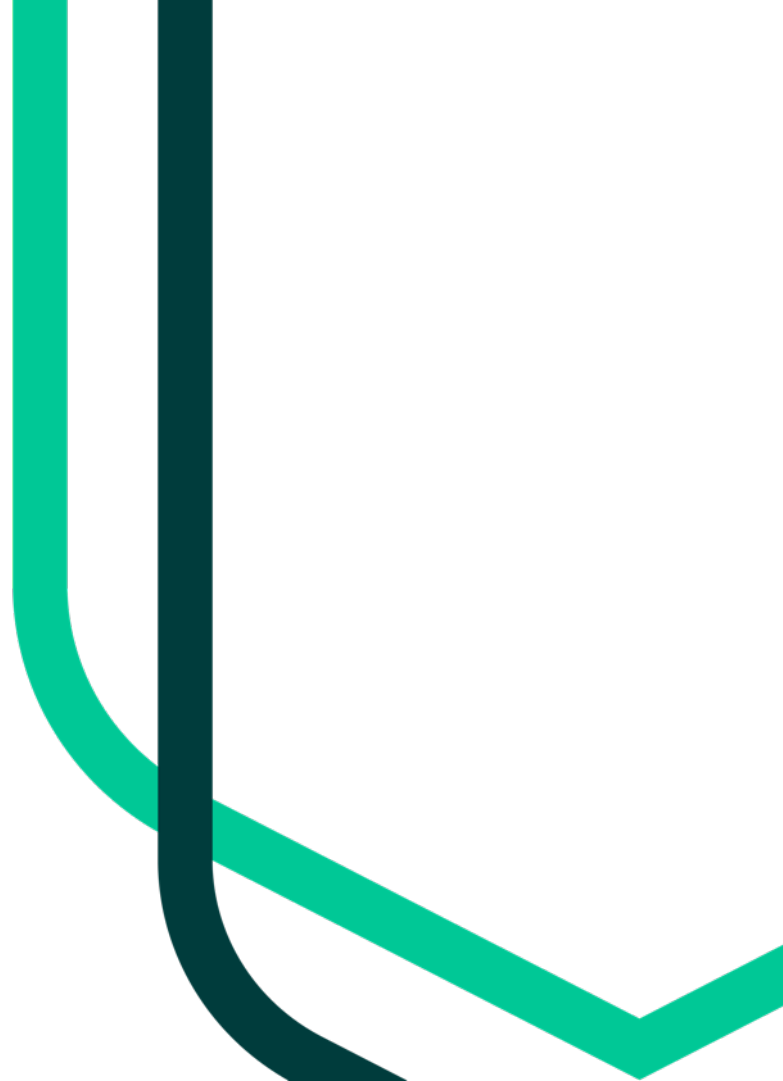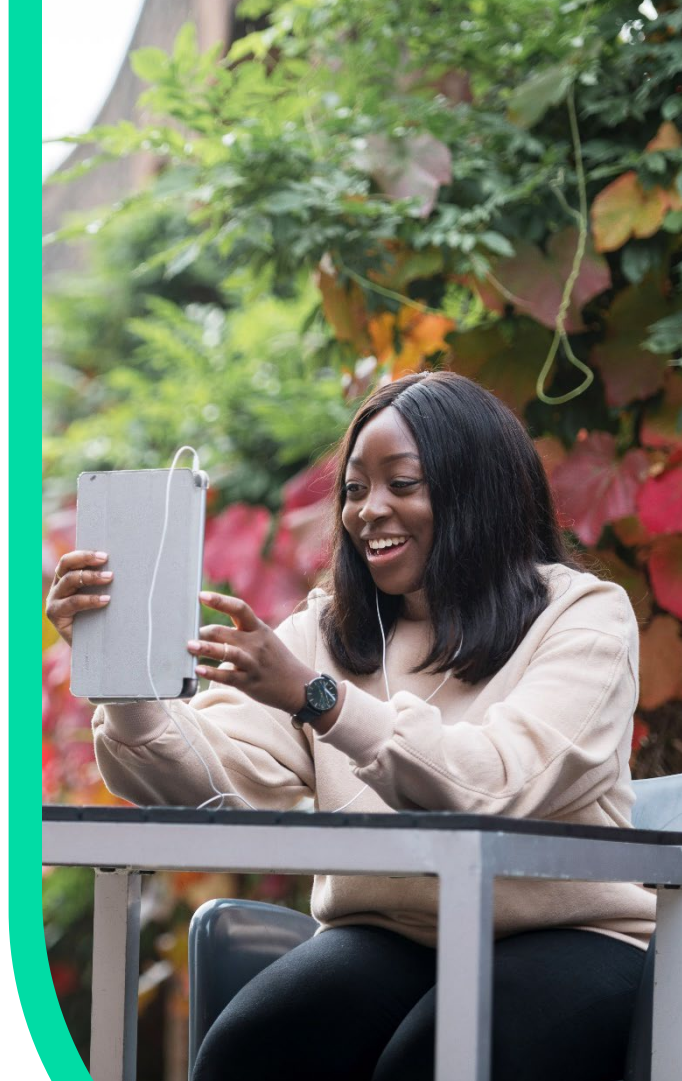# Widening Participation in Medicine and the Allied Healthcare Professions

Caspian Robson, Widening Participation Admissions Officer

WP and Universities:

- 'Widening Participation' (or 'WP') is a catch-all term, and can refer to initiatives, policies and actions across multiple teams, departments and aspects of university life.

- In terms of access to university, WP refers to specific characteristics that a group or individual may display.

- Target demographics and characteristics are determined by broader guidance, specification or demand from government and other external bodies.

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Identifying WP Students:

There are a variety of characteristics used in Higher Education to determine widening participation eligibility.

All universities choose slightly different ways to display their widening participation policies and criteria. These may include:

- Access and Participation Plans

- Contextual Offer Policy

- Eligibility Checker Tools

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Qualifying criteria for Widening Participation classification may include:

- Living in a Low Participation Neighbourhood (POLAR or TUNDRA assessed)
- Living in an area of high deprivation (IMD assessed)
- Care leaver / care experien status
- Asylum seeker or refugee sta
- Disability or additional learni need
- Caring or parenting responsibilities
- 'First generation' applicant
- Armed Forces Service child current member
- Mature student status (over applying to first UG degree)

Support for WP Students:

All universities are unique, and develop their own strategies to support access, progression and success to their specific institution.

Processes, policies and even characteristics of 'WP' can change year on year, in response to government, university or external body guidance or policy.

Support for students who are categorised as WP can include:

- Contextual offers for course application
- Bursaries and scholarships
- Support with accessing Wellbeing and/or disability services, if needed
- Social groups or specialist pastoral support
- Induction support
- Resource and support signposting (internal and third party)

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Key Contacts:

Useful information on supporting applications from WP‑qualifying students can be found in many places, but some of the most concise, trustworthy, and helpful, are:

- the UCAS website; useful for 'broad stroke' and general information, as well as Toolkits for advisors to help students with specific needs
- the webpages of universities; this is best for working out what is on offer at specific institutions, so students can make informed choices

Thank you!

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