

Westminster Higher Education Forum Keynote Seminar:

Part-time and mature study - increasing participation and improving retention

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 25th March 2014

Venue: Central London

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
- 9.05 - 9.30 **Support for part-time and mature students**
Sarah Howls, Head of Student Opportunity, HEFCE
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 - 9.55 **Part-time and mature higher study - trends and challenges**
Sir Eric Thomas, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bristol; Chair, Universities UK 'Review of Part-Time and Mature Higher Education' and former President, Universities UK
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.55 - 10.45 **Tackling the decline in part-time and mature student numbers - fees, perceptions and outreach**
To what extent can the reduction in the number of part-time and mature students in 2012/13 be attributed to the rise in tuition fees for part-time study and the introduction of a student loans system? What more can Government, HE institutions and other bodies do to better communicate the new student loans system for part-time students? What can be done to highlight the benefits of part-time learning to employers and what incentives could Government put in place to persuade more employers to cover the costs of workers who study part-time? How can Government and the HE sector encourage more employers to enrol and support their workers in part-time study; to what extent will the move towards a 'right to request flexible working' help facilitate this? Is the development of Higher Apprenticeships, equivalent to a degree, likely to further reduce the number of people studying part-time? Should universities and Government encourage more prospective students aged under 24 to consider studying part-time; what steps can be taken to address the perception of part-time study as being for mature students? How successful has the Access to HE diploma been in improving participation levels amongst adults without the traditional qualifications required for university? What more can Government, universities and other stakeholder groups do to increase the number of mature students, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds?
Dr Kathy Burton, Headteacher, Moat House, Stockport
Margaret Hart, Director, The Institute for Lifelong Learning (TILL), University of Sheffield
Professor Les Ebdon, Director, Office for Fair Access
Rajay Naik, Director of Government and External Affairs, The Open University
Senior representative, business
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 - 10.50 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
- 10.50 - 11.15 Coffee
- 11.15 - 11.20 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Lord Storey, former Chair, Burton Manor Adult Education College
- 11.20 - 11.40 **Working with employers to strengthen the UK's skills base - the role of part-time and mature HE**
Senior speaker confirmed from **UK Commission for Employment and Skills**
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.40 - 12.30 **Improving part-time and mature student experience and retention rates**
What steps can HE institutions take to improve retention rates of part-time and mature students, to bring them more in-line with full-time undergraduate rates? To what extent does student experience affect retention rates for part-time and mature students; are other barriers to course completion - such as care, work and other commitments - more significant? Should there be greater interaction between universities and employers to ensure part-time students are sufficiently supported with balancing their study-work commitments? What steps can HE providers take to ensure the flexibility of student services so that those available for full-time, undergraduate students can be also be accessed by part-time and mature students? What measures can student unions take to ensure they and their activities are adequately representative and supportive of the needs of part-time and mature students? To what extent will more flexible approaches to teaching, particularly advances in online learning, increase the retention rates of part-time and mature students? In what ways can universities use partnerships with FE colleges to provide more flexible learning opportunities for part-time and mature students, as called for in the UUK review?
Tricia King, Pro-Vice Master for Student Experience, Birkbeck, University of London
Dr Stella Cottrell, Director for Lifelong Learning, University of Leeds
Emma Barnes, Part-time Students Member, National Executive Committee, NUS
John Cunningham, Head of Qualifications, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Senior speaker confirmed from the **Association of Colleges**
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 - 12.55 **The future for part-time and mature study**
Gordon McKenzie, Deputy Director, Higher Education Strategy and Policy, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Lord Storey, former Chair, Burton Manor Adult Education College
Jonny Roberts, Associate Editor, Westminster Higher Education Forum