

Universities  
Scotland



**WORKING**

**TO**

**WIDEN**

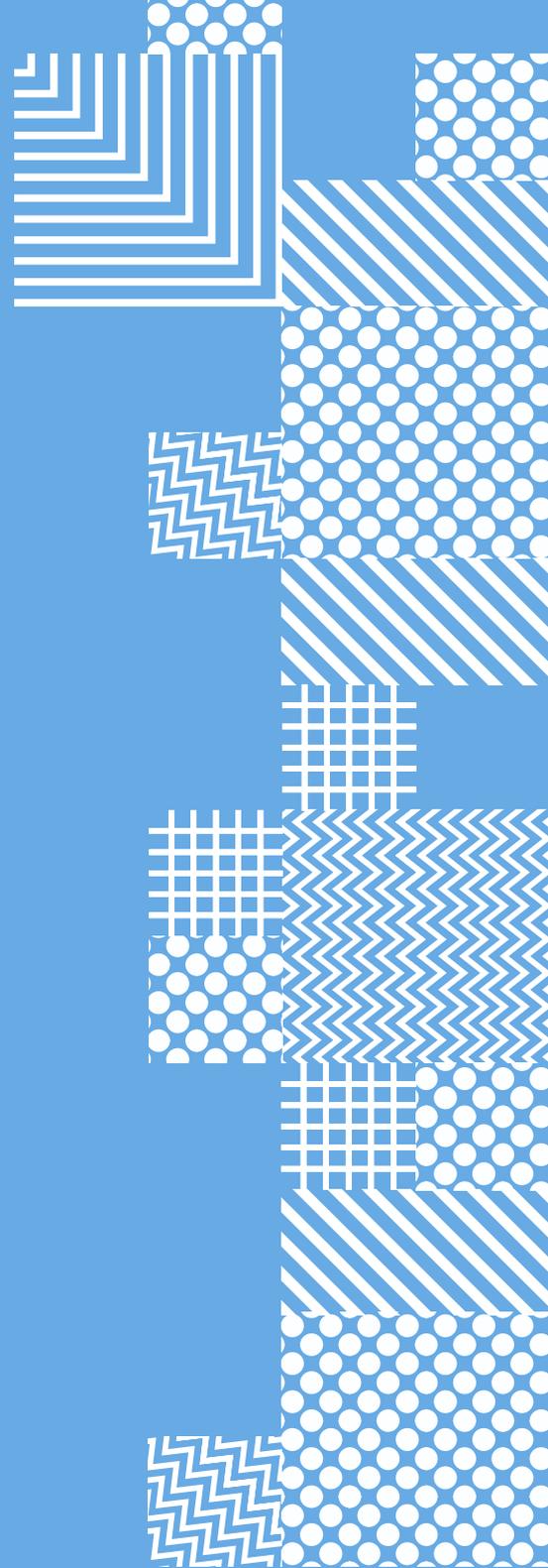
**ACCESS**



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We are grateful to Professor Sally Mapstone, Ms Susan Stewart, Professor Petra Wend and to all members of the working groups who gave their time, energy and expertise to help inform the actions we have developed. We will need to call on your support again but we are very grateful for your contribution so far.



# Preface

We believe in education as a public good, accessible to a wide range of people. We believe in the power of higher education as a way of helping people achieve their potential as well as for the wider contribution it makes to creating a fairer and more prosperous Scotland.

Access to higher education is too often determined by people's social and economic circumstances. This is both unfair to those denied the opportunity and wasteful of potential.

Universities are determined to change this situation and are working to widen access. We are making progress. Just this summer, 470 more Scottish applicants from the most deprived areas, commonly known as SIMD20<sup>1</sup>, gained a place at university than the year before. Currently 14% of entrants live in SIMD20 areas.<sup>2</sup> But the goal is to reach 20%. We are determined to make quicker progress so we will take bigger, bolder actions to achieve that.

It is in everyone's interest including universities' that this happens. Clever, curious, creative people are to be found everywhere. That is who universities are interested in. Potential university students don't live in one type of neighbourhood or attend one type of school; nor are they all school leavers with the same life experience. We want to broaden opportunities so that a university education is for every person who wants one and has the potential to benefit. Universities enable change in people's lives. They create opportunities that people can then make the most of.

We are realistic about the barriers that many people face when thinking about higher education and the barriers which prevent too many from even thinking about it as a possibility. We will do our part by removing as many obstacles and creating as many opportunities as are in our power. We are committed to our institutions being places that attract talented individuals from every part of society, and support them to succeed in their studies and in life. That is a value that runs through all our work to recruit, teach and support students, not just our specific widening access activities. We believe that the 15 actions set out in this report represent important steps to realise that value in full.

*“Taking a hard look at admissions, bridging programmes and articulation between college and university marks a very positive response in three key areas which link closely to many of our recommendations. I believe wholeheartedly that the most powerful, genuine and lasting change will come from within.”*

DAME RUTH SILVER, 2016



# Overview

We have based our work on the final report of the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA), *A Blueprint for Fairness*, which was published in March 2016. There were 34 recommendations from CoWA; there are ten that focus on universities directly and another three that universities have a role in. We respond with 15 actions.

Last summer we grouped the university-facing CoWA recommendations into three key areas. They are:

- the admissions process for university;
- direct routes from college into university (known as articulation); and
- bridging programmes.

We set up three working groups led by three university Principals and with membership from experts in universities and beyond.<sup>3</sup> These groups have taken a hard look at what we're currently doing, what is working best and what more we can do. There are things we need to change as well as new actions we can take.

As an example, we've realised that applying to university has become more complicated. There are many terms and processes to understand. We've found that they are not necessarily the same university to university. That's why all universities have agreed to work together to reach clear and consistent terms for their contextualised admissions. This work starts straight away. We say more about this in action 1 on page 14.

Our actions on minimum entry requirements (action 3) and the creation of a consistent core of metrics for contextualised admissions (action 2) both draw on new research and new data. Some of the actions will involve working with learners to create the evidence that will inform our work. This is the case with action 10 which sees the first ever national survey of learners' views on articulation from college into university.

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that bridging programmes are successful in helping to widen access. The group which focused on bridging programmes found that Scottish universities run over 100 different programmes. We want to improve the coherence, achieve better regional coordination and to identify where programmes might scale-up to maximise the advantages they bring to learners (actions 12-14).

The 15 actions and one recommendation set out in these pages will make a difference to learners of all ages, parents, advisers, and teachers. This will take hard work to deliver but they are realistic and achievable. These actions are not a cure-all. As Dame Ruth Silver said when *Blueprint* was published: "access is a whole system problem and it will require system-wide change to solve it."<sup>4</sup>

**February 2015**  
First Minister announces the formation of a Commission on Widening Access.

**March 2015**  
Dame Ruth Silver is appointed to chair Widening Access Commission.

**March 2016**  
A Blueprint for Fairness: The Final Report of the Commission on Widening Access is published.

**August 2016**  
Universities Scotland publishes *Futures Not Backgrounds* in response to the Blueprint. We create three working groups to take this forward.

**December 2016**  
Professor Peter Scott is appointed as the first Commissioner on Fair Access, meeting the deadline in CoWA's first recommendation.

## Our actions will enhance opportunities and widen access. Some highlights from the actions include:

- Scottish higher education institutions will develop clear and consistent information about contextualised admissions, articulation, and bridging programmes. We will work to publish a set of terms and descriptions that pass user-testing and are ready for use to inform the application cycle for 2020/21 entry at the latest.
- Scottish higher education institutions will use a consistent core of contextual indicators in their admissions.
- Every Scottish higher education institution will set minimum entry requirements for their courses in 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21. The minimum requirements will reflect the best evidence on the level of achievement necessary for successful completion.
- Every university will undertake a fundamental review of their ability to increase the number and percentage of students who articulate with full credit for the start of 2018/19. This review will need to involve college partners and others.
- We will create a National Articulation Forum to be co-owned by Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland and with the Scottish Funding Council and NUS Scotland also taking a strategic role. It will provide strategic guidance to further the work on articulation and a structure within which expert practitioner work can be taken forward to increase the range and diversity of articulation pathways.
- The National Articulation Forum will investigate student perspectives on articulation, including financial and cultural barriers they may face.
- Universities Scotland will work with others to scope the development of a single online resource that enables learners and their advisers to access information about bridging programme opportunities offered across Scotland. We will deliver this scoping exercise for the start of 2018/19.
- Higher education institutions will work to improve the national coherence of bridging activity. This will include better regional coordination of bridging programmes and more mutual recognition of programmes, making it easier for students to transfer. This will be implemented during 2018/19.

