



The Gender Action Plan

SFC Gender Action Plan looking at positive action and good practice

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The origin of the GAP

SFC was tasked with addressing gender imbalances in Further education by the Developing the Young Workforce report. This is a key Scottish Government policy commitment and its' aim is consistent across many other areas of policy.

SFC expanded that remit to address gender inequalities in both Further and Higher Education.

The Gender Action Plan report was published in August 2016.



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The aims of the GAP

The GAP aims to address the 2 main issues in education which have been holding people back from achieving their full potential for far too long.

These are;

- Gender stereotyping which persists in subject choices
- The increasing gap in representation of young men in higher education



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Key ambitions

By 2020

- Actions to improve gender equality are mainstreamed throughout institutional policy and practice
- No subject has an extreme gender imbalance (greater than 75: 25)
- All institutions have targeted approaches to tackling underrepresentation at a subject level

By 2030

- The gap between male and female participation in undergraduate study is reduced to five percentage points
- All widening participation and outreach initiatives will be focussed on achieving enhanced admissions from all genders



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Infrastructure

- Systems:** incorporating into policies, processes, strategies, leadership and current reporting mechanisms
- Humans:** embedding in staff CPD, and reward and recognition processes
- Resources:** research and understanding, time, finance and physical support
- Relationships:** internal and external networks for collaboration

Influencing the influencers

- Educators and careers advisors:** training, CPD and resource creation
- Parents:** awareness raising and support
- Current students:** embedding in the curriculum and co-curricular activities; awareness raising and training

Raising awareness and aspirations

- Outreach:** workshops, taster programmes, clubs, talks, bespoke programmes, competitions, school visits et al aiming to raise awareness and understanding of and interest in subjects and careers so as to influence the educational and career choice process. Use of role models, single-sex activities, thematic foci and media campaigns.

Encouraging applications

- Recruitment:** ensuring equitable admissions, supporting the recruitment process and tackling attainment disparities
- Marketing:** embedding gender equality and counter-stereotyping within prospectuses, websites and open day activities
- Course packaging:** designing courses to attract non-traditional students and utilising access programmes

Supporting success

- Creating gender inclusive environments:** auditing for and tackling environmental and structural barriers and developing gender inclusive environments
- Enhancing the student experience:** student mentoring, student networks, awareness raising and support for progression into counter-stereotypical careers



A note on Positive Action

Despite some misconceptions, Positive Action is legal and through the development of the GAP we found some excellent examples of its' use in tackling gender imbalances. We encourage the use of Positive Action to address gender imbalances at a subject level.

Positive Discrimination is illegal and a clear distinction should be made between the two.



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Positive Action

What is positive action?

Any Initiative to overcome the effects of historic discrimination. In FE and HE the term 'Positive action' refers to steps that HEIs and colleges can take to encourage people from different groups in order to overcome historic disadvantage, or low participation in education, training and welfare.

- Is it proportionate?
- Does it meet the needs of a particular protected group?
- Does it enable or encourage a protected group to participate where previously they may not have?



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Positive Action in practice

There are several examples of positive action being used to address gender inequalities in FE with great success, these include

- Men in Childcare courses run from 4 Colleges
- HNC Women in Mechanical Engineering and Women into Construction – City of Glasgow College
- SHELL girls into energy, run at Fife and NESCol

And we would encourage the use of such courses



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Examples of work in practice

Jane Henderson

Developing the Young Workforce Manager, Ayrshire



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Stop, Start Continue

Please break up into 4 work groups to identify what you believe your institution should Stop, Start and Continue in order to meet the GAP aims and targets

Please assign a note taker and spokesperson from each group to feedback key points from each group discussion



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