018 Source: (Office for national statistics, 2019).

2.2 Higher Education

Higher education is defined as a course studied at a university at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level. Other forms that can be referred to as HE in Accountancy in relation to the dissertation may include the following, (UCAS, 2020; Nldirect, 2020):

- Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA) - undergraduate course
- Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) – Equivalent to 2 years at university
- Higher National Certificate (HNC) – Vocational course equivalent to 1 year at university
- Master of Arts (MA) – postgraduate course
- Professional accountancy qualifications (ACCA, CIMA, ICAEW etc.)

2.3 Mature Students

Mature students are defined as students studying an undergraduate course in their first year as over 21 years of age and over 25 years of age for postgraduate first year students (UCAS, 2022).

Mature students are not all the same. They can have different challenging backgrounds and responsibilities such as dependents like children or being a carer, paying rent or a mortgage, working full/part time and potentially already have significant debts such as loans, credit cards and arrears (McAvoy, Dempsey and Quinn, 2020).

2.4 Accountancy Sector

Hodgeson (2009) and UCAS (2022) looks at accountants and the different branches within the profession. An accountant deals with financial transactions on a day-to-day basis for any business. Accountants are known for being experts in anything financially related whether it be an issue or procedure. Every business need accounting staff to determine profit/loss, give important information to HMRC, monitor outstanding balances, budget and ensure there is no fraudulent activity.

2.5 Financial uncertainty for mature students

According to Shaw (2013), policies were introduced in the late 90s to early 2000s to encourage universities to accept more mature students along with the help of student finance loans to cover tuition fees. With the encouragement of employers to help further their employees' educations, more mature students have been attending university. Back in 2007/8, Statistics show that only 7% were 18–21-year-old students with a massive 93% being mature students (UniversitiesUK, 2011). These mature students were mixing together studying alongside their daily lives of working and potentially caring responsibilities. Students already working could already meet the earnings threshold that student finance have placed to begin paying back the loan compared to those 18–21-year-olds that may have to climb the ladder in their career before hitting that threshold (Shaw, 2013).

Shaw (2013) investigates the financial support offered to mature students. Students can apply for a tuition loan which is paid directly to the university to cover course costs which has to be paid back in the future. A maintenance loan/grant can be applied for, but to determine what is grant and what is a loan is based on household income.

2021 to 2022

Household income	Living with your parents		Living away from parental home and studying outside London		Living away from parental home and studying in London	
	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant
£18,370 or less	£1,905	£6,885	£2,250	£8,100	£2,806	£10,124
£25,000	£2,860	£5,930	£3,403	£6,947	£4,287	£8,643
£35,000	£3,302	£4,488	£5,142	£5,208	£6,522	£6,408
£45,000	£5,743	£3,047	£6,881	£3,469	£8,756	£4,174
£59,200 or more	£7,790	£1,000	£9,350	£1,000	£11,930	£1,000
Total	£8,790		£10,350		£12,930	

Figure 2.2 source: (Student finance Wales, 2022)

Student Finance Wales (2022) also considers those with children, carers of adult dependents and disabilities. They offer a childcare grant which could cover a maximum of 85% of childcare costs, a parent learning allowance with a maximum of £1,862 per year for those eligible, £3,190 per year for an adult's dependent grant and disabled students allowance which can

help with specialist equipment, a non-medical helper or any costs associating with a disability and studying.

After 1st September 2012, students who enrolled after this date that are UK based Welsh or English have to earn at least £27,295 a year before they have to make repayments. Any income over this threshold, 9% is taken from the remaining amount to pay back (GOV, 2021).

Example

Your annual income is £28,800 and you are paid a regular monthly wage. This means that each month your income is £2,400 (£28,800 divided by 12). This is over the Plan 2 monthly threshold of £2,274.

Your income is £126 over the threshold (£2,400 minus £2,274). You will pay back £11 (9% of £126) each month.

Figure 2.3 source: (GOV, 2021)

Most students face financial difficulties but mature students can feel this more when they have household costs, dependents and other financial burdens such as loans/debts prior to university. These financial difficulties/worries can have a massive impact on a person which can influence their attendance, participation, motivation and mental wellbeing (Creedon, 2015). Bearing this in mind, looking back at the figures stated in Figure 2.2 and the information from Student finance Wales if a mature student with a dependent was not earning, they would receive £10,350 maintenance loan/grant plus the parents learning allowance of £1,862 bringing the total annual amount to £12,212 whilst paying for housing costs, child costs such as food, clothes, hobbies etc.

Hinton-Smith (2016) evaluates that 61% of lone-parents in university have debts not including the student loans. Talking to different students that meet Hinton-Smiths criteria for her research, they all express the financial demands of being a lone parent and increasing household costs attribute a negative effect. Some have had to go without, while others have struggled to stay motivated to academically perform to their best standard.

2.6 Students' motivation to study accountancy at higher level

Different factors contribute to motivating a person to study accountancy. Four factors considered are: intrinsic motivation, perceptions of the work of accountants, the prestige of the profession and reference groups (Jackling et al., 2012).

Intrinsic motivation is when a student thoroughly enjoys the topic they are studying regardless of any possible financial gain, that they succeed through enjoyment. Perceptions of the work of accountants is when a person perceives the career of being an accountant for what it is, it is known for being a number orientated job as compared to a role in communications or a trade. The prestige of the profession is the desirability of becoming an accountant with strong incentives of accountancy as a career. Reference groups are others that can influence a person's decision to study accountancy such as parents, teachers or a career councillor (Arquero and Fernandez-Polvillo, 2019).

Quality, social and career motivation can also influence students to study accountancy. Quality motivation comes from when a student finds encouragement in themselves to achieve the best outcome in their studies and then again in their career. Social motivation as an accountant can gain respect from fellow accountants and open up a whole new world into the professional business society. Career motivation comes from when a student is aiming for their career of their dreams, a particular position of their choice where their studies help them achieve this goal (Dewi and Yadnyana, 2020).

2.7 Mature students' motivation to study at higher level

Mature students seek studying at a higher level to learn new skills, aim for a promotion in their career or even a change of career path. OfS (2021) looks at the statistics of mature students in the UK:

In the UK, a significant proportion of adults do not participate in any form of learning, with a 1/3 or more of the respondents to the Learning and Work Institute's annual survey reporting that they have done none since full-time education. Around 1/5 of the adult population does not have upper secondary education; less than 1/2 have tertiary education. In 2018, 1.3% the UK population aged over 25 were enrolled in a

bachelors' degree or higher qualification – lower than international competitors such as Australia (3.8%) and the USA (2.1%). Many UK businesses report a lack of skilled graduate employees.

(Ofs, 2021, <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-opportunity-and-choice-for-mature-students/>)

Looking at the statistics mentioned shows the lack of potential mature students that could return to education. Reasons why could range from the amount of time they have available to them, or they could be content with where they are in employment but they could potentially put it off because of the financial uncertainty behind attending HE.

Sutton (2019) suggests that mature students are motivated to study HE based on an individual's life and the different factors such as home, family, wealth and employment that influences their decisions. They also suggest that mature students face restricting accessing education which again could be those personal factors as well as the financial risk, which is why mature students need to be highly motivated to stick to the course and graduate.

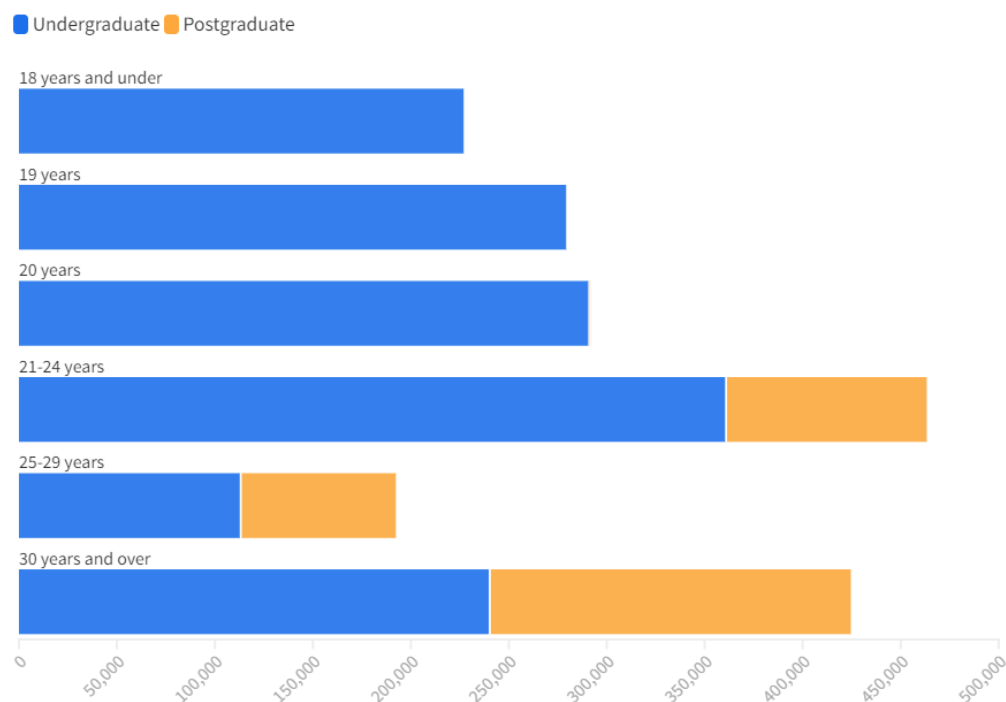


Figure 2.4 source: (universitiesuk, 2021)

Figure 2.4 shows the student population in year 19-20 by their ages and whether they are undergraduate or postgraduate. The mature student population (21 and over) make up 47.2% of the undergraduate population. Only 7.8% are undergraduate aged 25-29, which is normally the time when individuals are buying houses, getting married, starting families or settling into a career (universitiesuk, 2021).

Figure 2.5 shows the positive and negative factors affecting mature students from various backgrounds. Lack of confidence and financial fears are the common trend on the negative motivator side whilst career is high on the positive motivator side. Motivation to study for a career could potentially provide a family a steady income or finally achieve the career the individual has always wanted whether it's a career change or promotion.

Negative factors influencing decision to become a student	Categories of mature student	Positive factors influencing decision to become a student
• Fear of debt • No confidence due to old attitudes, school experience – 'not for me' • Unwelcoming institutions • Worries re-juggling job/study	Delayed traditional	• Interest in the subject to be studied • Long-term requirement to be equipped for career • Time to settle down • Parental support for some
• Some financial concerns • Lack of confidence – 'can I cope?' • Attitudes of family/social group	Late starters	• Cathartic experience as stimulus • Current opportunity – 'time for me' • Self-belief – 'If they can do it so can I' • Altruism
• Lack of self belief • Financial 'Catch 22' • Timetable difficulties • Childcare problems • Juggling responsibilities – family, work study	Single parents	• Need a good job to support family • Want to be a role model for family • Enjoy learning
• Need to work so time for study limited • Family pressures – never at home	Careerists	• Better long-term career prospects • Self-respect • Interest in studies • Employer support and sometimes requirement
• Lack of confidence • Costs difficult to manage • Need to work as well as study • Timetable issues • Doubts about job market when finished	Escapees	• New career with better prospects • Better pay • Need a change in direction – stuck in a rut
• Lack of confidence	Personal growers	• Interest in the subject • Opportunity presents itself now • Prove that I can do it

Figure 2.5 negative and positive factors upon the decision to become a mature student source: (Osborne, Marks & Turner, 2004)

2.8 Impact of affordability for mature students

There are two main factors with regards to financial uncertainty of attending university. The first being the running of day-to-day costs throughout the course against household income and the second being the significant amount of debt students leave higher education with. Studies show that mental health can be significantly affected with relation to both factors (Benson-Egglenton, 2018; Shaw, 2013).

According to Barden and Caleb (2019), Mental health of being a student comes in many forms. From being anxious on the course and when assignments and exams are due to depression from bad feedback and the feeling of failure. Adding in the financial aspect, money worries can increase that pressure and in drastic circumstances cause a drop out of the course.

The researcher will look at different groups of people and how financial uncertainty has affected them.

Wladis, Hachey and Conway (2018) look at students that are parents. They note that there is a slight difference between the parents that have young children and those with older. Parents with young children face lack of motivation when trying to raise a child, juggle childcare and study alongside. The financial impact of childcare costs would lead to more difficulty in meeting the basic bills needed to keep a warm roof over a child's head and food on the table out of the grants/loans that student finance provides.

Education is the surest route out of poverty, and yet attaining an education is difficult for student parents. Most student parents are single parents, but single parents are also more likely to be in poverty.

(Wladis, Hachey & Conway, 2018, pp.810)

Mulrenan, Atkins and Cox (2018) research students with housing costs such as mortgages and private rentals from all aspects including low-income households and families with children. The report is mainly based in London but can show the same results for all over the UK. Notably most mature students struggle financially to pay rent/mortgages whilst on the

basic grants/loans. Many find ways to make it work with taking up a part time job but considerable factors such as a breakdown of a relationship, death of a relative or loss of income can tip making those payments into non-existent and resulting in homelessness, (Mulrenan, Atkins and Cox, 2018). Affordable accommodation is lacking in the UK with housing prices rising and employment status listed as student puts many potential landlords and estate agents off. Again, these events can result in significant mental health issues and dropping out of HE.

2.9 Impact of financial uncertainty for mature students entering higher education in accountancy / Conclusion

The impact of financial uncertainty for mature students entering HE in Accountancy is very specific and the focus point for this dissertation. The researcher found that there was no literature surrounding the very specific topic resulting in a gap in literature. Although, some research did come close and the researcher believes the results will be similar to other literature mentioned.

In conclusion to the literature review, there is enough evidence to suggest there is multiple literature available regarding the impacts of attending higher education, motivators for mature students to study and how Accountancy is worth studying.

Many studies focus on financial impacts of attending HE but not specifically for mature students studying Accountancy. The researcher also found lack of literature regarding certain categories to compare the differences such as mature students with disabilities, carers, pre-university debts etc. The next chapter will address a suitable methodology to find the best primary research method to address the gaps identified above.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The literature review in chapter two achieved the first objective of the research and has shown significant research regarding financial uncertainty of mature students studying at university level. The previous chapter identified a gap in research regarding financial uncertainty of mature students studying Accountancy at a higher level. To investigate this further, the aim of this chapter will use the second objective of the dissertation:

Carry out qualitative research in the form of interviews to current, past and prospective accountancy students to establish whether or not financial uncertainty is a factor when deciding whether to study accountancy at higher level.

To meet this objective, the researcher found a suitable method and methodology to conduct primary research. A mono method approach was conducted with semi structured interviews.

The research onion by (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) will be used as a framework to help organise this chapter in a methodical and systematic fashion. This will provide guidance in identifying the importance of research and will help the researcher establish a research strategy, data analysis techniques and data collection methods suited for this dissertation.