**November 2017**  
Universities Scotland publish Working To Widen Access.

**2018**  
A Scottish Framework for Fair Access to be published by the Commissioner (CoWA recommendation 2).

**2019**  
All universities to have set access thresholds for all degree programmes (CoWA recommendation 1). We are on course to meet this with action 3.

**2021**  
By 2021 students from the most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 16% of full-time first degree entrants to Scottish HEIs as a whole.

# A Holistic Approach

When we were setting up the working groups we wanted to work with a broad range of relevant organisations, individuals and members.

The National Union of Students Scotland (NUS Scotland) was a member of every group as it is the voice of students. UCAS, the admissions body, was a member of the admissions group, as well as schools, colleges and university admissions staff. The articulation group included college and university staff who have years of experience building successful articulation routes. The bridging programmes group included the former General Secretary of School Leaders Scotland, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership, and access and outreach officers from universities. A full list of the membership of each working group can be found in Annex B.

Each working group was led by a Principal drawn from our membership. Professor Sally Mapstone of the University of St Andrews led the admissions group, Susan Stewart, Director of the Open University in Scotland led the articulation group, and Professor Petra Wend from Queen Margaret University led the bridging programmes group. The Principals engaged in regular dialogue with each other in recognition of the close connections between the work streams. The Principals engaged with Professor Peter Scott, the Commissioner for Fair Access throughout the process and have shared our actions with him.

We support the holistic approach to widening access that Scotland adopted in 2015. It is really important that all parts of the education system, Government and others work together. Long term, Scotland's goal has to be closing the attainment gap that exists in school performance. Schools and universities can support each other with this. Universities' outreach into schools now often begins with learners as young as four and universities are deeply engaged with schools in their areas. Whilst school-leavers are an important group in the access agenda, Scotland also needs to offer better solutions for adult returners and those who wish to study part-time. Success in all of these areas, as well as in each of our 15 actions, will see Scotland rise to the challenge.

# Our Guiding Principles

## Our 15 actions are underpinned by the following principles:

### A. Every applicant deserves fair admissions

All of our work to widen access will meet the guiding principle of ensuring fair admissions for every student as outlined by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA). SPA's five principles are:

1. being transparent;
2. enabling institutions to select students who are able to complete the course, as judged by their achievements and their potential;
3. striving to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid;
4. seeking to minimise barriers for applicants; *and*
5. being professional in every aspect and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes.

We believe that the actions we have set out in this paper are consistent with SPA's five principles, and SPA supports this.

### B. Collaboration

All three working groups were enthusiastic about collaborating more. Universities will create more opportunities to work together and will be more open to learning from each other and other stakeholders. This will be important in keeping to a holistic approach to widening access.

### C. The sector's diversity is valuable

It is really positive that Scotland has such a diverse set of higher education institutions. It means applicants have much more choice depending on their priorities.

Universities are open to doing things consistently where it is of benefit to learners. It is not in the interests of students to have a one-size-fits-all approach across all 19 higher education institutions. A great example of this is the Open University which requires no formal qualifications for any of its undergraduate courses. Entry requirements will continue to be something that each institution sets individually. Some courses are exceptionally demanding and require high levels of prior attainment; others, such as music, drama or art courses may require specific relevant attainment. Greater consistency will be achieved by the fact that every university will clearly set out its standard and its minimum entry requirements.

### D. Decisions will be informed by evidence

We are looking to do things differently and we want to have the confidence that we are making decisions that are informed by robust data. We have a responsibility to learners of all ages, parents, advisers, and teachers to make informed judgements, even where we cannot be certain of the outcomes. Access to reliable and robust data will be essential.

### E. Success in widening access will be judged by successful student outcomes

Widening access and retention are inseparable. Our aim is to go beyond admitting more students who meet access criteria. We want to ensure they have a good learning experience and a successful outcome. Unplanned exits from higher education can be a waste of someone's talent if that individual does not feel able to re-engage with education in whatever form. Our measurement of success is students completing their degree programmes successfully.

# Common Themes in the Actions

**We created three working groups to enable us to deliver sustained focus on admissions, bridging programmes and articulation. But their work is not separate from one another. Several common themes connect the actions:**

**I. The need for greater clarity and consistency in the terms and language universities use when it comes to widening access.**

Applying to university is challenging. There are many options and different entry requirements. The 'labels' given to good initiatives like contextualised admissions and articulation are not user-friendly; they may vary by institution, and are not well understood by the very people who need to use them. We will change this by developing a common language used by universities.

**II. The need for our actions to be taken forward with potential learners as well as for potential learners.**

Universities are taking these actions because they believe they are the right things to do and believe that they will make a difference. But we will not let that stand untested. We will make learner experience and user feedback from relevant groups a core part of the way we implement these actions.

**III. The need to establish robust data and share it between organisations with a role in widening access.**

A lot of highly relevant data is now collected by universities, the Scottish Funding Council, the Scottish Government and other partners with a role in access. It is really important that we share that data and make best use of it to inform the decisions we take about widening access and to track and evaluate progress.

Data sharing can open up new possibilities. There are some areas where data collection and aggregation is lacking and it would be helpful to establish robust data to inform decision-making by all stakeholders. Universities will be empowered to make bolder decisions if they have the confidence in the data and evidence to support them.

We will press the Scottish Government to introduce a Unique Learner Number in Scotland as CoWA recommended.<sup>5</sup> This would enable end-to-end tracking of learners who meet access criteria, supporting more effective long-term evaluation. We see great benefits for a scheme of this nature.

#### **IV. Work on the learner journey in Scotland.**

The Scottish Government has been leading a closely-related project to look at the learner journey between the ages of 15 and 24 through school, college, and university. This has been running in parallel to our work on widening access. Our detailed submission of evidence to the learner journey review has stressed that any reforms proposed by that review must enhance wide access to higher education.<sup>6</sup> We have briefed the learner journey review team about the outcomes from our widening access work and look forward to Scottish Government publishing proposals for refinement of the learner journey that are consistent with our widening access actions.

We have also stressed that the learner journey policy-making – as with widening access to higher education – needs to better recognise and include mature students as well as part-time study.

