

Session Abstracts

Workshop A: Work Experience - Targeting Widening Participation Audiences

Through the Enhancing Research Culture Fund, Craig Carnegie is running the 'Addressing Social Mobility Issues in STEM' project which is building a network across Midlands universities to learn from their models for work experience, including how they target and support widening participation audiences. This workshop will explore the learning so far and invite colleagues to contribute their insight as well as begin to develop a model timetable for future work experience practice.

Workshop B: Supporting local asylum seekers into Higher Education

This session will provide an overview of the barriers faced by asylum seekers in accessing higher education and will explore the current programme of support offered by the WP team and STAR locally to enable this group to successfully navigate and access the UK HE system. Presenters from asylum backgrounds will share their experiences, from arrival to becoming UoW students. The session will further explore potential actions for future support.

Workshop C: Inspiring the next generation of arts students: An ECLS student and staff collaboration

In this workshop we'll share insights into how students and staff in English and Comparative Literary Studies (ECLS) work with local partner schools to inspire the next generation of Arts students from widening participation backgrounds through Transformations - a programme that also helps build a sense of community for our 70+ student volunteers whilst they develop skills that enhance their future employability. The second half of the workshop will involve participation in some of the creative writing activities that have proved so popular with our participating school students.

Workshop D: Navigating the Independent Student Experience: Care Leavers and Estranged Students

Join the Widening Participation Lifecycle Team for an insightful session on the independent student experience for Care Leavers and Estranged Students. Informed by student voices, we will explore the hidden challenges students face during their time in higher education and celebrate the successes. You will have the opportunity to reflect on how your own work can contribute to a supportive environment for these student groups, as the university commits to an inclusive education for all.

Workshop E: School Tasking

Join us for an engaging session exploring School Tasking, an innovative outreach initiative developed by Dr. Ali Struthers inspired by the TV show Taskmaster. Through live, task-based activities, you'll experience the same creative and collaborative challenges Year 5 students tackle as part of the programme. Discover how School Tasking introduces young learners to legal concepts bringing the law to life. Watch as students develop teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking all while demystifying university and the law. Learn how this project supports widening participation by targeting disadvantaged schools and pupils from underrepresented backgrounds.

Workshop F: Next Chapter for Reluctant Readers

Children and young people's reading for enjoyment is at an all-time low according to the National Literacy Trust. With reading for enjoyment and attainment being closely linked, this is an area which needs help. Over the last two years ThinkHigher has been trying a different approach and using technology to bring enjoyment to reading. Come and experience what a ThinkHigher Next Chapter session feels like and see if it works for you.

Workshop G: University Strategy: widening access and student success

The session will focus on University strategy relating to widening access and student success giving attendees the opportunity to hear more about the University's commitments and what the priorities are for implementation over the next five years. The session will invite attendees to reflect on their work and studies and how it relates to access and success.

Insight Talk 1: Evolving Practice: The Journey of the Warwick Advance Internship Programme

This session will explore the past, present, and future of the Warwick Advance Internship Programme (WAIP), an employability programme for undergraduate WP students. As the 2023-2024 year was the first time WAIP has both completed a full academic cycle and received student feedback, this is an opportune time to share current perceptions of the programme and how the feedback will shape WAIP so it can meet the needs of WP students in the future. They'll also be chance for attendees to share their own insights and ideas about possible changes that would benefit WAIP.

Insight Talk 2: Thriving at Warwick: a Warwick Scholar's perspective of the Thrive personal development programme

Thrive™ is an award-winning personal development programme designed at Warwick, co-created with students, to help support and grow their confidence, resilience and agency. Thrive was primarily designed for female students, but has expanded this year to support Warwick Scholars of all genders. Thrive is an interactive in-person programme, where students can hear from inspirational speakers who bring the various topics to life, through sharing their experiences and how they have overcome challenges. Through Thrive, students can connect with other like-minded students and start to build a community of support. We will discuss impact so far, and plans for the future. Student ambassadors will also share their own personal experience of attending the Thrive programme.

