

Mainstreaming the Equality Duty – April 2021

“Stirling is a place where everyone is treated with respect and where ability – not background – is valued.”

Strategic Plan 2016-2021

FOREWORD

Promoting and fostering equality of opportunity is a core value that underpins all we do at the University of Stirling. From the publication of our charter, which states that “the University shall be committed to the fair and equal treatment of every person and shall not discriminate on unjustified, irrelevant or unlawful grounds” we have sought to create a culture of fairness, respect and equality of access to all our services, facilities and the education we provide.

This commitment was strengthened by the publication of our Strategic Plan, which stated that we will “create an inclusive environment, actively promoting equality and enriching our students’ lives by encouraging them to experience and understand the different cultures, beliefs and traditions of our student body”.

In 2017, we published four equality outcomes which set out our priorities for equality, diversity and inclusion. We have made considerable progress towards achieving these and creating a culture where equality and diversity thrive. For example:

- 83% of respondents to the National Student Survey (2020) felt the University was committed to equality and diversity;
- We have made strong progress to support the progress of women into senior positions: for example, 46% are lay members of University Court; 42% are Senior Officers; 60% are Institutional or Faculty Deans and 40% are Professors.
- We have enhanced our staff development provision to include a comprehensive new Dignity and Wellbeing programme, including Mental Health Awareness training, and we run a flourishing and well-regarded Women in Leadership programme of events and CPD;
- In 2018, our Leadership Development programme won the Times Higher Education (THE) Award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development.
- In 2019, we increased support in student mental health support provision, doubling the number of Mental Health Advisers in the Student Support Services team; and
- We have made significant progress in the delivery of our award winning strategy to tackle sexual and gender based violence; including training over 400 staff to respond effectively to these issues, and launching a trained network of 16 Sexual Violence & Misconduct Liaison Officers (SVMLOs) to provide support to staff and students affected by gender based violence

Of particular note is the approach that we have taken to achieve this progress; partnership and collaboration are fundamental to all that we do. We are proud of our collaborative approach, exemplified by our strategy for Preventing & Tackling Sexual Violence and our developing Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy, both of which are jointly owned by the University and the Students’ Union. Over the coming years, we look forward to making further progress towards our equality outcomes and to strengthening a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion where all our students and staff can thrive and achieve their potential.

Jill Stevenson
Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 requires all public sector authorities to produce a report on the progress it has made in integrating the general equality duty to the exercise of its functions, so as better to perform that duty. This provides us with an opportunity to showcase our approach towards mainstreaming equality and diversity, provide examples of best practice and reflect on the progress made since April 2017 to embed equality and diversity into our functions and processes so as to better perform the duties of the Equality Act 2010:

- **Duty 1:** Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **Duty 2:** Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **Duty 3:** Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Our Equality Outcomes 2017-2021

In 2017, to guide our work in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University Court agreed four equality outcomes. The 2017-2021 Equality Outcomes were developed to align with the University Strategic Plan and were developed adopting a consultative approach with wide engagement across the institution, including student representatives, academic and professional services staff and the University Equality Champions through the University's Equality Action Forum.

Our equality outcomes represented the areas that we regarded as priorities for action, based upon feedback from our consultative process and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Progress made to achieve our four equality outcomes

Since the publication of our Equality Mainstreaming Progress report in 2017, the University of Stirling has maintained its commitment to making the general equality duty integral to the exercise of all its functions and processes and has made meaningful progress to better perform all three duties of the Equality Act 2010. This section provides a report on progress in delivering the institution's set of equality outcomes for 2017-2021.

OUTCOME 1 – GENDER EQUALITY

The University will:

- **improve the gender balance in student intake in order to address the gender profile of different disciplines and improve the overall gender balance of students across the institution**
- **increase the diversity of representation in professorial and senior leadership roles and in governance committees**

Reflections:

In respect of gender equality, the University has a culture which creates visible role models for our female students as they commence their careers. In 2020, women accounted for 61% of the workforce in the University of Stirling. There is good representation of female leaders as Deans of Faculty: the proportion of females in these roles has been in excess of 60% in the past four years. In terms of professorial and senior leadership roles, 40%

of our professors are women, 42% of our Senior Management Team are women, and 42% of University Court members are women (46% lay members are women). Whilst more work is needed to ensure there are no barriers to women's progression across the career pipeline, these encouraging figures reassure us that our culture is one in which women are encouraged, supported and empowered to progress into senior positions.

We are also working towards our Gender Action Plan, which was published in 2017 following a period of review and consultation with staff and students to identify what works and what needed to be improved to address gender imbalances. The curriculum composition of the University creates a tendency towards a gender imbalance in our student population; as stated in the Gender Action Plan, in 2017 the student population was 64% female. Analysis of the gender balance by discipline identified the following areas as gender imbalanced (as defined by the Scottish Funding Council – a proportion of 75% or greater of one sex):

- Computing science and mathematics
- Health Sciences (nursing)
- Psychology
- Social work, social policy and sociology
- Education

These aligned with the subjects identified by the Scottish Funding Council as gender imbalanced across the sector. These subjects were the primary target subjects for the Gender Action Plan, with activities initially planned as being likely to focus on promotion and outreach work, partnerships with schools and colleges, role modelling, qualitative research with students, EDI training for staff and improved monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

The University also continues to work towards the achievement of further progress in Athena Swan accreditation, with a focus not just on staff recruitment and development but on the creation of inclusive cultures that recognise talent regardless of sex or gender. We have held a bronze institutional award since 2013 and will seek re-accreditation in 2021. The Faculty of Health Sciences and Support, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the department of Biological & Environmental Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Institute of Aquaculture all also hold Bronze awards. In November 2020, the Stirling Management School and the Division of Psychology submitted their own Bronze award applications.

A range of actions has been introduced and is planned across the institution to enhance gender equality. These include: continued investment in Aurora (the development programme for female staff); training delivered for staff on the academic promotions process, with a particular focus on equipping women for promotion; training in unconscious bias; enhancements to data collection and analysis, both centrally and locally; the introduction of more inclusive and flexible working options; development and delivery of Stepping Stones, a two-day personal and professional development programme for female staff.

Examples of actions underway and planned to further increase gender equality as a result of our Athena Swan work include: increasing the number of women participating in decision-making and in senior management role models in Faculties; installing EDI and gender Equality Champions across the institution; involving female members of staff, as role models, in open days for disciplines with lower numbers of female students, to help attract female students applying at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Gender Equality Evidence of Progress:

Table 1.1: Gender balance at the application stage of the admissions process

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	62.7%	62.1%	60.5%	59.6%	55.2%
Men	37.3%	37.9%	39.4%	40.2%	44.6%
In another way	0.0%	0.0%	0.05%	0.05%	0.1%

Table 1.2: Gender balance at offer stage of the admissions process

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	62.3%	60.8%	60%	58.8%	53.8%
Men	37.7%	39.1%	39.8%	41.0%	45.9%
In another way	-	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

Table 1.3: Gender balance at the acceptance stage of the admissions process

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Women	63.8%	61.9%	64.3%	64.2%	58.2%
Men	36.2%	38.0%	35.5%	35.5%	41.5%
In another way	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%

Table 1.4: Gender balance of enrolled students

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Sector
Women	66.7%	65.4%	64.6%	65%	62.1%	56.9%
Men	33.3%	34.5%	35.3%	34.7%	37.6%	42.9%
In another way	-	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
<i>Sector information from Heidi Plus (2019/20 data)</i>						

Tables 1.1-1.4 demonstrate that, whilst there remains a gender imbalance of students in favour of females as a result of the predominance of women in education, nursing and social work programmes, we are making good progress to address the gender imbalance of students at all stages of the application process. There has been an increase in the overall proportion of male students enrolled at Stirling.

Increasing the diversity of representation in senior leadership and governance committees

We have made significant progress in the representation of women in leadership and governance roles; 45% of Academic Council members and 42% (46% lay members) of Court members are women, meeting the Scottish Code for Good HE Governance commitment to a minimum of 40% of appointed governing body members.

Governance Committee Gender Balance:

Table 2: University Court membership (based on 1 August snapshot)

	Characteristic	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
All members	% women	33	48	48	47	42%	42%
	% men	66	52	52	53	58%	58%
Lay members	%women	25	42	42	55	55%	46%
	% men	75	58	58	45	45%	54%

Table 3: Academic Council Membership (based on 1 August snapshot)

	Characteristic	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
GENDER (All members)	% women	50	59	62	44	43	45
	% men	50	41	38	56	57	55

OUTCOME 2 – MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The University will:

- **Maintain a welcoming and inclusive culture and environment where staff and students feel valued, respected and supported**
- **Ensure that all of our services are responsive and sensitive to the staff and students with diagnosed mental health issues**
- **Promote deeper consideration and understanding of intersectionality and how various different facets impact on individuals to ensure all staff and students receive the support they require.**

Reflections:

The University employs more than 1500 members of staff across faculties and professional service directorates. The Human Resources and Organisation Development (HR&OD) Directorate is responsible for delivering an approach to people recruitment and development that ensures that skills and capability requirements are identified and available across the University. The Directorate comprises the Human Resources (HR), Organisation Development (OD) and Academic Development (AD) teams and each team operates a business partnering approach with faculty and professional service teams.