*“Contextualised admissions are a key weapon in the fight to secure fairer access. But the term itself is opaque, even obscure. The first need is for up-to-date and accessible language.”*

**PROFESSOR PETER SCOTT, Commissioner for Fair Access  
Discussion Paper on Contextual Admissions, June 2017**

# Admissions

*“I welcome the planning in making transparent and accessible all the pathways for all who are able to access university courses. As a Guidance Teacher who is familiar with many of the opportunities available in supporting students who do not fully meet the criteria for a standard entry, I may not always be up to date with the range of relevant courses across the 19 Scottish universities, which directly cater for able students with lower attainment. Therefore, I look forward to the development of appropriate one-stop websites and databases informing the student, teacher and parent/carer, and to the increased partnership working between secondary and tertiary education, which will enable me to offer the highest level of support to all of our students.”*

**Maria Rawluk**

Pupil Support Leader  
Drummond Community High School

*“Working as a Guidance Teacher in a school where a number of pupils would meet the criteria for contextual admissions, I think it can only be a positive step to have clarity and consistency across Scottish universities. Although as a school we make parents and pupils aware that contextual admissions exist, the universities do not all seem to look at the same factors which can be confusing. In order to better support my pupils, I would find it beneficial to know which factors universities will consider, along with the value placed on these when a pupil only has the minimum entry requirements. Often pupils can be put off from applying to a particular university because they don’t think their grades are competitive enough when actually their circumstances would allow them to be considered.”*

**Mrs Bryony Hunter**

PT Guidance (Mathematics)  
Kirkcaldy High School



## Actions in brief

- **Scottish higher education institutions will develop clear and consistent information about contextualised admissions. We will work to publish a set of terms and descriptions in 2018 that pass user-testing and are ready for use to inform the application cycle for 2020/21 entry.**
- **Scottish higher education institutions will use a consistent core of indicators in their contextualised admissions.**
- **Every Scottish higher education institution will set minimum entry requirements for their courses in 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21. The minimum requirements will reflect the best evidence on the level of achievement necessary for successful completion.**
- **Care experienced learners will be guaranteed an offer of a place at university if they meet minimum entry requirements. Until then, universities will continue to give care experienced applicants additional consideration.**
- **Universities Scotland will work with our members to consider whether there are other categories of learner who should receive special consideration.**
- **Universities Scotland will work with the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government to identify and share the data universities need to inform their contextualised admissions policies.**

The admissions working group had two main objectives: how to encourage more people from a wider range of backgrounds to apply to study at university in the first place, and; how to make the process of applying straightforward and user-friendly for those who do.

We believe it is possible to do both whilst keeping the system fair for all applicants.

### **Increasing the number of people able to apply to university**

Last year, only 10.5% of all 18-year old Scottish applicants to university in Scotland were living in SIMD20 data zones.<sup>7</sup> Our goal is to get to a point where 20% of entrants are from the 20% most deprived areas. There is a big job ahead to increase the numbers applying.

Scotland's universities will take action that should help increase the number of people able to apply to university. The combination of publishing minimum entry requirements, being clear about who these apply to, and a consistent language for admissions will help demystify the process of contextualised admissions in Scotland. This delivers on CoWA recommendations 11 and 12. Scotland leads the way because every university with entry requirements has already adopted contextualised approaches to admissions. These actions will be another big step forward in the way that Scotland's universities consider an applicant's attainment and circumstances.

## Minimum entry requirements

Universities will make offers at the minimum entry requirement where they are confident that the applicant has more potential than they have had a chance to demonstrate. There is some compelling evidence that students with potential who enter with a lower set of grades than their peers can perform just as strongly in the right circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Meeting minimum entry requirements won't always guarantee an offer to higher education because there are often more applicants than there are places available. Universities' judgement therefore has to be at the heart of this, as it is the applicant and the university that have the relationship going forward.

Minimum entry requirements are a positive statement about the level at which universities are confident an entrant stands every chance of doing well at university. If an applicant is offered a place at university at the minimum entry level they should be proud of their achievement. There is hard work ahead of them, but that is how it should be at university.

*“If we are serious about tackling the most serious forms of deprivation rather than just running an across-the-board flexible admissions system, we probably need to make bolder adjustments, based on clearly expressed educational rationales”*

**PROFESSOR PETER SCOTT, Commissioner for Fair Access to the Cross-Party Group on Universities and Colleges, 2017**

## Defining contextualised admissions

Universities use contextual data and contextual information from a number of sources to help them identify applicants who might benefit from additional consideration in the admissions process. This is contextualised admissions. This can be information provided by the applicant (such as self-declared care experience) or educational, socio-economic or geo-demographic data available to the university (such as SIMD).

Universities use contextualised admissions because they understand that not everyone has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential through their school or college qualifications alone. Extensive research shows that a person's socio-economic background, where they live, the type of school they attended, and their subject choice can all impact on their educational attainment and, therefore, their likelihood of progressing to higher education. Contextualised admissions is meant to reduce the impact of those factors, by providing universities with an effective means of identifying applicants with the greatest potential to succeed in higher education.

It is possible to go one step further and use contextual data and information about an applicant to make an adjusted offer.

### **Care experienced applicants**

We are making one exception to the rule on guaranteed places. Care experienced applicants will be guaranteed an offer to university if they meet minimum entry requirements, once we have minimum entry requirements in place. This directly addresses CoWA recommendation 21. This is to recognise the often very challenging circumstances that people with care experience face. Whilst the data on those with care experience is limited, data on looked after<sup>9</sup> school leavers shows that only 1% achieve one or more qualification at SCQF Level 7, which is equivalent to an Advanced Higher. This is compared to an average of 19% of all school leavers.<sup>10</sup> In the face of this substantial inequality, we feel it is only right to recognise the achievement of people with experience of care who succeed in reaching minimum entry requirements.

### **Helping applicants to understand admissions**

We want to bring more clarity and consistency to the language surrounding admissions. We will develop an agreed set of terms that all universities will use. We also want to be more transparent about whom contextualised admissions applies to by introducing a consistent core of indicators such as SIMD20 and care experienced status. We want every applicant to feel like the admissions process is working for them and with them. We believe these actions should encourage more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to consider applying to university.

## Action on admissions

### **1. Scottish higher education institutions will develop clear and consistent information about contextualised admissions. We will work to publish a set of terms and descriptions in 2018 that pass user-testing and are ready for use to inform the application cycle for 2020/21 entry.**

Every applicant and their advisers need to know how the university admissions process works and particularly how and why universities do contextualised admissions. This requires universities to provide clear explanations of the meaning of key terms like contextualised admissions itself, as well as minimum and standard entry requirements. People thinking of applying to university are likely to look at several universities before they make a decision. It is important universities use these key terms and processes consistently. Otherwise, universities may be missing out on able students who could have benefited from contextualised admissions if they had understood how the process could work for them. We will work with relevant groups to develop and 'road test' terminology and phrasing to ensure it is understood.

The next stage will be an awareness-raising campaign with key audiences. We'll work with UCAS and other key stakeholders to ensure that the materials we produce will reach our intended audiences in the most meaningful ways.

### **2. Scottish higher education institutions will use a consistent core of indicators in their contextualised admissions.**

We want to move to a system of contextualised admissions which offers more consistency and clarity for applicants. All Scottish universities will agree to use a consistent core of indicators for their contextualised admissions. This change will help potential students know, well ahead of applying, whether their application

could receive additional consideration. The first two indicators in the core are SIMD20 and care experienced status<sup>11</sup>. We will continue to work to see if there are other indicators that can be added to this core.

As well as core indicators, individual institutions will continue to use additional contextual indicators where there is evidence to suggest this would widen access or where it meets a clear need in their region or within their existing student demographic. This is entirely appropriate given the diversity of higher education institutions in Scotland, and given the diversity of local and regional contexts. The use of core and additional contextual indicators will bring greater clarity and consistency to contextualised admissions in Scotland.

### **3. Every Scottish higher education institution will set minimum entry requirements for their courses in 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21. The minimum requirements will reflect the best evidence on the level of achievement necessary for successful completion.**

Universities will use their professional judgement when making an offer below the standard entry requirement. A student's potential to achieve a successful outcome is more important than getting that student started on the course. Universities are committed to making offers that are tailored to the applicant's own access profile as well as the qualifications and learning they have already achieved.

Institutions will make the relationship between minimum and standard entry requirements clear.

Changes to entry requirements need to be agreed at least 22 months ahead of an entrant starting their course so we can make sure

the right information is available to potential applicants. This is because the application process is quite long in itself and because potential students start thinking about university many months, if not years, before they start. Universities will need to consult their academic staff and admissions teams on entry requirements before any changes are made. Most of Scotland's universities deliver several hundred courses and each course has its own entry requirements. We think it would be stretching but possible to set out minimum entry requirements by 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21.

In exceptional circumstances, institutions may make offers below their published minimum entry requirements. This might apply to applicants who have experienced extreme hardship and/or significant disruption to their education, or who have been identified through special support arrangements like bridging activity as having strong potential to perform well at university.

