

Widening Participation Strategy

2016-2020



REALISE YOUR POTENTIAL

Author	Sandra Cairncross & Katrina Castle
Date	June 2017
Version	Final
Status	
Owner	Assistant Principal Student Experience



A Strategy for Widening Participation 2016-2020

Strategic Aim - to become the sector leader for widening participation in our communities, facilitating the future success of all students, irrespective of background, through a focus on access, engagement and attainment.

Outcomes - in delivering this strategy we want to:

- Increase students from under-represented groups;
- Improve rates of progression, retention and success of under-represented groups;
- Establish an environment which enables widening participation groups to realise their full potential;
- Become the sector leader in supporting educational attainment and outcomes for care experienced young people and care leavers; and
- Play a lead role in the national conversation on widening participation.

Actions - to deliver this strategy we will:

1. Raise expectations and drive increased attainment in our communities by working in partnership with key schools, colleges, universities and other organisations.
2. Provide tailored transitions, moving in, moving through and moving on, to improve retention, engagement and graduate employability.
3. Embed reporting and evaluative practices to ensure an evidence-based approach.

Indicators – our headline success measures will include:

Theme	Headline Measure	Baseline	2020 Target
Expectations/Awareness	Increased applications from widening participation students	23.5% (2016/17)	30%
Access	SIMD20 Scottish domiciled UG entrants	11.2% (2015/16)	14%
Engagement	Engagement of widening participation students in employability/mobility opportunities	Not available	Mirror student pop.
Attainment	Increased percentage of offers to widening participation applicants	61% (2016/17)	65%
Continuation	%FT Scottish UG SIMD20 entrants continuing or qualifying following year of entry	84% (2015/16)	90%
National profile & impact	Dissemination of evaluation and good practice	Not available	Increased outputs

Our Strategic Aim

To become the sector leader for widening participation in our communities, facilitating the future success of all students, irrespective of background, through a focus on access, engagement and attainment.

In delivering this strategy we want to:

- Increase students from under-represented groups;
- Improve rates of progression, retention and success of under-represented groups;
- Establish an environment, which enables widening participation groups to realise their full potential;
- Become the sector leader in supporting educational attainment and outcomes for care experienced young people and care leavers; and
- Play a lead role in the national conversation on widening participation.

***“We create knowledge
and nurture talent”***

Key Drivers & Strategic Alignment

At Edinburgh Napier University we are committed to the principle of fairness in access to higher education, and promoting the success of under-represented groups who may have experienced barriers to entering higher education for social, cultural or economic reasons. Through Strategy 2020: Building Success, we outline our commitment to delivering high quality education that adds value to the social, cultural and economic communities we serve. Our strategy also highlights the value placed on the rich diversity of our student community and sets out a commitment to offer our students an excellent, personalised experience and a wide range of opportunities, both academic and for their own personal growth. The principles of widening access to our programmes and expertise, and supporting students from diverse backgrounds to be successful are core aspects of this commitment.

This Widening Participation Strategy has therefore been developed to deliver upon the ambitions outlined in Strategy 2020 and builds upon and is supported by our associated Student Experience and UK & EU Recruitment Strategies, Corporate Parenting Plan and our community engagement. Furthermore it will deliver commitments as outlined in the Scottish Government’s acceptance for ‘A Blueprint to Fairness’¹. The delivery of this strategy will be assessed through measures and targets developed and agreed in our Outcome Agreement with SFC, including relevant Gender Action Plan requirements, building on previous achievement.

¹ A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final report of the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA 2016a), pp. 14–19

As a University community we are committed to the belief that anyone with the talent and potential to succeed should have the opportunity to attend university, regardless of their place of birth, personal circumstances or socio-economic status.

Our commitment aligns with Scottish Government priorities articulated by the First Minister

“I want us to determine now that a child born today in one of our most deprived communities will, by the time he or she leaves school, have the same chance of going to university as a child born in one of our least deprived communities.”²

Our previous widening participation activity has focussed on working with senior phase pupils in local secondary schools, especially in partnership with the ‘Schools for Higher Education Programmes’ (SHEP)³ and LEAPS (the Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools), and in providing transition support for students articulating from partner colleges to the University. While these have made good progress in widening access to the University, the time has come to expand our pre-entry activity to encompass more groups and address the attainment gap, while ensuring tailored transitions for all our widening participation students, throughout their time with us.

As part of the 2014/15 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government set out ambitions relating to widening access, and subsequently established the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) to advise Ministers. In March 2016, the CoWA published its final report, ‘A Blueprint for Fairness’, which included a total of 34 recommendations. Universities Scotland has also since published an initial response from the sector called ‘Futures not Backgrounds’, prioritising three areas for immediate focus. All relevant recommendations from both of these documents have therefore been incorporated into this Widening Participation Strategy (see Appendix B).

Our Approach

In delivering our strategy, we will develop a holistic, institution-wide approach, focussing on the journey our students take as they **move in, move through** and **move on** from the University. At the heart of our approach, is a recognition that whilst the definitions used within this Strategy reflect the disadvantages and barriers experienced by certain groups, all students are individuals with their own identities, experiences and talents which they bring to our community.

