How to embed equality in outcome agreements

Toolkit for higher education institutions

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) issued revised guidance on outcome agreements for 2017 to 2020 on 5 October 2016.

This toolkit will support higher education institutions (HEIs) to address the equality related requirements of 2017-2020 outcome agreements. This toolkit should be read in conjunction with the SFC’s guidance for 2017-20 outcome agreements.

There is considerable overlap between Scottish government and SFC’s equality related priorities, broader widening access aims, legislative equality duties and outcome agreement requirements. Outcome agreements are therefore a key vehicle through which HEIs can address their own, Scottish government and SFC’s strategic equality aims, while also evidencing their progress on meeting their equality duties.

This toolkit therefore also outlines how to align development of outcome agreements with wider equality duties and reporting requirements.

The toolkit includes guidance on how to embed equality into outcome agreements, through:

- using equality impact assessment as an essential tool
- aligning and embedding information from existing and planned equality work, including equality outcomes and other key equality reporting, into the outcome agreement
- addressing the SFC’s strategic equality aims and specific equality priorities

Resources and recommendations are included throughout to support embedding of equality.
Overview

‘Equality and diversity is a theme that touches on all of SFC’s priority areas. SFC and individual institutions have a legislative duty to respond to the general and Scottish specific duties of the Equality Act (2010).

SFC’s equality outcomes and ambition … are closely aligned with the principles and duties of the Act, and are delivered through sector strategies. These strategies include, but are not restricted to: SFC’s Gender Action Plan, the Race Equality Framework 2016-30, the British Sign Language National Plan, and the final report of the Commission on Widening Access.’

SFC outcome agreement guidance 2017-18

All HEIs and the SFC have a legal duty to mainstream equality across their work under the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty Scottish duties (equality duties). In relation to the current position with equalities reporting, a number of new reports must be in place by April 2017. This provides an opportunity for institutions to ensure alignment between their equality duties and the development of their outcome agreements.

SFC requires HEIs to demonstrate their fulfilment of the equality duties in their outcome agreements through:

- undertaking equality impact assessment of their outcome agreement
- identifying alignment with institutional equality and diversity activities and applying a ‘cross-cutting’ approach to mainstream equality within their outcome agreement

SFC also sets a number of specific equality priorities for HEIs to achieve.

- Inclusivity and widening access: evidence of an inclusive approach, based on fair and accessible opportunities for all and widening access for those from protected characteristic groups. This includes:
  - an improvement in the gender balance of the student population in imbalanced subjects and identifying and addressing gender imbalances in retention
  - development of plans to support the British Sign Language (BSL) Act
  - supporting staff and students who are carers
  - identifying and promoting improved graduate entry employability rates of specific learner groups, including those with disabilities

- Promoting gender equality in relation to staff, including:
  - addressing gender imbalances at senior academic level
  - working towards eliminating the gender pay gap
  - enhancing the development and diversity of researchers (including ongoing ambitions for ECU’s Athena SWAN and Excellence in Research recognition)
  - addressing equality and diversity issues identified by the REF 2014

- Meeting equality and diversity within governance requirements, ensuring compliance with legislative equality requirements and addressing the gender balance of boards.
Role of equality and diversity leads

HEIs will benefit from involving their institutional equality and diversity leads to help address the above. The SFC outcome agreement guidance notes:

‘University equality and diversity leads can advise on the institution’s published equality outcomes and the development of new equality outcomes for publication by April 2017, to ensure that there is alignment with institutional equality and diversity work, including specialist skills in equality impact assessment.’

Resources


ECU (2012) The public sector equality duty: specific duties for Scotland
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/the-public-sector-equality-duty-specific-duties-for-scotland

ECU (2016) Setting equality outcomes: guidance for Scottish institutions
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/setting-equality-outcomes-guidance-for-scottish-institutions
Equality impact assessment of outcome agreements

Under the equality duties, HEIs must assess and review the impact that new or revised policies and strategies may have on equality for students and staff. This duty applies to outcome agreements, including annual revisions to outcome agreements.