**4. Care experienced learners will be guaranteed an offer of a place at university if they meet minimum entry requirements. Until then, universities will continue to give care experienced applicants additional consideration.**

People with care experience have often overcome additional challenges to achieve their qualifications and this deserves recognition. Care experienced learners will receive offers from the institutions they apply to if they meet minimum entry requirements. HEIs will develop a fair, inclusive and consistent definition of what care experienced means for the purpose of contextualised admissions.

**5. Universities Scotland will work with our members to consider whether there are other categories of learner who should receive special consideration.**

HEIs will examine the case for widening access to other groups of people who are under-represented in the student population and who experience particular forms of disadvantage.

**6. Universities Scotland will work with the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government to identify and share the data universities need to inform their contextualised admissions policies.**

Universities will be as bold as possible in setting minimum entry requirements. This will be greatly helped if they have the data that enables them to draw a correlation between levels of school attainment and the likelihood of successful completion of study. The data will also help us evaluate the impact of minimum entry requirements. We want to work with the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council to identify and secure access to specific additional data needed to support greater progress in widening access.



# Articulation

*“There seems to be a lot of issues with awareness and understanding of articulation with teachers and students. I think it is very important to look at how many routes there are in articulation from college to university and how institutions can increase their numbers. In my own applications for this year, I am worried about how many places there will be in third year and if I will be able to get any offers. If universities and colleges can work together to raise more awareness of the steps in applying to university – especially ones that differ from the regular route into first year – then I think this will help students much more.”*

**Hazel Pike**

HN student at Edinburgh College



Edinburgh  
College

Edinburgh College  
Main Entrance  
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## Actions in brief

- **Every university will undertake a fundamental review of its ability to increase the number and percentage of students who articulate with full credit for the start of 2018/19. This review will need to involve college partners and others.**
- **Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland will establish a National Articulation Forum in academic year 2017/18.**
- **The National Articulation Forum will examine how we can offer full credit articulation to more students. It will do this by looking at opportunities to improve articulation in specific subjects as well as considering how to expand the model of articulation to include other qualifications in addition to Higher Nationals.**
- **The National Articulation Forum will investigate student perspectives on articulation.**
- **The National Articulation Forum will develop clear information about articulation.**

The articulation working group set out with two broad goals. First, it wanted to increase the number and variety of pathways available to learners choosing an articulation route.

Secondly, the working group was also focused on increasing the proportion of articulating students who receive full credit for their qualification. Currently only 47.8% of Higher National (HN) students receive full credit.<sup>12</sup>

### Finding the barriers

More people choose to use their HN qualification to progress to university study than go into employment.<sup>13</sup> With articulation growing as a route into university, the working group wanted to assess articulation data to get a better understanding of where it works well and where it doesn't. To achieve this, the group led Scotland's first analysis of articulation data by subject. The data has given us some useful insights.

In some subject areas, including business, computing and engineering degrees, articulation is working very well and high proportions of students articulate with full credit (Table 1). But this varies significantly course to course. Based on our analysis of the data, a student entering a degree in computer sciences is more than four and a half times as likely to progress with full credit as someone studying subjects allied to medicine. Similarly, someone entering a degree in business studies is more than twice as likely to progress to university with full credit as a student entering a degree in social studies.<sup>14</sup>

## Defining Articulation

Articulation refers to a learner progressing from their Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND) into an undergraduate degree programme.

Recognising overlap between SCQF levels of study, colleges and universities can work together to give the learner full or partial credit for their qualification and offer the option of starting in the second or third year of the degree depending on whether the learner successfully completed an HNC or HND.

The articulation model could be expanded to apply to other qualifications.

Articulation is one way to help widen access. In 2014/15, 21.7% of articulating students were from SIMD20 data zones. This is a higher proportion than currently enter university directly. It will be important to keep monitoring the percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds using articulation as we look to expand it.

**Table 1: Above average rates of full credit articulation by university degree subject**

<b>Degree subject</b>	<b>Proportion of students with HNC/D who receive full credit articulation (%)</b>	<b>Variance from the average percentage</b>
<b>Average rate of full credit articulation</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>-</b>
Business and Administrative studies	75.7	+27.9
Mass Communications and Documentation	67.6	+19.8
Computer Sciences	63.4	+15.6
Engineering	53.9	+6.1
Architecture, Building and Planning	53.5	+5.7

Source: Analysis by Universities Scotland based on data from the National Articulation Database supplied by the Scottish Funding Council.

We found that when students stay in broadly the same subject group between university and college, the average rate of full credit articulation is higher at 57.6%.<sup>15</sup> In half of all cases where a student doesn't get full credit for their HN, the student has chosen to move into a different subject area. More than a third of HN students decide to change subjects as they move between college and university.<sup>16</sup> We wouldn't want to discourage learner choice but it has been important to learn this so we can improve our understanding of current learner journeys.

### **Credit where it is due**

Our analysis of articulation data found that there are seven broad degree subject areas which have a lower than average rate of full credit articulation and at least 100 students articulating (Table 2). This list of seven subjects gives universities and colleges a realistic set to work with. It also offers the prospect of a good return in terms of the number of students who are likely to want to progress with full credit if we get it right.

**Table 2: Below average rates of full credit articulation by university degree subject**

Degree subject	Proportion of students with HNC/D who receive full credit articulation (%)	Variance from the average percentage
<b>Average rate of full credit articulation</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>-</b>
Creative Arts and Design	44.2	-3.6
Biological Sciences	39.3	-8.5
Social studies	34.7	-13.1
Law	32.6	-15.2
Education	27.0	-20.8
Physical Sciences	19.6	-28.2
Subjects allied to Medicine	13.8	-34.0

Source: Analysis by Universities Scotland based on data from the National Articulation Database supplied by the Scottish Funding Council.

The articulation data offers a base for further analysis and understanding.<sup>17</sup> To continue this work, we will create a new, resourced National Articulation Forum (action 8) as a partnership between colleges, universities and students as represented by NUS Scotland. As well as the Forum's work at subject level, it will look at expanding articulation to include qualifications beyond HNs (action 9). It will develop clearer language and more information about articulation pathways for students (action 11).

All of our members have agreed to review their own ability to extend their articulation options or to improve the rate of full credit articulation for their existing routes (action 7). We recommend that the Scottish Funding Council make its articulation data more accessible to colleges and universities. We want to add to this growing evidence base with a qualitative survey of feedback from learners who have experienced articulation in whatever form (action 10).

## Action on articulation

### **7. Every university will undertake a fundamental review of its ability to increase the number and percentage of students who articulate with full credit for the start of 2018/19. This review will need to involve college partners and others.**

The review is aimed at increasing the number of articulation routes, the number of students using them and the proportion of students who articulate with full credit. This could be achieved with Higher Nationals (HN), Advanced Highers, or other qualifications. At present, six universities deliver more than 80% of HN articulation.<sup>18</sup> The picture is also uneven on the college side. Eight colleges deliver 80% of articulation. Other institutions are involved in articulation but this tends to be on a smaller scale, much more localised at subject level, and the students may not receive full credit for a range of reasons.

Institutions won't make equal contributions to articulation because institutions offer different subjects and have different curricula, they draw from different applicant pools across the world, and they have different strategic priorities and contexts within which they work. That said, the articulation working group took the view that it is unsustainable to expect that so much of the responsibility for articulation sits with so few institutions. Future growth in articulation should include a contribution from all colleges and universities in accordance with their different missions and identities.

As part of their review, universities should consider:

- How they might increase the amount of articulation taking place in subjects where routes are already established.
- How to increase the proportion of students receiving full credit.

- How and where new articulation routes might be created in subject groups and using other qualifications where this hasn't previously been an option.

We want this action to be taken forward in a collaborative spirit and to avoid the potential for competition between institutions for the same articulating students.

Separate to the work of the Forum and the case studies for students, Universities Scotland will collate and share examples of articulation as a resource for universities and colleges. We will deliver this by the beginning of 2018.

