

Course Outline - 2024

This course is for colleagues involved in leading or undertaking evaluation of access and participation initiatives in higher education. The course combines continuing professional development for evaluators with an institutional Peer Review process designed to benefit institutional strategies, approaches and methods for access and participation evaluation.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Working with a small group of colleagues from other higher education providers to support collaborative learning, reflexive practices and Peer Review, the course includes: an initial, full day, in-person workshop in London; four online sessions; a two-day residential in Bath; and conducting and receiving a Peer Review with each participant completing the course with a Peer Review of their own institution's practice, including a strategy for improvement.

The sessions will be based on collaborative reflection and include a combination of presentations, group discussions, group tasks, seminars, individual activities, readings and also pair work designed to support the process of undertaking a Peer Review. There will be a focus on developing reflexivity and criticality in professional practice. As part of the peer learning process participants will be expected to share examples of their institution's evaluation strategies, approaches and methods. Communications and access to resources will be supported through the Moodle platform.

Preparation for the sessions will include activities such as: information gathering, reading a key document or preparing a short presentation. Assessment will be based on submission of the templates underpinning the Peer Review process, made at different points throughout the course. The aim is to support the process of receiving and conducting a Peer Review along with building capacity to disseminate the findings of the Peer Review effectively.

Session 1: IN PERSON Residential

Widening participation & equity issues in higher education

This first session begins with introductions and a consideration of the benefits and challenges of the Peer Review process. We will then go on to explore key issues in equity and widening participation in the higher education sector focussing particularly on the context of change and challenge within our organisations introducing the Organisational Context Template 1 which is a key element of the Peer Review process.

Approaches to Research & Evaluation

In this session we explore the differences between research and evaluation, briefly considering major research paradigms, including issues of objectivity, subjectivity and validity and how these relate to evaluation approaches for widening participation and equity initiatives.

Evaluation Design & Planning

This session will emphasise the importance of selecting appropriate and effective approaches for evaluation design and planning including evaluation frameworks and theories of change, sharing practical examples of work in progress.

Session 2: ONLINE Evaluation Design & Planning continued

This session will focus on definitions of aims, activities, measures and evaluation indicators, evaluation methodologies and analytical strategies including tools for different methodological approaches, the practical

and ethical considerations and principles and standards in evidence and impact. We will also introduce Template 2 Part 2: Methods and Outputs.

Session 3: ONLINE Evaluation Methods

This session will focus on evaluation methodologies and analytical strategies including tools for different methodological approaches, the practical and ethical considerations and principles and standards in evidence and impact.

Session 4: IN PERSON

This in-person session will further explore evaluation challenges and solutions providing participants with the opportunity to share and discuss ongoing evaluations and consider their effectiveness in different contexts. The process of undertaking a Peer Review with a partner will also take place at this session.

Session 5: PAIR WORK Peer Review

Peer Review partners will work together to review the information critically and holistically, identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and make suggestions/ recommendations for evaluation strengthening. Pairs will be expected to work collaboratively to agree findings and prepare a Peer Review report

Session 6: ONLINE follow ups

Online sessions will be offered to support the Peer Review process.

Session 7: IN PERSON Dissemination

This session will enable participants to share and explore a variety of dissemination approaches for different audiences and will be the final assignment of the course.

Applicants and fees

The course is designed for those with at least two years of relevant experience in evaluation in higher education.

The cost for 2024 is £1,500 per person with a reduction to £975 for NERUPI and QAA members. This includes two nights accommodation in student halls of residence in central Bath during the residential and meals and refreshments at in person sessions.

The course was developed by NERUPI, The Network for Researching and Evaluating University Participation Interventions www.nerupi.co.uk, based at the University of Bath. With over 80 member organisations NERUPI is a well-established organisation with extensive experience of evaluation.