The definition of research is:

- *A process of inquiry and investigation*
- *Systematic and methodological, and*
- *Increases knowledge*

(Hussey & Collis, 2014, p. 2)

3.1 The Research Onion

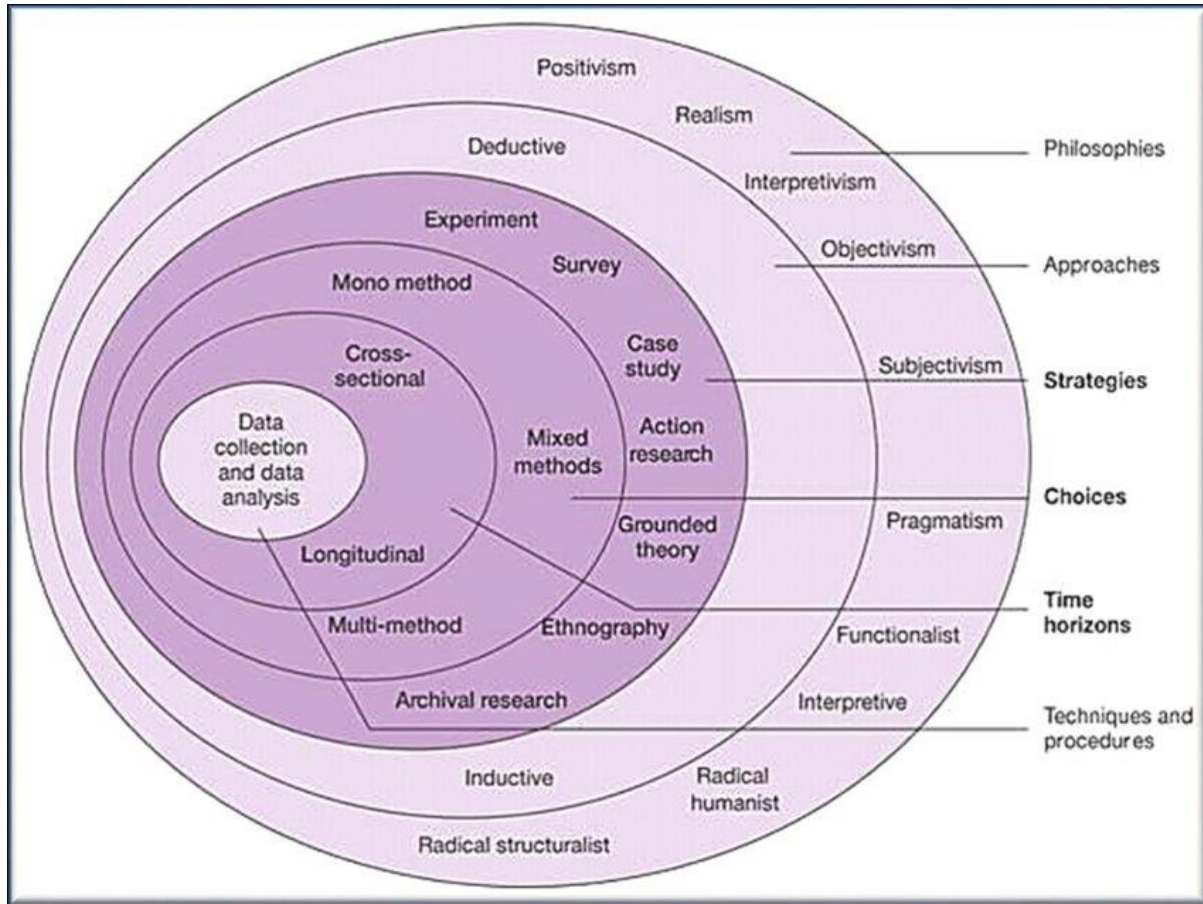


Figure 3.1 The Research Onion source: (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

The above framework has shown a suitable methodology, to which the research paradigm required to collect and analyse the primary data for the context of impact of the financial uncertainty for mature students studying accountancy at higher level, each layer will be analysed and concluded per sub chapter. The primary data collected aims to establish more knowledge on the financial uncertainty surrounding past, present and prospective mature students studying accountancy at a higher level and the perceptions of interviewees who take part within the study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Further investigation is necessary to address the gap in literature regarding financial uncertainty associated with mature students studying higher level accountancy.

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

In figure 3.1, the research onion shows an outer layer which shows ten different philosophies. Being the outer layer means it is the first step to the process of research. Research philosophy is made up of research paradigms. Ontology (reality) and Epistemology (knowledge) are two components that make up the diagram overleaf (Patel, 2015).

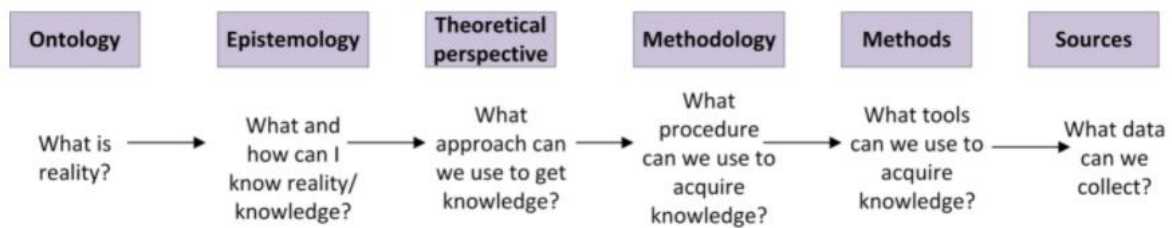


Figure 3.2 Research paradigm diagram source: (Patel, 2015).

The ontology for this research is that one participant's answers will be different and personal therefore the reality is created by each individual. The epistemology then would need to interpret the reality given to discover underlying meanings. Therefore, the philosophy of interpretivism is the approach the researcher will take to analyse qualitative interviews (Patel, 2015). Interpretivism is the most appropriate approach because each participant being interviewed, the answers will need to be understood and interpreted to gain knowledge and the data needed to be collected for this research (Chalmers, 2021).

3.1.2 Research Approach & Type

There are two approaches to research, deductive and inductive. Evaluating an already known theory where answers can be answered yes/no or true/false, the research would be deductive and developing a new approach from data where the answers could differentiate and need interpretation, would be inductive (Azungah, 2018).

There are also three types of research: Exploratory, descriptive and causal. The type of research this project uses is exploratory research which is when the topic is not clearly

understood and can provide groundwork for other researchers to explore further (Sreejesh, Mohapatra and Anusree, 2014).

The approach chosen to be taken for this dissertation is inductive as the dissertation topic has not been thoroughly discussed and analysed in literature. Use of the qualitative method, the inductive approach, opens flexibility into the findings from each participant (Liu, 2016).

3.1.3 Research Strategy

Using a qualitative method of interviews, key participants that meet a certain criteria are needed. Implementing interviews in seek of detailed answers from each individual relating to financial uncertainties will ask how and why questions, which is why a research strategy of a case study has been chosen (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.1.4 Choices

Using one singular method to gather data is referred to as the mono-method. The singular method of qualitative was selected because the topic for this dissertation requires in depth personal answers to analyse. If a quantitative method was used, answers would be generic yes/no answers and key information cannot be addressed. Also, with the topic being very specific towards mature accounting students, finding 150 participants would prove difficult for the researcher in the designated time limit (Molina-Azorín & Font, 2016).

3.1.5 Time Horizon

There are two time horizons stated in the research onion, cross-sectional and longitudinal. For this dissertation being a short-term study, a cross-sectional is the most suitable time horizon (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The reasons for the chosen time horizon show benefits that it is quick to conduct, different outcomes can be searched at once and it is suitable for descriptive analysis as stated in figure 3.3 (QuestionPro, 2022).

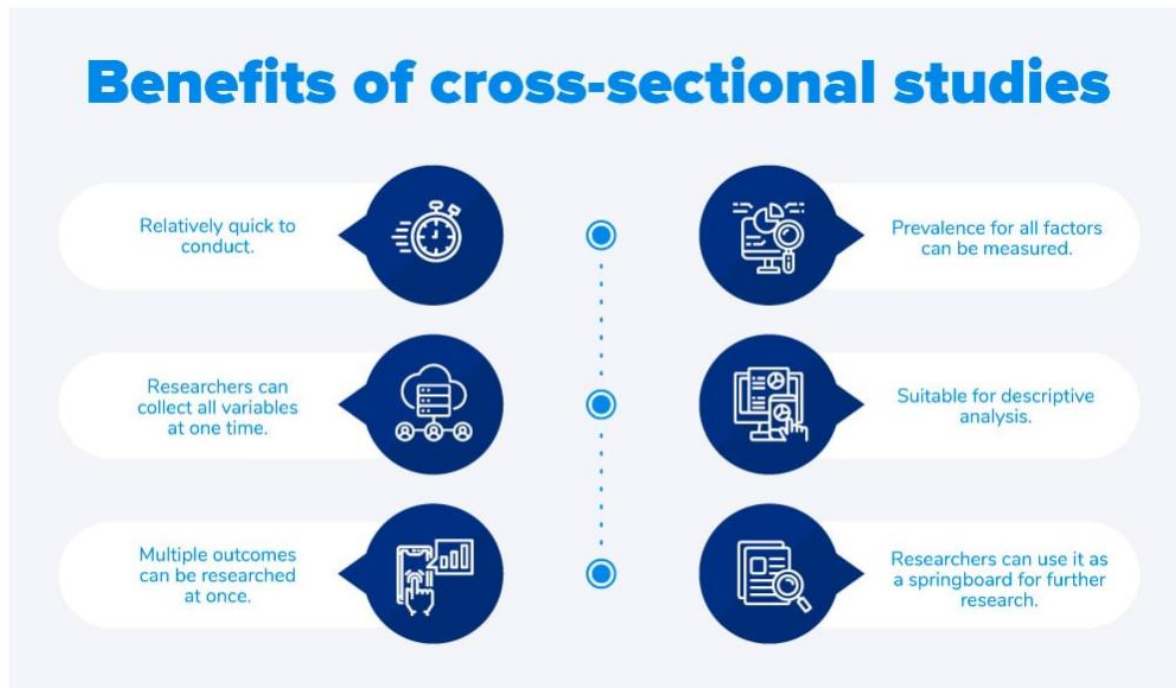


Figure 3.3 Benefits of cross-sectional studies source: (QuestionPro, 2022).

3.1.6 Techniques: Data Collection and Analysis

3.1.6.1 Data Collection

To achieve the aim of the dissertation and answer the question *‘What financial uncertainty is there for mature students studying/delay studying accountancy in higher education?’*, primary data in the form of qualitative interviews will be effective enough to gather in-depth answers in the available time frame (Khan, Raeside, & Adams, 2014).

Interviewing three categories of people – past, present and prospective, all with different circumstances, shows a variety of sources. Strengths in some data can compensate for any weaknesses which can increase reliability and validity of the results. This is data triangulation (Hales, 2010).

The researcher will make use of LinkedIn, Accounting blogs and the University for participants for the interviews. The interviews will be either conducted over Microsoft teams or face-to-face and recorded with permission for transcription. Due to possible COVID restrictions/worries or

busy lifestyles or even internet issues, interviewees have an option to conduct the interview by email (Clarke, Gray, & Braun, 2017).

3.2 Sample

Purposive sample also known as judgement sampling, is when the data collected from certain participants is required. The participants in question need to have the understanding and experience of being a mature student studying/studied accounting at higher level or wanting that particular experience (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This dissertation requires mature accounting students from the following three categories:

- Past
- Present
- Prospective

To qualify for mature student status, participants would need to be age 21 or over for an undergraduate first year degree or age 25 or over for a postgraduate first year degree. Therefore, participants would be purposively selected.

To determine the results of the data, the purpose is not to count each participant as a number but rather the detailed information that is given in different participants' experiences (O'reilly & Parker, 2013). Using theoretical saturation will determine an adequate number of interviews for the purpose of the research. For interviews to reach theoretical saturation, further interviews would need to not give any further information towards the topic (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The researcher has set a minimum sample size of two interviewees from each of the three categories listed above.

To find participants, the use of LinkedIn and accounting blogs will be used using the post detailed in appendix [1](#). Lecturers at the university will be contacted to help find current and past mature accounting students who could potentially take part in the interviews, the email in appendix [2](#) was sent to the students.

3.3 Interview question and literature review matrix

The matrix has been written in past tense but depending on which category the participant meets, the questions will be tailored to past, present and future tense.

Interview questions	Relation to chapter two
Q1. Which category most applies to you? • Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher • Present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher • Prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher Q2. What accountancy course did you study? Q3. What was your age during your first year of study? Q4. Did you study full-time or part-time?	Questions 1-4 are just to clarify that each participant has relation to being a mature student studying accountancy. (UCAS, 2022).
Q5. During your studying, please tell me more about your circumstances at the time: • Did you rent or own your own home? • Do you have children? • Are you a carer? • Did you also work? • Do you have any disabilities? • Did you have a partner? • Did you live with a partner? Did you have anything that would be considered debt outside of student loans?	Each mature student has their own circumstances, this is also demographic to show the differences between all the participants (McAvoy, Dempsey and Quinn, 2020).
Q6. Before deciding on studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainties did you have?	The experience of financial hardship on mature students (Creedon, 2015).
Q7. What motivators helped you decide to study accountancy?	Different motivators when deciding to study (Jackling et al., 2012), (Dewi and Yadnyana, 2020).
Q8. Did you receive financial support, if so please detail?	Financial help and support for mature students (Student Finance Wales, 2022), (GOV, 2021)

Q9. Did any financial uncertainty cause any additional stress, anxiety or mental health issues whilst studying?	Mental health and studying (Mental Health Foundation, 2021).
Q10. Do you think this affected your performance studying accountancy? Positive or negative	Impacts of financial stress (Benson-Egginton, 2018; Shaw, 2013).
Q11. What motivators helped you to complete your studies?	Different motivation factors (Sutton, 2019).
Q12. Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions, that you think will benefit this research?	This question is open ended where the participants can add any further details or comments to be analysed for any themes that have already been mentioned.

Table 3.1 Interview questions relating to chapter two the literature review

3.4 Analysis

Once the qualitative data has been collected, the interviews will be transcribed and put into a software programme called NVivo, which is a programme developed to help determine themes, patterns and codes to see a more organised conclusion. It also has the added benefit of reducing time spent on analysing the data (QSR International, 2022). The transcripts can be found in appendix [3](#).

3.5 Dependability and Credibility

Dependability establishes whether the data findings are repeatable and consistent, theoretical saturation almost mimics this as reliability needs to get to the point where answers become similar and the results the same. Credibility is how honest the answers given from participants in relation to the topic. Both are needed for the dissertation to reach a proper research status (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

As the primary data uses purposive sampling the participants have real life experiences related to the research, therefore the data given will be dependable and credible (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016).

