



SFC Corporate publication

Gender Action Plan

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Summary: The recommendations of *Developing the Young Workforce: Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy* committed SFC to work to address gender imbalances at the subject level within College regions through the development of a Gender Action Plan. Due to the nature of the issues involved we have extended the plan to cover universities as well, including the under-representation of male students at university. This report outlines the actions we will undertake in collaboration with colleges, universities and other partners to address gender imbalances.

FAO: Principals and directors of Scotland's colleges and universities

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Foreword by Professor Alice Brown, SFC Chair

I am pleased to present the Scottish Funding Council's Gender Action Plan. Our plans remain as ambitious as those we outlined in our interim report, published earlier in the year. Since its publication, Scottish Colleges and Universities have used their Outcome Agreements for Academic Year 2016-17 to outline how they will tackle gender imbalances. These agreements highlighted some of the great work that is happening across the sector to tackle gender inequality.

From this, it is clear that there is a strong commitment in the sectors to making progress, but we will have to work together on agreed actions if we are to make the step change that is required. With greater focus, co-ordination and partnership working across the whole education system in Scotland, we are confident that this is possible.

In December 2014, the Scottish Government published *Developing the Young Workforce - Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy*, a seven-year programme that aims to better prepare children and young people from the ages of 3–18 for the world of work. The headline objective is to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021. A key component in the strategy is to develop the talents of all young people. It implements the recommendations of the *Commission for Developing the Young Workforce* and builds on the foundations already in place as part of Curriculum for Excellence.

Within the strategy the Scottish Government committed SFC to develop a Gender Action Plan to address gender imbalances at a subject level within colleges, in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and other partners. This plan builds on these expectations and brings together our ambitions for both colleges and universities.

This plan is the result of wide ranging research and stakeholder engagement and I would like to take this opportunity to extend my personal thanks and record my appreciation to all those involved. Throughout the development of the plan, SFC has been encouraged by the positive response and aspirations of colleges and universities. They have, however, stressed that a lot needs to happen to influence subject choice when young people are at school.

Working in partnership with Skills Development Scotland and Education Scotland, SFC will encourage greater collaboration between our institutions and schools, with a

focus on tackling gender imbalances at all stages of the learner journey. We will also encourage innovative new ways of working.

SFC looks forward to working in closer partnership with all relevant organisations across Scotland, in order to achieve significant and sustainable change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Aileen Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a period at the end.

Introduction

In February, we published our interim report on this Gender Action Plan (GAP). In it we set out our ambition that by 2030 the proportion of male students studying at undergraduate level at university will be at least 47.5% (or to put it another way, the gap between male and female participation will be reduced to 5%) and that no college or university subject will have a gender imbalance of greater than 75% of one gender. This vision remains unchanged within this, the final action plan. The interim plan also outlined the case for having an action plan, encouraged innovative ways of working and emphasised partnership across the education system as key to realising our vision. This too remains unchanged but we have refined the actions from those within the interim plan to respond to stakeholder feedback and they focus on outreach, recruitment, enrolment, retention and success. This has resulted in a shorter, action-focused document.

This Gender Action Plan is a vital part of how SFC will support Scotland's institutions to become more accessible and diverse. Last year we outlined how we would work with the sectors towards our equality and diversity ambitions for Scottish Higher and Further Education (HE and FE) in our [Mainstreaming Report](#) and [Equality Outcomes](#) (as required under the Scottish specific duties of the Equality Act 2010). We will continue to ensure the actions outlined in this plan align with our wider aspirations for institutions in terms of all protected characteristics as well as socio-economic background and care experience.

As highlighted in the Chair's foreword, the work outlined in the Outcome Agreements is a great start but for the most part it is insufficiently integrated into broader institutional processes and structures. We know, and the sectors have told us throughout the development of this plan, that without a joined-up approach across early years, education and employment we will not make the progress that is required. This plan therefore sets out how we are asking institutions to consider their infrastructure, policies, processes and activities to determine the role they can play in tackling gender imbalances.

This is a substantial undertaking requiring significant focus and activity in the short, medium and long term across institutions. It requires action within schools and early years provision before any impact on the gender balance amongst students within universities and colleges is seen. At this stage, to make any long term change requires substantial activity and focus. Once that is in place, we believe the impact will be significant and we can realise our vision.

Executive Summary

SFC's ask of institutions

Research that SFC commissioned to underpin the GAP looked at how institutions were already tackling gender imbalances across Scotland¹. It suggested a provisional framework for tackling gender imbalances based on the key underlying criteria for, and design features of, a successful and sustainable approach to tackling gender imbalances across an institution's activities (figure 1). The research mapped approaches to tackling gender imbalances across Scottish Colleges and Universities and the report outlines the different approaches in place as focusing on the following five broad themes of:

- Infrastructure.
- Influencing the influencers.
- Raising awareness and aspiration.
- Encouraging applications.
- Supporting success.

