

SFC Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2018

- To update the Board on progress towards our published Equality Outcomes for the period 2017-2021. SFC's internal and external Equality Outcomes were developed in line with the expectations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This report summarises progress since April 2017.
- The next formal update on our progress, as outlined by The Equality Act 2010, is due in spring 2019. We will publish an update of our Equality Mainstreaming Report by April 2019.
- There is good progress across all external Equality Outcomes. Key issues include that we do not publish data on all protected characteristics (particularly in relation to LGBT where there is evidence of higher drop out), and there have been delays with the process to support the approval and publication of EIAs.
- We have made good progress on internal Equality Outcomes. Key issues relate to the need to improve BME representation within our organisation and enhancing the presence of equality in staff Forward Job Plans and appraisal discussions.
- We are aware that we need to improve the framing of some of our Equality Outcomes to make them more specific. We are also aware that we need to improve the consultation process to develop new Equality Outcomes. A key issue for the SFC is that we fund provision at institutions; we do not directly support students, making consulting with protected characteristic groups in relation to our Equality Outcomes more difficult. We plan to begin the process to improve our consultation and the framing of some of the outcomes for the spring 2019 reporting period.

Recommendations

- The Board is invited to note the progress to date, in relation to the full delivery of these published Equality Outcomes by Spring 2021.

Financial implications

- There are no financial recommendations resulting from this paper.

SFC Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2018

Purpose

1. To update the Board on progress towards our published Equality Outcomes for the period 2017-2021.

Background

2. On 28 April 2017, we published our Mainstreaming and Equality Outcome Report for the period 2015-17. This report set out our ambition for a high performing SFC and high performing colleges and universities, with clear commitments to meet the general PSED and the specific duties for Scotland. We also revised our Equality Outcomes for the period 2017-21. The report is available on our website [E&D reports page](#) and a direct link is available [here](#).
3. The SFC's Equality Outcomes (EOs) aim to remove or minimise disadvantages associated with protected characteristics that might be experienced by students and staff in our institutions or by SFC staff. There are five external EOs and two internal EOs. These are:

External Equality Outcomes to support SFC-funded institutions:

- i. To achieve more even patterns – at both a sectoral and an institutional level - of participation, retention and success by different groups of learners, from protected characteristic groups and including those from areas of deprivation and care backgrounds where they interact.
- ii. Understand the diversity of college staff, management and governing bodies leading to specific recommendations and guidance for Colleges in AY 2019/20.
- iii. Support the university sector to achieve a diverse and representative workforce.
- iv. To achieve an improved and aligned evidence base for equality, informed by increased rates of disclosure across protected characteristics.
- v. Equality and diversity considerations are evident in outcome agreements and across all core and strategic funding agreement.

Internal Equality Outcomes to support SFC staff:

- i. We will better understand and improve equality and diversity within our workforce through improved disclosure and positive action and development initiatives.

- ii. Equality and diversity responsibilities will be clearly established in our strategic and operational planning and advanced through forward job plans and evaluation processes.

Monitoring progress on the published Equality Outcomes

4. These outcomes and our work to embed equality are overseen by an internal Equality and Diversity Group (EDG) which is chaired by John Kemp, Interim CEO. The remit for this group is provided in Annex A. Each Equality Outcome has a designated owner who is asked to report progress to the EDG. This group is also attended by David Bass, Programme Manager for Advance HE in Scotland.
5. The next formal update on our progress, as outlined by The Equality Act 2010, is due in spring 2019. This will involve publication of an updated Equality Mainstreaming Report. Key messages from the report will be provided to the Board for consideration before publication.
6. We are aware that we need to improve the framing of some of our Equality Outcomes to make them more specific. We are also aware that going forward we need to improve the consultation process to develop new Equality Outcomes. A key issue for the SFC is that we fund provision at institutions; we do not directly support students. This makes consulting with protected characteristic groups in relation to our EOs more difficult. It is our intention to begin the process to improve our consultation and the framing of some of the outcomes for the spring 2019 reporting period.
7. The rest of this report provides an overview of our progress on each of our published Equality Outcomes.

