

North East Scotland College

Gender Action Plan (2017-21)

July 2017



1. Introduction

In August 2016, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) published a Gender Action Plan (GAP) which documented its ambition to tackle gender imbalances within Scotland's colleges.

Specifically, the SFC has, within its own GAP, identified two key aims and milestones particularly relevant to colleges which they wish to address and fulfil. They are:

	Aim	Milestone
1	By 2021, increase by 5% the minority gender share in each of the 10 largest and most imbalanced 'superclasses' among 16-24 year olds.	Increase by 4.2% by 2019-20.
2	By 2030, no subject has an extreme gender imbalance (75:25).	50% reduction in the number of college subjects in this category by 2025.

With these aims and milestones providing some context for the wider FE and HE sectors, the SFC has now asked colleges to tackle gender inequality and to develop their own GAPs. In doing so SFC has asked colleges to consider developing their GAPs within the context of 5 broad themes, namely:

1. Infrastructure;
2. Influencing the Influencers;
3. Raising awareness and aspiration;
4. Encouraging applications; and
5. Supporting Success.

The SFC has also asked colleges to:

- Outline what ambitions they have for tackling gender imbalance at course subject level, particularly in subject areas that show significant gender disparity;
- Identify where disparities exist between male and female students successfully completing their studies and identify possible actions to address such imbalance, and
- Identify how, in partnership with others, they will ensure that they work constructively and meaningfully towards reducing gender equality regionally and nationally.

SFC's guidance also asks colleges to identify:

- Who will be responsible for implementing the actions within the GAPs;
- How each institution will seek to build capacity across the institution to implement the GAP, and
- How progress will be monitored.

The following document represents North East Scotland College's first Gender Action Plan (GAP). It seeks to highlight the College's ambition to reduce gender imbalance and disparity across several areas of activity, particularly those relating to students and the College's curriculum offer. By implementing this GAP the College aims to contribute positively to SFC's key ambitions, noted above, to reduce gender disparities nationally as well as regionally.

Liz McIntyre

Principal

2. Existing NESCol gender equality commitments and activities

The College is already committed to, and involved in, work which seeks to address gender imbalance and inequality. The following provides a brief summary of some of the commitments already made by the College and examples of the gender equality-related work ongoing:

- **Equality Outcomes:** Within its most recent set of equality outcomes, published in April 2017, the College identifies an ambition whereby:

‘Opportunities will be created in targeted curriculum areas to address gender imbalance and stereotyping. The College will aim to eliminate the barriers to subject choice and thereby enable all students to maximise their education and employment opportunities’. (Equality Outcome 3)

- **Regional Outcome Agreement:** Within its Outcome Agreement (OA) the College identifies, as a priority outcome, its desire to *‘provide accessible programmes of study that lead to positive outcomes for students’*. As a consequence of these aforementioned equality-related commitments the College’s OA identifies specific actions and plans for continuing its work on reducing gender disparities. Some of these are documented in what follows:
- **School-College Links:** In AY 2015-16 continuing actions taken to address gender imbalance in School Link programmes resulted in a number of female learners enrolling on Construction programmes, and a number of male learners enrolling on Hair and Care programmes. A range of private sector-sponsored Girls Into Energy courses, where groups of female school pupils from partner schools undertake the SQA Skills for Work National 5 Energy course also operated. Shell and NESCol continue to work closely in partnership to extend this initiative into other schools with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- **Careers Advice and Marketing:** In AY 2017-18 the College is fully committed to promoting all programme choices to both genders and to dispel perceptions of stereotypical career choices influenced by gender, as much as possible, through avenues such as career guidance, school visits, and the promotion of role models in College publications. Key curriculum areas of focus will be hairdressing, care, engineering and IT.
- **Equality Challenge Unit:** Currently the College is also a participant in an Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) project to advance equality of opportunity. As part of the initiative, the College has chosen to address issues in advancing gender equality in two specific subject areas: Women into Computing and Men into Care.
- **Partnership working with Robert Gordon University:** The College has a strong and well-established partnership with Robert Gordon University (RGU). Recently, discussions have taken place on how best the two institutions could work more collaboratively on access and inclusion-related projects which could improve advice, support and outcomes for FE and HE learners in the North East of Scotland. For example, RGU is currently undertaking research into gender imbalance in education across the region and the University’s findings will help inform partnership working between the two institutions and help improve gender balance in key curricula areas.

- **Gender equality – An improving picture:** Within the College, areas where progress has been made in addressing gender imbalance include engineering where the proportion of credits generated by female enrolments has increased from 6% in AY 2009-10 to 10.3% in AY 2014-15, and Care where the proportion of credits generated by male enrolments has increased from 10% in AY 2011-12 to 12% in AY 2013-14.

The following section of this College GAP document identifies what activities will be undertaken by the College, across the aforementioned 5 key themes, in order to address gender inequality, imbalance and disparity.

3. Key themes

1. Infrastructure

‘Infrastructure’ refers to what North East Scotland College has in place to reduce gender-related disparities within the organisation. Essentially, this relates to several key areas of College activity:

- **Strategies, policies and procedures:** The College will continue to ensure that gender disparities are addressed and reduced through the embedding of gender equality within its outcome agreement, strategic plan, equality outcomes, other key college strategies and policies. The College is also committed to ensuring that a robust and embedded approach to equality impact assessment is prevalent within the organisation as a further means to identify possible, and eliminate, gender inequality.
- **Resources:** The College will ensure that data and other information is available to ensure that staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issues pertaining to gender inequality are raised and addressed appropriately.
- **Professional development:** As part of its professional development planning activities, NESCol will ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training and support to help create a greater awareness and understanding of the issues pertaining to gender inequality.
- **Internal and external relationships:** The College will, in partnership with others, seek to develop and maintain relationships that will address gender disparities regionally and nationally. In particular, the College will, amongst others, work in partnership with the SFC, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Education Scotland (ES), the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), Robert Gordon’s University, the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian and other stakeholders to ensure that co-ordinated and coherent approaches are developed and implemented for tackling gender inequality and imbalance.

