

Progress on Gender Outcomes in Final Outcome Agreements 2019-20

Purpose

1. This paper outlines how well institutions are responding to the gender requirements in the 2019-22 Outcome Agreement guidance.

Background

2. The OA guidance for this outcome agreement period included a much stronger section on gender than in previous years due to specific asks of the SFC in the Ministerial Letter of Guidance.
3. Institutions are expected provide a web link to their published Institutional Gender Action Plans in their Outcome Agreements. iGAPS developed to cover 2 years or more are expected to be reviewed and updated; for those institutions that produced one year iGAPs, SFC expect a new iGAP to have been published.
4. The 2019-22 OA guidance also requires institutions to:
 - Outline the institution's key ambitions to tackle gender imbalances at a subject level, with defined outcomes and targets.
 - Set outcomes to improve the under-representation of men in the university sector.
 - Consider success rates and retention by subject by gender.
 - Indicate how they are working towards improving gender balance and wider diversity on their Courts or Boards and a commitment to a 50/50 gender split.
 - Outline commitments to equal gender representation in senior, academic and research staff.
 - Outline their policy and provision for supporting and enhancing equality for staff, students and applicants who are trans or gender diverse.
5. The final Outcome Agreements (OA's) for 2019-20 were received by SFC in late April 2019.

Overview of Gender in 2019-20 Final Outcome Agreements

Universities

6. All but one University had fulfilled the guidance requirement to provide a link to their iGAPS within their OA.
7. 39% of universities noted that their GAP's were under review, with the updated versions due to be published in July 2019, and 22% provided links to GAP's updated and published in 2018 or 2019. However, 39% referred to their 2017 GAPs and did not provide further information about their plans being reviewed or updated.
8. 88% of the OA's highlighted subject areas with a greater than 25/75% split, although there was limited discussion over wider commitments to or evidence of continuing to address this imbalance within institutions. Only 5 institutions provided updated figures within their OA to show how they are progressing towards achieving greater balance in their subjects identified within their iGAPs.
9. However, the University of Strathclyde provided a comprehensive update in their OA, which includes identifying current high priority subjects and any changes in the gender balance for subjects listed as high priority in their 2017 iGAP. They also identify the most successful gender-based outreach programmes for wider rollout as applicable, such as Civil & Environmental Engineering's BP/BAM Nuttall 'Engineering the Future for Girls' Summer School. Edinburgh Napier have also expanded this section of their OA to outline how they are focusing on strengthening their infrastructure to support their GAP, and have created a Gender Equality Steering Group that reports to the Inclusion Committee for staff and students.
10. The guidance for the universities also requires them to address the underrepresentation of male students in the sector. 57% of universities provide the gender split for undergraduate students in their institutions within their OA's; however, 72% of these do not provide any further information or updates about how they have or intend to address this imbalance, or how they will continue to maintain an existing balance. 2 Universities demonstrate that they have an imbalance in favour of male students.
11. However, Glasgow Caledonian have updated their GAP in 2019 to include targets for representation and retention for male undergraduate students, and Queen Margaret University also outline that, although female undergraduates make up a more significant majority (71.5% of SDUE in 2018/9) in their institution, they have made progress in this area, with the percentage of male

entrants standing at 28.5%, and male students having increased over the period of this agreement from 21.5% to 23.1%.

12. Furthermore, the targets outlined by the university sector to tackle male under-representation suggest they are committing to improvements in the intake and retention of men, just not outlining details on how that will be achieved.
13. The OA's indicate limited progress towards the commitment to address retention rates by gender within the university sector, with only 4 universities referring to this within their OA's. 2 of these universities that have undertaken analysis of retention by gender highlight that the small numbers of students involved at the programme level make analysis of retention rates difficult and inconsistent, and therefore it is challenging to draw meaningful conclusions.
14. Strathclyde's Outcome Agreement discuss their findings from a recent analysis of retention by gender and by subject, and outlines that further work is being undertaken to better understand the reasons for varying retention rates by subject, by gender, and for other protected characteristics. SMO also outline that they recognise that there is a gender imbalance in that males are under-represented in the majority of their programmes, and so they are working with SDS to develop ways to encourage males into Gaelic programmes.
15. The majority of OA's (68%) provided details of the current gender balance of their boards and courts within their OA's. 50% of these demonstrated that had an existing 50/50 gender split or a gender balance in favour of women as of 2019, with the remainder committing to achieving this.
16. RGU and Aberdeen University outline their actions to achieve this equal balance, including the regular review and revision of recruitment and advertising procedures and the use of unconscious bias training. SRUC also discuss that recent interviews for new nonexecutive director have featured an all-female candidate list and that they will, where appropriate, seek to maintain this until a 50:50 ratio is achieved. Beyond this, institutions provided few details of how will achieve or maintain gender balance in their governance.
17. 89% of university OA's contained sections on addressing gender imbalance in staff at a senior and academic level, although few included substantive progress reports with new actions for this OA period. 64% of these discuss staff gender balance in terms of their existing Athena SWAN commitments.
18. 63% of the University OA's responded to the new guidance around policy and provision for trans and gender diverse people. Substantive progress was evident in certain universities; for example, the OU includes a link to their Gender Identity Policy and Guidance in their final OA, and UWS includes a very robust section in their OA on support for trans students, including details of a