### **8. Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland will establish a National Articulation Forum in academic year 2017/18.**

Co-owned by Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland, the National Union of Students and Scottish Funding Council will also have a strategic role in the Forum. The membership will include practitioners and other key stakeholders. It will provide strategic guidance to further the work on articulation and a structure within which expert practitioner work can be taken forward to increase the range and diversity of articulation pathways.

It will be the Forum's responsibility to continue the national-level work started by the articulation working group and to look further into articulation data at subject level.

### **9. The National Articulation Forum will examine how we can offer full credit articulation to more students. It will do this by looking at opportunities to improve articulation in specific subjects as well as considering how to expand the model of articulation to include other qualifications in addition to Higher Nationals.**

The articulation work stream led the first ever analysis of articulation data by subject. This identified seven broad degree subject areas which have a lower than average rate of full credit articulation and at least 100 students articulating. A key task for the National Articulation Forum will be to identify the barriers to full credit recognition in the priority subject areas, and how these can be overcome.

**10. The National Articulation Forum will investigate student perspectives on articulation.**

The National Articulation Forum will undertake a national-level survey of student perspectives and experience of articulation. It has been really valuable to examine the data on articulation. Doing so has given us new insights but the data can't tell us everything we want to know. We need to hear from articulating students. A survey of student views will give us rich, additional qualitative information about any remaining academic and non-academic barriers that students face in moving from college to university. Asking students directly may give us new insight and new suggestions that universities, colleges and students' associations could act on.

**11. The National Articulation Forum will develop clear information about articulation.**

The articulation working group identified problems with awareness and understanding of articulation, and confusion about key terms and definitions. This is similar to the findings of the working groups looking at admissions and bridging programmes. Working through the Forum, colleges and universities will agree a common language for articulation to offer greater clarity to learners and their advisers. We will test this with users.

The Forum will also publish a set of positive case studies of articulation for learners and other stakeholders. This will help to support their understanding of the range of opportunities available through articulation.

**The working group also set out a recommendation for the Scottish Funding Council:**

**The Scottish Funding Council should improve the accessibility of data it holds on articulation to inform the work taken forward by higher education institutions and the National Articulation Forum.**

The accessibility and use of data is essential to inform the development of policy and practice on articulation. It would be a great help towards achieving these actions if the Scottish Funding Council would regularly publish more detailed and timely data on articulation, including data by subject for both the HN qualification and the undergraduate degree. It would be helpful if we had access to articulation data at a sufficient level of detail to look at patterns by both college and university. It will be important to interrogate this data by SIMD quintile, given this is the indicator the Scottish Government is using to track progress on access. It would also be helpful to universities to be able to access data on the protected characteristics of articulating students as well as other factors of under-representation such as care experienced status and carers. Finally, we would like to interrogate articulation data by retention and completion rates as our goal is not just to widen access but to help a wider group of students achieve successful outcomes.



# Bridging programmes

*“It is really encouraging to see universities taking the issue of widening access seriously. So many of our young people have the potential to thrive in a university environment, but there are often many visible and invisible barriers in their lives that prevent that from happening.*

*If we are serious about dismantling those barriers, then we need to see concerted action from all involved and these proposals are definitely a step forward.*

*We would all like a future where a young person’s circumstances have no impact on the options open to them beyond school. We would all like essentially, then, equality of opportunity, and I’m pleased to see that our universities are clearly on board with that aspiration.”*

**Mr Gavin Clark**

Head Teacher, Preston Lodge High School,  
Park View, Prestonpans



## Actions in brief

- **Higher education institutions will work to improve the national coherence of bridging activity. This will involve better regional coordination of bridging programmes and more mutual recognition of programmes making it easier for students to transfer. This will be implemented during 2018/19.**
- **Higher education institutions will agree a common language on bridging programmes for use across the sector to ensure clarity for learners and their advisers. This process will be fully inclusive of relevant stakeholders and be delivered in 2018.**
- **Universities Scotland will work with others to scope the development of a single online resource that enables learners and their advisers to access information about bridging programme opportunities offered across Scotland. We will deliver this scoping exercise for the start of 2018/19.**
- **Higher education institutions will explore the potential of introducing regional widening access targets to encourage collaboration.**

We created a working group on bridging programmes because there is good evidence of the positive impact that bridging programmes have on under-represented students. CoWA also makes a specific recommendation about them.

CoWA believed that bridging programmes have a ‘powerful impact’ on access.<sup>19</sup> They can offer multiple benefits including: additional academic support and a ‘top-up’ on school attainment; support for the motivation of school pupils; a sense of belonging to their university, which is known to help retention, and; dismantling cultural barriers to university. The evidence base on widening access has identified the transition points between school and university or college and university as crucial periods in someone’s journey through education where extra advice and support is needed.<sup>20</sup> Bridging programmes can provide that function. Bridging programmes can also link into admissions as they help universities get a better sense of people’s ability and potential.

## Defining our terms

Language proved to be an important issue for bridging programmes, as it did for the admissions and articulation working groups.

The group produced a definition for bridging programmes:

*The essential purpose of a bridging programme is to help a learner overcome a gap in knowledge, skill, experience or aspiration or to help overcome a barrier between one place and other. That could be the transition between school, college or employment into higher education. Bridging programmes are systematic and are not just a one-off engagement.*

*Bridging programmes should:*

- *be informative and raise aspiration;*
- *add to learners' educational attainment;*
- *prepare learners for successful transitions and for becoming successful university students;*
- *enable choice; and*
- *include an access agreement that can be taken into account in admissions.*

## Clarity in a crowded landscape

The working group then completed the first ever comprehensive audit of all Scottish university bridging programmes which matched this definition. There were over 100 bridging programmes cover the full age range, from pupils as young as four right through to adult returners.

When you look at the detail of different bridging programmes it is easy to understand why there are so many. Many deliver very different things. Some are focused on raising aspiration or providing entry routes to specific subjects like medicine, science or the

creative arts. Others are aimed at addressing the under-representation of protected characteristics like gender. As one of the benefits of bridging programmes is their ability to help someone feel a sense of belonging to the university, it makes sense that some bridging programmes would be shaped by and connect closely to just one university.

However, having over 100 bridging programmes in Scotland makes it a very crowded and difficult landscape for schools, parents and others to navigate. We see the benefits in trying to achieve better coordination of bridging programmes. We set out more detail in action 12.

## A shared language for better understanding

Defining what we mean by bridging programmes was an important first step in bringing greater clarity to a crowded area. Universities are just one of many organisations involved in developing and delivering bridging programmes. We think it would help if universities, schools and colleges were all using the same language. We will work with our partners to develop a common language for bridging programmes (action 13).

## Action on bridging programmes

**12. Higher education institutions will work to improve the national coherence of bridging activity. This will involve better regional coordination of bridging programmes and more mutual recognition of programmes making it easier for students to transfer. This will be implemented during 2018/19.**

There are over 100 different initiatives in Scotland that meet the working group's definition of a bridging programme.

We will work to improve the coherence of bridging activity on offer to learners, including better regional coordination of programmes. Some bridging programmes might lend themselves to being scaled up nationally. We will also explore what scope there is for HEIs to formally recognise each other's programmes which could create more options for students to move between institutions.

**13. Higher education institutions will agree a common language on bridging programmes for use across the sector to ensure clarity for learners and their advisers. This process will be fully inclusive of relevant stakeholders and be delivered in 2018.**

As with other aspects of promoting wider access to higher education, there needs to be clear communication of what support is available to learners and how it can help them.

**14. Universities Scotland will work with others to scope the development of a single online resource that enables learners and their advisers to access information about bridging programme opportunities offered across Scotland. We will deliver this scoping exercise for the start of 2018/19.**

Universities Scotland will work with the Scottish Government to see how this online resource might fit with other plans for information and guidance as part of its learner journey review.