The SFC asks HEIs to demonstrate their fulfilment of this duty in 2017-20 outcome agreements.

Undertaking an equality impact assessment (EIA) of the agreement can ensure the HEI:

1. uses evidence to identify priorities for advancing equality in relation to all protected characteristics, and can embed these within the agreement and its implementation.
2. meets the duty to assess the potential equality impact of its outcome agreement.
3. makes the outcome agreement effective for as many people as possible.

Current practice

Within the 2016/17 outcome agreements, only one institution stated that an equality impact assessment had been undertaken on the agreement and only five institutions made any reference to equality impact assessment taking place more broadly.

Recommendations

1. **Undertake EIA during the drafting of the outcome agreement** to enable any findings to inform the final agreement.
2. **Use a range of equality evidence** to inform the assessment, for example existing data such as student and staff monitoring data, departmental data, or staff and student survey results.
3. **Involve students and staff** to help determine impact on different groups
   
   SFC states: ‘...we expect universities to summarise how – from the outset of the process – their outcome agreements have been developed in consultation with students, the university’s students’ association, staff, and with trade union representatives.’

4. **Involve an equality specialist** with experience of undertaking EIA to assist in the process. SFC suggests using institutional equality and diversity leads to provide advice.
5. **Use the results** of the assessment to shape the outcome agreement, equality priorities and implementation.
6. **Record and publish** the results of the assessment (ie what was found and what action was then taken). This should preferably be published on the institution’s website at the same time as the outcome agreement. Full EIA documents do not need to be included within the agreement; they can be provided either via a link to the institution’s website, or as an annex.

Resources

ECU overview of EIA


EHRC Scotland non-statutory guidance on assessing impact


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October 2016
Aligning outcome agreements with equality strategy and reporting

Alignment with equality strategy

SFC identifies key equality related outcomes and measures within their priority for ‘high performing institutions’. SFC is seeking evidence of how institutions will promote equality and diversity in their operation and help to create a more equal society. Within the SFC’s priority outcome 5, HEIs are specifically asked to summarise how they:

- **promote equality and diversity** in all their activities
- **address statutory requirements** to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
- **use data and consultation processes** to evidence and address underrepresentation of protected characteristic groups

Equality and diversity as a cross cutting theme and alignment with equality reporting

Equality and diversity is identified within the SFC outcome agreement guidance as a cross-cutting theme for 2017-2020. As well as ensuring equality impact assessment is undertaken to identify equality priorities relating to each outcome agreement priority, SFC expects HEIs to demonstrate the links to the institution’s cyclical equality duties reporting, including its equality outcomes and mainstreaming reports. This provides opportunity for embedding information from these sources to demonstrate equality as a cross-cutting theme, as well as evidencing the institution’s work to meet the equality duties and enable this work to be more easily embedded into core business plans and activities.

Outcome agreement authors may wish to note the specific requirements for further equality reporting by April 2017 to cover the period 2017-21:

- A report on mainstreaming the public sector equality duty (which includes employee information)
- A new set of equality outcomes, prepared using involvement and evidence, and reasons if the equality outcomes do not cover every protected characteristic
- A report on progress made towards achieving the previous set of institutional equality outcomes
- Gender pay gap information
- A statement on equal pay and occupational segregation for gender, disability and race

While these reports will not be complete before outcome agreement negotiations conclude, work will already be underway in institutions to prepare for this new legislative equality reporting cycle and there may be draft equality outcomes or equality priorities that could be utilised. It therefore may be helpful to involve those who are or will be leading this work to assist with developing the outcome agreement.
Current practice

In 2016/17 outcome agreements:

= Widening participation and access focused largely on activity linked to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and support for care leavers. In most cases, there did not appear to be an integrated approach to considering the impact of protected characteristics alongside other factors.