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for the research follow the following (Arifin, 2018):

- Informed consent – Consent to take part in the interviews is taken before any interview is conducted
- Voluntary participants – All participants have volunteered to take part in the research
- Anonymity – All participants have been informed that they will be anonymous to any reader of this dissertation
- Confidentiality –Postings of results and transcripts will not link any participant to their own answers.
- Data Security - All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a password protected file accessed solely by the researcher and will be removed when the purpose of this dissertation has been completed.

Per UWTSD (researchers' university) standards, an ethical approval form was submitted (Appendix 4) and approved before research began. All participants were not vulnerable and not under the age of 18.

3.7 Limitations

The amount of time allocated for the research is a limitation. Reviewing the literature, finding purposively selected participants, gathering the primary data and interpreting the data for analysis can be timely if unorganised.

As purposively selected participants are required, finding those that agree to participate and meet the criteria could be few and far between (Tuckett, 2004). That is also one of the reasons why the researcher took the qualitative route instead of the quantitative route. Reaching out on accounting blogs, LinkedIn and the university should reduce this limitation. If the minimum participants are not completely found, the researcher will extend to contacting local accounting firms and other nearby universities.

3.8 Conclusions

In conclusion, the research methodology has been investigated in full and completed part of the second objective.

The next chapter will look at the data collected following the methods specified in the research methodology. The results will be interpreted, analysed and displayed.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four will analyse the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and findings presented to achieve the final part of objective two of the dissertation:

Carry out qualitative research in the form of interviews to current, past and prospective accountancy students to establish whether or not financial uncertainty is a factor when deciding whether to study accountancy at higher level.

The interviews received responses from seven participants, these consist of three prospective mature students who want to study accounting at university level or higher, two current mature students who are studying accounting at university level or higher and two past matures students who have studied accounting at university level or higher. See Appendix [5](#) for interpretations of interviews.

4.1 The participants

The following participants are mentioned in the contents below. Therefore, a key is required to distinguish between each participant what category applies to them.

Participant (1) – Past mature student
Participant (2) – Perspective mature student
Participant (3) – Past mature student
Participant (4) – Perspective mature student
Participant (5) – Present mature student
Participant (6) – Present mature student
Participant (7) - Perspective mature student

Table 4.1 Key of participants

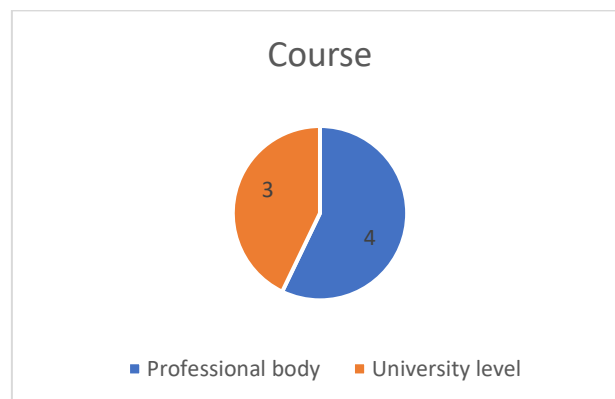


Figure 4.1 Course participants have studied/ want to study

Figure 4.1 shows which type of courses related to the research the participants have studied or want to study. One participant studied CIMA and two others want to study ACCA with the final participant wanting to study either CIMA or ACCA.

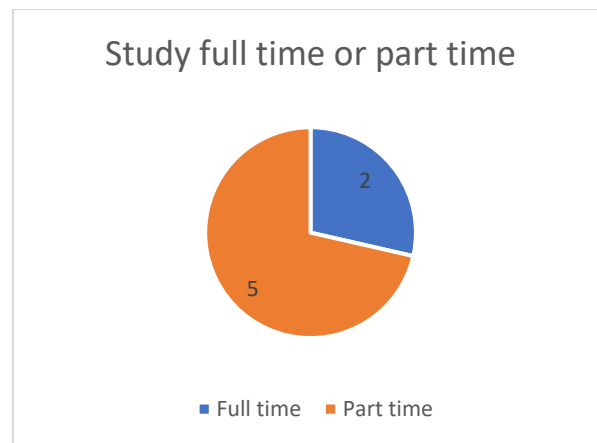


Figure 4.2 Participants studied/ want to study full time or part time

Figure 4.2 refers to if the participants studied or want to study full time or part time.

4.2 Demographics of circumstances

Demographic data of the participants circumstances was collected to show the differences in the participants. Multiple demographic circumstances may not necessarily be responsible for the outcome of the data but could potentially contribute to it (Fernandez, et al., 2016).

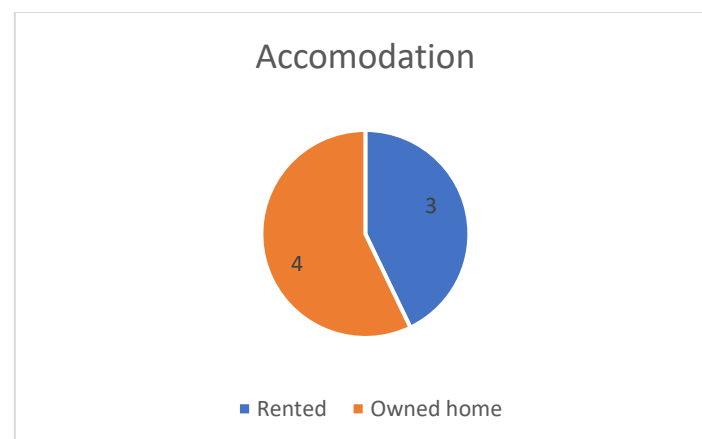


Figure 4.3 Participants accommodation at time of studying

Figure 4.3 shows the accommodation status of each participant during their time of studying or if decide to study.

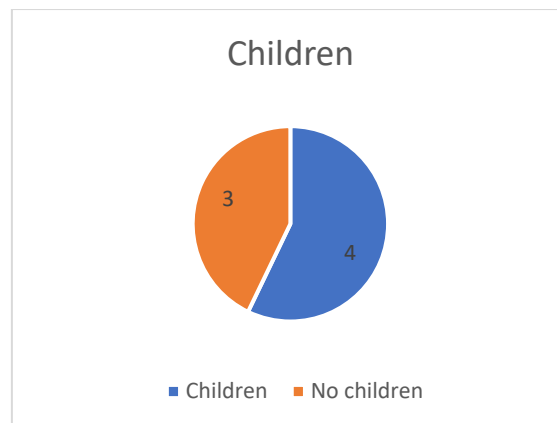


Figure 4.4 Children

Figure 4.4 shows how many participants had children when studying or choosing to study.

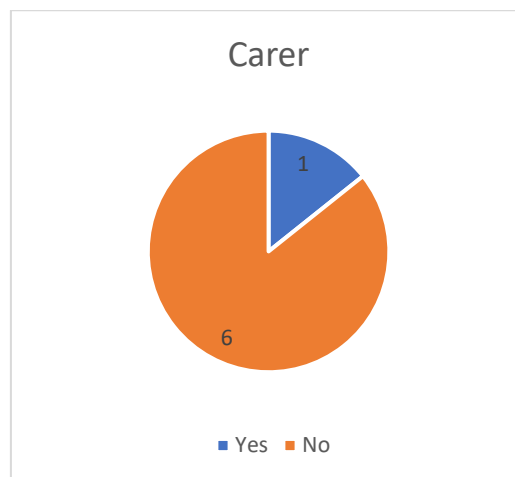


Figure 4.5 Carers

Figure 4.5 shows how many participants were carers when studying or choosing to study.

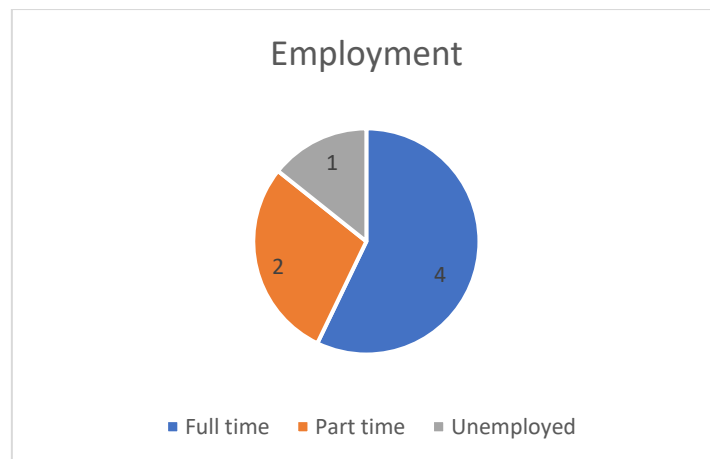


Figure 4.6 Employment

Figure 4.6 shows how many participants worked during studying or what they would work if they chose to study.

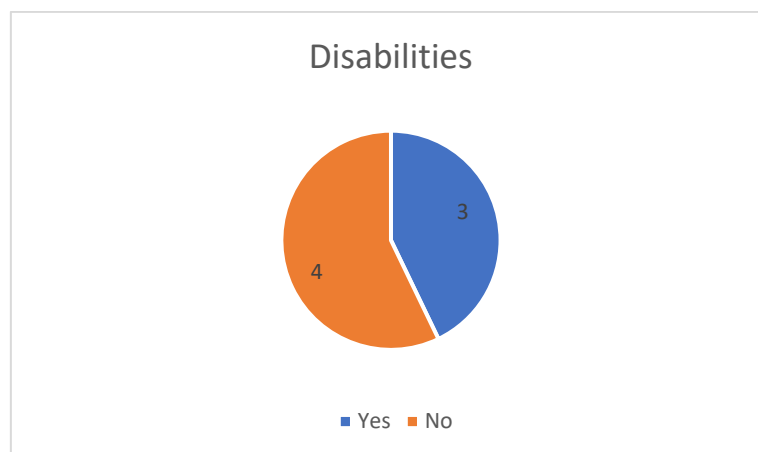


Figure 4.7 Disabilities

Figure 4.7 shows how many participants have disabilities whilst studying or choosing to study. According to House of commons (2021), in 2019/2020 17.3% of students had registered a disability of some kind ranging from specific learning difficulties to physical and medical conditions. It is noted that the overall figure had risen by 47% in five years. Two participants stated medical conditions and the remaining one stated learning difficulties.

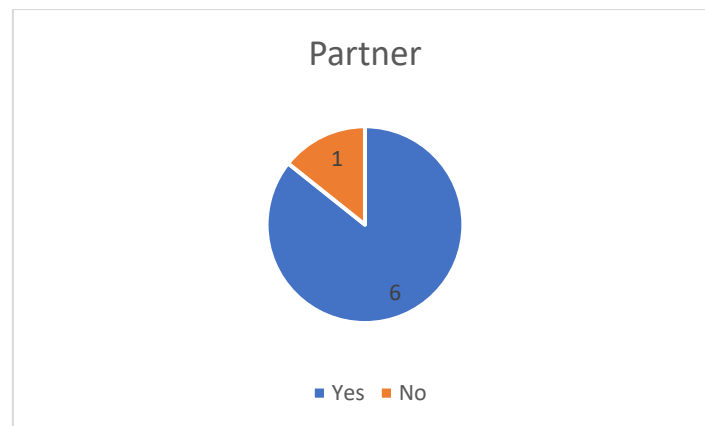


Figure 4.8 Participants with partners

Figure 4.8 shows how many participants have a partner at the time of studying or potentially studying. This data was collected to analyse financial situations on whether a partner was in the picture.

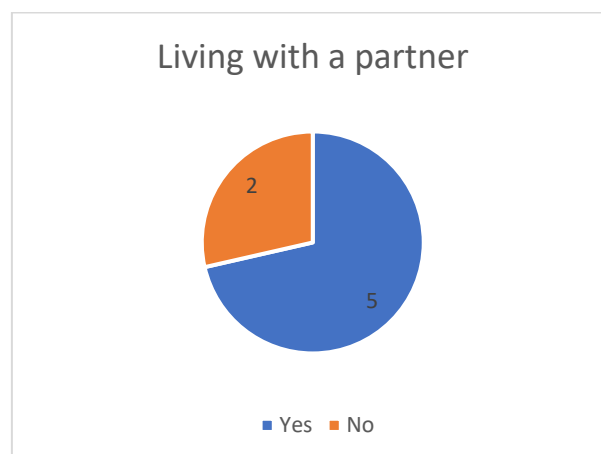


Figure 4.9 Living with a partner

Figure 4.9 shows how many participants lived with a partner whilst studying or if they chose to study. As above, the data collected was to determine if a partner would be apart of the overall household income that student finance accesses as a whole (UCAS, 2022).

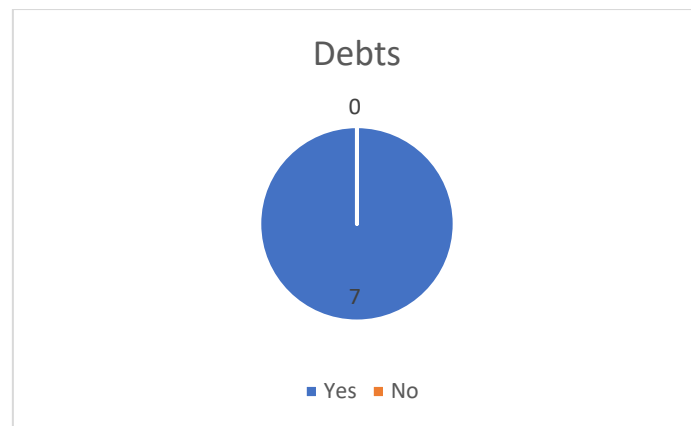


Figure 4.10 Debts

Figure 4.10 shows how many participants are currently living with a debt of some sort. The list of debts is made up of mortgages, loans, credit cards and car finance. Going back to chapter 2.1 in the literature review of this research, studies show that most mature people have a debt of some sort relating to lifestyles. The results of figure 4.10 confirm this.

4.3.1 Financial support

Participant (1) received no financial support as they had a redundancy pay-out and paid for the course themselves. On student loans, the participant mentions:

33

The participant sees student loans having high interest rates and would rather commit to a personal loan as a mature student instead. According to Experian (2020), personal loan interest rates can range from 6% to 36% with the average being 9.41%. The rates will be affected by the borrowers' credit score and financial history. Looking at figure 4.12 the rates of student loans seem to be much lower than a personal loan.

Your annual income	Interest rate
£27,295 or less	RPI (currently 1.5%)
£27,296 to £49,130	RPI (currently 1.5%), plus up to 3%
Over £49,130	Usually RPI (currently 1.5%), plus 3%

Figure 4.12 Interest rates of student loans source: (GOV, 2021).

In chapter 2.5, the literature looks into student loans and discover that there is a minimum threshold of £27,295 before 9% of anything over the amount is taken from a person's wages (GOV,2021).

Also, (GOV, 2021) mentions that after 30 years from the first April the repayments are due, the loan will be written off. It is also mentioned that if the person passes away that the loans will be written off showing that they are solely the student's responsibility and will not pass down to any family members.