The People Strategy was launched as an enabling strategy to the University Strategic Plan in 2017. The Strategy is based on the organisational values of openness, ambition and excellence:

- Excellence:** Leading the way globally in our areas of research expertise and through the delivery of an outstanding learning experience.
- Openness:** Being open in all we do, communicating the work and worth of the University to the wider world, and engaging people in the delivery of our vision.
- Ambition:** Growing the University in innovative ways, embedding sustainability, and making it a role model for the sector.

The Strategy also sets out the University's 'continuing commitments' that, "It is taken that the University's commitment to a culture of diversity and internationalisation underpins all strategic goals; similarly, we remain committed to being an employer of choice, through our favourable terms and conditions, and enabling, competitive and equitable staff policies and procedures".

We are well aware of the challenges our staff and students face in respect of their mental health and wellbeing. Enhancing mental health and emotional wellbeing is of key importance to us institutionally. We have been focussed in recent years in seeking to understand the issues and put in place strategies and actions in the area of health and wellbeing. We have also sought to build on our campus environment as a promoter of wellbeing, for example, the Library provides a quiet, safe space, equipped with fiction, self-help literature and supporting materials, also affording stunning views of the campus loch and space for students to relax and gather thoughts, and through features of the campus including the [Art Collection](#), the [Macrobert Arts Centre](#) and the [University labyrinth](#).

As part of the University's response to the impact of Covid19, in spring 2020, and in partnership with the Students' Union, we launched '[Be Connected](#)', a programme of social, health and wellbeing, learning and cultural activities and resources designed to help and support both staff and students. Delivery of the programme recognised the significant impact that the pandemic was having on the lives of everyone in the University community, and sought to facilitate members of the community being connected with each other and offer support for people to remain health and active.

The programme was inspired by the '[5 ways to wellbeing](#)' and therefore based around the principles of: Connect with others; Get active; Learn something new; Give; and Take notice. A range of online events was run and recommended by members of the Stirling community every week – from live workout and dance classes hosted by Sports Centre staff, to mindfulness meditation sessions from Student Support Services and CV masterclasses from the Careers and Employability Services team, with a calendar of events published online.

Subsequent activities have included a new campus wellbeing map, a Gardening Club, Film Club, a sports referral programme between Student Support Services and Sport, dedicated wellbeing promotional activities and campaigns (e.g. University Mental Health Week 2020) and a programme of social events designed to foster a sense of community and belonging. Links were also available via the website to a wide range of resources under headings including learning, health and wellbeing, and arts and culture.

In August 2020, it was agreed the 'Be Connected' programme should evolve beyond the pandemic to become the University's Student & Residential Life Programme. The operating framework, website and communications plans were well established, and as such were easily adapted to incorporate face-to-face activities as well as online or blended activities, such as those that have been operating during the pandemic.

During 2019/20, the University also progressed the development of a new Mental Health Strategy through collaboration between a range of staff from Faculties and Professional Services, as well as Students' Union staff and Sabbatical Officers, and a number of external partners, within the 'Health and Wellbeing Group'. Engagement with students was important in the development of the strategy and was progressed through a number of approaches, for example, focus groups and panel discussions involving University staff at the most senior levels. Once in place, the strategy will be jointly owned by the University and the Students' Union.

The strategy will include a set out strategic outcomes (for staff and students) which will be used to evaluate impact, with impact will be monitored through a focussed monitoring and evaluation framework, which is currently under development.

Whilst the development of the strategy has been underway, the University has continued to make significant progress in its approaches to mental health and wellbeing support. This has included: increased investment in the Mental Health, Wellbeing and Counselling Team with resource being targeted mainly but not exclusively during term time to respond to peaks in student demand; the introduction of the One at a Time Counselling model; launch of a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training programme available for all staff; and introduction of new digital solutions to enhance wellbeing and mental health support. This includes the launch in 2020 of 'TogetherAll' for all students and staff, and a new Employee Assistance Programme for staff, which provides access to free counselling and mental health support. Any student who is also employed will be able to access both systems.

We recognise that different students will require different types and levels of support (both academic and pastoral), at various points during their studies. We also recognise that the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our students has a direct impact on their success and their experience of the University. We work proactively to support student well-being and success, and to be able to respond appropriately when students require additional or particular support. Our overall approach to providing students with support spans across academic, faculty and professional service teams, and types of support includes advice, guidance, focussed support on e.g. learning techniques and employability, wellbeing support, counselling, mental health support, money advice/financial support and chaplaincy/spiritual guidance. We also see the support provided by the Students' Union as being an important element of the overall support provision available to University of Stirling students.

A range of centrally provided support services is available to students, with the Student Services Hub bringing together access to several services via a single point. Created in 2017, the purpose of the Student Hub is to ensure students can receive responses to queries in relation to the wide range of services we offer without having to navigate these services individually. Students can receive responses to upwards of 80% of enquiries via the Student Hub, and in cases where enquires are more complex, the Hub team triages these and refers on to specialist services as required.

The Student Hub model is now well embedded in the University's operations and offers ready access to support in relation to services including: mental health and wellbeing; student counselling; accessibility and inclusion/disability support; money advice; chaplaincy; LGBT+ support contacts; student learning services; administration services; study abroad and exchange; visas and immigration; careers information and guidance; sexual/gender-based violence liaison officers; support for student carers, estranged and care experienced students. From late 2021, the Student Hub will be prominently based within the new Campus Central development, therefore further enhancing ease of access for students at the heart of the campus.

More broadly, we take a student-focussed approach to the overall development of student support provision. As an example, in 2019/20, with the aim of providing timely, student-centred counselling support to as many students as possible, the service introduced a new 'One at a Time' (OAAT) counselling model, which works on the basis of allocating counselling time on a session by session basis, rather than in blocks of for example six sessions, in direct response to need. This had the immediate effect of reducing waiting times for counselling appointments from several months (at peak times) to less than two weeks.

Students can also access support services from the Students' Union. This includes advocacy support, the student-run Nightline that operates via remote instant messaging, and the STEER peer-mentoring programme which has become a Students' Union led service.

Evidence of Progress:

Demand for Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) Services

Evidence suggests that students are increasingly feeling pressure associated with University life. HEPI research from 2017 indicated that, as well as having lower levels of wellbeing than the national population, there has been a year on year decline in the feelings of wellbeing amongst students generally, by about 2-3% each year.

Nationally, it is estimated that 1 in 4 people (students and staff) will experience a diagnosed mental health condition each year; at Stirling, this translates as c.3000 students experiencing mental health issues to some extent.

There has been a year on year increase in students registering with the Accessibility and Inclusion Service over the past 5-6 years; the percentage of the student population seeking accessibility support is also steadily increasing.

Table 4: Number of students registering with Student Support Services with a diagnosed mental health condition

Year	Number of students registered
2016/17	462
2017/18	630
2018/19	784
2019/20	951

Demand for Counselling & Wellbeing

Table 5 Counselling and Wellbeing registrations 2016/17 – 2019/20

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total number of students accessing the counselling service	625	636	494	624
Total student head count	12,934	12,779	15,360	14,971
Percentage of student population accessing the service (%)	5	5	3	4

Table 6: Student feedback on impact of Counselling and wellbeing service):

Impact of counselling and wellbeing service:	2019/20 (%) semester 1*	2019/20 (%) semester 2	2020/21 (%) semester 1
Respondents who advised counselling either “helped a lot” or was the most important factor in overcoming the problem that made them come to the service	45	49	64
Respondents who advised attending counselling had helped them stay at University	50	49	69
Respondents who advised counselling has improved their overall student experience	36	41	59
Respondents who were at least fairly satisfied with the registration process	71	79	85
Respondents who were at least fairly satisfied with the waiting time	55	59	79
Respondents who were at least fairly satisfied with their counsellor and their approach	95	90	100
Respondents who were at least fairly satisfied with the number of sessions they received	69	62	92

***introduction of new OAAAT model**

OUTCOME 3 – RETENTION, CONTINUATION AND SUCCESS

The University will:

- **ensure that the students with a protected characteristic equal the retention and continuation rates of the University average**
- **ensure that students with a protected characteristic equal the degree attainment results of the University average in order to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at the University of Stirling and beyond.**

Reflections:

The definition of ‘student success’ has shifted in recent years. Traditionally, success was measured by academic outcomes or graduate destinations. However, student success can now be considered as the attainment of a holistic set of outcomes that include, but extend beyond the completion of, a University degree, e.g. the development of lifelong skills necessary for success beyond university e.g. resilience, critical thinking, networking; and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and experiences out with the curriculum e.g. work experience, international experience, placements, mentoring, volunteering, and club participation. Student services in the widest sense therefore have a critical role in the achievement of student success by providing students with high quality, impactful services that not only greatly enhance the student experience but also help them to develop transformational lifelong skills and attributes.

