



Mainstreaming Progress Report 2020

Mainstreaming Equality

Introduction

This document sets out how West Highland College UHI is integrating equality into the day-to-day working of the College. It also includes:

- employee equality information;
- a breakdown of information on the number and relevant protected characteristics of employees, including information on recruitment and retention;
- Board diversity information:
 - the gender breakdown of board members
 - how information on the protected characteristics of the Board has and/or will be used to improve diversity amongst members

Strategic Plan

West Highland College’s ambition to drive forward its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is firmly embedded in its strategies, values and policies.

The College’s [Strategic Plan 2016-2021](#), our **College Values, Excellence for All, Access and Inclusion Strategy and Equality and Diversity Policy** set out our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. There are three cross-cutting themes within the Strategic Plan. These are enablers which support the achievement of our strategic aims and our vision. Under the “People” cross-cutting theme we have set out the College’s ambition to:

“sustain a culture which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all”
and

“ensure a positive working environment of well-being, reward and recognition, dignity and respect”

This commitment is reflected in our **College Values**:

INCLUSIVE

Respect individual values and proactively promote equality and diversity.

INDIVIDUALISED

Recognise and take account of personal need, aspiration, skill and ability.

INNOVATIVE

Continually improve the way we design and deliver programmes; develop best practice through creative approaches to learning and teaching and effective use of technology.

INTERCULTURAL

Embrace and celebrate diversity through integration and interaction. Recognise all forms of difference and actively engage and learn from each other.



our
use

Equality and Diversity Policy

The College's [Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy](#) sets out its commitment and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

“West Highland College UHI recognises that equality of opportunity and valuing diversity and inclusion are vital to its success. It is committed to creating and sustaining a positive, supportive working environment for all of our staff and a teaching and learning environment which encourages all of our students to thrive academically and personally.”

Access and Inclusion Strategy

In addition the College's commitment and objectives in relation to access and inclusion are set out in full in its [Access and Inclusion Strategy](#).

Embedding Equality into our Functions

The Board

At the time of the last mainstreaming update, female representation on the Board of Management was standing at 50%. When the Board sought new independent members in 2019, we specifically encouraged applications from women. Unfortunately our female representation on the Board of Management now stands at 25% as we are experiencing great difficulty sourcing applications to address this.

	Non executive Members (independent)		Executive Members (staff)		Student Member		Total		Current Vacancies
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1 Oct 2018	5	4	1	1	0	1	6	6	2
1 Oct 2019	5	5	2	1	0	1	7	7	0
1 Oct 2020	6	2	2	1	1	0	9	3	2

All new Board members have an induction and Equality and Diversity training is part of that induction.

Staff Learning and Development

All staff complete Diversity in the Workplace training within the first six months of employment. The college monitors progress and managers sign off training completion at the end of probation. All staff responsible for the development and review of policies, procedures and strategies must complete the Equalities Impact Assessment training.

98% have completed diversity training.

Staff are encouraged to attend the UHI virtual equalities training event which normally takes place across the partnership every year. In addition, staff take part in equality and diversity related College Development Network (CDN) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (Jisc) webinars and events. The Staff Learning and Development team regularly promote these events and provide funding support for staff to attend.

Staffing Profile

Gender and Contracts

The college employs 234 staff on a permanent, fixed-term, or casual basis. 65% of staff are female and 35% of employees are male. The gender split has remained approximately the same over a period of five years.

70% of staff are employed on a permanent basis. 45% of our permanent staff are female and 19% of all female staff are employed on a fixed term or temporary basis. 25% of our male staff are permanent and 10% of all male staff are employed on a fixed term or temporary basis.

79% of the workforce are part time and 65% of our part time staff are female. Almost two thirds of our support staff are female and only 20% of all female staff work full time. 22% of all male staff work full time. 65% of all our female staff are employed in a support roles compared to 30% of all our male staff. 49% of our teaching staff are female and 51% are male.

Age profile

The college staff age profile ranges from 19 to 70 years and over. Currently most of our staff (79%) are aged between 30 and 60 years of age.

Younger staff tend to be recruited into support staff jobs. In some vocational subject areas, such as construction and maritime, the proportion of teaching staff who are aged over 50, tends to be higher. This evidence suggests that part time vocational lecturing posts attract more mature and experienced lecturers.

Other Protected Characteristics

Only 2% have a declared disability.

87% of staff are British.