Participant (2), (3) and (7) all mention that they would not study if their employers did not assist with financial support. Only participant (3) mentions student loans:

If I did have to go down the route of getting a student loan this would have pushed me to perform to my absolute best (3).

A motivator is mentioned that having the financial commitment of student loans would push the participant to perform to their best ability. This can be identified as quality motivation mentioned in chapter 2.6 (Dewi and Yadnyana, 2020).

Participant (7) admits they have never looked into student loans as a perspective student.

Participant (4) has a high partial financial support from their employer to study. If they did not receive this assistance, they would consider student loans as the threshold for the loan to be paid back is higher than most accountancy jobs starting salaries. A lifestyle contributor is mentioned – A partner who has high earnings could help support the participant financially.

Participants (5) and (6) are both current mature students and both receive student loans which is broken down into exact figures in chapter 2.5 of the literature review (Student Finance Wales, 2022). Participant (5) also receives benefits from Universal credit. For the added benefits the participant does not live with a partner because of an uncertainty around how the partners earnings will affect the student (Mulrenan, Atkins and Cox, 2018). A motivator is mentioned, the cost of the course and the loans that each student has behind them can motivate a student to achieve their best to endure that experience and turn it into something positive. Participant (6) is also working part time. The participant also mentioned buying a home and how the student loans were a struggle to get noticed as other income when applying for a mortgage. Although the feedback does not fit into the aim of this research, it is worth noting that further research could potentially look into this more as there is a lack of literature available regarding this.

4.3.2 Financial uncertainty

I don't think I would study until financial uncertainties were sorted so I wouldn't join the course with financial uncertainties. I'm put off joining a course for financial uncertainties. So, would it add undue stress? Probably not, because the simple fact I wouldn't join the course if I had financial uncertainties. (2)

Participant (2) thinks there is no financial help for studying as a mature student without employer's assistance and that no help would be a financial uncertainty. This would put them

off joining an accounting course all together. An impact is mentioned – This participant believes financial uncertainty will cause undue stress. This confirms the literature in chapter 2.8 in the literature review regarding financial uncertainty and mental health (Benson-Egglenton, 2018).

Getting into that type of debt, is it going to be beneficial in the future? So, it's just the unknown, really, putting yourself through those maybe three to four years. (4)

Participant (4) believes the financial uncertainty is the benefit of doing the course and still unknowing about how beneficial it could be in the future (Blackburn, 2018). The debts and time spent doing the course could be a waste of time. This can be backed up with data that evaluates that half graduates 10 years out of university are not earning much more than minimum wage (Keep, Vignoles and Launder, 2019). The participant also mentions the cost of courses in England and that if Wales prices match these prices, affordability would be further to reach.

Being a mature student with household costs and then child related costs, I'm not going to lie; I feel like it's not enough financial help. The thought does cause a lot of stress and anxiety whilst studying and you get to the point you question your finances and think can I actually afford to go back next year and finish this course? (5)

Participant (5) has a lifestyle circumstance that contributes to their financial uncertainty. As the participant is unemployed and has children, the student loan has to cover all costs including household. Chapter 2.8 Wladis, Hachey and Conway (2018) in the literature review look more into students that are parents. The participant mentions unknown bills or celebration events where financial uncertainty weighs heavy. An impact is mentioned – Financial uncertainty can affect the outcome of the participants performance when in examination or submitting an assignment, mental health is also mentioned and the possibility of ending the course before it is completed as a result of this. Again Chapter 2.8 confirms this finding (Barden and Caleb, 2019). The participant also believes they do not receive enough financial help.

4.3.3 Impacts of financial uncertainty

Participant (2) mentioned an impact to financial uncertainty for them would be not to sign up for the course in general. If they faced financial uncertainty during the course, they would face stress which would impact on their motivation to study. Chapter 2.7, figure 2.5 confirms this finding in relation to delayed studying negative factors (Osborne, Marks and Turner, 2004).

Participant (4) believes that financial uncertainty is a burden and with unpredicted events such as COVID already putting a strain on finances, the participant constantly worries about everything and sees impacts in their studying. This data could be seen as lack of confidence also mentioned in chapter 2.7 (Osborne, Marks and Turner, 2004).

Participant (5) experiences financial uncertainty as an impact on their mental health. Doubts are suggested about completing the course and any unexpected financial strain affects their performance studying. Chapter 2.5 looks at literature on participating and mental wellbeing (Creedon, 2015).

Participant (6) experiences stress through financial uncertainty and the cost of everything relating to blended learning because of the COVID pandemic. The participant does not specify any other impacts other than stress. Affordability during the COVID pandemic has not been included in this research due to a wide variety of new research could possibly be found (Su and Guo, 2021).

Participant (7) does not experience financial uncertainty as they are not studying. They do believe though that any stress they feel now has an impact on their disability to flare up which can cause negative impacts on their job and lifestyle in general never mind any exams. They believe that studying could be too much negative implications due to their disability. Riddell, Wilson and Tinklin (2002) look at mature students with disabilities with what support is available for the student. The researcher has chosen not to look further into literature surrounding this topic as the researcher believes it could potentially be a topic for another research project.

4.3.4 Motivators

When I start something, I keep going so it's a self-motivation. Once I made the mind up to go, I was going, and paying your own money as well, I suppose, is a motivator. (1)

Participant (1) had motivations of self-belief and potential future earnings. They refer to paying for the course themselves which is a motivator to complete what they paid for. Chapter 2.6 in the literature review mentions this as a quality motivator (Dewi and Yadnyana, 2020).

The cost benefit of actually doing the course. Well, like offset the cost against potential future earnings. (2)

Participant (2) mentions cost benefit and future potential earnings as a motivator. In chapter 2.6 perceptions of the work of accountants is mentioned. The participant sees the accountant role as a high paid career (Jackling et al., 2012).

The potential for long term job security. Having a better education to do the job I was currently in and obviously by getting the qualification and then moving up the ladder within the workplace that I was currently in and the long-term prospects of what could potentially come afterwards. (3)

Participant (3) states job security as a motivator and progression of furthering their career.

Participant (4), (6) and (7) states area of interest and furthering their career as a motivator. Potential future earnings also come into play from this. They also mention self-confidence as a reward for studying. A few motivators mentioned in chapter 2.6 come into the data received here. Intrinsic motivation and career motivation are the main motivators for these participants (Arquero and Fernandez-Polvillo, 2019).

Participant (5) also mentions area of interest as a motivator. Future earnings potential and the career they want to be in will benefit the participant and their family. Past experiences and having a child motivate the participant. A lifestyle circumstance of having children plays a role in being the motivator for this participant. In chapter 2.7 Sutton (2019) mentions each mature student has different factors that can motivate a student to study, participant (5) confirms this literature.

4.3.5 Additional comments

The following comments were noted by the researcher as additional information that could potentially help this research.

As much financial support or as much guidance from maybe like a mentor or something like that and just always knowing that the University, College or workplace has got someone like a wellbeing coach or like someone from the wellbeing sector that you could go and speak to.

(4)

Participant (4) recommends a mentor/wellbeing coach from the education provider or the employer as a solution to helping manage mental health. Most universities use peer support to act as well-being mentors already, but Crisp et al. (2020) looks at ways to improve the systems in place as some students experience delayed support or lack of confidence to sign up to these programmes. The participant also adds more further into the interview making a point about how hard it is for mature students to gain relevant experience relating to their course. They believe that if graduate schemes or apprenticeships took on mature students, they would retain their staff easier as mature students need to support their families and lifestyles. They compare those coming straight from school into university are still deciding what they want to do whilst mature students are already set on what they want to do as a career. Divan et al. (2022), looks at graduate schemes and the data of those that have successful applications, noting that the younger has a higher success rate as well as the non-disabled. Just basing off this literature alone, participant (4) has raised an excellent point regarding mature students and graduate schemes and this topic should be explored further in the future.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapter four analysed the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and the findings were presented to achieve the final part of objective two of the dissertation.

The outcome of the findings showed four key themes which were:

- Financial support
- Financial uncertainty
- Impacts
- Motivators

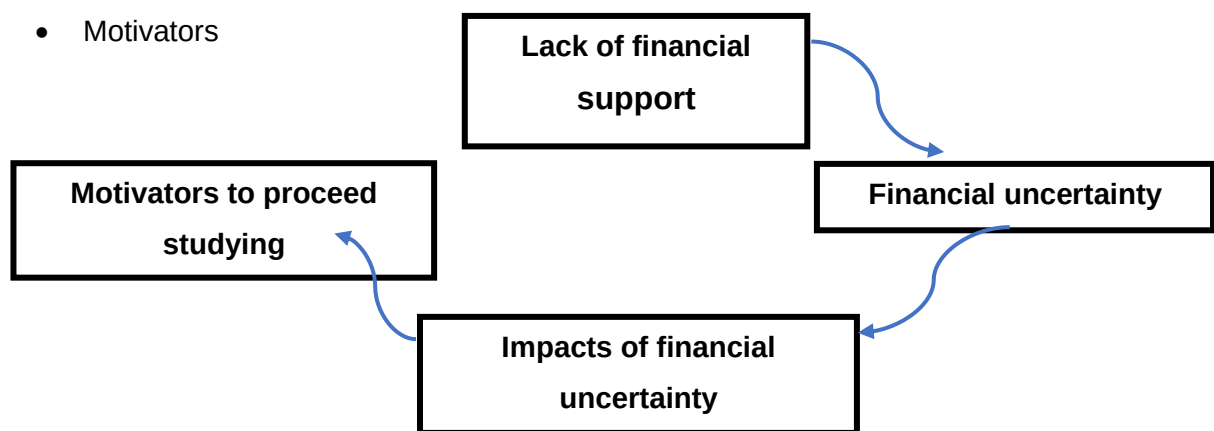


Figure 4.12 Model of how the themes interact with each other

Chapter 5 will achieve the last objective of the dissertation:

Make recommendations premised on the findings to higher education governing bodies and government agencies on how mature potential students can be sustainably attracted to an accounting course at university level or higher.

Chapter Five - Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 analysed the data collected from the mono-method used of semi-structured interviews. This completed the second objective of the dissertation. The outcome of the findings uncovered four themes: financial support, financial uncertainty, impacts and motivators. Chapter 5 will achieve the third and final objective of the dissertation.

Make recommendations premised on the findings to higher education governing bodies and government agencies on how mature potential students can be sustainably attracted to an accounting course at university level or higher.

This chapter will offer recommendations that can be taken and conclude the dissertation. It will also address limitations to the study and list any topics that have not been explored fully for future research.

5.2 The achievements of objectives

1. *Carry out a comprehensive literature review in reference to the higher education and accountancy sector to determine students' motivation to study, impact on affordability of studying accountancy and financial uncertainty.*

Chapter 2 achieved objective one by covering a considerable amount of research regarding the literature around the topic chosen.

2. *Carry out qualitative research in the form of interviews to current, past and prospective accountancy students to establish whether or not financial uncertainty is a factor when deciding whether to study accountancy at higher level.*

Chapter 3 and 4 achieved objective two by identifying the correct methodology to use, carrying out the semi structured interviews and analysing the data collected using Nvivo.

5.3 Main Findings

The literature in chapter two support the main findings. Although the literature was not directly associated with the case study as a whole, it was broken down into separate topics that did make up the case study topic as a whole.

Studying accountancy at university level or higher as a mature student has proved beneficial, however, the analysis of data shows financial uncertainty and a lack of understanding of what financial support is available.

The concerns found in the dissertation from the semi-structured interviews is that all three prospective mature students would choose not to study accountancy at university level or higher without employer assistance to pay for the course. From the literature, student finance gives a general implication of what help can be received but when added in mature students with different lifestyle factors such as children, partners, debts etc. the information provided by student finance Wales is unhelpful and inaccurate.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are being made to Student Finance Wales, governing bodies and government agencies:

1. Findings showed lack of knowledge regarding financial support when studying accountancy at university level or higher. As prospective mature students, the recommendation is to add a 'what am I entitled to?' calculator which takes into consideration those lifestyle factors.
2. Findings showed that both student finance and extra benefits seemed to be lacking when factoring in debts, children, disabilities and carers.
3. As participants mentioned employer assistance to study, an incentive for employers from the government to encourage employees to be able to access CPD would prove beneficial as employees wanting to study accountancy at university level or higher would not have to wait to be asked to do a course by the employer but rather approach an employer instead.

5.5 Limitations

The researcher found that trying to find participants to interview was the most restrictive. Finding past mature students that studied accountancy was quite unresponsive after posting on social media, an accounting blog and emailing multiple accountancy firms in the surrounding areas. Same with finding current mature student's studying accountancy. The researcher emailed several universities and did not even receive an acknowledgement email in return. The lack of support from other universities is unsettling.

5.6 Further research

Some of the findings from the data collected could potentially become research projects of their own. Due to the length of this dissertation and factoring in the time limit, the following were only lightly analysed to avoid straying from the case study aim.

- Mature students with disabilities
- mature students and the struggle to be placed on a graduation scheme
- Student finance listed as income when applying for a mortgage

5.7 Conclusion

The dissertation has completed the aim and objectives which was to discover what financial uncertainties there are for mature students studying accountancy at university level or higher.

Financial uncertainties discovered through both the literature and the data collected was the lack of knowledge regarding financial support, negative views on student loans and the cost benefit of studying weighing against future career opportunities.

Many participants expressed mental health as an impact of financial uncertainty. However, the motivation for mature students as shown in both the literature and data analysis, shows that furthering a career in accounting, self-confidence and even lifestyle factors would help mature students with that push to finish their course.

In conclusion to the dissertation overall is that there is a need for further knowledge and understanding surrounding student finance to be aimed at mature students and further finance or benefits available for those with lifestyle factors.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Social media post

I am looking for mature university level or above accountancy students that meets the following criteria to interview:

1. Past mature students who studied Accounting as Higher Education
2. Present mature students currently studying Accounting as Higher Education
3. Prospective mature students wanting to study Accounting as Higher Education.

I am currently in my third year of university studying a bachelor's degree in accounting. This year we are required to submit a dissertation. My topic is about the financial uncertainty behind studying accounting as a mature student. Mature students are if first year they are over 21 (UG) or over 25 (PG).

Exploring the financial uncertainty behind it means the interview will be slightly personal, but fully anonymous.

My email address is

samanthajoannehopkins@gmail.com

if anyone is interested in taking part.

Any queries, do not hesitate to ask, thank you.

Samantha Hopkins

Appendix 2 – Email to universities

To whom it may concern,

I am currently studying (BA) accountancy at UWTSD and in my final year. I am currently writing my dissertation about the financial uncertainty that could possibly surround mature students studying accountancy.

