

OU WORKSHOP: Evaluating WP initiatives: overcoming the challenges

Call for papers and registration



The Hub Theatre, the Open University, Milton Keynes. MK7 6AA

The [Open University](#), and [Queen's University Belfast](#) widening participation teams, with the support of the [Forum for Access and Continuing Education \(FACE\)](#), are hosting this one-day event which seeks to address some of the challenges HE providers are facing in evaluating their widening participation initiatives, and to explore some of the alternative evaluation methods being adopted. Evidence-based practice is increasingly being prioritised by Governments across the four nations of the UK with increasing pressure on HE providers to demonstrate the impact of their widening participation spend. This presents challenges for many, as outreach initiatives are rarely undertaken in isolation, with targeted participants in schools ranging in age from primary through to secondary. Evaluation of the impact of outreach aimed at those returning to learning after a long period away from education presents similar challenges, made particularly difficult as the target group is likely to be dispersed across a range of settings. A drive towards the use of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) to overcome some of these challenges has been questioned, particularly around the ethics around targeting specific individuals for 'treatment' and which potentially excludes others who may be equally deserving of 'treatment'.

This workshop will be of interest to:

- Academics and practitioners working in widening participation (WP);
- Research and evaluation officers;
- Policy-makers and those responsible for developing Access and Participation Plans.

The cost of the workshop is just £99, which will include lunch and refreshments.

If you would like to present at the workshop, please submit a 250 word abstract to widening-participation@open.ac.uk by Friday 7th December 2018. We would particularly welcome presentations that demonstrate alternative approaches to the evaluation of widening participation initiatives or projects that expose the challenges and solutions to particular issues.

You can register for the event via the following link: [Eventbrite](#)

If you are a member of staff at one of the organising Institutions, you are entitled to a 10% discount (Queen's University Belfast, the Open University, or staff working at institutions who are members of FACE). If so, please register using the discounted price option at the above Eventbrite link.

Further details will be available [here](#).