Almost all staff who have recorded their ethnic status, are white (91%).

A majority of staff who have indicated their marital status are married (52%). Out of the staff who have indicated their religion, 33% are Christian and 41% indicate they have no religion.

Staff Retention

In 2019/20 West Highland College UHI had 37 leavers. The split of male/female leavers is similar to the staff composition.

There were no members of staff who declared a disability.

57% of our leavers were white and 41% had not declared their ethnic origin. 46% had not declared their religion or belief. The College has not had any maternity/pregnancy related leavers.

Staff Retention	
18/19	36
17/18	38

Staff retention figures reflect fixed term contracts and casual contracts in addition to resignations.

Flexible working requests

The College already operates a very flexible staffing model. We frequently receive requests for flexible working arrangements through our flexible working procedure which are accommodated. This is reflected in our statistics which show a large percentage of staff working part-time. We therefore believe that flexible working is embedded in our ways of working.

The College has had one grievance and no disciplinary cases.

Recruitment

Gender

The majority of applications in 2019/20 were from female candidates (59%), with only 36% received from male candidates and 10 (5%) not disclosed.

This reflects the composition of the work force, however some work will be undertaken in the future to look at the way we advertise and attract candidates and to encourage more applications from under-represented groups.

The majority of applicants interviewed in 2019/20 were female 62%, with only 36% being male interviewees.

Sexual Orientation

The majority of candidates in 2019/20 declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual (83%), with only 2% bisexual, 2% lesbian and 2% gay.

A number of applicants chose not to disclose their sexuality (12%). Some work will be undertaken, to look at ways of encouraging applicants to disclose this information and reassurance regarding the confidentiality of the personal data.

The majority of staff appointed in 2019/20 (85%) declared their sexuality as heterosexual, with no appointees in the bisexual, gay or lesbian categories. A number of staff chose not to disclose their sexuality (15%). As mentioned previously some work will be undertaken to encourage disclosure.

Religion/Belief 2019/20

Applicants Interviewed	
Christian	17
Buddhist	1
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	0
Sikh	0
Spiritual	0
None	45
Other	4
Not disclosed	7

The majority of applications received in 2019/20 were from candidates with no religion/belief (58%) closely followed by Christian (24%). A number of applicants chose not to disclose their religion/belief (12.5%).

The majority of applicants interviewed reflected the split of applications received (61%) with no religion/belief, closely followed by Christian (40%).

Ethnic Origin

The majority of applicants in 2019/20 were White Scottish 54%, with 18% White English, and 11% from Other White.

Disability

The majority of applicants did not have a disability or did not declare it. We will take some positive action to encourage candidates with a disability and to encourage disclosure.

Age

We were unable to report on the age band of applications received and applicants interviewed in 2019/20 as we do not currently ask for a date of birth as part of the recruitment/interview process. We have now amended our application form to include age bands and will be able to report this data in our 20/21 report.

Section Four

Student Profile

Through the provision of support for learning services, the college is committed to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed. The college has developed its organisational structure to support this ambition. A key element of this has been the development of our Student Support Department. This has mainstreamed support services to ensure all students identified as having a protected characteristic, a priority group or an additional support for learning need, are able to access suitable and appropriate support. The college has 9 additional outreach learning centres and the student services team works to ensure an entitlement of support is consistent across all of the college learning centres and builds a one college ethos and approach.

Recent activity includes:

- Updated information on website at point of enquiry on how to access support and the services on offer from the college.
- Amalgamation of a number of practitioner groups across UHI to become the Priority Groups Forum.
- Student Carers policy (cross UHI) adopted by UHI 27th March 2020.
- Multiple opportunities for students to disclose a support need – on application form, at interview, at induction, on course, by referral (self-referral or from a lecturer).
- Updating and improvements to literature sent to students at application on the range of support services available.
- Preferential interview dates and times can be arranged for students with additional support needs or care experience.
- A named person is allocated to students for learning support and care experienced students.
- Personal Learning Support Plans for all students with additional support or Mental Health support requirements.
- Additional Assessment support and arrangements – the team have a bank of readers, scribes, and invigilators.
- Adapting of delivery options to meet the Covid-19 related government guidelines.
- Area on the website linked to Covid-19 guidance and information.
- Development of student services induction process onto a virtual learning environment delivery module – always available for students to access.