In order to gather data for my dissertation, I am looking for participants to interview anonymously that qualify from the following criteria:

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

1. Past mature students who studied Accounting at university level or higher
2. Present mature students currently studying Accounting at university level or higher
3. Prospective mature students wanting to study Accounting at university level or higher

I was wondering if you could possibly send this to your account staff to see if anyone would be interested in participating in an interview. If so, my email address is samanthajoannehopkins@gmail.com.

Thank you for reading,

Samantha Hopkins

Appendix 3 – Interview transcripts

Participant 1

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

This is completely anonymous. So, nothing that you say will identify you whatsoever.

Interviewee 1

K no problem.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

I have submitted an ethical form and that was all fine. Some of the questions are a little bit personal. Obviously for the financial reasons. But again, you cannot be identified from the information given.

Interviewee 1

No problem.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK, so, if possible, could you give me as much detail as possible for each question. If you do feel uncomfortable, just answer yes or no, it's fine.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 1

Yeah, no problem at all.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. The first question which category most applies to you? Past mature student who has studied accountancy at university level or higher, present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher or prospective mature student who would like to study accountancy at university level or higher.

Interviewee 1

Past one.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. And what accountancy course did you study?

Interviewee 1

I did CIMA.

Interviewee 1

So yeah, that that was that was more relevant to what I was doing for a job. So that's what I studied.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What was your age during your first year of study?

Interviewee 1

Uhm, it only took me a year and a half as I already had a master's degree, so I had exemptions, so I would have been probably 48, maybe 49. I think I finished at 50 so 48 probably is about right seems a million years ago now.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you study full time or part time?

Interviewee 1

I did part time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK.

Interviewee 1

Uh, it was mainly weekends.

Interviewee 1

Because I was still working full time when I was studying, I've got another job and I needed to get my studies finish. So,

Interviewee 1

Weekends and had a few study days and used holidays as well for exams and that. But yeah, it was all part time.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

During your studying, please tell me more about your circumstances at the time. So, there's a few questions here now that'll delve a little bit into your personal life.

Interviewee 1

Yep, no problem. It's not that exciting. I am an accountant.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you rent or own your own home?

Interviewee 1

Yeah.

Interviewee 1

We owned our own home.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. Do you have any children?

Interviewee 1

I've got one daughter.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And you had her at the time when you were studying?

Interviewee 1

Yeah, I'm trying to think now. She would have been about 3 years old at the time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Crikey, that must have been hard.

Interviewee 1

My wife was really good, but she was also working full time so.

Interviewee 1

You give up weekends with them. It's not great. But you know you do what you have to do.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So where you would carer at the time?

Interviewee 1

No

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

My next question you've already answered. Did you also work?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 1

Yeah. Oh yeah.

Interviewee 1

Silly hours.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you have a partner?

Interviewee 1

Yeah, we are married. We just had our 15th anniversary actually. So yeah, we've been married for a little while now.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And did you live with your partner at the time?

Interviewee 1

Yeah.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you have anything that you would consider a debt outside of any student loans?

Interviewee 1

No, I don't think so. No, it's a joy. Well, I have a mortgage. Yeah, I suppose. I don't think of that as a debt. Just think of that as home.

Interviewee 1

Uh, yeah, mortgage would be, you know, we got credit card that's paid off every month.

Interviewee 1

Own the cars.

Interviewee 1

So that is one of the advantages of being a bit older.

Interviewee 1

That, you know, finances tend to be settled. And I married a younger woman who earns a lot more than I do so.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK, so before deciding on studying accountancy, what if any, financial uncertainties did you have?

Interviewee 1

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

The financial uncertainty was, it wasn't around paying for the cost of the course but the financial uncertainty was that if I didn't qualify, would I get a job earning the kind of money that I'd be earning previously? That was if I didn't study.

Interviewee 1

I'm limiting my earnings potential.

Interviewee 1

That's really the only financial uncertainty as I've been made redundant. I did have another job and it was trying to protect the role.

Interviewee 1

I guess whether those answers what you're looking for, I don't know, but that's the reason I did it, is to make sure that I could command an income as opposed to paying for the course, if that makes sense. Because I've been with my company for quite a long time, and got a reasonable pay out

Interviewee 1

Uh as a redundancy package, so I hope we have money in the bank.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So did you pay for the course yourself?

Interviewee 1

That's right. And don't get me wrong, we did shop around for the cheapest place to go. You know, we found and went to a place which was about an hour's drive from us.

Interviewee 1

And we didn't just go to the one which was just half an hour on the train because it was twice as expensive. So, there was some consideration. We just weren't flippant about it, if that makes sense.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Yeah.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So, if you didn't have the money to do it yourself?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

You could have potentially gone down, say, the student finance loans application. Would you then be worried about that? What what's your thoughts on student loans?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

If they're being put to you when you know that you've got to pay it back.

Interviewee 1

Under the current terms, where your earnings are.

Interviewee 1

I wouldn't have wanted to do as a mature student. Does that make sense?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Yes.

Interviewee 1

Uhm, I would have probably applied for a personal loan as I know the rates on the student loan are absolutely criminal.

Interviewee 1

The APR rates are absolutely foul and you can get a personal loan. I don't know what the rates would be now we even want to get personal loan for 1/2 or a third of what the student loan is so.

Interviewee 1

I probably wouldn't have gone down the student loan route, or I would've certainly investigated any other route and reporting on the personal loan route.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Thank you.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators helped you decide to study accountancy?

Interviewee 1

Yeah. Well, I've been in the industry for quite a long time.

Interviewee 1

And it was literally that redundancy.

Interviewee 1

Frustratingly, you know, my wife worked in America and worked for an American company, whereas to get into management you have to have an MBA. But when you go to a professional recruitment company in this country and I say I've got a master's in business and they say what's an MBA?

Interviewee 1

You know, unless you're in accounts, we won't even look at you. I kind of had no choice at that point.

Interviewee 1

You know, I've been toying with the idea. I didn't need to because I had my job and I've done well.

Interviewee 1

And then all of a sudden, I was in a position where,

Interviewee 1

You know, I can either half my income or I'm going back to studying up and it was quite a bit of a shock.

Interviewee 1

And it's like, you know, from someone who's probably got three GCSE's, I found a little bit frustrating, but there we go. That's what that means. But I felt like I had to.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

I have heard of an MBA; I think they offer them at my university.

Interviewee 1

Well, it always was going back 20/25 years from now. It's become a thing you almost have to go to Oxford or Cambridge or Harvard or you know but I looked at Oxford and they would have taken me, but the way Oxford work

Interviewee 1

The way they do things is they say you have to live the Oxford experience.

Interviewee 1

It costs four times as much as what I did pay, and I would have had to go full time and sort of had to give up a full-time job as well.

Interviewee 1

So it would have cost me a heck of a lot of money and at the end of the day I'm 50 years old at that point.

Interviewee 1

Is having Oxford University on my CV going to make any difference to my career? No, it's not.

Interviewee 1

And then, you know, work said don't do accountancy because you've got your masters. You don't need your accountancy. Until such time as I needed to get another job with all the recruitment agencies. And they said unless your accountant.

Interviewee 1

Yeah. In America, an MBA is the first thing you need to get into a management position. Everything else is secondary.

Interviewee 1

So it's strange, there's a bit of an eye opener. I have to be honest.

Interviewee 1

It was a little bit naive, maybe a little bit arrogant, I don't know, but it was, it was echoing, I don't know.

Interviewee 1

So I was forced into the course.

Interviewee 1

Not that I took too much forcing because I kind of been thinking about it for a while, but my bluff was called, if you like.

Interviewee 1

And I needed to do it to guarantee the job, the income.

Interviewee 1

Uhm, you know all the things that we work for, isn't it the money?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you receive financial support? If so, please detail.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 1

No, it's all done.

Interviewee 1

So but again, the joys of an older, you know, you've had years of saving and years of spending and saving a little bit more, but you know, so no there was no financial support.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did any financial uncertainty cause any additional stress, anxiety or mental health issues while studying?

Interviewee 1

Not at that point, because I had got another job after being made redundant, so I'd had my redundancy pay out. I've been out of work for a few months and I've gone into another job, so no at that point, no.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think this affected your performance studying accountancy positive or negative?

Interviewee 1

No, it didn't. Didn't have any impact.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators helped you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 1

That's a good question.

Interviewee 1

I'm one of those people, I think I tend to procrastinate quite a lot. But once I made up my mind to do something, it happens.

Interviewee 1

So when I start something I keep going so it's a self-motivation.

Interviewee 1

Once I made the mine up to go, I was going, and paying your own money as well, I suppose, is a motivator. But I didn't really think about that. So, I made up my mind to do it. So, I was going to do it.

Interviewee 1

Does that make sense?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Yeah, totally.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions that you think will benefit this research?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 1

I don't know, I've tried to be quite open with the questions I've answered.

Interviewee 1

Uh, are you comfortable with what I've said as I can't think of anything off the top of my head that I can add?

Interviewee 1

No, I'm glad I did it when I was older in one way, because the financial security is there.

Interviewee 1

In another way, I kind of wish I'd done it younger because I didn't. Well, no, I've done all right. I'm a director of Finance. You know, I have not done too bad, but I could have done it so much sooner if that makes sense. But I never wanted to be an accountant. You know, I joined the military, joined army, and that's what I was going to do for the rest of my life.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Yeah.

Interviewee 1

And then I got injured. And so, I fell into accounts purely by accident.

Interviewee 1

So that's how I ended up sitting behind the desk looking at numbers and lines.

Interviewee 1

I quite enjoy it. It's alright. It's never. It's never going to.

Interviewee 1

Set my world on fire if that makes sense, but I quite enjoy what I do and you know.

Interviewee 1

I do. I'm good at my job and I deal with the job.

Interviewee 1

I found that the point of doing the studying, I did learn things from the course and there were people saying, oh no, all this, I certainly didn't.

Interviewee 1

What I found was you had to learn to pass exams. This is how they want to be answered.

Interviewee 1

As opposed to? Yeah, I can learn the technicality. I can learn these things. But this is this is how they want it answered.

Interviewee 1 But yeah, I think I think I've covered off every night hope of coming off everything for you.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Yeah, I did realise I missed one tiny question.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 1

No, bit overweight, but hey, what's wrong with that now or none at all.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Brilliant. Thank you.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK, I'll stop recording.

Interviewee 1

OK.

Participant 2

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

The first question is which category applies to you?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher, present mature student who is studying accountancy at university level or higher or prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher.

Interviewee 2

Prospective.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

If you could potentially give me as much details as possible. If you do feel uncomfortable with any questions, just answer yes or no, but obviously the more details you can give, the better for the research.

Interviewee 2

Yeah, that's fine.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK, what accountancy course would you like to study?

Interviewee 2

A degree course, or ACCA or CIMA course.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And how old are you?

Interviewee 2

37.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Would you like to study full time or part time?

Interviewee 2

Uh, part time due to working constraints.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

If you were studying accountancy now, please tell me more about your circumstances. So, are you currently renting or owning your own home?

Interviewee 2

Currently renting.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any children?

Interviewee 2

Yes, one.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you a carer?

Interviewee 2

Uh, yes, but not registered.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you also work?

Interviewee 2

I do, yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 2

No.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have a partner?

Interviewee 2

I do.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And do you live with that partner?

Interviewee 2

I do live with my partner.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 2

Car finance.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Before deciding,

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

On studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainties do you have?

Interviewee 2

Cost of the course, I don't believe there is

Interviewee 2

much financial help out there towards the course, unless there are employers willing to assist.

Interviewee 2

Affordability as well and

Interviewee 2

The cost benefit of actually doing the course.

Interviewee 2

Well, like offset the cost against potential future earnings.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators could help you to decide to study accountancy?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 2

If there's any potential financial assistance.

Interviewee 2

An accommodating employer.

Interviewee 2

If they will internally assist the cost or at least help provide available times to attend the course.

Interviewee 2

Again, the cost benefit of the course.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What financial support do you think you would receive?

Interviewee 2

Currently none.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think financial uncertainty could cause you any additional stress, anxiety, or mental health issues while studying?

Interviewee 2

I don't think I would study until financial uncertainties were sorted

Interviewee 2

so I wouldn't join the course with financial uncertainties. I'm put off

Interviewee 2

Joining a course for financial uncertainties. So, I would it add undue stress?

Interviewee 2

Probably not, because the simple fact I wouldn't join the course.

Interviewee 2

If I had financial uncertainties.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think that could affect your performance, study and accountancy, positive or negative?

Interviewee 2

Let's just say if I was

Interviewee 2

Uncertain about the financial aspects of the course, for example.

Interviewee 2

If I wasn't sure if I could secure funding for a second year or, you know, continue studies, of course, yeah. I mean that would be playing on my mind.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 2

And then it will always go back down to, is it worth me staying on the course, that will always be in the back of the mind and the motivation to continue will be

Interviewee 2

Little.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators do you think could help you complete your studies then?

Interviewee 2

For me, it will always go back to the cost benefit ratios,

Interviewee 2

In in this area, accountancy

Interviewee 2

It is not the best paying job.

Interviewee 2

There's lack of jobs in accountancy in area.

Interviewee 2

Uh, so investing in a course?

Interviewee 2

is the benefit of achieving that course, it would weigh heavily on the on

Interviewee 2

Any sort of motivators for me for the course

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. And last question, is there any further information you can give me in relation to any of the previous questions that you think will benefit this research?

Interviewee 2

No.

Interviewee 2

I was just seeing if I could sum up something for you, but there's not much I could assist you further on.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Ok, Thank you.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Participant 3

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Which category most applies to you,

Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher,

Present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher or Prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher?

Interviewee 3

Past mature student

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What accountancy course did you study?

Interviewee 3

ACCA

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What was your age during your first year of study?

Interviewee 3

26

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you study full-time or part-time?

Interviewee 3

Part time

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

The following questions can be answered yes or no if too uncomfortable to answer but any additional detail or comments will be appreciated

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

During your studying, please tell me more about your circumstances at the time

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you rent or own your own home?

Interviewee 3

I rented

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have children?

Interviewee 3

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Yes, I have two

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Were you a carer?

Interviewee 3

No, I was not

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you also work?

Interviewee 3

Yes, I did, full time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 3

No

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you have a partner?

Interviewee 3

Yes

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you live with a partner?

Interviewee 3

Yes

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 3

A car loan, yes

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Before deciding on studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainties did you have?

Interviewee 3

The long-term prospect of owning my own home but relating to studying then none.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators helped you decide to study accountancy?

Interviewee 3

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

The potential for long term job security.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did you receive financial support, if so please detail?

Interviewee 3

Yes, the company I was working for paid for my course.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Did any financial uncertainty cause any additional stress, anxiety or mental health issues whilst studying?

Interviewee 3

No

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think this affected your performance studying accountancy? Positive or negative

Interviewee 3

Not applicable

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators helped you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 3

Lots. Having a better education to do the job I was currently in and obviously by getting the qualification and then moving up the ladder within the workplace that I was currently in and the long-term prospects of what could potentially come afterwards.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions, that you think will benefit this research?