2. Influencing the influencers

- **Staff:** All College staff have a responsibility to support College approaches towards greater gender balance. In particular, College curriculum staff have, through learning and teaching, opportunities to promote and support gender equality. In addition, all staff, support and curriculum, have responsibilities to positively, in terms of academic, vocational and career choice and progression, support and encourage prospective or current learners to challenge arcane views and practices which perpetuate gender segregation in specific course areas and career choices. College staff have also a responsibility to ensure that all course content is subject to routine review in order to ensure that any gender bias within materials and assessments is addressed.

In order to ensure that both curriculum and support teams appraise the success of their respective efforts to address gender disparities an increased emphasis has been placed within the College's quality improvement processes, particularly KPI meetings with curriculum managers and self-evaluation reporting for all managers.

- **Students:** The Student Association (SA) is central to the College's gender equality activities and ambitions. In partnership with the College, the SA has a key role to promote gender-related issues to, and raise awareness within, the wider student body and can do so through targeted campaigning, arranging key awareness-raising events and campaigning through local, regional and national activities undertaken in conjunction with others e.g. the National Union of Students (NUS) and other student associations or student unions.
- **Prospective students, parents and guardians:** Through various key events and publications the College will, in its communication with prospective students, parents and guardians, support an approach that reduces gender segregation and stereotyping across its curriculum offer. In addition, the College will actively promote specific areas of its curriculum offer in order to reduce significant gender under-representation on its courses.
- **Educational Partners and Employers:** In conjunction with partner local authorities, schools, universities and employers, the College will contribute to, support and promote, initiatives and joint planning activities which seek to address specific regional gender disparities. In addition, the College will – through enhanced employer engagement approaches – seek to work closely with new and existing partners employers to ensure that opportunities are taken to improve gender inequality in workforce planning and apprenticeship-related activity.

3. Raising awareness and aspiration

- **School links:** The College will build on its already successful relationships with partner schools to ensure that the College-related course and careers advice offers local pupils, regardless of gender, the best possible advice and support in course and career advice, support and choice. Where gender disparities exist in terms of College courses and career opportunities the College, in collaboration with local schools, will take positive action to support the reduction of gender segregation.

NESCol is also a key partner within the Children's University Scotland. In doing so, the College – in conjunction with other partner organisations give local primary and secondary school children opportunities to take part in interactive and voluntary learning activities, outside of normal school hours. Taking part lets children explore different learning environments, different interests and different possibilities for future study and career progression. The initiative also allows partners to encourage children to challenge gender stereotyping in education and employment.

- **Community Planning:** The College is committed to ensuring that its efforts to ensure greater gender equality are promoted, supported and implemented through regional community planning partnership (CPP) arrangements. The College is a statutory partner on both Community Planning Aberdeen and the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership. As it develops its proposed activity, through the respective CPP Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans, the College will – in conjunction with other CPP partners – seek to ensure that positive actions are implemented in order to support activities that will establish greater levels of educational and employment gender equality within the Region.
- **Enhanced employer engagement (Business Development Strategy):** As part of its commitment to developing new and innovative approaches to business development and employer engagement, the College will seek to ensure that it promotes and encourages local employers, local young people, their parents/guardians and school staff to consider the benefits of gender equality and to consider ways to negate and challenge gender segregation. In doing so it will build upon existing College successes including the Shell-sponsored 'Girls into Energy' initiative.

4. Encouraging applications

- **Admissions and student recruitment:** The College is committed to reviewing and revising its approaches to student admissions in 2017/18. Without pre-empting the outcome of any pending review it is anticipated that improved information and advice will be available to support the College's ambitions to reduce imbalance on courses with significant gender under-representation.
- **Marketing and Communication:** The College's Marketing and Communications Team ensures that gender equality is promoted positively within College publications such as the prospectus, the part-time guide and through other vehicles such as the College website. Within 2017/18 the College is committed to reviewing its approaches to marketing and communication with a view to strengthening its promotion of the College's equalities-related ambitions. Accordingly, it is anticipated that a revised Marketing and Communications Strategy will be approved in this academic year and will seek to promote gender equality more fully and directly through social media, the College intranet (COLIN) and key stakeholder events.
- **Educational Pathways and Workforce Planning:** The College will seek to build on its already successful 'Curriculum Pathways' documents as a means of ensuring that young people, regardless of gender, are well informed of the educational and employment

options available to them in the North East of Scotland. Promotion of these already lauded documents (or route maps) will be promoted to ensure that issues relating to gender segregation within courses and careers, are proactively countered.

The College will continue to enhance its approaches to employer engagement and will actively seek to assist partner employers in developing their workforce plans and in considering ways to reduce gender segregation within their respective workforces.

5. Supporting success

- **KPI analysis:** The College undertakes to increase, through the development and implementation of a 'data dashboard' for college managers and staff, the analysis of gender equality data on students. In doing so, the College will – through regular KPI and quality improvement meetings for curriculum managers – specifically focus on ensuring, year-on-year, improvements where gender-related issues for student retention, attainment and segregation exist. Further, the College is investigating admissions data in order to monitor more effectively how applications and enrolments progress with respect to any gender bias.
- **Review of student access and support arrangements:** In seeking to ensure it delivers the best possible services, the College will – during the first half of the academic year 2017/18 – undertake a review on its access and support arrangement for students. Amongst other things, the review will seek to promote ways of enhancing student experiences particularly where students find themselves on courses where they are in a gender minority. In addition, those responsible for leading the review will consider, in conjunction with representatives of the College's SA, how best to support students who consider themselves gender neutral or transgender.