In 2018, we proposed five strategic themes to shape the University’s approach to enhancing the student experience. It attested that, to have a world-class experience, students should feel: prepared; connected; supported; evolved; and organised, and in 2018 these themes were approved as our Student Experience Framework.

The five themes are now being used to help shape student experience initiatives and to inform prioritisation of activities and resource allocation. The themes complement those of the Learning, Teaching and Quality

Enhancement Strategy (LTQES), and the strategic priorities of both the LTQES and SEF are being progressed under the leadership of the Deputy Principal (Education and Students), with strategic oversight from the ESEC committee structure.

The results of the 2020 National Student Survey (NSS) were published in July 2020 and the University was delighted to have achieved significant improvement in its Overall Satisfaction score, and to have performed better across all eight sections of the survey compared to 2019. Underpinning overall institutional performance in the 2020 NSS was year-on-year improvement for four out of the five faculties. Our Overall Satisfaction score increased from 83% to 87% placing the University 6th in Scotland and 18th in the UK. Improvement across all eight survey sections was also achieved, with the highest levels of improvement being: Student Voice (5.4%); Academic Support (3.7%); and Organisation and Management (3.7%).

Table 7: Overall satisfaction - NSS

Overall Satisfaction	NSS Stirling Results					Sector	
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	NSS 2020	Comparison 2020
All respondents	89%	86%	88%	83%	87%	83%	+4
Gender							
Men	89%	87%	85%	84%	89%	84%	+5
Women	89%	86%	84%	82%	86%	83%	+3
Age							
Young (under 21 years old)	91%	87%	86%	84%	87%	83%	+4
Mature (over 21 years old)	89%	84%	80%	79%	86%	82%	+4
Ethnicity							
BME	79%	90%	85%	92%	84%	81%	+4
Not BME	90%	86%	85%	83%	88%	83%	+5
Not Known	87%	83%	81%	80%	83%	81%	+2
Disability							
A specific learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)	92%	86%	78%	86%	87%	81%	+6
No known disability	89%	87%	85%	84%	87%	83%	+4
Other disability (Excluding Dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)	89%	81%	82%	77%	84%	80%	+4

These improvements have already supported consequent improvements in league table positioning as demonstrated by the University placing 28th (+17 places year-on-year) in the [latest Guardian University Guide League Table](#).

In respect of the NSS, where our analysis of feedback indicates particular subject areas where this is not always the case, the feedback is explored through targeted investigation and discussion involving, the Senior Deputy Principal, Deputy Principal (Education and Students) and Faculty Deans, and responded to through agreed action.

The University of Stirling's retention rate 93.9% for full-time, first degree Scottish/EU undergraduate students (HESA 2019-20) is marginally lower than the sector average (94.2%) and the Stirling benchmark (95.2%). Improving retention and continuation rates across the University is a continuing ambition one of the aims of our Strategic Plan 2016-21 was to ensure that student retention rates are in the upper-quartile of UK

institutions.

Creating the right conditions to optimise learning is therefore vitally important in order to help students identify and develop their intellectual, sporting and cultural passions, encouraging well-being and resilience and supporting students to reach their full potential.

We continue to progress our approach of proactive, targeted discussion and planning in response to student feedback gathered through the NSS and more broadly, with the aim of ensuring that the University's work is directly focussed on responding to what our students tell us through their feedback.

Widening Access and Outreach

The University has a strong commitment to supporting access to higher education and recognises that not all applicants have the same opportunities. We continue to exceed the 2021 Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) target of more than 10% MD20 student intake (20% most deprived postcode areas in Scotland), having performed above this target level in each of the five years since the final CoWA report was published. In 2019/20, the intake was 12%. We are committed to maintaining a strong focus on widening access to ensure the University remains an accessible and supportive provider of higher education to students from all backgrounds.

Our contextual approach to admissions assesses applications in conjunction with personal and educational circumstances and was fully implemented in the 2019/20 admissions cycle. Eligible applicants (those who are a carer or have experienced care, as well as those from MD20 postcodes) are considered for an offer at the minimum entry requirements. We believe it is important to be responsive to individual circumstances as much as possible within the admissions process; and the contextual admissions approach is one element of this. However, the process itself should also be tailored to individuals. We offer individually focused information, advice and guidance for widening access students coming from school or college, mature students, care experienced and estranged students as well as those with caring responsibilities accessed through our 'Realise your Potential' contacts.

Work is ongoing to develop our Widening Access Strategy with key strategic objectives having been identified, including promoting accessible routes to higher education; fair admissions; transition and induction; and retention and support. A key area of consideration will be the impact of Covid19 on pre-university educational attainment and progression, not just for the 2020 cohort of students and school leavers but also for the next few years. A number of sector surveys have been assessing the impact of online learning and is showing low levels of engagement in some geographical areas and with particular groups. The Commissioner for Fair Access published the third annual report on 5 June 2020. There were sixteen recommendations, which were discussed by the Access Delivery Group and the Universities Scotland Admissions Policy Group in autumn 2020, and the University will take account of sector-level research and our priorities in the development of our strategy.

Our outreach activity is delivered across Scotland and in partnership with a range of education, community and third sector organisations. Partnerships across the Forth Valley allow us to work with school groups of all ages, as well as college students and community groups such as Stirling Carers Centre and the Stirling Champions Board. Our relationships with Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils feed into our wider institutional activity on skills development in the Forth Valley, and our outreach work allows us to create opportunities for people from a variety of backgrounds to get involved with the University.

A key aspect of our outreach activity is to raise aspirations, support students to increase their awareness of pathways to positive destinations and provide support to people who may not have the same access to information about university study. The University works with pupils in local schools of all age groups, and provide a range of engaging presentations, exciting workshops and a suite of information advice and guidance to any year group and at all stages of the academic year. Our relationships with schools across Scotland, including working with all four SHEP (Schools for Higher Education Programme) agencies, has meant that we can respond directly to the needs of both schools and individuals.

Another key area of focus is working with college students and adults who are returning to education through access programmes. The relationships we have with Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) and a large number of colleges across Scotland has allowed us to create bespoke subject presentations in order to increase the students' knowledge of the options available to them for university study. 2019/20 saw a full review of our college and SWAP presentation delivery, responding directly to feedback from college staff, with the aim of ensuring students are getting the most out of the sessions we provide. A central part of that is increasing the information we provide on the UCAS process, a topic that can often be daunting for students. Following the evaluation of previous activity, key themes were made evident around our offerings, which have full recognition of prior learning, and work has since begun to streamline the process of gaining advanced entry for college students. We consistently review and improve our outreach activity, and use a mix of participant feedback, teacher/lecturer feedback, sector comparisons and a range of internal data in order to make informed improvements.

Admissions

The University seeks to provide professional, supportive, accessible and inclusive services to applicants, engaging with over 30,000 applicants each year for a range of provision including degree programmes, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, Study Abroad, Exchanges and International Summer School. In doing so, we aim to provide excellent service in terms of information, communication and response-time.

The Admissions Policy is directly aligned with the Strategic Plan (2016-2021) and takes account of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions good practice guidance on Admissions Policies, guidelines from Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Universities Scotland 'A guarantee of fairness when applying to university in Scotland' published in 2020.

The University contributes to and follows sector-level developments in relation to admissions and widening access. For example, the Director of Admissions and Access was a member of the Universities Scotland Admissions Common Language Sub-group, which agreed use of consistent terminology, particularly in the presentation of entry requirements across the Scottish sector. The University adopted this terminology in undergraduate recruitment and admissions materials including the prospectus and website from 2019/20. In addition, in 2016 the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) published a report called 'A Blueprint for Fairness', which included recommendations for universities relating to areas such as transparent admissions policies, delivering a coordinated approach to access and basing entry requirements on a strong educational rationale, and included challenging targets on access. The higher education sector responded through Universities Scotland's 'Working to Widen Access' report, which had actions on admissions, articulation and bridging programmes. This resulted in a number of work streams including the National Articulation Forum (NAF), the Care Experience Guarantee, Admissions Common Language, Minimum Entry Requirements and the

University Admissions Fairness Statement. The University has joined other higher education institutions in Scotland in contributing to these work streams and committing to the outcomes.

