

Introducing the Peer Evaluation course for access & participation

Improving Higher Education Access, Participation & Progression



Genuinely one of the best workshops I've attended... I learnt a lot from every activity

[Pilot Course Participant 2023]

- The course was developed by **NERUPI** (*Network for Researching and Evaluating University Participation Interventions*)
- Based at the University of Bath
- Over 60 member organisations and growing
- A well-established organisation
- Extensive experience of evaluation.

Peer Evaluation Context



Evaluation for widening access & participation

- Accountability for equity focused investment (APPs)
- Learning from practices that work to ensure equal opportunities
- External and internal transparency
- Effective, efficient and rigorous evaluations

Internal systems of Quality Assurance

Peer Review

External systems of Quality Assurance

Peer Evaluation Context

Benefits of Peer Review

- External feedback and objectivity
- Recommendations for evaluation strengthening
- Collaborative learning from colleagues with similar challenges and expertise
- Building evaluation capability through staff continuing professional development (CPD)



...enabled me to become aware of a range of different perspectives, which was helpful for my learning

...provided many opportunities for knowledge exchange and mutual learning which have and will continue to influence my practices

Some examples of challenges – 2025 cohort

Need to enhance knowledge exchange & peer culture

Lack of established evaluations

"...there are misconceptions about evaluation"

Theory of change under-developed

Challenges with buy-in – procedural or on-the-ground students themselves

Accountability unclear

Poor data systems and problematic metrics

Inconsistencies/silos

Programme 2026

Combines collaborative learning in small groups with colleagues with a process of Peer Review:

- Initial, full day, in-person workshop (London, 15 April)
- Three expert sessions (online, 12 May; 3 June; 30 June)
- Two-day residential experience in (Bath, 17-9 July)
- Bespoke online session
- Conducting and receiving a Peer Review (July-Sept)
- In-person workshop (London, November (tbc))



Participant Perspectives



Julie Vuolo

Deputy Head of Widening
Access & Student Success
University of Hertfordshire



James Rew

Group HE Access and
Participation Research and
Evaluation Manager, Luminate

Learning & Teaching

Designed to support busy professionals



- Presentations, group discussions, group tasks, seminars, individual activities, readings and pair work
- Emphasis on collaborative reflection and individual reflexivity
- Preparation activities such as information gathering, reading a key document

- Supported by a carefully designed curriculum, resources and expert team
- Communication and access to resources through University of Bath Moodle



- Phased submission of templates, to support the Peer Review process
- Assessment based on:
 - evidence of engagement with the materials,
 - depth of understanding,
 - creative thinking
- Feedback for development and building capacity to disseminate findings effectively
- Supported by a carefully designed curriculum, resources and expert team
- Access to resources through Moodle

Principles



- **Co-creation**
- **Active engagement**
- **Willingness to share**
- **Supportive rather than judgemental**
- **Openness to different perspectives & ideas**
- **Improvement focused**

Organisations

- A Peer Review of evaluation strategy, delivery and capacity to meet regulatory requirements
- Suggestions for greater efficiency and effectiveness in evaluation
- Opportunities for participation in collaborative evaluation projects
- CPD for members of staff involved in evaluation

Individuals

- Understand evaluation theories
- Improve practice in all aspects of evaluation
- Experience collaborative working
- Capacity to demonstrate impact & disseminate findings
- Understand equity issues
- Reflexivity & criticality in own practice

Types of evaluation strengthening

- Methodological opportunities and alternative approaches
- Enhancing ToCs with causal chains
- Strategies for comparative analysis
- Improvements to governance & use of evaluation
- Consolidation of evaluation materials/ supports



Criteria:

- At least two years of relevant experience in evaluation in higher education

Cost:

- Standard fee £1,500 pp*
- NERUPI & QAA members - £995 pp*

* Includes two nights accommodation in student halls of residence in Bath during the residential, meals and refreshments at in person sessions.



THANK YOU

Peer Review Course information and sign-up

<https://www.nerupi.co.uk/events/peer-evaluation-course>