The latter theme includes retention of students and ensuring successful outcomes for all. In this plan we set out how we will work with every institution to support enhancement in each of these five areas to achieve the strategic aims as outlined in the plan and to realise our vision by 2030. We will drive this through the Outcome Agreement process and the development of institutional Gender Action Plans.

The evidence base

The research also emphasised the need to enhance the evidence base. We have already invested in further research and we will be conducting regional and subject based expert groups through to 2020. We will be developing a replacement for our annual *Learning for All* publication which reports on progress in widening access and any future iteration will include analysis on gender and its intersection with other protected characteristics as well as deprivation and care experience. We will extend such an approach within our second triennial review due by 2020. Together with our annual monitoring of the Outcome Agreement commitments from 2016, this will provide a solid evidence base.

¹ [Whose job is it anyway?](#)

Subjects of focus and milestones

One small change in this final plan from the interim plan is the dropping of maths as a subject of focus for universities². This is in response to stakeholder feedback and gives a clearer focus on our work to tackle the under-representation of female students in computer sciences.

In the technical report accompanying this plan we set out the baselines for the subject areas with severe imbalances (greater than 75% of one gender). These subject areas are:

| Colleges | Universities |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Female under-representation | |
| Construction (general) | Architecture, Building and Planning |
| Building/Construction Operations | Engineering |
| Building Services | Technologies |
| Engineering/Technology (general) | Computer Sciences |
| Mechanical Engineering | |
| Electrical Engineering | |
| IT: Comp Science/Programming/Systems | |
| Vehicle Maintenance/Repair | |
| Male under-representation | |
| Child Care Services | Social Studies |
| Hair/Personal Care Services | Nursing |
| | Training teachers |
| | Psychology |

Our milestones for each aim are as follows:

| Aim | Milestone |
|---|--|
| By 2021, increase by five percentage points the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced 'superclasses' among 16-24year olds (DYW KPI) | Increase by 4.2% by 2019-20 |
| By 2030, no subject has an extreme | 50% reduction in the number of college |

² The interim plan had 'maths and computer sciences' as a subject area of focus with an under-representation of female students. Stakeholder feedback stressed that maths should be dropped as the under-representation was within computer sciences.

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| gender imbalance (75: 25) | and university subjects in this category by 2025 |
| By 2030, the gap between male and female participation in undergraduate study is reduced from 15.4% gap to 5% | We will look to have reduced this gap to 13.6% in 2019-20 |

Our milestones, in particular the middle one, are built on the assumption that significant capacity building will be required up to 2020. Our Gender Governance Group³, which we will set up to oversee implementation of the plan, will refine these milestones and ambitions as we increase our understanding of the challenges facing institutions.

Gender equality

The subjects and milestones as outlined above are important and our vision of success specifically focuses on them. We have therefore outlined some of the specific actions that we will take to tackle imbalances within these subjects in this plan. However, to shift these imbalances will take more than actions simply focused on these subjects, it will require concerted effort across the whole education system and beyond.

We recognise that this plan is intricately linked to broader approaches to addressing gender inequality. We are also mindful of the need for institutions to integrate their responses into broader equality plans and other strategic work. We will work with partners to ensure the appropriate links are made. We do not plan to be specific about what an institution's Gender Action Plan needs to look like. It can form part of an institution's Equality Outcomes Plan or other strategic plan as long as it contains a specific gender element. Alternatively it can be a separate, stand-alone document.