partnership between UWS, SAUWS, and the DEAR Alliance, and work with TransEdu.

Colleges

19. 85% of colleges provided a link to their iGAP within their 2019-20 OA. 50% of college OA's noted that their GAP's were under review and would be updated in summer 2019. 16% did not discuss reviewing their GAP's, and the remainder had updated their plans in 2018.
20. All but one of the colleges discussed gender imbalance at the subject level within their OA's, and, overall, these sections were slightly more developed than in the university OA's. Dundee and Angus provide a good update, outlining changes in enrolments in the most imbalanced programmes over the past year, including an increase in female enrolments in Construction from 5.4% to 13.8%, and an increase in male enrolments in Retail and Events from 9.1% to 15.2%. The college has also adopted a contextualised recruitment arrangement for 2019/20 to increase conversion rates for applicants in curriculum areas where a gender imbalance is evident. West College Scotland and Ayrshire College also outline their key actions and ambitions well.
21. 54% of college OA's include details of progress towards improving the underrepresentation of male students, even though this is not specified as a requirement in the OA guidance for the college sector. West Lothian College highlights this as a priority for the next 3 years, particularly at the FE level, and that their strategic review of the curriculum and Gender Action Plan will take this into account.
22. Only 30% of college OA's discussed success rates by gender. West College Scotland highlights that there has been an increase in the attainment gap in FE courses, where male students have a higher attainment rate than female students, but, conversely, female students enrolled in HE courses have an attainment rate which is 7.5% higher than male students.
23. The majority (85%) of college OA's contain updates on the gender balance of their governing boards. 45% of these report an existing 50/50 balance and a commitment to maintain this- although few further details of how this is being maintained are provided.
24. The remainder commit to achieving this balance by 2022, but again with few further details; although West College Scotland discuss that they will continue to ensure that staff undertake unconscious bias training, and the Board of Governors is working with Changing the Chemistry to make progress on achieving the government's 50/50 ambition for gender balance on boards.

25. There is less focus on the gender balance of senior staff in the college OA's than universities, with only 38% referencing this. This disparity may be due to existing Athena SWAN commitments within the university sector. Edinburgh College and Dundee and Angus College outline clear actions for improving their gender pay gaps, including publishing a Gender Pay Analysis and Action Plan.
26. Only 46% of the college OA's included a response to the new guidance around support provision for transgender students- a noticeably lower proportion than in the university sector. However, the colleges that had included this had robust responses with full policies in place.
27. For example, Ayrshire College aims to be sector-leading in its approach to promote the full inclusion and visibility of trans and gender diverse people. The College is fully engaged with the TransEDU Community of Practice (CoP), and their Equality and Inclusion Advisor is currently the Chair of the TransEDU CoP.

Summary of Gender Outcomes in 2019-20 Outcome Agreements

28. Overall, gender reporting has improved in the 2019-20 OAs, with all of the institutions including well developed sections in their OA's. However, gaps remain in these commitments and reporting.
29. Imbalance in retention and representation of male students remains an area that requires greater focus, although the 2019-20 OA's do show evidence of improvement.
30. The new requirement in the 2019-22 guidance to support inclusion for trans and gender-diverse students has shown positive progress, but a greater response to this is required, particularly in the college sector.
31. The overall lack of consistent development of new actions and targets to address gender imbalance, at both a subject and institutional level, suggests that momentum towards achieving the aims of the GAP needs to be increased and maintained. It is important that gender outcomes and the GAP remain a priority in the sector.

Recommendations

32. The group is invited to note the paper and raise any questions accordingly.

Further Information

33. Contact: Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer or Rachel Adamson, Senior Policy/Analysis Officer, eroberts@sfc.ac.uk or radamson@sfc.ac.uk