



## Developing gender action plans: April 2017

In the guidance for Outcome Agreements for Academic Year 2017-18, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) set out that all Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) institutions are to develop institutional gender action plans (GAPs). This briefing has been designed to help support institutions as they do this.

In the first round of institutional GAPs we expect institutions to have explored their institutional and regional data to understand where their gender imbalances lie and to set out:

- Actions across the five themes of Infrastructure; Influencing the Influencers; Raising awareness and aspiration; Encouraging applications; and Supporting Success.
- How they are working with partners, both regional (e.g. schools and other FE / HE institutions) and national (e.g. equality specialists).
- Who is responsible for implementing the actions within the GAP.
- How the institution will seek to build capacity across the institution to implement the GAP.
- How progress will be monitored.

The action plans should impact on policy and practice already in place across an institution, as well as outline how additional policy and / or practice will be developed to ensure the required step-change in efforts to tackle gender imbalances. Ideally these plans should build on the gender outcomes already expressed in your Outcome Agreements i.e. it should outline how you intend to achieve your ambitions. If you have not expressed a set of gender based outcomes in your outcome agreement then your GAP should start with that and then outline how you intend to achieve them.

We expect all GAPs to be signed off by the Principal and to be published on your institution's website. We expect all institutions to discuss and share their evolving Gender Action Plan with their Outcome Agreement Managers prior to finalisation. We ask all institutions to send the web link to their plan to their Outcome Agreement Manager, copying in [radamson@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:radamson@sfc.ac.uk), by **noon on Monday 3 July 2017**.

The following advice is based on the work of the European Institute for Gender Equality, Equate Scotland and the Higher Education Academy Scotland<sup>1</sup>. It is offered to support institutions in thinking about how they develop their plans and what conversations might need to take place. It is not prescriptive guidance.

### **Which subjects have an imbalance of male and / or female students of more than 75% one gender?**

- Are the subjects within the focus of the GAP? If not, discuss with your Outcome Agreement Manager.
- Is it realistic to focus on all subjects with severe gender imbalances? If not, which are your priorities in the short term?
- Do you have subjects in which retention and / or completion and success levels differ by gender?

### **What are you going to do about the imbalances?**

#### ***Leadership***

- Who are the key managers responsible for driving change? How will they drive change and what training and support will they need?
- Are the right people and perspectives, including external partners, involved in developing and then implementing the action plan? How will you ensure continuity in GAP delivery?

#### ***Policy***

- How will your GAP be embedded within other strategic work / policy? How will it impact on other strategies and vice versa?
- What infrastructure<sup>2</sup> is required to develop and / or implement the GAP? What internal and external networks does this involve?

#### ***Action***

- How will the objectives of your GAP impact on the regular functioning of your institution?
- What will you do to build capacity throughout your institution to ensure this is an organisation wide responsibility?
- What activities (for each of the five themes) are required to bring about change?
- What gender specific activities or provision is proportionate to both your evidence and the need?

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<sup>1</sup> More information on these organisations and the documents used to shape this document is given in Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> More detail on what we mean by 'infrastructure' is given in Annex A.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

- How will you know you are making progress? Do you already collect this data or does it require additional data to be collected or analysed?
- How will you review, modify and update the plan as you monitor what is and what is not working?

### ***Violence against women, career progression for staff and Board membership***

Whilst SFC's current focus is on student gender imbalances, some institutions may wish to consider how their actions to address these imbalances will align with broader work they are involved in to tackle obstacles for career progression for women staff, prevent violence against women and improve Board gender balance. Institutions were asked to outline their ambitions to improve career progression for women staff and Board representation for women within their outcome agreements and they may want to outline specific actions within their action plans.

**For further information** on this document or SFC's GAP, please contact Rachel Adamson, Senior Policy and Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6646; email: [radamson@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:radamson@sfc.ac.uk).

### Further issues to consider and additional information

The questions above have been developed as a **key set of questions** to steer institutions. Some institutions may also wish to consider the following and they are questions we would expect all institutions to be considering in future.

#### *Leadership*

- What is the business case / benefits for your institution? How can you frame gender equality actions to address the specific institutional priorities and key challenges for your institution? Clarity on this will help secure buy-in throughout the institution and with key partners. It is our view there is both a strong economic and moral argument to tackle gendered subjects.

