Understanding and addressing disparities in student progression and attainment.

Angie Pears, Equality and Diversity.

Sarah Lawther, CADQ.

Aim.

- Better understand disparities in student progression and attainment.
  - Introduction to sector data.
  - Current sector understanding of causes of the disparities in progression and attainment.

- Introduction to the 'Narrowing the Gap' project at NTU.
  - The Vice-Chancellor has endorsed this project as his first Equality and Diversity theme lead.

What do we mean by progression and attainment gaps?

- Equality and Diversity groups: gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and at NTU, socio-economic disadvantage (widening participation).

- Progression and attainment of 'good degree.'

- The ethnicity degree attainment gap is measured as*:

  "(percentage of UK-domiciled white first degree undergraduate qualifiers achieving a first/2:1) – (percentage of UK-domiciled BME first degree undergraduate qualifiers achieving a first/2:1)" (ECU, 2014, p12).

  - The gender attainment gap is measured as:

  "(percentage of male first degree undergraduate qualifiers receiving a first/2:1) – (percentage of female first degree undergraduate qualifiers receiving a first/2:1)" (ECU, 2014, p12).

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Why is this important?

Increased sector awareness.

- HEFCE Business Plan 2015-2020 and Understanding and addressing differential student outcomes call for case studies ends 28 March 2015.

- Higher Education Academy (HEA) Black and minority-ethnic strategic development grants.

At NTU.

•NTU's Equality Scheme 2012-15.

•ASQC's Annual Reports.

•NTU's OFFA Access Agreement.

Improving the student experience for all students.
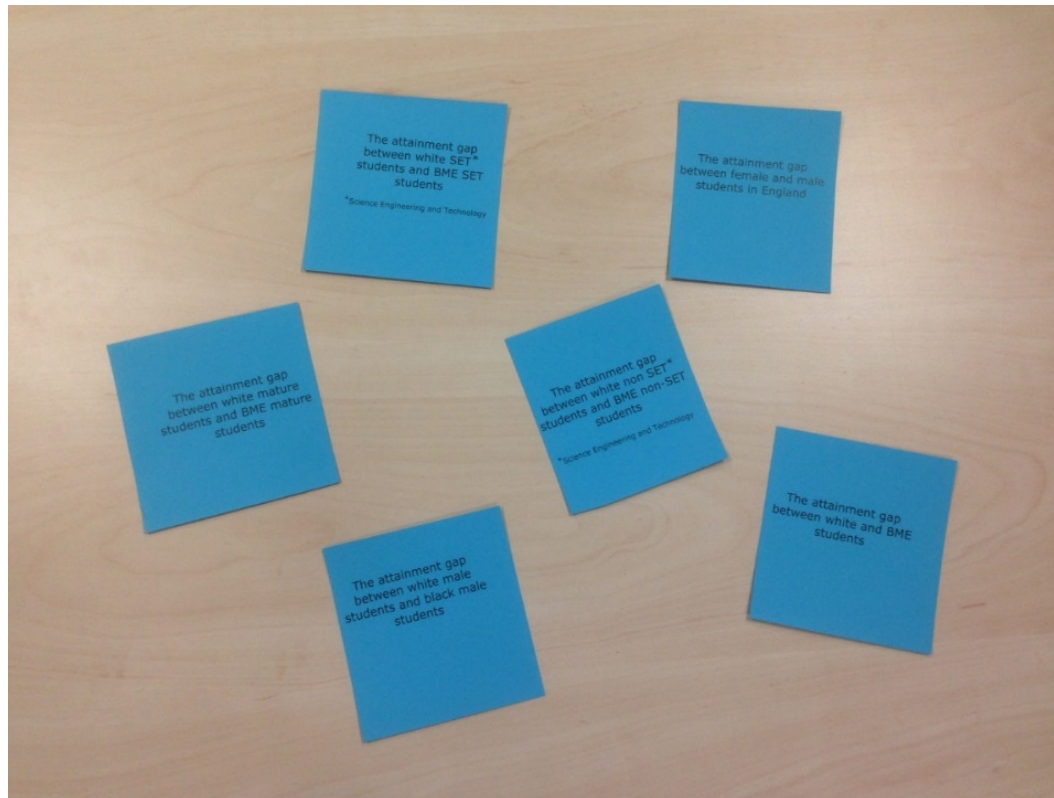
Understanding sector data activity.

