



SFC Consultation

User Consultation: SFC Report on Widening Access

Issue date: 4 December 2017

Deadline: 31 January 2017

Reference: SFC/CN/02/2017

Summary: To gather user views on the SFC Report on Widening Access, the successor publication of SFC's Learning for All.

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

Further information:

Contact: Cathy Mitchell
Job title: Senior Policy/Analysis Officer
Department: Finance
Tel: 0131 313 6699
Email: cmitchell@sfc.ac.uk

SFC Report on Widening Access Consultation

Introduction

1. The tenth update of SFC's Learning for All report was published in August 2016. In this report, SFC committed to reviewing the publication in terms of its scope and content with a view to improving the analysis provided on equality and diversity across both the college and university sectors.
2. This review was conducted considering the final report of the Scottish Government's Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) and the recommendation that "the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government should enhance the analyses and publication of data on fair access" and is in line with further SFC efforts to improve consistency around reporting of data relating to access to higher and further education.
3. This review resulted in the [SFC Report on Widening Access](#) which was published on the SFC's website on 26 September 2017.
4. SFC's commitment to reviewing our publication is ongoing, and we would like to offer users the chance to comment on the changes from Learning for All and on any other aspects of this publication. This includes the content, coverage and presentation.

Planned updates for the second SFC Report on Widening Access

5. The second SFC Report on Widening Access is planned to be published in the Spring 2018. This will give users access to the statistics much earlier and will bring this publication in line with SFC's other headline statistical publications.
6. Depending on availability of key data and statistics, a chapter on 'Transitions' will be added to cover the movement of students across levels of study and sectors. This chapter may include aspects such as school leaver progression to college or university, articulation or other aspects of the learner journey, where data is available.
7. SFC is reviewing if other access statistics, including the Participation Indicators (PIs) for Scottish HEIs, should be included within this publication.

Reporting on CoWA Targets and the Wider SFC Measure

8. The SFC Report on Widening Access had two main strands; the first was on the key indicators and targets introduced by CoWA, and the second presenting a wider analysis of access to further and higher education similar to what was covered in the previous Learning for All publications. These two strands overlap

in the areas of socio-economic deprivation and care experienced learners, meaning that the data for these two areas is presented twice in the report.

9. The data presented in each of these strands differs, due to the data specification and focus used. In Section 2, data are presented on the same basis as the targets proposed by the Commission on Widening Access. In the remaining sections, data was presented broadly in line with the measures currently included in Outcome Agreements, in line with previous SFC reports on widening access. Changes are being implemented to ensure they are aligned in future years and further details of the differences are given throughout the report.
10. These differences in methodology will still exist between the CoWA targets and the wider analysis of access in academic year 2016-17. It is proposed that the two strands are presented separately, as in the AY 2015-16 publication, and then the two will be aligned for data covering AY 2017-18. We would welcome comments on this.

HESA Access PI's

11. In February 2017 SFC published the Participation indicators (PIs) for Scottish HEIs which present the numbers of young Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time undergraduate courses from the most deprived datazones that contain 20% of the population and also from the most deprived datazones that account for 40% of the population.
12. These were produced in order to provide additional information on Scottish HEIs' efforts at widening access to supplement that published in the UKPIs and to replace the UKPI based on entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, which is not produced for Scottish HEIs.
13. After the publication of PIs for AY 2015-16, the relevancy of a separate publication focused on 'young' Scottish-domiciled entrants to full-time undergraduate courses was reviewed. It is felt that these PIs would be better placed within the access publication, with an equivalent measure for students older than 21. We would welcome comments on this.

Further information

14. Please contact: Cathy Mitchell, Senior Policy/Analysis Officer, Tel: 0131 313 6699, Email: cmitchell@sfc.ac.uk.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Martin Smith

Chief Funding and Information Officer