The college takes the mental health and wellbeing of our students seriously and has committed a resource to allow access to counselling services through partnerships in Fort William and on the Isle of Skye. This service has proved vital with an increase from an initial 7 students accessing this external support in the first year (15/16). The figures for the last four academic years are as follows:

Counselling put in place	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	
	External	External	External	External	Internal (New Funding)
Total Number	13	16	11	19	11

The Government Funding that was made available for counselling activity has been used to allow us to employ our resident Student Counsellor and Well-being Coordinator from March 2020. She been able to provide both 1-2-1 sessions, plus a series of bookable slots for students to attend to support their wellbeing. As the government funding was clearly identified to be in addition to existing funds, we are still able to signpost students to local counsellors as appropriate, or when our counsellor reaches capacity.

As can be seen, the number of referrals for 1-2-1 counselling increased significantly during 2019-20, so almost double our highest previous number.

We allocate a proportion of the government funding, along with other Academic Partners, to allow all students to have access to Togetherall. Togetherall is a 24/7 mental health support service providing students with access to an online support community, self-help resources and a place to air how they are feeling anonymously. During April of 2020 there were a total of 454 new registrations onto Togetherall across the UHI partnership. Unfortunately it is not possible to identify which academic partner these registrations are from.

There is an increasing need for counselling activity and wellbeing support for students. Comments from students indicate that for many, their mental health is more fragile. This has also been evidenced in national student pulse surveys. Students with poor mental health are less resilient and more likely to withdraw or disengage. The college is aware of this and is working proactively with students who have mental health issues. This may result in higher withdrawal rates from programmes.

Other improvements made during the 2019-20 academic year included a dedicated counselling email address, which is monitored by a small team, as well as an [online referral form](#).

The college has also provided alternative support for students who present in distress as in some cases it is more relevant to provide signposting to alternative agencies depending on individual need. The numbers above do not include these figures. Examples of additional supportive interventions made by the department include delivery and support for Guidance Sessions, undertaking and delivering Mental Health First Aid training, and signposting to external agencies.

The college continues to commit resources to providing support for students within priority groups. We continue to encourage early declaration, self-referral and improved support for a wider range of learning support needs. A number of priority groups can be disclosed during application, enrolment, or at other times during a student's interaction with the college. This includes care experienced, carers, and other priority groups, as well as students who may need individual support plans for an assessed and identified support need. The number of students accessing our services for assessed and identified support needs initially grew significantly and although dropped for 2018/19 has now risen again.

Student Support Plans	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Total Number	72	74	63	72
				5 DSA assessments

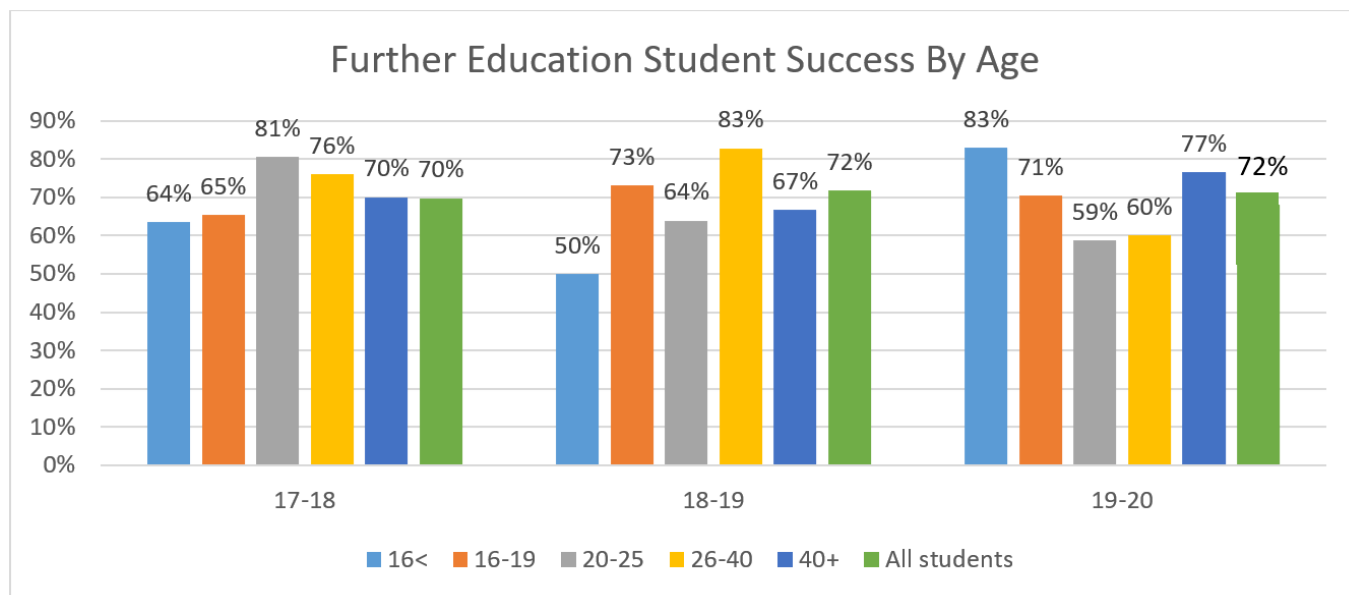
All of these aspects of service enable the college to support students towards a positive outcome. However, the Coronavirus pandemic which started with a first lockdown in March 2020 has had an impact on outcomes. This also impacted on our planned work with carers, as we had just adopted the policy as lockdown hit. We intent to refocus on this area going forward and are applying for the Carers Trust Going Further award during the 2020-21 academic year.