Over the past three years, we have improved our admissions approaches and processes for online applications. The end-to-end applicant journey has been enhanced and external web page navigation and course selection pages have been developed to make it easier for applicants to apply. In addition, a project looking at Flexible Applications delivered improvements to the system infrastructure for application and admission into single modules, short courses and CPD. This also facilitated a more flexible approach to learning, enabling students to study single modules without the commitment to full-time study.

Student Transition and Induction

Student induction and support for transition has continued to be an area of strategic focus for the University over many years, and since the conclusion of the 'Student Transitions' Enhancement Theme. We continue to bring together a wide range of University teams and staff members whose areas collectively deliver our arrangements and approaches for welcoming and supporting students as they first join the University, as an 'Induction Group', to support communication and collaboration.

Review activity in 2018 and 2019 informed a range of focussed enhancements that were implemented as of September 2019 and which, alongside the continuous improvement work that is progressed each year by the range of University teams with responsibilities for delivering elements of student induction, were aimed at providing a refreshed student experience and more effective introduction to student life.

The enhancements implemented in autumn 2019 included:

- Re-organisation and enhancement of the 'Welcome Website';
- Significant increase in the number of University level induction events from nine to 43, targeting particular cohorts of students (e.g. mature students and disabled students), as well as the main student body. As part of this work, we successfully piloted a supported two-day event for disabled students; and
- The development of a new on-line module, 'Stirling Essentials', created to orientate students to the expectations of Higher Education and provide a portal into more detailed resources. The module is provided to new students in advance of their arrival and remains available on every Canvas module on an ongoing basis.

As part of our broader commitment to supporting student transition into the University, in May 2019 the Principal and Vice Chancellor signed the 'Stand Alone Pledge', committing to support estranged students in the same way as care experienced students. In doing so, the University committed to targeted provision of outreach and transition support, and ongoing support for all estranged students including: a bursary; 365 days per year student accommodation access; and designated single points of support contact.

The short-term impact of the changes implemented in 2019 were evaluated through a student survey, focus groups and analytics. The evaluation showed increases in engagement of students with a wider range of induction events and on-line resources; and awareness of support services and engagement with Stirling Essentials. It also indicated that changes including in terms of the use of a marquee as a base for welcome events on-campus, had worked well in supporting the festival feel we wanted to create.

Induction activities were again enhanced in 2020, both in broad terms and specifically to take account of safety and wellbeing considerations in light of Covid19. In advance of the 2020/21 academic year, the

University made information available to students on the commitment we had made to safety, the changes to the campus that had been put in place, the Stirling Campus Pledge we asked all students and staff to commit to, and of course, the warm welcome we wanted to extend to all students.

Accessibility, Inclusion and Progression

We have renewed our focus on inclusive and accessible teaching and are developing a more explicit approach to embed this in everything we do. We have launched a module for staff on how to embed good accessibility and inclusion practice within the curriculum and learning and teaching approaches, and updated our approaches on how agreed adjustments for students are processed within faculties, making them more streamlined for staff and supportive for students. In addition, we are working to ensure our materials are digitally accessible, and we are building on the pockets of good practice around the university on de-colonising the curriculum, such as work in the division of Literature and Languages and work undertaken in Philosophy to promote female and non-white writers. Covid19 has provided us with opportunities to accelerate change in this area, for example, in 2020 we purchased 'BB Ally' software to ensure that learning and teaching material in Canvas is available in accessible formats.

All our lectures continue to be recorded and automatically captioned as part of our commitment to mainstreaming inclusive practice and recognising that many students use lecture capture for revision purposes. Our policy position on this has been strengthened recently with a new policy on 'Audio-Visual Material Produced to Support Learning' approved by the Education and Student Experience Committee in September 2020. The availability of recorded and captioned lectures is popular with students, and supports inclusion. The University uses this within our overall approach to learning and teaching to provide the best student learning experience possible.

We have also worked to support students as independent learners through both programmes of study and co-curricular workshops. In summer 2020, we introduced a series of workshops for new and returning students, focussing on academic skill development, which have helped students bridge learning gaps caused by the impact of Covid19. These, and a series of workshops on digital skills, have proved very popular and have helped build student confidence and ability in areas that have relevant both within and beyond their studies.

We support our students through assessment in a number of ways and aim to be as transparent as possible from the pre-entry stage and throughout the student journey. For example, information on approaches to assessment and feedback is provided in the Stirling Essentials Canvas module, and we provide details of assessment types and weighting for all assessments at the point when student choose module options. Once a student enrolls on a module, module-level information sets out the nature of the module assessment, timing and weighting throughout the module so students can plan their time and preparation accordingly.

Overall, we aim to be very supportive of our students and we seek to take account of disability, specific learning difficulty and the occurrence of life events in our assessment policy position. As such we make provision for extension requests, exam deferral and the consideration of Extenuating Circumstances within our Board of Examiners arrangements. Those students with a disability or specific learning difficulty can have their needs assessed through our Accessibility and Inclusion Service and are provided with an Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments (ARUAA), which then facilitates appropriate adjustments to assessments.

We are very conscious of the stress that students can experience around exams and assessments. Our Personal Tutors encourage students to get in contact if they are experiencing difficulties that may impact on studies and assessments, and the support available from Student Learning Services is heavily promoted during assessment periods. For several years, we have also promoted balancing health during these periods, and we encourage students to participate in a range of activities to help manage stress such as yoga, table tennis, mindfulness, healthy coping skills, and other activities. Our library is a haven for many of our students during assessment periods and we have introduced a Wellbeing Space and blankets to help them relax. We also recognise that staff need support to be able to help students as much as possible and in 2020 we launched a new dedicated website for staff called 'Supporting Staff to Support Students'. This includes a wide range of resources for staff to help them identify students in crisis, provide empathic initial support, and refer and signpost to other, more specialist sources of support – both in the University and externally – as appropriate, and within appropriate professional boundaries.

In response to Covid19, we accelerated a planned pilot of the Jisc Learning Analytics service to enable us to monitor student engagement with online learning. The intention was to identify students 'at risk' and to offer them support where required. We worked with the Students' Union to produce a set of principles to guide the supportive use of learning analytics and from autumn 2020, the use of learning analytics will provide us with data to monitor student engagement in learning materials and activities, which will help us identify successful strategies more easily.

Evidence of Progress:

Table 8: Retention - all full-time Scottish domiciled students from first year to second year

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Gender			
Number of male entrants	605	446	594
Number of male entrants retained	546	408	495
Proportion of male entrants retained	90.2%	91.5%	83.3%
Number of female entrants	1,039	919	1,142
Number of female entrants retained	958	847	952
Proportion of female entrants retained	92.2%	92.2%	83.4%
Ethnicity			
Number of BAME entrants	75	70	91
Number of BAME entrants retained	68	65	75
Proportion of BAME entrants retained	90.7%	92.9%	82.4%
Disability			
Number of entrants with a known disability	223	212	338
Number of entrants with a known disability retained	210	192	317
Proportion of entrants with a known disability retained	94.2%	90.6%	93.8%

Undergraduate Degree Classification by Protected Characteristics

Table 9: Gender

Award classification	Gender	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Sector 2019-20
First Degree Honours					
(first class)	Women	62.3%	62.0%	67.2%	59%
	Men	37.7%	37.7%	32.8%	40.9%
	Other	-	0.3%	-	0.1%
(second class, upper division)	Women	60.8%	60.2%	62.6%	58.7%
	Men	39.2%	47.4%	37.3%	41.2%
	Other	-	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
(second class, lower division)	Women	54.8%	52.6%	54.1%	54.4%
	Men	45.2%	47.4%	45.9%	45.5%
	Other	-	-	-	-
(third class)	Women	41.7%	41.2%	47.4%	53.1%
	Men	58.3%	58.8%	50.0%	46.8%
	Other	-	-	2.6%	0.1%

Table 10: Disability

Award Classification	Recorded Disability	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Sector [2019-20]
First Degree Honours					
(first class)	Not Known, Not Sought or Refused	81.9%	82.8%	80%	83.2%
	Recorded Disability	18.1%	18.2%	20%	16.8%
(second class, upper division)	Not Known, Not Sought or Refused	81.3%	81.1%	74.7%	81.7%
	Recorded Disability	18.7%	18.9%	25.3%	18.3%
(second class, lower division)	Not Known, Not Sought or Refused	82.3%	73.1%	74.8%	80.9%
	Recorded Disability	17.7%	28.1%	25.2%	19.1%
(third class)	Not Known, Not Sought or Refused	62.5%	58.8%	81.6%	81.3%
	Recorded Disability	37.5%	41.2%	18.4%	18.7%

