

# Statement on Widening Participation

1. The Queen's Foundation ('The Foundation') has a long-standing commitment to widening participation and fair access to higher education. This is embedded in the Foundation Vision statement and Strategic Plan and accountable to the Leadership of the Foundation and ultimately to the governing body on these matters. It is manifest by a number of factors, including:

- 1.1 The diversity of its student body, with a particularly high number of mature students with no prior access to higher or further education.
- 1.2 A reputation for working with under-represented groups within the Theological Education Institute (TEI) sector, particularly those from BME backgrounds.
- 1.3 A commitment to various part-time (PT) modes of study (with the majority of Queen's students on such PT modes). Students may access modules in a variety of modes; these might include daytime, evening or weekend delivery, or in online format, in ways appropriate and pertinent for them, and alongside other life commitments and responsibilities.
- 1.4 A portfolio of variable programmes leading to CertHE, DipHE & BA level awards, with the possibility of progression to taught and research post graduate study for all suitably qualified applicants. Queen's recognizes the variety of student contexts, and configures its programmes to enable the participation of those otherwise disenfranchised or precluded from HE programmes.
- 1.5 Admissions processes that enable non-traditional modes of meeting entry requirements, and/or which build on learning and skills derived from non-educational sectors.
- 1.6 A staff student ethos, which embeds a high ratio of staff to students, (including both dedicated and informal personal tutorial contact time), in addition to substantial standard classroom, seminar and other face to face delivery.
- 1.7 A history of developing networks with local churches and related institutions, leading to formal partnerships that enable access for underrepresented groups; for instance the formal partnership with the Wesleyan Holiness Church.

2. Queen's is thus committed to the recruitment of students regardless of their prior background, and to the provision of support so as to give students the best opportunity to fulfil their potential. Programmes are broken into their smallest constituent parts to allow both initial access and subsequent achievements, along with the appropriate processes for progression.

This commitment to widening access to study is manifest in a number of ways. Recent initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 2.1 Taster courses that build awareness of what HE study entails, and what it might offer a potential student, particularly within the TEI context. These courses smooth the transition to HE for new students, and also offer applicants the opportunity to make an informed choice *not* to begin study.
- 2.2 A programme of open days at various times and days (including weekends and evenings) so as to enable attendance from a variety of applicants.
- 2.3 A commitment to bursaried support for those students whose personal circumstances preclude them from participating in a programme of HE study.
- 2.4 Provision of teaching at locations that enable fair geographical access to courses and programmes.
- 2.5 The operation of a buddy scheme for new students to support them in their transition to the new HE context.
- 2.6 The strong integration of pastoral and academic tutorial support, an area commended within the 2016 QAA HER report, so as to offer a dedicated tutorial support function to all students. Such tutorial support enables students to progress through their programme of study and achieve an award commensurate with their abilities, and ensures that a student's academic and pastoral needs are viewed holistically.
- 2.7 A staff student access group working on both physical and cultural access matters relating to the Foundation.
- 2.8 Dedicated programmes of study skills training particularly targeted at students who have been out of education settings for some time, and/or who have never previously experienced HE study.