² Nicola Sturgeon, Scottish Parliament A Plan for Scotland: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2016-17

³ SHEP is an SFC funded programme that has identified 80 schools as having a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (defined as a less than 22% average progression rate to HE, based on 5-year average) - See Appendix C

Priority groups covered by this strategy are outlined below, acknowledging there will be intersectionality between the groups:

- Individuals from socially deprived backgrounds as defined by the following criteria:
 - SIMD20⁴ areas;
 - Pupils from schools with low progression rates onto higher education including SHEP schools and LEAPS eligible pupils;
 - Pupils identified by schools or SHEP programmes as coming from low income families;
 - Care-experienced young people, care leavers and young adult carers.
- Protected characteristics including:
 - Potential participants in programmes whose numbers display a significant gender imbalance;
 - BME (black and minority ethnic) students;
 - Disabled applicants and students.
- Other backgrounds:
 - Access route (e.g. SWAP) and articulating students from Scotland's colleges;
 - 'First in generation' students;
 - Refugees and the children of refugees;
 - Applicants from military or ex-military backgrounds, and children from military families with widening participation criteria.

Although we have structured this strategy around the three key objectives set out below, cross-cutting principles include the need for a strong partnership approach and sustained and sustainable interventions, rather than one-off events, with evaluation and measurement of effectiveness and value embedded from the outset. Underpinning data and research will be used both to inform future actions and monitor effectiveness.

Partnership

The successful implementation of this Strategy will require collaboration and partnership working, both internally between the academic Schools, Professional Services, ENSA and students, and externally with partners including other universities, colleges, primary and secondary schools, local authorities, SHEP programmes, industry and third sector organisations. In addition, we will develop strategies and initiatives which will seek to harness the experiences and skills of our alumni and current student populations to provide role models and mentoring to under-represented groups. We will work closely with regional partners to maximise the sustainability and impact of our outreach work.

⁴ Applicants who have a home postcode in any of the 20% (SIMD20) most deprived areas of Scotland based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Sustainability and timescale

This Strategy has been developed to take both a long-term view designed to meet the needs of the “child born today”, while bearing in mind the needs of today’s teenagers and adult returners. Some of the delivery mechanisms/actions in this Strategy will therefore have a short-term impact on the numbers of students entering, progressing and leaving the University, whilst others, such as attainment gap work with primary school pupils and parents, will have longer-term impacts.

To achieve our aim we will:

- 1. Raise expectations and drive increased attainment in our communities**
- 2. Provide tailored transitions: moving in, moving through and moving on**
- 3. Embed reporting and evaluative practices to ensure an evidence-based approach**

1. Raise expectations and drive increased attainment in our communities

Background

Expectations & Access

Our focus on raising expectations is rooted in our belief that students from under-represented groups do not necessarily lack aspiration, rather opportunities, support and guidance. We are therefore committed to admitting any student who has the potential to succeed. In 2015/16 our [Contextualised Admissions Policy](#) was implemented, recognising that applicants from under-represented groups may not have had an equal opportunity to demonstrate their potential in their previous educational setting. This publicly available policy ensures that, where possible, we will make an offer of admission, interview, audition or portfolio review, to Scottish-domiciled students who are in a priority widening access group.

Care experienced young people and care leavers make up one such priority group we want to focus on. Not only is it the most under-represented group in higher education, with just 6% of looked after children in higher education nine months after leaving school, compared to 39% of all children (COWA, 2016), but care experienced people also have significantly poorer life outcomes than those without care experience. Indeed, we want Edinburgh Napier University to be recognised as the sector leader in supporting educational attainment and outcomes for this group, and are committed to ensuring an increase in opportunities to access higher education for anyone with a care experienced background, as well as meeting our obligations as a Corporate Parent.⁵

Articulation will play a key role in enabling us to meet the ambitions within this Widening Participation Strategy. For example, between 2008 and 2015, 53% of care experienced students matriculating into the University gained access via a college route. In addition, a significant proportion of our SIMD20 population enters via college routes; with 14.1% of articulating students in 2015/16 being entrants from SIMD20 postcodes, compared to 11.2% of all entrants (Appendix C, Table C4).

The University's Outcome Agreement also sets out targets for the number and proportion of Scottish-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree-level courses with advanced standing. We recognise that future targets are likely to remain challenging, however we believe that they are achievable through continued strong partnership working with colleges. Edinburgh Napier University was the lead partner in ELRAH (Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Borders Regional Articulation Hub). Post-ELRAH, there is support from all existing partners for Edinburgh Napier University to continue to lead on regional articulation planning, development and reporting. In addition, Edinburgh Napier provides the largest number of articulation opportunities of any university in the South of Scotland.

⁵ Outlined in Part 9: Corporate Parenting of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Scottish Government, 2015).

There are undoubtedly challenges in achieving the targets for SIMD20 outlined in the CoWA report (Appendix B, recommendation 32), one key challenge being the pool of potential local applicants from SIMD20 areas (Appendix C, Table C1). Within the Edinburgh Napier University local authority area, the percentage of the 16 to 29 year old population who lived in SIMD20 areas in 2014 was 18%, and the percentage of secondary school pupils (S1 to S4) who lived in SIMD20 postcodes was approximately 20% (CoWA, 2016b). This pool is further diminished when taking into account grades achieved compared to entry requirements for courses. In 2014/15, in comparison to other Scottish universities, Edinburgh Napier University was 12th out of 18 HEIs in terms of % SIMD20 population, and 3rd out of the 4 Edinburgh institutions, however when looking at total SIMD20 population (or headcount) we were 6th out of 18 HEIs and had the largest SIMD20 population of the Edinburgh institutions (See Section 3 and Appendix C, Table C2).