Table 11: Ethnicity

Award Classification	Recorded Ethnicity	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Sector [2019-20]
First Degree Honours					
(first class)	BAME	2.8%	3.2%	5.0%	18.9%
	Not BAME	73%	75%	68.3%	79.9%
	Not Known, recorded or refused	24.2%	21.8%	26.6%	1.2%
(second class, upper division)	BAME	3.1%	4%	4.8%	24.3%
	Not BAME	85.2%	85.9%	82.3%	74.2%
	Not Known, recorded or refused	11.7%	10.1%	12.9%	1.5%
(second class, lower division)	BAME	8.0%	4.3%	6.7%	34.9%
	Not BAME	83.3%	79.1%	71.5%	62.1%
	Not Known, recorded or refused	4.2%	16.6%	21.9%	3%
(third class)	BAME	4.2%	5.9%	7.9%	38%
	Not BAME	79.2%	64.7%	44.7%	51.3%
	Not Known, recorded or refused	16.7%	29.4%	47.4%	10.7%

OUTCOME 4 – INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS AND RESPECT

The University will:

- **maintain a welcoming and inclusive culture and environment for staff and students, regardless of their background or the presence or absence of a protected characteristic and ensure that interculturalism is at the heart of everything we do**
- **develop and maintain a culture of respect and provide appropriate support to ensure that unlawful discrimination and harassment of staff or students is not tolerated in order to celebrate the diversity of our staff and student body and the positive impact they have on our culture.**

Reflections:

The University has a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and seeks to make continued progress in ensuring everyone in the University community is treated fairly, promoting and encouraging diversity, adopting a range of practices that support inclusion, and eradicating discrimination, structural bias and inequalities.

Developing intercultural awareness complements an increased focus on a respectful culture between and across communities with protected characteristics; recognising the value of diversity in staff and students and the contributions they make. Both the University and the University of Stirling Students' Union are committed to:

- **Creating an inclusive environment, actively promoting equality and enriching our students' lives by encouraging them to experience and understand the different cultures, beliefs and traditions of our student body;**

- Providing life changing opportunities – in Stirling and through international exchanges - that give our students new perspectives and broaden their horizons
- Actively promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination by creating an environment that reflects our commitment to social justice and ensures transformational experience are accessible to all;
- Produce graduates who are active global citizens by making them socially, culturally and environmentally aware

In line with its commitment to EDI, the University established the role of Institutional Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, in 2017. The current Dean has been in post since March 2019 and is the first appointee to the role from a Professional Services, rather than academic background. The role of the Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is to provide strategic leadership to EDI, liaising with students and staff at all levels of the institution to create a culture where equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded into all that we do, from strategic planning to operational activity.

The University Court delegates responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to the Equality Steering Group (ESG) – a strategic advisory group that reports to University Court via the Joint Policy, Planning & Resources Committee (JPPRC). Chaired by the Senior Deputy Principal, and with both staff and student representatives within its membership, the ESG oversees compliance with the statutory equality duties and ensures effective delivery of the University’s equality outcomes and supporting strategies.

The ESG is in turn delegates responsibility for operational development and implementation activity to a number of action groups, as appropriate to strategic objectives. At present, these include: the **Health and Wellbeing Group** (responsible for the coordination of work relating to staff and student health and wellbeing, including the development of the Mental Health Strategy); the **Tackling Gender Based Violence Steering Group** (responsible for overseeing the joint strategy on preventing and tackling gender based violence); the **Anti-Racism and Race Equality Group** (responsible for developing the Anti-Racism and Race Equality Strategy); the **Digital Accessibility Working Group**; the **Accessibility in Learning & Teaching Group**; and the **Athena Swan Institutional Self-assessment Team** (which coordinates and drives the institutional gender equality work and the Athena Swan submissions, as well as identifying and sharing good practice between Faculty Self-Assessment Teams).

The Equality Forum was a previously longstanding forum within the University that operated with contributions of identified Equality Champions from different areas of the University, and which provided a constructive point of focus for the equality agenda. From 2020/21, a broader, refreshed group of Champions will form a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum to replace the previous Equality Forum. The new Forum will also form a two-way communication channel between staff and students, and the formal strategic groups leading on specific aspects of the EDI agenda.

In 2020, work has accelerated to develop a new institutional strategy on Anti-Racism and Race Equality and we have been proactive in engaging with and promoting race equality agendas.

The University of Stirling is committed to creating an anti-racist culture and environment. We recognise that black and ethnic minority students and staff are subjected to structural inequalities that impact on their education, career and life outcomes. We want to move beyond generic conversations about equality, diversity and inclusion to a culture whereby all our staff and students have the confidence and competence to identify & challenge racism in all its forms, thereby dismantling structural injustice and barriers to equity.

As part of this our Principal and Vice Chancellor recently signed the Public Declaration of Anti-Racism as part of the collaborative approach taken by Scottish University Principals, emerging from the SFC and Advance HE funded project to tackle racism and racial inequality in HE and FE. Furthermore, in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, we invited all students, staff and stakeholders with concerns about racism at the University, or about our approach to tackling racism and racial inequality, to share their views and experiences with us, by taking part in two engagement sessions in which the Senior Deputy Principal, the Deputy Principal (Internationalisation) and the Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, participated. The aggregated findings from those sessions have been reported to the Equality Steering Group and will be discussed by the University Strategy & Policy Group later in 2020 as part of the development of the anti-racism strategy.

In October 2020, the University and Students' Union once again celebrated Black History Month by launching a programme of events, activities and resources, including an [art installation on the campus](#) as part of the 'Black Lives Matter Mural Trail'. This reflects the University's desire to raise awareness of black history and culture, and our commitment to anti-racism initiatives and celebrating racial diversity. More information on this commitment and our programme of events is provided in a new dedicated [webpage](#). In addition, work to ensure that our curriculum is more inclusive, diverse and reflective of the historical impact of racism and white privilege, and therefore decolonised, is underway. Seminars on the topic were held in October 2020 as part of the Black History Month programme.

Work is also underway to ensure staff and students have clear information on how they can report and receive support if they are affected by hate crime, including racism and racial harassment. In progressing this work, we are building on the model used in relation to gender-based violence which is discussed in the next part of the Reflective Analysis.

Clear arrangements are in place to consider and respond to complaints of racism against either a staff member or a student. The University's student disciplinary procedure ([Ordinance 2, the Code of Student Discipline](#)) includes the explicit disciplinary offence of "abuse, threat or intimidation motivated by prejudice or discrimination". This offence exists at Level 3 in the procedure and therefore potentially carries the most severe penalties. Any complaint regarding the conduct of staff would be addressed under [Ordinance 68, University Staff](#) that similarly sets out the institutional staff disciplinary procedure.

Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence

The University is committed to taking all steps in its power to prevent and tackle gender-based violence in all its forms. In partnership with the Students' Union, we encourage a culture of respect and create a University community that does not tolerate, and feels comfortable to challenge and report, gender-based violence. Over recent years, the University has invested significantly in the development and delivery of our strategy for preventing and responding to gender-based violence, whilst also contributing at the sector level including through our Principal and Vice Chancellor's membership of the Universities UK Advisory Group on Sexual Misconduct.

In 2017, the University won The Herald HE Partnership Award for its work on its ['Preventing and Tackling Sexual Violence and Misconduct'](#) strategy. This was followed in 2018 by the accolades of NUS Campaign of the Year 2018 and THE Awards Runner Up 2018, positioning the University as one of the sector leading universities in the field of addressing gender-based violence.

In the period since the strategy was launched, the following key aspects of progress have been achieved:

- Development and launch of the award winning [#IsThisOk](#) awareness raising campaign;
- Development, launch and promotion and ongoing training of a 16 strong team of Sexual Violence and Misconduct Liaison Officers (SVMLOs), who are trained to provide information and support to students or staff affected by sexual violence. The team won the inaugural Lime Culture Limelight SVMLO Team Award in 2019;
- Development and launch of a dedicated [website](#), providing comprehensive information on support, reporting, and external agencies;
- Launch of new reporting mechanisms, channelled through the trained SVMLO Coordinators, including the online Report and Support tool which simplifies and takes a trauma informed approach to reporting incidents of gender-based violence, and which enables more comprehensive data on trends to be gathered;
- Development and roll out of a three-tier training programme, focusing on staff, students and sports coaches and club captains, focusing on raising awareness of sexual violence through a lens of leadership and performance culture;
- Development of new guidance and support for ‘first responders’ e.g. anyone in a student facing role such as cleaners, accommodation staff, Personal Tutors, security. This was developed in partnership with Rape Crisis Forth Valley; and
- Development of a module on gender-based violence – ‘Don’t be a Bystander, Be a Friend’ which focusses on prevention, response, and the role of the bystander, which was integrated into the Stirling Essentials module for the 2020 welcome and induction period.

