



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Widening Access to Higher Education: Scottish, UK and European Policy Dimensions

Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity (CREID),
University of Edinburgh
Centre for Higher, Adult and Vocational Education (HAVE),
University of Nottingham

Venue: Godfrey Thomson Hall, Thomson's Land,
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

Date: Thursday 1st March 2012, 10.15am – 3.45pm

This seminar will disseminate findings drawn from the EU Sixth Framework Project *Lifelong Learning Policy and Practice in Europe* (LLL2010), which ran from 2005 – 2011. The project involved 12 European countries and Russia and investigated various aspects of lifelong learning policy and practice, including higher education, adult education and workplace learning. The potential of lifelong learning to promote social inclusion as well as economic growth was a major focus of the study. The research spanned a period of economic and educational expansion across Europe, followed by an ongoing economic crisis, which continues to threaten the progress made between 1997 and 2007 in widening access to higher education. This seminar presents findings from the LLL2010 study on widening access to higher education across Europe, drawing contrasts between developments in Western and Eastern Europe. Croxford and Raffe present early findings from research funded by the Nuffield Foundation on the social profile of students attending different types of universities in different part of the UK. Gray and Gallacher provide an account of the Scottish Funding Council's approach to the widening access agenda in the light of ongoing reductions in public funding. Finally, Holmwood describes the UK-wide campaign to defend the future of public higher education.

Questions to be addressed

During the course of the day, the following questions will be addressed by speakers and participants:

- How do patterns of participation in higher education vary across Europe, with a particular focus on comparisons between old and new member states?
- What approaches to widening participation have been adopted in different European countries and what lessons can be learnt from various experiences?
- Which groups are defined as under-represented in different countries and of these, which have been encouraged to engage in widening participation initiatives?
- To what extent have widening access policies resulted in the reduction of social inequalities in different countries?
- Which groups have been the major beneficiaries in different countries?
- If higher education is to counter rather than reinforce social inequality, what changes are needed?

PROGRAMME

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Chair: Professor Lyn Tett, University of Edinburgh

10.15 – 10.30	Arrival and coffee
10.30 – 11.15	<i>Reducing or reinforcing inequality? Higher education and social inequality in Europe: Findings from the LLL2010 project</i> Professor John Holford (University of Nottingham), Professor Sheila Riddell, Dr Elisabet Weedon (University of Edinburgh), Triin Roosalu (University of Tallinn, Estonia)
11.15 – 11.30	Questions
11.30 – 12.00	<i>Widening access to higher education policy in post-devolution UK: Preliminary findings from research funded by the Nuffield Foundation</i> Dr Linda Croxford (University of Edinburgh) and Professor David Raffe (University of Edinburgh)
12.00 – 12.15	Questions
12.15 – 13.15	Lunch
13.15 – 13.45	<i>Scottish approaches to widening access to higher education</i> Jon Gray, Assistant Director, Strategic Development Group, Scottish Funding Council
13.45 – 14.15	Professor Jim Gallacher, Chair, Scottish Universities Association for Lifelong Learning
14.15 – 14.30	Coffee
14.30 – 15.00	<i>Defending public higher education in the UK</i> Professor John Holmwood, University of Nottingham
15.00 – 15.45	Final plenary