

# Widening access/participation at UoG, staff views

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# Questions posed to staff

(PGCertHE and Academic Skills colleagues)

1. Do you feel that you have a strong understanding of widening access issues at UoG? Please give reasons for your answer
2. As a member of teaching staff, what do you feel are the challenges for widening access/participation at UoG?
3. What specific opportunities can you comment on in your courses/programmes which help with widening participation?



**Do you feel that you have a strong understanding of widening access issues at UoG? Please give reasons for your answer**

**UoG is based in London, widening access might have more to do with students with diverse backgrounds recruited from London and the Southeast as well as international students**

**My time in the School of Humanities (20 years) gave me very good and first-hand understanding of WP and access issues; the students were extremely diverse in every way.**

**I am less clear about the current 'status' of WP at the university as I'm less involved now with direct student contact, and have less knowledge of admissions/recruitment across the university**

**Do you feel that you have a strong understanding of widening access issues at UoG? Please give reasons for your answer**

**I'd say a fairly good idea across both aspects- anecdotally informed by a few examples. I know more about the general rather than the specific though.**

**Some students do not have the language ability to be able to cope with their studies; thus, widening participation in these cases is unfair as these students may be unable to progress without a lot of support.**

**Depends what you mean by strong. And also 'widening access'- are you talking recruitment or about those already recruited.**

## As a member of teaching staff, what do you feel are the challenges for widening access/participation at UoG?

the diverse academic background of the current students which may disadvantage students with non-traditional academic qualifications

a balance between recognising where particular 'groups' may have particular needs, and recognising each student as an individual whose needs will differ from those of any other student

reconsidering resources, case studies, reading, images used etc. – can be done at course level, but does still take time and may require a shift in perception and priorities for some teaching staff.

## As a member of teaching staff, what do you feel are the challenges for widening access/participation at UoG?

Ensuring that students feel welcomed and that they belong, and being involved in dialogue with students to understand their experience

the misalignment between what UoG say they are about (policy , values etc) and the amount of resource they are willing to put into fulfilling those policies and values. This aligns, imho, with national policy which does the same.

## As a member of teaching staff, what do you feel are the challenges for widening access/participation at UoG?

Linguistic/cultural challenges for our large international student population.

the challenge of learning spaces, especially overcrowded rooms, and inflexible furniture and lecture theatres – which don't make it easy for teaching staff to vary activities, support groupwork etc.

Some inclusive practices are easier than others – reconsidering resources, case studies, reading, images used etc. – can be done at course level, but does still take time and may require a shift in perception and priorities for some teaching staff.

## As a member of teaching staff, what do you feel are the challenges for widening access/participation at UoG?

students for who English is a second language; particularly, Chinese international students. I often find myself trying different ways to explain an idea to them and I am often unsure whether they have understood me which at times can be frustrating if they seem to not understand, but it can also be helpful as it makes me continue to think even more about the importance of language and simplifying the language I use with students as well as explaining what I say.



## What specific opportunities can you comment on in your courses/programmes which help with widening participation?

The courses I contribute to are aimed at staff so, raising awareness and discussing these issues can help.

We raise the issue and endeavour to bring it to the attention of participants on the programme, both in relation to classroom teaching and in relation to curriculum design.

variety of assessment, tutorial support and academic skills support, as well as the use of inclusive language avoiding colloquialisms, slang and jargon might help.

PGCertHE – we do include diversity and inclusiveness but its as a topic and I think it should be embedded through out our curriculum.

## What specific opportunities can you comment on in your courses/programmes which help with widening participation?

We have worked hard at online access for learning and teaching resources and guidance which can help with inclusivity

we use a range of different approaches to learning and teaching,

different formats for assignments, including choice on some assignments, which may help to make the activities more accessible.

The the shift to online- has its own downsides and 'exclusions' but, in principle, that move was to widen access – particularly in terms of geography- int. cohorts, of course

# Some take-away thoughts

- Staff surveyed seem to only have a general understanding of widening access/participation issues at UoG
- Challenges to WA/WP range from staff priorities, supporting students from diverse groups/non traditional routes of entry, student belonging, institutional support for WP goals, rooming issues
- Things being done to help: raising awareness of WA/WP issues, changes to assessment, range of support offerings, different teaching/learning approaches