The primary focus of our current strategy was on sexual violence and misconduct. The next version, which is under development and due to launch in 2021, will cover a wider range of behaviours across the gender-based violence spectrum, in line with the Scottish Government’s Equally Safe Strategy. As would be expected, staff, students and partners are involved in the development of the next version. A series of focus groups took place in late 2020. National research and the results of local surveys, including the survey led by Students’ Union on the impact of the strategy to date, will also be used to shape the outcomes of the next version.

We value a multi-agency approach based on strong partnerships internally and with local and national agencies and continue to work in close partnership with staff, students and external organisations, e.g. Samaritans, Student Minds, Police Scotland, Action in Mind and Forth Valley College, Stirling Council and the NHS in order to build a culture that protects and enhances wellbeing and positive mental. We were also involved in the development of a city wide strategy for mental health and our Dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) represented the sector on the National Task Force for Children and Young People (generic work stream) to improve collaboration to improve the mental health of young people in Scotland.

We continue to work in partnership with external organisations such as Rape Crisis Forth Valley, Police Scotland and the local Violence Against Women Partnership to take steps to prevent, tackle and respond appropriately and supportively to incidences of [sexual violence or misconduct](#) affecting our students, staff and those who use our facilities and services. This strategy and the partnership that underpins this was recognised at the Herald Higher Education Awards in Glasgow in July 2017 for a collaboration that results in a transformative impact upon students. On 16 May 2018, the Further Education, Higher Education and Science Minister, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, visited the University to learn about the initiative which aims to encourage a culture of respect and create a university community that does not tolerate – and feels comfortable to challenge and report – sexual violence and misconduct.

Evidence of Progress

Response to Staff Survey questions on Equality and Diversity:

Table 12: Agreement with question relating to equality of opportunity

	2014	2017	2021
'I believe the University is committed to equality of opportunity for all of its staff'	93%	81%	Recent staff survey data not available due to Covid 19

Table 13: Agreement with question relating to equality and diversity

'The University respects equally people of different.....'			
	2014	2017	2021
Genders	93%	93%	Recent staff survey data not available due to Covid 19
Nationality/ethnicity	98%	96%	
Ages	96%	92%	
Disabled/not disabled	97%	94%	
Sexual orientation	98%	98%	
Religion/beliefs	98%	98%	
Pregnancy/maternity status	96%	94%	
People of different gender identify	97%	97%	
People of marital/civil partnership status	98%	98%	

Table 14: Agreement with question relating to equality and diversity

	2014	2017	2021
'I understand my responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity issues'	87%	90%	Recent staff survey data not available due to Covid 19

Table 15: Optional equality and diversity question - NSS

<i>"I believe that the University is committed to equality and diversity"</i>	Stirling NSS results					Sector 2020
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
All respondents	87%	91%	88%	90%	83%	75%
Gender						
Women	88%	92%	90%	90%	84%	75%
Men	85%	88%	84%	87%	82%	74%
Age Group						
Mature Students	92%	86%	85%	91%	88%	78%
Young Students	86%	92%	89%	89%	82%	74%
Ethnicity						
BAME	86%	94%	83%	82%	78%	72%
Not BAME	88%	91%	88%	90%	83%	76%
Disability						
A specific learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)	94%	91%	76%	84%	83%	73%
Other disability (Excluding Dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)	77%	88%	79%	86%	81%	73%

Formal Disciplinary and Grievances: cases concluded between 1 March 2019 and 31 July 2020

	Female	Of these, relating to harassment, discrimination or victimisation	Male	Of these, relating to harassment, discrimination or victimisation
Disciplinary hearings	7	0	5	2
Investigations (no hearing)	1	1	0	0
Formal grievances (raised by)	2	0	0	0

Note: There had been two formally upheld cases of discrimination/harassment of staff between 1 April 2017 and 1 March 2019.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION REPORT, EQUAL PAY STATEMENT AND GENDER PAY GAP

Equal Pay Statement

The University's commitment to equal pay

The University of Stirling was established on the principle of equal opportunity articulated in its founding instrument, the University Charter. This underpins our main purpose and objectives. The University believes that staff should receive equal pay for work of equal value, for the same or broadly similar work and for work rated as equivalent irrespective of gender or any other protected characteristic contained in the Equality Act 2010.

The University's approach to equal pay

We aim to eliminate any bias in our pay systems, not only to protect the UK and European legal rights of our employees but also to increase their confidence that the work men and women undertake is equally valued. It is in the interest of the University to have fair and just pay systems to attract the best staff from domestic and international arenas and to send a positive message to our students, customers and other stakeholders.

We recognise that in order to achieve equal pay for employees doing equal work we should operate a pay system which is transparent, based on objective criteria, free from bias and which does not discriminate unfairly between those on different contractual arrangements.

Whilst it makes good business sense to have a fair and transparent reward system that will help us to control costs and follow good practice in workforce planning, we are also aware that avoiding unfair discrimination will improve morale and support motivated individuals committed to excellence. The job evaluation scheme assesses, systematically, the relative contributions of existing roles within the institution and to provide fair and equitable grading structures. Additionally, steps have been taken to harmonise terms and conditions across roles and to remove or reduce non-transparent aspects of the reward system. Evaluation processes for new roles and for the re-grading of existing roles have also been set in place. During the implementation of these processes we worked closely with the recognised campus unions and within the spirit of national agreements. The University Equality Impact Assessment process enables relevant policies, procedures, practices and decisions to be reviewed to identify any discriminatory impact and required actions across all characteristics.

The University's equal pay objectives

The University's objectives are to:

- Eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay; and
- Take appropriate action to address any unwarranted discrepancies in pay that are discovered.

In order to put its commitment to providing equal pay into practice, the University will:

- Conduct an equal pay review every 2 years, covering all staff and develop an action plan;
- Consistently monitor and review existing and future pay practices;
- Ensure that existing and future pay practices are fair and transparent;
- Perform an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) when policy decisions are considered which may impact on pay;
- Plan and implement any changes to pay related processes, practices and systems. Where appropriate the University will consult on these with recognised campus unions and staff representative groups;
- Provide equality and diversity training and guidance for those staff directly involved in decisions about recruitment and selection, pay and benefits, job evaluation and re-grading;
- Inform employees how their pay is determined; and
- Deal with grievances on equal pay as a priority.

Methodology and Calculation

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with 20 employees or more must publish information on the percentage difference between men's and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) based on the most recent data available.

The specific duties require that HEIs should present a gender pay gap figure for the institution as a whole. This should:

- include all staff, including full and part time staff, zero hours' staff and those at the most senior levels of the institution, to give an accurate picture of the difference between women's and men's pay; and
- be provided as both mean and median calculations to illuminate different aspects of gender pay gap information.

The Gender Pay Gap calculation is based on the hourly rate of all salaried and casual staff as at 1 August 2020. The calculation is: $(\text{Average Male Salary} - \text{Average Female Salary} / \text{Average Male Salary}) \times 100$.

Gender Pay Gap Data

	1 st August 2016	1 st August 2020
Mean Gender Pay Gap	19.14%	18.72%
Median Gender Pay Gap	18.61%	18.61%

Gender	Mean Hourly Rate	Mean Hourly Rate
Female	£17.97	£19.51
Male	£22.22	£24.00
All	£19.63	£21.21

	1 st August 2016	1 st August 2020
Gender	Median Hourly Rate	Median Hourly Rate
Female	£16.60	£17.53
Male	£20.40	£21.54
All	£18.13	£19.72

The 2020 the University of Stirling mean gender pay gap was 18.72%, which continues a positive downward trend. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) states the average mean gender pay gap (whole UK) was 17.4% (2019 data). The mean gender pay gap across the Higher Education sector in the UK was 16.1% (2018-19).

In quartile four (highest rates of hourly pay), the proportion of females continued to account for almost half – 48% in 2020 (47% in 2018 and 48% in 2017) of this group. In quartile one (lowest rates of hourly pay), females accounted for 75% of this group (69% in 2018 and 2017).

There are no significant pay gaps in the average basic pay of male and female staff in the same pay grade for grades 1 to 7.

The average basic pay of female staff was slightly higher in grade 3, while male staff earned slightly more in grades 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7. There is no difference in the average pay in Grade 2.

The average basic pay of male staff in grade 10 is higher than that of female staff. It should be noted that grade 10 pay arrangements are not a single pay grade in the sense of the other pay grades because it contains a collection of senior posts of different 'sizes' and at different management levels.