There were a number of students that, despite all attempts to keep them engaged, had additional external influences which impacted on their ability to successfully complete. In addition, a very small number of courses had some units that could not be delivered due to their specific nature. A minority of learners still have aspects of their course deferred from the 2019-20 academic year.

We remain are committed to monitoring our outcomes against all protected characteristics but in our current enrolment numbers we have very low or no representation in some areas which makes reporting unrealistic. Also, the impact of Covid has adversely affected students in different ways. At present we are still responding to changes in guidance and have not been able to reflect how this has impacted our equalities data.

Success Rate Data Further Education

The data for 19/20 was captured in February 2021. Figures will be checked in June 2021 and this statement will be updated, to confirm whether there are any changes by June 2021.



The success rate data above shows the overall Full Time Funded success rates for FE learners. Detail behind these high-level summary performance charts is analysed by Curriculum Areas and at individual course level to identify trends, strengths and areas for improvement.

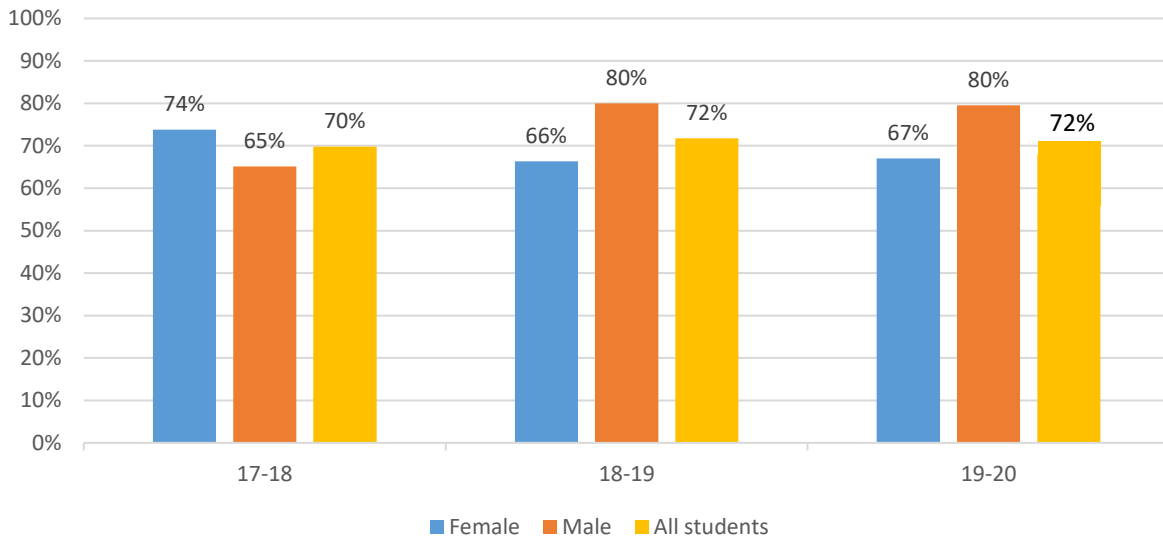
Our overall success rate has risen from 70.5% in 2016-17 to 71.8% for the 2018-19 academic year. This remains at 72% for 2019-20.