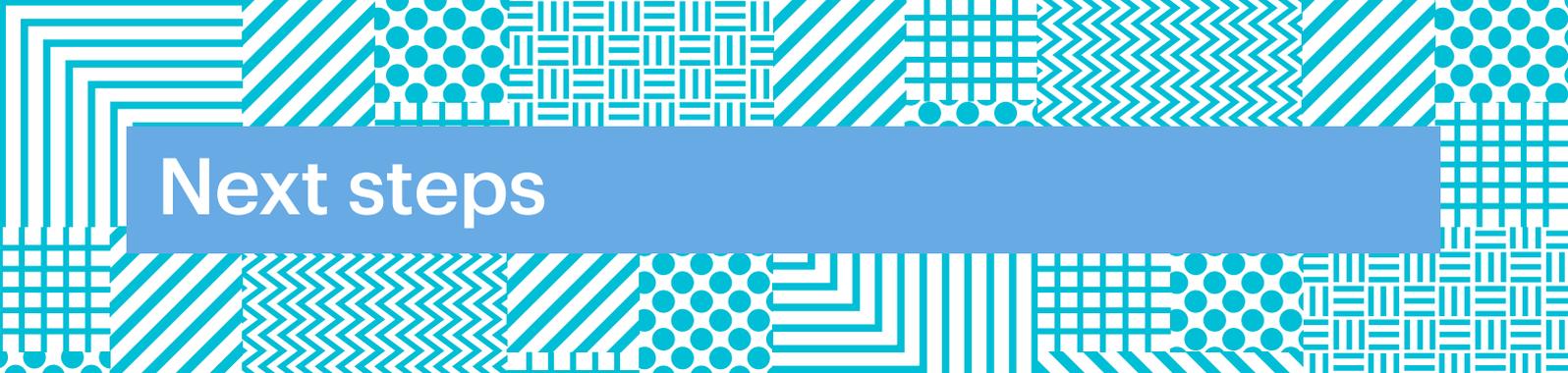
Consideration should be given to how this would be resourced and who should be responsible for ensuring it remains timely and accurate. It is important to ensure that this is hosted in a location that can deliver the necessary reach into our target audiences and that works with existing information, advice and guidance for learners.

**15. Higher education institutions will explore the potential of introducing regional widening access targets to encourage collaboration.**

We believe there is potential benefit in models that encourage institutions to work together to widen access. Taking a more regional approach to bridging programmes is one example of this. Currently the targets and measurements in the Scottish Funding Council's Outcome Agreement framework are at national or individual institution level. This can push institutions into competition for the same students and can work against collaborative action to widen access to higher education for under-represented groups. The goal is to widen access holistically so there should be more incentives in place to support schools, colleges and universities to collaborate even further. We think it is worth exploring alternative models to support this.

One such model might be regional targets in addition to national and institutional level targets. We would like to explore this. This is not intended to replace anything that exists now.

Taking a regional view might allow institutions more flexibility to take different approaches to widening access. It would need to recognise that institutions have different student demographics and that each will contribute to the widening access agenda in different ways. Regional targets would not be effective without change to the Scottish Funding Council's Outcome Agreements framework and the removal of financial and administrative barriers to their implementation. Any discussions will need to involve the Scottish Funding Council. Universities will need to define for themselves and with each other what they consider a 'region' or whether they are part of one.



## Next steps

Taken together, the 15 actions laid out represent an ambitious plan of work for universities to deliver. We have already turned our attention to implementation. The first of our actions will be delivered in 2018. The full set of actions and the timescales we have put on them keep us on track to meet the milestones and targets that CoWA set out for universities.

If you'd like to be kept informed as we implement our widening access actions please sign-up for email updates via our website: <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/sign-up/> and select 'Widening Access'.



# Annex A:

## Our Actions mapped against the university-facing CoWA actions

CoWA recommendation	The action we are taking
<p>4: Universities, colleges, local authorities, schools, the SFC funded access programmes and early years providers should work together to deliver a coordinated approach to access which removes duplication and provides a coherent and comprehensive offer to learners.</p>	<p>12. Higher education institutions will work to improve the national coherence of bridging activity. This will involve better regional coordination of bridging programmes and more mutual recognition of programmes making it easier for students to transfer. This will be implemented during 2018/19.</p>
<p>5: Universities should ensure their admissions processes and entry requirements are based on a strong educational rationale and are not unnecessarily prescriptive, to the detriment of learners who take advantage of the availability of a more flexible range of pathways. This should be monitored by the SFC through the outcome agreement process.</p>	<p>3. Every Scottish higher education institution will set minimum entry requirements for their courses in 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21. The minimum requirements will reflect the best evidence on the level of achievement necessary for successful completion.</p>
<p>7: The Scottish Funding Council, working with professionals, should develop a model of how bridging programmes can be expanded nationally to match need.</p>	<p>12. Higher education institutions will work to improve the national coherence of bridging activity. This will involve better regional coordination of bridging programmes and more mutual recognition of programmes making it easier for students to transfer. This will be implemented during 2018/19.</p>
<p>8: The SFC should seek more demanding articulation targets from those universities that have not traditionally been significant players in articulation.</p>	<p>7. Universities Scotland and Colleges Scotland will establish a National Articulation Forum in academic year 2017/18.</p> <p>11. Every university will undertake a fundamental review of their ability to increase the number and percentage of students who articulate with full credit for the start of 2018/19. This review will need to involve college partners and others.</p>
<p>9: Universities, colleges and the SFC should closely monitor the expansion of articulation to ensure it continues to support disadvantaged learners to progress to degree level study. Should this not be the case, a proportion of articulation places should be prioritised for disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>As actions 7-11 take effect universities will work with the SFC and colleges to monitor how this is supporting disadvantaged learners.</p>

<p>10: The Scottish Funding Council, working with HEIs and colleges, should explore more efficient, flexible and learner centred models of articulation which provide learners with the choice of a broader range of institutions and courses.</p>	<p>8. The National Articulation Forum will look at how we can offer full credit articulation to more students. It will do this by looking at opportunities to improve articulation in specific subjects as well as considering how to expand the model of articulation to include other qualifications in addition to Higher Nationals.</p> <p>9. The National Articulation Forum will investigate student perspectives on articulation.</p>
<p>11: By 2019 all universities should set access thresholds for all degree programmes against which learners from the most deprived backgrounds should be assessed. These access thresholds should be separate to standard entrance requirements and set as ambitiously as possible, at a level which accurately reflects the minimum academic standard and subject knowledge necessary to successfully complete a degree programme.</p>	<p>3. Every Scottish higher education institution will set minimum entry requirements for their courses in 2019 for entrants starting in 2020/21. The minimum requirements will reflect the best evidence on the level of achievement necessary for successful completion.</p>
<p>12: All Universities should be as open and transparent as possible over their use of access thresholds and wider contextual admissions policies. In particular, they should seek to maximise applications from disadvantaged learners by proactively promoting the access thresholds to the relevant schools, pupils, parents, local authorities and teachers.</p>	<p>1. Scottish higher education institutions will develop clear and consistent information about contextualised admissions. We will work to publish a set of terms and descriptions in 2018 that pass user-testing and are ready for use to inform the application cycle for 2020/21 entry.</p> <p>2. Scottish higher education institutions will use a consistent core of indicators in their contextualised admissions.</p>
<p>15: Universities and colleges should increase engagement with our youngest children and their families as part of the provision of a coordinated package of support for those in our most deprived communities in line with Recommendation 4.</p>	<p>As actions 12-14 are implemented we will be mindful of our engagement with young children and their families.</p>