4. Responsibilities and the GAP

The Equality Act 2010 places upon all College staff the responsibility to promote gender equality and address issues of discrimination, should they arise. All college employees have a responsibility to act in such a way to ensure the GAP's implementation and promotion is successful and that it has the desired impact of reducing gender-related disparities within the College and within the communities it serves. Specifically, however, there are key groups of people within the College who have specific responsibilities in relation to the GAP. They are noted below:

- **The Regional Board:** All members of the Regional Board are responsible for ensuring that the College and its staff implements, and complies with, the GAP. This obligation is part of the Regional Board's wider responsibilities to ensure that the College meets all its duties under equality legislation and delivers on its Equality Outcomes and related action plan.
- **The Principal, in conjunction with the Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships:** The Principal, in conjunction with the Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships, is responsible for providing the high-profile lead on gender issues, promoting gender equality inside and outside the College, and ensuring that the GAP is implemented and its impact is measured

and reviewed. The Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships has cross-college responsibility for ensuring that the College’s ambitions and plans for all equality-related activity are developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

- **The College Leadership Team, incorporating the SMT:** The College’s Leadership Team is responsible for putting the GAP into practice and ensuring its success. Its role is to make sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the GAP and that they receive support and guidance in fulfilling these responsibilities. The Leadership Team is also responsible for ensuring that resources are made available to deliver the GAP and for overseeing its development, implementation, monitoring and review.
- **Line Managers:** All line managers are responsible for embedding a culture that embraces gender equality. Line Managers will lead by example and challenge staff and students if inappropriate behaviour occurs. They have a responsibility for taking positive action to address gender inequality, where needed. They must ensure that they understand their responsibilities under equalities legislation. Those involved in academic matters are responsible for ensuring that gender equality is embedded within the curriculum and that recruitment, transitions and retention practices include monitoring by gender. Those involved in support function activities are responsible for ensuring that gender-specific equality practice is embedded in the activities of their teams and that positive action is taken to eliminate gender-specific disadvantage and gender segregation.
- **Human Resources (HR):** The College’s HR Team is responsible for taking positive action in their recruitment practices to promote employment opportunities in both teaching and support roles to the gender minority within particular vocational areas.
- **Staff:** All staff are responsible for promoting gender equality and being able to recognise and challenge gender-related discrimination and stereotyping. All staff have a legal obligation and a personal responsibility with regard to gender equality. They should ensure that they attend training that will enhance their understanding of the commitment to equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination. Teaching staff should make good use of opportunities to promote understanding of gender equality amongst their students.
- **The Student Association (SA):** The SA is responsible for promoting gender equality to the wider student body. Specifically, the SA President and Depute President are responsible for ensuring that the College’s gender equality ambitions and the GAP itself are communicated and understood when recruiting students to fill other executive roles within the SA.
- **Students:** All students are responsible for helping to eliminate gender discrimination and promote gender equality and good relations generally. Students should be aware of gender-related equality issues within their vocational area through the curriculum and practice of their lecturers and the awareness-raising activities of support teams and the SA.

5. The Regional Board and the GAP evidence base

The Regional Board of North East Scotland College is committed to fostering a culture of equality and diversity.

Currently, the Regional Board's gender balance, as at July 2017, is:

Board of Management					
Non Executive Board Members		Staff Board Members (including Principal)		Student Board Members	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
8	4	2	1	1	1

The Regional Board's Governance Steering Group is currently reviewing its selection and appointment process and approach to succession planning to ensure that Members' ambition for a diverse governing body is fulfilled.

Discussions at the Governance Steering Group have involved reaffirming a commitment to take positive action in recruitment. Actions to support this include communicating the intention of the Board to increase its diversity to key stakeholders in the region, especially to organisations with a focus relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. Work will also be undertaken to demystify the role of a Regional Board Member and to publicise the benefits of being a Member. This will include engaging with local and regional employers to emphasise the professional development benefits of Regional Board positions and engaging with communities to raise awareness of the regional role and impact of the College. Consideration is also being given to inviting external observers to Board and Committee Meetings to encourage interest in future Board Member vacancies, and through the use of targeted invitations, to help encourage greater diversity in the Board's future membership. The Board will also engage with relevant equalities organisations to seek their advice on outreach and addressing potential barriers to participation.

The Board undertakes equality monitoring as part of its established processes and considers the range of protected characteristics represented on the Board ahead of and during the recruitment and selection of members. In May 2017 a number of Board Members, including the Regional Chair, attended a training session on 'Unconscious Bias' delivered by the Equality Challenge Unit. This has raised awareness of the potential influence this can have on the selection process for Regional Board Members.

The Regional Board, at its first meeting in AY2017-18, will consider signing up to the Scottish Government's initiative 'Partnership for Change'. **Signing up to this pledge demonstrates** a voluntary commitment to work towards gender balance on the Board – 50/50 by 2020.

6. College staff and GAP evidence base

The College's Equality Outcomes 2017-21 (which are published separately on the College website) – in particular Equality Outcomes 1 and 3 - aim to tackle gender imbalance across both staff and students:

- Equality Outcome 1: The College's gender pay gap will be reduced by addressing the causes of gender inequality to create a more equal and balanced workforce with men and women being more equally represented at all levels in the organisation
- Equality Outcome 3: Opportunities will be created in targeted curriculum areas to address gender imbalance and stereotyping. The College will aim to eliminate the barriers to subject choice and thereby enable all students to maximise their education and subject choice.

This Gender Action Plan looks in more specific detail how these could be achieved and attaches responsibilities, actions and outcomes.

Institutional and National Data

Evidence from the College's Gender Pay Gap Report and Occupational Segregation Report: Gender (published separately on the College website) illustrate that the College has an overall gender pay gap of 14% and a part-time pay gap of 23%, caused by occupational segregation. In particular, there is a clear predominance of female staff grouped in lower support staff grades, mainly undertaking administrative tasks. The majority of male staff are grouped at Lecturer Grade 4.

More women than men work part-time (in both lecturing and support roles). The majority of part-time women work in support roles, with a cluster working in the lowest paid support grades. At senior levels, very few staff work part time.

