

Call for Papers

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

Please send an abstract of up to 250 words and a CV to anna.zimdars@manchester.ac.uk before 30 November 2010. Decisions on acceptance will be made in December 2010. Submissions can be discussed informally with the organisers.

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 cost for attending both conference days, overnight accommodation at Chancellors Hotel in Manchester and all meals will be waived for speakers. If we are unable to accommodate your contribution into the conference programme you would be welcome to attend as a full delegate for the standard cost of £295.

Conference Organisers:

Julian Skyrme, Head of Undergraduate Recruitment and Widening Participation, Julian.Skyrme@manchester.ac.uk, 0161 275 2050

Dr Anna Zimdars, Institute for Social Change, 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. Presenters are expected to contribute a chapter to this book.

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.