<p>16: Universities working with schools, should take greater responsibility for the development of the pool of applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds by delivering academically based programmes to support highly able learners, who are at risk of not fulfilling their academic potential.</p>	<p>Our mapping exercise of bridging programmes demonstrated that HEIs are already heavily involved in working with schools to support academically based programmes.</p>
<p>18: Universities, colleges and local authorities should work together to provide access to a range of Higher and Advanced Higher subjects, which ensures that those from disadvantaged backgrounds or living in rural areas are not restricted in their ability to access higher education by the subject choices available to them.</p>	<p>There are several examples of HEIs providing and/or supporting delivery of Higher and/or Advanced Higher qualifications. Other HEIs deliver alternatives at the same SCQF level. Some of these initiatives operate nationally, whilst others operate more regionally, but all work with partners in schools and local authorities and some work with colleges.</p> <p>HEIs are happy to discuss expanding this work with relevant partners, but would not want to pre-empt the outcomes of the Scottish Government’s Learner Journey Review. The Review is expected to report by the end of 2017.</p>
<p>21: By 2017, those with a care experience, who meet the access threshold should be entitled to the offer of a place at a Scottish university. Entitlement should also apply to those with care experience who have had to take a break from higher education and wish to return. Learners should be assessed at the minimum entry levels in 2017 and 2018 and the access thresholds thereafter.</p>	<p>4. Care experienced learners will be guaranteed an offer of a place at university if they meet minimum entry requirements. Until then, universities will continue to give care experienced applicants additional consideration.</p>
<p>30: The Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government should enhance the analyses and publication of data on fair access.</p>	<p>6. Universities Scotland will work with the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government to identify and share the data universities need to inform their contextualised admissions policies.</p> <p>The working group also set out a recommendation for the Scottish Funding Council:</p> <p>The Scottish Funding Council should improve the accessibility of data it holds on articulation to inform the work taken forward by higher education institutions and the National Articulation Forum.</p>

# Annex B:

## Membership of the working groups

### Admissions

Prof Sally Mapstone (Chair)	Principal, University of St Andrews
Prof Kath Shennan	Dean of Quality Enhancement and Assurance, Lead Admissions Selector for STEM, University of Aberdeen
Dr Shane Collins	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Dundee
Ms Rebecca Gaukroger	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Edinburgh
Mr Alan McLachlan	Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions, Edinburgh Napier University
Mr Robin Gordon	Head of Admissions, University of Glasgow
Ms Julie Fisher	Head of Admissions, Glasgow Caledonian University
Mr Scott Parsons	Director of Strategy and Marketing, Glasgow School of Art
Ms Rhona McComiskie	Access Pathways Lead, Robert Gordon University
Ms Anne Campbell	Assistant Principal, West College Scotland (Colleges Scotland nominee)
Mr Philip Whyte	NUS Scotland
Ms Mhairi Moore	School Leaders Scotland
Mr Michael Cross	Scottish Funding Council
Ms Fiona Burns	Scottish Funding Council
Prof Maggie Kinloch	Chair of SFC Access and Inclusion Committee (SFC nominee) Professor Emerita (previously Deputy Principal), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Mr Dan Shaffer	Supporting Professionalism in Admissions
Mr Ben Jordan	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Prof Graham Caie	Member of Court at Queen Margaret University Honorary Professorial Fellow (previously Vice Principal), University of Glasgow
Dr Gillian Wyness	Senior Lecturer in Economics, UCL Institute for Education

## Articulation

Ms Susan Stewart (Chair)	Director, Open University in Scotland
Dr Andrew Starkey	Senior Admissions Selector for Engineering, University of Aberdeen
Ms Laura Cattell	Head of Widening Participation / Deputy Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Edinburgh
Ms Liz Scott	Regional Articulation Manager, Edinburgh Napier University
Ms Eleanor Wilson	Head of Outreach, Glasgow Caledonian University
Ms Elizabeth Beidler	Progression Manager, Glasgow School of Art
Mr Richard McGookin	Director of Planning, Heriot-Watt University
Mr James Dunphy	Head of Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access, Robert Gordon University
Mr Andrew Comrie	Director of Academic Innovation, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Dr Martin Campbell	Senior Lecturer and Pro-Dean of Science, University of St Andrews
Ms Irene Peterson	Acting Vice Principal (Further Education), University of the Highlands and Islands
Ms Joanna McGillivray	Vice Principal, Student Experience, City of Glasgow College (Colleges Scotland nominee)
Ms Vonnie Sandlan	President, NUS Scotland
Ms Mhairi Moore	School Leaders Scotland
Ms Aileen Ponton	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
/ Ms Sheila Dunn	
Ms Fiona Burns	Scottish Funding Council
Ms Anna Thomson	Scottish Funding Council
Mr Alan Sherry	Member of SFC Access and Inclusion Committee (Scottish Funding Council nominee)
	Principal, Glasgow Kelvin College

## Bridging programmes

Prof Petra Wend (Chair)	Principal, Queen Margaret University
Prof Alison Jenkinson	Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Science, Engineering and Healthcare), University of Aberdeen
Dr John Blicharski	Access and Participation Manager, University of Dundee
Ms Laura Cattell	Head of Widening Participation / Deputy Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Edinburgh
Dr Sandra Cairncross	Assistant Principal (Student Experience), Edinburgh Napier University
Dr Neil Croll	Head of Widening Access, University of Glasgow
Ms Eleanor Wilson	Head of Outreach, Glasgow Caledonian University
Ms Shona Paul	Head of Professional and Continuing Education, Glasgow School of Art
Dr Marlisa Ross	Programmes Development Manager, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Mr Mike Johnson	Deputy Director of Admissions, Director of UK/EU Admissions and Access, University of St Andrews
Ms Pam Wilson	Vice Principal Academic, Perth College UHI (Colleges Scotland nominee)
Ms Risga Carson	NUS Scotland
Ms Sheila Dunn	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership
Ms Fiona Burns	Scottish Funding Council
Ms Carina MacRitchie	Scottish Funding Council
Prof Frank Coton	Member of SFC Access and Inclusion Committee (Scottish Funding Council nominee)
	Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, University of Glasgow
Dr Ken Cunningham	Chair of Children 1st
	Member of the Board of Children's University Scotland
	Previously General Secretary of School Leaders Scotland

# Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. SIMD20 refers to the 20% most deprived data zones.

<sup>2</sup> This is the figure for full-time, first degree Scottish-domiciled entrants of all age groups. Scottish Funding Council Report of Widening Access 2015-16.

<sup>3</sup> You can find the full membership of each of the working groups in Annex B.

<sup>4</sup> *A Blueprint for Fairness* (2016) (Chair's Foreword).

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation 29, *A Blueprint for Fairness*.

<sup>6</sup> Universities Scotland (2017) Learner Journey Review: Proposals from Universities Scotland.

<sup>7</sup> This was just over 2,000 applicants. UCAS (2016) End of Cycle Data Resources, DR2 047 06. This figure relates to 18-year old applicants only, not all applicants. For the CoWA targets, our work is focused on Scottish-domiciled, full-time degree entrants of all ages. UCAS does not publish this figure in its end of cycle report.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, I., Lasselle, L. & McDougall-Bagnall, J. M. (2014) School grades, school context and university degree performance: evidence from an elite Scottish institution Oxford Review of Education.

<sup>9</sup> 'Looked after school leavers' is only a subset of people with care experience. It is those learners who are in care for the full academic year in which they leave school.

<sup>10</sup> Scottish Government (2017) Looked after children: education outcomes 2015/16, table 1.1.

<sup>11</sup> With the exception of UHI given its distinctive purpose in serving the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the fact there are very low levels of SIMD in its catchment areas.

<sup>12</sup> SFC National Articulation Database, as analysed by Universities Scotland.

<sup>13</sup> SFC (2017) College Leaver Destinations.

<sup>14</sup> SFC National Articulation Database, as analysed by Universities Scotland.

<sup>15</sup> SFC National Articulation Database, as analysed by Universities Scotland.