= Roughly a quarter of HEIs made reference to the equality duties with relatively few institutions including any information on how they were meeting the duties or explicitly making links to their equality reports.

= Only half of HEIs referred to the institution’s equality outcomes.

= In some cases, institutions provided a link to their key documents or mentioned the relevance of specific equality outcomes to the agreement.

= A minority of HEIs included key outputs or milestones for delivery of their equality outcomes for 2016/17.

Scotland’s Rural College

= Provided a link to their mainstreaming report, equality outcomes report, employment and gender pay gap information.

University of Strathclyde

= Referred to equality data being provided to faculties, academic schools and professional services for planning purposes, and to ensure the diverse needs of all students are met. This includes data on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, gender reassignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity.

University of the Highlands and Islands

= Has appointed an equality outcomes adviser to work across the partnership to identify how equality is being mainstreamed within the academic partners and on a cross university basis, to support and advance implementation of the university’s strategies and policies.

Recommendations

HEIs can align strategic priorities and equality activities within 2017-202 outcome agreements by:

1. Including information on the institution’s mission and values as they relate to equality and diversity and the institution’s overall approach to the equality duties. This information may be most helpful in an introductory section or a specific equality section.

2. Undertaking equality impact assessment of the outcome agreement to support the identification of priorities for advancing equality for all protected characteristics and demonstration of equality as a cross-cutting theme.

3. Identifying and demonstrating the interrelationships between institutional equality and diversity reporting and the development of outcome agreement priorities. This could include:
Co-ordinating involvement of key institutional partners to contribute to and develop the outcome agreement, including expertise from institutional equality and diversity leads.

Providing information on the development of the institution’s new equality outcomes, mainstreaming report and employee information, including gender pay gap and occupational segregation, for 2017-2021, including any draft priorities or deliverables that are available at this stage.

Signposting to the HEI’s previous equality reports, including equality outcomes and accompanying plans, mainstreaming reports, equal pay and occupational segregation statements, gender pay gap and staff monitoring information, preferably providing links.

Resources


ECU (2012) The public sector equality duty: specific duties for Scotland
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/the-public-sector-equality-duty-specific-duties-for-scotland

ECU (2016) Setting equality outcomes: guidance for Scottish institutions
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/setting-equality-outcomes-guidance-for-scottish-institutions
SFC’s specific equality priorities for 2017 – 2020

To implement government priorities, SFC’s expectations of HEIs for 2017-2020 outcome agreements are to address:

Priority 1: Inclusivity and widening access issues:

Evidence of an inclusive approach, based on fair and accessible opportunities for all and widening access for those from protected characteristic groups.

Certain protected characteristic groups are underrepresented in HE education as a whole, at institutional level, or within particular subject areas. Other groups can face barriers in institutions that impact on their recruitment, retention and attainment.

Institutions are asked to outline:

- steps they are taking to address barriers to participation, including recruitment, progression, and retention for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and protected groups;
- institutional data on protected characteristic groups and ambitions for any area of underrepresentation;
- the intersection of socio-economic deprivation and protected characteristics and how this can have an impact on their students.

Note: See priority 2 for further information on student gender balance.

Current practice

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<th>Student equality data included in 2016/17 OAs</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Narrative on entrants by gender</td>
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<td>Narrative on entrants by age groups</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative on entrants by sexual orientation and religion and belief</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
University of Edinburgh

- Outlined a range of measures in place to identify the factors affecting gender imbalance and provide evidence to support and inform policy change.

Open University

- Referred to its approach to supporting transgender students and the development of a support policy on this matter.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

- Referred to the establishment of a BA performance course in British Sign Language (BSL) and English in response to applicant and industry demand.