Purpose of the activity.

- Understanding of sector patterns when looking at own data.

- Multiple identities of students.

- Differences between ethnic groups.

- All data is from EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT (ECU), 2014. *Equality in higher education: statistical report 2014 Part 2: students* [online]. Available at: http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2014/.

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Understanding sector data activity.

**As a table, please sort the cards in order from the largest to the smallest attainment gap.**

Understanding Sector Data: Activity.

The attainment gap between white male student attainment and black male student attainment	The attainment gap between mature (aged 36 and over) white students and mature BME students	The attainment gap between non-SET (Science Engineering and Technology) white students and non-SET BME students
27.1%	24.3%	17.6%
The attainment gap between white and BME students	The attainment gap between SET (Science Engineering and Technology) white students and SET BME students	The attainment gap between male and female students in England
16.8%	14%	-4.6%

Sector data by discipline.

- The HEA's Undergraduate retention and attainment across the disciplines reports on retention and attainment data by discipline.

- The HEFCE UK review of the provision of information about higher education contains an analysis of NSS results by student group for the period 2005 - 2013.
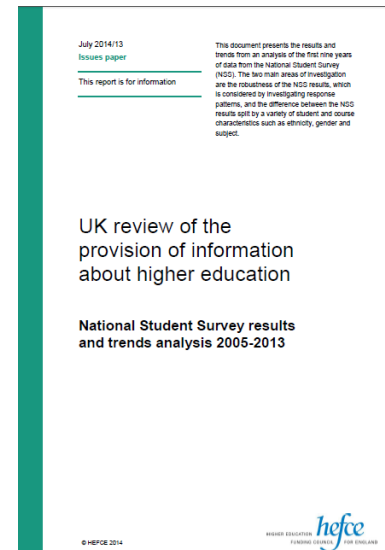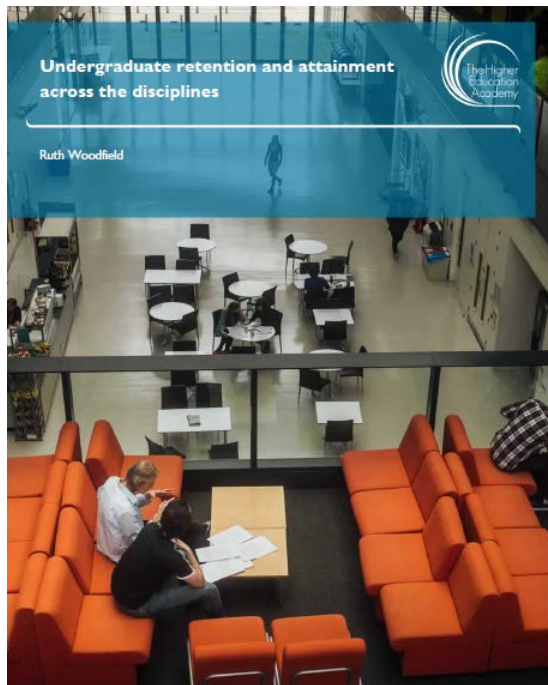
- National Student Survey results and trends analysis 2005-2013.

NTU Equality Information: Student Data.

Michael Kerrigan and Laura Hope, Schools, Colleges & Community Outreach, February 2015.

- Reports produced in SCCO across student lifecycle and for equality and diversity groups, WP and international students..

- Data reports are available on Narrowing the Gap SharePoint.

- Questions about data Mike Kerrigan, SCCO.

- Susannah Lamb: Using data to inform change: implications for course reporting – opportunity to look at Cognos and your own course data.

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BTEC students.

- "The vocational route into HE is ... an important route for the most disadvantaged students (Rouncefield-Swales, 2004, p11).

- The number of students taking BTEC's has doubled in the last three years at University Alliance institutions (ibid, p4).

- BTEC's particularly popular for the subjects:
  - Creative arts and design;
  - Business and administrative studies;
  - Biological sciences; and
  - Computer science (ibid, p13).

What Works? Student retention and success.

- No one silver bullet or specific intervention.

- Know your own students.

- Address themes found to support retention and success according to own context.

- Importance of belonging to student retention and success.

- Compendium of effective practice in higher education retention and success.

- Compendium of effective practice in higher education: Volume 2.

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Sector understanding activity.

Purpose of the activity.

