

THE BUSINESS OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Policy, Practice and Culture

Edited by

**COLIN MCCAIG
JON RAINFORD
RUTH SQUIRE**



The Business of Widening Participation

The contention of this lively collection of essays is that WP has become part of the 'normal business' of HE providers during the past 25 years. This is a lively account of the drivers of WP since the Dearing Review and the implementation of the social justice policies since that time. There is extensive use of policy documents from Government bodies such as HEFCE and OFFA as well as the academic literature, enabling a focus on the sometimes discordant relationship between Government, still the primary funder of undergraduate HE in England and autonomous, but dependent, universities. This highly readable book will be of great interest and value to policy makers, practitioners, researchers and historians of widening participation as well as to the many thousands of graduates who have benefitted from opportunity not afforded to those who went before.

Professor Sir Les Ebdon CBE DL, Former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bedfordshire and Former Director of Fair Access to Higher Education. Chair of NEON (the National Educational Opportunity Network)

This is an exciting, must-read, timely and thoughtful collation of historical and contemporary insights of what it means to increase participation in a neoliberal market system. A stellar cast of policy and academic voices make sense of the dynamics of markets, businesses, student choice and widening participation. The book is essential for those already working in English HE in policy or academic roles related to widening participation. Those in continental European systems and elsewhere who are wondering what the outcomes of shifts from public to market funded higher education might mean must look no further than this book to understand the impact on students and providers.

Professor Anna Mountford-Zimdars is academic Director of the Centre for Social Mobility at the University of Exeter

The Business of Widening Participation: Policy, Practice and Culture

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Abbreviations

Acronyms

AA	Access Agreement
APP	Access and Participation Plan
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
DAP	Degree Awarding Powers
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEP	Higher Education Provider
LEO	Longitudinal Education Outcomes
NCOP	National Collaborative Outreach Project
NNCO	National Network for Collaborative Outreach
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
RAB	Resource Accounting Budget
SEND	Special educational needs and disability
TSWPO	Third Sector Widening Participation Organisation
UT	University Title
WP	Widening Participation

Organisations

EEF	Education Endowment Foundation
FACE	Forum for Access and Continuing Education
FEA	Fair Education Alliance
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
NEON	National Education Opportunities Network
NESTA	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
NNECL	National Network of Education for Care Leavers
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
OfS	Office for Students
SMC	Social Mobility Commission
SPA	Supporting Professionalism in Admissions
TASO	Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service

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About the Editors

Colin McCaig is a Professor of Higher Education Policy at Sheffield Hallam University. He has written extensively on widening participation policy in the context of marketised higher education systems. He has 20 years' experience evaluating government-funded education programmes. Key recent publications include *The Marketisation of English Higher Education: A Policy Analysis of a Risk-based System* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018); *Equality and Differentiation in Marketised Higher Education: A New Level Playing Field?* (co-edited with Bowl and Hughes, Palgrave, 2018); *Who Are We Widening Participation For?* (BERA Research Intelligence No. 143, 2020); 'Higher Education, Widening Access and Market Failure: Towards a Dual Pricing Mechanism in England', *Social Science*, 2019 (with Nic Lightfoot).

Jon Rainford is an Associate Lecturer and Honorary Associate in Access, Open and Cross-curricular Innovation at The Open University and is an independent widening participation consultant. He has over 12 years experience of working with marginalised groups in education and completed his PhD at Staffordshire University in 2019 which focused on widening participation policy and practice. He has written numerous publications on widening access and has a particular interest in the way technology can be embedded in a post-pandemic world and the role creative methods can play in evaluation.

Ruth Squire is a researcher and former widening participation practitioner, with 15 years' experience in delivering and evaluating widening participation activity in higher education and the third sector. She has published articles on practitioner-led research, working-class student representation and on evaluation practices, and she has a particular interest in practitioner-led evaluation and policy enactment. Her current research focuses on the role of the third sector in widening participation policy and on networks and expertise in policymaking.

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About the Contributors

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