Recommendations

1. **Analyse HEI student journey data to identify differences in participation and access** (attraction, retention and success) by protected characteristic to include gender (including gender disparities across subjects), disability, age, by each ethnic group and, where possible, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

2. **Compare HEI data to external data to identify underrepresentation**, such as Scottish census, local authority data and national HEI data (published by SFC and ECU).

3. **Set appropriate targets on student entrants, retention and attainment by protected characteristic.** Consult with key institutional equality and diversity leads to consider appropriate targets linked to the development of new equality outcomes for April 2017.

4. **Work with key staff involved in widening participation activities as well as key equality and diversity staff** to ensure access is considered and enhanced for a wide range of underrepresented protected characteristic groups, as well as addressing disparities across subject areas.

**1a. Development of plans to support the BSL Act**

In light of the introduction of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, SFC includes development of BSL plans within the outcome agreement guidance.

**Current practice**

There was little indication in 2016-17 agreements of institutional work to develop plans linked to the introduction of the BSL Act, however this does not mean that activity is not underway.

**Recommendations**

1. **Consider implications of the BSL Act** and how institutional plans might be developed to support these requirements and remove barriers for BSL users.

2. **Include information on the institution’s progress in considering the BSL Act** within the agreement.
1b. Supporting staff and students who are carers

SFC has introduced a requirement to include the needs of this group in relation to both staff and students; this is a distinct group who have different needs to those who may be described as ‘care experienced’ (and are generally included under a broad widening access category). SFC provides the Carers Trust definition of a carer as: ‘anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support’.

Outcome agreements should now include a statement of current and future commitments to support staff and students who are carers (or become carers) during the outcome agreement year, including plans to promote a positive declaration environment and the provision of numbers, where known.

Current practice

As this is a new requirement within outcome agreements, there is little within previous agreements which refers to practice within the sector. However, institutions may currently operate support and flexibility through their extenuating circumstances policies for students and their flexible working policies for staff.

Recommendations

1. Provide a statement on future commitments to students and staff who are carers within the outcome agreement.
2. Identify any existing or planned actions within the outcome agreement statement, where work has already started to support this group.
3. Develop policies to encourage declaration, mechanisms for gathering information and for the communication and implementation of flexible support policies, where these measures do not already exist.

1c. Employability rates for particular groups, including disabled students

SFC is asking institutions to: ‘identify areas of provision in which high proportions of graduates fail to enter employment at graduate level, and provide an action plan identifying areas of skills development to improve graduate employability, including for particular learner groups such as those with disabilities; and the actions that they are taking to enhance employability and entrepreneurship’.

Particular learner groups such as disabled students may experience considerable disadvantage in seeking graduate entry to employment within the labour market and this may be further affected by the extent and type of their individual impairments.

Note: SFC identifies partnership working and collaboration as a cross-cutting theme to support effective working ‘in a changing and uncertain public policy and fiscal landscape’ to include the sharing of research and resources, work placement opportunities and access initiatives.
Current practice

There is little evidence or information within current outcome agreements to suggest any related activity that may be taking place, although institutions may have specific support activities or measures in place.

University of Edinburgh

- Referred to short term international initiatives targeted at encouraging student involvement from underrepresented groups, in order to gain international experience. This includes disabled students, students from widening participation backgrounds (low socioeconomic groups) and students with low participation in STEM subjects

Recommendations

1. **Use data on destinations of leavers and other external resources** to identify and analyse trends and patterns in graduate employment, including breakdowns for protected characteristic groups and by areas of provision.
2. **Consider and target intervention schemes (eg employer mentoring) to support learner groups** that are failing to secure graduate level employment on an ongoing basis.
3. **Provide enhanced skills support or careers advice for identified learner groups**, in partnership with relevant agencies, such as specialist disability employment organisations where relevant.
4. **Enhance engagement with employers and other agencies** to consider barriers and employability issues and to help address these for specific under-represented groups.