Appendix 5 of the College's Mainstreaming Report (the appendices to the Mainstreaming report are published separately on the College website) presents a staff data report, which clearly illustrates that the College employs more women than men. With regard to staff recruitment, the College receives more applications from women than men and both shortlists and recruits more women than men.

Appendix 5 also highlights that the majority of staff (and applicants for staff vacancies), in their Equal Opportunities monitoring form, either did not disclose or preferred not to say if they were in a transgender category. Whilst this may, arguably, indicate that no College staff identify as transgender, the College should look into ways in which those who wish to identify as transgender feel comfortable in doing so and feel comfortable in self-disclosing such information for the College's equality monitoring purposes. In addition, the College should review its equality monitoring forms to ensure that the prompt for transgender disclosure is appropriate.

These College reports provide an analysis of the College data, which are then put into context and compared with regional (where possible) and national data. The Gender Action Plan, documented towards the end of this document, looks in more detail at the steps that will be taken to address the gender issues identified in these reports.

7. Students and the GAP evidence base

The Student Association

The College's Students Association promotes and supports gender equality and actively encourages all students, regardless of their gender identity, to develop and progress through and beyond College.

SA literature promotes the work that it undertakes as well as the opportunities the SA offers. This information is explicitly non-gender specific.

The SA has, through its own self-evaluation methods, sought to enhance its approaches to developing effective class representation. To date, the SA's own data would suggest that some further work may be needed within specific areas of the College when considering the issues, noted in the table below, relating to gender segregation within class representation. This said, the gender imbalance noted in the following table reflects in two of the three Schools gender imbalances which already exist within particular, course areas for enrolled students.

Class representatives per School 2016/17		
Schools	Female	Male
Service Industries	138	69
Engineering Science and Technology	24	82
Creative Industries	123	120
Total	281	271

Student subject area enrolment bias

The table and chart below show the numbers of 2015-16 full-time enrolments by biological sex in each of the subject areas delivered by the College. Most subject areas show some degree of bias of either males or females but in some the bias is more exaggerated. The subject areas with the greatest bias are similar to those identified by national data:

Predominantly Female:

- Care (93% Female)
- Hair & Beauty (98% Female)

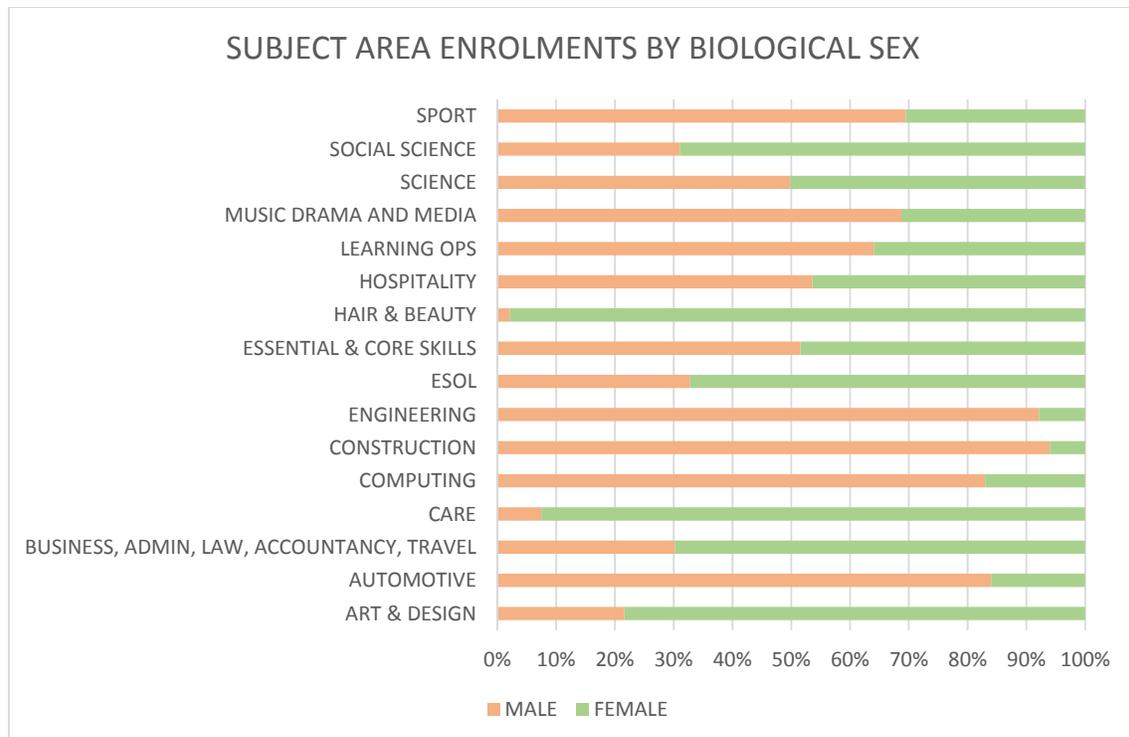
Predominantly Male:

- Automotive (84% Male)
- Computing (83% Male)
- Construction (93% Male)
- Engineering (92% Male)

Table 1 - Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments by biological sex in each subject area

SUBJECT AREA	MALE	FEMALE
ART & DESIGN	22%	78%
AUTOMOTIVE	84%	16%
BUSINESS, ADMIN, LAW, ACCOUNTANCY, TRAVEL	30%	70%
CARE	7%	93%
COMPUTING	83%	17%
CONSTRUCTION	94%	6%
ENGINEERING	92%	8%
ESOL	33%	67%
ESSENTIAL & CORE SKILLS	52%	48%
HAIR & BEAUTY	2%	98%
HOSPITALITY	54%	46%
LEARNING OPS	64%	36%
MUSIC DRAMA AND MEDIA	69%	31%
SCIENCE	50%	50%
SOCIAL SCIENCE	31%	69%
SPORT	70%	30%

Chart 1 - Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments by biological sex in each subject area



Student subject area attainment bias

The table and chart below show the proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments who successfully completed their course of study by biological sex.

