

## Delegate Application

# The evidence base for fair admissions: can we achieve excellence and social justice?

7th - 8th July 2011 at The University of Manchester

### Confirmed Speakers

**Professor Steve Smith**, Chief Executive, Universities UK  
**Dr Bill Fitzsimmons**, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Harvard  
**Professor Agnes van Zanten**, Sciences Po, Paris  
**Professor Anthony Heath**, FBA, Universities of Oxford and Manchester  
**Dr Adam Swift**, University of Oxford  
**Professor Harry Brighouse**, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
**Dr Lee Elliot-Major**, Sutton Trust  
**Dr Anthony Hoare**, University of Bristol  
**Dr Kevin Denny**, University College Dublin  
**Janet Graham**, Director, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)

### Theory, Research and Policy

The conference will be unique in a UK context through seeking to bring together theorists, researchers and policy makers in higher education working on 'fair admissions' to competitive higher education institutions.

There has been a sustained drive by government and higher education institutions to improve the fairness of admissions procedures. Many leading universities have introduced new policies, which use measures of social and educational disadvantage as relevant factors in the admissions process. Concepts such as disadvantage, achievement, aptitude, potential, under-representation and social class have variously been used to justify such approaches. These practices raise three inter-related questions for the conference:

- 1) Normative questions: who should be admitted to leading HEIs?
- 2) Empirical questions: who is admitted?
- 3) Policy questions: how can 'fair admissions' be pursued in practice?

All too often, these three questions are answered by distinct groups – namely philosophers, empirical researchers and policy makers/practitioners respectively. This conference bridges these divides and brings all three perspectives together. We invite empirical researchers, policy makers and theorists to contribute. Admissions discussions are furthermore frequently restricted to national contexts. We particularly welcome contributions with a comparative or international perspective.

### Application

The unique feature of this conference is to bridge theory, research and policy. We will use an application process for delegates that will help us achieve an appropriate balance of these different perspectives. We therefore invite prospective delegates to send us up to 150 words describing how you and/or your organisation would benefit from participating in the conference, basic biographical information and your particular interest/perspective – i.e. theory, research or policy. The deadline for applications to attend is 10 December 2010 and should be sent to [julian.skyrme@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:julian.skyrme@manchester.ac.uk)

### Venue

Manchester is a dynamic and lively place with a trendsetting music scene, renowned pubs and industrial heritage. The conference venue is Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre. It is conveniently located only 3 miles from Piccadilly Train Station and approximately 5 miles from Manchester International Airport.

### Costs

The full cost of attendance, including overnight accommodation, dinner and all refreshments is £295. The conference will run from 10am on 7 July and close at 2pm on the 8 July 2011. A limited number of needs-based scholarships to attend the conference are available. Please state if you would like to be considered for a scholarship on your application form along with the case for support. The organisers' decision is final.

### Conference Organisers:

Julian Skyrme, Head of Undergraduate Recruitment and Widening Participation, [Julian.Skyrme@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Julian.Skyrme@manchester.ac.uk), 0161 275 2050

Dr Anna Zimdars, Institute for Social Change, [Anna.Zimdars@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Anna.Zimdars@manchester.ac.uk), 0161 275 4855. Both organisers are at the University of Manchester.

### Publication

Conference proceedings will be published as an edited book combining normative theory, empirical evidence and policy/practice.

### Sponsors

The conference is kindly supported by The University of Manchester's Institute for Social Change and Student Recruitment, Admissions and International Development Division and endorsed by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) and Universities UK.