Resources

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2015

The Scottish government online Scotland census data explorer allows national or local analysis of demographics by sex, age and ethnicity. Reports can be produced for a range of geographic areas, including local authority, postcode, and health board areas:
www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-web/home.html

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

http://www.agcas.org.uk/assets/download?file=6041&parent=74
Priority 2: Gender related requirements for students and staff

Gender is identified by the SFC as a strong focus for action and another cross-cutting theme, which includes the specific areas of activity identified below.

2a. Student gender balance issues, including retention

There is a strong focus in SFC outcome agreement requirements on addressing gender balance in subject areas for which there is considerable under-representation of either male or female students. This builds on previous established work and initiatives within the sector in conjunction with the development of gender action plans which will set a clear future direction for institutions.

Key issues for HEIs to address in outcome agreements include:

- **Identifying where there is an imbalance between male and female students** within retention, by subject, and how they intend to address the imbalance.
- **How gender imbalances within specified subjects are being tackled, as well as/or in any other subjects in which there are severe gender imbalances** within their institution.
- **How widening access activities can help** to address both gender imbalances at a subject level and the lower rates of engagement of males from deprived backgrounds.

See [section on inclusivity and widening access](#) for further information on student underrepresentation.

**Current practice**

- Within the outcome agreements for 2016-17, 13 HEIs provided data on one or more aspects of gender balance within their institutions and/or subject areas and all 19 HEIs referred to addressing some aspect of gender balance as part of the agreement.
- Many mentioned involvement in current ECU [Attracting diversity](#) projects addressing student gender balance.
- A number of institutions referred to monitoring policies and gender balance in attracting students but few provided specific monitoring data relating to male and female retention rates within subject or programme areas.

**University of Strathclyde**

- Included information about gender imbalanced subjects but in addition to focusing on equality issues for women, recognise where attention also needs to be focused on male participation in areas of underrepresentation (for example, primary education). Information is also included about the use of equality data which is provided to faculties, academic schools and professional services for planning purposes; this includes data on gender.

**Heriot-Watt University**

- Referred to their continuing aims to address gender imbalance issues in their subject areas which are dominated by technological and STEM subjects. Work to address the issue is being supported by a number of measures, including involvement in ECU’s Athena SWAN, monitoring of admissions and applications to avoid gender bias and aims to set a formal target.
in the 2017-18 outcome agreement. There are also aims to improve male underrepresentation in psychology and language subjects.

Glasgow School of Art (GSA)

- Referred to their equality outcomes and embedding their approach to mainstreaming in particular, with reference to protected characteristics groups. GSA cite they will have a focus on identified underrepresented student groups which will include black and minority ethnic students, male students and lower socioeconomic groups.

Recommendations

See also recommendations in Inclusivity and widening access section.

1. **Extend data monitoring where necessary.** Analyse data to proactively inform actions and priorities in relation to male and female student representation and retention across subjects and programmes to help understand reasons for differences and how they might be addressed.

2. **Share data with schools, programme and subject staff** and involve them in discussions about patterns or trends and appropriate targets and activity.

3. **Consult with key institutional equality and diversity leads** to consider appropriate targets linked to the development of new equality outcomes for April 2017.

4. **Work with key staff involved in widening participation activities as well as key equality and diversity staff** to ensure access is considered and enhanced for a wide range of underrepresented protected characteristic groups, as well as addressing disparities across subject areas.

2b. Promoting gender equality in relation to staff

Within SFC’s current outcome agreement guidance there is an enhanced focus on gender equality for staff, particularly at senior academic level and in relation to pay. Requirements include:

- **Promoting gender equality in relation to staff**, including addressing gender imbalances at senior academic level and working towards eliminating the gender pay gap.

- **Enhancing the development and diversity of researchers**, including ambitions for ECU’s Athena SWAN and European Commission HR Excellence in Research recognition

- **Addressing equality and diversity issues identified by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014**

Gender pay gap reporting is a requirement of the equality duties. The median and mean gender pay gap in Scottish HEIs was 20.2% and 21.6 % respectively in academic year 2014-15. This is a larger gap than in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and also larger than across wider society.