At the time of writing this report, the national sector average figures are not available, due to the impact of COVID and the need for substantial deferrals. West Highland College UHI has a track record of achieving higher than the national average of full time student success levels over the previous seven academic years.

As can be seen, the success rate for the under 16 age category improved, however this will have been impacted by the SQA revised grading that took place following the cancellation of the exam diet. The 40+ age bracket also saw a significant increase in success rates by 10 percentage points from the 2018-19 academic year.

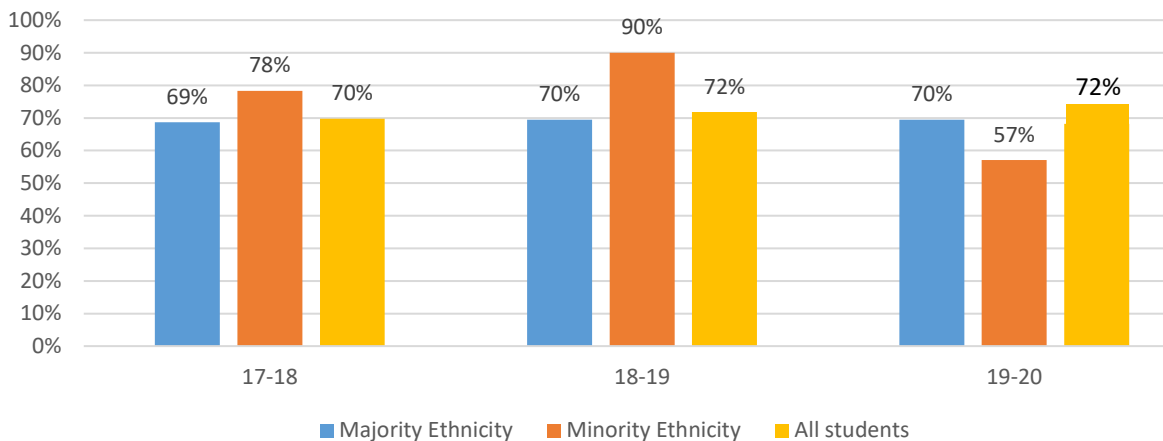
All other age ranges saw a decline in the achievement rates, although for 16-19 this did not drop as low as 2017-18.

Further Education Student Success By Gender



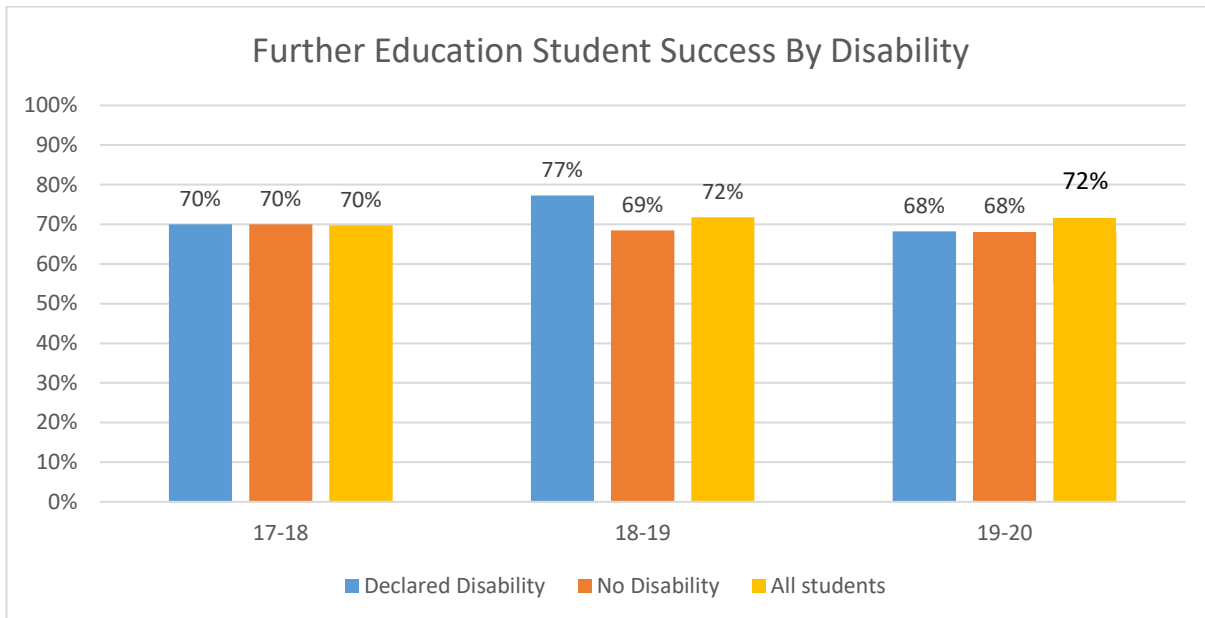
When looking at FE full time fundable success by gender, there appears to be no discernible trend. For two of the three previous academic years, males have outperformed females, which is in contradiction to school leaver attainment between females and males from 2016-17 where females outperform males at all levels, with the greatest difference with the percentage of school leavers attaining 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 6 which has grown to 11.7 percentage points.¹

