



SFC Guidance

University Outcome Agreement Guidance 2020-21

Additional information: CoWA and WARF reporting requirements

Commission on Widening Access: CoWA and WARF reporting requirements

1. SFC recognises the positive commitment to date from Universities towards the delivery of the targets as set out in CoWA final report A Blueprint for Fairness. To provide a clear line of sight of SFC's investment and priorities and also to address the current gaps in commitments and reporting, the 2019-20 Outcome Agreement Guidance asked universities to outline how this ambition will be achieved, for example, what new or different steps will be taken to deliver this commitment. It also asked universities to report on the CoWA recommendations they have been asked to lead and implement. The specific reporting requirements requested for AY 2019-20 Outcome Agreements (OAs) are outlined below. As outlined in the Outcome Agreement Guidance we are grateful for the reporting on this in the last round of OAs. Outcome Agreement Managers may request additional information from institutions in relation to this reporting but this will be on an institution specific basis.

CoWA implementation: specific reporting requirements outlined for the AY 2019-20 Outcome Agreements

2. This CoWA section of the OA should outline how each institution will:
 - Achieve its three year targets for COWA and articulation in full (Recommendation 32, 8-10).
 - Ensure that the retention of SIMD20, care-experienced and articulation students is comparable to the institution norm and where this is not the case what improvement plans the institution has in place to achieve this.
 - Implement access thresholds (including a timeline to full implementation). Please note that the COWA final report recommendation required this by 2019 (Recommendation 11).
 - Implement the entitlement of an offer for care-experienced learners who meet the requirements of the access thresholds (Recommendation 21).
 - Promote access thresholds to relevant schools, pupils, parents, local authorities and teachers (Recommendation 12).
 - Evaluate its contextualised and wider admissions processes and entry requirements to ensure they meet the recommendations of COWA (Recommendation 5).
 - Report on the rate of the conversion of applications to offers to acceptances for SIMD20 and care-experienced students and the use of adjusted offers.
 - Ensure that the expansion of articulation supports disadvantaged learners to progress to degree level study (Recommendation 9).
 - Outline its use of Bridging Programmes (defined by CoWA Blueprint as summer schools/gateway programmes/top-up schemes) (Recommendation 7).

- Identify how core funding is being used to support access (Recommendation 25).
- As stated earlier in this guidance, continue to report on the now embedded additional places allocated to some institutions in 2012-13. Institutions in receipt of the widening access and articulation places should evidence a commitment that is over and above the places allocated. The widening access places must be used for SIMD20 intake.
- Continue to report on the use of Widening Access and Retention Fund (WARF).

Widening Access and Retention Fund: reporting requirements for AY 2020-21

3. All institutions in receipt of WARF funding must report on their use of this funding and clearly demonstrate its impact.
4. WARF is allocated to institutions to enable them to increase the intake of and support the successful outcomes of students from the most disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds. In particular we want this fund to support student intake from SIMD 20 areas and it should aim towards equalised retention rates for this group. It is currently allocated to eight institutions that traditionally have had, proportionately, higher intakes of students from the most disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds. In response to and in recognition of this targeted funding, SFC expects those institutions in receipt of WARF funding:
 - To support higher numbers and proportions of students from the most disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds – particularly those from the 20% most deprived areas – than those institutions that are currently not in receipt of WARF allocations. Please note we will take regional differences into consideration.
 - For institutions which are below the sector average retention rate including SIMD20 and SIMD40 students – to outline an improvement plan as part of their OA, including how they will use these funds to seek improvements in retention rates for these groups.
 - For institutions which are maintaining average or above retention levels including SIMD20 and SIMD40 students - to commit to maintaining and, where possible, increasing their retention rates. These institutions should outline in their OA how this funding is assisting them in achieving this parity of outcome.
 - To increase the numbers and proportions of students from a care-experienced background and increase the student retention rates for this disadvantaged group.
 - To use the funds to identify, support and report on progress of their student carers.

- To use the funds to target male retention rates for improvement, particularly males from SIMD20 areas.