In terms of protected characteristics, the priority focus for the Widening Participation Strategy at this point is gender, although the Student Retention Steering Group (SRSG) will monitor other protected characteristics, including BME and disability and stay alert for any drift from benchmarks. The SFC Gender Action Plan (August 2016) set out the ambition that by 2030 no subject should have a gender imbalance greater than 75/25 and the gap between male and female participation in undergraduate study should be reduced from a 15.4% to 5%. This Strategy will focus on tackling these gender imbalances (see Indicators of Success), and act to improve applications, enrolments, retention and success from the minority gender group in these areas.

Attainment

The attainment gap has also been highlighted as a key priority by the Scottish Government, and is the focus of Education Scotland's Scottish Attainment Challenge. Many children and young people from Scotland's most deprived communities still do significantly worse than those from the least deprived communities throughout the education system. CoWA (2016a) reported that by the age of five, there was already a 13 month gap in vocabulary between children from low-income and high income households. Our ambition is for Edinburgh Napier University to be regarded as the key partner in initiatives to close the attainment gap, especially when related to poverty, in our regional schools, working with teachers, pupils, parents and carers from primary school onwards, particularly around subject choices, expectations, opportunities and additional resources for key subject areas.

Outcome

By 2020 we will have increased the access and attainment profile of under-represented groups

Delivery Mechanisms

- 1.1 Working in partnership with key regional primary and secondary schools⁶, and other universities
 - 1.1a Develop a tailored portfolio of activities covering the entirety of a pupil's journey through education, targeting school staff, pupils, parents/carers and influencers, to raise expectations and awareness of the opportunities and benefits of higher education (*Long-term impact*).
 - 1.1b Provide support and guidance on entry routes and opportunities at university for senior phase pupils (*Short-term impact*).
 - 1.2 Provide an "educational home" for looked after and care experienced young people in the region.
 - 1.3 Review and develop articulation and access routes in local and national priority subject areas, or for priority groups.
 - 1.4 Pilot a programme of workshops and resources to reduce gender stereotypes and enable learners to make informed decisions regarding specific programmes with a gender imbalance, focussing on:
 - 1.4a Gender stereotypes from primary school onwards (*Long-term impact*).
 - 1.4b Subject specific issues and gender stereotypes for senior phase pupils and college students (*Short-term impact*).
 - 1.5 Deliver initiatives to close the attainment gap, including:
 - 1.5a Review and develop early year interventions and subject specific activities/resources in partnership with schools, colleges and other universities (*Long-term impact*).
 - 1.5b Student mentoring programmes, subject specific support for partner schools and targeted admissions policies (*Short-term impact*).
-

⁶ Table Appendix C, Table C3 shows the top 20 priority regional secondary schools by proportion of SIMD20 pupils.

Success

Indicators of Success	Baseline (Year)	Target (2020)	Comments
Expectations/Awareness	Will be baselined at start of specific initiatives	Improvements per initiative	Specific evaluation campaigns will be conducted with target schools to measure changes in students' expectations of applying to or studying at university.
Increased applications from widening participation priority groups (SIMD20, students who have been in care, pupils from SHEP schools, LEAPS eligible, students applying via SWAP)	Applications from WP groups (as % of applications from all Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants) 23.5% (2016/17)	30%	Use applications as a proxy for expectation/awareness raising. The range of priority groups will increase as we gain access to more robust data around other eligibility criteria, e.g. young adult carers, free school meals, EMA.
Attainment raising activity	Offers to WP groups (as % of applications from WP groups) 61% (2016/17)	65%	Use offers to students applying from WP groups as a proxy for attainment. The focus is on all offers (unconditional and conditional), as this group tends to be made conditional offers due to the nature of entry routes.
Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants: SIMD20 population	11.2% (2015/16)	14%	Whilst the CoWA recommendation is for at least 10% by 2021, we aim to mirror the Scottish sector average as this reflects our ambition to be the lead institution for WP in south east of Scotland while acknowledging regional challenges.
Care experienced entrants (headcount)	14 (2015/16)	28	

Deliverables

Participants in programmes whose numbers display a significant gender imbalance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subjects allied to Medicine Mathematical & Computer Science Engineering Architecture, Building & Planning Psychology 	2013/14 data 86.9% F : 13.1% M 12.5% F : 87.5% M 6.6% F : 93.4% M 20.3% F : 79.7% M 85.4% F : 14.6% M	82.0% F : 18.0% M 17.7% F : 82.3% M 14.2% F : 85.8% M 22.3% F : 77.7% M 81.1% F : 18.9% M	Positive trajectory toward 2030 targets of no subject area having a gender imbalance greater than 75/25
Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants: BME (black and minority ethnic) students	2015/16 196 (7.5%)	7.5%	Maintain current levels at or above sector average (6%), while monitoring patterns for specific ethnic groups
Enrolled students: Disabled students	2015/16 11.5%	11.5%	Maintain current levels at or above sector average for a similar institution.
Articulating entrants (no loss of time) (headcount)	698 (2015/16)	707	Following the end of the Additional Funded Places scheme (107 places), we plan to mainstream these numbers into our University articulating population.