Insight Talk 3: Experience Warwick Pre-entry Programme and Partnerships with Schools

Following the introduction of Experience Warwick at last year's conference, we are excited to provide an update on its launch and ongoing evolution. This session will outline the key milestones achieved since the programme's relaunch. We will share how the programme has developed over the past year, highlighting new initiatives, refined processes, and enhanced collaborations. We will also focus on the challenges and successes of building and maintaining relationships with schools to ensure the programme's long-term sustainability and impact.

Insight Talk 4: Future Now: Widening Access; Dual Professionals and Degree Apprentices

Degree Apprentices are unique learners. They develop a dual professionalism during their journey at Warwick. They bring insights from the contemporary workplace, informing relevant learning opportunities. This is demonstrated significantly in the progress they make, despite varied experiences and backgrounds. Degree Apprentices come with a vast set of practices, and at Warwick we ensure we utilise this in assessment; the learning environment and beyond.

Insight Talk 5: Widening Participation in Philosophy: Introducing the WiPhi Network

The Department of Philosophy recently introduced a Widening Participation in Philosophy (WiPhi) Network. The network connects students from WP backgrounds with their peers and groups them together for priority access to activities and opportunities designed to support academic success, well-being, social inclusion, and personal and professional development. This session will explain the origins of the network and details of a professional development opportunity involving a field trip to Microsoft London to visit an alumnus. It includes student testimony about the impact of this activity.

Insight Talk 6: Student Success Powered by Alumni

Philanthropy has long been a cornerstone of Widening Participation at the University of Warwick. The Development and Alumni Engagement team is currently crafting a new narrative to inspire even greater levels of donations and volunteering from alumni and supporters. This narrative aligns with the Education and Student Experience Strategy, which takes a holistic approach to ensuring every student can thrive at Warwick. This presentation will showcase how the team engages alumni, supporters, and friends to give time and money to Student Success. It will also demonstrate the transformative impact of alumni support on Warwick's Widening Participation programme.

Insight Talk 7: The highs and lows of sustained engagement at Pre-16

This insight talk will share some reflections on 10+ years of delivering the UniTracks Programme. We will explore the challenges and successes that have occurred during that time, looking at how the programme has evolved and changed in response to changing priorities within Widening Participation, and looking ahead to the future.

Insight Talk 8: Developing presentation resilience?

Some students feel too anxious to engage in a student presentation and opt out. This was Elliot's experience. It later transpires that they missed out on the opportunity to develop important skills for life and future employment. In order to widen participation, we propose this year to trial an alternative approach with mathematics students based on the mathematical resilience toolkit developed by Sue and colleagues. In the session we will explain the background to the issue and the proposed approach.

Insight Talk 9: Go Abroad! International Experiences for All!

Discover how Student Mobility are working to enable all students, irrelevant of background, to engage in an international experience during their time at Warwick. This includes activities arranged by Warwick, such as exploring the short-term programme offering to include international study, work and volunteering opportunities, as well as maximising the use of government Turing Scheme funding which can provide significant financial support towards self-sought opportunities. For WP students, shorter international experiences are ideal as they offer the benefit of an international experience at a reduced cost and time commitment. This session will be co-lead with members of staff from the Student Mobility team and WP students who have engaged with international experiences through Warwick.

Insight Talk 10: Life is Beautiful and You Do Have Time: A WP Journey Abroad and Beyond

Drawing on experiences from my first two years engaging with Widening Participation (WP) events, this session narrates the transformative impact of WP initiatives, including my year abroad in Hong Kong. Through personal reflections on faith, community, and self-perception, I explore how WP shapes students' journeys and broadens their horizons. I will also introduce the WP Exchange Forum: a collaborative platform where final-year and postgraduate students share advice and insights for new WP participants. This innovative idea fosters an enduring exchange of wisdom and questions, ensuring WP knowledge continues to empower and inspire future students.

Spotlight Session: The Power of Connections

From the perspective of a Widening Participation (WP) student, now Warwick staff, 'The Power of Connections' will take you through the reality of what it can be like navigating the higher education system and how connections can be the difference between dropping out and going on to further study and employment.

This session will develop your understanding of what WIHEA* is, the opportunities available for students and staff, including introducing you to Warwick's Building Belonging Framework. Throughout the session you will have the opportunity to share and reflect on the day, and consider... How might we enhance belonging across contexts?