



Professional Development Conference Widening Participation and Outreach

**Wednesday 6th May, 2026, 10:00 - 15:45
Online**

10:00 - 10:15 Registration and Welcome

10:15 - 11:00 Higher education recruitment and widening participation: A conversation on intersectionality, issues and ideas - Patricia Anderson, SCAPP (Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners)

This collaborative workshop will explore how higher education recruitment and widening participation meet in practice. SCAPP Development Manager, Patricia Anderson, is keen to hear your experiences of advising widening participation applicants and how applicants understand widening participation—particularly around areas such as contextual admissions and recognition of prior learning. Are there areas that cause confusion, and can we gather ideas to make your role easier when providing information, advice and guidance to widening participation applicants, their advisers, and families, as well as improve the overall experience for prospective students?

11:00 - 11:15 Comfort Break

11:15 - 12:15 Promoting accessibility and inclusion in widening participation activities - Jalal Pour, UCL

Drawing on his own experiences running numerous events for young people with various disabilities and additional needs, Jalal will provide some tips and best practice for how other practitioners can promote accessibility in their own work. This session will talk through practical examples of how small changes can help to ensure activities are inclusive and accessible for participants.

12:15 - 13:15 Lunch

13:15 - 14:15 Transforming WP Engagement: Insights from the Gen Z student lifecycle - Zero Gravity

This session aims to provide attendees with insights and tangible strategies to better support widening participation students across their higher education

journey. Topics include: setting the scene for widening participation, access challenges and solutions, graduate outcomes and employability. By the end of the session you will: understand the widening participation student perspective, gain data insights via Zero Gravity's data on APPs, explore widening participation students' strategies for succeeding in university, and develop a range of actionable takeaways for your team.

Zero Gravity is a free online membership platform that propels students from areas of the top 15% of academic potential and bottom 40% of socioeconomic deprivation into university and onto careers at an unparalleled scale through tech. Since launching in 2020, over 8,000 students have made informed decisions and reached their dream university through online 1:1 mentoring, masterclasses, and community.

14:15 - 14:30 **Comfort Break**

14:30 - 15:15

Group work to great work: Building transferable skills through group projects - James Casey, Royal Holloway, University of London

Can group projects make outreach more impactful? This session will examine how collaborative learning can build students' transferable skills in addition to expanding their academic insight, and how to strike a good balance between the two.

15:15 - 15:45 **Networking and discussion**

This will be an opportunity to discuss topics relevant to the conference today and to network with fellow professionals.

15:45 **Finish**

*Please note this programme is subject to change