Further Education Student Success By Ethnicity



In previous years, people from a minority ethnicity have a higher success rate than those from a majority ethnicity, however this was not the case for 2019-20, and will need further investigation. It may be that people from a minority ethnicity were impacted more directly by Covid-19 related issues, the impact of Brexit or that they had additional external influences. Ethnicity along with other equalities data will be considered in our Equality Outcomes.

¹ <https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NACWG-Education-ASD-content.pdf> accessed 10th Dec 2019



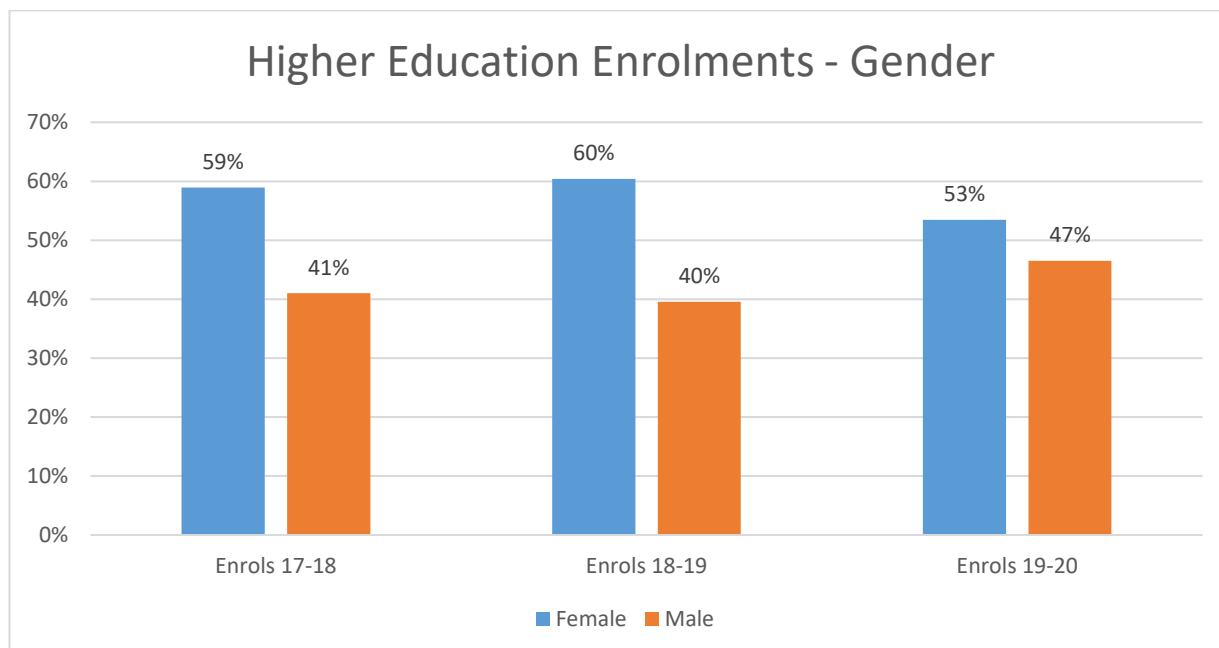
When looking at success by students with disabilities, a higher percentage of students with a declared disability were successful in 2018/19 overall. The figures for 17/18 and 19/20 indicate that students with a declared disability are not being disadvantaged.

Planned work to further break down the equality categories was not completed due to the ongoing priorities since the pandemic commenced. We remain confident that the biggest demographic in the declared disability category are students with mental health issues and we believe that the steps taken to improve the services we offer and the specialised support that we can access has had a positive impact.