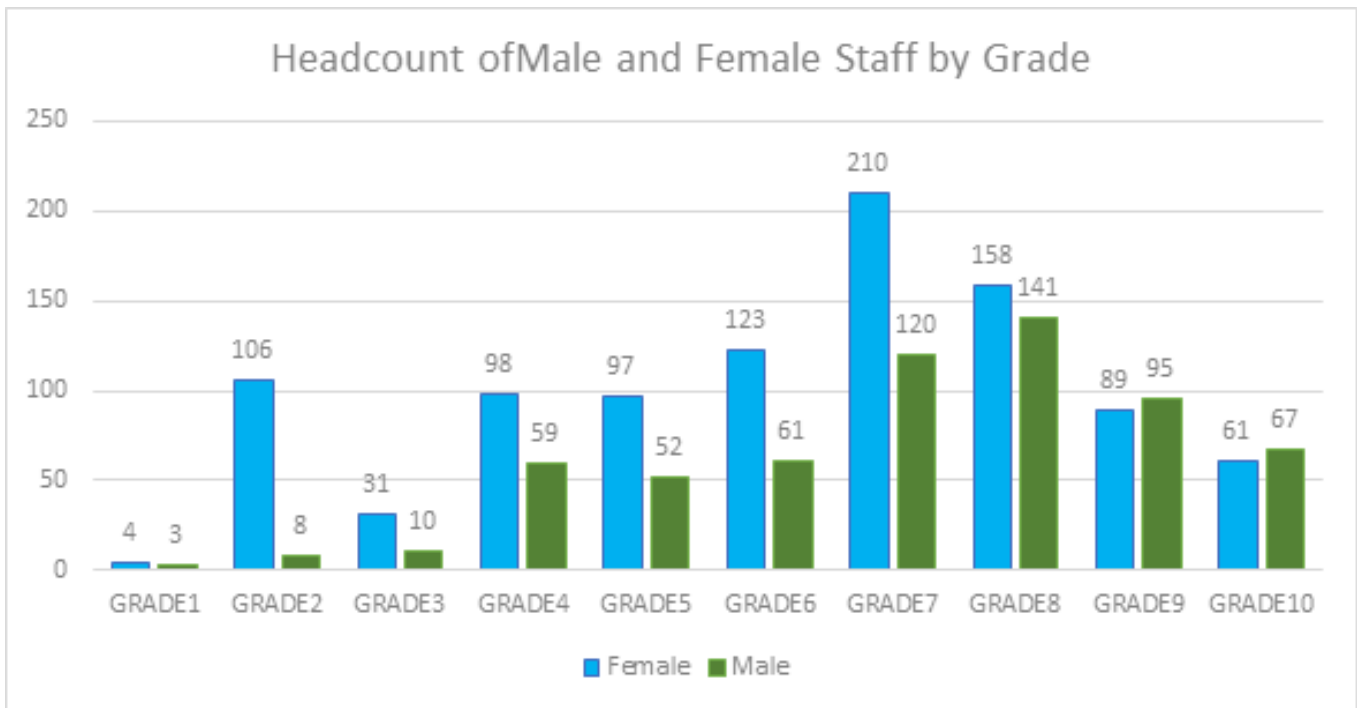
Whilst the proportion of females within Grade 10 has increased from 44% in 2016 to 48% in 2020, the average salary for females in this grade is 93% of the average salary for males, which results in a gender pay gap within this grade.

The gender pay gap relates to the difference in the average earnings of men and women across the organisation. The continuing pay gap is a result of an uneven distribution of male and female staff at the University by grade and (occupational) staff group, i.e. there is a higher proportion of female staff in the lower grades and a lower proportion of female staff in the higher grades. There may be numerous reasons for the gender pay gap, which includes occupational segregation, both institutionally and societally. However, this gap has lessened, and this is because the average salary of females has increased by 10.07%, whereas the average male salary by 7.49% in comparison (since 2016).

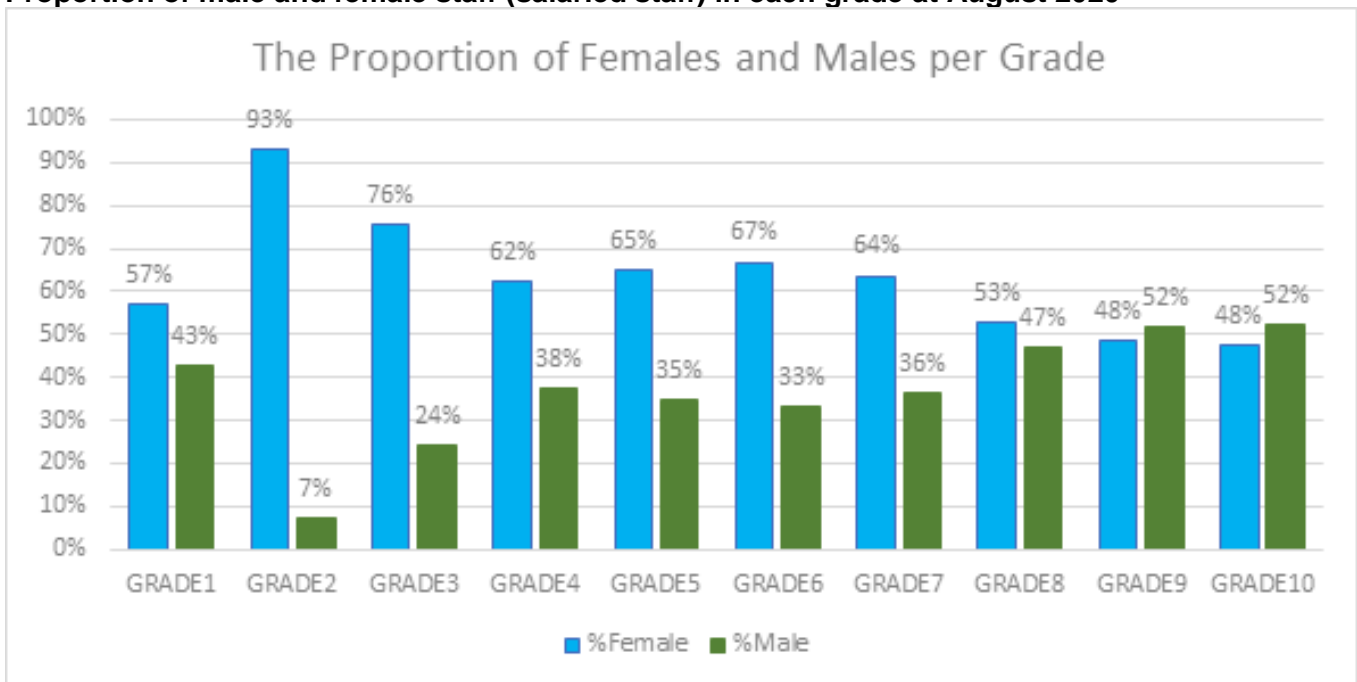
Average basic pay and gender basic pay gap by grade at August 2020:

Grade	Average Salary			Gender Pay Gap
	By Grade	Female	Male	
GRADE1	£17,181.10	£17,125.18	£17,255.67	0.76%
GRADE2	£17,682.30	£17,682.33	£17,682.00	0.00%
GRADE3	£18,842.97	£18,878.79	£18,731.92	-0.78%
GRADE4	£21,401.32	£21,329.03	£21,521.38	0.89%
GRADE5	£24,565.00	£24,489.50	£24,705.84	0.88%
GRADE6	£31,173.80	£31,037.31	£31,449.02	1.31%
GRADE7	£38,291.79	£38,263.03	£38,342.12	0.21%
GRADE8	£48,126.41	£47,800.20	£48,491.96	1.43%
GRADE9	£58,686.68	£58,240.97	£59,104.24	1.46%
GRADE10	£85,340.95	£82,282.14	£88,125.84	6.63%

Distribution of Male and Female Staff (salaried staff) by Grade at August 2020



Proportion of male and female staff (salaried staff) in each grade at August 2020



Employee Information

Introduction:

One of the University's duties, under the Equality Act (2010) is to take steps to gather information on the composition of employees and information on the recruitment, development and retention of people as employees of the University with respect to, in each year, the number and relevant protected characteristics of such people. The University must use this information to better perform the general equality duty.

The data:

Information on seven of the protected characteristics is now requested as part of the recruitment process for all staff. For several years, the University has been collecting data on age, disability, race and sex from all applicants. In early 2010, we added the additional equality characteristics of gender reassignment, religion & belief, and sexual orientation, as well as a question on caring responsibilities. We do not collect information on pregnancy at the point of recruitment, and we do not collect information on marriage and civil partnership status.