In almost all subject areas the female students attain more highly than males. The exceptions to this are Construction, where the small minority of females do significantly less well than males, and Learning Opportunities, where female attainment is 2% behind that of males.

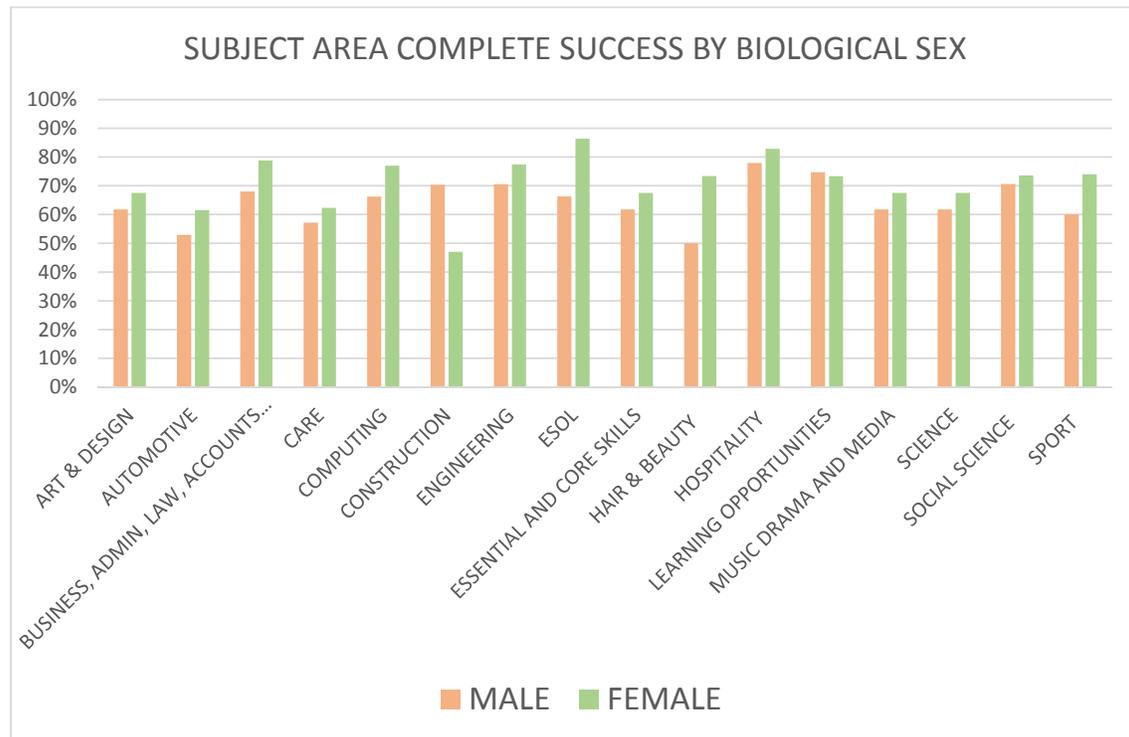
Female minorities in Computing, Automotive and Engineering attain better than their male counterparts. Male minorities in Care programmes do less well but the difference is comparable with subject areas where there is no significant male minority. The small number of males in Hair and Beauty do significantly less well than females and the attainment difference is significantly larger than in other areas.

There are also significant attainment gaps by biological sex in some subject areas where there is a less significant enrolment bias – mostly notably in ESOL and Sport but also in the Business subject areas.

Table 2 : Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments who successfully completed their course of study by biological sex

SUBJECT AREA	Male		Female		Attainment Difference (FEMALE – MALE)
	No. enrolled	Complete Success	No. enrolled	Complete Success	
ART & DESIGN	89	62%	311	68%	6%
AUTOMOTIVE	102	53%	13	62%	9%
BUSINESS, ADMIN, LAW, ACCOUNTS & TRAVEL	291	68%	816	79%	11%
CARE	28	57%	645	62%	5%
COMPUTING	501	66%	100	77%	11%
CONSTRUCTION	236	70%	17	47%	-23%
ENGINEERING	945	71%	93	77%	6%
ESOL	95	66%	228	86%	20%
ESSENTIAL AND CORE SKILLS	36	62%	62	68%	6%
HAIR & BEAUTY	6	50%	417	73%	23%
HOSPITALITY	68	78%	76	83%	5%
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	87	75%	30	73%	-2%
MUSIC DRAMA AND MEDIA	239	62%	116	68%	6%
SCIENCE	116	62%	111	68%	6%
SOCIAL SCIENCE	126	71%	318	74%	3%
SPORT	258	60%	100	74%	14%

Chart 2 -: Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments who successfully completed their course of study by biological sex



Student subject area attainment bias by level of course

The table and chart below show the proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments in subject areas where there are significant enrolment bias who successfully completed their course of study split by level of programme and compared by biological sex.

Attainment differences are not consistent by level. Female minorities in Computing and Engineering who attain better than their male counterparts do so in advanced courses but this is not true of non-advanced programmes. Male minorities in Care programmes do less well in non-advanced programmes but have higher achievement in advanced courses (though numbers are low so statistics may be misleading). In Construction the attainment gap disappears at advanced level but again there are low numbers so the data is not reliable.