Whilst we have identified that there is a requirement to be able further breakdown categories for reporting, and also have a way of identifying cross-category reports, this has been hampered by the high level of demand for data analysts and an inability to recruit to this post. UHI have been developing a more integrated data dashboard – Metis, which rolls out from Spring 2021.

Equalities Data – Higher Education

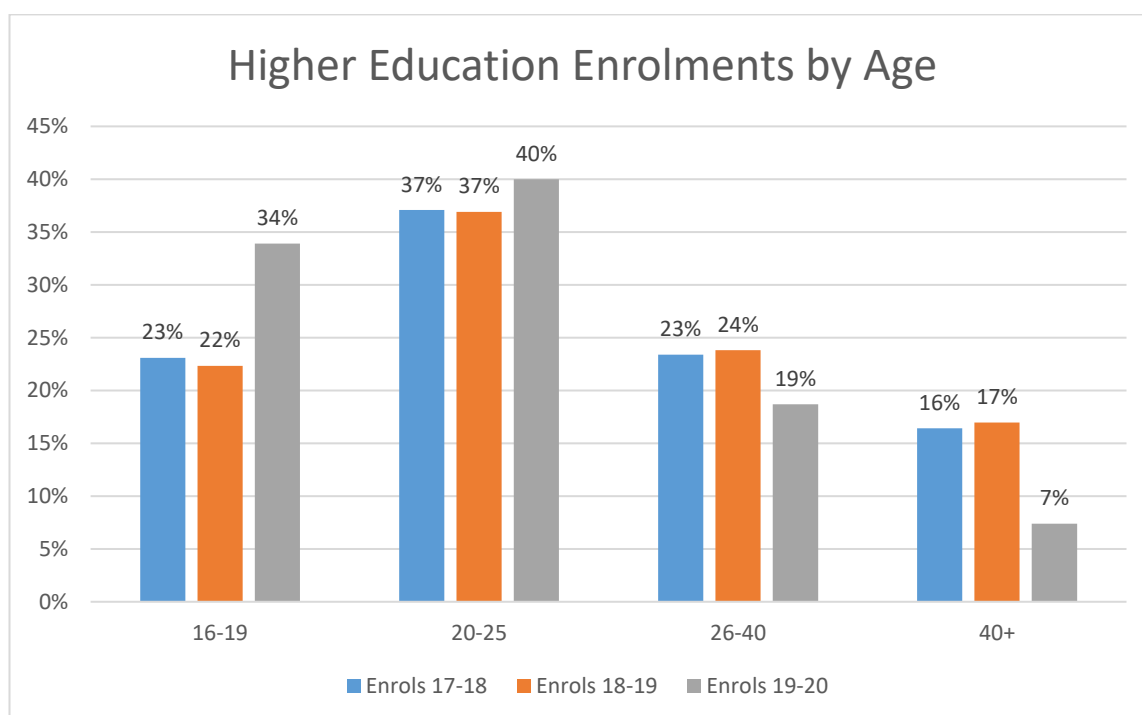
As Higher Education has different success measures than Further Education, the following charts give information based on Higher Education Enrolments and shows trends across the 3 previous academic years.



In relation to Gender, there had been a modest but consistent decline in the number of Males participating in Higher Education, but this was significantly overturned for the 2019-20 academic year.

We have been encouraging more females to enter our School of Adventure Studies (SOAS) programmes which has seen an increase in females, particularly in Adventure Education. We are also running a number of HND/D's in Health and Social Care, Textiles and Business Admin, which traditionally attract females. Recognising this, we developed a programme for Men into Care currently at Further Education level, with the aim to encourage progression onto Higher Education for males.

Looking at Highland Council demographic data² there are more females than males living in Highland in 4 out of 6 age groups, i.e. all age groups over 25 years old.



