



Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
James Clappison MP, Member, Fair Access to University Group (FAUG)
- 9.05 - 9.30 **Widening participation - trends in admissions data**
Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive, UCAS
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 - 9.55 **The National Strategy for access and student success**
Professor Les Ebdon, Director, Office for Fair Access
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.55 - 10.10 **Have raised tuition fees affected efforts to widen participation?**
Dr Graeme Atherton, Director, National Education Opportunities Network (NEON)
- 10.10 - 11.00 **Fair access and widening participation - evaluation, investment and support**
Perspectives on the challenges for Government, the HE sector and others to implement the National Strategy. What steps can HEFCE, OFFA and Government take to encourage more institutions to undertake comprehensive evaluations of the longer-term impact of their widening participation activity, to ensure future investment is more focused on what works? What financial support measures (bursaries, fee-waivers etc.) are most likely to be effective in encouraging applicants from non-traditional backgrounds and what has been the impact of the National Scholarship Scheme to date? What steps can be taken by Government and the HE sector to establish widening participation (WP) activity in primary schools, as suggested in the interim National Strategy report? What can be done to improve the progression rates for learners with vocational qualifications and how can Government encourage greater flexibility for learners to transition between apprenticeships and degree-study? To what extent should e-learning models be a part of universities' WP activity? How successful are Access to HE courses in supporting mature learners into HE and what more can universities do themselves to widen participation amongst mature learners? Should Government encourage universities to collaborate with each other on WP across a region, and if so what lessons can be learned from AimHigher?
Rebecca Bunting, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Portsmouth and Member, Widening Participation and Student Opportunity Committee, HEFCE
John Rose-Adams, Research, Information and Evaluation Manager, Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships, The Open University
Professor Anthony Bowne, Principal, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and Member, Student Experience, Teaching and Quality Committee, HEFCE
Louis Coiffait, Head of Research, The Pearson Think Tank and Editor, Blue Skies
Questions and comments from the floor with **Dr Graeme Atherton**, Director, National Education Opportunities Network (NEON)
- 11.00 - 11.05 **Chairman's closing remarks**
James Clappison MP, Member, Fair Access to University Group (FAUG)
- 11.05 - 11.25 Coffee
- 11.25 - 11.30 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Paul Blomfield MP, Member, Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee and Secretary, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
- 11.30 - 11.40 **First year student experiences in UK universities**
Dr Debbie McVitty, Head of Higher Education (Research and Policy), NUS
- 11.40 - 12.30 **Student success - improving student retention**
What are the most likely causes of students falling into financial trouble during their studies and what could be done to reduce the numbers of students affected? What steps can be taken by HEIs to foster a "sense of belonging" amongst students, as suggested by the National Strategy, and how can those from disadvantaged backgrounds be encouraged to take part in the wider university student experience, such as clubs and societies? What role can second and third year students play in mentoring first years, particularly first-generation students? How could universities do more to smooth the transition from 6th form or college and the 1st year of university study? What role should academic departments play in identifying students 'at risk' of dropping-out; is lecturer-CPD required if this role were to be enhanced? What steps can universities and Government take to support staff in identifying 'warning signs' for students suffering mental health problems? Is there a case for greater standardisation of the financial support offered by individual universities for students in financial difficulty? Is the financial support currently available for students from both Government and universities sufficient, particularly for those from low-income backgrounds, care leavers or those with disabilities? Should retention rates be included in the Key Information Set?
Phil Davis, Chair, National Association of Student Money Advisors and Head of Student Support, Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln
Alison Clark, Director, National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES), University of Liverpool
Peter Quinn, Vice-Chair, National Association of Disability Practitioners and Director of Student Support Services, University of York
Dr Jane Andrews, Programme Director for the Engineering Management Programmes, Aston University
Questions and comments from the floor with **Dr Debbie McVitty**, Head of Higher Education (Research and Policy), NUS
- 12.30 - 12.55 **'Widening Participation'**
Bev Thomas, Deputy Director, HE Access & Quality, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Paul Blomfield MP, Member, Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee and Secretary, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
Jonny Roberts, Associate Editor, Westminster Higher Education Forum