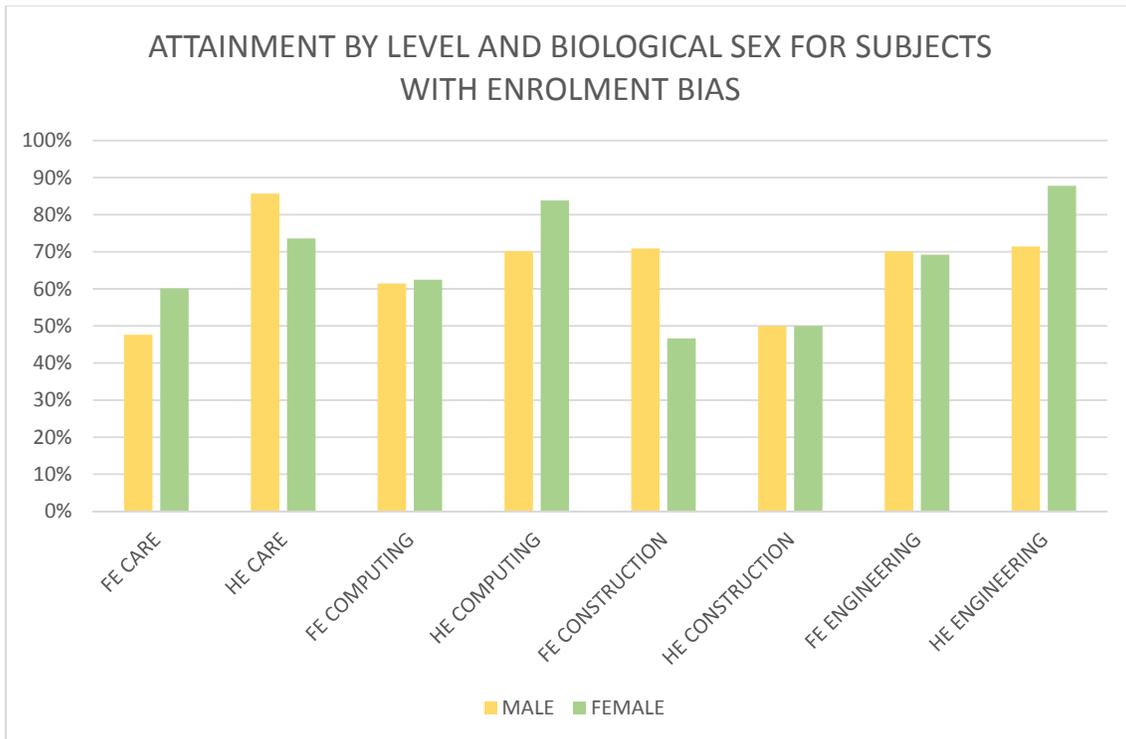
This limited data suggests that the difference in these subject areas between male and female attainment is greater at advanced level, when females tend to either catch up or increase their attainment gap on males. Care is the exception in this sample.

Automotive and Hair & Beauty courses are all at non-advanced level so no comparison is available.

Table 3 - Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments in subject areas where there are significant enrolment bias who successfully completed their course of study split by level of programme and compared by biological sex.

LEVEL	SUBJECT	MALE		FEMALE		Attainment Difference (Female-male)
		No. enrolled	Complete Success	No. enrolled	Complete Success	
FE	CARE	21	48%	539	60%	12%
HE	CARE	7	86%	106	74%	-12%
FE	COMPUTING	223	61%	32	63%	1%
HE	COMPUTING	278	70%	68	84%	14%
FE	CONSTRUCTION	230	71%	15	47%	-24%
HE	CONSTRUCTION	6	50%	2	50%	0%
FE	ENGINEERING	598	70%	52	69%	-1%
HE	ENGINEERING	347	71%	41	88%	16%

Chart 3 - Proportion of 2015-16 full-time enrolments in subject areas where there are significant enrolment bias who successfully completed their course of study split by level of programme and compared by biological sex.



Subject area application to enrolment conversion bias

The table and chart below show the conversion of applications to enrolments by biological sex for each subject area (these groupings are slightly different from outcome data due to available splits).

Whilst in most subject areas there is no significant bias in applications converting to enrolments, in electrical engineering and in art & design there is a greater chance of female applicants converting to enrolments by 17% and 12% respectively. Conversely, there is a 12% greater chance of male applicants converting to enrolments in Music and Drama. These differences do not correlate with the areas where there is an enrolment bias and so does not support the theory that bias in applications processing is responsible for the enrolment bias in most areas.

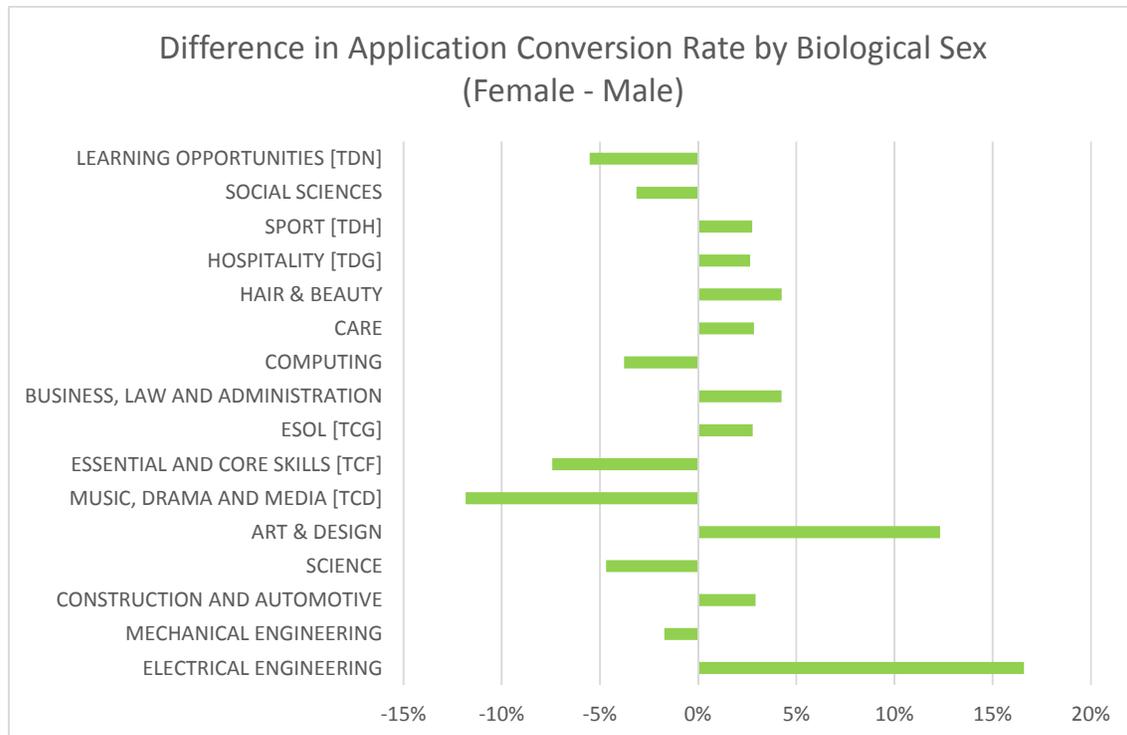
However, it is worth investigating further those areas in which there is a significant difference to establish possible reasons for the difference.

