



# How do you turn a dissertation into an award-worthy submission?

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CDI National Research Conference  
18 February 2026

# Introducing...

## **Natalie Freeman**

Bill Law Award finalist 2025  
MRes Social Science Research Methods (University of East Anglia)

**Topic:** How students experience career provision at school, and how it influences engagement with HE career services.

## **Gemma Smith**

Bill Law Award finalist 2025  
MSc Career Guidance and Development (University of the West of Scotland)

**Topic:** How Does a Cancer Diagnosis Impact Career Development and Decision Making, and the implications for Career Guidance practice

## **Stephanie Kenyon**

Bill Law Award Finalist 2025  
MA Career Development and Employability (University of Huddersfield)

**Topic:** Maternal role models: exploring their influence on daughters' experience of returning to work after having children.

## **Valerie Rowles**

Bill Law Award recipient 2025  
MA Applied Linguistics (University of Nottingham)

**Topic:** the role of language in constructing unconscious attitudes towards careers

# Writing an abstract – what we thought about

- Consider your audience
- Key research elements
- Structure
- Opening line
- Closing line
- Clear and direct language
- References
- Edit & revise
- Submit in good time



# Abstract extracts

## **Natalie Freeman**

[...] Despite widespread provision at secondary level, many students remain disengaged from university career services. This study explores how early experiences shape later engagement, using semi-structured interviews with first-year undergraduates and reflexive thematic analysis. [...]

## **Stephanie Kenyon**

[...] While McGinn et al. (2019) showed that daughters of working mothers are more likely to return to work themselves, their large-scale study could not explore how this influence is experienced individually. My research aimed to address this gap, looking at how a small group of women experienced returning to work after having children. [...]

## **Gemma Smith**

[...] A cancer diagnosis can be one of the biggest career shocks an individual will face, however, its impact on career development remains largely overlooked in guidance practice. With one in two people in the UK predicted to be diagnosed with cancer (NHS, 2024), many working-age adults navigate treatment, recovery, and returning to work, often with little career support. [...]

## **Valerie Rowles**

[...] Although as Career Development Professionals (CDPs) we understand that our practice and the social processes that surround it are produced through language, we rarely have the time or tools available to systematically deconstruct the words and phrases transmitted in everyday discourse that may be influencing our clients. [...]

# Get in touch!

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