External Equality Outcome update

8. Overall, there is good progress across all external Equality Outcomes. Key issues include:
 - That we do not publish data on all protected characteristics (particularly in relation to LGBT where there is evidence of higher drop out).
 - Delays in the process to support the approval and publication of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).
9. The protected characteristic groups in the Equality Act (Scotland) are:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Sex (the SFC uses the term gender)
 - Gender reassignment (the SFC uses the term trans)

- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

10. At the SFC, we have expanded that to include:

- Care experience and Socio-economic status

Equality Outcome 1 – To achieve more even patterns of participation, retention and success from protected characteristic groups

11. The [SFC Report on Widening Access 2016-17](#) was published on 30 May 2018. This is the second SFC Report on Widening Access, the successor publication to SFC's *Learning for All* publication. The Report presents data in two separate ways; firstly data specifically relating to the Scottish Government access targets, followed by further access data that is more in line with SFC Outcome Agreement measures. These focus on socio-economic status and protected characteristics such as gender, disability and race.
12. After the first [SFC Report on Widening Access](#) was published in September 2017, a consultation was held on the content, structure and other aspects of the report. This consultation was concluded in January 2018 and the results have fed into this second update. The development of the report will continue, with possible future additions including data on subject choice and on graduate outcomes and destinations, and more extensive data included within the background tables.
13. The key points from the May 2018 report are:

Scottish Government COWA Targets and Related Measures

- In 2016-17, 13.8% of Scottish domiciled full-time first degree entrants to Scottish universities were from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.
- Students with care experience backgrounds accounted for 0.6% of entrants at full-time first degree level and of all entrants to undergraduate higher education.
- The overall retention rate for Scottish domiciled full-time first degree entrants was 91.8% in 2016-17, compared to 87.4% for SIMD20 entrants and 87.0% for entrants with care experience backgrounds.

- In 2016-17, 13.1% of Scottish domiciled full-time first degree qualifiers from university were from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Widening Access Update

- There were 28,945 full-time Scottish domiciled first degree entrants to universities in Scotland in 2016-17 with a further 2,645 full-time entrants to sub-degree programmes. There were an additional 22,285 full-time Scottish-domiciled entrants to HE level courses at colleges, contributing to a total 53,875 full-time HE undergraduate student entrants.
- Combining the number of entrants to full-time FE and HE courses at college and full-time first degree courses at university, there were 25,490 total entrants from the most deprived 20%, and 17,675 from the least deprived 20%. This means that those from the most deprived 20% have the highest total number of entrants across these full-time levels of study. However, of those from the most deprived 20%, 41.1% are studying at HE level compared to 73.6% of those from the least deprived 20%.
- In 2016-17, females had a higher proportion of entrants at all levels, other than at part-time HE in colleges where males accounted for 57.0% of entrants. The highest proportion of females was at first degree level where they accounted for 64.1% of part-time entrants and 58.1% of full-time entrants at this level.
- The highest proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students were in part-time FE study at college, followed by full-time first degree level at university, where 8.1% of entrants in 2016-17 were from a BME background.
- The highest proportion of students with a declared disability in each of the last four academic years was at full-time FE level in colleges where, in 2016-17, 20.3% of entrants had a declared disability.
- Across the levels of study shown in this report, the number of reported care experienced entrants increased from 1,500 in 2015-16 to 2,070 in 2016-17. However, there was a performance difference of 7.4 percentage points for retention at university between students with care experienced backgrounds and those without. The largest gap was in successful completion of full-time FE courses at college, where the gap was 13.1 percentage points in 2016-17.

14. Annex B provides an overview of our policy work to support Equality

Outcome 1. A key issue is our lack of reporting and policy work in relation to LGBT. An initial analysis of the data outlines a higher drop-out rate in this sector and this is confirmed by a survey undertaken by LGBT Youth Scotland.

15. **Assessment of progress:** We feel that we are on track to deliver this EO but are aware that our policy work and statistical reporting does not cover all protected characteristics and we need to improve this position.

Equality Outcome 2 - Understand the diversity of college staff, management and governing bodies leading to specific recommendations and guidance for Colleges in AY 2019-20

16. Listed below are two publications that have advanced this equality outcome.

- [SFC published College Staffing Data 2016-17 \(Experimental Statistics: data being developed\), March 2018](#)
- Advance HE (funded by the SFC) published [College staffing data collection guidance, March 2018](#)

17. The SFC publication outlines key issues including the numbers of FT staff with recognised qualifications (although it is improving) and low numbers of BME staff and disabled staff. Females accounted for 61% of staff and 44% of staff are aged 51 and over.