2. Provide tailored transitions: moving in, moving through and moving on

Background

Historically, widening participation has focussed on access to university, but this Strategy recognises this is not enough and there is a need to provide tailored transitions in, through and out of the University. We currently provide an extensive tailored transition pre-entry experience (**Moving in**) to articulating students starting at the University, and will undertake the steps needed to expand this to enable all widening participation groups to progress and succeed (**Moving though**), and achieve graduate level employment (**Moving on**).

We recognise the need to fully engage students from under-represented groups in those opportunities offered as part of the student experience, which will help them develop graduate attributes and achieve future employability. We will therefore focus on promoting opportunities, evaluating engagement and identifying and removing barriers where possible.

Outcome

By 2020 we will have improved the continuation, achievements and employability of widening participation students

Delivery Mechanisms/Actions

- 2.1 Promote, implement and support flexible entry and study arrangements for those widening participation groups who are at most risk of withdrawing (as evidenced by our historic data).
- 2.2 Research barriers for under-represented groups, and disseminate findings to ensure University staff are aware of these barriers and actions required to support students' success in engaging fully while moving in, moving through and moving on.
- 2.3 Seek to raise funds to minimise financial barriers and signpost students to other sources of financial support so that students are not deterred from entering, remaining in or fully engaging with University life.
- 2.4 Implement a nationally recognised model of best practice, incorporating transition activities across the whole journey for all widening participation students, focussing on academic attainment, progression to Honours and post-graduate study, and employability.

- 2.5 Implement academic development, personal development and employability programmes that attract under-represented groups, recognising their needs and improving their employability outcomes

Success

Indicators of Success	Baseline (<Year>)	Target (<2020>)	Comments
% FT UG Scottish domiciled entrants who continue or qualify following the year of entry: SIMD20	84% (2015/16)	90%	
Proportion of widening participation students entering graduate employment	Not currently available	80%	Need to develop method to measure and track this figure from DLHE statistics. Overall target is to match general student population.
Engagement of widening participation students in employability/mobility opportunities	Not currently available	Mirror Edinburgh Napier student population	

3. Embed reporting and evaluative practices to ensure an evidence-based approach

Background

Evaluation and monitoring of applications, enrolment, progression and success of widening participation students is a key principle of this Strategy. Beyond collecting data to report to SFC and HESA, there is a need to be able to monitor performance around widening participation, identify areas of good practice, and roll these out across the institution and the sector.

In order to accurately identify our priority under-represented groups, there is a need to move away from one-dimensional reporting focussing on a single indicator, such as SIMD20, and move towards implementing a set of measures that captures the full scope of widening participation at the University (Appendix D). The CoWA (2016b) reported that 46% of pupils receiving free school meals and 47% of pupils in low progression schools were from SIMD20 areas, highlighting the limitations of SIMD20 as a sole indicator. The set of measures we will implement, will allow us to track and report on real progress in ensuring equal access to higher education. Reporting and monitoring will therefore focus on the following groups:

- Students from SIMD20 backgrounds;
- Care leavers, care experienced and young adult carers;
- Articulating students from college;
- First in generation;
- Participants from low participation, low attainment, high SIMD20 schools, or those on SHEP programmes;
- Students applying from SWAP and other recognised access programmes;
- Refugees and children of refugees.

In addition we will continue to monitor and contribute to developments in the sector around the development of, and access to, more sensitive ways of measuring individual disadvantage such as young adult carers (identifiable through UCAS as of 2018 round of applications), and free school meal entitlement and Education Maintenance Allowance (as a proxy for low income). We will work in partnership with other universities, and engage with the recommendations in Futures not Backgrounds, to develop these measures, and review and adapt our contextualised admissions policy and reporting practices accordingly.

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of widening participation activities and resources will enable the University to identify what is working well. We will use an evidence-based approach to play a lead role in the sector by understanding the impact of our widening participation activities, disseminating best practice and informing the development of future models of delivery.

Outcome

By 2020 we will have established an evidence-based set of case studies related to widening participation and will be playing a lead role in the national conversation on how to improve widening participation

Delivery Mechanisms/Actions

- 3.1 Establish robust monitoring and tracking that enables accurate reporting of applications, matriculation, progression and success of Scottish and RUK widening participation students.
 - 3.2 Agree targets for individual Schools based on entrants from widening participation backgrounds, number of students articulating onto programmes with no loss of time and retention/progression of widening participation students.
 - 3.3 Embed robust methods of monitoring, reporting and disseminating the impact of activities, and the progress and success of pupils from widening participation backgrounds.
 - 3.4 Develop robust methods of measuring and reporting engagement of widening participation students with added-value activities including volunteering, employability, academic skills support, mentoring, internships, study abroad and internationalisation.
-

Success

Indicators of Success	Baseline (<Year>)	Target (<2020>)	Comments
Dissemination of evaluation and best practice	Not available	Increased outputs, impact and profile	Outputs include case studies and publications. Profile will be assessed through representation and degree of influence at key WP policy groups and feedback from key stakeholders
Develop and disseminate robust data sets to underpin the deliverables outlined in sections 1 and 2	Not available	Robust quantitative and qualitative data sets for all priority widening participation groups and activities	

Monitoring and Measuring Our Success

Strategy Dashboard

The following strategy dashboard will be used to monitor the overall success of the strategy.