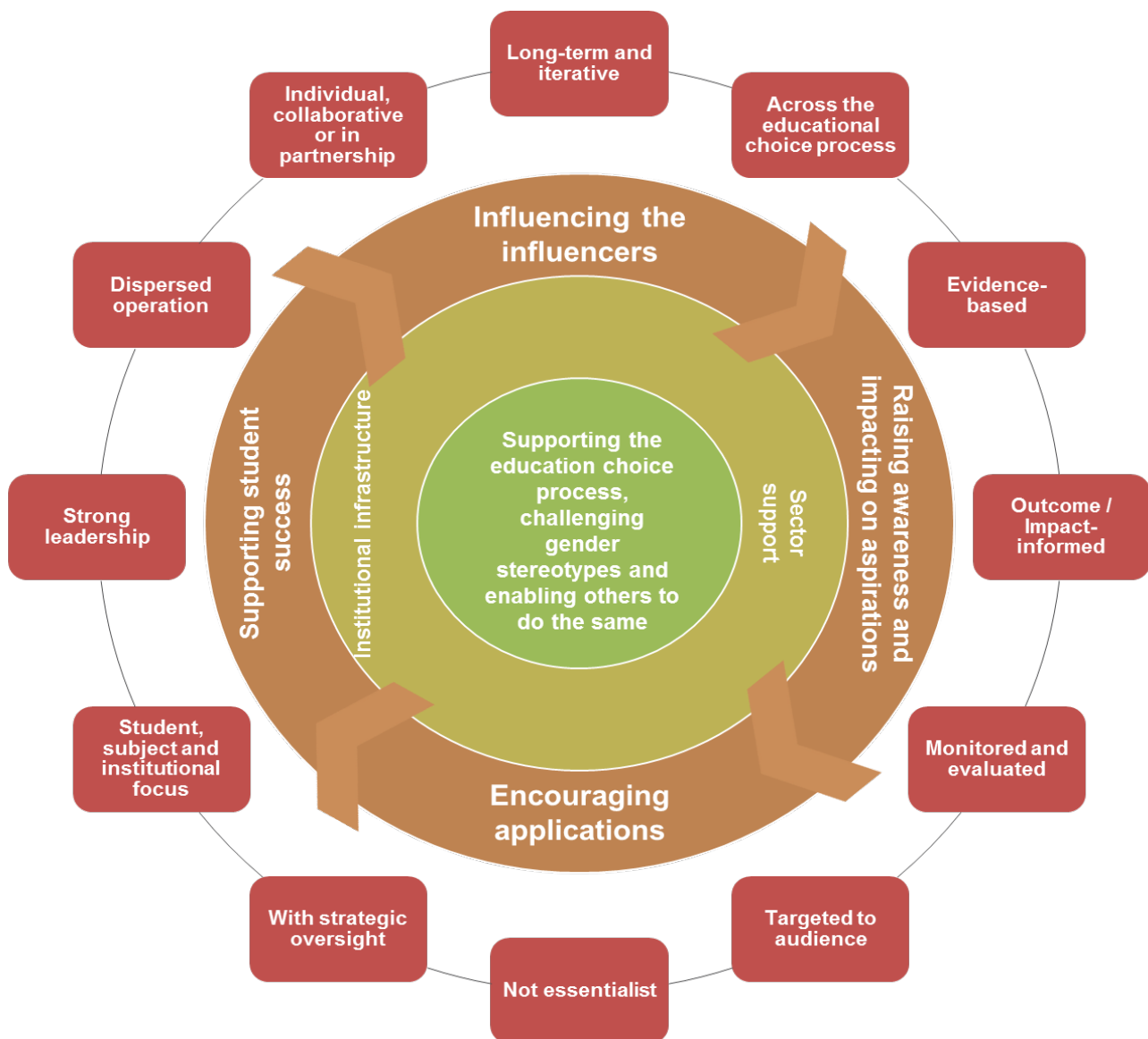
It is important to stress that SFC recognises that gender is not binary and wishes to be inclusive of all learners. Nevertheless, examining the differences in participation and success for male and female students enables the sectors to identify where there are differences, barriers and potential discrimination. Alongside its work to address gender imbalances in colleges and universities, SFC intends to focus on improving the support the sectors provide to all students, irrespective of their gender identity. This will include addressing the particular challenges faced in

³ The Gender Governance group will be made up of representatives from partner organisations including the Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, Education Scotland, National Union of Students Scotland, Equality Challenge Unit, College Development Network and representatives from both sectors.

colleges and universities by trans students. The plan sets out our initial investment in this area and how we will continue to enhance support for trans students.

We look forward to working with all our partners in innovative new ways across outreach, recruitment, enrolment, retention and success to embed consideration of equalities across all aspects of Scottish institutions and to realise our vision of no severe gender imbalances and enhanced participation by male students.