Table 4 Full time application to enrolment conversion rates split by biological sex for each subject area

Subject Area	Applications - Male			Applications - Female			Difference (Female - Male)
	Received	Converting	Percentage Converting	Received	Converting	Percentage Converting	
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	624	253	41%	35	20	57%	17%
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	1064	416	39%	107	40	37%	-2%
CONSTRUCTION AND AUTOMOTIVE	860	243	28%	93	29	31%	3%
SCIENCE	283	130	46%	320	132	41%	-5%
ART & DESIGN	211	83	39%	602	311	52%	12%
MUSIC, DRAMA AND MEDIA [TCD]	521	247	47%	312	111	36%	-12%
ESSENTIAL AND CORE SKILLS [TCF]	86	48	56%	93	45	48%	-7%
ESOL [TCG]	246	87	35%	443	169	38%	3%
BUSINESS, LAW AND ADMINISTRATION	561	230	41%	1125	509	45%	4%
COMPUTING	1075	543	51%	368	172	47%	-4%
CARE	185	57	31%	2032	684	34%	3%
HAIR & BEAUTY	138	49	36%	1192	474	40%	4%
HOSPITALITY [TDG]	159	63	40%	123	52	42%	3%
SPORT [TDH]	558	231	41%	231	102	44%	3%

SOCIAL SCIENCES	401	187	47%	823	358	43%	-3%
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES [TDN]	84	53	63%	66	38	58%	-6%
Total	7056	2920	41%	7965	3246	41%	-1%

Chart 4 Full time application to enrolment conversion rates split by biological sex for each subject area



8. Some conclusions

The data presented above identifies priority areas where the College should target activity to address imbalances between the biological sexes. Specifically, the College should:

- Take steps to address the enrolment bias in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing; Construction and Automotive subject areas;
- Investigate further the reasons for the attainment gap between biological sexes in FE courses in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing and Construction where the minority groups attain less well;
- Take steps to address the attainment gap between biological sexes in FE courses in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing and Construction where the minority groups attain less well;

- Investigate the reasons for the difference in application conversion by biological sex in Art & Design; Music. Media & Drama and Electrical Engineering;
- Take steps to address the difference in application conversion by biological sex in Art & Design; Music. Media & Drama and Electrical Engineering.

These suggestions have been incorporated, along with others, into the following section of this document, namely North East Scotland College's Gender Action Plan.

North East Scotland College – Gender Action Plan (2017-21)

1. Infrastructure						
No.	Issue	Actions	Output	Target Date	Responsible Person(s)	Progress
1.1	Gender equality must be assured a higher profile at all levels within the College.	Ensure equality issues and actions are driven by the Leadership Team, SMT and the Board	Greater embedding of equality issues across all aspects of the College agenda	July 2019	Principal Senior Management Team Leadership Team	
	There are occupational gender differences, in particular in certain vocational areas, and staff do not necessarily understand how they can address these issues	Provide unconscious bias training Ensure staff understand gender data analysis in their vocational area and the steps they can take to address any gender imbalance	Improved understanding of how staff can help to address gender imbalance in given subject areas	July 2020	Director of HR + OD Directors of Curriculum	
	A more systematic and targeted marketing approach may be required to ensure that potential gender bias is eliminated with College publications	Marketing to review all publications for any inadvertent gender bias	Genders are more equally presented across all subject areas	July 2019	Director of Marketing and Communications	

	<p>Gender Pay Gap is too high</p>	<p>Set up focus groups to identify underlying causes and issues: Predominance of women in lower graded support jobs Gender-specific work-life balance issues + predominance of women in part-time posts Barriers to progression</p> <p>Participate in Equality Challenge Unit project to look at the connection between part-time work, progression & development and gender</p>	<p>Information from focus groups will be used to identify strategies to address the issues</p> <p>Use information from this project to address gender issues within Nescol and use at a wider level to inform College sector-wide initiatives</p>	<p>June 2019</p> <p>June 2018</p>	<p>Director of HR + OD</p> <p>Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships + Director of HR + OD</p>	
	<p>Organisationally there is too narrow a definition and too narrow a focus on gender i.e. gender is simply seen as binary</p>	<p>Eliminate binary terminology used in the College, by: Changing pronouns in College documentation and systems e.g. use “they” not “she/he”. Changing gender-based terminology used to e.g. siblings instead of brother/sister. Avoiding use of titles e.g. Mr/Mrs or give option to use title such as Mx</p>	<p>Creation of a more inclusive workplace</p> <p>Revised systems, documentation, marketing materials to become non-binary</p> <p>Develop relationships with e.g. Scottish Transgender Alliance</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	<p>Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships + The Leadership Team</p>	