Institutions may wish to consider participation in the Athena SWAN Charter as a positive means of progressing gender equality issues and supporting the future work required as part of gender action plans.

The SFC continues to seek an improvement in the sector’s performance in any future REF exercise and requires HEIs to address equality and diversity issues identified by the REF 2014 equality and diversity advisory panel report. The report makes a number of recommendations for HEIs,
including improving equality impact assessment, giving further consideration to promoting working cultures that enable work-life balance of staff and providing a safe way for individuals to disclose sensitive circumstances, considering how the institution is exercising its duty of care to staff.

A further report on REF 2014 has been published by gender, race and disability. This found:

- The selection rate for staff with declared disabilities was lower than for those without.
- A marked difference between the selection rate for men and women, increasing with age.
- The selection rates were similar for all ethnicity groups, with the exception of Black and Asian UK and non-EU nationals.

**Current practice**

- In 2016-17 outcome agreements, no institutions explicitly mentioned work to address the gender pay gap.
- 18 institutions provided information about their current or planned involvement in ECU’s Athena SWAN ranging from commitments to securing an award, to actions resulting from Athena SWAN work.
- Some institutions highlighted support policies and flexible working policies, or work to increase the understanding of equality and diversity of the wider workforce by implementing training and development on equality issues.
- Several HEIs mentioned work related to equality and diversity in the REF 2014 and gave examples of initiatives to address the issues or related data.

**Scotland’s Rural College**

- Commented on their Athena SWAN action plan and recognised the challenges. They intend to ensure wider awareness of key policies among staff, promote more consistency among managers in implementing them, improve processes to reduce the risk of unconscious bias, achieve wider representation of women and improve the quality, relevance and analysis of data to monitor progress.

**Glasgow Caledonian University**

- Mentioned they have set up an Athena SWAN group to enable staff and students to meet and regularly discuss issues and developments; this also links to a Women in STEMM group. They also commented on their successes with increasing the number of applications for promotions from female staff and also successfully supporting staff to engage in the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) Aurora programme.

**University of Aberdeen**

- Mentioned identifying a number of inequalities in staff selection for the REF and plans to address these to include measures aimed at improving work-life balance for all staff, a workload model, child friendly policies around meeting times, and sponsorship of the LFHE Aurora leadership programmes to increase representation of women in senior roles.
University of the West of Scotland

- Referred to a maternity fund, a careers fund and a bridging fund for female early career researcher staff in the schools of science and sport, engineering and computing, to support their transition from fixed-term to open-ended academic posts.

University of St Andrews

- The University of St Andrews mentions it has been awarded the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award which recognises commitment to the principles of the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Recommendations

1. **Use staff data monitoring** at an institutional and school or programme level to identify areas where investigation may be necessary.

2. **Where institutions are involved in the Athena SWAN charter, make realistic and achievable commitments to securing awards**; where possible, commit to dates to achieve specific awards.

3. **Where these are in place, embed key actions and milestones from Athena SWAN action plans** into the outcome agreement.

4. **Include key targets and outputs on staff equality from the institution’s existing and/or upcoming equality outcomes, equal pay and occupational segregation reports.**

5. **Analyse REF 2014 submission data** to understand whether specific groups were underrepresented when compared to the eligible population.

6. **Explain the HEI’s approach to addressing work-life balance** recognising that staff cannot be expected to routinely conduct their research outside of standard working hours.

7. **Outline how the HEI is proactively exercising its duty of care to staff**, for example demonstrating how disclosure of circumstances of a sensitive nature are done so in confidence, and staff provided support as required.

