The University of Aberdeen - ECU Attracting Diversity Project
Developing a Schools Outreach resource to breakdown gender barriers in Computing Science

Our Vision:
The University is participating in this project because of its commitment to Widening Participation and ensuring the highest standard of equality and diversity practice in student recruitment.

The University welcome’s a diverse population of new students into its community each year and this diversity is recognised as one of the institution’s greatest strengths. This recognition is stated in University Policy. “The University’s vision is to strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates the diversity of the University’s staff and students.”

Our aim in the first two years of the project was to build upon this strength through an increased understanding of our student population, any equality and diversity issues in our recruitment processes and the experiences of our students.

Equipped with this greater understanding and awareness the University is working towards addressing any gaps or issues that have been identified.

One of the areas that we identified as having a substantial imbalance in terms of gender recruitment is **Computing Science**. The main focus of the next stage in our project will the development of an outreach resource that will help to address these issues.

The aims of our project are as follows:
1. To develop an educational resource to use in local secondary schools that will help to break down barriers, change misconceptions and ultimately help the University (and other institutions) to increase the diversity of who we recruit into our **Computing Science** degree programmes.
2. To increase awareness and understanding of **Computing Science** as an academic subject and the career opportunities in this field.
3. Help the University to learn more about how **Computing Science** (and the University more generally) is perceived by pupils, teachers and key influencers like parents.
4. Ultimately this project will enable the University to develop an “off the-shelve” resource that will help the institution to address gaps in other academic subjects through positive outreach work.

Our plan:

- Contact local secondary schools to invite interest
- Develop plan with partner schools
- Develop subject specific resources with academic team
- Carry out workshops in schools
- Carry out research with parents and other key influencers
- Evaluate findings
- Measure the impact of the project
- Develop the resource for other subject areas.

Summary of Activities & Research to date:

- Completed analysis of the Home (Scot & EU) recruitment data for **Computing Science**.
- The core project team has been assembled – encompassing both academic and professional services staff.
- Currently recruiting Post-grad / PHD assistants and demonstrators for the in school work.
- Currently developing the resources needed for the in school work – an informative mixture of presentations, demonstrations and practical exercises.
- Two partner secondary schools have agreed to take part in the project. Both are rurally based Widening Participation target schools.
- Project linked to the University’s SFC Gender Action Plan.