

## **Special Issue Title: Advancing Theory and Research in Widening Participation**

### *The need for research advancement*

Despite the attention of both policy makers and the scholarly community to the topic of Widening Participation in post-compulsory education, the issue of inequalities in the system remain as white middle class young adults tend to participate more than those from lower social class backgrounds. The problem of limited access for specific groups thus needs continuous attention, both from internationally leading bodies such as the European Commission and the OECD, but also from scholars in the field. Instead of looking back, it is important to look into the future, and design sound research strategies to continuously improve knowledge on how to decrease social inequality and other skewed representations in post-compulsory education. Instead of disseminating research results from previously undertaken research projects, we are mainly interested in what we can learn from it and how we can advance theory and research in the field.

The Special Issue is therefore interested in papers contributing to the following topics:

- Methodological considerations in Widening Participation research, including the use of new innovative methodologies
- The need for appropriate data to assess Widening Participation issues
- The development of recent theoretical frameworks in the field of Widening Participation
- Empirical testing and validation of new theoretical frameworks and measurement instruments in the field of Widening Participation
- Pressing questions for Widening Participation research
- The role of interdisciplinary thinking in Widening Participation research
- The development of innovative evidence based impact and dissemination strategies in the field of Widening Participation

Papers can be conceptual and/or empirical in nature, but the main argument of the paper needs to be constructed around the way in which your findings and outcomes can be used to advance research strategies in Widening Participation research.

### *Review procedures*

People are invited to send in a 500 words outline by 15 December 2015. This Expression of Interest to contribute to the Special Issue should be send to Dr Nalita James ([nrj7@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:nrj7@leicester.ac.uk)) and Dr Ellen Boeren ([Ellen.Boeren@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Ellen.Boeren@ed.ac.uk)). Based on Expressions of Interest, the editors will send invitations for full papers by 31 January 2016. Submission of full papers will be 31 May 2016. All papers will undergo double peer review on which final decisions for publication will be based. Authors will be asked to rework papers integrating reviewers' feedback.