18. In addition to this, an Advanced HE research publication – [Equality in Colleges in Scotland: results from the 2017 staff survey and focus groups](#) was published on 15 May 2018. The research project report funded by the SFC informs work on improving staff diversity in colleges and details a number of recommendations targeted at colleges, Colleges Scotland and staff trade unions, SFC, College Development Network and Advance HE. This research highlights the following issues:

- Disabled staff experienced greater levels of inequality across all aspects of working life and had the highest proportion of staff who did not feel treated fairly in the work place (22.5%).
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff were more likely than white staff to report that their race or ethnicity affected fair treatment in areas such as recruitment and selection, allocation of desirable or sought after tasks or roles, support from management, representation in senior positions, and promotion decisions.

- Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff, staff in the over 60 age group, and disabled staff tended to rate the support that they received from management particularly low.
- Disability, age and sexual orientation were the protected characteristics staff felt least confident in disclosing to their college.
- The level of information about colleges' promotion processes and criteria was generally poor among all staff, and varied significantly by gender, disability and age: female staff, disabled staff, and staff in the youngest age group were significantly less informed than male staff, non-disabled staff, and staff in the older age groups.
- Female survey respondents were, overall, more positive about all aspects of working life than male respondents. However, in focus groups, female participants more willingly shared experiences where they had felt discriminated against based on their gender and/or age than male participants. More broadly, female participants spoke about equality in terms of lived experience, whereas male participants discussed policies and procedures related to equality.

19. **Assessment of progress:** We feel we have made excellent progress on this but we now need to identify actions to progress the findings of the SFC statistical publication and Advance HE research.

Equality Outcome 3 - Support the university sector to achieve a diverse and representative workforce

20. Work to establish robust baseline data relating to the profile of staff at SFC funded HEIs is continuing. Once this is complete we will provide Outcome Agreement teams with details on University staff across all protected characteristic groups by December 2018. This will enable SFC to undertake longitudinal analysis of staff profiles and trends that are in line with HESA analysis. This activity also supports the delivery of Aim 14 of the Gender Action Plan.
21. Over February-March 2018, Advance HE delivered a series of regional training days for governing body members and key staff working in governance and equality and diversity in Scottish HEIs and colleges. These workshops provided practical approaches to diversity in governance and focused on:
- Unconscious bias in governance and recruitment.
 - Positive action in elections and for non-appointed members.

- Increasing diversity and disclosure for protected characteristics beyond gender.
22. As information on governors will be collected in the HESA Staff record from 2017-18 onwards, SFC will be able to establish baselines and undertake longitudinal analysis that will inform future approaches to improving the representation of protected characteristic groups on HEI Governing bodies.
 23. In terms of promoting and supporting career development, we assess final Outcome Agreement AY2018-19 submissions (and work with Advance HE) to ensure the delivery of Athena SWAN and HR Excellence in Research aims are sufficiently ambitious and monitor delivery against these aims going forward.
 24. In 2012, the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) published its report [*Tapping All Our Talents*](#), a comprehensive set of recommendations for Scotland aimed at increasing both the proportion of women in the STEM workforce and the number who rise to senior positions in universities, institutes, government, business and industry. A Review Group, led by Professor Lesley Yellowlees FRSE, has been established by RSE to explore what progress, if any, has been made on equality in the STEM workforce in Scotland over the past six years, and what remains to be done. SFC is participating in evidence gathering activities associated with this review, including the submission of evidence in response to the open consultation.
 25. The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is leading a £1 million bid to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) [*Inclusion Matters funding call*](#); it is through to the final round of selection, with funding decisions expected to be made in mid-June. A total of up to £5 million is available through this call, to support around 10 partnership awards. The proposed project is called *Entitled, Changing the Landscape* and aims to improve the inclusion of under-represented groups in Engineering and Physical Sciences. Due to the alignment with this EO, the SFC agreed to allocate up to £42,000 to UWS to pay for a Project Officer to kick start activity and establish a solid academic and industry participant group in the run up to the EPSRC decision. We recognise that this project will achieve good outcomes even if the EPSRC bid is unsuccessful and these will make a direct contribution to this EO, the SFC's Gender Action Plan and the Scottish Government's economic, equality and diversity and STEM strategies.
 26. **Assessment of progress:** We feel that this is on track. Going forward we are keen to develop an Equality Outcome that is more specific than simply understanding the data but this needs to be evidence driven which is what this EO is seeking to achieve in the first instance.