What	Indicators of success	Baseline (<Year>)	Target (<2020>)	Comments
By 2020 we will have increased the access and attainment profile of under-represented groups	Increased applications from widening participation priority groups (SIMD20, students who have been in care, pupils from SHEP schools, LEAPS eligible, students applying via SWAP)	Applications from WP groups (as % of applications from all Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants) 23.5% (2016/17)	30%	Use applications as a proxy for expectation/awareness raising. The range of priority groups will increase as we gain access to more robust data around other eligibility criteria, e.g. young adult carers, free school meals, EMA.
	Attainment raising activity	Offers to WP groups (as % of applications from WP groups) 61% (2016/17)	65%	Use offers to students applying from WP groups as a proxy for attainment. The focus is on all offers (unconditional and conditional), as this group tends to be made conditional offers due to the nature of entry routes.
	Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants: SIMD20 population	11.2% (2015/16)	14%	Whilst the CoWA recommendation is for at least 10% by 2021, we aim to mirror the Scottish sector average as this reflects our ambition to be the lead institution for WP in south east of Scotland while acknowledging regional challenges.

	Care experienced entrants (headcount)	14 (2015/16)	28	
	Participants in programmes whose numbers display a significant gender imbalance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subjects allied to Medicine ▪ Mathematical & Computer Science ▪ Engineering ▪ Architecture, Building & Planning ▪ Psychology 	2013/14 data 86.9% F : 13.1% M 12.5% F : 87.5% M 6.6% F : 93.4% M 20.3% F : 79.7% M 85.4% F : 14.6% M	82.0% F : 18.0% M 17.7% F : 82.3% M 14.2% F : 85.8% M 22.3% F : 77.7% M 81.1% F : 18.9% M	Positive trajectory toward 2030 targets of no subject area having a gender imbalance greater than 75/25
	Scottish domiciled undergraduate entrants: BME (black and minority ethnic) students	2015/16 196 (7.5%)	7.5%	Maintain current levels at or above sector average (6%), while monitoring patterns for specific ethnic groups
	Enrolled students: Disabled students	2015/16 11.5%	11.5%	Maintain current levels at or above sector average for a similar institution.
	Articulating entrants (no loss of time) (headcount)	698 (2015/16)	707	Following the end of the Additional Funded Places scheme (107 places), we plan to mainstream these numbers into our University articulating population.

By 2020 we will have improved the continuation, achievements and employability of widening participation students	% FT UG Scottish domiciled entrants who continue or qualify following the year of entry: SIMD20	84% (2015/16)	90%	
	Proportion of widening participation students entering graduate employment	Not currently available	80%	Need to develop method to measure and track this figure from DLHE statistics. Overall target is to match general student population.
	Engagement of widening participation students in employability/mobility opportunities	Not currently available	Mirror Edinburgh Napier student population	
By 2020 we will have established an evidence-based set of case studies related to widening participation and will be playing a lead role in the national conversation on how to improve widening participation	Dissemination of evaluation and best practice	Not available	Increased outputs, impact and profile	Outputs include case studies and publications. Profile will be assessed through representation and degree of influence at key WP policy groups and feedback from key stakeholders

	Develop and disseminate robust data sets to underpin the deliverables outlined in sections 1 and 2	Not available	Robust quantitative and qualitative data sets for all priority widening participation groups and activities	
--	--	---------------	---	--

Governance

The delivery plan and progress of the Widening Participation Strategy will be monitored and reviewed through the Student Experience Committee and the annual planning rounds.

Strategic Alignment

Strategy 2020

Strategy 2020 Cluster	Action(s) in this strategy	Outcome (what will be different)	KPI (Court)	PI
To Deliver an Excellent, Personalised Student Experience, we will:				
Work with college and international partners to ensure effective student transitions and integration into the university	1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5	We will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased the access and attainment profile of under-represented groupsImproved the continuation, achievement, and employability of widening participation students	Other	% FT UG Scottish domiciled entrants who continue or qualify following the year of entry
Provide students with responsive personalised support	1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5		1.7 Student Satisfaction	
To Build Innovation, Enterprise & Citizenship, we will:				
Provide a learning environment that develops graduates who have enterprising and innovative mind-sets who are well-prepared to thrive in complex uncertain environments	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5	We will have improved the continuation, achievement, and employability of widening participation students	2.1 Graduate Employability	Proportion of WP students entering graduate employability
			2.3 Student participation in co-curricular activities (in development)	Engagement of WP students in employability/mobility opportunities

Other Strategies

Strategy	Strategic impact, alignment, dependency or connectivity
Academic Strategy & Student Experience Strategy	<p>This strategy helps to address key objectives/outcomes set out in the student experience strand of the Academic Strategy, and the underpinning Student Experience Strategy, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “An inclusive environment that celebrates and supports the achievements of all, valuing diversity of experience, background, culture and ability” • “A student population that is highly inclusive, diverse and representative in terms of background, ethnicity, gender, disability, and age...” • “Induction and transition support tailored to all students at all levels (including those articulating into programmes with advanced standing from partner colleges...” <p>Targets in relation to access, articulation, attainment, retention, participation, representation and employability.</p>
UK & EU Student Recruitment Plan	This strategy is specifically referenced in the recruitment plan as the vehicle in which to realise our ambitions around increasing access and recruitment of UG students from widening participation groups.