• Introduce current sector understanding of causes of the disparities in progression and attainment.

6 Themes.

• Study habits, assessment and feedback.

• Building positive relationships with students.

• Seeking support.

• Social and cultural capital.

• Institutional racism and unconscious bias.

• Motivation and aspirations.

"No single cause has been found to solely explain why there is a gap"
(Richardson, 2013, p11),

"the evidence points to a complex range of differently connected factors"
(Singh, 2009, p24)

19 May 2015

Sector understanding activity.

- Please choose 1 or 2 theme cards and discuss:

  - What works well to address these themes in your course? How is this shared amongst colleagues?

  - What would you like to develop within your course?

Evaluated interventions to close the gaps.

- Eddy and Hogan (2014) Active Learning.
  - halved their white/black attainment gap.
  - closed their WP gap.
  - increased classroom community.
  - changed study habits.
  - black students more likely to participate.
  - NTU DELITE Project - Delivering Engaging Lectures and Interactive Teaching. For further information please contact David Ellicott.

> *"One intervention type does not fit all students equally"* (Eddy and Hogan, 2014, p463)

- Yeager and Walton (2011) Social-Psychological Interventions.
  - Belonging.
  - Halved the white/black attainment gap.

- University of Derby, Fit to Submit: Assignment Checklist.
  - Understanding assessment.

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International students and BME students.

- "Some HEIs … viewed international and home BME students as synonymous" (Stevenson, 2012, p7).

- "Raising awareness of the term BME and its distinction from international students helped staff to focus on issues that were particular to BME students and that were independent of English language ability" (Berry and Loke, 2011, p62).

- Shared experiences between international and home students including discrimination, Eurocentric curricula (Berry and Loke, 2011, p25).

- Different experiences, for example, Black international students (9%) were more likely to describe their current teaching and learning environment as racist than Black UK-domiciled students (5%) (NUS, 2011, p5).

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NTU Narrowing the Gap Project.

- NTU's 'Narrowing the Gap Project' is concerned with addressing the differential rates of progression and attainment for certain disadvantaged student groups (protected student equality groups and socio-economic disadvantaged students).

- Key organisational and sector drivers include:

  - NTU's Equality Scheme 2012-15.

  - ASQC's Annual Reports.

  - NTU's OFFA Access Agreement.

  - Increased sector awareness.

- Led by Angie Pears (Equality and Diversity).

- The Vice-Chancellor has endorsed this project as his first E&D theme lead.

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School Plans.

- Focus on ethnicity, male and widening participation.

- Focus on progression and attainment.

- Informed by a School specific Equality & Diversity and WP Data Analysis Report.

- **Inclusive** framework for action agreed.

- Aim is to build up **an evidence base** at NTU about what works to narrow/close the progression and attainment gaps for disadvantaged student groups.

- Each School has identified a research question that can be evaluated during this academic year.

- Further information and resources can be found on the SharePoint site at https://portal.ntu.ac.uk/pva/NPG/SitePages/Home.aspx.

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NTG School Leads.

- ARES - Julia Davies.

- ADBE - Mark Davison.

- Art & Design - Christine Hardy.

- Arts & Humanities - Lloyd Pettiford.

- School of Education - Belinda Ferguson.

- Nottingham Business School - Melanie Currie.

- Nottingham Law School - Matthew Homewood.

- Social Sciences - Sam Murphy.

- Science & Technology - Karen Moss.

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Summary of project themes.

- **One-to-one meetings/tutorials with academic staff.**
  - All students and linked to development logs (NBS).
  - Low engaged students (ARES).
  - Low attending students (ADBE).
  - Students with fail or low third (Social Sciences).
  - Structured self assessment tool for students at risk of failure by Course Tutors (SST).
- **Buddying.**
  - Course buddies for 10 UG courses (A&D).
- **Achieving aspirations.**
  - Alumni talks to highlight career opportunities (ADBE).
  - 'Praising excellence' letters to high engagement students (ADBE).
  - Inspirational lecture by former student (A&H).
  - Alumni and placement students talk with students (NBS).
  - Visits and talks by the Professional Accounting Bodies (NBS).
- **Assessment and study skills.**
  - Guided peer feedback on assignment plans (EDU).
  - 'How to' series – online video resources to support assessment and study skills (NLS).

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[Narrowing the Gap SharePoint](#).

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