



Edge Hill University

**WIDENING PARTICIPATION**

RESEARCH CENTRE

## **Mainstreaming equity, opportunity and success in higher education**

**Widening Participation Research Centre, Edge Hill University,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference, 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

### **Conference overview**

This 24 hour international conference in central Liverpool is organised by the Widening Participation Research Centre at Edge Hill University. It aims to bring together researchers, practitioners, institutional staff and managers and policy makers from the UK and beyond to learn from each other about mainstreaming equity, opportunity and success in higher education.

On Day One there will be research-based key note presentations from international and national leaders in the field. There will also be research and evidence-informed paper sessions. In the evening you are invited to attend a complementary drinks reception, buffet dinner and the Inaugural Professorial Lecture delivered by Dr Liz Thomas at Edge Hill University. Day 2 will take the form of an international symposium, examining in-depth institutional approaches to mainstreaming equity, opportunity and success in higher education and beyond.

### **Conference theme**

This conference explores the response of, and impact on, higher education institutions (HEIs) to greater student diversity, in particular, the ways in which institutions have mainstreamed and embedded widening participation, equity, opportunity and success. The conference theme is informed by a number of key principles:

- i. HEIs want to admit the best students possible to their courses and programmes, irrespective of background or circumstances.
- ii. HEIs have a responsibility to ensure all their students are as successful as possible, irrespective of background or circumstances.
- iii. Success is defined broadly to include academic and social engagement, effective learning and development, retention, achievement and progression beyond higher education.

- iv. Many institutions want to change themselves to further promote and enable student diversity and success.
- v. A transformative approach to change values diversity and uses it as a positive force to inform all aspects of the institution's work.
- vi. When equity, opportunity and success are mainstreamed, an institution's processes and cultures are inclusive and effective. The needs, interests and values of diverse students are proactively met and not subsumed.
- vii. It is appropriate, useful and cost effective for staff and units concerned with widening access and participation; improving student experiences, retention and success; and disability, equality and diversity to work together and maximise their impact.

This conference will draw on international and national research, developmental work and evidence informed experience to explore the theory and practice concerned with institutional transformation to mainstream equity, opportunity and success in higher education and beyond.

## Programme

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, Holiday Inn, Lime Street, Liverpool

From 11.15 Registration

12.00 Lunch

12.40 Edge Hill University Welcome to Liverpool: Dr David Law, Pro Vice Chancellor, Edge Hill University

12.50 Introduction to the Conference: Professor Liz Thomas, Director Widening Participation Research Centre. **Mainstreaming equity, opportunity and success in higher education.**

13.00 Premiere viewing of the **Life changing experiences** DVD demonstrating the transformative effects of higher education on six students who have studied HE in a further education college.

13.15 Key note: Professor John Storan, Director, Continuum, University of East London. **How are institutions doing at mainstreaming equity? Learning from the Widening Participation Strategic Assessments.**

13.45 Parallel sessions

14.45 Break

15.00 Virtual keynote: Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, Director, Griffith Institute for Education Research, Australia. **Being Strategic about the First Year.**

- 15.20 Keynote: Dr Helen May, Higher Education Academy.  
**Strategies for institutional change to embed equity in HE**
- 15.50 Final plenary
- 16.00 Close of day 1
- 16.20 Buses depart for Edge Hill University
- 18.00 Drinks reception and buffet dinner
- 19.00 Liz Thomas Inaugural Professorial Lecture: **Widening participation: Where have we come from, where are we now and where are we going to?**
- 20.15 Drinks reception.
- 21.30 Buses depart for Liverpool

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2010, Holiday Inn, Lime Street, Liverpool**

- 9.15 Introduction to the symposium
- 9.30 International symposium on institutional change to mainstream and embed equity and widening participation:
- Aston University, UK
  - University of Bristol and University of West of England, UK
  - Edge Hill University, UK
  - La Trobe University, Australia
  - Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, UK
  - Open University, UK
  - Oslo University College, Norway
  - Royal Veterinary College, UK
  - University of Zagreb, Croatia
  - University of Bedfordshire, UK
- There will be 3 parallel sessions, in which three case studies will be presented (20 minutes each). These will be followed by structured discussion to develop understanding and facilitate learning about mainstreaming WP and equity.
- 11.30 Final plenary: Learning from case studies (feedback from groups, open discussion, closing comments)
- 12.15 Conference close followed by lunch and networking