Equality Outcome 4 - To achieve an improved and aligned evidence base for equality, informed by increased rates of disclosure across protected characteristics

27. From 2019-20 onwards the college dataset will collect data on all protected characteristics which is a significant set forward. Latest [college guidance \(FES\) for student data collections in 2018-19](#) incorporates best practice guidance, all protected characteristics and the inclusion of other additional special interest groups such as; British Sign Language, Estranged person, Stateless person and Veterans.
28. In the university sector we work with the Higher Education Statistical Authority which covers the UK. At present, there are no flags for the following protected characteristics:
 - Marriage and civil partnerships
 - Pregnancy and maternity
29. We are currently working with HESA to secure flags for BSL and trans-gender students.
30. SFC is progressing with its lawyers on the establishment of a legal basis for collecting college individualised staff and student personal data and preparing sector Data Sharing Agreements that are GDPR compliant. The Advance HE research publication (as referenced above in para. 16) has specific college staffing recommendations focused on improving data quality and disclosure rates across protected characteristics.
31. **Assessment of progress:** We feel that this is on track. It is a very positive step to include all protected characteristics in the college student data collection.

EO5 - Equality and diversity considerations are evident in outcome agreements and across all core and strategic funding agreements.

32. The reporting on data (as per the requirements of intensification) is significantly improved but there is a lack of commitment (as evidenced by target setting in the draft OAs) to improvements by some universities in relation to males, disability and BME.
33. All requests to the SFC for funding continue to require an EIA. This is assessed by a policy lead and is referred to those making the decision to approve or decline funding.
34. The inclusion of EIAs in OAs is a requirement of the guidance but the number of EIAs submitted is still low and when they are provided they are usually of low quality. Advance HE (funded by the SFC) is leading improvement work in this area; currently working on a pilot with both colleges and universities. Part of

this process will lead to a specific new section on EIAs to be included in the SFC OA guidance from 2020 onwards.

35. The [EIA for the OA guidance and funding for 2018-19](#) was published on 18 May 2018. Other EIAs completed and scheduled for publication prior to the June 2018 board meeting include capital funding and student support funding. There is good progress in the completion of EIAs and we are currently undertaking development work to improve the overall process and the pace at which EIAs are formally approved and published on our website. A revised form for EIAs is being finalised, with refreshed and simplified guidance notes. It is intended that this will make the process simpler and more efficient in future.
36. **Assessment of progress:** We feel there has been good progress but we recognise the need to improve the publication of SFC EIAs and the reporting on external OA EIAs.

Internal Equality Outcome update

37. There is good progress on both the internal Equality Outcomes. Key issues relate to the need to improve BME representation within our organisation and enhancing the presence of equality in FJP and appraisal discussions.

Internal Outcome 1: We will better understand and improve equality and diversity within our workforce through improved disclosure and positive action and development initiatives

38. This is being progressed by our HR department in relation to our 109 staff cohort and is reported to our internal EDG. Key issues for the SFC include:
 - Encouraging more applications from BME groups and supporting those applications through to shortlisting and recruitment.
 - Compliance with the data protection rules to ensure we do not hold data indefinitely and enable people update their data.
 - We have identified a high proportion of “not disclosed” responses and have put steps in place to improve this e.g. diversity forms in starter packs and options to complete this information on arrival.
39. Key achievements include:
 - The roll out of [Aurora](#) to female staff, this is a female only leadership development programme, and steps being taken at SMT level to support an appropriate “legacy” for Aurora work.
 - An SFC diversity calendar to promote and support equality days. This can include coffee mornings and promotional materials. Recently this has included Care Day, LGBT History month and International Women’s Day

Going forward we intended to be more selective and focus on more high profile events for three or four key areas (e.g. ones not acknowledged previously).

- Mental health awareness training for line managers (open to all staff).

40. Going forward we will:

- Work with Advance HE to deliver unconscious bias training to SFC staff.
- Provide recruitment training – proposed recruiters have training/material relating to unconscious bias.