Values

Value	Impact/Alignment
Ambitious	Although recognising the challenges in striving to bridge the gap for those from widening participation backgrounds to accessing, and achieving success through, higher education, we are ambitious in our intent and outcomes.
Innovative	We will seek to be innovative in our approach to delivering this strategy recognising the need for new tactics to address a long-standing cultural inequality.
Professional	Adopting a robust and professional approach, particularly to the evaluation of our work in this area, will be critical if we are to be both effective and play a leading role in the national conversation.
Inclusive	This strategy is a significant enabler in ensuring the University is inclusive and accessible in line with our commitment to the principle of fairness of access to higher education and promoting the success of under-represented groups who may have experienced barriers to entering higher education for social, cultural or economic reasons.

Culture

Cultural Ambition	Impact
We have high aspirations for, and confidence in, ourselves and our students	This strategy is rooted in our aspirations for, and confidence in, our students, regardless of background as well as our own ability to play a leading role in this arena. The successful implementation of this strategy will not only demonstrate this ambition but show it to be achievable and well-placed.
We embrace change and are responsive to stakeholder, customer and society needs	Through this strategy we recognise the need to adopt different approaches to engage and support people from different backgrounds. We will also use widening access to and participation in Higher Education as a vehicle for positive change in society.

Key Recommendations from 'A Blueprint for Fairness', Commission on Widening Access, March 2016

This appendix contains those recommendations which are addressed through this Widening Participation strategy.

Recommendation 4: Universities, colleges, local authorities, schools, SFC funded access programmes and early years providers should work together to deliver a coordinated approach to access which removes duplication and provides a coherent and comprehensive offer to learners.

Recommendation 5: Universities should ensure their admissions processes and entry requirements are based on a strong educational rationale and are not unnecessarily prescriptive, to the detriment of learners who take advantage of the availability of a more flexible range of pathways. This should be monitored by the SFC through the outcome agreement process.

Recommendation 6: The Scottish Government, working with key stakeholders, should ensure the key transitions phases around SCQF levels 6 to 8 are better used to provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the qualifications and experiences required to support fair access.

Recommendation 8: The SFC should seek more demanding articulation targets from those universities that have not traditionally been significant players in articulation.

Recommendation 9: Universities colleges and the SFC should closely monitor the expansion of articulation to ensure it continues to support disadvantaged learners to progress to degree level study. Should this not be the case, a proportion of articulation places should be prioritised for disadvantaged learners.

Recommendation 10: The Scottish Funding Council, working with universities and colleges, should explore more efficient, flexible and learner centred models of articulation which provide learners with the choice of a broader range of institutions and courses.

Recommendation 11: By 2019 all universities should set access thresholds for all degree programmes against which learners from the most deprived backgrounds should be assessed. These access thresholds should be separate to standard entrance requirements and set as ambitiously as possible, at a level which accurately reflects the minimum academic standard and subject knowledge necessary to successfully complete a degree programme.

Recommendation 12: All universities should be as open and transparent as possible over their use of access thresholds and wider contextual admissions policies. In particular, they should seek to maximise applications from disadvantaged learners by proactively promoting the access thresholds to the relevant schools, pupils, parents, local authorities and teachers.

Recommendation 14: The SFC should undertake an independent review of the processes – such as personal statements and interviews – that are used to evaluate non-academic factors in applications, with the aim of assessing whether, and to what extent, they unfairly disadvantage access applicants.

Recommendation 15: Universities and colleges should increase engagement with our youngest children and their families as part of the provision of a coordinated package of support for those in our most deprived communities in line with Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 16: Universities, working with schools, should take greater responsibility for the development of the pool of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds by delivering academically based programmes to support highly able learners, who are at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential.

Recommendation 17: SDS and schools should work together to provide a more coordinated, tailored offer of information, advice and guidance to disadvantaged learners at key transition phases throughout their education.

Recommendation 18: Universities, colleges and local authorities should work together to provide access to a range of Higher and Advanced Higher subjects, which ensures that those from disadvantaged backgrounds or living in rural areas are not restricted in their ability to access higher education by the subject choices available to them.

Recommendation 20: Disadvantaged learners and their parents, should be provided with clear, accurate information on both the availability of student finance and the conditions for repayment. This should be taken forward by the bodies identified in Recommendation 17 and the Student Awards Agency Scotland.

Recommendation 21: By 2017, those with a care experience, who meet the access threshold should be entitled to the offer of a place at a Scottish university. Entitlement should also apply to those with a care experience who have had to take a break from higher education and wish to return. Learners should be assessed against minimum entry level in 2017 and 2018 and the access threshold thereafter.

Recommendation 22: The Scottish Government should replace student living costs loans with a non-repayable bursary and provide a more flexible package of student support for learners with a care experience from academic year 2017/18.

