

Team: **Pan-university team**

Protected characteristic(s): **All**

Eliminating discrimination/advancing equality of opportunity/fostering good relations

Key area/example of where progress has been made with regard to equality and diversity:

Following a successful 'expression of interest', the University began work with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Scotland in January 2016 (alongside five other teams from Scottish institutions) on a structured development programme designed to enable Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to tailor equality and diversity mainstreaming initiatives to their own disciplinary, institutional and/or sector priorities. The 1 year project was designed to facilitate the development of initiatives that have a direct learning and teaching focus and/or develop and support learning and teaching activities.

The university's area of focus for the project was equality and diversity in assessment and feedback and incorporated development activity around 3 sub-foci (with the assumption that assessment incorporates both summative and formative assessment as well as feedback and feed-forward practices):

- 1 Creative and authentic assessment
- 2 Assessment choice and negotiation
- 3 Assessment that critically engages with equality and diversity

A university assessment and feedback resource had already been developed to help staff reflect on practice and meet their obligations in carrying out assessment and feedback with their students. An initial scoping exercise, 'Assessment Methodologies' had also been previously carried out to ascertain the range of assessment methodologies currently in place across Subject Networks. Undertaking the HEA project offered the opportunity to build on this work.

The following project outputs and impacts were initially identified:

- 1 Enhanced assessment, feedback, feedforward resource
- 2 Staff awareness and knowledge of inclusive assessment processes are increased
- 3 Learning and Teaching Strategy informed

Action we have taken to progress this key area:

Research around inclusive assessment was undertaken (March 2016 – Feb 2017) with a view to mapping findings to the current university resource.

Assessment workshops were held at the Science Health and Engineering (SHE) Conference June 2016 and at the HEA Conference in Cardiff July 2016 to gain

staff feedback and to raise awareness of the concept of inclusive assessment processes.

A call went out to sector equalities groups for potential case studies around inclusive assessment (September 2016).

Further workshops were planned for delivery to university staff and to staff in another college (November/December 2016)

Proposals for Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) Scholarship research and evaluation project invited in the area of Inclusive assessment practice (December 2016).

Measures we are using to monitor our progress:

Research findings
Feedback from workshops
Feedback from sector

Evidence of progress that has been made:

Key themes from research identified where inclusive assessment practices are currently being embedded:

- Assessment design
- Preparing students for assessment
- Involving students in the assessment process
- Feedback/feedforward

Positive feedback from workshop participants that research was being undertaken in this area and enthusiasm from some to take things forward perhaps as evaluation this year and piloting something the next.

Challenges that have been faced in progressing this key area:

The following concerns have been raised by staff:

- Resources - would need to be put in place if assessments were to be redesigned ie time and staff resources
- Allowing assessment choice could be seen as 'dumbing down' ie professional discussion instead of written essay
- Difficult to embed equality and diversity into accrediting bodies' pre-designed assessments.

Some planned workshops had to be cancelled due to lack in numbers of staff interested in attending.

Further action we intend to take:

- Embed Assessment and Feedback for Learning within the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy
- Embed inclusive assessment processes within assessment and feedback resource
- Revise assessment and feedback policy
- Embed learning and teaching enhancement values in module and programme approval process
- Align enhancement values (including those focused on inclusivity and assessment and feedback for learning) with institutional ALPINE recognition scheme
- 'Surface' and disseminate best practice digitally
- Longitudinal evaluation relating to enhanced practices
- Visibility of good practice through e.g. ALPINE
- Indicators (currently being determined) related to implementation of new learning and teaching strategy