Figure 1: Five areas of influence and development priorities (taken from the 2016 Higher Education Academy report; *Whose Job is it anyway?*)



| Actions | | | |
|---|--|--|----------------|
| WHY | WHAT | WHO | WHEN |
| The strategic aim | The Action | Our key partners | By when |
| To enhance strategic oversight of tackling gender imbalances at a national, regional and institutional level | <p>We will work, through our Gender Governance Group and particularly with the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to ensure the work of colleges and universities aligns with and enhances the Government’s ask of early years’ providers, schools and employers to enable colleges and universities to work effectively with young people as early as practical (see ‘To engage with schools’).</p> <p>This will include working to integrate colleges and where appropriate universities, into the equality regional partnership pipeline plans currently being developed by SDS with the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) groups - developing a sustainable regional pipeline model of support to address gender segregation, tapping into the funds, support and experts of regional partners in a co-ordinated</p> | <p>Scottish Government, Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| | <p>approach.</p> | | |
| | <p>SFC will ask all institutions to develop their own Gender Action Plans to outline the actions they will undertake to address the aims of this plan, with a specific focus on actions to enhance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure. 2. Influencing the influencers. 3. Raising awareness and aspiration. 4. Encouraging applications. 5. Supporting success⁴. <p>We will issue guidance through the Outcome</p> | <p>Colleges and universities</p> | <p>Annually through Outcome Agreement process</p> <p>First round of GAPs expected July 2017</p> |

⁴ These themes are taken from the research of the Higher Education Academy ‘Whose Job is it Anyway?’, commissioned by SFC to underpin the Gender Action Plan. More detail on these five themes and on the areas for potential development in Scotland’s work to tackle gender imbalances is given within the executive summary, together with a link to the full report.

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| | <p>Agreement process giving more detail to support the development of institutional action plans. Institutional action plans may sit within broader plans (e.g. Equality Outcomes Plans, regional context statements) but should clearly detail the specific actions which will contribute to tackling gender imbalances across all five themes (outlined above) and lead to improved outcomes in the subjects of focus.</p> <p>Where relevant these actions should be developed in collaboration with regional partners, in particular schools, Local Authorities and DYW groups (including SDS pipeline plans as outlined above) and should consider the needs of different groups of students by gender from recruitment and enrolment through to successful completion and employment.</p> <p>In some cases a regional, rather than <i>institutional</i> action plan will be appropriate. Where this is the case, the institutions involved should first raise this with their Outcome Agreement Managers.</p> | | |
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| | <p>SFC will ask all institutions to state the outcomes they aim to achieve through their action plans within their Outcome Agreements. These should be focused on contributing to the key outcomes for this plan and the key subjects of focus.</p> <p>Building on the commitments set out in Outcome Agreements for Academic Year 2016-17 we will ensure each College outlines numerical targets for 2020 in at least three subject areas and will ask all Universities to clearly commit to specific outcomes for the subject areas of focus for this plan and the overall under-representation of male students. Colleges' Outcome Agreement commitments and Gender Action Plans will include their contribution to implementing SDS's Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships.</p> | <p>SFC Outcome Agreement Managers, senior management of each institution, SDS</p> | <p>Annually through Outcome Agreement process</p> |
| | <p>Where appropriate, we will work to align this action plan with the recommendations from the Commission on Widening Access focused on SFC and will work with the Commissioner (once appointed) to enhance alignment between their plan of work and this plan.</p> | <p>SFC</p> | <p>Summer 2017</p> |

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| | <p>Where appropriate, through our Outcome Agreement Managers, we will encourage institutions to align their commitments to tackle gender imbalances with their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Equality Outcomes and (supported by both Outcome Agreement Managers and ECU) to state them within their Outcome Agreements⁵.</p> | <p>ECU, Colleges and Universities</p> | <p>April 2017 and every four years thereafter</p> |
| | <p>We will work with SDS to ensure that tackling gender imbalances is embedded in the skills investment planning approach in three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating available data on gender imbalances in the next iteration of Regional Skills Assessments to ensure a robust evidence base. • Identifying strategic actions required to tackle gender imbalances in the development and refresh of Sectoral and Regional Skills Investment Plans. • Building an equality impact assessment into the skills investment planning approach. | <p>SDS</p> | <p>November 2016</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> |

⁵ ECU has provided guidance on [embedding equality within Outcome Agreements](#)

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| | <p>SDS is currently developing 32 Labour Market Information guides including comprehensive equality information. We will work with SDS to build College and University information into these.</p> | <p>SDS</p> | <p>September 2016</p> |
| | <p>Through targeted briefing and training, we will work to improve SFC Outcome Agreement Managers' understanding of gender equality to encourage positive and informed negotiations with institutions. This will also support each institution, or (where appropriate) region, to develop strategic approaches covering all the aims of this plan. Where practical, this will be done in collaboration with partners. In September 2016 this will include a joint briefing session for Outcome Agreement Managers with SDS focused on tackling gender imbalances.</p> | <p>SFC Outcome Agreement Managers</p> | <p>September, November and February each year</p> |
| | <p>Through our annual staff development day, our corporate training plan and the ongoing work of the SFC's Equality and Diversity Group, we will work to improve understanding and awareness of gender inequality for all SFC staff and Board members and seek to enhance embedding of actions to tackle it across our policy and</p> | <p>All SFC employees and Board</p> | <p>Annually</p> |