Recommendation 23: The Scottish Government should develop an approach to allow those with a care experience to be identified from early years to post-school and on to employment to enable additional support, for example, a marker or a flag. Young people with care experience must be included in the development of how this would be used and shared.

Recommendation 25: The SFC should monitor how institution spend from core funding is being used to support access through the Outcome **Agreement process**.

Recommendation 29: The Scottish Government should improve mechanisms to track learners and share data to support fair access. Specifically, the Government should

- lead the work necessary to develop and implement the use of a unique learner number to be used to track learners' progress from early learning, throughout education and onwards into employment.

- review data access arrangements to provide a national process for the provision of information to practitioners and policy makers working on fair access. This review should consider access to and sharing of data held by local authorities, schools, UCAS and SAAS.

Recommendation 31: The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council, working with key stakeholders, should develop a consistent and robust set of measures to identify access students by 2018.

Recommendation 32: The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council should implement the following targets to drive forward the delivery of equal access in Scotland:

To realise the First Minister's ambition of equality of access to higher education in Scotland:

- By 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education. Equality of access should be seen in both the college sector and the university sector.

To drive progress toward this goal:

- By 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 16% of full-time first degree entrants to Scottish HEIs as a whole.
- By 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 10% of full-time first degree entrants to every individual Scottish university.
- By 2026, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 18% of full-time first degree entrants to Scottish universities as a whole.
- In 2022, the target of 10% for individual Scottish universities should be reviewed and a higher level target should be considered for the subsequent years.

Key Recommendations from 'Futures not Backgrounds', Universities Scotland, August 2016

This appendix contains those actions which are addressed through this Widening Participation strategy.

Action 1: Admissions: A system of admissions that does more to level the playing field for applicants:

- Identify and share best practice in the use of contextual admissions. This will include identifying where it is possible to achieve more consistency in their use across institutions.
- Consider how to make the use of contextual admissions better understood by potential applicants, their parents, guardians, teachers and others. We hope this will dispel perceptions some people hold that higher education is an unattainable goal. We hope it will support aspirations, inform decision-making and encourage more applications from all backgrounds.
- Look at how applicants from deprived backgrounds and care-experienced learners are identified in admissions.
- Consider how and where it is appropriate to make adjusted offers to applicants who have markers of deprivation or underrepresentation.

Action 2: Making bridging and other access programmes transferable across Scotland.

Action 3: Building on articulation from college:

- At the moment, where credit is given for the HN qualification 82 per cent of students get full credit. However, that still leaves some receiving only partial credit and some students progress with no credit given for their HN qualification. It is important to consider that where no credit is given this can be for a variety of reasons including student choice. Universities see scope to improve on the number of students given full credit for their prior study and reducing the number who receive no credit at all. We are committed to addressing this.
- We want to work with our college partners to increase both the number of articulation routes between courses and the number of students using them. In doing so we will diversify opportunity and improve the contribution articulation makes to widening access. This should also mean developing new routes to a broader number of institutions. This will require closer partnerships between colleges and universities to develop the curriculum in a way that works for the student that can be delivered in both sectors.

Action 4: An inclusive definition of underrepresentation.

Data relating to SIMD quintile

Table C1 SIMD20 Students: Where Do They Come From? (2014/15)

Table includes all SIMD20 Scottish students, eligible to pay home fees and fundable by funding council studying for first degree in 2014/15. There were 111,305 Scottish First Degree students in total in 2014/15, so those coming from SIMD20 areas comprised 12.58% of the Scottish first degree population in 2014/15.

County Name	Rounded Headcount	County Name	Rounded Headcount
City of Glasgow	4,215	Falkirk	235
North Lanarkshire	1,410	Clackmannanshire	155
City of Edinburgh	920	Dumfries and Galloway	135
City of Dundee	810	East Renfrewshire	120
South Lanarkshire	705	Angus	115
Renfrewshire	700	Perth and Kinross	115
Fife	680	Argyll and Bute	110
North Ayrshire	625	Midlothian	105
West Dunbartonshire	520	Stirling	90
Inverclyde	435	East Dunbartonshire	70
East Ayrshire	420	East Lothian	65
City of Aberdeen	315	Scottish Borders	55
West Lothian	315	Aberdeenshire	25
Highland	270	Moray	15
South Ayrshire	250		
Overall - Summary			14,000

Table C2 Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants (SDUE) to Scottish HEIs, 2014/15, by deprivation quintile (HESA)

HEI	SIMD20	Total SDUE	% SIMD 20	% SIMD 0 to 40
Aberdeen, University of	84	1,523	5.5%	15.7%
Abertay Dundee, University of	139	889	15.7%	34.4%
Dundee, University of	319	2,007	15.9%	35.5%
Edinburgh Napier University	300	2,841	10.6%	27.0%
Edinburgh, University of	145	2,068	7.0%	18.9%
Glasgow Caledonian University	842	4,085	20.6%	40.6%
Glasgow School of Art	42	183	23.0%	38.8%
Glasgow, University of	382	2,778	13.9%	28.1%
Heriot-Watt University	137	1,175	11.7%	28.8%
Highlands and Islands, University of the	288	3,325	8.7%	27.1%
Queen Margaret University	86	757	11.4%	29.6%
Robert Gordon University	163	2,261	7.2%	17.5%
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	12	148	8.1%	24.3%
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	102	892	11.5%	27.2%
St Andrews, University of	38	733	5.2%	14.1%
Stirling, University of	279	1,963	14.2%	34.7%
Strathclyde, University of	417	3,134	13.5%	28.0%
West of Scotland, University of the	1077	3,793	28.5%	50.8%
Sector	4852	34,555	14.1%	30.8%

Table C3 **Top 20 priority regional schools by proportion of SIMD20 pupils (September, 2016)**

LA	School	SIMD20	Total Roll	% SIMD20
Edinburgh City	Castlebrae High	163	198	90.4%
Edinburgh City	Wester Hailes Education C	229	303	83.2%
Edinburgh City	Craigroyston Community High	278	404	75.7%
Fife	Viewforth High	192	402	52.5%
Fife	Lochgelly High	335	745	49.5%
Fife	Buckhaven High	519	1258	45.4%
Edinburgh City	Gracemount High	251	630	43.8%
Edinburgh City	St Augustine's High	248	709	38.5%
Fife	Kirkland High	186	536	38.2%
Fife	Glenwood High	285	889	35.3%
Edinburgh City	Holy Rood High	327	1021	35.3%
Fife	St Columba's High	276	901	33.7%
Edinburgh City	Broughton High	268	920	32.1%
Fife	Kirkcaldy High	312	1092	31.4%
Fife	Beath High	278	1069	28.6%
Edinburgh City	Leith Academy	222	900	27.1%
Fife	St Andrew's High	187	773	26.6%
West Lothian	Whitburn Academy	195	822	26.0%
West Lothian	St Kentigern's Academy	283	1218	25.5%
Scottish Borders	Hawick High	225	978	25.3%

Table C4 **SIMD20 Population in Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants: Articulating and Non-articulating 2012/3 to 2015/6**
(Using SIMD 2012 classification and total known SIMD population)

Population	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
All Scottish Domiciled Undergraduate Entrants				
Headcount	2531	2300	2783	2544
SIMD20 Headcount	276	268	294	284
% SIMD20	10.9%	11.7%	10.6%	11.2%
Articulating Students				
Headcount	500	575	626	697
SIMD20 Headcount	67	83	85	98
% SIMD20	13.4%	14.4%	13.6%	14.1%
Non-articulating Students				
Headcount	2031	1725	2157	1847
SIMD20 Headcount	209	185	209	186
% SIMD20	10.3%	10.7%	9.7%	10.1%

Measuring widening participation in Scottish Undergraduate Applicants and Entrants at Edinburgh Napier University

In 2015/16 Edinburgh Napier University introduced a New Contextual Admissions Policy:

- Students who have been in care
- Students who have been identified via a LEAPS or SWAP route
- Students who have attended a school which has a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (SHEP Schools)
- Students who live in an area of high deprivation (SIMD20)

Prospective students meeting one or more of the above will have contextual information considered as part of their application from 2015/16.

Table D1 Applications

Number of WP flags	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
0	12,641	12,073	12,902	13,017	12,622
1	2,833	2,753	3,163	3,193	3,128
2	407	494	542	589	687
3	30	54	54	63	71
4	0	0	2	0	0
%1 or more WP flags	20.55%	21.47%	22.56%	22.80%	23.54%

Table D2 Offers

Number of WP flags	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
0	6,714	6,147	6,947	6,929	6,912
1	1,543	1,471	1,716	1,730	1,855
2	287	335	364	408	459
3	24	38	37	52	54
4	0	0	2	0	0
%1 or more WP flags	21.64%	23.08%	23.37%	24.02%	25.52%

Table D3 Acceptances

Number of WP flags	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
0	2,231	1,861	2,298	2,234	2,266
1	473	391	440	455	505
2	66	76	70	87	92
3	5	4	9	10	8
4	0	0	0	0	0
%1 or more WP flags	19.60%	20.20%	18.42%	19.81%	21.07%

Table D4 New Entrants

Number of WP flags	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
0	2,137	1,763	2,187	2,111	2,166
1	422	395	445	464	475
2	47	72	88	64	56
3	1	5	1	6	0
4	0	0	0	0	0
%1 or more WP flags	18.03%	21.12%	19.63%	20.19%	19.69%

References

Commission on Widening Access (2016a). A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/1439/downloads#res496535>

Commission on Widening Access (2016b). CoWA Technical paper on measures and targets - March 2016 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00496620.pdf>

Edinburgh Napier University (2016). Contextualised Admissions Policy www.napier.ac.uk/~media/documents/policies/admissions/contextual-admissions-policy.pdf

Scottish Funding Council (2016). Gender Action Plan

http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Corporate_publications_SFCCP052016_GenderActionPlan/SFCCP052016_Gender_Action_Plan.pdf

Scottish Government (2015). Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014: Statutory Guidance on Part 9: Corporate Parenting

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00483676.pdf>

Sturgeon, N., Scottish Government (2016). A Plan for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016-17

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00505210.pdf>

Universities Scotland (2016). Futures not Backgrounds <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/10537-%E2%80%A2-Futures-Not-Backgrounds-web.pdf>