Interviewee 3

All I can say is if my workplace didn't help me financially by paying for my course then I would have been under a lot more financial strain to be able to pay for the course myself and potentially not have been able to start or complete the course if I didn't have that financial help that I did have. If I did have to go down the route of getting a student loan this would have pushed me to perform to my absolute best. In a sense, if I was paying for the course myself, I would be 100% dedicated to completing the course. Whereas if I had finance or student finance to help me complete the course, then would always be the potential of being able to drop out without financially sacrificing myself. That's it.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Ok, thank you.

Participant 4

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Which category most applies to you; past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher, Present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher or prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher.

Interviewee 4

Last one.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So prospective.

Interviewee 4

Prospective yes. So, I'm starting in September.

Interviewee 4

University level.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What accountancy course would you like to study?

Interviewee 4

Forensic accounting is the area I'm looking at studying going forward because, I find that the most interesting from my experience of doing a lot of governance work and from my previous employees where I worked in a

Interviewee 4

Rather large banking sector, so I found that very interesting.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And if you don't mind me asking, how old are you?

Interviewee 4

I am 32.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Would you like to study full time or part time?

Interviewee 4

Part time. Personally, due to financial UM.

Interviewee 4

Just financially really, and I find it easier when I'm actually working and studying because I could use

Interviewee 4

Examples in my workplace while I'm studying to understand it better due to my dyslexia.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK, if you were studying accountancy now, please tell me more about your circumstances.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you rent or own your own home?

Interviewee 4

So I own my own home, so like mortgaged.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any children?

Interviewee 4

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you a carer?

Interviewee 4

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you also work?

Interviewee 4

Yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 4

Uh, I am dyslexic, so yeah, that's technically a disability, so I am disadvantaged at that point. So yes, I do have a disability.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have a partner?

Interviewee 4

Yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And do you live with that partner?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 4

Yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 4

Uh, no, only general mortgage debt.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Before deciding on study accountancy what, if any, financial uncertainties do you have?

Interviewee 4

Just knowing and actually studying and

Interviewee 4

Technically, getting into that type of debt, is it going to be beneficial in the future? So, it's just the unknown, really, putting yourself through those maybe three to four years. If you go ahead and do your masters, you're going to have that student debt behind you then. And I understanding don't pay it back until you earn, and you couldn't misquote me if I'm incorrect, like 26,000 and a lot of

Interviewee 4

Starting finance posts start around about 22,000. So after you build that knowledge then, are you going to manage to go further or are you going to have to restudy because that's what I've noticed a lot of the accountants where I currently work they've got their degree but they've still had to study further, to run up in line with all the current practices so you know is it going to be worth long term really and is it taking that chance of

Interviewee 4

Reducing down to part time.

Interviewee 4

To do it so that would be my only thing.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivates does could help you to decide to study accountancy.

Interviewee 4

I think the main motivators would be, is, one it's going to be worth it further down the line to advance my career, which in a lot of ways, yes, it definitely would because at certain levels or certain practices in accountancy you can only go to a certain like banding. So, to increase that financially yes for your own personal confidence of having that

Interviewee 4

Degree

Interviewee 4

behind you and

Interviewee 4

That's another thing. And then second of all,

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 4

It's just having the confidence to do it; I believe is the main thing.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What financial support do you think you would receive?

Interviewee 4

Uh, if I stay where I'm currently working, I would get financial support from them but would be a percentage. So, between 70% to 80% of the course being paid. I'd have to still find maybe 20% to 30%. That's quite a significant amount. So, it's not such a massive burden on me financially. But if I wasn't there then, I would go down something like student

Interviewee 4

Loan if I could get those type of loans because there is quite the scrutiny over criteria, especially because my partner

Interviewee 4

Does work and he does have quite a larger

Interviewee 4

Pay package so they would expect him

Interviewee 4

To support me in that way. So that's the way I'd go down there.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think financial uncertainty could cause you any additional stress, anxiety or mental health issues while studying?

Interviewee 4

Yes, definitely. I think it's a massive burden and especially in the current climate, especially with COVID and everything like that, that put an extra strain on people's finances. Especially during that uncertain time. So yeah, it would financially put a massive impact on me and I'd always be conscious. So, if anything, I'd probably

Interviewee 4

Look at getting maybe a part time job on the weekend or something to help support my studies, even if it was just like

Interviewee 4

A Saturday night or something, just to have that extra income coming in because financially, because I have got the mortgage and things like that, it would put a maybe a bit of a strain on me and I would have to do a pros and cons list or if I was going to study further depending on if the

Interviewee 4

If the actual course fees go up in line with what they are currently in England, then I definitely wouldn't be able to afford to do it.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think then that this could affect your performance studying accountancy, in a positive or negative way?

Interviewee 4

I believe it be a negative way because I'm constantly worrying about other things rather than concentrating on my studies

Interviewee 4

I've kind of gone through something similar, maybe not financially, but I'm consciously worrying about other things. Over the last two years that have affected my studies. So yeah, I definitely think personally it would have an impact negatively on my studies.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators do you think could help you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 4

As much financial support or as much guidance from maybe like a mentor or something like that and just always knowing that the University, College or workplace has got someone like a wellbeing coach or like someone from the wellbeing sector that you could go and speak to.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions that you think will benefit this research?

Interviewee 4

I think as a mature student,

Interviewee 4

A lot of the universities, colleges, even workplace, put it quite

Interviewee 4

an emphasis on like

Interviewee 4

The younger generation that are leaving

Interviewee 4

school or at a leaving college and things like that, and they have things like apprenticeships and graduate trainee schemes and things like that, but they always forget, like the middle people, so people like, I'd say, like you and me that have left school, just got a normal job, didn't know what they wanted to do, gain some experience in the workplace and then actually figured out what they actually wanted to do. So, there's not much support

Interviewee 4

there from even just a financial support and gaining experience in an accountancy firm so, I always find that we are

Interviewee 4

Left out. So, I think if they can do something along those lines of an apprenticeship or graduate scheme where you are actually working, gaining experience in a workplace, plus you are getting paid for it for two or three days a week

Interviewee 4

And they are helping you towards gaining a qualification, you'd have a lot more people changing their jobs and you'll actually retain those people within your workplace. So, you've got that actual general progress within the companies. I think sometimes we are left out of a lot of it and we've got to take on that financial burden by ourselves by taking out student loans and things like that as mature students

Interviewee 4

that we are, and sometimes I do think that we are left behind.

Interviewee 4

With apprenticeships or graduate training schemes for people that have gained their

Interviewee 4

qualification in university and I know a lot of people that have gone to university, done something completely different and have gone on a graduate trainee scheme to be accountant and I always think sometimes we are left out. So, if there's something

Interviewee 4

out there that companies can do to gain that. I know that because we are mature students, a lot of us do have families and homes and things like that,

Interviewee 4

And they would retain the staff a lot quicker.

Interviewee 4

And they, the staff would be gaining and learning in the way that they want them to be trained. So, I think there is a niche missing there. But you know, some companies need to lookout for, especially now, And I think being an accountant you can't just study accountancy. You've got to be a bit savvier with your actual qualifications because a lot of things, especially in the public sector are going a lot more automated. So, you can't just be someone that

Interviewee 4

Can understand the debits and credits and run a trial balance. You've got to be someone that can do

Interviewee 4

A lot of different, you know, programming, not just working on Excel. Looking at reports, using Microsoft Teams using

Interviewee 4

Business intelligence.

Interviewee 4

Different programmes

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 4

and things like that. So, I do think we've got to not just look at Accountancy dead straight, you got to go on different courses as well to come up in line, especially now tax is going digital.

Interviewee 4

A lot of companies are still not up to date with it, so I think there's not just accountancy. I think it's got to be broader now going forward.

Interviewee 4

I think that's it.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Thank you.

Participant 5

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Which category most applies to you?

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher, present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Or prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher.

Interviewee 5

Present mature student.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And what accountancy course are you studying?

Interviewee 5

I am currently studying a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What was your age during your first year of study?

Interviewee 5

I was 32.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you studying full time or part time?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

Full time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So the following questions can be answered yes or no. If too uncomfortable to answer, but any additional detail or comments will be appreciated.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

So during your study and please tell me more about your circumstances at the time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you rent or own your own home?

Interviewee 5

I am currently renting but also

Interviewee 5

trying to save up for my own home.

Interviewee 5

But I'm hoping to do that after university has finished.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any children?

Interviewee 5

Yes, I have one.

Interviewee 5

She's 13 years old.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you a carer?

Interviewee 5

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you also work?

Interviewee 5

I don't work currently

Interviewee 5

Because of

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

My daughter is 13 and she is in comprehensive school.

Interviewee 5

With the full-time studying

Interviewee 5

It's just too much to take on at once.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 5

I'm not sure really if it's a disability, but I do suffer from iron deficiency anaemia.

Interviewee 5

Which at times when

Interviewee 5

My

Interviewee 5

Ferritin level drops.

Interviewee 5

I get really exhausted.

Interviewee 5

And just a total loss of energy.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have a partner?

Interviewee 5

Yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And do you live with that partner?

Interviewee 5

I don't.

Interviewee 5

Currently.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 5

Yes, I do.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

Going back a few years ago

Interviewee 5

I was struggling with employment and took out a few things like overdraft, credit card

Interviewee 5

And even a few payday loans and realised then after losing my job that I couldn't afford to pay them back. So, I'm currently on a payment plan.

Interviewee 5

a debt help charity

Interviewee 5

And paying back slowly through that.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Before deciding on studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainty is did you have?

Interviewee 5

So before,

Interviewee 5

Choosing to study my course

Interviewee 5

I was working and

Interviewee 5

I was pretty much in a dead-end job

Interviewee 5

If that's what you want to call it.

Interviewee 5

And I've always wanted to

Interviewee 5

Work in accounts.

Interviewee 5

So at the time with my daughter being UM,

Interviewee 5

She was 11 at the time and going into comprehensive school,

Interviewee 5

I thought it was the right time to take that step at university

Interviewee 5

But I did

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

Worry about how

Interviewee 5

I was going to be able to afford everything

Interviewee 5

With student loans and grants that they offer.

Interviewee 5

I didn't know how much help I would get with rent with the property that I'm renting.

Interviewee 5

I think if it wasn't from the support of my partner,

Interviewee 5

I wouldn't have been able to

Interviewee 5

Have gone through this alone financially.

Interviewee 5

I also knew that if I lived with my partner, his income would have been considered

Interviewee 5

With not working

Interviewee 5

I wouldn't have received any help, say from housing benefit

Interviewee 5

To help with the rent.

Interviewee 5

So we decided to put off living together until I have finished university.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators had due to decide to study accountancy?

Interviewee 5

So like I mentioned already,

Interviewee 5

I have always wanted to be

Interviewee 5

An accountant or working in accounts.

Interviewee 5

I've had experience here and there and enjoyed it.

Interviewee 5

But due to having a child,

Interviewee 5

Uhm, it's been hard to keep those

Interviewee 5

Jobs.

Interviewee 5

Most of my life I have been a single mother

Interviewee 5

So childcare hasn't come easily to fit in around

Interviewee 5

Work patterns.

Interviewee 5

Like normal nine to five jobs have been OK.

Interviewee 5

But if you don't drive.

Interviewee 5

It can go against you, especially if

Interviewee 5

Uh, you work an hour away and you

Interviewee 5

finish at 5:00 o'clock

Interviewee 5

You could be stuck in traffic.

Interviewee 5

And most childcare places shut at 6:00 o'clock.

Interviewee 5

And then it's the same in the morning as well. Most childcare places open at 7:00 AM and most jobs expect you to be in at 8:00 AM so,

Interviewee 5

It has been hard.

Interviewee 5

Now is the time where I can really

Interviewee 5

The focus on only working in

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

Professions that

Interviewee 5

are accountancy related.

Interviewee 5

As my daughter can now pretty much take care of herself

Interviewee 5

not to the extent where she can live by herself, but

Interviewee 5

I don't have to rush home and she does not need to be in childcare anymore.

Interviewee 5

If that makes sense.

Interviewee 5

So a big motivator was

Interviewee 5

I had applied to multiple jobs in accounts and they were looking for education and experience and I wasn't getting much of the experience again due to childcare.

Interviewee 5

But then I didn't have much of an education in accountancy either, so that again was a motivator to study accountancy.

Interviewee 5

So really, the massive motivator for me is to

Interviewee 5

Have a career that I will enjoy.

Interviewee 5

And hopefully no longer

Interviewee 5

Struggle month to month

Interviewee 5

To provide for my daughter and my family.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Currently studying accountancy,

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you receive financial support? If so, please detail.

Interviewee 5

So I currently get

Interviewee 5

The maximum allowance of student loans

Interviewee 5

And grants.

Interviewee 5

Uhm, I also get the parents learning allowance

Interviewee 5

And special support grant.

Interviewee 5

But the problem is with these

Interviewee 5

Is when I applied for

Interviewee 5

Uhm, Universal Credit?

Interviewee 5

For child tax credits and then help with rent.

Interviewee 5

They considered

Interviewee 5

The grant side of it.

Interviewee 5

Because I was also receiving

Interviewee 5

the special support grant and parents learning allowance so before previously before I went to university I was receiving

Interviewee 5

260 pounds a month in child tax credits

Interviewee 5

And that was regardless of if I was working full time or not.

Interviewee 5

So when I applied for that and help for rent, I now receive £300 a month off Universal Credit and that is

Interviewee 5

Child tax credits and

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 5

rental help

Interviewee 5

Mixed into one.

Interviewee 5

Which means that I'm only getting £40 a month

Interviewee 5

To help pay my rent.

Interviewee 5

Everything is extremely tight, yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do any financial uncertainty cause any additional stress, anxiety, or mental health issues while studying?

Interviewee 5

Oh yes, definitely. I think the fact that we get our student loans and grants.

Interviewee 5

Every four months,

Interviewee 5

I have to

Interviewee 5

split that to last each month.

Interviewee 5

Its basically divided by 4 and I have a certain amount of each month.

Interviewee 5

As I said previously, it's been very tight to live month to month like that.

Interviewee 5

Things like Christmas and birthdays

Interviewee 5

Aren't taken into consideration.

Interviewee 5

And then with my daughter being in comp school uniform, it is incredibly

Interviewee 5

Expensive.

Interviewee 5

Not to mention

Interviewee 5

Who travels to school on a bus that I have to pay for that.

Interviewee 5

Being a mature student with

Interviewee 5

Household costs and then child related costs

Interviewee 5

I'm not going to lie; I feel like it's not enough financial help.

Interviewee 5

The thought does cause a lot of stress and anxiety.

Interviewee 5

Whilst studying and

Interviewee 5

You get to the point you question your finances

Interviewee 5

and think can I actually afford to go back

Interviewee 5

Next year

Interviewee 5

And finish this course?