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| | <p>practice both as an employer and as a funder of higher and further education.</p> | | |
| <p>To engage with schools to tackle gender imbalance earlier and to tackle gender stereotypes</p> | <p>SFC will develop a regional school engagement strategy. It will seek to combine our school activity into one coherent offering covering advice, pathways and bridging programmes. A key purpose and element of this work will be to tackle gender under-representation, both at a subject level and overall male under-representation. We will work with SDS and Education Scotland to ensure alignment between our schools strategy and their work to tackle gender imbalances and will draw on the learning from the Improving Gender Balance in STEM Programme supported by SDS, Education Scotland and the Institute of Physics.</p> | <p>Schools, SDS, Education Scotland, Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), Access to High Demand Professions (AHDP), Local Authorities, regional Colleges and University partners</p> | <p>Summer 2017</p> |

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| | <p>SFC will review all its widening access initiatives (including the Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), Access to High Demand Professions (AHDP), Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), Widening Access and Retention Fund and Access and Inclusion Fund to enhance the role they play in supporting the strategic aims of this plan as well as institution’s Gender Action Plans. In addition, the review will seek to identify and tackle any barriers to universities and colleges engaging as early as is practical with young people. This will feature in the relevant offers of grant or through guidance from 2017 onwards.</p> | SFC | 2017-2020 |
| <p>To ensure equitable admissions by gender</p> | <p>We will assess our current adult engagement models in colleges and universities with a view to exploring the development of a coherent programme across Scotland for learners over the age of 25. A key purpose and element of this work will be to tackle gender under-representation.</p> | SWAP | Spring 2017 |

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| | <p>SFC will work with UCAS to explore how admissions data can inform progress towards achieving the outcomes and strategic aims of this plan. UCAS will also use the outputs from the plan's activities to enhance the information and advice it offers learners, parents, teachers and advisers about educational opportunities.</p> | UCAS | Summer 2017 |
| | <p>SFC will work with Supporting Professionalism in Admissions to determine how best to share their work on equality in admissions most effectively with the sectors and to identify what joint action we might take specifically to tackle gender under-representation.</p> | Supporting Professionalism in Admissions | Summer 2017 |
| | <p>SFC is supporting the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) to work with 10 Colleges and 13 Universities to increase the participation of under-represented equality groups within HE and FE through the project <i>Attracting Diversity</i> focused on widening participation, student recruitment and admissions.</p> <p>The majority of the participating institutions are looking at gender under-representation and are implementing action plans and</p> | Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), Colleges and Universities | Summer 2018 |

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| | <p>positive action activity as part of their work within the project. Some have focused on one or more of the subjects of focus for this plan.</p> <p>SFC will seek to share good practice that emerges from this project specifically from those institutions focused on tackling under-representation by gender, alongside sharing earlier work by ECU on equity in admissions. This will include good practice examples, case studies, learning on regional and college / HEI collaboration, as well as evidence on what works and barriers to progress. We will identify what further guidance might be useful on the back of the learning from the project.</p> | | |
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| | <p>SFC has developed a ten year articulation strategy. Recognising the role articulation plays in male participation at university⁶, SFC will work with colleges, universities and SFC funded initiatives to enhance articulation routes for males specifically in those subject areas where they are both under and over represented and support this action within our strategy.</p> <p>We will also work with the Scottish Widening Access Programme to ascertain if, through their access courses, we can encourage greater male participation at first year degree level.</p> | <p>Scottish Widening Access Programme (SWAP), SHEP, AHDP, Colleges and Universities</p> | <p>Summer 2017</p> |
| <p>To enhance support for those involved in student educational choice processes to enable them to impact on gender imbalances</p> | <p>We will work with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and College Development Network (CDN) to enhance CPD for college and university staff, including board members, as well as to enhance the leadership given across the sectors to tackling gender imbalances and gender inequality, building on guidance previously produced by ECU.</p> | <p>HEA, CDN</p> | <p>Autumn 2016</p> |

⁶ More detail on our [articulation strategy and its role in enhancing access to University for young male students](#)