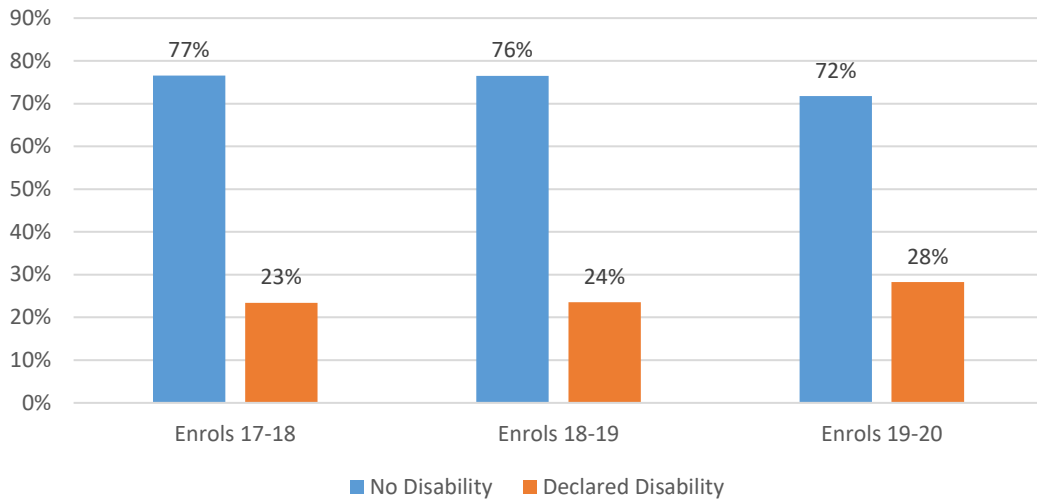
2019-20 has also seen a change in the age demographics of our Higher Education enrolments, which as totally reversed the previous trends. It will be important to monitor these changes to see if this is just an anomaly, or if this is a trend.

Student enrolments have increased overall. In 2019/20 there was a decrease in HN enrolments which impacted on our numbers overall with a couple of programmes failing to meet their recruitment target and therefore did not run. There has been an increase in pupils staying on in school in 6th year and the college has also seen an increase in the number of work based enrolments, which may impact on HN recruitment. However, numbers increased in 2020/21 intake.

Student enrolment figures from ENR010	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
WHC HE	336	291	312	301

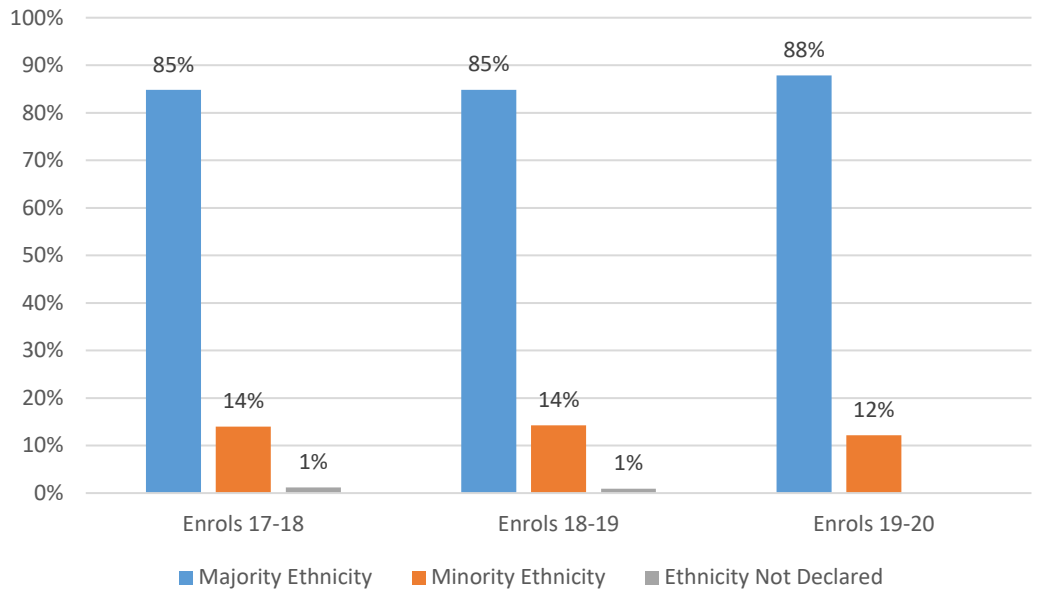
² <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/highland-council-profile.html> accessed 11 Dec 2019

Higher Education Enrolments - Disability declared



Numbers of students who have declared a disability is gradually increasing across the academic year, as a proportion of the numbers of enrolments. Students now have a number of opportunities to declare a disability and it would appear that they are more confident about doing so.

Higher Education Enrolments - Ethnicity



Data related to ethnicity indicates that we have a very small decrease in students who are either declaring minority ethnicity with none feeling they did not need to declare. Although the numbers are small, it is pleasing to note that all students felt that they were able to declare their ethnicity.