Internal equality outcome 2: Equality and diversity responsibilities will be clearly established in our strategic and operational planning and advanced through forward job plans (FJP) and evaluation processes

41. There is currently a strong equality presence in both our strategic and operational plans and the work of our Equality Outcome leads will be recognised in the forthcoming appraisal and FJP processes. Going forward we will:

- Continue to support a strong equality presence in both the Strategic and Operational Plans.
- Consider including the specific equality outcomes and leads in the Operational Planning process.
- Monitor the appraisal and FJP processes to ensure they are being used as a process to discuss equality responsibilities.

Risk assessment

42. The internal SFC Equality and Diversity Group was established to oversee the progress of the published EOs and ensure they are delivered in full. In addition to this, we feel that the formal reporting to the AIC and the Board ensures strong governance of this work. As such, we assess the risk of not delivering the EOs as low.

Equality and diversity assessment

43. This is outlined in our progress on each EO.

Financial implications

44. There are no financial recommendations resulting from this paper.

Recommendations

45. The Board is invited to note the progress to date, in relation to the full delivery of these published Equality Outcomes by Spring 2021.

Publication

46. This paper will be published on the Council website.

Further information

47. Contact: Fiona Burns, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk

Annex A: Remit of the Equality & Diversity Group

1. The remit of the Group is to monitor, support and challenge implementation of our 2017-2020 Equality Outcomes, both within and throughout the organisation, following the recent publication of our Mainstreaming Report & Equality Outcomes. The Group will also authorise and agree an update, including evidence of progress, in 2019, in keeping with our obligations as a Scottish public sector organisation.
2. In particular the E&D Group will seek to consider and influence equality as part of SFC culture:
 - Supporting the process and maintain momentum in the development and publication of EHRIA's
 - Reflect and detail progress towards the Annual Board report
 - Reflect and detail progress on our Statutory Reporting responsibilities
 - Provide information on and track development on the five external Equality Outcomes
 - Provide information on and track development on the two internal Equality Outcomes
 - Develop an internal communications strategy led by the Communications Team

Annex B: Policy work by protected characteristic to support EO1

Age

- We continue to work with the sector to progress and support equality in relation to age. This includes the OA process requiring targets on age intake, retention (universities) and successful completions for FTFE 16-19 year olds (colleges)
- We are developing a School Engagement Framework (SEF) to support the COWA recommendations. The Framework is being developed jointly with schools (including pupils and staff), local authorities, SFC-funded school initiatives (such as Access to High Demand Professions, Schools for Higher Education Programme) and other key stakeholders. It will focus on pupils – not schools or types of schools – and will seek to achieve early intervention.
- The aim is to have full implementation of the Framework in all Scottish secondary schools by August 2020 to support pupils with their aspirations and ambitions for post-school life.
- To balance this work, an Adult Engagement Framework (AEF) is also in development, to consider adult learners or those who wish to return to education. This work will cross over with the School Engagement Framework because many adult returners might have children of school age, and the impact of the parental learning on the children's ambitions will be an area of potential interest going forward.
- We also continue to fund SWAP which specifically support adult returners

Disability

- All institutions have reported on the intake, retention (universities) and success rates of students (colleges) in their Outcome Agreements. All colleges have developed an access and inclusion strategy that also details the intake, success and destinations by disability group.
- Working with the Scottish Government to implement its Disability Delivery Plan. In both sectors there is a 4% gap between progression to employment of disabled students compared to their peers.
- Part of our funding to Advance HE for 2018-21 is for a specific disability programme of work.
- We are funding the Association of Real Change (ARC) Scotland to help improve transitions for young disabled pupils. This includes all college regions and relevant schools and three university pilots including a small specialist institution.

- Recently we held a joint multi stakeholder workshop with Lead Scotland to identify what more we can do to ensure parity of outcome for disabled students. This included both sectors, NUS Scotland, Inclusion Scotland, the EHRC and many others. We are currently developing an action plan with Lead Scotland to further improve our work in this area.

Specifically in relation to Mental Health

- We promote and support the NUS Scotland “Think Positive” campaign through our OAs and will be working with the NUS in partnership to ensure this is having an impact.
- We have agreed a plan of action with the Scottish Government team that oversees the 10-year Mental Health Strategy. This includes our OA framework and working with key mental health charities to demonstrate a significant contribution to the SG MH Strategy. In both sectors the outcomes of those who declare a mental health disability are the lowest of all the disability types.