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| | We are supporting ECU and Opening Educational Practices in Scotland (OEPS) to develop open source teacher CPD materials and classroom resources to tackle gender stereotypes between P5 and S3 in female school pupils' decision making around STEM and career choices. | ECU, Opening Educational Practices in Scotland at the Open University, participating institutions | April 2017 |
| | Through our schools strategy we will encourage closer working with schools and identify how schools can better involve and support teachers, parents and carers. This will link with learning from SDS' Improving Gender Balance Project on best practice in engaging parents and other influencers. | Schools, SDS, SHEP, AHDP, Local Authorities, regional Colleges and University partners, key parent and teacher bodies | July 17 |
| To enhance student involvement to tackle gender imbalances | Working with National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland, SFC will convene a student group to consider how institutions can better involve their students in work to tackle gender imbalances and to hear their views on the actions and aims as outlined within this plan. | NUS Scotland, Student Associations | Autumn 2016 |

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| | SFC will work with NUS Scotland to enhance Student Associations' ability to engage with and drive institutional ambitions to tackle gender imbalances through enhancing student engagement with their institutional Outcome Agreement negotiations, ensuring longevity and sustainability despite the transient nature of student officers. | NUS Scotland, Student Associations | Ongoing |
| | SFC will work in partnership with the University of Stirling to convene a student conference to seek to engage students further with widening access work, with one theme of the event being gender. | University of Stirling, Students | Winter 2016 |
| | Equate Scotland are working with SDS to develop a mentoring scheme for apprentices. We will work with them to support take up across Colleges. | Equate Scotland, SDS | Pilot project to complete in summer 2017 – roll out to take place late 2017 |

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| <p>To promote male engagement and success in study</p> | <p>Whilst this plan seeks to improve both subject imbalances and male participation at university, the research underpinning this plan was based on approaches to tackling subject imbalances and there is significantly more work going on currently to tackle female under-representation in certain subject areas than overall male under-representation. Our analysis also indicates an overall gap between male and female retention at university, with male students from deprived backgrounds particularly adversely affected. We will therefore develop a strategy specifically focused on male engagement and success and seek to build any additional requirements into institutional action plans.</p> | <p>SFC</p> | <p>Summer 2018</p> |
| <p>To enhance retention and completion at a subject level where there is a gap by gender</p> | <p>We will work with each institution to identify where they have an imbalance between male and female students within completion or retention <i>by subject</i> and encourage them to outline their ambitions to address it in their Outcome Agreements and what action they will take to realise their ambitions within their institutional action plan.</p> | <p>SFC Outcome Agreement Managers, senior management of each institution</p> | <p>Annually through the Outcome Agreement process</p> |

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| | <p>In comparison to the large imbalances at entry level to colleges and universities, our analysis indicates there are few major imbalances between male and female students within completion and retention by <i>subject</i> at a <i>national</i> level. Exceptions at college include engineering and childcare and at university, nursing and computer sciences. Through our expert groups focused on these areas (more detail given below under 'To enhance the evidence base'), we will work to enhance the work already underway to tackle poor retention and completion generally and identify what else is required for these subject areas.</p> <p>For IT and computer sciences, this will include working with SDS to support the actions identified for HE and FE within their action plan to tackle the under-representation of women in ICT and digital technologies. As a member of the SDS digital technology gender work stream, SFC will continue to ensure that actions are aligned.</p> | Equate Scotland, CDN, SDS | Winter 2017 |
| <i>To enhance the evidence</i> | SFC continues to invest in research to enhance understanding of what is required to tackle subject imbalances. This currently | SFC, Robert Gordon University, University of Stirling | Autumn 2016 |

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| base | <p>includes two projects as outlined below. The outputs will be shared widely and we will work with the sectors to identify how best to implement the recommendations at both a national and institutional level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling gender imbalance – a pilot project at the Robert Gordon University. • So you want to be in the Professions? – a pilot project at the University of Stirling. | | |
| | <p>Building on the HEA’s framework (figure 1), SFC will commission the development of a longitudinal evaluation framework to enhance the understanding of what works to tackle gender imbalances.</p> | SFC | Summer 2017 |
| | <p>SFC will conduct expert groups on subject areas with colleges and universities which deliver high levels of gender- imbalanced subjects (as evidenced in the technical report). These discussions will identify what specific additional actions may be required for each subject, where appropriate including retention and completion (as outlined earlier in this plan) and ensure alignment at a national level with partner</p> | <p>SDS subject specialists, Equality & Diversity leads for the College/University, Sector skills Councils, NUS Scotland, employers, schools, Colleges, Universities , CDN</p> | 2016 - 2018 |

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| | <p>agencies.</p> <p>These subject areas will include nursing, engineering, IT & computer sciences, building & construction, childcare & education.</p> | | |
| | <p>Working with Scottish Government and CDN to support the workforce planning element of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare from 2021, we are supporting specific actions to increase the proportion of male students reaching support worker (SCQF Level 6) practitioner (SCQF Level 7) and manager/lead practitioner (SCQF9) level in SSSC Approved Childhood Practice courses. (The awards/course identified above are what is required for registration with SSSC in Day Care of Children services). This will include positive action and closer partnership work with Local Authorities or other local employers and childcare providers. This will also include targeting additional activity in the College sector specifically for under-represented groups including male students.</p> | <p>Scottish Government, CDN, employers, Colleges, Universities and Local Authorities</p> | <p>2016-2021</p> |