	2017	2018	2020
Total Headcount	1,561	1,663	1,623
Female	59%	61%	61%
Male	41%	39%	39%
Age Banding			
<20	1%	2%	0.1%
21-30	11%	13%	9.6%
31-40	23%	23%	25.0%
41-50	30%	29%	29.0%
51-60	28%	26%	26.9%
61-70	6%	7%	9.0%
71+	0%	0%	0.4%

	2017	2018	2020
Disability			
Known disability	-	3%	3.5%
No known disability	77%	83%	81.1%
Information refused	-	3%	3.7%
Information not known	-	11%	11.7%
Gender Reassignment			
Gender reassigned	-	0%	0.2%
Sex the same as registered at birth	81%	95%	83.5%
Information refused	-	-	8.1%
Missing record	-	5%	8.2%
Ethnicity			
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	-	4%	3.82%
White	88%	87%	85.2%
Prefer not to answer	-	3%	4.68%
Not known	-	6%	6.28%
Religion & Belief			
Another religion or belief	-	2%	1.79%

Buddhist	-	0%	0.55%
Christian – other	-	14%	13.92%
Christian – Church of Scotland	-	2%	1.85%
Christian – Roman Catholic	-	8%	6.78%
Hindu	-	0%	0.18%
Jewish	-	0%	0.43%
Muslim	-	0%	0.31%
No religion or belief	-	41%	44.18%
Protestant	-	6%	4.5%
Roman Catholic	-	0.4%	0.68%
Sikh	-	0.06%	0.06%
Spiritual	-	0.2%	0.18%
Prefer not to answer	-	11%	11.15%
No record	16%	15%	13.43%
Sexual Orientation			
Bi-sexual	-	1%	1.1%
Gay / Lesbian	2%	2%	2.3%
Heterosexual / Straight	72%	73%	71.5%
Other	-	0.5%	0.4%
No record	15%	9%	8.2%
Prefer not to answer	11%	14.4%	16.5%

New Starts from 1st August 2019 to 31 July 2020

Gender	Headcount	% of total
Female	204	64.76%
Male	111	35.24%
Grand Total	315	100.00%
Age Banding		
Age Banding	Headcount	% of total
21 - 30	87	27.62%
31 - 40	102	32.38%
41 - 50	61	19.37%
51 - 60	53	16.83%
61 - 70	12	3.81%
Disability		
Disability	Headcount	% of total
Disability	10	3.17%
Information refused	36	11.43%
No known disability	215	68.25%
Not known	54	17.14%
Gender Reassignment		
Gender Reassignment	Headcount	% of total
Not disclosed	81	25.71%
Sex same as registered at birth	220	69.84%
No record	14	4.44%
Religion		
Religion	Headcount	% of total
Another religion/belief	7	2.22%
Buddhist	3	0.95%
Christian – Other	25	7.94%
Christian – Church of Scotland	4	1.27%
Christian – Roman Catholic	11	3.49%
Jewish	2	0.63%
Muslim	3	0.95%
No record	68	21.59%
No religion or belief	132	41.90%
Prefer not to answer	44	13.97%
Protestant	11	3.49%
Roman Catholic	4	1.27%
Sikh	1	0.32%
Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Headcount	% of total
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	20	6.35%
Not known	89	28.25%
Prefer not to answer	11	3.49%
White	195	61.90%
Sexual Orientation		
Sexual Orientation	Headcount	% of total
Bi-sexual	4	1.27%
Gay	12	3.81%
Heterosexual	182	57.78%
No record	14	4.44%
Prefer not to say	102	32.38%
Sexuality - Other	1	0.32%

Leavers from 1st August 2019 to 31 July 2020

Gender	Headcount	% of total
Female	354	62.99%
Male	208	37.01%
Grand Total	562	100.00%
Age Banding	Headcount	% of total
< 21	5	0.89%
21 - 30	163	29.00%
31 - 40	144	25.62%
41 - 50	91	16.19%
51 - 60	89	15.84%
61 - 70	65	11.57%
71 +	5	0.89%
Disability	Headcount	% of total
Disability	27	4.80%
Information refused	37	6.58%
No known disability	422	75.09%
Not known	76	13.52%
Ethnicity	Headcount	% of total
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	36	6.41%
Not known	90	16.01%
Prefer not to answer	23	4.09%
White	413	73.49%
Gender Reassignment	Headcount	% of total
Not disclosed	80	14.23%
Gender Reassignment	1	0.18%
Sex same as registered at birth	439	78.11%
No record	42	7.47%
Religion	Headcount	% of total
Another religion/belief	5	0.89%
Buddhist	1	0.18%
Christian - Other	55	9.79%
Christian – Church of Scotland	7	1.25%
Christian – Roman Catholic	22	3.91%
Hindu	3	0.53%
Israelite	1	0.18%
Muslim	7	1.25%
No record	93	16.55%
No religion or belief	240	42.70%
Orthodox	1	0.18%
Prefer not to answer	86	15.30%
Protestant	35	6.23%
Roman Catholic	5	0.89%
Sikh	1	0.18%

Sexual Orientation	Headcount	% of total
Bi-sexual	15	2.67%
Gay	25	4.45%
Heterosexual	360	64.06%
No record	42	7.47%
Prefer not to say	119	21.17%
Other	1	0.18%

Academic Promotions

Gender	2019				2018	
	Number of applications received	Proportion	Number of successful applications	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
Female	30	65%	19	65%	48%	39%
Male	16	35%	10	35%	52%	61%
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Sexual Orientation	2019				2018	
	Number of applications received	Proportion	Number of successful applications	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
Heterosexual	37	80%	24	83%	72%	72%
No record	4	9%	2	7%	14%	17%
Prefer not to say	5	11%	3	10%	10%	6%
Bisexual	0	0%	0	0%	3%	6%
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Age	2019				2018	
	Number of applications received	Proportion	Number of successful applications	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
21 - 30	1	2%	1	3%	-	-
31 - 40	15	33%	8	28%	31%	28%
41 - 50	16	35%	10	34.5%	55%	61%
51 - 60	14	30%	10	34.5%	7%	11%
61 - 70	0	0%	0	0%	7%	-
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Ethnicity	2019				2018	
	Number of applications received	Proportion	Number of successful applications	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
Not known	2	4.35%	0	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to answer	2	4.35%	1	3%	7%	11%
White	42	91.30%	28	97%	90%	83%
BAME	0	0%	0	0%	3%	6%
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Religion or Belief	2019				2018	
	Number of applications	Proportion	Number successful	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
Another religion/belief	2	4.35%	1	3.45%	-	-
Christian - Other	4	8.70%	1	3.45%	21%	17%
Christian – Church of Scotland	1	2.17%	1	3.45%	-	-
Christian – Roman Catholic	5	10.87%	3	10.34%	10%	17%
Jewish	1	2.17%	1	3.45%	-	-
No record	3	6.52%	2	6.90%	7%	11%
No religion or belief	19	41.30%	13	44.83%	41%	44%
Prefer not to answer	8	17.39%	4	13.83%	14%	6%
Protestant	3	6.52%	3	10.34%	7%	6%
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Disability	2019				2018	
	Number of applications	Proportion	Number successful	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	Proportion of applications successful
Disability	1	2.17%	1	3.45%	-	-
Information refused	2	4.35%	1	3.45%	-	-
No known disability	38	82.61%	25	86.21%	86%	83%
No record	5	10.87%	2	6.90%	14%	17%
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%	100%	100%

Gender reassignment	2019				2018	
	Number of applications	Proportion	Number successful	Proportion	Proportion of applications received	
Prefer not to answer	1	2%	0	0%		n/a
Sex the same as registered at birth	41	89%	27	93%		n/a
No record	4	9%	2	7%		n/a
Grand Total	46	100%	29	100%		n/a

FORMAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

224 employees undertook formal training during 2019/20.

Gender	Headcount	% of total
Female	157	70
Male	67	30
Disability	Headcount	% of total
Disability	14	6
Prefer not to say	4	2
No known disability	187	84
Not known	19	8
Ethnicity	Headcount	% of total
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	8	4
Not known	11	5
Prefer not to answer	10	4
White	195	87

CONCLUSION

The University of Stirling is a place where everyone is treated with respect and where ability not background is valued. We are an agent for change, connecting people, innovating and transforming the lives of our students, staff and the communities we serve.

One of the key objectives of our Strategic Plan 2016-21 was to create an inclusive environment and to actively promote equality; to support people with specific needs; acknowledge difference and respect the right of students and staff to hold differing views and maintain our commitment to equality and diversity. Equality, diversity and inclusion is a part of the institutional DNA, and we have made significant progress against our Equality Outcomes and more broadly, since our last report of 2019.