Interviewee 5

And it can bring you down as well.

Interviewee 5

I think if you have an unexpected bill as well in the middle of say when an assignment is due or

Interviewee 5

An exam.

Interviewee 5

That financial uncertainty of how I am going to cope with next month's Bill.

Interviewee 5

And it could really affect the outcome of

Interviewee 5

Your results of that exam or assignment.

Interviewee 5

it has been hard.

Interviewee 5

Mentally and physically.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think this has affected your performance studying accountancy, positive or negative?

Interviewee 5

So I'm actually going to say both.

Interviewee 5

On the negative side, it's affected me mentally.

Interviewee 5

As I've just said,

Interviewee 5

The constant strain of.

Interviewee 5

What if this happens? What if I need to need to pay for this? Where am I going to get the money for that? Etc.

Does play heavily on your mind and can affect your performance

Interviewee 5

In exams and assignments around that time, as I've just mentioned.

Interviewee 5

But on the positive side

Interviewee 5

I've committed to this course.

Interviewee 5

And I've committed

Interviewee 5

Again, as I previously mentioned, for the reasons of

Interviewee 5

Having a career in accountancy and

Interviewee 5

Building a better future for my family

Interviewee 5

By having a steady and comfortable pay.

Interviewee 5

That has been what has pushed me through

Interviewee 5

To complete my studying.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivators are helping you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 5

Building a better future

Interviewee 5

for my daughter and myself.

Interviewee 5

I also think a lot of people said

Interviewee 5

That I couldn't do it and I was too old

Interviewee 5

To be a university student and so I went out of my way to go

Interviewee 5

I'm going to prove you wrong.

Interviewee 5

I'm going to come out of this with a degree in accountancy and finance and I am going to get

Interviewee 5

The career of my choice.

Interviewee 5

And I'm going to be able to do everything that I've struggled to do in the past. I'm going to eventually

Interviewee 5

Own my own home.

Interviewee 5

And be able to go on

Interviewee 5

Holidays abroad.

Interviewee 5

Not expecting every year, but just once in a while would be nice.

Interviewee 5

So yeah, that that is my motivation.

Interviewee 5

Don't get me wrong, the student loans for the course itself is a lot of money

Interviewee 5

I think just putting yourself through that

Interviewee 5

Is also a motivator itself.

Interviewee 5

Because it has to be worth it at the end, doesn't it?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions that you think will benefit this research?

Interviewee 5

I don't think so.

Interviewee 5

I do want to say I know you're also a mother studying

Interviewee 5

And I want to applaud you for what you're doing.

Interviewee 5

We really are doing this for our children, aren't we?

Interviewee 5

Why else would someone put themselves through all

Interviewee 5

this financial stress at our ages.

Interviewee 5

Most people study

Interviewee 5

through a job that they are already doing

Interviewee 5

in the field that they're interested in.

Interviewee 5

I think I've covered everything else.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Oh, thank you. You also doing a really good job.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

It's nice to find someone that does have similar experiences to myself.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And honestly, I appreciate you taking time after what I can gather is probably a really busy lifestyle

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

To let me interview you.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Thank you for your time.

Participant 6

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. Which category most applies to you? Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher,

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher, or prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher.

Interviewee 6

Present, university student.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And what accountancy course are you studying?

Interviewee 6

A Bachelor of Arts in Accountancy

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What was your age during your first year of study?

Interviewee 6

21.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you studying full time or part time?

Interviewee 6

Full time.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

These questions can be answered yes or no if too uncomfortable to answer, but any additional detail or comments would be appreciated.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

During your studying, please tell me more about your circumstances at the time. Do you rent or own your own home?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 6

Yeah, I own my own home. I bought it up right in the middle of the pandemic and

Interviewee 6

Basically mid university as well.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any children?

Interviewee 6

No, no children.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Are you a carer?

Interviewee 6

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 6

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have a partner?

Interviewee 6

Yes.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And do you live with that partner?

Interviewee 6

Yeah.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 6

Yeah, probably my

Interviewee 6

Car finance.

Interviewee 6

My mortgage.

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 6

Things such as form bills and things like that, if that would be included, but yeah, and nothing more than that.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Before deciding on studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainties did you have?

Interviewee 6

I was concerned more so because at the time I hadn't bought my house, but I was saving to buy my house. So going into doing something like that was quite hard because when you're a student, despite whether you have another job or whether you are just living off your student loan, not only is it hard to live off anyway, but trying to save and also trying get mortgage companies to understand that you do have it. The other income was

Interviewee 6

Was quite challenging, so that was that was quite an uncertainty as in like, Did I further my career or did I further my future in buying a house that I've been saving for before university if that makes sense

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

What motivates has helped you to this site to study accountancy.

Interviewee 6

I always wanted to study accountancy and it was something that I found that I was better toward because I did look at like other avenues, but numbers was more my thing and

Interviewee 6

I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I found it easier to just

Interviewee 6

Stay on in education and sort of stay in university, then it would have been if I'd gone and got a job in COVID, which was like really uncertain times.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you receive financial support? If so, please detail.

Interviewee 6

No, no financial support.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Student loans?

Interviewee 6

Oh yes, student loan. So yeah. Yeah, loans.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do any financial uncertainty cause any stress, anxiety, or mental health issues whilst studying?

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Interviewee 6

Yeah, lots and lots of stress.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Do you think this is affected your performance studying accountancy, positive or negative?

Interviewee 6

Yeah, probably negatively in some ways because everything at the moment it's just so, so expensive and having to buy equipment to be able to do what you need from home having to obviously accommodate to go in in some days and then not other days.

Interviewee 6

It does cost like a lot more than.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

And what motivators are currently helping you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 6

The fact that I'm in my last year and is nearly at the end, that's it

Interviewee 6

No other motivators.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions that you think would benefit this research?

Interviewee 6

No.

Samantha Hopkins (1903145)

OK. Thank you.

Participant 7

Samantha Hopkins

Which category most applies to you? Past mature student who studied accountancy at university level or higher, Present mature student currently studying accountancy at university level or higher or Prospective mature student who wants to study accountancy at university level or higher?

Interviewee 7

Prospective mature student

Samantha Hopkins

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

What accountancy course would you like to study?

Interviewee 7

ACCA – I'm AAT qualified which would make me exempt from the first three ACCA exams.

Samantha Hopkins

How old are you?

Interviewee 7

30

Samantha Hopkins

Would you like to study full-time or part-time?

Interviewee 7

Part-time – I currently work 30 hours per week in an accountancy firm and would not be able to give up work to study full-time.

Samantha Hopkins

These questions can be answered yes/no if too uncomfortable to answer but any additional detail/comments will be appreciated.

Samantha Hopkins

If you were studying accountancy now, please tell me more about your circumstances:

Do you rent or own your own home?

Interviewee 7

Own my home – Taken out a mortgage, been living there for one year. I was renting with my mum for eight years before that.

Samantha Hopkins

Do you have children?

Interviewee 7

No

Samantha Hopkins

Are you a carer?

Interviewee 7

No

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

Samantha Hopkins

Do you also work?

Interviewee 7

Yes. I have only been in my current job 8 months, but I worked at another accountancy firm for 9 years before that.

Samantha Hopkins

Do you have any disabilities?

Interviewee 7

Yes – I have been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis for 7 years which was the same year I was meant to start studying for my ACCA. I have been trying to manage my conditions while also undergoing 3 rounds of chemo which has not allowed me to go back to study. I had my last round late last year so if all goes well this year, I am hoping to look at going back to ACCA in 2023.

Samantha Hopkins

Do you have a partner?

Interviewee 7

No

Samantha Hopkins

Do you live with that partner?

Interviewee 7

No

Samantha Hopkins

Do you have anything that would be considered a debt outside of student loans?

Interviewee 7

Yes – I have a 30-year mortgage (currently 1 year in) and a loan relating to repairs on the house which will finish the end of this year.

Samantha Hopkins

Before deciding on studying accountancy, what, if any, financial uncertainties do you have?

Interviewee 7

Samantha Hopkins 1903145

My boss has offered to pay for everything so I wouldn't have any uncertainties. If this wasn't the case, I'm not sure I would be able to afford it due to paying my mortgage.

Samantha Hopkins

What motivators could help you to decide to study accountancy?

Interviewee 7

Improve knowledge in my current job. I can earn more money with a degree; also, current job will give me a bonus for each exam passed. It also gives me more options if I ever wanted to change my job.

Samantha Hopkins

What financial support do you think you would receive?

Interviewee 7

My boss has offered to pay for my study, exams etc. I am not sure what I could get regarding loans or grants if I needed to pay myself as I have never needed to look into this, the accountancy firms I have worked with encourage study and will pay for it.

Samantha Hopkins

Do you think financial uncertainty could cause you any additional stress, anxiety or mental health issues whilst studying?

Interviewee 7

If I had any then definitely, stress is a major factor for MS flare ups which would then besides the exams would also impact my job and lifestyle.

Samantha Hopkins

Do you think could then affect your performance studying accountancy? Positive or negative

Interviewee 7

Negative

Samantha Hopkins

What motivators could help you to complete your studies?

Interviewee 7

Again, just furthering my job.

Samantha Hopkins

Is there any further information you can give in relation to the previous questions, that you think will benefit this research?

Interviewee 7

Even if my boss paid for my studies, my disability would come into it. The stress and everything are on a completely different level for someone like me with a disability because the stress would send me into a flare up. Even if I could study and the resources were there for me to do it, due to my disability it could potentially be too much for me.

Appendix 4 – Ethics approval form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Samantha Joanne Hopkins			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	University of Wales St Davids Trinity
4	Campus:	Swansea
5	E-mail address:	samanthajoannehopkins@gmail.com
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07477538810
For students:		
7	Student Number:	1903145

8	Programme of Study:	(BA) Accountancy
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Gareth Hughes

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in) Lecturer approval	☒	23/11/21	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	<i>[List any other relevant documents here]</i>	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐

9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	An analysis of the impact of financial uncertainty for mature students to enter higher education: A case study of undergraduate accountancy programmes		
2	Proposed start date:	30/09/21	Proposed end date:	25/04/22
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity			

	The researcher has chosen this area of research because the researcher is also a mature student in the final year of higher education studying accountancy. The researcher prolonged studying for several years because of financial uncertainty whilst raising a child. When the researcher finally took the leap to study an undergraduate Accountancy degree, motivation and family support helped the decision but financially the researcher has found a struggle. Referring to bullet point three of the objectives, the idea to explore what financial help is available to recommending to governing bodies could potentially help perspective accountancy students' that worry about the financial uncertainty. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question What financial uncertainty is there for mature students studying/delay studying accountancy in higher education? (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity To research mature students' that struggle financially when undertaking higher education in accountancy and analyse whether financial uncertainty has an impact on the students' intentions to study. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity

	• Carry out a comprehensive literature review in reference to the higher education and accountancy sector to determine students' motivation to study, impact on affordability of studying accountancy and financial uncertainty. • Carry out qualitative research in the form of interviews to current, past and prospective accountancy students to establish whether or not financial uncertainty is a factor when deciding whether to study accountancy at higher level. • Make recommendations premised on the findings to higher education governing bodies and government agencies on how mature potential students can be sustainably attracted to a accounting course at university level or higher. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	A mono-method in the form of semi-structured interviews will be conducted, aiming at six participants from categories of past, present and prospective mature students. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	Face to face or via Microsoft teams and all those that reside in the United Kingdom. (this box should expand as you type)

	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒

17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	Six participants (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be?	Two past and two present accountancy mature students. Two prospective mature accountancy students. (this box should expand as you type)

12	How will you identify the participants?	Clearly stating the criteria of who the researcher would like to interview, gain consent before inviting them to an interview.,. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Chapter	Chapter 3 Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
Chapter 4 1	Chapter 5 Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Chapter 6 Yes	Chapter 7 ☐
		Chapter 8 No	Chapter 9 ☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it		

	For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
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	Directly via email to them individually and not in a group message. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Contacting the universities and accountancy firms detailing the participants that the researcher requires and an outline of the research that is being conducted. A potential participant can communicate that they give consent before sending, the researcher sets up an invitation to interview, which once completed the results will be transcribed anonymously. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	The semi structured interview will not ask for names or anything that can identify the participant from their answers and will be transcribed and stored safely completely anonymous. The researcher will have an idea of who has participated but will keep that information completely confidential. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	The researcher needs to establish the financial impact on studying accountancy higher education, general information on if the participants pay rent/mortgage and bills will be asked and if they have any children. These questions will be kept at yes/no answers but participants will be given the option to give more details if they wish to. (this box should expand as you type)		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	(this box should expand as you type)		

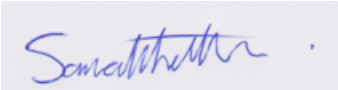
	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
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5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☒
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Password protected file for the questionnaires to be saved to. Once the information has been submitted for the research project the file will be removed completely from personal computer. A memory stick will be used to back up data and stored safely in a locked cupboard the researcher's home. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☒	☐
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☒	☐
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be kept anonymous and no personal information will be disclosed. The researcher will be using their own personal email as a point of contact for potential participants. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		

	Access to the data before inputted into the research project will only be accessed by the researcher and supervisor. All data in the researcher project will be kept anonymously but can be accessed by anyone. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher only. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Data will be stored in a password protected file on the researcher's computer and on a memory stick until the data is transferred to the research project. Once transferred and analysed the data will be deleted and removed from existence. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	Not applicable <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:		Date: 29/11/2021

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
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☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) <i>ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT</i>
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore **it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.**

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES

should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Appendix 5 – Interpretations of interviews

Node	Participant	Interpretation
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Financial Support	(1) Under the current terms, where your earnings are. I wouldn't have wanted to do as a mature student. Does that make sense? Uhm, I would have probably applied for a personal loan as I know the rates on the student loan are absolutely criminal. The APR rates are absolutely foul and you can get a personal loan. I don't know what the rates would be now we even want to get personal loan for 1/2 or a third of what the student loan is so. I probably wouldn't have gone down the student loan route, or I would've certainly investigated any other route and reporting on the personal loan route. No, it's all done. So but again, the joys of an older, you know, you've had years of saving and years of spending and saving a little bit more, but you know, so no there was no financial support.	As this person had been made redundant, they had the spare money to pay for the course themselves. On student loans, this participant thinks that getting a personal loan would be much better as the rates for student loans are higher.
	(2) unless there are employers willing to assist. If there's any potential financial assistance. An accommodating employer. If they will internally assist the cost or at least help provide available times to attend the course. Currently none.	This participant sees financial support as employer assistance. To complete a course in accountancy they would only decide to study if their employer offered assistance.
	(3)	The participant received financial support from the company they

	Yes, the company I was working for paid for my course. All I can say is if my workplace didn't help me financially by paying for my course then I would have been under a lot more financial strain to be able to pay for the course myself and potentially not have been able to start or complete the course if I didn't have that financial help that I did have. If I did have to go down the route of getting a student loan this would have pushed me to perform to my absolute best Whereas if I had finance or student finance to help me complete the course, then would always be the potential of being able to drop out without financially sacrificing myself.	worked for (employer assistance). If they did not have this support, they would of potentially not have studied the course. If they had gone down the route of self-funding or student loans, a motivator is mentioned that having that financial commitment would push the participant to perform the best they could.
	(4) If you go ahead and do your masters, you're going to have that student debt behind you then. And I understanding don't pay it back until you earn, and you couldn't misquote me if I'm incorrect, like 26,000 and a lot of Starting finance posts start around about 22,000. So after you build that knowledge then, are you going to manage to go further or are you going to have to restudy because that's what I've noticed a lot of the accountants where I currently work they've got their degree but they've still had to study further, to run up in line with all the current practices so	The participant has a high partial financial support from their employer to study. If they did not receive this assistance, they would consider student loans as the threshold for the loan to be paid back is higher than most accountancy jobs starting salaries. A lifestyle contributor is mentioned – A partner who has high earnings could help support the participant financially.

	you know is it going to be worth long term really and is it taking that chance of Reducing down to part time. To do it so that would be my only thing. Uh, if I stay where I'm currently working, I would get financial support from them but would be a percentage. So, between 70% to 80% of the course being paid. I'd have to still find maybe 20% to 30%. That's quite a significant amount. So, it's not such a massive burden on me financially But if I wasn't there then, I would go down something like student Loan if I could get those type of loans because there is quite the scrutiny over criteria, especially because my partner Does work and he does have quite a larger Pay package so they would expect him To support me in that way. So that's the way I'd go down there.	
	(5) Worry about how I was going to be able to afford everything With student loans and grants that they offer. I also knew that if I lived with my partner, his income would have been considered With not working I wouldn't have received any help, say from housing benefit To help with the rent.	The participant receives maximum help from student finance and also added benefits from Universal credit. For the added benefits the participant does not live with a partner because of an uncertainty around how the partners earnings will affect the student. A motivator is mentioned, the cost of the course and the loans that each student has behind them can motivate a student to achieve their best to endure that experience and turn it into something positive.