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| | SFC will conduct expert groups in each region with college, university and partners to discuss their GAP, progress in tackling gender imbalances and future plans. The outputs from these discussions will be shared through the virtual hub and will inform future rounds of Outcome Agreement negotiations. | SFC Outcome Agreement Managers, Equality & Diversity lead for the College/University, SDS regional contacts, Student Associations, regional colleges, university partners, CDN. Where appropriate, we will seek to involve schools and Heads of Education at Local Authorities. | Winter 2017 |
| <i>To share good practice</i> | SFC will work in partnership with the University of Stirling to convene an Impact for Access conference to share learning from recent activities focused on gender as well as other learning from other Impact for Access Projects. | Education Scotland, University of Stirling, schools, colleges, universities and partners | Autumn 2016 |
| | SFC will host a specific gender related web resource (referred to as a virtual hub earlier on in this action plan). This will provide links to good practice across the sectors, research and our annual progress report. We will begin to pilot this in autumn 2016. It will be fully developed in time for the first progress report of this plan. This web resource will also include an update of Annex A provided in our interim | SFC | Spring 2017 |

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| | <p>plan in which we gave an overview of significant activity being undertaken with schools by Education Scotland and other partners. It will include research commissioned by partners and will link to other web resources focused on tackling gender imbalances held by partners, such as SDS and ECU. The intention is that this will lead to sharing of information about what works and will help develop cross-sectoral solutions.</p> | | |
| | <p>To build on the sharing of good practice we started at the gender conference of 2015 and the Impact for Access Conference we will hold in Autumn 2016 in partnership with the University of Stirling, we will also hold a year on conference to maintain momentum and to share plans for improvement. A key focus for this event will be engagement with schools and Local Authorities.</p> | <p>Education Scotland, schools, Colleges, Universities and partners</p> | <p>Spring 2017</p> |

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| | <p>SFC will develop sectoral understanding of the actions required to best support transgender students by co-funding the ECU to develop enhanced guidance on supporting trans individuals and to produce case studies on good practice.</p> <p>Building on this, SFC is supporting the University of Strathclyde to produce a practical self-assessment tool to allow colleges and universities to audit their current awareness and support for trans students and staff and plan future work in this area; case studies of best practice alongside a set of best practice guidelines; a series of sector dissemination events; and workshops for staff. The project will also seek to develop a sustainable community of practice to embed the research findings and share good practice.</p> | ECU, University of Strathclyde | Summer 2017 |
| | <p>Building on ECU's analysis on intersections by protected characteristics and socio-economic background within HE⁷ as well as other work in this area, SFC will work with ECU and the sectors to identify what further</p> | Colleges and Universities , ECU | Summer 2018 |

⁷This analysis is available on the [ECU website](#)

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| | resources and guidance are required to support institutions to develop intersectional approaches to recruiting and supporting students. | | |
| | Aligned with the focus of DYW and the Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework for Scotland , SFC will consult with relevant ethnicity and disability representatives to improve our understanding of the issues faced by such minority groups and how they differ by gender. Building on work with ECU, as identified above, SFC will seek to identify what further guidance is required. | LEAD Scotland, BEMIS, CRER Race Equality Network for Scottish HEIs and Colleges, CDN | Summer 2018 |
| | To share good practice and enhance the evidence base, we will be convening expert groups in 2018 and publishing a series of progress reports each year from 2017 to 2020 (more detail given under 'To enhance the evidence base'). | SDS, CDN, Sector Skills Councils, NUS Scotland, employers, schools, Colleges and Universities | 2020 |

