



UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

ACCESS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION POLICY

Approved by Governing Authority 28 June 2011

Access & Widening Participation Policy

The University of Limerick's policy for access and widening participation, as set out below, flows from a philosophy that values inclusion and diversity. The policy seeks to provide entry mechanisms, programmes and support services that ensure equality of entry, participation and outcome for all student groups at the University of Limerick.

1. The University of Limerick is committed to ensuring that all groups are represented within the student body. The under-represented groups in higher education are (i) people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds; (ii) people with a disability; (iii) people aged 23 or older; and (iv) people from the Traveller community or other ethnic minorities.
2. This policy seeks to promote and facilitate entry to and participation in the access, undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes and student life of the University by people from these under-represented groups.
3. The University will ensure awareness of its access and widening participation policy among targeted groups through publicity material and positive engagement with schools and relevant representative groups.
4. The University will determine targets for entry into its programmes by people from each of these groups. Progress towards achieving these targets will be monitored on a regular basis, and the targets will be revised as appropriate.
5. The University will put in place accessible and clearly documented procedures to facilitate entry to its programmes by people from each of these groups.
6. The University will endeavour to provide incentives to encourage positive engagement with the Access and Widening Participation Policy.
7. The University will continue to develop the University of Limerick *Access Campus* to challenge educational disadvantage in areas of economic deprivation, with particular emphasis on the geographical area known as Limerick City South. The University will collaborate actively with its partners as defined in the University of Limerick *Access Campus* Memorandum of Understanding in pursuit of these goals. This development will focus on:
 - i. Supporting those in primary and second-level education to have equal access to third-level education

- ii. Promoting and supporting second-chance learning for the adult population, including the delivery of outreach programmes
 - iii. Increasing the relevance of the University of Limerick to the communities in this area
- 8. The University will recognise prior learning for applicants from appropriate under-represented groups in accordance with its policy on the recognition of prior learning.
- 9. The University will seek input from under-represented groups and their representatives to further improve this policy and its related procedures.
- 10. The University will ensure that any future strategic and policy developments to widen access and participation from under-represented groups will be informed by action, research activities and findings.
- 11. Through its Governing Authority, the University will perform annual quantitative and qualitative reviews of the implementation of this policy and associated procedures and programmes to ensure its objectives are fulfilled and to enhance its effectiveness.
- 12. The University will develop and sustain flexible access routes and learning modes for students from under-represented groups by promoting collaboration with other educational institutions, particularly those within the Shannon Consortium, NUI Galway, other strategic-innovation-funded access consortia and organisations supporting regional and educational development. Such collaboration may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Outreach programmes
 - ii. Access and foundation courses
 - iii. Linkages to other educational programmes
 - iv. Flexible modes of teaching and learning, including exemptions where appropriate
 - v. Shared service models of provision
 - vi. Community engagement.
- 13. The University will take measures to provide its entire staff with the information, training and means necessary to ensure compliance with this policy.
- 14. The Director of Student Affairs will facilitate the implementation of the policy in collaboration with the appropriate units and personnel within the University.