	So I currently get The maximum allowance of student loans And grants. Uhm, I also get the parents learning allowance And special support grant. But the problem is with these Is when I applied for Uhm, Universal Credit? For child tax credits and then help with rent. They considered The grant side of it. Because I was also receiving the special support grant and parents learning allowance so before previously before I went to university I was receiving 260 pounds a month in child tax credits And that was regardless of if I was working full time or not. So when I applied for that and help for rent, I now receive £300 a month off Universal Credit and that is Child tax credits and rental help Mixed into one. Which means that I'm only getting £40 a month To help pay my rent. Everything is extremely tight, yes. Don't get me wrong, the student loans for the course itself is a lot of money I think just putting yourself through that Is also a motivator itself. Because it has to be worth it at the end, doesn't it?	
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	(6) I was concerned more so because at the time I hadn't bought my house, but I was saving to buy my house. So going into doing something like that was quite hard because when you're a student, despite whether you have another job or whether you are just living off your student loan, not only is it hard to live off anyway, but trying to save and also trying get mortgage companies to understand that you do have it. The other income was quite challenging, so that was that was quite an uncertainty as in like, Did I further my career or did I further my future in buying a house that I've been saving for before university if that makes sense Oh yes, student loan. So yeah. Yeah, loans.	The participant received student loans as financial support but is also working part time. The participant also mentioned buying a home and how the student loans were a struggle to get noticed as other income when applying for a mortgage.
	(7) My boss has offered to pay for everything so I wouldn't have any uncertainties. My boss has offered to pay for my study, exams etc. I am not sure what I could get regarding loans or grants if I needed to pay myself as I have never needed to look into this,	The participant has financial support from their employer. They have not looked into student finance to see what assistance they could qualify for if the employer was not able to support them financially.
Financial uncertainty	(2) Cost of the course, I don't believe there is much financial help out there towards the course, unless there are employers willing to assist.	The participant thinks there is no financial help for studying as a mature student without employer's assistance and that no help would be a financial uncertainty. This would put them off joining an accounting course all together. An impact is mentioned

	I don't think I would study until financial uncertainties were sorted so I wouldn't join the course with financial uncertainties. I'm put off Joining a course for financial uncertainties. So, I would it add undue stress? Probably not, because the simple fact I wouldn't join the course. If I had financial uncertainties.	– This participant believes financial uncertainty will cause undue stress.
	(4) Just knowing and actually studying and Technically, getting into that type of debt, is it going to be beneficial in the future? So, it's just the unknown, really, putting yourself through those maybe three to four years. If the actual course fees go up in line with what they are currently in England, then I definitely wouldn't be able to afford to do it.	The participant believes the financial uncertainty is benefit of doing the course and still unknowing about how beneficial it could be in the future. The debts and time spent doing the course could be a waste of time. The participant also mentions the cost of courses in England and that if Wales prices match these prices, affordability would be further to reach.
	(5) Oh yes, definitely. I think the fact that we get our student loans and grants Every four months, I have to split that to last each month. It's basically divided by 4 and I have a certain amount of each month. As I said previously, it's been very tight to live month to month like that. Things like Christmas and birthdays Aren't taken into consideration. And then with my daughter being in comp school uniform, it is incredibly Expensive. Not to mention Who travels to school on a bus that	The participant has a lifestyle circumstance that contributes to their financial uncertainty. As the participant is unemployed and has children, the student loan has to cover all costs including household. The participant mentions unknown bills or celebration events where financial uncertainty weighs heavy. An impact is mentioned – Financial uncertainty can affect the outcome of the participants performance when in examination or submitting an assignment, mental health is also mentioned and the possibility of ending the course before it is completed as a result of this. The

	I have to pay for that. Being a mature student with Household costs and then child related costs I'm not going to lie; I feel like it's not enough financial help. The thought does cause a lot of stress and anxiety. Whilst studying and You get to the point you question your finances and think can I actually afford to go back Next year And finish this course? And it can bring you down as well. I think if you have an unexpected bill as well in the middle of say when an assignment is due or An exam. That financial uncertainty of how I am going to cope with next month's Bill. And it could really affect the outcome of Your results of that exam or assignment. it has been hard. Mentally and physically.	participant also believes they do not receive enough financial help.
Impacts	(2) I don't think I would study until financial uncertainties were sorted so I wouldn't join the course with financial uncertainties. I'm put off Joining a course for financial uncertainties. So, I would it add undue stress?	The participant mentioned an impact to financial uncertainty for them would be not to sign up for the course in general. If they faced financial uncertainty during the course, they would face stress which would impact on their motivation to study.

	Probably not, because the simple fact I wouldn't join the course. If I had financial uncertainties. If I wasn't sure if I could secure funding for a second year or, you know, continue studies, of course, yeah. I mean that would be playing on my mind. And then it will always go back down to, is it worth me staying on the course, that will always be in the back of the mind and the motivation to continue will be Little.	
	(4) Yes, definitely. I think it's a massive burden and especially in the current climate, especially with COVID and everything like that, that put an extra strain on people's finances. Especially during that uncertain time. So yeah, it would financially put a massive impact on me and I'd always be conscious. I believe it be a negative way because I'm constantly worrying about other things rather than concentrating on my studies I've kind of gone through something similar, maybe not financially, but I'm consciously worrying about other things. Over the last two years that have affected my studies. So yeah, I definitely think personally it would have an impact negatively on my studies.	The participant believes that financial uncertainty is a burden and with unpredicted events such as COVID already putting a strain on finances, the participant constantly worries about everything and sees impacts in their studying.

	(5) The thought does cause a lot of stress and anxiety. Whilst studying and You get to the point you question your finances and think can I actually afford to go back Next year And finish this course? And it can bring you down as well. I think if you have an unexpected bill as well in the middle of say when an assignment is due or An exam. That financial uncertainty of how I am going to cope with next month's Bill. And it could really affect the outcome of Your results of that exam or assignment. it has been hard. Mentally and physically. On the negative side, it's affected me mentally. As I've just said, The constant strain of What if this happens? What if I need to need to pay for this? Where am I going to get the money for that? Etc. Does play heavily on your mind and can affect your performance In exams and assignments around that time, as I've just mentioned.	The participant experiences financial uncertainty as an impact on their mental health. Doubts are suggested about completing the course and any unexpected financial strain affects their performance studying.
	(6)	The participant experiences stress through financial uncertainty and the

	Yeah, lots and lots of stress. Yeah, probably negatively in some ways because everything at the moment it's just so, so expensive and having to buy equipment to be able to do what you need from home having to obviously accommodate to go in in some days and then not other days. It does cost like a lot more.	cost of everything relating to blended learning because of the COVID pandemic. The participant does not specify any other impacts other than stress.
	(7) If I had any then definitely, stress is a major factor for MS flare ups which would then besides the exams would also impact my job and lifestyle. Negative Even if my boss paid for my studies, my disability would come into it. The stress and everything are on a completely different level for someone like me with a disability because the stress would send me into a flare up. Even if I could study and the resources were there for me to do it, due to my disability it could potentially be too much for me.	The participant does not experience financial uncertainty as they are not studying. They do believe though that any stress they feel now has an impact on their disability to flare up which can cause negative impacts on their job and lifestyle in general never mind any exams. They believe that studying could be too much negative implications due to their disability.
Motivators	(1) That's the reason I did it, is to make sure that I could command an income as opposed to paying for the course, if that makes sense. And I needed to do it to guarantee the job, the income. Uhm, you know all the things that we work for, isn't it the money? I'm one of those people, I think I tend to procrastinate quite a lot. But	The participant had motivations of self-belief and potential future earnings. They refer to paying for the course themselves which is a motivator to complete what they paid for.

	once I made up my mind to do something, it happens. So when I start something I keep going so it's a self-motivation. Once I made the mine up to go, I was going, and paying your own money as well, I suppose, is a motivator. But I didn't really think about that. So, I made up my mind to do it. So, I was going to do it.	
	(2) Affordability as well and The cost benefit of actually doing the course. Well, like offset the cost against potential future earnings. Again, the cost benefit of the course. For me, it will always go back to the cost benefit ratios, In in this area, accountancy It is not the best paying job. There's lack of jobs in accountancy in area. Uh, so investing in a course? is the benefit of achieving that course, it would weigh heavily on the on Any sort of motivators for me for the course	The participant mentions cost benefit and future potential earnings as a motivator.
	(3) The potential for long term job security. Having a better education to do the job I was currently in and obviously by getting the qualification and then moving up the ladder within the workplace that I was currently in and the long-term prospects of what could potentially come afterwards.	The participant states job security as a motivator and progression of furthering their career.

	(4) Forensic accounting is the area I'm looking at studying going forward because, I find that the most interesting from my experience of doing a lot of governance work and from my previous employees where I worked in a Rather large banking sector, so I found that very interesting. I think the main motivators would be, is, one it's going to be worth it further down the line to advance my career, which in a lot of ways, yes, it definitely would because at certain levels or certain practices in accountancy you can only go to a certain like banding. So, to increase that financially yes for your own personal confidence of having that Degree behind you. And then second of all, It's just having the confidence to do it; I believe is the main thing.	The participant states area of interest and furthering their career as a motivator. Potential future earnings also come into play from this. They also mention self confidence as a reward for studying.
	(5) I have always wanted to be An accountant or working in accounts. I've had experience here and there and enjoyed it. I had applied to multiple jobs in accounts and they were looking for education and experience and I wasn't getting much of the experience again due to childcare. But then I didn't have much of an education in accountancy either, so that again was a motivator to study accountancy.	The participant also mentions area of interest as a motivator. Future earnings potential and the career they want to be in will benefit the participate and their family. Past experiences and having a child motivate the participant.

	So really, the massive motivator for me is to Have a career that I will enjoy. And hopefully no longer Struggle month to month To provide for my daughter and my family. But on the positive side I've committed to this course. And I've committed Again, as I previously mentioned, for the reasons of Having a career in accountancy and Building a better future for my family By having a steady and comfortable pay. Building a better future for my daughter and myself. I also think a lot of people said That I couldn't do it and I was too old To be a university student and so I went out of my way to go I'm going to prove you wrong. I'm going to come out of this with a degree in accountancy and finance and I am going to get The career of my choice. And I'm going to be able to do everything that I've struggled to do in the past. I'm going to eventually Own my own home. And be able to go on Holidays abroad. Not expecting every year, but just once in a while would be nice. So yeah, that that is my motivation.	
	(6) I always wanted to study accountancy and it was something that I found that I was better toward	The participant also mentions area of interest as a motivator.

	because I did look at like other avenues, but numbers was more my thing and I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I found it easier to just Stay on in education and sort of stay in university, then it would have been if I'd gone and got a job in COVID, which was like really uncertain times.	
	(7) Improve knowledge in my current job. I can earn more money with a degree; also, current job will give me a bonus for each exam passed. It also gives me more options if I ever wanted to change my job. Again, just furthering my job.	The participant mentions potential future earnings and area of interest as motivators.
Other	(4) As much financial support or as much guidance from maybe like a mentor or something like that and just always knowing that the University, College or workplace has got someone like a wellbeing coach or like someone from the wellbeing sector that you could go and speak to.	The participant recommends a mentor/wellbeing coach from the education provider or the employer as a solution to helping manage mental health.
	(4) I think as a mature student, A lot of the universities, colleges, even workplace, put it quite an emphasis on like The younger generation that are leaving school or at a leaving college and things like that, and they have things like apprenticeships and	The participant is making a point about how hard it is for mature students to gain relevant experience relating to their course. They believe that if graduate schemes or apprenticeships took on mature students, they would retain their staff easier as mature students need to support their families and lifestyles. They compare those coming straight from school into university are still

	graduate trainee schemes and things like that, but they always forget, like the middle people, so people like, I'd say, like you and me that have left school, just got a normal job, didn't know what they wanted to do, gain some experience in the workplace and then actually figured out what they actually wanted to do So, I think if they can do something along those lines of an apprenticeship or graduate scheme where you are actually working, gaining experience in a workplace, plus you are getting paid for it for two or three days a week And they are helping you towards gaining a qualification, you'd have a lot more people changing their jobs and you'll actually retain those people within your workplace. So, you've got that actual general progress within the companies. I think sometimes we are left out of a lot of it and we've got to take on that financial burden by ourselves by taking out student loans and things like that as mature students that we are, and sometimes I do think that we are left behind. With apprenticeships or graduate training schemes for people that have gained their qualification in university and I know a lot of people that have gone to university, done something completely different and have gone on a graduate trainee scheme to be accountant and I always think sometimes we are left out. So, if there's something out there that companies can do to gain that. I know that because we	deciding what they want to do whilst mature students are already set on what they want to do as a career.
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	are mature students, a lot of us do have families and homes and things like that, And they would retain the staff a lot quicker.	
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