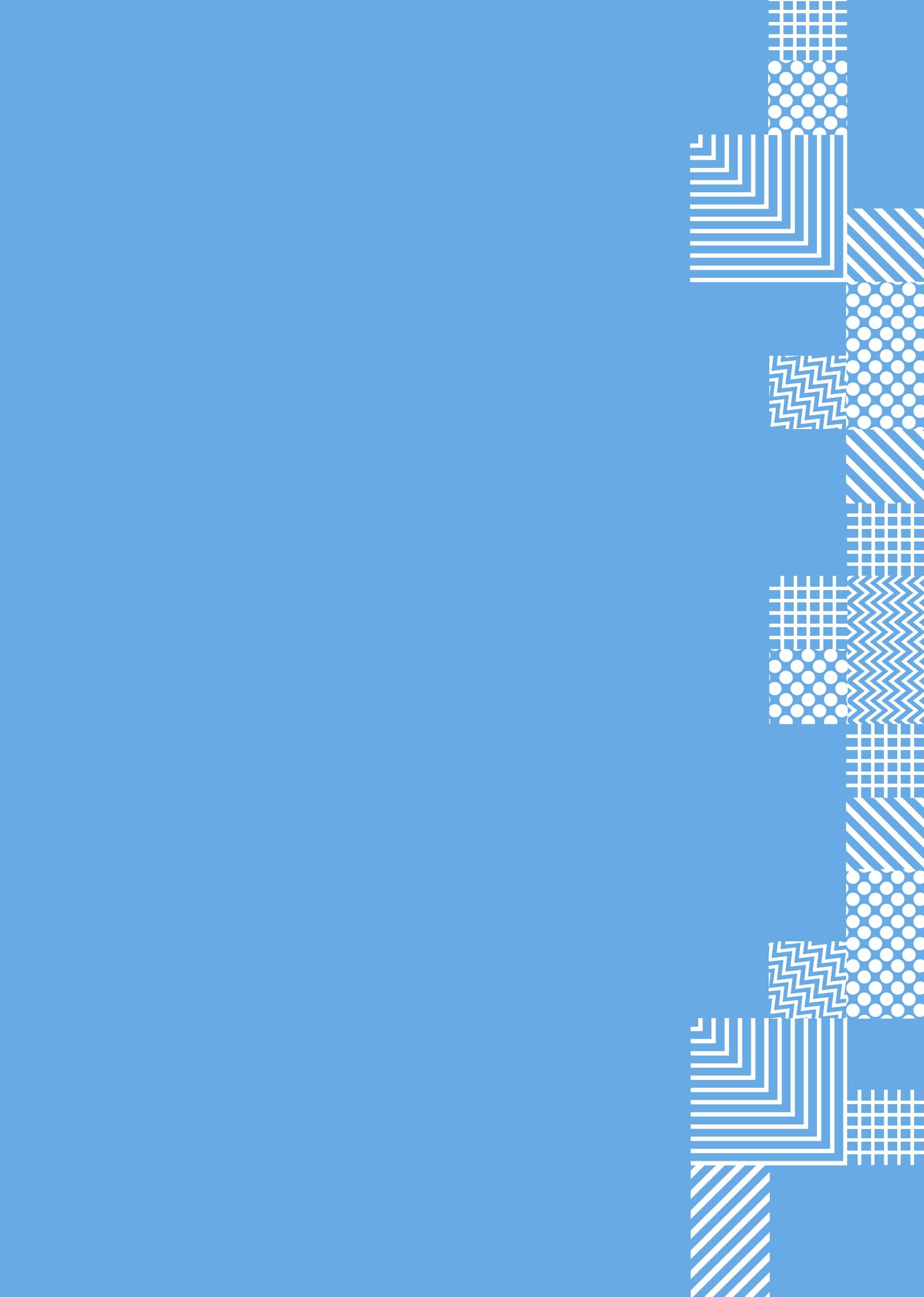
<sup>16</sup> SFC National Articulation Database, as analysed by Universities Scotland.

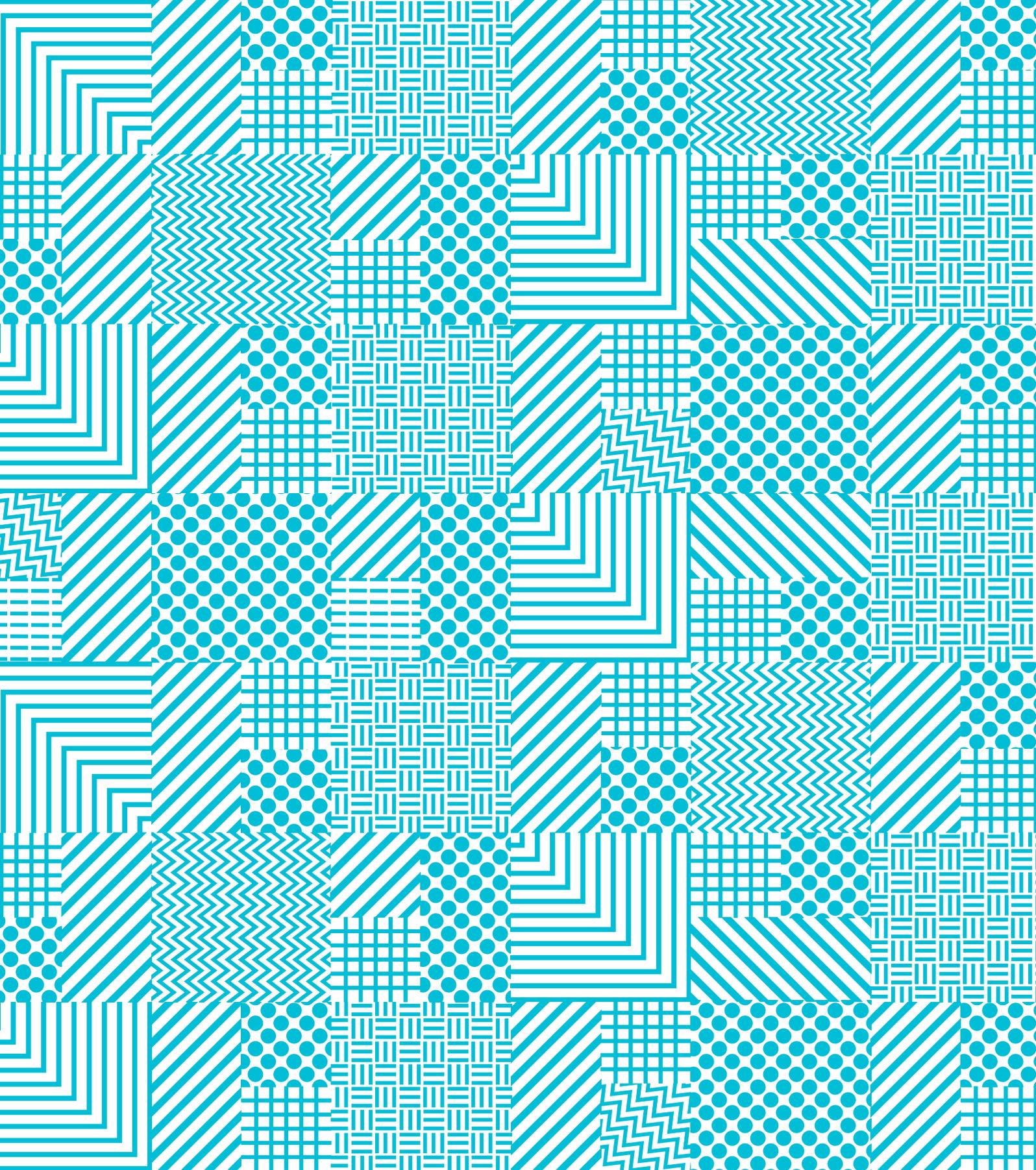
<sup>17</sup> Scottish Funding Council articulation data used in this report does not include associate students, which is the term for HNC/D students at college who are connected to a university from the very start of their college studies. As such, the data are likely to understate articulation.

<sup>18</sup> 80.7% of full and partial credit articulation was delivered by six HEIs in 2014-15. SFC National Articulation Database.

<sup>19</sup> *Blueprint for Fairness* (2016) Commission on Widening Access. Pg 31.

<sup>20</sup> HEFCE (2013) ARC Literature Review of Research into Best Practice in Widening Participation to Higher Education.





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