Resources

ECU’s Athena SWAN Charter
www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan

EDAP (2015) *Equality and diversity in the REF: Final report by EDAP*
www.ref.ac.uk/equality/edapreport

HEFCE (2015) *Selection of staff for inclusion in the REF 2014*
www.hefce.ac.uk/media/HEFCE,2014/Content/Pubs/2015/201517/HEFCE2015_17.pdf
**Priority 3: Other staff equality issues**

In addition to gender, other areas of equality may represent particular challenges for HEI staff.

**Race equality**

SFC refers to the importance of the Scottish government Race Equality Framework as central to its strategies. Addressing barriers, underrepresentation, participation, attainment and retention for ethnic minority groups will be important to advancing race equality in line with principles of the framework.

Institutions may wish to consider how they continue to address race equality issues; one approach may be to take forward involvement in ECU’s Race Equality Charter as a focus for tackling cultural and systemic changes.

**Current practice**

In this year’s outcome agreements, whilst a core of institutions referred to race equality for students, few universities referred to race equality for staff and only four HEIs referred to involvement or future consideration of involvement in ECU’s Race Equality Charter.

**Other protected characteristic groups**

Six HEIs referred ongoing work and/or provided data relating to the other protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation, religion and belief and pregnancy and maternity.

**University of Aberdeen**

= Referred to a number of staff based equality initiatives, including: a focus on support for disabled staff, the establishment of a mental health working group, ongoing work to improve the university’s Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, a staff LGBT network (which was shortlisted for group of the year by the Scottish Equality Network) and a race equality working group.

**The Open University**

= Referred to participation in a number of quality standards within their institution including the Disability Standard and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

**University of Strathclyde**

= Referred to the establishment of a gender equality working group for staff to focus on any issues across the university related to gender equality but also extended this to include marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.
Recommendations

1. **Use data monitoring relating to protected characteristic beyond gender** at an institutional and school or programme level to identify areas where investigation may be necessary.
2. **Where institutions have decided to take forward involvement in ECU’s Race Equality Charter**, include aims and commitments within outcome agreements.
3. **Apply the principles and learning** from supporting a specific protected characteristic group or widening access group to other under-represented groups but ensure it is appropriate support for that specific group, consulting and involving that group as necessary.

Resources

ECU’s Race Equality Charter  
www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter-mark/

ECU (2016) **Supporting transgender staff and students** (new guidance available shortly)  
www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/inclusive-environment/providing-support/trans-people

Priority 4: Equality within governance

SFC asks institutions to summarise how they ensure continuous improvements in the quality of their governance, including work being undertaken to address the gender balance of boards.

This aligns with the Scottish Code of good higher education governance requirements to ensure both compliance and good practice in relation to equality and diversity and to establish a policy and goals on governing body membership in relation to equality and diversity.

Current practice

There was little evidence of equality in governance reflected in outcome agreements for 2016-17, although a few institutions did comment on the composition of their boards.

**University of Dundee**

- Mentioned benchmarking with other institutions on the gender make up of their governing body but has also set targets to improve the gender balance.

**Edinburgh Napier University**

- Referred to a 41% female representation at senior board level.

**Heriot-Watt University**

- Commented on improved gender balance of the university court which is now a 13 male to 10 female ratio.
Recommendations

1. **Summarise how equality and diversity are being addressed to support continuous improvement of governance**, for example work to improve governing body oversight of delivery of equality outcomes or equality impact assessment.

2. **Include information in the outcome agreement on the institution’s policy and goals** to improve the balance of its governing body membership in terms of diversity which should have been set to meet the Scottish Code of good higher education governance requirements.

3. **Embed key actions and milestones** for achievement of governing body diversity goals, where these are in place.

Resources

ECU (2015) *Governing bodies, equality and diversity in Scottish HEIs (research report)*
www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/governing-bodies-equality-and-diversity-in-scottish-higher-education-institutions

ECU (2016) *Handbook for governors of Scottish higher education institutions*
http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/governing-bodies-2016/

*Scottish Code of good higher education governance*
www.scottishuniversitygovernance.ac.uk