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| <p><i>To evidence our progress in achieving our 2030 vision</i></p> | <p>Through monitoring the outcomes committed to within Outcome Agreements as well as the actions set out within institutional action plans, SFC will compile an annual progress report on the achievements and ambitions of each sector for 2017 onwards. Over the different years, as we progress the other actions in this plan, this should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected impact as outlined in Outcome Agreements. • Information on intake and their success. • Information on the next academic year's expected recruitment. • Statistical evidence from HESA and FES, including contextual information. • Results from regional and subject based focus groups. • Schools data on subject choice and progression (through linking with SDS). <p>The 2019 report will also assess our overall progress towards the 2030 vision and the need for institutional and or national milestones from 2020 to 2030.</p> | <p>Colleges and Universities , Gender Governance Group, Access and Inclusion Committee, SFC Board</p> | <p>Summer 2017, 2018 and 2019</p> |
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| | Following the first iteration of institutional action plans, SFC will conduct a survey of colleges and universities on their progress on developing their plans, including the learning, good practice and barriers encountered. | Colleges and universities | Summer 2017 |
| | We will review our and partners' publications which analyse representation by protected characteristics across Scotland's colleges and universities to clarify the national picture and to ensure they play an effective role alongside our partners' publications to convey the national picture and avoid duplication. | SFC | TBC |
| | From 2018 onwards the SFC will have developed our replacement for <i>Learning for All</i> , SFC's annual report on progress with widening access to chart our progress on access, inclusion and equality. This will include a section on our ambition for gender equality including the intersectionality of gender alongside protected characteristics as well as deprivation and care experience. | Colleges and universities | Summer 2018 |

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| | <p>In our second triennial review we will provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of progress in widening access from a gender perspective, considering the intersection between gender and socio-economic disadvantage as well as other protected characteristics. • Evidence of good practice in considering the intersection between gender and socio-economic disadvantage as well other protected characteristics. • An assessment of what more is required to tackle gendered outcomes. | SFC | Summer 2020 |
| <i>To enhance partnership working</i> | <p>Conduct expert groups with those who lead in the provision of initial teacher training and careers guidance courses to discuss how to use that training to support our ambitions and agree good practice guidance. This group will also consider the role universities and colleges can play in enhancing CPD for teachers in these areas and the intake of male teachers.</p> | CDN, General Teaching Council, university academic partners, Scottish Government, schools and Heads of Education at Local Authorities | Winter 2018 |

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| | <p>Conduct expert groups with those who lead in the provision of early years training to discuss how to use that training to support our ambitions and agree good practice guidance. This group will also consider the intake of male early years professionals.</p> | <p>Early Years Scotland, Scottish Government, nursery school managers and practitioners, schools, colleges and universities</p> | <p>Ongoing from now to 2020</p> |
| <p><i>To hold SFC to account in the implementation of this plan</i></p> | <p>The SFC will reform the Gender Steering Group to become a Gender Governance Group. This group's remit will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing SFC's annual progress reports. • Scanning the environment on gender issues and projects to inform planning. • Promoting and leading positive partnership working and collaboration. <p>The Group will hold at least three meetings annually and will oversee monitoring activity of progress towards the aims of this plan.</p> | <p>Scottish Government, SDS, ES, NUS Scotland, ECU, CDN, US and representatives from colleges and universities</p> | <p>2016 onwards</p> |

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| | Oversight of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan will sit with the Board of the Scottish Funding Council. The SFC Board will receive the annual progress report. | SFC | Board meeting after summer in 2017, 2018 and 2019 |
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| Further gender equality related policy developments | | | |
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| To prevent gender based violence across Scottish Colleges and Universities | The Scottish Government have funded the University of Strathclyde for three years from 2016 to develop an institutional approach to tackling violence against women and to develop a toolkit for roll out across the university sector. We will work with them, where appropriate, specifically to support the inclusion of colleges within this work. Once the toolkit is developed we will consider what further work is required to share good practice to tackle gender-based violence. | University of Strathclyde | 2016-2018 |
| | We are aware of good practice in place across Scotland to tackle violence against women and specifically at the Universities of Glasgow and Stirling and Glasgow Caledonian University. We will work to share good practice and collaboration from other sectors, and from universities and colleges to ensure any learning can be shared across the sectors and included within the developing toolkit (outlined above). | Universities , Colleges, Improvement Service | 2016-2018 |
| | This work will include a focus on the violence faced by transgender students and staff. We will seek to work with the Scottish Transgender Alliance (STA) as well as other partners to identify appropriate action. | Scottish Transgender Alliance | 2018 |

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| <p>To enhance career progression for female staff in colleges and universities</p> | <p>SFC is working on delivering our Public Sector Equality Outcomes by April 2017, one of which identified further work to understand representation by protected characteristic amongst staff, senior management and Boards. We will review our progress in April and outline any future Equality Outcomes and policy direction to enhance female career progression. For colleges, this will build on the work we are supporting through the ECU looking at staff equalities, and for universities; it will build on our support for the Athena Swan Charter.</p> | <p>Colleges, Universities , ECU</p> | <p>Summer 2018</p> |
| | <p>Our actions to identify the barriers to female progression will include progression onto Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research degrees.</p> | <p>SFC</p> | <p>Summer 2018</p> |

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