#### *Policy*

- What additional gender-specific strategic steps are required?
- What *changes* to infrastructure might be required?
  - We are taking the term infrastructure from the HEA research which SFC commissioned which identified four aspects of infrastructure supporting or leading to the tackling of gender participation imbalances: the infrastructure of policies and processes (systems), the infrastructure relating to staff development (human), the infrastructure relating to resource support (resources), and the infrastructure relating to the development of techniques of relation (relationships). More information on each of these elements can be found on pages 21-27 of HEA's report ['Whose job is it anyway?'](#)

#### *Action*

- How will you involve students in the development and implementation of the GAP?
- How can your action plan work with, as well as go beyond, Athena Swan or other gender focused initiatives by the institution?

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

- How will you monitor the impact of your activities?
- Is what you're planning going to deliver the change in outcomes required by SFC's GAP?

### ***Work underpinning this guidance and further sources of information for institutions***

The [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. The specific work which has been used in developing this briefing is the [Gender Equality in Academia and Research toolbox](#) and the [Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science Guidelines](#). Both of these are suggested as further sources of information for institutions whilst recognising their focus on academia and science.

Equate Scotland is Scotland's expert in gender equality throughout science, technology, engineering and the built environment. The specific work which was used in developing this briefing was the overview of support [Equate](#) can offer institutions in developing their GAPs.

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) provides a central source of expertise, research, advice and leadership regarding equality and diversity for universities and colleges. They have a range of resources that might be of use to institutions in developing institutional action plans. In particular, it might be helpful to consider their [guidance on mainstreaming equality](#).

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) is the national body which champions teaching excellence. HEA's report '[Whose job is it anyway?](#)' was commissioned by SFC to underpin the development of the Gender Action Plan. **The logic framework on the final page of this document is taken from the report.** It suggests five medium term outcomes required to impact on gender imbalances as well as short term outcomes, outputs, activities, resources and inputs institutions might like to consider in developing their plans. For assumptions underpinning the framework, please see page 68 of the report.

<b>Impact</b>	Reduction of gender participation imbalances in post-16 education				
<b>Medium-term outcomes</b>	<i>Application change</i> with increased applications to subjects from specific genders	<i>Attitudinal change</i> to subjects and institutions regarding specific genders	<i>Success change</i> with gender balance of retention and attainment	<i>Institutional change</i> in policies, practices and processes to attract and retain gender balance	<i>Societal change</i> through exiting graduates tackling gender imbalances and entering imbalanced professions
<b>Short-term outcomes</b>	<b>Access</b> Raise aspirations to study Inform student choice Inform parents', teachers', employers' and institutions' understanding	<b>Transition</b> Enhance student preparedness and manage student expectations Raise expectations of and by students	<b>Awareness</b> Raise awareness of gender inequality amongst students, staff, and wider public	<b>Satisfaction</b> Nurture student belonging Promote student engagement Enhance student satisfaction	<b>Graduation</b> Increase aspirations and ability to enter professions Increase gender competence of students and staff
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Externally focused</b> Gender-balanced participation in outreach interventions Marketing and recruitment activities and processes that embed gender balance IAG that addresses gender-balanced expectations and preparedness for study		<b>Internally focused</b> Co-curricular and student support activities that encourage gender-balance in relation to subjects Learning and teaching environments that encourage gender-balanced engagement, participation and belonging Learning and teaching pedagogy and curricula that embed gender equality		
<b>Activities</b>	Evidence-based approaches aimed either externally (information, advice and guidance; marketing and recruitment; outreach) or internally (student support; co-curricular activities; learning and teaching environment; learning and teaching practices).				
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Human</b> Cross-institutional teams with the capacity, ability and desire to create change	<b>Finance</b> Longitudinal funding that can support the effective planning, delivery and evaluation of approaches	<b>Knowledge</b> Comprehensive subject, institutional, regional and sector qualitative and quantitative data on which to base approaches	<b>Infrastructure</b> Efficient and effective systems and physical infrastructure for the design, delivery and evaluation of approaches	
<b>Inputs</b>	CPD and training Recognition and reward Recruitment and promotion Networks / collaborations / relationships	Sector funding Institutional funding Collaborative funding	Research Sharing of best practice	Leadership Vision, mission and values Policies and strategies Data systems Monitoring and evaluation processes	