	There needs to be a long-term, sustainable and resourced approach to supporting and embedding all aspects of equality within the College	Review the way in which equalities issues are currently resourced, communicated and addressed	Improved cross-College understanding of, and practice relating to, equalities. Staff with equalities responsibilities to support and drive forward the practical aspects of the equalities agenda	April 2018	Vice Principal – Access and Partnerships + the Leadership Team	
	Inadequate availability of ‘live data’ for curriculum and support managers to analysis and make ‘in-year’ improvements	Create a College ‘Dashboard’ that includes live equality-related data.	Improved ‘in-year’ responses to equality-related issues and improved retention, attainment and experiences for students	July 2018	Director of Access and Support + Director of IT + TS	
	Gender differences in application conversion rates of greater than 10% in Art & Design and Music & Drama which exacerbate application bias	Provide unconscious or implicit bias training for staff involved in recruitment and admissions to improve difference in conversion rates from applications to enrolments to less than 8% in target subject areas	Improved gender balance in enrolments in targeted subject areas	September 2019	Director of HR + OD	
	Gender differences in application conversion rates of greater than	Through enhanced tracking of individuals, investigate reasons for difference in	Improved gender balance in enrolments in	September 2018	Director of Access and Support +	

	10% in Art & Design, Engineering and Music & Drama	application conversion rates in identified subject areas	targeted subject areas		Directors of Curriculum	
	Equality and diversity are not always considered fully when planning admissions policy	Through engagement with the Equality Challenge Unit, participate in project to enhance equity in college applications policy and process	Reduced bias in enrolments in key subject areas by 3% by 2020	September 2020	Vice Principal - Access and Partnerships	
	Gender enrolment bias greater than 75:25 ratio in key identified subject areas	Through engagement with the Equality Challenge Unit, participate in projects to enhance gender minority enrolments in computing and care	Reduced bias in enrolments in key subject areas by 3% by 2020	September 2020	Vice Principal - Access and Partnerships	
	Employers are not all willing to engage with the importance of gender bias in their workforce	Through engagement with the Chamber of Commerce and individual employers, promote the benefits of having a more evenly mixed gender workforce	Reduced number of employers not engaging with gender bias issues in relation to work placement or workforce planning	September 2020	Director of Business Development	
	There is a lack of analysis and awareness of gender segregation within the Foundation/Modern Apprenticeship frameworks delivered by the College.	Through engagement with partner schools and SDS improve progression and careers advice to young people and employers in order to reduce gender stereotyping and gender segregation in career choices	Improved understanding of gender segregation across the College's Apprenticeship Family offer and, in line with aspirations of SDS, reduce to	September 2021	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality + Vice Principal - Access and Partnerships	

		and occupational routes chosen by young people in education	60% the percentage of MA frameworks where the gender balance is 75:25 or worse by 2021			
2. Influencing the influencers						
No.	Issue	Actions	Output	Target Date	Responsible Person	Progress
	Gender equality to be addressed in formal staff training	TQFE, PDA and other formal training to embed gender equality issues	Upon completion of the training, staff will have good understanding of gender equality	July 2018 – and on an on-going basis	Director of HR + OD	
	Poor parental and other advisors' understanding of gender issues leading to bias in applications to College courses	Through improved links with partner schools and SDS Careers staff, facilitate access to advisors and parents in order to improve understanding of gender issues and dispel stereotypes	Improved numbers of applications from minority groups to targeted subject areas	September 2020	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality	
3. Raising awareness and aspiration						
No.	Issue	Actions	Output	Target Date	Responsible Person	Progress
	Stereotyping of workforce in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering;	Run taster events for groups of balanced gender composition in conjunction	Improved career awareness and reduction in gender	September 2019	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality	

	Computing; Construction and Automotive leading to bias in applications to College courses	with primary schools and the Children's University which promote careers in targeted subject areas	stereotypes for younger children			
	Stereotyping of workforce in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing; Construction and Automotive leading to bias in applications to College courses	Run careers events in conjunction with partners e.g. Oil and Gas Technology Centre which challenge stereotypes and include promotion of gender equality issues	Improved numbers of applications from minority groups to targeted subject areas	September 2020	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality	
4. Encouraging applications						
No.	Issue	Actions	Output	Target Date	Responsible Person	Progress
	Staff recruitment processes, including advertising and interviewing, may have inadvertent biases	Provide unconscious bias training for all staff involved in any stage of the recruitment process Ensure gender-neutral wording in all advertising Revise job titles to address occupational stereotyping	Better gender balance within the College Increase recruitment of staff into "non-traditional" gender roles	January 2019	Director of HR + OD	
	Poor knowledge and understanding of careers in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing;	Improve College information on careers in target subject areas and promote with partners and suitable events	Improved numbers of applications from minority groups to	September 2019	Directors of Marketing & Communication and Curriculum	

	Construction and Automotive leading to bias in applications to College courses		targeted subject areas			
	Stereotyping of workforce in Care; Hair & Beauty; Engineering; Computing; Construction and Automotive leading to bias in applications to College courses	Develop further counter-stereotypical imagery and case studies	Improved numbers of applications from minority groups to targeted subject areas	September 2019	Directors of Marketing & Communication and Curriculum	
	Whilst a reflection of the gender bias already prevalent within the applications and enrolment processes, gender representation for Student Association/College Class Representatives is imbalanced within the Service Industries and Engineering, Science and Technology Schools	In conjunction with reviewing the College's Admissions processes, there needs to be further promotion of class student class representation in areas of minority gender	Improved gender balance of class representatives across all College Schools	September 2020	Student Association	
5. Supporting success						
	Lack of flexible working contributes to occupational segregation	Set up working group to look at how flexible working could be implemented in the College	Creation of a more gender inclusive environment	December 2018	Director of HR + OD	

	Gender differences in attainment by level in courses in Care; Computing; Construction and Engineering	Provide unconscious or implicit bias training for teaching staff in those areas where significant gender attainment gaps exist to reduce gap to below 12%	Reduced gender attainment gap for target subject areas	September 2019	Director of HR + OD	
	Gender differences in attainment by level in courses in Care; Computing; Construction and Engineering	Through tracking of individuals, investigate reasons for students in minority groups withdrawing or failing to complete programmes of study	Increased understanding of issues affecting success for minority groups to inform further action planning	September 2019	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality	