



Widening Participation & Outreach Strategy 2011-2014



The University of Surrey Widening Participation & Outreach Strategy 2011-14

1 Vision

1.1 The University acknowledges the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body and recognises the need to increase and widen participation in higher education so that the most able students from any background are able to access and enjoy the best possible student experience within our institution in order to succeed in graduate employment.

1.2 The University also believes that it is part of our social responsibility to support community groups and raise aspirations and improve attainment among potential students in order to sustain the industrial, commercial, and professional life of the country and thus make a long-term commitment to the future prosperity of our nation.

2 Context

2.1 The University of Surrey has long been proactive in widening participation and a central Educational Liaison team has been leading in this area since 1990. This current strategy revision builds on this work and reflects the considerable distance travelled by the University in this time, including the appointment of School Liaison Officers in each academic faculty.

2.2 This strategy recognises the need to provide a coherent framework for widening participation and outreach activity at all levels and across all academic areas and central professional services of the University.

2.3 This strategy also takes national considerations into account and recognises that increasing social mobility, extending fair access to higher education and attracting a higher proportion of students from under-represented groups are key priorities.

2.4 This strategy is being revised as new arrangements for funding higher education are implemented from 2012/13. It therefore reflects the need to adopt a pragmatic and financially accountable approach to widening participation and outreach activity.

3 Aims

3.1 To support the University strategy 2007-17 and its six imperatives:

1. Quality – in particular to attract high calibre students from any background that are able to access and enjoy the best possible student experience at Surrey
2. International Impact – in particular to further internationalise our curriculum and student experience for all students, regardless of their background
3. Distinctiveness – in particular to ensure that all students from any background have the opportunity to participate in the Professional Training Year
4. Collegiality – in particular a commitment to supporting all our students equally
5. Professionalism – in particular ensuring that all policies and procedures are transparent, fair and ethical and address the WP and outreach agenda
6. Sustainability – in particular to raise entry standards and increase application numbers in line with the widening participation and outreach strategy

3.2 To provide an effective means of ensuring that the University addresses its key institutional benchmarks with respect to the participation of under-represented groups whilst seeking to identify and recruit the best students.

3.3 To implement the five key priorities for widening participation and outreach:

1. On-campus taster activities aimed at aspiration and attainment raising as well as offering information, advice and guidance (IAG)
2. University based residential 'summer' schools which target students from groups under-represented in certain subject areas and within higher education more generally
3. Tutoring and mentoring schemes with local schools and colleges
4. Off-campus presentations in schools and colleges aimed at raising aspirations and attainment, as well as offering IAG
5. Targeted compact scheme (In2Surrey) designed to recruit students to the University from under-represented groups.

3.4 To develop a strategic approach to the disbursement of widening access funds, to be maintained at least at £100k p.a., in order to promote widening participation and outreach activity across all academic areas and central professional services of the University.

3.5 To promote the principles of fair access and ensure that able students from any background are able to access this University without facing any institutional barriers to progression.

3.6 To promote the enhancement of the overall student experience so that all students from any background enjoy the best possible experience within our institution, are successfully retained, and ultimately take up graduate employment.

3.7 To develop robust measures of success to help determine current and future priorities for widening participation and outreach.

3.8 To create a common framework for recording and reporting on current widening participation and outreach activity across the six key themes of:

1. Widening participation & outreach activity and initiatives
 - including the targeting of particular student cohorts
2. Partnership and engagement
 - including schools, colleges, employers and the wider community
3. Access
 - including the use of contextual data and flexible admission schemes
4. Learning and teaching
 - including changes to assessment strategies and the use of student-centred learning
5. Employability
 - including promotion of the professional training year and progression to employment
6. Targets, evaluation and impact
 - including the use of data to assess recruitment, retention and employability strategies

4 Implementing the widening participation and outreach strategy

4.1 The University will ensure that resources, both financial and material, are maximised in order to support widening participation and outreach activity and that effective use of these resources is made.

4.2 The University will keep under constant review the financial support that it makes available to students through its Access Agreement with OFFA.

4.3 The University will ensure that the faculties and relevant central professional services develop their own strategies and policies to implement and manage the priorities identified above whilst reflecting their own particular focus and expertise.

4.4 In line with Hefce guidance the faculties and relevant central professional services will, as appropriate, adopt a targeted approach to their activities in order to ensure that limited resources are used effectively.

4.5 In line with Hefce guidance the faculties and relevant central professional services will adopt an evidence based approach to evaluating the outcomes and impacts of their strategies and policies whilst recognising that not every activity need be evaluated in equal depth.

4.6 The University's Planning Department will provide Management Information to assist in monitoring key widening participation performance indicators and progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives.

4.7 The Educational Liaison Centre (ELC), with support from the Faculty Schools Liaison Officers, will provide staff workshops in order to aid understanding of the widening participation agenda and will also disseminate good practice.

5 Governance and management

5.1 This widening participation and outreach strategy is assured by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC). ULTC is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) and reports to Senate.

5.2 ULTC oversees and monitors the effective implementation of policy and strategy and is assisted in discharging this responsibility by four subcommittees, each chaired by an Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching). The four subcommittees are:

- Admissions
- Quality and Standards
- Student Experience
- Widening Participation and Outreach

5.3 The Widening Participation and Outreach Subcommittee (WPOS) has wide institutional representation and the following membership ensures that appropriate expert advice is available to this subcommittee:

- Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching) Chair
- Director of Strategic Planning
- University's Principal Contact for OFFA
- Equality and Diversity Officer (Students' Union)
- University's Widening Participation Manager
- Director of Student Recruitment
- Head of Admissions (Registry)
- Strategic Representative from each of the four academic faculties
- School Liaison Officer from each of the four academic faculties

5.4 Although the WPOS leads on this strategy the other subcommittees ensure that they cross reference any other key University strategies and policies to this widening participation and outreach strategy as appropriate.

5.5 The faculties and relevant central professional services will produce an annual monitoring and evaluation report on their own strategies and policies to the WPOS using the standard template provided to capture the data listed at 3.8 above.

5.6 WPOS will receive the faculty and central professional service reports and provide an overall strategic assessment for ULTC on progress towards widening participation targets that will help facilitate an evidence-based approach to planning.

5.7 ULTC will receive the relevant WPOS minute and report in order to evaluate the longer-term impact of widening participation and outreach activity across the University that will help determine the University's current and future priorities.