Specifically in relation to BSL

- We have set up a BSL Steering Group to oversee the implementation of institutional BSL plans which are due in October. This group will also inform the OA guidance to support the implementation of these plans and the promotion of BSL.
- We are discussing with HR and communications how we can support the recruitment of BSL users and the promotion of the BSL language.

Gender

- We are making good progress on the actions and commitments set out in the SFC’s Gender Action Plan, published in 2016. We will be holding another Annual Gender Conference later in the year and will be publishing an annual report.
- We report progress, including an assessment of gender related outcomes in OAs and institutional Gender Action Plans to a Gender Governance Group.
- We have, through our funding of Advance HE, supported two gender projects on Board diversity and preventing violence against women.
- We have also agreed a workplan with the Gender Governance Group for the next year. This includes:
 - To circulate a report, following a survey of the sector, on the development of institutional GAPs
 - Develop SFC gender policy webpages outlining good practice

- Explore gender related CPD opportunities for both sectors
- Undertaking institutional visits, led by the SFC gender policy lead and OA teams, on the implementation of institutional plans
- Updating OA guidance in relation to gender
- Developing subject based measures for gender for implementation in the OA guidance in 2019-20
- Commissioning an evaluation framework to identify what makes the difference in changing subject based gender imbalances

Specifically in relation to trans students

- Published a blog on the SFC funded project [TransEdu](#)
- We have updated our college dataset to ensure we have data on this group in future to enable us to monitor intake and outcomes. We are requesting the same data field from HESA.
- We will update our OA guidance to require more evidence of the support for this group as per the Trans Edu research.

Race

- We are working with the Scottish Government on the Race Equality Framework and the Race Equality Plan published in December. This includes a commitment to enhance our reporting by racial group as a means to evidence the barriers faced in accessing education, progressing, and gaining related employment
- We will also work with the Scottish Government on its planned further and higher education roundtable event and will follow that with an event to discuss the barriers and agree solutions with both sectors in more depth
- Our funding to Advance HE includes support for its Race Equality Charter Mark which we promote through our OAs and encourage all universities to consider
- We are members of the Advance HE's Scottish Race Equality Network and we are actively supporting the developing priorities of this group
- We will develop a report that looks at outcomes by racial group by Spring 2019

Care Experience

- We have reported progress and upcoming areas of work with the Care Experience Governance Group.
- This progress includes a full assessment of the draft OAs. There has been a step change in the commitments to this group especially in the college sector.

- We set a national ambition for 2016-19 and are on track to deliver it – it seeks improvements in intake and outcomes. However, an analysis of the group shows a lack of male engagement and a lack of STEM intake.
- We are building a new ambition for 2020-23. It will include a new measure on articulation to ensure good pathways into HE and is likely to consider STEM. We will consider the lack of male engagement as part of our gender work.
- We have supported a CELCIS and Who Cares? Scotland led event on implementing the COWA recommendation for guaranteed entry for care experienced learners and will be working with the two agencies on an action plan.
- We will be holding a promising practice event in September and are in discussions with Who Cares? Scotland on a new programme of work to tackle gaps in success rates.
- We are discussing with HR how we can support care experienced people in our recruitment processes.

Socio-economic

- We are members of the Minister's Access Deliver Group and have developed action plans for all the COWA recommendations we are directly responsible for delivering.
- We have an internal COWA Steering Group that oversees our progress – this includes the Finance Directorate and the Access, Skills and Outcome Agreement Directorate and is chaired by Michael Cross.
- We are seeking support from the SFG for a trilateral post between SFC, Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland to implement the articulation recommendations of COWA including ensuring fair access and representation. In addition to this we are beginning OA Manager led discussions on articulation and will be publishing data on articulation
- We attended a School led Access Delivery Group and are working with them on an action plan including a possible set of early adopters for access thresholds and a forum to bring admission staff and school staff together
- If the draft OAs are achieved in full we will have met the COWA milestone of 16% by 2021
- We are beginning a review of the Widening Access and Retention Fund allocated to Post 92s
- We are considering early warning systems for COWA delivering through the Early Access Return and OA self-evaluation processes

Areas where there is no policy work

There is currently no policy work in the following areas. A recent assessment of outcomes by sexual orientation outlines that there is a higher likelihood of drop outs for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual students. The data quality is also problematic with high levels of non-disclosure in this field which means it is not possible to include it in our national statistics at this stage.

- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity