

WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HE ACROSS THE LIFE-COURSE

National experts in the field of WP met at a recent conference entitled 'Widening Participation in HE Across the Life-course' at Avenue Campus. Funded by the Law, Arts and Social Sciences Faculty and organised by the Non Participation in HE project team (an ESRC TLRP funded research study, based in the schools of Education and Social Science) the conference aimed to identify and debate some of the major issues faced by researchers, practitioners and policy makers.



BACK L – R: Prof. Nick Foskett , Prof. Caroline Thomas
Prof. Phil Hodgkinson, Prof. Miriam David

Front L – R: Prof. Sue Heath, Prof Ann-Marie Bathmaker
Prof. Alison Fuller

Widening participation in Higher Education has maintained a high media profile since the Government set the target of 50 per cent of 18-30 year olds to have some experience of Higher Education by year 2010.

After a welcome from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Caroline Thomas, the day was structured around plenary presentations and workshops, in which a variety of issues were considered including the challenges of widening participation in isolated and rural locations, routes into higher education (creating the question 'are we widening or narrowing participation?'), What constitutes participation and whether non-participation is always negative, and the issues faced by older individuals contemplating the move into higher education.

Feedback from the 70 delegates representing research, post-graduate, policy and practice constituencies was very positive; the organisers were widely congratulated on a stimulating event. One person remarked that the day had made them look afresh at their own ideas and work and to catch up and reflect on the ever changing world of Widening Participation in HE.