Attracting diversity
Think equality, do equality

Ayrshire College is fully committed to challenging discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, promoting inclusion and celebrating the diversity of all of its students, staff, visitors and College partners.
Gender representation and Foundation Apprenticeships

Background

Foundation Apprenticeships are unique learning experiences in that S5 and S6 pupils can complete an industry recognised qualification as part of their senior phase school curriculum.

Ayrshire College offers three Foundation Apprenticeships in:
- Engineering
- Information Technology: Software Development
- Social Services: Children and Young People

In August 2016, the Engineering Foundation Apprenticeship course was the only one able to successfully attract enough interest. It currently has 10 Foundation Apprentices enrolled.

Of those enrolled on this course, all are male.

This means initial female engagement did not convert into applications and enrolments.
While the other two College Foundation Apprenticeship courses were unable to attract the optimal student number to be viable, they too wholly reflected gendered choices in terms of interest.

This provided the basis to focus the ECU project on gender representation and our College Foundation Apprenticeship courses. The nature of these courses also allows for changes to be implemented and evaluated.

Now in year two, the College is progressing positively by beginning to implement a range of actions focused primarily on the application and recruitment stages of the learner journey.

The very premise of Foundation Apprenticeships, arguably, is to support the continued development of a fairer, more equal Scotland.

It is for this reason Foundation Apprenticeship courses need to have noticeable gender balances in engagement, participation and success.
This means the College is taking actions to encourage fair gender representation in our Foundation Apprenticeship courses.

By the end of the project, the College aims to be in a position where it can demonstrate change and evidence successful outcomes in relation to gender representation and Foundation Apprenticeship courses.

It is hoped therefore by taking these actions, a trend increase in male and female representation throughout key stages of the learner journey will be witnessed where under-representation currently exists.

A small project team has been established which feeds into the Foundation Apprenticeship Project Board and the College’s Values, Equality, Inclusion and Wellbeing Steering Group.

A project action plan and a yearly work plan are in place to support the development of the project.

The actions currently being undertaken relate to:

- College infrastructure
- Influencing the influencers
The project is progressing positively however, it is a learning process meaning we need to think further about the development of systems so they effectively monitor progress throughout the whole project life-span.

Further considerations are related to the following:
- How do we know impact in gender representation is a result of project actions?
- What can we develop to share learning within the College after project ends?

ECU project
Learning

ECU project
Initial findings

We are seeing changes in gender representation but this is particularly in regards to the Engineering course – a higher number of females for Aug 2017 start in comparison to Aug 2016 start.

ECU project
Key next steps

- Analysis – numbers and student feedback to start comparative between Aug 2016-Aug 2017
- College systems development to monitor equalities data and leaver destination
- Audit equalities tool
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RAISING ASPIRATIONS
INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENT
INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES