



Developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice in higher education

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report is an outcome of a facilitative change programme, Developing and Embedding Inclusive Policy and Practice in Higher Education, involving ten higher education institutional teams and led by the Higher Education Academy.

The programme ran from 2007 to 2008 and was open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK. It offered a framework to facilitate and support HEIs in the development and embedding of inclusive policies and/or practices to enhance the learning experience of students from under-represented groups. The programme created a space for institutions to focus on, and exchange ideas about, policy and practice development and implementation.

Over the course of the programme, the Academy conducted research to explore the institutional teams' experience of developing and embedding an aspect of inclusion related to disability equality and/or widening participation. The research involved a series of observations, reflective questions, institutional visits, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. It aimed to capture the 'journey travelled' by the teams in managing and implementing an institution-wide change initiative. Ultimately, the research has contributed to a greater understanding of the processes involved in developing and embedding inclusion within policy and practice in HEIs.

Policy and legislative context

The UK policy, regulatory and legislative context for equality and widening participation calls upon HEIs to make systemic and cultural change. Moving these agendas "from the margins to the mainstream" (Thomas *et al.*, 2005) remains a significant challenge. It necessitates a shift away from supporting specific student groups through a discrete set of policies or time-bound interventions, towards equity considerations being embedded within all functions of the institution and treated as an ongoing process of quality enhancement. Making a shift of such magnitude requires cultural and systemic change at both the policy and practice levels. This was reflected in the emphasis given by the ten institutions on changing both policy and procedure, but also on enhancing staff attitudes and professional practice.

The change initiatives: development and implementation

The ten participating institutions aimed to develop and embed different aspects of widening participation and/or disability equality. The focus of their change initiatives are summarised in Table I.

Table I: Summary of the change initiatives

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Theme of change initiative</i>	<i>Key aim(s)</i>
Anglia Ruskin University	Equality proofing the curriculum	To facilitate academic staff to become skilled and empowered to develop and deliver an inclusive curriculum to meet the entitlements of a diverse student body
University of Bradford	Enhancing learning, teaching and assessment strategies and practices for disabled students	To achieve a more inclusive approach to learning, teaching and assessment
University of Hull	Disability equality impact assessments and academic approvals	To develop and embed an equality impact assessment procedure within the academic approval process for new modules and programmes
Leeds Trinity University College	Success for all: from widening participation to improving attainment	To provide the learning and support infrastructure to promote access, remove barriers, improve retention and enhance achievement, for all students
Manchester Metropolitan University	Building curricula for the 21st-century learner	To develop and embed tools to review diversity and enhance the design and delivery of all programmes
The Open University	Building the digital divide: widening participation and e-learning	To enable students from widening participation backgrounds to access and benefit from the University's e-learning communications
Queen Mary, University of London	Widening participation and students' writing in the disciplines	To develop a coherent approach to the development of students' academic literacy within the curriculum
Sheffield Hallam University	An integrated approach to equality and diversity	To create a learning environment that embraces and values diversity and maximises the use of inclusive policies and practices
University of Westminster	Embedding inclusive curriculum practices	To develop sustainable approaches towards inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment
University of Worcester	Developing inclusive curricula in higher education	To embed effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design

There were variations between institutions in the management of the change initiatives and the process used to implement them. Institutions chose methods that fitted their context and, while teams had methods in common, no two teams were found to use the same overall approach, even though they may have been targeting the same issue.

In implementing inclusive policy and practice, however, there were a number of common features across the institutions with regard to their approach. These can be summarised as follows:

- they all used a multi-pronged approach, using more than one method to bring about change;
- they were systematic and holistic in their approach, covering multiple institutional functions and elements of the student life cycle, and they adopted an embedded approach to ensure inclusive practices were delivered across several services within the institution;
- each used a proactive, longitudinal and iterative approach to achieving their aims and recognised the need to make anticipatory, rather than retrospective adjustments, the need to allow time to bring about the required changes, and the need to build in flexibility in the process;
- the initiatives were empirically based, with each team building an evidence base as a fundamental part of the change process.

The teams sought to promote a shared responsibility for achieving widening participation and/or disability equality. They sought to assure the consistent uptake of inclusive practices across the whole institution. The individuals involved in the programme were themselves agents for change. Over the course of the change programme they worked with many stakeholder groups across the institution including senior managers, academic staff, students, staff in quality assurance and enhancement among others, and encouraged collaboration and partnership between different functions and roles across the institution. Students were found to be key agents of change and their experiences and input helped to convince staff of the need for change. Teams adapted their methods and triangulated a range of evidence (drawn from literature reviews, surveys, focus groups, statistical analysis, action research and appreciative inquiry), ensuring both were tailored to the different stakeholder groups they sought to engage. They also drew on external sources of evidence such as Government policy, equality legislation and research literature to inform the change process, as well as internal documents such as the institutions' mission, policies and frameworks.

Language played an important facilitative role in the change process. The changing of particular words or phrases (such as using the word ‘entitlement’ rather than ‘need’) or the use of inclusive messages (such as ‘inclusive practices enhance the learning of all students’) were found to make a substantial impact upon stakeholders and promote a culture that fosters the success of all students.

Implications for inclusive policy and practice

A key finding of this study has been that sustainable and effective inclusive cultural change will only come about through institutions focusing simultaneously on both institutional and individual factors. They cannot be seen in isolation of one another, as they operate as two sides of the same coin.

All teams instigated changes at the institutional level affecting internal policy and procedures with a view to bringing about widespread use of inclusive practices. Methods used to enable institutional-level change included: reviewing and developing policy; conducting equality impact assessments; revising performance management or induction processes; and data analysis.

Addressing individual-level change was found to be a significant part of the process by which inclusive practice was developed and embedded across the participating institutions. A variety of different methods were found to be required to engage individuals across the institution, as no one method was found to engage all individuals. These methods included: forming advisory or working groups; working with known advocates/champions; providing or supporting the processes of continuing professional development; providing opportunities for dialogue; disseminating effective practice; changing management processes; conducting research; and developing resources and materials.

Conclusions

There are three key emerging conclusions. Firstly, change is required at both an institutional and individual level to bring about inclusive policy and practice. Attention to one requires attention to the other and changing one has implications for the

other. To ensure the consistent uptake of inclusive practice across the institution, it is necessary to modify institutional policy and processes, and work with individuals to promote positive attitudes and changes to practice. To embed widening participation and equality could arguably be not about doing different things, rather it involves doing things differently.

Secondly, it is essential to build an evidence base from which to bring about change. Evidence plays a significant role in the process of change, providing the means to demonstrate an imperative to change and the benefits or impact of change, as well as identify priorities for action. It is necessary to generate and draw on robust evidence that is pertinent and tailored to the particular institutional context and stakeholder groups.

Finally, a multi-method, tailored approach is necessary involving different stakeholder groups and functions across the institution. Inclusive policy and practice should be considered in relation to multiple functions of the institution and requires a mixed method approach. To maximise effectiveness, methods should be adapted to the context and stakeholder groups being targeted.

I. Introduction

This report is an outcome of a facilitative change programme, Developing and Embedding Inclusive Policy and Practice in Higher Education, involving ten higher education institutional teams and led by the Higher Education Academy.

The report is based on research conducted by the Academy during the course of the programme to explore the institutional teams' experience of implementing inclusive policy and practice. The research involved a series of observations, reflective questions, institutional visits, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. It aimed to capture the 'journey travelled' by the teams in managing and implementing their change initiatives. Ultimately, the research has sought to contribute to a greater understanding of the processes involved in developing inclusive policy and practice within higher education institutions.

The report highlights the diverse ways in which 'inclusion' is being conceptualised, managed, developed and embedded across the ten institutions, each with its different mission, focus, structure and legislative response, as well as physical size and location. It also highlights the various strategies used by the teams to manage the embedding of inclusive policy and practice and negotiate the varying obstacles encountered along the way.

This report disseminates the learning gained from the experience of implementing inclusive change within the ten institutions across the wider higher education (HE) sector so as to impact positively on the learning experience of students from under-represented backgrounds. It is hoped that the findings of this work will act as a focus for further work within the HE sector to take forward the related agendas of disability equality and widening participation.

I.1 Rationale for the programme

Support for the widening participation and disability equality agendas has continued to be a central part of the Academy's work, particularly in light of recent equality legislation, research and policy developments. The programme's specific focus on embedding inclusive policies and/or practices reflects a legislative and policy driver to create a culture that enables all students, including those from under-represented

groups, to succeed in higher education. This requires attention to all aspects of its operation. Both the widening participation and equality agendas encourage a proactive, evidence-informed, whole institutional approach.

The programme was significantly informed by research evidence, undertaken by the Academy and others in recent years (including Thomas *et al.*, 2005; Gorard *et al.*, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2007), which has highlighted the importance of:

- widening participation and equality being a part of the institutional mission and strategic goals;
- diversity and equality being embraced across the institution;
- maintaining a focus on widening participation and equality across the student life cycle;
- curriculum, learning and teaching being informed by issues of diversity and equality; and
- institutional structures and processes valuing and incorporating diversity and equality.

Finally, a research study was intrinsic to the design and delivery of the programme. By undertaking this study, the Academy aimed to promote evidence-informed policy and practice and to provide a resource that could support institutions and practitioners in developing an inclusive culture.

1.2 Programme development and design

The Academy's programme was launched in April 2007 and was open to all higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK. Its aim was to offer a framework to facilitate and support HEIs in the development and embedding of inclusive policies and/or practices to improve the learning experience of students from under-represented groups. The programme sought to create a space for institutions to focus on, and exchange ideas about, policy and/or practice development and implementation.

The programme was originally inspired by Change Academy© – a year-long facilitative programme for teams from HEIs that enables them to develop the knowledge, capacity and enthusiasm for achieving complex institutional change. Change Academy is led by the Higher Education Academy and Leadership Foundation. While this programme upheld the core principles of Change Academy, it was different in being thematically

based, involving all team members throughout the process, providing support for the implementation, as well as the planning, of the change itself, and being tailored to the requirements of those taking part.

The Academy recognised that the sector is diverse with regard to the size of HEIs, their structures, approaches and responses to both internal and external contexts. The development of this programme therefore sought to provide participating institutions with the opportunity to develop approaches to inclusive policy and practice that were appropriate and responsive to their own institutional context and environment.

Institutions were invited to respond to a call for proposals in which they were asked to describe and propose how they would develop an aspect of widening participation and/or disability equality during the course of the programme. Twenty-nine proposals were received from which ten institutions were selected to take part, having clearly demonstrated that they had met the inclusion criteria specified in the call.

The Academy provided a framework over a 14-month period to facilitate the planning, implementation and dissemination of the institution's proposed change initiatives. It centred on a programme of events, which brought together teams of staff from across participating institutions to work alongside others focusing on similar themes.

1.3 Key features of the programme

The key features of the programme included:

- *Self-identified change*: Institutions were required to identify the change they would like to make, and state how it aligned to their mission, strategy or policy development. They had to demonstrate that the topic addressed an aspect of widening participation and/or disability equality, and would effect change across the institution.
- *A facilitative programme*: The programme was designed to support the institutions to focus on, and exchange ideas about, policy and/or practice development and implementation. It offered space away from the institution, prompted discussion and debate, provided input from change consultants and relevant organisations and access to relevant research evidence, tools and resources. The programme provided a mix of institutional, role-based and cross-team working.

- *A longitudinal programme of engagements (rather than one-off events):* The programme involved a series of facilitative events for all team members, one of which was a three-day residential. The events were designed to build upon one another and guide the change initiatives through a process of planning, implementation and dissemination, as well as encourage them to address key issues such as evaluation and sustainability. During the course of the programme, team members had access to an Academy contact to respond to specific queries.
- *The involvement of institutional teams:* As a condition of participation, institutions were required to nominate a team drawn from across the institution and to include a senior manager, operational manager, member of staff with teaching and learning responsibility, a widening participation/disability equality practitioner, student (where possible), and member of staff from a partner organisation (as appropriate).
- *Working alongside other institutions:* By bringing teams together, the programme enabled the participating institutions to work alongside others who were addressing the same theme. This was to allow for the sharing of experiences, challenges and solutions and facilitate networking across institutions.
- *Promoting the development of evidence-informed practice:* the programme was informed by a number of relevant research studies.
- *Seeking to share the learning with the sector:* From the start of the process, the programme was underpinned by research to capture the 'journey travelled' by the teams over the course of the programme so that others may learn from the work they have undertaken.

1.4 Programme outline

The programme structure is outlined below:

Start-up meeting: Involving all team members, to facilitate the planning of their individual change initiative through team and shared activities.

Three-day residential: Involving all team members, to progress their change initiatives. The programme offered a mix of team and shared activities, with input from change consultants, relevant sector organisations and specialists. The teams were also given access to research evidence and resources.

Follow-up meeting: Involving all team members, to reflect jointly on key achievements and research findings, as well as develop strategies and mechanisms for evaluation and sustainability.

Dissemination event: Open to whole HE sector, to provide an opportunity for the Academy and team representatives to share the outcomes of the programme and individual change initiatives, as well as facilitate discussions based on emerging themes arising from their experience of developing and embedding of inclusive policy and practice with the sector.

1.5 Research

1.5.1 Aim/Purpose

The research aimed to improve our understanding of the processes involved in developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice, for the purpose of enabling non-participating HEIs to benefit from the experiences and lessons learned in the process.

The research focused on the management of the change initiatives and change process, the challenges or barriers encountered, and how these were negotiated in order to achieve a successful outcome. In essence the research sought to capture and document the ‘journey travelled’ by the HEI teams in developing, managing and implementing their change initiative within their institution.

1.5.2 Research methods

The research employed a qualitative, multi-method and iterative approach, throughout the course of the programme and beyond¹. The following methods were employed:

Contextual analysis – involving analysis of the proposals and semi-structured telephone

¹ Institutions were contacted nine months after the completion of the programme to update the Academy on their progress.

interviews to understand the institutional context in respect of diversity and inclusive practice, strategic drivers and the rationale for change.

Non-participative observation – involving observation of team discussion during sessions at Academy events, to gather information about the process of change.

Reflective questions – a series of reflective questions were distributed to team members following events and at significant points throughout the programme. These provided ongoing information about the process of development of each initiative, the approaches used by teams and the resultant change. The questions also encouraged team members to reflect on their own learning and participation in the programme.

Telephone/email discussion – Telephone and email contact was established in order to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the Academy and participants. Such contact provided both external support to the teams and clarification or additional information where necessary.

HEI visits/interviews – At least one visit per HEI was undertaken, involving interviews with team members as appropriate.

1.5.3. Analysis of data

During the course of the programme, a very large quantity of data were gathered, all of which were drawn together in a research management database. The data were coded and emerging themes extracted. Regular research meetings were held to ensure consistency of analysis and interpretation across all members of the research team, as well as discuss and interpret the data gathered.

1.5.4. General limitations of the research

Although this research has taken a broad approach and gathered extensive quantitative data, the following limitations are acknowledged in relation to its findings:

- Only ten institutions were able to participate in the programme and, although they were diverse in mission and approach, their experiences of embedding inclusive policy and practice as captured during their participation in the programme may

differ from the experience of institutions who did not participate.

- The research focused on the development and implementation of specific change initiatives involving changes to policy and practice, and may not reflect all the change taking place within an institution with respect to inclusion.
- It should be noted that quotations are used for illustrative purposes and are specific to participants' own experience on, and perspectives of, the programme. Where possible, institutions are cited in quotations. In cases where they are not cited, however, the quotations were taken from individuals participating in cross-institutional discussions where institutions could not be identified.

1.6 Structure of the report

Chapter 2 of this report involves a discussion of the social, political and economic context in which the participating institutions were operating. It identifies the particular drivers (both internal and external) for embedding inclusive policy and practice, and the perceptible shift in language around widening participation and disability equality within the higher education context.

Chapter 3 details the journey travelled by the ten participating teams in facilitating the development and embedding of inclusive policy and practice within their own institutions. The characteristic features of this change are described, as is the process teams went through in planning for this change; and the variations and similarities in approach in pursuit of this goal. In Chapters 4 and 5, the different approaches used by the teams in developing and embedding inclusion in both institutional policy and individual practice are identified. The findings are further discussed in Chapter 6, making a link with relevant literature in the field of widening participation, disability equality and organisational change and effectiveness.

The final chapter of the report details three emergent conclusions that can support the sector to benefit from the lessons learned by the ten participating institutions. It makes a series of recommendations targeted at policy makers, institutions and individuals. A case study from each participating institution, detailing their context, initiative, rationale, progress and any learning points is presented in the case study section at the end of the report.

2. Context for change

Widening participation (WP) and equality and diversity are central to the work of the Higher Education Academy. In conjunction with other sector organisations and the UK higher education funding councils, the Academy has sought to embed these agendas within HEIs' strategic and corporate policies and in their organisational practices. This chapter reviews the socio-political context for this work and considers the key drivers that informed and shaped the change initiatives developed by HEIs participating in the Academy's programme.

2.1 The HE environment

2.1.1 National policy context

This programme is set in the context of the UK Government's policy commitment to widening participation and disability equality in higher education. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) states its commitment to "the development of a higher education system committed to widening participation, equipping people with the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy". This has recently been reaffirmed by Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, when he highlighted the importance of universities for achieving social mobility and lifelong learning (Lord Mandelson, Birkbeck University, July 2009).

The Leitch Report published in 2006 set the framework for the Government's higher level skills agenda, which informed its higher level skills strategy, *Higher Education at Work. High Skills: High Value* (DIUS, 2008). This document remains the key focus for the development of a competitive knowledge economy in a global context and has cascaded down into 14–19 educational policy with the development of diploma qualifications and the promotion of both vocational and academic progression routes to higher education.

Promoting equity of access and success remains a core strategic aim of all UK funding councils, who have invested significantly in these issues over recent years. This investment has particularly promoted collaborative working both across the higher education sector itself and with other partners, and has supported institutions to improve the retention and success of students from under-represented groups

(Thomas *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, the commitment of the funding councils has begun to extend to the embedding of widening participation and diversity within and across all institutional functions or operations, and is supported by regulatory, funding and professional practice requirements to retain students and continually enhance the student experience.

In reviews of practice, with respect to widening participation and disability equality, such as the review of Widening Access (WA) in Wales (Colley, Thomas and May, 2009), review of disability equality schemes (Elliot *et al.*, 2009), review of widening participation practice (HEFCE, 2006a) or review of disability policy (HEFCE, 2007), there has been an attempt to chart the progress made by the sector and shape future strategy. Such reviews refer to the importance of creating an environment where inclusive policy and practice become part of the fabric of institutions. The HEFCE review of WP, for example, identifies “cultural change and the organisation, management, and leadership changes that go with it” (HEFCE, 2006a, p. 82) as critical in bringing about WP. The review of WA in Wales (Colley, Thomas and May, 2009) recommends a whole institutional approach involving senior management leadership, greater devolved responsibility and collaboration among staff, greater integration of relevant policy, as well as student participation in decision-making processes.

Recruiting, and ensuring success for, a more diverse student population remain key priorities for the UK funding councils. For instance, embedding widening participation in corporate policies and practices is highlighted in HEFCE’s *Strategic Priorities in Widening Participation* (2006–2011) in order that it becomes “part of the norm for the sector” (HEFCE, 2006b). Institutions are required to respond to key performance indicators (KPIs) with respect to widening access and participation. For instance, in England, HEFCE have set KPIs to increase participation in higher education and to increase the proportion of students (full-time and part-time, both young and mature) from under-represented groups in HE, together with a continued commitment to embed support for disabled students. Such KPIs can only be achieved by HE providers developing their practice to take account of diversity of student entitlements in all areas of their operation.

Funding councils have set a further requirement on institutions to submit strategy documentation for widening participation (or access). In Scotland and Wales, the documentation extends to institutional collaborations for addressing widening participation (or access). As of June 2009, HEIs in England are required to submit a

Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA), identifying the full range of their widening participation activity. The submission of a WPSA is a condition for the receipt of an institution's WP funding allocation.

Funding councils have also taken forward both the employer engagement and higher level skills agendas. In England, HEFCE have funded two initiatives to support this agenda, namely the Workforce Development Programme and Lifelong Learning Networks. The focus of the Workforce Development Programme is on employers, aiming to develop and deliver new curriculum in partnership with employers, increasing the number of work-based, employer-supported learners. This focus on employer engagement has necessitated HEIs considering the development of courses that meet the business needs of employers and higher level skills. The Lifelong Learning Networks have focused on learners, aiming to develop and promote progression to higher education for those on vocational routes, putting "learners on vocational programmes on the same footing as learners following more traditional academic pathways" (HEFCE, 2006b). Given the fact that both these initiatives are aimed at extending provision to those who might not otherwise consider higher education, HEIs therefore need to consider the ways in which they can ensure the success of students with a different profile (e.g. students who enter HE with three A-levels at 18/19 years of age). This may involve the development of new approaches to the curriculum and the delivery of programmes of study.

2.1.2 *Equality legislation*

The Academy programme was also set in the context of the requirements of the UK equality legislation (Disability Discrimination Act 2005; Equality Act 2006; Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; Race Relations Act (amended) 2000). HEIs are required to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equality legislation. These requirements are designed to protect and uphold the rights of social groups, including the right to equity of access and success in higher education. The disability equality duty requires institutions to make anticipatory adjustments and be proactive in their approach, as well as make reasonable adjustments for individual disabled students and staff. It further requires that positive attitudes to disability are promoted and sets an expectation that the responsibility for implementation will be shared by all staff.

Currently HEIs are required to produce an equality scheme for race, gender and disability equality, which records their proposed actions to eliminate discrimination

across all institutional functions. In addition, institutions are required to carry out equality impact assessments on their plans, policies and procedures, to identify any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality. The Equality Bill awaiting parliamentary approval at the time of writing makes provision for organisations to produce a single equality scheme to encompass a number of protected characteristics, extending the current equality groupings covered by the legislation.

To meet equality legislative requirements, HEIs have to adopt a whole institution approach, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of access and opportunity across all functions and areas of delivery. Consequently, HEIs need to be strategic in reviewing and revising their systems, practice and attitudes, ensuring not only that they are non-discriminatory, but also that there is both shared responsibility and shared accountability for equality and inclusion at the institutional and individual level. In responding effectively to the duty to make anticipatory adjustments and promote positive attitudes to equality, all staff need to be involved. Therefore continuing professional development (CPD) is significant as part of a strategic approach to achieving equality. There is a need to promote 'buy-in' from academic and support staff and to develop the understanding of the implications of the legislation on particular roles and associated practices.

2.1.3 *Funding*

The focus of funding for widening participation and disability equality has shifted bringing a greater emphasis on embedding. There are now fewer external funding levers to stimulate and promote change through specific targeted activities. For example, the opportunities to access European and community funding have diminished. Notwithstanding, while funding for widening participation and disability project activity has been decreasing, in line with a shift towards embedding, the funding councils have made funding available to promote the development and integration of widening participation (access) and inclusive practice within institutions. Examples of such shifts in funding have been seen in England with the introduction of the Teaching Enhancement and Student Success (TESS) fund, bringing teaching quality enhancement funds together with funding for retention, or the most recent (2009–10) changes to the funding formula for widening participation, recognising this drive, placing a greater emphasis than before on teaching enhancement, student retention and success, and encouraging HEIs to support students within the institution in addition to simply attracting them to enrol.

Given the current funding regime for undergraduate provision, this emphasis takes on greater significance when considered in the context of the recruitment of a more diverse student population. The retention of students becomes a key issue for universities as student 'drop-out' means a loss in funding for the institution. This can be regarded as a financial penalty, which could militate against the recruitment of a diverse 'non-traditional' student body. Additionally, given the current cap on funded student numbers, institutions are increasingly looking to generate funding from students who are not funded by the funding councils to generate expansion and, hence, both international and employer-sponsored recruitment are taking on greater significance.

In this climate, HEIs are recognising the need to seriously consider issues relating to learning, teaching and assessment and student success. HEIs are able to draw on widening participation, TESS and disability funding to support outreach and access, equality, student retention and success, and encourage the development of excellence and innovation in learning and teaching for an increasingly diverse student population.

2.1.4 Regulation

In addition to the legislative requirement to produce equality schemes and UK funding council requirements to produce a strategy for widening participation (or access), HEIs are also subject to QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) Institutional Audit. This represents the key mechanism for maintaining quality and standards across the higher education sector and forms part of the QAA's Quality Assurance Framework. The core emphasis of the Audit procedure is the students and their learning experience. Within this framework, the experiences of all students can be explored providing a further stimulus for embedding inclusive policies and practices.

Further, the QAA provides guidance to HEIs on this framework and has updated its *Code of practice, Section 3: Disabled students* (QAA, forthcoming), to reflect more recent legislative developments.

2.1.5 Market position

All HEIs are now aware of, and are keen to elevate, their position in the HE 'marketplace', not only through their ranking in the Research Assessment Exercise but also regarding the quality of the student experience they offer. In an increasingly

competitive environment, HEIs are formulating their position in a variety of ways. They are differentiating themselves through their location, size, history, mission and course portfolio, as well as by their performance against funding council performance indicators, their position in HE league tables and their 'ranking' in the National Student Survey. These measures and differentiating characteristics influence the way an institution shapes its offer and defines itself in order to maximise its appeal to potential students. Recruitment and retention have become increasingly central to survival for all institutions given their need to maintain their student numbers. HEIs will increasingly have to take account of the changing demographics in the UK that indicate that the 18–20 population is declining, prompting the need to look to 'non-traditional' groups of potential students in order to maintain student numbers. This, in turn, will have implications for learning and teaching strategies. While all institutions will be affected, the pressure, however, is more acute for 'recruiting' institutions than for 'selecting' institutions (Shaw *et al.*, 2007).

2.1.6 Research context

The programme was significantly informed by research evidence, undertaken by the Academy and others in recent years (including Thomas *et al.*, 2005; Gorard *et al.*, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2007), which has highlighted the importance of:

- widening participation and equality being a part of the institutional mission and strategic goals;
- diversity and equality being embraced across the institution;
- maintaining a focus on widening participation and equality across the student life cycle;
- curriculum, learning and teaching being informed by issues of diversity and equality; and
- institutional structures and processes valuing and incorporating diversity and equality.

The evidence thus points to the importance of a strategic approach that is “planned and coherent” rather than one that is “confined to isolated project activity” and dependent on additional income (Duke, 2003, cited in Gorard *et al.*, 2006). It is therefore vital that HEIs address the need to embed inclusive approaches to all areas of the student experience rather than perpetuate a 'project culture' that fails to change the culture within.

While in the past externally funded project work has always been a useful tool to address specific organisational issues or problems, this activity has often remained marginalised. In relation to widening participation, particularly where external funding has

supported activity, long-term issues of sustainability ensue (Thomas *et al.*, 2005). Greater sustainability can be achieved when activity becomes embedded into institutional strategy and practice. While there is clearly commitment to this principle within the sector (as demonstrated by the responses to the Academy's initial call for this programme), more work needs to be done to achieve the level of change and integration required.

In the *Review of widening participation research: addressing the barriers to participation in higher education* (Gorard *et al.*, 2006), it was identified that there is acceptance in the HE sector that change is required in order to attract and retain an increasingly diverse student body and promote their success. However, with regard to learning and teaching, which several of the participating institutions addressed, the review found:

... little evidence that teaching approaches are being adapted for diverse learners despite recognition in the literature that particular target groups ... have specific needs.

It was further noted that there was little evidence of universities adapting assessment to cater for the diverse educational background of students despite the fact that:

... varying forms of assessment seems to benefit all students, not just those from particular target groups.

Nevertheless, Shaw *et al.* (2007) identify that the sector is becoming increasingly more aware of the benefits of inclusive approaches to learning teaching and assessment:

... while there (is) still a long way to go, a discernible shift in the attitudes, approach and understanding within departments (can) be seen.

The research also identifies that effective practice developed in respect of disability has had a positive impact on learning and teaching across the board.

The research evidence collectively points to a need for HEIs to maximise the impact of their core funding by becoming institutionally responsive to the entitlements of students from diverse backgrounds. This in turn has the potential to enhance the student learning experience, improve retention rates and secure an institution's market position as a university of choice.

2.2 Drivers for change

This section identifies how the participating institutions interacted with and responded to the national policy, legislative and research context, arising from the research. It describes the range of both external and internal drivers, prompting the development of inclusive practice and used by the participating HEIs teams in the course of implementing their change initiatives. It was found that a range of different drivers were used as levers to gain buy-in from different groups of stakeholders across the institutions. The external and internal drivers for inclusion, and their key features, are summarised in Table 2 below and explained further in the paragraphs that follow.

Table 2: Internal and external drivers for disability equality and widening participation

<i>External drivers</i>	<i>Key features</i>
i) Government policy/national environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leitch/higher level skills agenda • Employer engagement • Commitment to WP • Development of 14–19 diplomas • Demographics
ii) Funding council priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic priorities in WP • WP strategy • Key performance indicators • League tables • Workforce Development Programme • Funding regime
iii) Equality legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public duty/SENDA • Equality impact assessments • Equality schemes • Avoidance of litigation
iv) Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional audit • QAA codes of practice
v) National Student Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student satisfaction • Student experience • League tables
<i>Internal drivers</i>	<i>Key features</i>
i) Mission and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional stated mission • Strategic direction/priorities • Institution-wide strategies and policies

ii) Student retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student life cycle • Student experience • Transition to first year of study • Student support • Funding
iii) New opportunities/ business development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New markets • Employer engagement • Lifelong learning networks • Partnerships
iv) Quality management/ quality enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional audit requirements • Student experience • Development of professional practice • Quality of learning, teaching and assessment
v) CPD/Developing professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality enhancement • Specific requirements of the DDA • Greater understanding of diversity • Build knowledge and confidence • Positive impact for all students

The following two sections expand upon these two categories of drivers.

2.2.1 *External drivers*

Research carried out throughout the programme identified the following externally facing drivers as significant in the development of the change initiatives.

Government policy/national environment

All teams identified that Government policy had influenced their approach to inclusive practice within their institutions. The evident policy commitment to widening participation, equality and other key agendas, as discussed earlier, is encouraging HEIs to consider more inclusive practice to facilitate success among a more diverse student intake:

*We need to address employability and employer links ...
world-class skills for professionals and students for industry.
(Manchester Metropolitan)*

This national policy context was seen as ‘strategically important’ by all teams. There was recognition that their student bodies are becoming more diverse than ever before and

that universities need to be clear about how they should respond to this. The changing demographics in respect of 18–20-year-olds, and introduction of new qualifications (in England), are also presenting challenges that institutions cannot fail to recognise:

The external environment is changing – most people are realising that they have to be realistic about this.
(Manchester Metropolitan)

Funding council priorities

Directly linked to the UK Governments' policy agendas, is the funding councils' strategic commitment to widening participation and equality and diversity in order to ensure that HE opportunities are appropriate and accessible to all those who will benefit from them. Teams were acutely aware of the need to demonstrate that their institutions were taking a proactive approach to addressing these commitments. The funding councils require institutions to submit their widening participation strategy and report on their progress against key performance indicators. The funding council priorities acted as a driver for the teams with regard to developing their practice, increasing student retention and enhancing the student experience (also see National Student Survey below).

In addition, specific funding models have also provided the impetus to develop inclusive practice among participating teams. For example, recent Strategic Development Fund (SDF) allocations for employer engagement activity, coupled with increased knowledge exchange activity, have necessitated the development of new employer-focused avenues for recruitment. In the same way, the cap on additional student numbers is driving institutions to increase their international student numbers in order to maximise income and student recruitment.

Equality legislation

As with the national policy agenda, there was awareness across all teams of the equality legislative requirement to proactively address discrimination; promote equality and diversity; carry out equality impact assessments; and put in place equality schemes in respect of race, gender and disability. Inclusivity was regarded as good practice but legislation was clearly identified as the driver for change:

We need to recognise and develop good practice for all students. There is also a legislative driver that required us to do it. (Westminster)

Disability equality was the main focus for a number of the change initiatives. Indeed, the Bradford team took a whole university approach to addressing the requirements of the DDA. This led to the development of a holistic approach to inclusive practice that would ensure it was not only meeting the disability legislation but also changing policy and practice that would benefit all students.

Other institutions focused on equality impact assessments as a tool to bring about change and to assess whether change was taking place. As part of implementing their Disability Equality Scheme the University of Hull addressed equality impact assessment for academic approvals. Sheffield Hallam University took on the development of a single equality scheme as a main focus for their change initiative.

The need to ensure that all staff understood and took responsibility for the implementation of legislative requirements served as a driver to make CPD a key aspect of all change initiatives. While it may not have been part of their initial plans, it was recognised by, and became integral to, the strategies employed by all HEIs. It served as a key lever to bring about systemic and cultural change.

Quality assurance

Institutional audit was recognised as a factor driving institutions to develop inclusive and appropriate practice, although it did not take the same prominence as the need to comply with legislation. However, the need for quality management and quality enhancement were identified as internal drivers for change (see Internal drivers below).

National Student Survey

The results of the National Student Survey (NSS) were important to all teams and they consistently identified student satisfaction and the student experience as key drivers for addressing inclusive policy and practice. It presented perhaps the strongest external driver for change, particularly in relation to learning and teaching:

We want to introduce an enhanced induction period leading to better early retention rates, attendance and student satisfaction levels. (Leeds Trinity)

It was recognised that the NSS is a key benchmark for gauging the quality of the student experience and consequently institutions were very aware that their performance in the survey was crucial to how they would be judged by their potential market:

The National Student Survey – it matters! We would like to attract students because we are known to be really inclusive. (Anglia Ruskin)

The scope of the NSS and the consideration of benchmarking data led institutions to consider how they could maintain or enhance their position in the HE marketplace and provide the best experience for the students they hoped to recruit. This is linked to the development of internal drivers that will:

... make things better for students as an institution. (Manchester Metropolitan)

2.2.2 *Internal drivers*

The drivers that we can identify as internal to institutions are intrinsically linked to those that are external. The significance of each is dependent on the institution's own interpretation of its position in the HE environment.

Mission and strategy

Institutional mission and/or strategic priorities provided the starting point for developing a rationale for change for all participating institutions. Teams demonstrated that their change initiatives were being developed in response to the strategic direction of their institution and in support of the strategies and policies that were in place to support institutional mission. For example, Sheffield Hallam drew on the University's commitment to inclusion articulated in key strategy and policy documents, including its vision and values statement, its corporate plan, learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and disability, race and gender equality schemes.

The fact that institutions could draw on this strategic-level commitment was regarded as very positive and it was “*important for this to be at the core of the project*” (Bradford). Whether expressed in relation to social justice, benefit to the individual or economic interest, in taking this approach teams provided themselves with a strategic lever to drive their change initiative.

Student retention

Retention provided a key focus for several of the participating institutions, (particularly transition into the first year) as well as more broadly the student experience. Several institutions identified that they had significant number of students repeating a year or changing their programme of study, which had financial implications, especially given how student retention is currently delineated.

Retention therefore represented a key driver for ensuring that institutions were providing accurate pre-course and on-course information, catering for the diversity of students they attracted:

... help students make the right choices and support them academically, administratively and pastorally. (Manchester Metropolitan)

... enhanced induction period leading to better early retention rates, attendance and student satisfaction levels (and enhanced staff engagement). (Leeds Trinity)

The issue of retention provided a driver not only in financial terms, but also in respect of learning, teaching and assessment practice:

... review of curriculum and pedagogy leading to ... better staff/ learner engagement, improved retention, attendance post-Christmas and fewer re-sits (based on recognition of the importance of curriculum at Level 1 and centrality to student drop-out). (Leeds Trinity)

It was generally recognised that in an increasingly competitive HE sector and with a declining 18–20 demographic, institutions will have to ensure that they take account of a diverse range of student learning requirements in order to effectively retain and support the success of both current and future students.

New opportunities/business development

For some institutions, there was recognition of the need to respond to new market opportunities (e.g. work-based learning). Institutions were conscious of the drive (e.g. from Lifelong Learning Networks and/or diverse educational qualifications) for the development of new curricula and more flexible learning provision.

Quality management/quality enhancement

As part of the process of developing and implementing their change initiatives, teams used quality management and enhancement processes to drive the development and embedding of inclusive policy and practice. Two particular themes emerged:

- the importance of the student experience as the overall driver in respect of quality and enhancement;
- the use of organisational structures and processes as a means to address aspects of the student experience.

As the programme progressed, quality management and enhancement became increasingly significant to the embedding process for all teams, even where it had not been identified as a high priority from the outset. These were seen as key drivers to the development of academic and professional practice and a means to impact on the culture of the institution. The focus of a number of initiatives was the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment policy and practice.

Quality management and enhancement was also employed by some teams as a lever to engage with academic stakeholders. The University of Hull worked directly with academic approval panels to embed equality impact assessments into the process to ensure that new curricula were designed and delivered in an inclusive way. This was seen as a process of changing hearts and minds as well as policy with a view to bringing about enduring cultural change.

Developing professional practice

Continuing professional development was seen as key to embedding inclusive policy and practice and to addressing quality enhancement. All the change initiatives included a staff

development element. It was seen as key to changing the culture of an institution and ensuring that inclusive practice was embedded for the benefit of a diverse student body. In articulating the rationale for enhancing professional practice, one institution reported:

... staff development leading to improved staff 'buy-in' and understanding of diversity issues leading to more effective programme design ... also [it promotes] less of a 'blame culture' with staff accepting responsibility for addressing the implications of diversity in their teaching. (Leeds Trinity)

It was recognised universally that developing inclusive practice to address the entitlements of particular student groups (such as disabled students) would provide a positive impact for all students. It would also build the knowledge and confidence of teaching staff. Consequently the whole of the student experience would benefit. Better teaching and assessment practice was regarded as beneficial for staff professionally, for students with regard to their academic experience and outcome, and for the institution in respect of its reputation and standing.

2.3 The context of language

Language and terminology, as used on both an individual and an institutional level, also emerged as an important defining factor in the rationale and content of institutional change initiatives and their approach to embedding. Therefore, in considering why institutions might wish to ensure that policies and practices are 'inclusive' and what they might want to change, it is important to reflect on what is meant by the term 'inclusion'. As highlighted by Shaw *et al.* (2007), there appears to be no definitive understanding of the terms 'widening participation' and 'diversity' and understanding clearly varies from institution to institution. This was borne out by evidence collected during the course of the Academy's programme. Debate among participating HEIs about the definition of inclusion included consideration of:

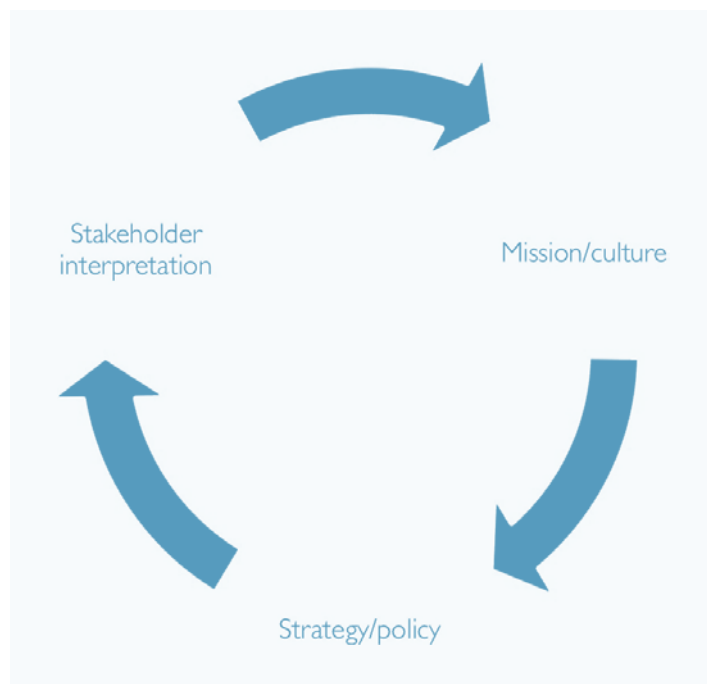
- an equitable experience for all students – one that acknowledges the need for, and provides a flexible approach to, learning and teaching in order to meet the entitlements of all students;
- enabling access – ensuring that all potential students, whatever their background, have the opportunity to progress to higher education;
- making things better for students – recognising student entitlement and ensuring

- that all services across the institution are fit for purpose;
- a future where inclusive teaching is the 'norm' – ensuring that all staff subscribe to and develop their practice to provide a flexible and appropriate approach to learning and teaching.

The term 'inclusion' appeared to be interpreted differently in different contexts; for example, providing support for students from nominated under-represented backgrounds, identifying a positive student experience through the National Student Survey, or better integration of all students in their diversity where there is no under-representation of any minority group. However, whatever the interpretation, it is clear that the development of policy in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion, together with the historical development of interpretations and use of language, both within the institution and across the sector more widely, had influenced the way in which language and terminology was understood by the teams.

The process of interpretation can be represented as follows:

Figure 1: The process of interpretation



It was observed that the interpretation of policy at institutional level has served not only to shape strategic priorities but also to influence the language used within an institution and from stakeholder to stakeholder across that institution. This consequently influenced the language used within teams; for example, the interpretation of 'inclusion' by some as meaning 'access', as opposed to an interpretation that related to the whole student life cycle.

Debate and discussion within and across teams highlighted that national policy development in respect of widening participation and inclusion is a significant influencer in respect of the interpretation and use of language. For example, the requirement of widening participation initiatives (such as Aimhigher) specifically to target low socio-economic groups was reflected in the interpretation of widening participation in some teams:

Widening participation relates to lower socio-economic groups.

This for some served to create a clear divide between widening participation activity and equality and diversity:

We have widening participation practitioners who deal with a very specific piece of work which has nothing to do with the inclusion agenda and disability.

However, others looked to join up the widening participation discourse with that of equality, diversity and inclusion in their institutions:

We are trying to get widening participation on the agenda of equality and diversity for people in HR and our management structure in our university to take it seriously.

It could also be argued that the language used by policy makers is compounding a deficit perception of widening participation or disability equality. While this language has been taken on by HEIs in their own discourse, it is worth noting that teams were aware of, and talked about, the notion of deficit language and the need to move towards a positive articulation of issues surrounding a diverse student body:

*There was a shift from the word 'need' to the word 'entitlement'.
It repositions the learner from being needy, and the academics
have been more positive about the word 'entitlement'.*

Team discussions recognised historical changes observed in the language used, particularly with regard to disability. It was highlighted that, as a result, it was difficult to arrive at specific definitions for the language and terminology used:

*We have to recognise that you cannot entirely define these
and be confident of them partly because they have different
meanings depending on the different point of view of people
historically and different contexts.*

It was, however, agreed that the development of language had been an important factor in moving the inclusion agenda forward. Teams recognised the move from a 'medical' model of disability, to a 'social' and 'rights'-based model. This has shifted the focus for adaptation from the student to the environment and provision of service that are disabling. In the same way there has been a shift away from the term 'equal opportunities' towards 'diversity' as the latter recognises a more holistic approach, taking account of individual difference and the multi-variate nature of disadvantage in contrast to an approach that sees people as belonging to homogeneous groups (Kandola and Fullerton, 1994).

It was also recognised, however, that language still presents a significant barrier, both in respect of academics' perception of their students and the students' perception of themselves. Discussion throughout the programme revealed that the language used predominantly focuses on the notion of problems in relation to students from non-traditional backgrounds rather than positive experience and success. For example, all institutions provide student support, but this is often situated as a distinct service with deficit connotations, rather than being presented as part of an inclusive student experience.

The notion of unspoken language as a reflection of the culture within a particular institution also emerged as a potential lever for change. This related to standards of behaviour (e.g. attitude to students from different backgrounds), academic standards (e.g. learning and teaching issues) and the organisation of learning spaces (e.g. how

student support is organised, provided and located, including facilities in learning spaces). It was recognised that behaviour is of itself a 'language' that has the power to influence and change culture and in the context of inclusion is an expression of the complex relationship between ethical, regulatory and legislative drivers for change. HEIs not only subscribe to the notions of social justice and corporate social responsibility but are also required to comply with sector regulation (quality assurance) and follow the letter of the law by acting proactively in changing processes, procedures and cultures in order to promote equality. These requirements serve to drive the way in which institutions as a whole, and the individuals within them, behave and so can be regarded as direct levers for change.

It is evident that language is influenced by contextual factors at both external and institutional levels. Further, while the understanding of terminology varies across the sector and language is used differently from institution to institution, language can provide both a significant driver for and a means by which to influence and facilitate change.

2.4 Summary

The environment in which HEIs are now operating is complex, with many competing drivers and priorities. Policy, regulatory and legislative factors are influencing the way in which HEIs understand, manage and implement the equality and diversity agenda in order to achieve embedded change. Teams recognised that both systemic and cultural change was required, and this is reflected in the emphasis given not only to changing policy and procedure, but also to staff development to achieve changes in professional practice.

During the programme it emerged that language has historically shaped and driven the way in which an institution develops its approach to widening participation and equality. In developing their discourse around inclusion, teams began to use language as a tool to facilitate change and to engage key stakeholders. They developed strategies to tap into the transformative power of language, thereby to impact on institutional culture and thinking. This in turn helped to further the embedding of inclusive practice and improve the student experience itself.

Moving widening participation, student diversity and disability equality “from the margins to the mainstream” (Thomas *et al.*, 2005) remains a significant challenge. Legislating to change beliefs and attitudes is undoubtedly problematic, and it is difficult to find ways to maintain the momentum of change and achieve the necessary cultural and systemic changes. This programme, therefore, represented a shift from a ‘project culture’ towards longitudinal change to bring about sustained adjustment. HEI teams began to use the external environment and both internal and external drivers to formulate a rationale and a case for change that was in the best interests of not only the institution but also the learners themselves.

3. The process of change

This chapter deals with the change process undertaken by the participating HEIs as they worked to develop and embed more inclusive policy and practice. It considers the 'journey travelled' by the teams with regard to defining, planning and implementing the changes required. It also distinguishes between methodological approaches and seeks to identify the particular features that characterise the process of achieving inclusive policy and practice.

Managing change is part of the higher education context, but, at this current time, change is more rapid than ever before. As discussed in Chapter 2, institutions are operating within a complex social, political and economic environment. The higher education sector is increasingly competitive with importance being placed on league tables, student satisfaction and recruitment and maintenance of student numbers. Institutions are required to respond to numerous policy priorities, several of which require a cultural-level response. These priorities include equality and diversity, widening participation, internationalisation, and enhancing learning through technology. Institutional teams drew on these competing priorities to create opportunities or openings to help them drive forward the changes they sought to make.

The nature of change required by the equality legislation and widening participation agendas is cultural, requiring critical reflection on the whole organisational context. The agendas demand that attention be paid to the policies, practices and inter-relationships across the institution. It was notable that irrespective of the focus of the ten initiatives (see case studies section towards the end of this report) there were ramifications for the whole institution. Consequently, it is possible to identify common features across the ten institutions, and these are discussed later in the chapter. Although these features are considered here in the context of inclusion, they may be transferable to other policy agendas where whole organisational change is sought or required.

3.1 The nature of change

The ten participating institutions aimed to develop and embed different aspects of widening participation and/or disability equality. The themes they addressed are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of the change initiatives

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Theme of change initiative</i>	<i>Key aim(s)</i>
Anglia Ruskin University	Equality proofing the curriculum	To facilitate academic staff to become skilled and empowered to develop and deliver an inclusive curriculum to meet the entitlements of a diverse student body
University of Bradford	Enhancing learning, teaching and assessment strategies and practices for disabled students	To achieve a more inclusive approach to learning, teaching and assessment
University of Hull	Disability equality impact assessments and academic approvals	To develop and embed an equality impact assessment procedure within the academic approval process for new modules and programmes
Leeds Trinity University College	Success for all: from widening participation to improving attainment	To provide the learning and support infrastructure to promote access, remove barriers, improve retention and enhance achievement, for all students
Manchester Metropolitan University	Building curricula for the 21st-century learner	To develop and embed tools to review diversity and enhance the design and delivery of all programmes
The Open University	Building the digital divide: widening participation and e-learning	To enable students from widening participation backgrounds to access and benefit from the University's e-learning communications
Queen Mary, University of London	Widening participation and students' writing in the disciplines	To develop a coherent approach to the development of students' academic literacy within the curriculum
Sheffield Hallam University	An integrated approach to equality and diversity	To create a learning environment that embraces and values diversity and maximises the use of inclusive policies and practices
University of Westminster	Embedding inclusive curriculum practices	To develop sustainable approaches towards inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment
University of Worcester	Developing inclusive curricula in higher education	To embed effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design

Across all ten institutions, the nature of organisational change required to bring about inclusive policy and practice fell into two broad categories:

- *institutional-level change*: targeting institutional policy, strategy, structures, systems, processes and/or environmental factors, whether centrally or within departments/faculties;

- *individual-level change*: targeting individuals' attitudes, awareness, knowledge, understanding, perceptions and assumptions, as well as practice.

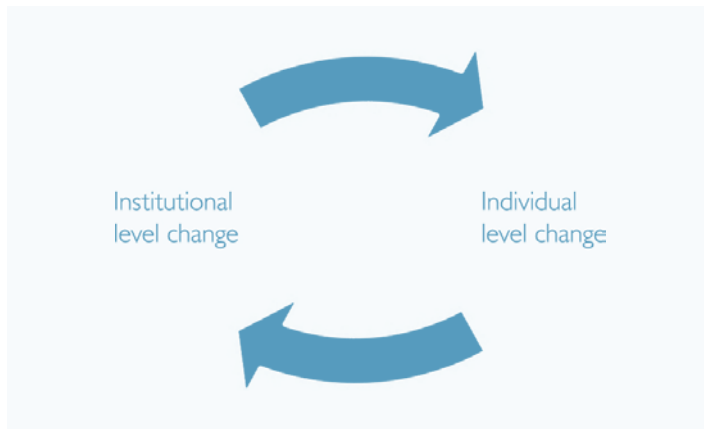
Noticeably, both institutional and individual change was sought with a view to maximising the impact of the change initiatives, creating whole organisational change and ensuring sustainability. Institutional teams thereby addressed both strategic and operational issues in the course of implementing their change initiatives.

Importantly all teams found they needed to target both institutional and individual factors to develop and embed inclusive policy and practice. Without the policies, systems and processes to ensure shared responsibility and accountability for inclusion, endeavours directed towards developing individuals alone would be at risk of petering out. Likewise, without the commitment and engagement of the individuals implementing the policies, systems and processes, inclusive practice might not be achieved. Seeking to ensure that appropriate changes were made to both practice and inter-relationships across the whole institution required changes to policy and systems, but, likewise, changes to policy and systems depended upon the buy-in or engagement of staff. As one participant in the programme stated:

It is very difficult to make change if all the attitudes, behaviours and systems are against you, so I think it is very difficult to do one without the other.

Furthermore, for inclusive practice to be seen as part of the institution's routine practice (rather than compensatory or additional), an embedded approach was required. In many respects, the institutional and individual nature of the organisational change required to create a sustainable, inclusive culture, represents two sides of the same coin. One cannot be achieved without the other, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: The nature of change required in creating an inclusive culture



The work of one of the initiatives, at Sheffield Hallam University, serves to illustrate the targeting of both institutional and individual level change. In the development of a co-ordinated and integrated approach to diversity, the team's endeavours were directed towards both a) the development of an infrastructure (e.g. through the production of a single equality strategy and the appointment of a diversity co-ordinator) and b) work with individuals to raise their awareness and enhance practice (e.g. through the production of diversity awareness teaching materials, validation guidance materials and the organisation of a high profile 'celebrating diversity' event).

3.2 Planning for change

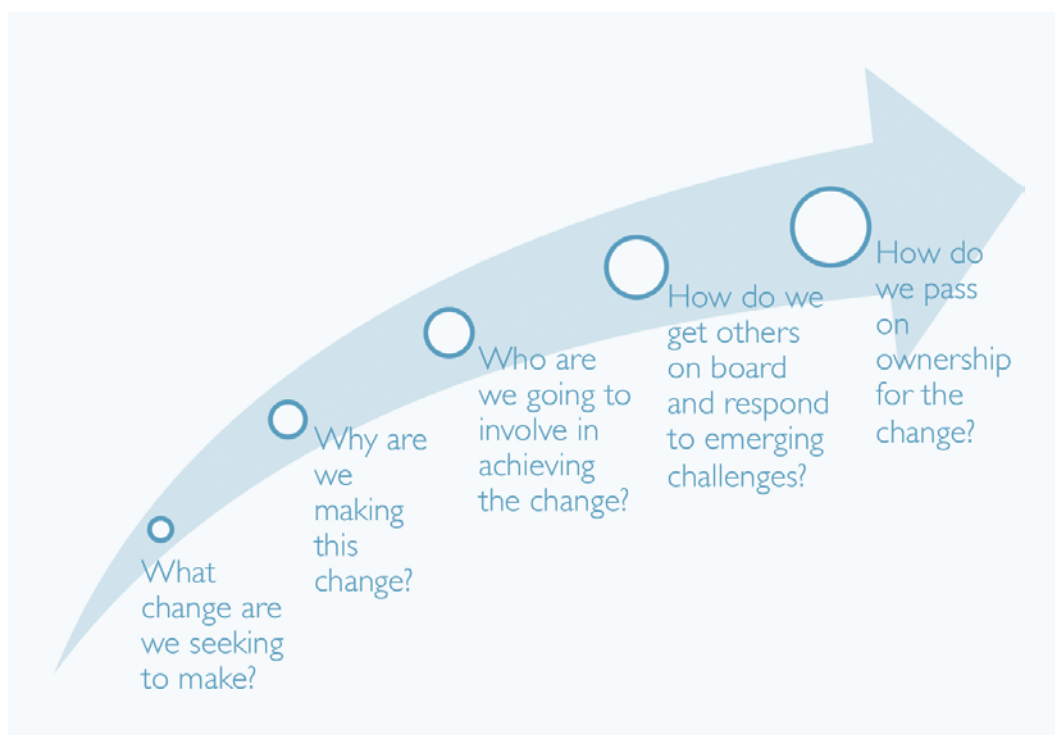
Embarking upon a journey to bring about whole organisational change was a daunting prospect for the ten teams, not least because of the scale of the changes they sought to bring about. Initiatives required careful planning and deliberation to be successful.

At the beginning of the facilitative programme provided by the Academy, teams had to have identified the change they wished to make and a methodology for achieving this. The first event focused on the planning of the initiative (see Section 1.4). Teams were invited to use log frames as a tool to structure and plan their change initiatives. The tool encourages the articulation of an overarching vision, purpose, outputs and activities as well as the identification of underlying assumptions and evaluation

measures. The underlying tenet behind log frames is that undertaking a range of nominated activities should lead to achievement of desired outputs, which in turn contribute to the initiative's purpose and supports its overarching vision. Furthermore, log frames require that assumptions be considered in the planning of each stage (i.e. activities, outputs, purpose and vision) to ensure risks can be managed. They further encourage the consideration of evaluation measures for each stage, in order to maximise and evidence the impact of the initiative.

Figure 3 depicts the process that the teams went through in undertaking their change initiatives over time. When setting out, the teams' focus was on defining the nature of the change they sought to make. As they moved through the planning and implementation process, they gathered evidence that the change was required, involved a range of stakeholders, adapted their methods and sought to pass on ownership and responsibility to others.

Figure 3: The process of change



The figure shows the stages teams progressed through over time. The process was, however, by no means linear and earlier stages were often revisited during the later stages of the process.

3.2.1 What? Defining the desired change

At the start of the process, teams were tasked with defining a vision for their initiatives and, later in the programme, with creating a common understanding of inclusion as a team. Where a common vision and understanding had been achieved by the team prior to commencing work on their initiative, this was found to support the success of the change being taken forward. These teams appeared to be more effective because all endeavours were directed towards a common goal. While for some reaching a common understanding took time, it paid dividends as the initiative progressed.

This common vision and understanding nevertheless needed to be shared, not just by the team but with others across the institution, as part of the process. Teams articulated their vision to others across the institution, which acted to increase the effectiveness and scale of the change. As part of the Academy's programme, teams were encouraged to consider the clarity of their vision, as well as the rationale. They reflected on their institutional context as well as the historical, socio-political and economic developments that had contributed to the perceived need for change and drew upon internal and external evidence as to why it was necessary (see 'Why?' below). They were also asked to reflect upon their personal commitment to the initiative to acknowledge the investment of time and energy that would be required.

Where the vision and understanding of the change were aligned to the mission, values or corporate plan of the university, this positively acted as a lever and impetus for the change. Teams made reference to a range of relevant external levers for change (c.f. Chapter 2), as well as the policy/practice of other (competitor) institutions, which helped to validate and substantiate their rationale that the change was required.

3.2.2 Why? Collating and tailoring an evidence base for the change

Each of the institutions benefited from building an evidence base as an intrinsic part of the change process (c.f. Sections 5.2 and 7.1.2). Teams undertook research within their institutions (e.g. surveys of staff attitudes) and drew on external research evidence (e.g.

by writing a literature review). While this research was undertaken at various stages throughout the change process, it was undertaken particularly in the early stages. Such evidence was used chiefly for the purposes of informing their initiatives, engaging stakeholders (e.g. to prove that change was required or gain buy-in for the change) and/or for monitoring the progress and impact of the change.

Teams were tasked to identify their own 'compelling' evidence that their proposed change was required. They were asked to reflect on a book entitled *Made to Stick* (Heath and Heath, 2007) and to consider ways in which ideas can be nurtured to support their success. The book focuses on "why some ideas thrive while others die" and tackles the issue of how to communicate ideas effectively. The authors propose that a 'sticky message' depends on a number of principles. To increase the chance of an idea making a difference, they propose an idea should be conveyed as:

- simple: this means advocates need to find the core of the idea;
- unexpected: ideas can grab people's attention by surprising them;
- concrete: this ensures an idea can be grasped and remembered later;
- credible: to make an idea believable;
- emotional: feelings can help people see the importance of an idea;
- story: it empowers people to present an idea through narrative.

In the context of the programme, teams sought to promote a simple message such as that inclusive practice promotes success for all students. Several teams identified the student voice as a powerful way to persuade staff that change was required. A member of the Worcester team talked of working with one department and engaging them by reporting that they had a 'high IQ' (inclusion quota) to capture their attention.

Importantly, the teams found that they required different kinds of evidence to engage different groups of staff (whether senior managers, human resources, academic staff etc.) due to the need to relate the change to the role, responsibilities, priorities and interests of those they sought to engage. It was not the quantity but the quality of evidence that was important. The more relevant the evidence presented, the more likely it would hold the attention of staff.

Institutions draw on sources of evidence already available. In order to capitalise on, and extend, prior endeavours, teams drew on previous or existing work within the

institution. For example, the change initiative at Anglia Ruskin University built a suite of research and development work already completed or underway, including the ‘Mind the Gap’ project for students with mental health difficulties and a set of ‘practical tips’ guides for academics on inclusive practice, which had already been developed. Part of the ethos of the Academy’s programme was to enable the teams to draw on practice elsewhere – hence teams shared ideas and practice with one another and used existing resources (for example, May, 2009, Inclusive practice resource guide series).

3.2.3 *Who? Identifying those involved in the change*

Given the nature and scale of the change envisaged, teams found it was imperative to work with a range of internal stakeholders. The success of their change initiatives depended on gaining ‘buy-in’ from these stakeholders and, in some cases, shared ownership. Raising awareness and understanding was a critical first step. Institutions employed a number of strategies to facilitate buy-in and ownership (see Section 3.2.4 and Chapter 5) and were focused in their approach, choosing to work with academic and senior staff in particular and those who were conscious of the need for change, in order to build an internal momentum.

It is noteworthy that, irrespective of the nature of the initiative, all teams engaged a range of stakeholders across their institutions (see Section 5.1) as part of developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice. This process was supported by the fact that the teams themselves comprised representatives from across the institution including senior managers and staff from learning and teaching, student support services (including disability), widening participation, staff development, quality assurance and enhancement, and human resources. The mixed nature of the teams was encouraged by the Academy from the outset. The institutions chose team members to represent relevant HEI functions or stakeholders, those in a position to influence or aid the initiative’s development and implementation, those acting as advocates for the change or those with the potential to deliver (long-term) change. Having a mixed team undoubtedly helped in taking the change initiatives forward. Team composition was mentioned when participants were asked for their advice to other institutions about taking forward a similar initiative. For example:

Ensure you engage team members who are representative of as many University functions as possible. (Anglia Ruskin)

Get a good healthy mix of academic and non-academic stakeholders involved in the project. (Bradford)

Team members attempted to work with, or forge positive relationships with, a range of staff from across the institution. It was recognised that a number of stakeholder groups (both staff and students) would need to be engaged in order to address multiple strategic functions and to implement institution-wide change. Teams were strategic about who they targeted, and who they prioritised. It was acknowledged that, although all staff needed to take responsibility, there were some who held more responsibility for the agenda than others. In addition to those working in the area, teams targeted two major staff groups as being key to the successful implementation of the required changes – academic staff and senior management.

As part of the Academy's programme, teams were also encouraged to consider the links between the different stakeholders groups. Each group does not operate in isolation of others, not least because students interface with a variety of staff in the course of their studies. This can be exacerbated for those with particular entitlements or requirements such as disabled students. In the development of inclusive policy and practice, teams were encouraged to map out the inter-relationships between staff groups, which in turn helped to clarify the process of change and the issues they would need to address. The Westminster team, for example, attempted to embed the consideration of inclusive practice within the University's validation process. They needed to work with different stakeholder groups (including staff development, academics, senior managers, quality) to achieve this. The change required a multi-pronged approach including staff training, revisions to their validation handbook and the buy-in of senior managers. One change could not happen without another being made elsewhere. This illustrates the complex nature of change, where the implications for other systems and processes are far-reaching.

3.2.4 *How? Getting others committed to making the change*

All teams undertook a 'cascade' approach, drawing on a small base of core staff at first, before enabling a larger number of staff to engage in the work of the initiative. This was essential to creating whole institution change and to ensure that the change did not continue to depend upon the core team.

In choosing 'how' to engage others, there was a perceptible awareness among team members as to the sensitivities around managing change. This is exemplified in the following quote:

People do not like being told what to do, and there are academic freedom issues over compliance of educational policy and procedure.

Thus engaging the stakeholders in the process of change (not just the products of change) was seen to be crucial. Also there was an appreciable need to provide opportunities for dialogue, rather than be prescriptive or coercive in expecting others to make the change.

The methods used to engage others are outlined in Chapter 5. Significantly, each of the teams used a variety of methods including resource development, continuing professional development programmes, events and research surveys/focus groups. Typically teams sought methods to engage large cohorts of staff/students (e.g. a research survey) or to work with sub-groups (e.g. an event, focus group or training). The methods called for varying levels of engagement with stakeholders, which can be mapped onto the ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969). The methods varied from informing stakeholders *about* the change (e.g. conference presentations, Bradford); consultation *with* stakeholders as informants to the change initiative (e.g. focus groups, Westminster; or staff survey, Hull); through to the full *participation* of stakeholders in the change process, as a collaborative activity (e.g. appreciative inquiry, Worcester). Furthermore, teams worked hard to identify methods that were creative, engaging and relevant to the different stakeholder groups they wanted to work with. The team at Bradford, for example, packaged their activities around scholarship and research in order to engage the academic staff they were targeting. They promoted dialogue among this group, providing opportunities to debate and discuss inclusive practice and to reflect upon what it meant in their university context.

Teams often needed to adapt their approach along the way. In some cases, the methods planned by the team could not proceed, due to unforeseen circumstances. The team at Manchester Metropolitan University planned a dedicated diversity event that did not go ahead, but instead negotiated to deliver a session at another event. Teams needed to build flexibility into their change initiatives so as to be able to respond creatively to emerging situations and challenges.

3.2.5 *Moving forwards: passing on ownership and responsibility*

There was recognition among teams that they needed to pass ownership to others to ensure that the changes did not rely solely on the original team but became an accepted part of the institution's routine practice in the future. This stage of the process needed to be planned as part of the project.

It was recognised that the team did not have the capacity to work with all staff, although everyone might eventually need to be involved in implementing the change. The teams were introduced to the concept of the 'tipping point' to encourage them to plan for their initiative to reach a point where more staff used inclusive practices than did not. The creation of a 'groundswell' of support for the change – or a 'tipping point' – was deemed more likely to happen through working with interested (as opposed to disinterested) parties. In cross-team discussions, four potential groups emerged when discussing the engagement of their colleagues, namely those who are:

1. 'champions', i.e. knowledgeable advocates;
2. 'consciously unknowledgeable', i.e. know they need to change but require guidance as to how to do it;
3. 'initial resisters', i.e. resist the change until the benefits are explained or demonstrated; and
4. 'resisters', i.e. do not want to engage as they do not see it as their business.

It was acknowledged that it was best to prioritise those in the second and third categories as this would help to create a point at which the resisters might be urged to engage. When asked to identify a piece of advice they would offer to other institutions, one team member went so far as to state:

There will always be some people who you think will never be convinced of the need for change, so don't waste your time and energy on them in the early stages. It's more productive – and far less demoralising – to identify and promote those who are already keen. Then, turn your attention to those who are perhaps not there yet but who are interested in learning more, and promote their subsequent achievements. As for your more stubborn colleagues, don't write them off entirely: they will

probably be exposed eventually and may seek your advice and guidance at a later date. Be ready for them: 'converts' can be very effective champions. (Anglia Ruskin)

Among the case studies, a number of institutional teams reportedly targeted champions (i.e. interested parties who may assist or facilitate in the process) (c.f. case studies of QMUL, Worcester, Anglia Ruskin, Manchester Metropolitan, Westminster as well as Section 5.3.2). Furthermore, the team at Worcester reported working with 'gatekeepers' (i.e. those deemed to be in a position to influence the process); while at Queen Mary, University of London the team sought to engage 'key staff' who might be instrumental in creating a groundswell of support.

There came a point in the initiatives at which it was deemed appropriate to pass on responsibility to others. Unsurprisingly, the teams reached this point at different times, partly down to their overriding approach.

3.3 Variations in approaches to change

As mentioned in Section 3.1, in bringing about inclusive policy and practice, there were two key foci of change – the institution and the individual. The ways of achieving these two levels of change were found to vary and there were differences between institutions in their organisational approach.

3.3.1 Variation in approach between institutional and individual change

Changing *institutional*-level issues (such as policy, procedure, or systems) was approached as a procedural task and thus could be planned and implemented methodically. The process was seen as a matter of effective project management with a clearly defined scope, aims, objectives, target areas, stakeholders, timescales and impact. The process could be delineated in advance by the team. For example, the team at Bradford drew out their vision for an inclusive campus by mapping out the functions, systems and interventions required to bring about the desired change.

On the other hand, changing *individual* practice, could not be so well defined, given that it was about influencing inter-relationships across the institution and winning the

'hearts and minds' of the stakeholder groups required to bring about inclusive policy and practice. By and large, this required creative, flexible and responsive approaches to effecting change. Not only did this process vary from institution to institution (e.g. hub and spoke approach, targeting one faculty/department), but the process was more challenging to plan for and measure. The teams found that this required a strategic, ongoing process, the outcomes of which could neither be achieved within a set timescale nor necessarily predicted or planned. Importantly, achieving such change required an acknowledgement that the responsibility for inclusive practice is shared among all staff.

Since there was a need to address both kinds of change, the overall journey travelled by the teams was not a linear process. While the changes to institutional policy and systems could be planned and delivered within a time-limited period, the type of persuasive change required when working with individuals took time and could not be planned to the same extent.

3.3.2 *Variation in management of change between institutions*

Institutions were found to differ in the organisation and management of their initiatives. This was observed in the functioning and structure of the teams, and in the management of scale.

Team functioning was largely dictated by its composition i.e. the role and position of team members. Teams considered that a mix of staff across institutional functions was an advantage in achieving whole organisational change. The presence of a team member from human resources, for example, enabled the team at Anglia Ruskin University to influence the performance management systems of the University. The teams also recognised that a mix of strategic and operational staff on the team was helpful. The presence of a senior manager in a strategic role provided an advocate for the change proposed and simplified the process of gaining approval (e.g. Westminster); likewise the presence of an operational manager on the team provided the human resource to get the work taken forward.

A number of teams were observed to operate a 'hub and spoke' organisational approach, with a central core (led by the project manager) co-ordinating the activity and other team members supporting the operation. This type of organisational structure was seen to operate in Anglia Ruskin University, University of Bradford,

Leeds Trinity University College, Manchester Metropolitan University, the Open University and Queen Mary, University of London. This approach mirrored existing organisational structures since the central co-ordination function was largely carried out by those in a central role within their institution, with the operational tasks being undertaken by team members based in academic departments, schools or faculties. Others operated a task-led approach, where particular tasks were defined centrally by the whole team but were allocated and delivered by individual members of the team. This approach was used at Sheffield Hallam, Westminster and Worcester Universities.

There were also variations in how teams involved key stakeholders across the institution. There were those that targeted certain staff, subjects or departments for the planned change, then tested out their approach with a few of their target group and planned a way to roll out the change across the institution over time (see case studies for Hull, Open University, QMUL and Worcester), as further explained in Section 3.3.2 below under 'phased approach'. Where pilot studies were not used, or only used selectively, teams did not target at departmental level but sought to be more holistic in their approach (see Anglia Ruskin, Bradford, Leeds Trinity, Manchester Metropolitan, Sheffield Hallam and Westminster). These teams approached the task in a similar way to conducting an impact assessment by scoping all aspects of the institution's functions, plans, procedures and activities that would be influenced by the change. They gathered views from staff and identified the likely enablers and challenges to their taking forward the proposed change. The tools and resources they developed and/or the changes they made to structures and processes were designed to address a particular need.

Further differences were observed between institutions in their approach to managing the potential scale of the changes being proposed. These included:

- *Prioritisation* – a number of teams concentrated on one aspect of inclusive policy and practice – for example, by focusing on one priority area where discrimination may be occurring (e.g. writing enhancement, QMUL; bridging the digital divide, Open University) or by targeting one area of the institution's function (e.g. validation and review process, Hull). The nature of the initiative was then such that the scale was manageable and realistic with regard to workload for the team.
- *Pilot approach* – several of the teams implemented a pilot study, as a way of managing the change initiative (including Hull, Open University, Manchester Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam). For example, the University of Hull piloted the use of equality

impact assessment within academic approval of one new programme; the Open University ran a pilot project to trial the provision of access to information and computer technology within community locations and planned to go from a pilot project to implementation across the institution.

- *Phased approach* – some teams (including Bradford, QMUL and Worcester) managed the scale by having a defined number of stages to the initiative, whereby the change was implemented on a smaller scale initially, with plans for it to be rolled out at a later date. For example, the Worcester team planned the initiative in phases, starting in one department before rolling it out across the institution. The team used an appreciative inquiry approach in one faculty, started in one department and then wrote a step-by-step guide to encourage and support other departments to use the same approach.

Institutions varied with regard to size affecting the nature of the initiative. One of the most ambitious initiatives regarding scale was observed at Leeds Trinity University College in addressing the topic of student success from widening participation to improving attainment. The initiative covered the institution's work on pre-entry, transition, personalised learning and learning support. In many ways the scale of the initiative was beyond the capabilities of a small team to deliver, yet the small size of the institution of itself meant that things could be achieved by this team that would have been impossible to achieve in larger institutions. For example, the team were involved in running a staff development day for all staff.

3.3.3 *Variation in research methodology between institutions*

Each of the initiatives was underpinned by research, but there were differences between institutions in the research methodology used, representative of different methodological traditions².

Firstly it was notable that most teams used a 'top-down' or 'positivist' approach to the

2 This binary distinction between approaches is used for illustrative purposes only. It was notable, in some cases, the traditions were less distinct (see Bradford, QMUL), where the subject of the enquiry was defined through dialogue with staff and departments within the institution.

research process. Typically, the topic and the process of enquiry had been pre-defined, and aimed to answer a particular set of research questions to contribute to the development of their change initiative. More often than not, the methods applied involved asking staff or students for their views, opinions and ideas on topics deemed important to the change initiative or institution. Examples of these methods would be survey, focus group or interviews (see Anglia Ruskin, Hull, Open University, Sheffield Hallam and Westminster).

A 'bottom-up' or 'interpretative' research approach was also used by other teams. Characteristically, the issue was investigated using a discovery or emergent process. This approach, involving working with staff and students as part of the change process; for example, appreciative inquiry (see Worcester).

Noticeably, the enquiry tradition followed had implications for the purpose, timing and length of engagement with stakeholders affected by the change. The implications are summarised in Table 4 below. Those institutions who sought staff or student engagement to inform a particular issue or question typically chose a relevant point in time during the project and treated it as a one-off engagement. Where research was being used to inform understanding or to ensure collaboration, the engagements were typically ongoing and were sought from the planning stage onwards.

Table 4: Implications of the research approach

<i>Implication</i>	<i>Positivist approach</i>	<i>Interpretative approach</i>
Purpose of engagement	To inform or provide evidence for particular issues or questions	To inform understanding, planning and/or ensure a collaborative process
Type of engagement	One-off	Ongoing series
Timing of engagement	At a given point during the change process	Continual engagements throughout the process and from the planning stage

A second methodological distinction was observed with regard to the research strategy applied to empirical research. Several strategies were apparent, including mixed methods, action research and appreciative inquiry. A mixed method approach

was used by several teams, who sought to gather evidence to inform the change. It was common for one or more research methods to be conducted with staff and/or students thereby involving large numbers in the work of the initiative. For example, Westminster University conducted 22 university-wide focus groups comprising staff and students, from which they identified topics to inform a series of teaching and learning guides on inclusive practice and a set of case studies. Sheffield Hallam University conducted an institutional survey involving 484 students, looking at the experience of both disabled and non-disabled students. This survey looked at students as learners, i.e. their perceptions of themselves as learners and of their student experience, data which were later compared with their attainment. The survey was then used, along with analysis of institutional data, to inform the single equality scheme and identify priority areas for action.

An action research approach was observed within one team, where research was collated and used to inform the approach taken by the team, not just the areas for change. The Open University also conducted telephone interviews with students from widening participation backgrounds who had different levels of access to IT. They investigated the information technology issues they encountered, which they used to inform the approach taken by the team. They also evaluated the impact of pilot work and used this collated evidence to identify how they might best tailor the support offered to students.

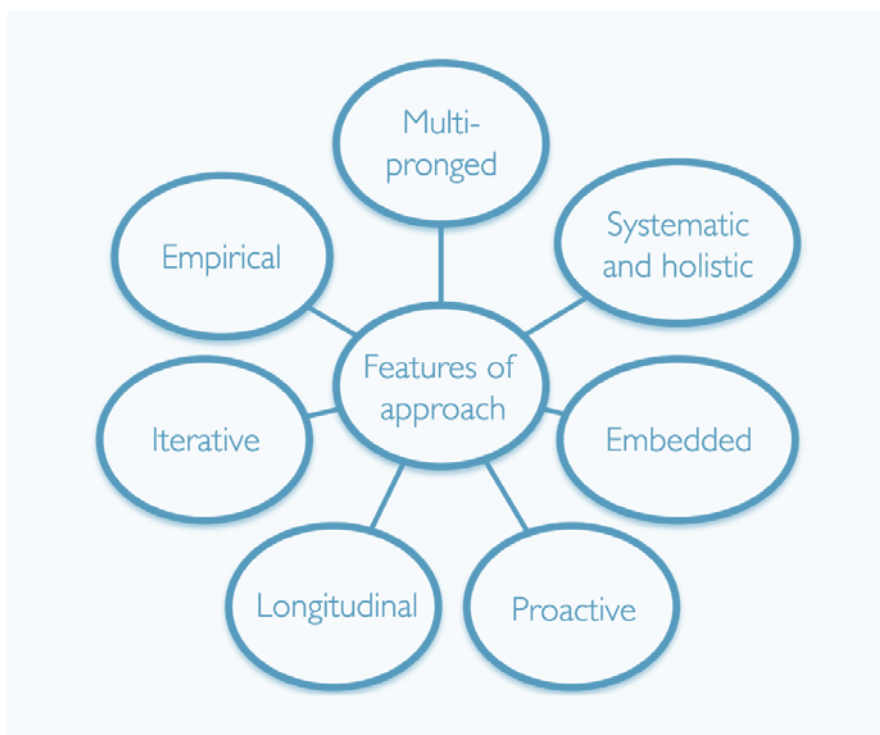
At the University of Worcester, the team used an appreciative inquiry approach, characterised as a collaborative process involving research undertaken by those affected by the change. As part of the process, disabled students were trained to undertake research. They identified what their peers valued about the teaching and learning, which along with reports of their experience, was used to 'hold up a mirror' to the staff with regards to inclusive practice. Their voices were used to define and plan any subsequent changes to practice.

A final disparity could be identified in relation to drawing on external research evidence. Four institutions (Bradford, Leeds Trinity, Hull and Manchester Metropolitan) drew on external evidence in the form of the research literature, reviewing priority areas identified and gaps. While building an evidence base was a common feature of all initiatives, the other institutions relied on empirical research of their own undertaking.

3.4 Similarities in approach to change

While a number of variations in approach were observed across the ten case study institutions, nevertheless several common features emerged. These are summarised in Figure 4 below and expanded upon in the sections that follow.

Figure 4: Common features of approach



3.4.1 Multi-pronged

All teams used a multi-pronged approach to develop and embed inclusive policy and practice. Thus they used more than one method to achieve the change they wished to make. This point is illustrated in several of the case studies since each contains a bulleted list of strategies used to implement the change.

An example of a multi-pronged approach was observed at the University of Westminster, where the team undertook a range of different tasks to embed inclusive curriculum into their validation and review process. Their approach included:

- revising the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook to include information about the requirements of an inclusive curriculum for the validation process;
- obtaining senior management agreement for inclusive curriculum to be on the agenda at validation planning meetings;
- arranging for pre-validation workshops for course teams to include inclusive curriculum;
- writing a series of learning and teaching guides to support staff in considering inclusive curriculum issues when designing new programmes;
- collating a series of case studies offering examples of 'an inclusive curriculum'.

The team thus addressed the issue from many angles, including staff development, quality assurance and management buy-in, to bring about the change.

The multi-pronged approach used by the teams was characterised by working with different stakeholders and employing a variety of methods, which in turn served to ensure that the change was taken forward and the new policy or practice implemented was sustained over time.

3.4.2 *Systematic and holistic*

All the initiatives were institution wide, requiring a systematic and holistic approach to change. In all cases the scale of the change was such that it addressed multiple aspects of institutional function and delivery. A number of initiatives might also be termed 'holistic' in their approach through their addressing of the whole student life cycle from access, through to retention and success, and progression to employment. The scale of the change required a systematic approach to ensure that all areas were covered. While the issue of scale was managed differently by institutions (see Section 3.3.2), this did not detract from their use of a systematic approach.

The University of Bradford provides an example of this approach. The initiative centred on developing an inclusive university campus, with a specific focus on curriculum reform, requiring them to work with all teaching and support staff. The team drew up a concept map, taking account of all aspects of the University's operation and providing

the team with a comprehensive overview of the areas that needed addressing, as well as the areas on which the change would impact. This was used to engage others in the change process and as a project management tool to monitor progress.

3.4.3 *Embedded*

More than one strategic institutional function was targeted by each team in the process of implementing inclusive policy and practice. This is particularly evident in the range of stakeholder groups with whom teams sought to work. These included the senior executive, academic teaching staff, faculty/departments, staff development, quality assurance and enhancement, disability, equality and diversity, widening participation, human resources, welfare and support services, library, and the Students' Union (as well as external agencies). In most cases, the changes proposed were focused on academic practice (i.e. teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design) and thus its implementation was a central concern for many institutional functions.

All teams sought to integrate the relevant changes into the everyday operations of the institution as a way of ensuring that inclusion was an ongoing part of the institution's agenda and that the changes were sustained and further developed. This would signal that they had been 'embedded'. This process was evident across the ten institutions with inclusive policy and practice being integrated into strategy development as well as core management processes (see Chapter 4). Each team targeted a number of strategies or policies in order to ensure that staff henceforward considered widening participation and/or disability equality in the planning and delivery of their practice. A range of strategies were targeted for development or review including: teaching and learning, assessment, widening participation, disability/single equality schemes, writing, communication, financial, ICT and admissions. Some teams, as at Queen Mary, University of London, Anglia Ruskin University, Leeds Trinity University College and Sheffield Hallam University, sought to integrate or associate the changes with the institution's mission – either drawing on, or ensuring that it reflected, positive messages about the institution's position on inclusion (whether expressed in relation to equality, diversity, disability or widening participation) and that these messages were subsequently filtered down through the various policies and practices of the institution.

All institutional teams integrated inclusive policy into management processes to promote staff understanding of their responsibilities and accountabilities with respect

to the delivery of inclusive practice (see Section 4.2). The management processes included: staff induction (Worcester); performance management (Anglia Ruskin); module validation processes (Anglia Ruskin, Hull, Bradford, Westminster); impact assessment (Bradford, Sheffield Hallam); continuing professional development (all teams); admissions (Leeds Trinity) and quality assurance and enhancement (Bradford, Manchester Metropolitan, Westminster).

Teams further embedded inclusive policy and practice by making changes to existing documentation. The team at Anglia Ruskin University included references to inclusive practice within a university document used in recruitment and induction and entitled *Expectations of an Academic at Anglia Ruskin – the evolving role*. The University of Hull successfully embedded an inclusivity checklist into an existing workbook for panel members and, similarly, the University of Westminster embedded information about inclusive curriculum in the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook.

The teams also sought to link their change initiatives into existing institutional practices or developments, which served further to embed inclusive approaches. This 'piggybacking' approach enabled the teams not only to share the workload and responsibility across institutional functions, but also to limit the number of extra agendas or considerations to which staff were required to respond to. An example of this was the Open University, whose team incorporated a review of student information and computer technology requirements into an existing review of student support. Further examples include instances where teams used existing events, such as an annual learning and teaching conference (see Hull), to promote staff understanding rather than run separate events. Teams further linked the change to existing roles and responsibilities to ensure it was seen as an ongoing part of the institutional development. At the University of Worcester the team negotiated for responsibility for developing inclusive practice to be integrated within the remit of the Academic Development and Practice Unit, and at the University of Bradford it was arranged that responsibility for implementing inclusive teaching, learning and assessment would be through curriculum assessment and review teams.

3.4.4 Proactive

The teams and the change initiatives, by their very nature, encouraged a proactive approach within the institution to the development of inclusive policy and practice. Teams sought to achieve this through its embedding (e.g. by integration into corporate

policy, teaching and learning strategy, validation processes, staff development, quality enhancement) and through encouraging colleagues to actively plan for change (e.g. in the planning and design of the curriculum). These measures help to ensure that staff are taking an anticipatory approach, addressing inclusive practice as an everyday part of their routine work, rather than a retrospective one and something applicable only to a nominated sub-group of their student population.

Taking a proactive approach was expressed by some as making an explicit attempt to move away from a deficit understanding of (and approach towards) disability and widening participation. The University of Worcester used an approach that moved away from a focus on barriers associated with disability. The teams at Anglia Ruskin and Westminster Universities widened the focus of their initiatives to promote inclusive practice for all students rather than just for disabled students. At Sheffield Hallam University the team aimed to celebrate diversity and promote positive messages, including visual images. In each case, the expressed purpose was proactively to shift the university away from associating certain approaches with particular groups of students (e.g. disabled, those with dyslexia, mature, part-time, 'home'), if only because they relied too heavily on (often) misguided assumptions about the homogeneity of those students as individuals.

3.4.5 *Longitudinal*

The Academy's programme ran for a 14-month period in recognition that the scale and scope of the proposed changes would require long-term strategies. However, even at the proposal stage, several institutions indicated that the proposed work with the Academy would be part of a much longer-term initiative. This was the case at the University of Bradford (who sought agreement from senate for a two-and-a-half-year programme), the University of Westminster (work to be part of a three-year initiative), Queen Mary, University of London (part of a three-year development) and the University of Worcester (part of a longer, phased approach). For others, such as Manchester Metropolitan University, Anglia Ruskin University and Leeds Trinity University College, there was also a clear recognition that the changes instigated during the programme would run on beyond the life of the programme.

3.4.6 *Iterative*

The process of undertaking their change initiative was iterative in all ten institutions. The activities at the University of Bradford, for example, centred on the use of research and dialogue to generate an emergent and common understanding of an inclusive campus. Through analysis of both concepts and practice, the team identified the changes they wished to make. In other cases, the process was iterative in relation to needing continually to revise and adjust the approach through negotiation over time. The team at Manchester Metropolitan University, as with other institutions, were implementing their initiative within a period of significant change for the institution. Thus, they needed to use an iterative process of development both to recognise and to tap into other activities. At two institutions, Leeds Trinity University College and the University of Hull, the implementation of the change initiative was affected by the loss of key staff from the team, requiring a reshaping of the initiative over the course of time.

3.4.7 *Empirical*

Each of the institutions benefited from building an evidence base as an intrinsic part of the change. Institutions drew on internal and external research at varying stages throughout the change process, and this was used chiefly for the purposes of engaging stakeholders (to prove the change was required or to gain buy-in to the change) and/or monitoring the progress and impact of the change being taken forward.

3.5 *Summary of emerging findings*

Participating teams addressed both institutional and individual change as part of their initiatives, which in turn helped to maximise impact and sustainability. These two facets cannot be seen in isolation of one another as they operate as two sides of the same coin.

Teams underwent a series of stages in planning their change initiatives. These stages included: defining the nature of the change and exploring why it was necessary; determining who needed to be involved and how; building in flexibility to respond to emerging challenges; and ultimately passing on ownership to others.

The approach by which change was achieved varied in three respects across the ten institutions. In attempting to win the 'hearts and minds' of individuals across the institution a different approach was found to be required to that needed to bring about change to institutional policies or systems. This distinction illustrates the existence of both emergent and procedural change.

The second variation in approach was found around the teams' management of change, observed in the way teams functioned, interacted with others and managed the scale of proposed change. Further variations were noted between teams in the nature of the research methodologies they applied – representative of different research traditions – and the range of strategies employed in undertaking empirical research.

Despite these variations in their approach to embedding inclusive policy and practice, there were also features that were common to all teams' approaches to implementing change. They all used a multi-pronged approach, using more than one method to bring about change. They were systematic and holistic in their approach, covering multiple institutional functions and elements of the student life cycle, and they adopted an embedded approach to ensure inclusive practices were delivered across several services within the institution. Teams used a proactive, longitudinal and iterative approach to achieving their aims and recognised the need to make anticipatory rather than retrospective adjustments, to allow time to bring about the required changes, and to build in flexibility. The final common feature was the empirical nature of the initiatives, with each team building an evidence base as a fundamental part of the change process.

4. Approaches at the institutional level

This chapter explains the institutional-level changes implemented by the teams in order to move towards their aim of achieving an inclusive institution. As has been discussed already, in the process of carrying out their initiatives and implementing whole institutional changes to practice, all teams worked to embed inclusive approaches within the institution's established ways of working to some degree. Thus, typically, a number of institutional-level policies and procedures were reviewed and revised as part of the change process, either at a central level or within departments/faculties.

For some, the nature of the change was recognised to be significant enough to require a culture shift in the organisation. In commenting on the culture of their institution, one team member stated:

We had an issue with the culture of the organisation. [Name of institution] ... is very much based in research and a lot of strategies sit on shelves gathering dust, they are read and looked at and then [staff think] 'fine I will get on and do what I always do'.

The teams clearly recognised that embedding disability equality or widening participation requires institutions to be proactive and that they have a legislative duty to fulfil as public bodies to anticipate the requirements of prospective and current students in their plans and procedures. They also appreciated the need for inclusion to be considered as part of an institution's everyday operations and integral to its core business and all functions. It was thereby seen to affect all staff and implementation was recognised as a shared responsibility.

By aligning the changes to the policy and procedures of the institution, the teams felt able to ensure that inclusion would remain on the agenda and the outcomes of the initiative would be further developed once the initiative had been completed. There was recognition that the team's work might not be sustained unless the changes were embedded into the organisation, as exemplified in the following quote:

The strategies ... can amount to nothing if they are not rooted in something sound.

This chapter is structured into two sections – institutional policy and institutional procedures – and describes the nature of policy and procedural change undertaken and the process by which teams brought about such change.

4.1 Institutional policy

The institutional teams embedded inclusion into policy in the following ways:

4.1.1 *Alignment of initiative with institutional strategic priorities and objectives*

Teams found it beneficial to align the changes they were making with their current institutional strategic (or corporate) objectives. This helped them to build a case for the proposed change. Institutions had been asked by the Academy at the proposal stage to provide a rationale for the proposed change and demonstrate how their work would align to the mission or key strategies of their institution. All ten teams were revisiting this alignment throughout the change process, with initiatives being variously informed by corporate mission statements, values, plans, strategies and schemes (see Section 2.2).

In several institutions, a commitment to inclusion was already expressed within corporate documents and the initiative provided the means by which to achieve such an objective. For example, Anglia Ruskin University's combined equality scheme defines six strategic objectives – one of which states the University will “deliver an accessible, inclusive, equality-proofed curriculum which meets the needs of a diverse student population”. Similarly, the vision statement of the University of Worcester includes a pledge to be a “high quality University with an international reputation for excellent, inclusive education”.

In specific cases, the teams worked to ensure that inclusion would be taken into consideration in the development of future strategic objectives. For example, at Sheffield Hallam University the team aimed to ensure that widening participation and equality and diversity became integrated into its new corporate plan.

4.1.2 Strategy review and development

A small number of reviews of existing policy were undertaken to include:

- academic assessment policy (Bradford);
- disabled students' learning contracts (Sheffield Hallam);
- admissions policy (Leeds Trinity);
- curriculum validation and review process (Westminster).

It was found that these often paved the way to revise policy. In several cases teams undertook research to underpin revisions to their institution's policy. The team at Sheffield Hallam University, for example, commissioned research and analysed statistical information to provide an evidence base with which to inform policy change.

It was common practice among the ten teams for policies to be revised so as to include reference to inclusive practice. The following policies were revised:

- retention strategy (Anglia Ruskin);
- inclusive assessment (Bradford);
- bursary scheme (Leeds Trinity);
- communication strategy (Westminster).

In a few cases, new policies were developed as part of the change initiative. At Sheffield Hallam University, the team produced a diversity equality strategy to inform an integrated approach to diversity and equality. In reflecting on their experience of developing a new strategy, one team member commented on the importance of ensuring integration with existing strategies:

Development of strategy requires the alignment of this strategy against other organisational strategies ... Anything that we dovetail will help get that action ... having been through the experience of writing the strategy itself, it certainly made me more aware of how to key into things through that process.

4.2 Institutional procedures

In a number of cases, institutional procedures and processes were changed during the course of implementing the change initiatives. By targeting core institutional procedures, teams aimed to support the embedding of inclusion and to trigger culture change. The following procedures and processes were changed by teams:

- performance management (including staff promotion and appraisal);
- staff induction;
- equality impact assessment;
- individual contracts and development;
- course validation, monitoring and review;
- impact monitoring and review.

The changes to these processes, which were instigated as part of embedding inclusion, will be expanded upon in the sections that follow.

4.2.1 Performance management

In the case of Anglia Ruskin University, performance management approaches, including those for promotions and appraisals, were adapted to ensure that individuals are responsible and accountable for delivery of inclusive practice. Their team included a senior representative from human resources who helped to facilitate the introduction of criteria relating to meeting students' diverse learning needs into their performance management and staff appraisal process.

Integrating inclusion into performance management procedures helps to ensure that inclusive practices are used and provides the criteria against which individual performance is assessed. It can help to address staff reluctance to engage with the process of developing inclusive practices. The team recognised that several of the changes they were making are requirements under the equality legislation. Although disciplinary procedures could be used to ensure staff are compliant in their practice, a positive approach that designates accountability and responsibility to staff through recognition and reward was the preferred route by which an institution could demonstrate its commitment to inclusive practice.

4.2.2 *Staff induction*

The team at the University of Worcester influenced the institution's induction procedure with the aim of ensuring that effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design are used throughout the University. To build staff capacity to effect this, the team arranged for elements of their programme 'Developing Inclusive Curricula in HE' to be delivered within staff induction.

4.2.3 *Equality impact assessment*

One team targeted the process of undertaking equality impact assessments as part of their change initiative. It was recognised that a more effective procedure was required and that staff needed simple tools to help them undertake the process, which can play a key role in identifying potentially discriminatory practice and ascertain priority areas to target. The procedure could also be used to identify language that could perpetuate a negative or deficit perspective towards particular student groups. The University of Hull initiative aimed to develop and deliver an evidence-informed disability impact assessment as part of academic approval. They piloted a draft tool during the development of a new programme and developed guidance and training materials for addressing inclusion as part of curriculum design.

4.2.4 *Reviewing disabled student support system*

The team at Sheffield Hallam University worked to improve the system of disabled student support. This was underpinned by a research study, which surveyed the experience of learning, teaching and assessment practice of 484 disabled and non-disabled students. The findings were used to inform policy and practice.

4.2.5 *Course validation, monitoring and review*

Institutional change initiatives addressing curriculum design and delivery all targeted course validation processes as one way to develop inclusive policy and practice. There was recognition that addressing equality and diversity within the validation procedures helps to ensure that issues of inclusion are addressed in course design from the outset.

For the University of Hull, changing the academic approval process to incorporate an equality impact assessment was the principle aim of the initiative. The team took a multi-pronged approach to the validation of new programmes, which involved working with the quality office, disability services, academic staff and senior management. They developed and delivered guidance material to support continuing professional development as well as piloting a tool for undertaking equality impact assessments in academic approval. A similar multi-pronged approach was taken at Westminster University for both the validation of new courses and the review process for existing courses. This involved the provision of guidance and staff development as well as embedding information on inclusive curriculum into agendas for meetings and into the University's quality assurance and enhancement handbook.

Other institutional teams simply ensured that inclusive practice was given due consideration as part of the course validation process. Examples of this approach included arranging for questions about inclusiveness to be added to the validation process (Anglia Ruskin), changing course approval criteria (Bradford) and developing course validation guidance materials (Sheffield Hallam).

4.2.6 *Impact monitoring and review*

Institutional teams recognised the need to instigate appropriate procedures for monitoring and reviewing progress, both in relation to the specific changes brought about by the initiative and with respect to their general progress in equality and diversity or widening participation. Some deemed it necessary that the initiative should demonstrate an impact against the institutional key performance indicators, as exemplified in the following quote:

... a lot of our project is about influencing what the institution would see as key performance indicators around recruitment, around the diversity of the student body, retention, student satisfaction, student achievement and quite frankly if you are not hitting those indicators you are going to have a problem getting buy-in at a very senior level.

In measuring change, there was a concern that management information systems were insufficient to capture all the progress that had been made across the institution:

There is not anyone who seems to be aware of what is going on in the next block.

Management information systems again seem to have been scattered to the four winds. Different bits will do different bits. There should be someone picking up the bits ... That monitoring needs to be picked up and fed back through as well.

All ten institutions used procedures to measure the impact of their change initiative. Examples of these included informal monitoring of staff requests for help and/or levels of engagement (Manchester Metropolitan, QMUL), research to assess impact (Open University, Worcester) and keeping a record of institutional change (Sheffield Hallam). The team at the University of Bradford established the means to measure impact and the effectiveness of the initiative, which was supported by qualitative evidence. They further linked this process to the University's impact assessment process.

4.3 Summary of emerging findings

All teams instigated changes at the institutional level affecting internal policy and procedures with a view to bringing about widespread use of inclusive practices.

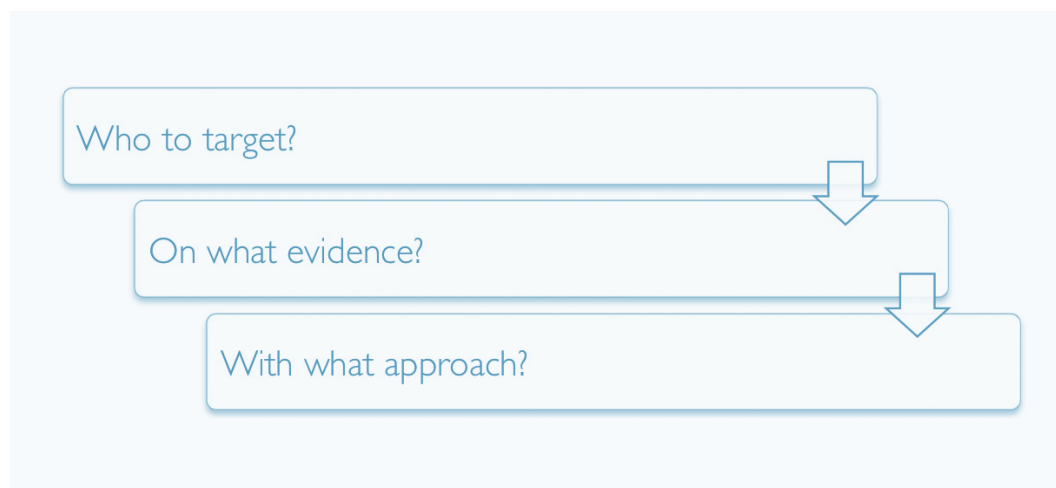
A range of institutional policies were targeted for review and development, including the strategies relating to admissions, retention, academic assessment, curriculum validation and review, learning contracts, bursaries and communication. In some cases new policies were written as part of the change initiative. In addition to revising and developing policy, teams made links between their initiatives and institutions' strategic statements. Initiatives were aligned to their institutions' mission, corporate plan, objectives and/or key performance indicators, for the purpose of effecting widespread changes to practice and building the case for change with staff, particularly senior managers.

A number of procedures were also reviewed and developed including those relating to: performance management; staff induction; equality impact assessments; individual contracts and development; course validation, monitoring and review; and impact monitoring and review. Changing such operational procedures was seen as a key way of ensuring systematic uptake of inclusive practices across the institution and acceptance as part of the everyday practice of different institutional functions.

5. Approaches at the individual level

Chapter 3 demonstrated that developing inclusive policy and practice requires change at two levels, namely institutional change and individual change. This chapter will consider change at an individual level. It expands upon the process by which teams sought to bring about change in the understandings, perceptions and practices of individuals across the institution.

It was noticeable that seeking to bring about change at an individual level was a significant part of each team's activities. Engaging individuals in inclusive practice required teams to reflect on the following:



Each of these is addressed in the sections that follow.

5.1 Who to target? Identifying stakeholders

As discussed in Section 3.2.3, the scale and nature of the changes sought required teams to identify and then work with a range of internal stakeholders. These key stakeholder groups included both internal staff and external stakeholder groups. The wide range of staff involved in the change initiatives was partly in recognition that everyone needs to be involved in supporting a diverse student body and improving (the quality of) the student experience.

Teams talked of the importance of achieving the ‘buy-in’ of stakeholders both with regard to the successful implementation of the objectives of their initiative and the wider agenda of creating an inclusive institution in which all staff adopted inclusive practices.

All ten participating institutions targeted certain groups of staff in particular in recognition that certain staff held more responsibility for the agenda than others. While the teams generally included those already working in the areas of widening participation and disability, there were two groups of staff who were deemed key to the development and embedding of inclusive practices – academic staff and senior management. This may reflect their impact on the student learning experience in general and on the agendas of widening participation and disability equality in particular.

The following sections identify the range of stakeholders involved and describe how they were variously engaged. They are grouped under internal and external stakeholder groups.

5.1.1 Internal stakeholder groups

Teams endeavoured to engage a range of internal staff in their change initiatives including:

Academic staff

Academic staff were seen to be the key stakeholder group to target by all ten institutions. This was partly because of the nature of the changes being taken forward, i.e. centred on the enhancement of teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment practices. Ultimately teams sought to ensure that academics were proactive in using inclusive practices, were knowledgeable, skilled and empowered in their use, and would “critically evaluate their own teaching practice by *choice*”.

A range of methods were used to engage academic staff, including: enlisting their engagement in associated advisory groups, research, continuing professional development and events or in developing resource materials; providing opportunities for dialogue (scholarly debate and discussion); working through champions of the agenda; or integrating proposed changes into management structures or processes. The University of Worcester also used a developmental approach to engage academics that involved staff in the change process itself.

Since all ten institutions aimed to create whole institutional change, teams both recognised and encountered some resistance among academic staff in taking the change forward. In light of this, a number of teams sought to work with champions or advocates (see Section 5.3.2) or those who were interested or ‘consciously unknowledgeable’ (rather than resisters), with the aim of creating a ‘tipping point’, i.e. the point where a greater number of staff are using inclusive practices than not.

Senior management

Teams sought to work with and engage senior management, including vice-chancellors (Manchester Metropolitan, QMUL, Anglia Ruskin), the Director for Students (Open University) and the Senate (Bradford). Senior management staff were targeted for a number of reasons. Anglia Ruskin University and the Open University enlisted their support to help ensure the message was cascaded throughout the institution. This is exemplified in the following quote:

... [we are] trying to get the management behind it to lay it down as an expectation [as] the way we want to treat our students.

Senior management also facilitated the team’s work through funding (e.g. to buy out staff time or approve new staff posts), approving the changes being made and by helping to engage other staff.

At Leeds Trinity University College and Queen Mary, University of London the teams found it beneficial for the senior staff member to be an advocate and champion for the changes through setting a good example to others:

If there are champions in senior positions as well as those in departments, that would be very helpful in triggering wider changes because they can actually put it into documents which have the force of requirement in.

Students

All ten teams sought either to consult or to collaborate with students as part of the change process. The purpose for engaging students varied. Firstly, they were engaged

by some to *inform the initiative*, to ensure its outputs were appropriate and relevant. It was deemed necessary to gain an insight into the students' experiences of being at university, of the challenges they faced and the factors that enabled them to succeed. This was particularly the case among those conducting research with students as part of the change process, such as Anglia Ruskin University, University of Bradford, Westminster University, University of Worcester, Queen Mary, University of London, Sheffield Hallam University and the Open University.

Students were also engaged to act as a lever for change, because they were seen to be at the centre of the change being proposed. Students were deemed to have a role in securing change. For example, one participant commented that: "*Commitment to change [among academics] will come via student involvement.*" Students' views were deemed helpful to 'sell' the message to colleagues and provide evidence that the change was necessary, as evidenced in the following quote:

Who are the staff going to listen to? Are they going to listen to academic and other departments or are they going to listen to their students? They are going to listen to their students much more likely than they are to me. If students say there are things that need to be valued or addressed then that is the voice that matters to them, they care. (Open University)

In some cases students were also used to help teams to *measure or evaluate the change initiative*. Students in this instance were being engaged to build the evidence by which to measure the change and the ultimate success of the initiative. Students were also engaged to *create a collaborative change process*. The University of Worcester used appreciative inquiry involving students as researchers and had a student on their team. Finally, a principled reason for involving students was evident among teams, in recognising that students had a *right to be involved* in matters that affect them and that it was necessary to ensure that "*no decision would be taken about us, without us*".

Continuing professional development

A number of institutional teams sought to engage those involved in the delivery of the institution's postgraduate certificate in higher education (PGCertHE) programme. The University of Worcester embedded elements of their 'Developing Inclusive Curricula in HE'

staff development package into this course. Two universities (Hull and Westminster) entered into discussions with their staff development unit to ensure that the approach, resources and materials produced as part of their change initiative would be embedded into the course.

Faculties/departments/schools

Among the ten institutions, there were a number who targeted faculties, schools, heads of department and/or particular departments. This was deemed to be important because of cultural differences at a faculty or departmental level. One participant noted:

The many cultures observed is very important and ... I can see a range of different cultures within the academic departments and ... getting those to work together ... is a challenge.

Working with departments was approached in one of two ways. Either, heads of department were targeted as a specific stakeholder group (see QMUL and Manchester Metropolitan) or whole faculties/departments were targeted to pilot a change within one department as part of a plan to roll out the change across the institution over time. This latter approach was used by the University of Worcester who worked with the Sports Science department to pilot the use of appreciative inquiry before rolling it out across other departments.

Quality assurance and/or enhancement

A number of teams engaged those involved in quality assurance or enhancement at their institutions to take the change forward. For example, the University of Hull team secured the agreement of staff working in their quality unit to embed their equality checklist within the existing workbook for validation approval panel members. Further examples were noted at the University of Bradford and Westminster University whose teams sought to link their change initiative with quality assurance and enhancement. At Bradford an inclusive curriculum development module was integrated into the University's quality enhancement strategy.

Human resources

The team at Anglia Ruskin University included a member of staff from human resources. This helped to secure the agreement of the University to incorporate the use of inclusive practice into their performance and promotion criteria.

Central services

At the heart of the change initiatives, there was a focus on the widening participation, disability equality and/or equality and diversity agendas. This was reflected not only in the make-up of teams, but also in the staff that teams sought to engage, who included those in the relevant central service units. All initiatives sought to encourage a shared sense of responsibility for equality and participation among these particular groups of staff to some degree, and their engagement did prompt some staff to reflect on the way they worked with other colleagues and students across the university; for example, prompting them to be more proactive and strategic in their operations. With this, some teams reported a discernible shift in the focus of the work of these central services towards providing support and advice to staff rather than solely working with students.

Student services

A number of teams included representatives from services that support students in a range of ways, including disability and student services. Teams also sought to engage other, less obvious services in their initiatives where relevant (e.g. library, finance services and ICT). This was to ensure a consistent and unified approach to change, to enhance service provision and to raise the profile of equality and participation. In working with student services, one participant reported securing a joined-up approach to the analysis of student data:

I was talking to people in part of our student academic services and we were looking at complaints, appeals and academic conduct ... we made an agreement with those bodies to actually collect standard information so that we can bring together effectively three sets of information and we can graft this onto all of the diversity stats gathered from the student numbers ... we can look across those to see the trends between them.

Student Union

One institution, Sheffield Hallam University, worked with their Student Union in the delivery and running of their diversity event.

5.1.2 *External stakeholder groups*

Teams also sought to engage a range of stakeholder groups outside of the institution. These included:

Public services

The Open University in particular worked with a range of public services to take forward their change initiative. They worked with the public libraries and IT centres to enable students to have access to the ICT hardware they needed to complete their course. Sheffield Hallam University sought the involvement of the local district council as part of their change process. They involved a range of local partners in their diversity week and secured the agreement of the council in the running of a diversity week in 2010.

Other higher education institutions

Two of the institutions explicitly involved other institutions as part of the change process. The University of Bradford had enlisted a member of staff from another institution to provide an external perspective and a basis for enquiry, as well as to help with dissemination of the change. Sheffield Hallam University ran a 'diversity week' as part of their change initiative, which was deemed to be so successful that in 2009–10 it will be organised in collaboration with the University of Sheffield.

External sources of support

The Academy's programme aimed to facilitate access to relevant organisations, research and resources to support the change process. The teams drew on these materials in the course of taking their changes forward. The University of Hull, for example, based their guidance materials on TeachAbility (a series of resource guides designed to help HEIs in creating and delivering an inclusive curriculum, written by staff at the University of Strathclyde). The University of Worcester invited a member of Academy staff to the University to train their students on the use of appreciative inquiry.

5.2 With what evidence? Building an evidence base

As discussed in Section 3.2.2, all teams undertook research and built an evidence base as an intrinsic part of the change process. The research had a number of defined purposes: it aided the teams' understanding of the issues and helped to define their scope and scale; it informed the type of changes that would be required; and it provided a way of identifying effective practice, priority areas for development and gaps in existing provision. Research also helped to provide the evidence to develop a robust case for change and ensure that the changes implemented would be evidence-informed. Finally research provided the means by which teams could demonstrate impact and the effectiveness of their interventions.

Teams triangulated different sources of evidence, collecting new empirical data and reviewing existing evidence, collecting qualitative and quantitative data, as well as utilising external and internal sources of information. They used research to consult with staff and students, employing a range of methods including survey, focus group, case studies, action research and appreciative inquiry (see sections 3.3.3 and 5.3.7). They collated evidence about staff and students' experiences and perceptions; knowledge and skills; challenges, barriers and concerns; as well as effective practice and suggestions for improvement. Several teams conducted institutional research. This included analysis of their institutional data, including student numbers (Open University); student admission, performance and progression (Sheffield Hallam); and student engagement and attainment (Leeds Trinity). Teams also conducted research into pre-existing practices, such as an evaluation of the 'Thinking Writing' initiative and review of centralised provision (QMUL); an audit of inclusive teaching practice (Anglia Ruskin); an audit of previous changes arising from equality schemes (Sheffield Hallam); and a review of assessment practices (Bradford). Notably four institutions (Hull, Leeds Trinity, Open University and Manchester Metropolitan) conducted reviews of literature to inform their change initiative.

Another emergent finding was the fact that teams sought to build a case for change that was tailored for the different stakeholders they were seeking to influence through the initiative. This included tailoring the rationale, approach and/or the resources they were developing for different stakeholder groups. It was also considered important to make the outputs and outcomes relevant to the stakeholders to maximise their effect; for example, running discrete staff development sessions for particular roles, to identify and discuss the issues relevant to their role. While tailoring was seen as important, it was also deemed necessary to create opportunities for stakeholder groups from

different parts of the institution to work together, whether this was across roles (e.g. disability services and academics) or between faculties and/or departments.

5.3 Which approach? Engaging stakeholders

It was notable that all institutional teams used a range of methods to engage stakeholders in the change, and that common practices were used for doing so. The table below summarises the methods used to engage stakeholder groups.

Table 5: The range of methods used to engage stakeholders

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Method</i>
Advisory/working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering group • Consultation group • Working group
Advocates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity champions
Identification of effective practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written • Verbal
Continuing professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training module/programme • Event(s) • Workshop(s) • PGCertHE • Other staff training
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-off event • Series of engagements • Committee agenda • Changing language
Management processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional policies/strategies • Staff induction • Performance management • Programme validation, monitoring and review
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Focus groups • Case studies • Appreciative inquiry
Resource and materials development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance material • Website • DVD • Staff development materials

The following sections expand upon these methods of engaging staff.

5.3.1 *Advisory/working groups*

A prerequisite of the Academy's programme was the creation of teams of between five and seven people, drawn from across the institution, to take the work forward. The teams acted as working groups and their make-up was seen to be significant to their success by a number of institutions when reflecting on the process of change. For example, the team at the Open University felt a mix of staff had served to ensure that staff from different areas and levels of responsibility worked together and that they drew on varying perspectives, expertise and knowledge in its development. The team at Bradford felt that their mix of academic, service, support staff and students had aided the development and implementation of the initiative.

Although the Academy capped numbers at seven per team, several teams had an extended team working on their change initiative, for example:

We extended that team within our own institution so we got the head of personnel and director of race equality as part of the project.

We split the project into working groups bringing in people from other departments and so (although) the original team was seven, we probably had about 30 working on the project and that enabled us to get different perspectives on things.

A few teams also engaged additional staff in an advisory or consultative capacity. Two institutions formed steering groups for their change initiatives. At Manchester Metropolitan University the team invited their widening participation champion's forum to act as a steering group, while at Sheffield Hallam University a diversity equality strategy steering group was established to capitalise on other institutional developments and the institution's infrastructure.

Consultation groups were also formed by some teams. The Open University formed a group made up of staff and students and Sheffield Hallam University used their diversity and inclusion forum as a reference group. Furthermore, Manchester Metropolitan

University involved their newly established ‘communities of practice’, involving teaching staff, members of core service teams and senior learning and teaching fellows, as a resource to influence departmental developments. A further institution, University of Bradford, included a member of staff from another institution to advise their change process from an external perspective.

5.3.2 *Advocates*

A number of teams, including those at Worcester, Westminster, QMUL, Anglia Ruskin and Manchester Metropolitan, identified and worked with inclusion champions or advocates. These included those who already led or worked on the development and implementation of inclusive practice and who were au fait with the agenda. Teams recognised that such staff provide a useful resource and can act as effective role models in demonstrating inclusive practice, as well as providing support for the actual implementation of the changes proposed.

5.3.3 *Identification of inclusive practice*

A common approach employed by a number of teams was the identification and sharing of effective inclusive practices. This approach was used to encourage individuals to adopt inclusive practices and ensuring consistency across the institution.

Several teams were aware of the existence of effective practice at the individual or faculty level and deemed it necessary to build on this. By identifying effective practices, the teams were able to define to others what they meant by ‘inclusive practice’ and provide examples to illustrate what could be done. The teams used this approach to showcase inclusive practices and recognise colleagues who are using them.

The methods used to disseminate these practices across the ten institutions were varied but chiefly fell into two key groups – written and verbal means of dissemination (c.f. section 5.3.8). Verbal dissemination included seminars, workshops and other events, including dissemination as part of CPD programmes. Several teams also worked on the production of written materials to include: learning and teaching practice guides (Westminster, Anglia Ruskin); staff newsletters/bulletins (Manchester Metropolitan); and key messages for display on strategically placed television screens around the campus (Leeds Trinity).

5.3.4 Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development emerged as important in embedding inclusive policy and practice and in supporting the change process itself. It was seen to be an effective mechanism by which to increase staff knowledge about inclusion issues including those of social justice, equality of opportunity, access, diversity and accessibility. This approach also helped teams to encourage moves away from a deficit model approach to addressing student requirements and to develop a widespread understanding across the institution of positive approaches to equality and diversity. This helped to address negative, and often entrenched, attitudes.

There were five key ways in which CPD was targeted as a route to enabling change:

- *Training and development modules or programmes:* four institutions developed a dedicated training programme for staff as part of their change initiative. At Hull, the team developed a training programme for module validation approval panel members, while Worcester created a staff development package entitled 'Developing Inclusive Curricula in HE'. Westminster plan to develop a training programme for those teams involved in delivering the postgraduate certificate in HE. Three teams developed and delivered a staff development module: at Anglia Ruskin University on inclusive practice; at the University of Bradford on inclusive curriculum development and practice; and at Sheffield Hallam University on diversity.
- *Events:* some teams held a dedicated event or series of events related to the change initiative. The University of Worcester's team held a staff/student summit to disseminate the research findings as part of the appreciative inquiry process and the Sheffield Hallam University team held a diversity week to raise awareness and celebrate diversity.
- *Workshops:* five institutions ran workshops during the course of taking forward their change initiative. In several cases workshops on the change initiative were delivered as part of the institutional learning and teaching conference or equivalent (e.g. at Hull, Westminster and Leeds Trinity). At Manchester Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam Universities, specific and one-off staff development workshops were delivered by the teams.
- *Part of the PGCertHE:* four teams sought to engage with those delivering the postgraduate certificate in HE to promote the development and use of inclusive practice among new staff. These included the University of Worcester team,

who arranged for elements of their 'Developing Inclusive Curricula in HE' staff development package to be embedded into the programmes. Three further teams (Hull, Westminster and QMUL) initiated discussions to ensure that the approach, resources and materials produced as part of their change initiative would become embedded into the course.

- *Part of other training:* the team at Westminster University has ensured that inclusive curriculum will be an aspect of the pre-validation workshops run for course teams involved in validating new programmes of study.

There was an emerging recognition that staff benefit from personalised CPD that is tailored to the practice of their particular staff group or role. It was realised that the particular drivers affecting different staff groups should be taken into account when designing and/or delivering a training course. This is exemplified in the following quote from a participant from Anglia Ruskin University:

If you start using the jargon of HR units to an academic, you have lost them immediately but if you talk about helping them to build their research profile by engaging this and that and the other, you have a chance of engagement. It is about knowing the approach to take with people, if you know the primary objective of a group of people.

Some teams also sought to engage students in staff CPD so they could gain a better understanding of student perspectives, experiences, barriers and areas for development in relation to teaching and learning. The University of Worcester provides a good example of this. As part of their initiative, disabled students were invited to give presentations to staff as part of a departmental development workshop about their experiences of being a student. This operated to hold up a 'mirror' to staff about their practices and served to identify which practices in particular those students found most beneficial.

5.3.5 *Dialogue*

Several teams promoted communication about inclusion and networking through their activities whether with other colleagues across departments and institutional functions or with staff in other institutions/organisations. It was found that dialogue needed to be promoted first at team level. Where a vision for an inclusive university was defined

by the team on commencing the initiative, this was found to support the success of the change. While for some reaching a common understanding took time, it paid dividends as the initiative progressed.

To engage those outside the team in the work of the initiative, some institutions organised a dedicated event, such as a debate, staff development day, seminar or meeting, to further communicate with staff about their initiative. Teams also arranged for inclusive policy and practice to be incorporated into committee meetings or events at their institution. Others provided a series of events or engaged staff in a process (e.g. appreciative inquiry). Each of these opportunities to promote dialogue was used to raise awareness, and obtain stakeholder 'buy-in' and engagement to both the change initiative itself and to the wider inclusion agenda. The methods also aimed to ensure visibility for the work at an early stage, to promote and disseminate the outcomes (so others do not reinvent the wheel), and to provide a forum for informed engagement and debate. Furthermore, the opportunities provided were used to encourage listening, reflection and collaboration.

Notably, in developing their discourse around inclusion, language was used as a tool to facilitate change and to engage key stakeholders; for example, by using it to deliver their messages in a more positive and non-confrontational way:

Documents [put on the website] that had been written in the 'thou shalt not do' era have now been changed to 'this is what we do and who we are'.

So if you present things as the norm, rather than this is what we do with particular groups of students, you are presenting a different culture.

Significantly, the teams used evidence to shape the discourse and to move colleagues away from a deficit model approach, seeking to demonstrate that inclusive practices have a positive impact on all students rather than being relevant to specific student groups. The changing of particular words or phrases (such as using the word 'entitlement' rather than 'need') or use of inclusive messages (such as 'good practice for disabled students is good practice for all', or 'inclusive practice is relevant to all students') were found to make a substantial impact and helped teams remain true to

the philosophy of inclusion they were seeking to develop. The identification and use of affirmative messages (as opposed to ascertaining barriers or defining deficit) and the language of students (rather than staff) also made a significant contribution towards the development of an inclusive culture.

There were other key messages that teams sought to convey through their work such as that 'one size does not fit all', rather there is a need to recognise the heterogeneity within and across particular student groups. What is appropriate for one nominated group of students (such as those with dyslexia), may be not appropriate for another (such as those with autism). In the same way, an approach for one student, experiencing dyslexia for example, may not be appropriate for another student with the same impairment. Thus, through the initiative teams sought to encourage more flexible approaches to teaching and learning, recognising that positive, as opposed to deficit, language can play an important part in this regard.

5.3.6 *Management processes*

In Chapter 4, it was discussed that teams encouraged staff to use inclusive practices by targeting management processes to drive change. The aim was to embed inclusion, reinforce staff responsibility and remove the element of choice about the use of inclusive practices by including a requirement to use inclusive practice as part of these management processes.

A number of processes were targeted to embed inclusion, some of the most notable being:

- institutional policies/strategies;
- staff induction;
- performance management;
- programme validation and review.

5.3.7 *Research*

All teams conducted research with staff and students (see Sections 3.2.2, 3.3.3, and 5.2), and this was a key way in which wider stakeholder groups became involved. A range of methods was observed including surveys, focus groups, case studies and appreciative inquiry.

Surveys

A number of teams used surveys as a way of engaging a large number of staff and students across the institution. Stakeholder involvement was sought to inform the teams' understanding of the issues, seek out effective practice, provide a lever for change and identify priority areas. They included staff surveys (e.g. Anglia Ruskin), and student surveys (e.g. Sheffield Hallam, QMUL and Anglia Ruskin).

Discussions/interview

Two teams prompted dialogue with the institution, through informal or formal discussions. The Open University conducted a series of telephone interviews with students, while QMUL, University of London held discussions with departments about the nature of academic writing, curriculum development, assessment and feedback, and the effectiveness of central support.

Focus groups

Two teams (Leeds Trinity and Westminster) conducted focus groups as part of their work. For example, the University of Westminster conducted 22 focus groups with students and staff (i.e. a wide range of academic, academic-related and support staff). Both focus groups explored learning and teaching practice, barriers to learning, good practice and areas for development. The collective findings were used to inform a series of teaching and learning guides on inclusive practice.

Case studies

At Westminster University, the team collated four staff and four student case studies, based on information provided from the focus group. The case studies aimed to expand upon individual experiences and provide examples of practice to promote inclusion and overcome barriers.

Appreciative inquiry

The University of Worcester team used appreciative inquiry within one faculty as part of the change initiative. This team facilitated staff and students from across the faculty

to work together to generate an action plan, with the goal of improving the use of inclusive practices.

5.3.8 *Resource and material development*

A range of tools and resources were developed by teams that served to assist teams in engaging stakeholders whether by marketing and promoting the change initiative, or by providing the means to inform staff about, or share, inclusive practice. In some cases the resources sought to provide staff with a tool by which to assess and develop their practice. Resources included:

- *Staff guidance* – including a guide to inclusion (Hull), a series of inclusive learning and teaching practice guides (Westminster), a guide to curriculum review (Manchester Metropolitan), a step-by-step guide to appreciative inquiry (Worcester) and a revised course validation guidance (Hull).
- *Website* – the institution's website was further developed to incorporate information about the initiative and/or inclusion, as well as material for staff development purposes. These interactive materials included an online inclusive teaching resource for staff (Anglia Ruskin), an online staff development module (Bradford) and an online toolkit (Manchester Metropolitan).
- *DVD* – to convey the perceptions and experiences of current students, to inform and promote change (Leeds Trinity), and to convey examples of inclusive practice, for staff development purposes (Manchester Metropolitan).
- *Staff development package* – on developing inclusive curricula in higher education (Worcester and Bradford).
- *Workbook* – to support the training of course approval panel members on the incorporation of equality impact assessments into the validation process (Hull).

5.4 Summary of emerging findings

Addressing individual-level change was a significant part of the process by which inclusive practice was developed and embedded across the institutions involved. It was necessary for teams to work with a range of stakeholder groups from across their institutions, as well as (in some cases) those external to the institution. Teams took a targeted approach, predominantly targeting academic staff and senior management for

the changes, as the 'buy-in' of these two groups was seen to be fundamental to effecting change and achieving inclusivity. The process of embedding was assisted by facilitating collaboration between groups of staff, such as between different support services; between non-academic support and academic staff; and/or between departments.

All teams undertook research and triangulated various sources of evidence, which was then used to inform the change process, build their case for change and demonstrate impact. Change was further facilitated by tailoring messages to particular stakeholder groups, drawing on the evidence that matched the drivers and issues known to be pertinent to particular roles.

All teams used a variety of different approaches to work with or engage individuals across the institution. These approaches included: forming advisory or working groups; working with known advocates/champions; providing or supporting the processes of continuing professional development; providing opportunities for dialogue; disseminating effective practice; changing management processes; conducting research; and developing resources and materials.

6. Discussion

This chapter draws on relevant literature to understand and explain the findings as presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. A key finding of this research has been that simultaneous attention needs to be given to both institutional policy and individual practice to be effective in achieving more inclusive policy and practice. This finding was first described in Chapter 3 and has shaped subsequent chapters, which have focused on the teams' approaches to these two aspects of change. This chapter is also structured around this finding, with sections covering institutional and individual change, as well as a consideration of both. The chapter begins by discussing the relevance of equality and widening participation to this finding.

6.1 Relevance of theme of inclusion

At the heart of both the equality and widening participation agendas, is a requirement on institutions to promote diversity, equity of access and student success. These two agendas aim to eliminate discrimination so that those with the potential to succeed in higher education can do so. Since discrimination can arise through misunderstanding or misconduct on behalf of an institution and/or an individual it is unsurprising that this study has identified the importance of addressing both in order to effect positive change.

Discrimination can stem from inherent, routine and longstanding institutional practices, and hence a critical examination of university operations is required so that appropriate adjustments can be identified and implemented. Changes to these functions (including strategies, systems and processes) can help ensure inclusive practices are used consistently and routinely. The systems should be created and be designed to operate inclusively, with a view to ensuring coherence between the two.

Discrimination can also arise through the way in which individuals conduct themselves in their everyday operations and dealings with others. Few people would seek to deliberately discriminate against another person. Yet despite good intentions, lack of knowledge or understanding can perpetuate practices and behaviours that are inherently discriminatory and create unnecessary barriers to the success of others. Addressing this requires critical reflection and adjustments in the practices and behaviours of individuals, and this is best achieved in collaboration with those on the receiving end, whether staff

or students. The agendas of widening participation and disability equality also require a review of prejudicial beliefs, stereotypical attitudes and misassumptions. The work of the participating teams demonstrated the importance of creating a secure environment for staff to self-reflect, enhance their understanding and undertake action.

The dual approach to change, of the institution and individual, acknowledges that policies and strategies are not only interpreted and transformed into practice by those who work within the framework provided by them, but also that they are, almost inevitably, developed by individuals through the agency of their own personal and professional values, attitudes and beliefs. Hence the individual is at the heart of effecting transformative change.

The importance of targeting both the organisational (i.e. structural and systems factors) and the individual (i.e. staff and personal factors), together with the interactions between them, could be learning applicable to any agenda where the outcome desired needs to be embedded across the functions of the whole institution to be effective (e.g. e-learning; education for sustainable development; student engagement).

6.2 Institutional change and development

This section discusses institutional-level change and considers the relationship between the findings and the plethora of research literature³ available on organisational change either in general, or within the context of widening participation and disability equality.

6.2.1 Developmental approaches in equality and widening participation

The need for institutional change as a result of widening participation was highlighted in a large-scale literature review on the topic (Gorard *et al.*, 2006). The literature review also points to different levels of understanding among institutions about the nature of change required to ensure student success in the context of the widening participation

3 See, for example, the list of organisational change resources, collated by Sheffield Hallam University and available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ok5ode>.

and equality agendas. A number of authors provide typologies or models depicting different institutional approaches to widening participation in relation to the success of students once at university (see Jones and Thomas, 2005; Waterfield and West, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2007; Fuller *et al.*, 2009; McNaught, 2009). For example, Shaw *et al.* (2007, p. 56) cite three organisational approaches:

- a) academic: supporting those from under-represented backgrounds to acquire the skills and competences of the student body;
- b) differential provision: providing alternative provision for under-represented groups;
- c) transformative: existing provision is reviewed and revised to support all students to succeed.

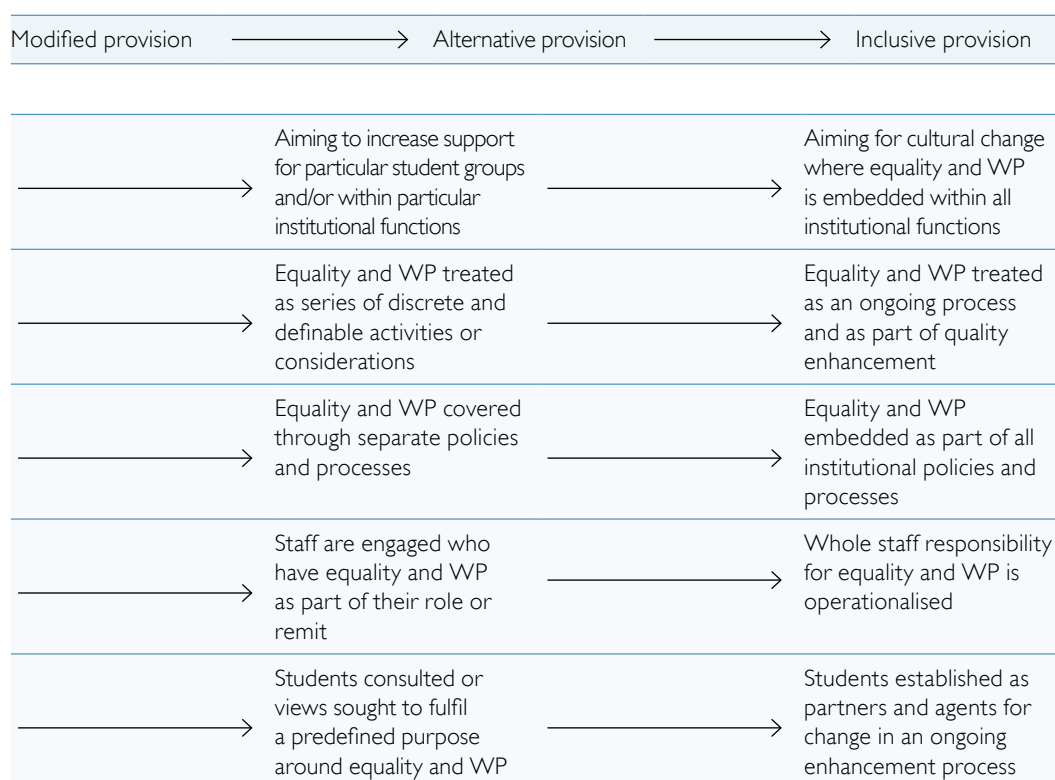
It is noteworthy that, despite differences in focus, three similar approaches emerged from a literature review undertaken as part of a four-year longitudinal study on disabled students (Fuller *et al.*, 2009) and from a study on inclusive assessment (Waterfield and West, 2006). The authors distinguish between modified provision (i.e. making special arrangements to support individual students within the existing system), alternative provision (i.e. arrangements within the curriculum for particular students) and inclusive provision (i.e. flexible and anticipatory arrangements within the curriculum to support all students to succeed). Such a shift is also captured within a six-stage accessibility maturity model by McNaught (2009). His model shows variations in institutional perception with reference to a series of characteristics including: the integration of accessibility; the distribution of responsibility and expertise; and approaches to teaching and learning.

The models described above outlined a spectrum of approaches ranging from limited adaptation of provision on one hand, to extensive modifications on the other. While the former requires the student to adapt, the latter places the onus on the institution. Each approach is underpinned by contrasting attitudes towards equality and widening participation. Considering these as paradigms (see Shaw *et al.*, 2007) acknowledges that institutions shift their approach (and thus perception) over time.

The diversity between institutions identified above may best be depicted by using a continuum model (rather than a hierarchy), in which institutions can be situated as being at various stages in the process of development towards being inclusive institutions. The continuum depicted in Figure 5 below, seeks to differentiate between approaches to inclusive practice,

When applied to this research study, it was found that differences in approach were evident on several dimensions along this continuum. Each of these dimensions or characteristics of inclusive practice can arguably contribute to a position where an institution can be said to have created an inclusive culture or fully embedded widening participation and disability equality.

Figure 5: A continuum model of equality and widening participation (WP)



Representing institutional difference as part of a continuum of progress towards an overarching aim provides a way of acknowledging that considerable work may have taken place to arrive at the first stage outlined above, and that goals may also need to be readjusted over time to go beyond the second. It also serves to remind institutions that equality and widening participation can never be completed and ‘ticked off’ the list; rather they are part of an ongoing process to facilitate the success of all students and enhance the student experience.

Such models provide useful frameworks for reflecting on individual progress towards a more inclusive institution. For the participating institutions, each certainly made significant progress over the course of the programme. However, their starting points were different, as were the points they had reached at the close. They had different rationales for change and standpoints on inclusion, which in turn influenced the way(s) in which they chose to effect change. Although the purpose of this study was never to compare progress, readers can now use such models and the case studies to reflect upon their own relative position, as they seek to develop and embed inclusive policy and practice.

6.2.2 *Organisational change and development*

Turning to the literature on organisational change and development, one of the emerging messages is that higher education institutions are constantly evolving complex social systems (c.f. Jackson, 2005) and that change is unavoidable (c.f. Pennington, 2006). It may be helpful to consider equality and widening participation as part of the process by which institutions constantly review and develop all their operations, including those relating to these particular agendas. While this may help to encourage institutions to accept change as inevitable, the process may still need to be prompted rather than left to chance.

The organisational change literature can help illuminate the findings of this research, particularly with respect to the nature of change and the change process. Trowler *et al.* (2005) define the implications of five common approaches to change in their publication entitled *Changing Thinking, Changing Practice*. These five models can be summarised as follows:

1. **Techno-rational:** change accomplished by planning and then managing its implementation.
2. **Resource allocation:** change achieved by allocating central resources, which leads to results.
3. **Diffusionist:** the provision and dissemination of clear messages, aligned to audience priorities provokes change.
4. **Continuous quality improvement:** an expectation of the continual enhancement of practice leads to change.
5. **Complexity:** aim to create the conditions for change, from which change occurs organically.

When considered in relation to the findings of this programme, all five of these models

could be seen to apply and self-evidently more than one of these processes was being used in parallel to effect change in any one institutional context.

Thus, in the Academy's programme, teams planned for and managed change that occurred as a direct result of their endeavours (i.e. techno-rationalist). This was particularly noticeable with change at an institutional level, where defined policies or systems were targeted for change and the process was managed.

The second model, resource allocation, was also evident. Teams negotiated for additional resource – time, funding or materials – to take their change initiative forward. This led to additional staff resource being allocated in more than one instance (c.f. Bradford, Leeds Trinity) to continue to implement the initiative beyond the lifetime of the programme.

A 'diffusionist' approach was used by all the teams, and indeed encouraged by the Academy's programme. Throughout the process, teams continually sought to make a case for change and to simplify and clarify their message. They tailored this message to align with their various audiences and used a variety of methods to disseminate it and create buy-in or engagement.

The expectation of continuous quality improvement underpins both the duty enshrined in the equality legislation and in quality assurance procedures – with a requirement placed on institutions to monitor and report on their progress. Teams referred to their legal duties when building their case for the change initiative.

The final model, complexity, provides a way of explaining changes that occurred in ways that were not always planned or predicted by the teams, but were evident across all institutions, particularly around changes in practice at an individual level, which could not be so directly influenced or predicted as the changes at an institutional level.

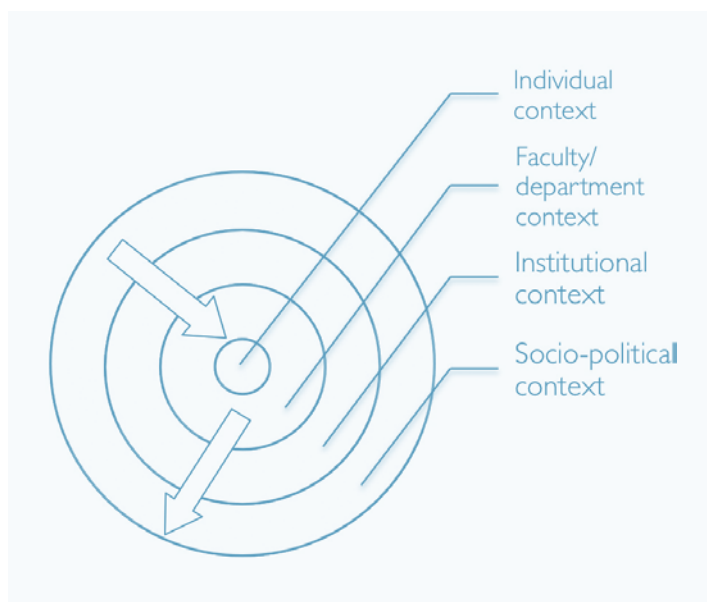
6.2.3 *The relational nature of change*

Thinking about these models of change in relation to the teams' experiences and achievements helps demonstrate the value in taking a multi-faceted approach to developing inclusive policy and practice. It further shows that its achievement will necessarily vary depending on which aspect of inclusive policy and practice is being targeted for change. The model or categories of change by Trowler *et al.* also raise the

importance of context. As Pennington (2006) reminds us “every organisation is unique and has its own identity manifested in its culture” (p. 21). Hence, what is effective in one context may not be in another. This may even apply within an institution where multiple ‘contexts’ or ‘cultures’ co-exist. A key finding of this study was the need for teams to tailor their approaches to the settings in which they were to be applied. After all, the adoption of different approaches serves to recognise diversity and may play a necessary part in developing an inclusive culture across an institution.

While each of the ten institutional contexts was unique, and the processes by which change were achieved noticeably different, there were common elements to the change process (as described in Chapter 3). This may be explained by the context in which the institution is operating. All institutions operate within a socio-political context, and do not act in isolation of one another. Talking to one institution about their current priorities will therefore yield similar issues to those of another, despite their apparently different cultures. This can be partly explained through the work of a developmental theorist, Bronfenbrenner (1977), who provides a useful model to describe the layers of influence operating in a given situation. The model is often represented as a series of concentric rings, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: A representation of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of development



Bronfenbrenner's model provides a framework for thinking about development and is centred around three core propositions: that development arises through transactions between an individual and their environment; that the immediate environment can be distinguished from wider environmental levels and that inter-relationships between the different levels are influential. Since institutions operate within the same socio-political context, it may be possible to identify common elements of change, despite institutional differences. However, the model also illustrates that there can be a number of different contexts that impact upon a given situation, operating simultaneously.

6.3 Individual change and development

This section addresses the individual factors necessary to effect change. The importance of targeting staff across the institution as part of the change process emerged as central to developing and embedding inclusion in HE.

Individual factors are often overlooked in the process of effecting change where the structures and processes are targeted for change, rather than individual practices. An equality impact assessment, for example, as required by the equality legislation, involves reviewing plans, policies and procedures to eliminate discrimination and identify potentially adverse impacts on particular equality groups. This process does not involve reflection on individual conduct or interpretation of policy, nor does it include identifying prejudices or beliefs.

In comparison to the body of literature on organisational change and development, there is rather less on the role of individuals. This is particularly the case when considering individuals as contributors to the process of whole organisational change. Nevertheless, people are important: policies and strategies are interpreted and translated into practice by those who work to deliver them, and they are also informed by the personal and professional values, attitudes and beliefs of those individuals responsible for their instigation.

Within any given organisation, staff are central to its effectiveness and ultimately to its reputation. It is often said that 'the whole is greater than the sum of the parts' in recognition that more can be achieved when everyone works together. However hard the teams worked towards developing and embedding inclusive policies and practices,

their effectiveness hinged on the uptake of those policies and practices by large numbers of staff across their institution. To this extent a significant proportion of the teams' endeavours were directed towards engaging individuals in making their own practice more inclusive.

Teams also recognised the need to 'win the hearts and minds' of different groups of staff across their institutions. Teams were encouraged to reflect upon Gladwell's (2000) concept of the 'tipping point', which he defines as "the moment of critical mass" or the point "at which the momentum for change becomes unstoppable". Gladwell argues that the spread of change (whether ideas, products, messages or behaviours) can act like a virus or infectious disease. In many ways, the teams' endeavours were directed at creating a situation or set of conditions in which inclusive policy and practice would spread independently without further encouragement or action from the team itself. Gladwell argues that the spread of disease or epidemics happens in a very unusual and counter-intuitive way, in which a small change often brings about much wider effects even within a short time frame. Teams developed a number of supporting strategies to effect the change they desired, but found that it was not always possible to identify the crucial factor that would make the difference between success and failure. This finding confirms Gladwell's principle that the cause of the eventual 'tipping' process cannot always be predicted.

In the absence of being able to predict exactly when and how they might reach their 'tipping point', there was, however, a discernible shift over the course of the programme in the drivers for engaging staff. In their initial proposals, several had institutions referred to the importance of raising staff awareness of inclusive practices. As the programme progressed, they shifted their purpose first towards improving staff understanding (such as providing the evidence as to why a change was necessary) and then finally to encouraging staff to take action. This shift is depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The shifting purpose for engaging staff in equality and WP



The model rests on the assumption that staff were more likely to take action when they had a better understanding of why inclusive practices were being promoted or required, on what evidence the change was deemed necessary and what the benefit would be to them or to their students. In other words, knowledge was likely to be empowering.

The need for change was not, however, universally accepted by staff themselves and some were clearly not open to it. Nevertheless, the student voice was a key factor influencing their willingness to embrace changes to their own practice and/or philosophy. Students were persuasive and significant agents for change. In some teams, students were participants in the change process itself, while other teams listened to their perceptions and experiences to inform their initiatives. Although institutions may originally have been conscious of their legal duty to involve disabled students, several teams came to view students as central to the change process and valued their contribution in engaging individual staff.

One of the key challenges was the scale of the change required to effect inclusive policy and practice. As previously discussed, teams managed the issue of scale in a variety of ways: by focusing on particular groups of staff, subject areas or services; and by targeting those in a position to influence as well as working with champions or advocates. In his book describing the 'tipping point' concept, Gladwell (2000) outlines three key types of people on whom the success of 'social epidemics' depend. These include:

- *connectors*: those who bring people together, make connections and build social networks through their "curiosity, self-confidence, sociability, and energy";

- *mavens*: those who accumulate and share knowledge through their specialism, social skills and ability to communicate;
- *salesmen*: those who persuade others through their charisma and negotiation skills.

The make-up of the teams was undoubtedly one of the significant factors by which the scale of change was managed. Not only did teams consist of a cross-section of staff (including senior managers, academics, widening participation and equality practitioners, heads of service), but teams also comprised individuals whose personality, knowledge and skills helped to engage others. According to Gladwell, in any given situation the majority of the work will be undertaken by a small minority of the people, namely the types of ‘agents of change’ identified above. It was notable that in several institutions, those working on the initiative extended beyond the core staff who took part in the programme. However, the core team were undoubtedly ‘key agents of change’ in their institutions, as their collective achievements signify.

Finally, and in thinking further about the spread of change from the individual to the collective, it is helpful to draw on Kuhn (1975). His developmental theory helps to explain how practice that starts out as novel or innovative can become conventional over time, as more people embrace and use it. Kuhn proposes that, at any one time, a given community of practice (such as academics within a particular discipline or department) has a shared professional identity and ‘tacit’ knowledge, which is used as the basis by which to evaluate and judge new information. He uses the phrase ‘paradigm’ to describe this collective way of behaving or thinking and ‘paradigm shifts’ to describe the change that occurs when a community of practice accept different ways of thinking. At the heart of Kuhn’s theory is an understanding that change is context-dependent and is incremental. His theory provides an explanation of the often ‘inherent’ or ‘taken-for-granted’ assumptions from which decisions are made within institutions, and the shifting patterns that can be observed to have taken place when looking back in time.

The timescale over which the Academy’s programme was implemented was relatively short and although paradigm shifts could not be observed or evidenced within this time frame, it was evident that teams sought to achieve them by seeking to change the collective practice and/or philosophy of individuals across their institutions. They questioned the current operating context and used scoping techniques to provide

clarification of their ideas. The teams thereby started by critically evaluating the universally accepted practices and sought then to change the 'shared' basis on which decisions were being made across the institutions.

6.4 Both institutional and individual change

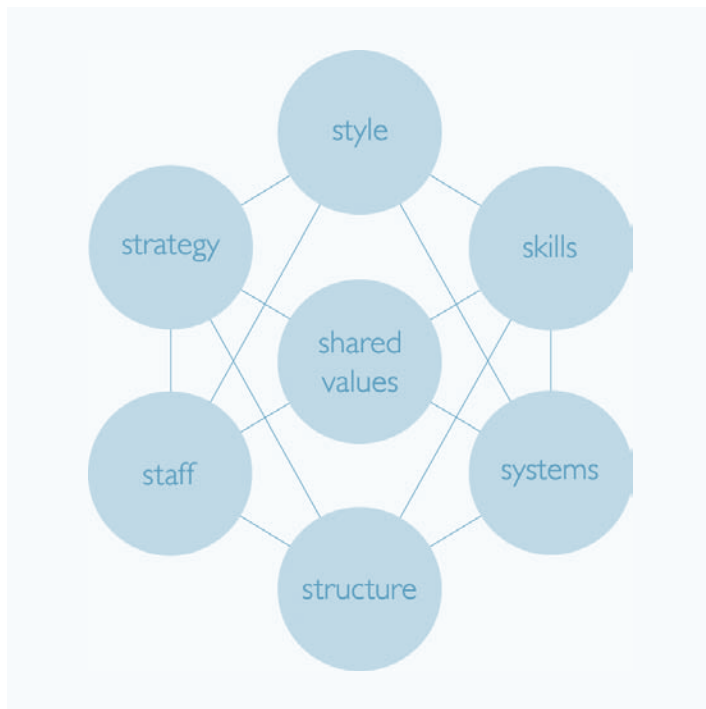
This section reflects on the benefit of targeting both institutional- and individual-level change to be effective in developing inclusive policy and practice. It draws on the organisational effectiveness and developmental literature to help explain the findings of this study.

The literature acknowledges the need for a simultaneous focus on both the institutional and individual levels of change. One model is particularly applicable because it covers both individual and institutional factors. The McKinsey 7S Framework⁴ was developed by two consultants to help organisations seek harmony. The model is based on seven interdependent factors (illustrated in Figure 8 below) that contribute to organisational effectiveness. The seven factors are further broken down into hard (strategy, structure and systems) and soft elements (shared values, skills, style and staff). The authors argue that the 'hard' elements are easier to define and identify and can be directly influenced by management. The authors argue that for an organisation to perform effectively there needs to be alignment and coherence between the seven elements.

The McKinsey model helps to clarify the various factors required to bring about the goal of developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice.

4 See The McKinsey 7S Framework, Mind Tools (1995–2009) www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_91.htm

Figure 8: The McKinsey 7S Framework⁵



In many ways the seven interdependent factors resonate with, and indeed mirror, these findings. This is demonstrated in the following discussion:

- ‘Strategy’ (i.e. plan): teams sought to develop new institutional strategies or review/amend existing ones. This involved all the multiple strategies to which their change initiatives applied.
- ‘Structure’ (i.e. reporting arrangements): team members identified and worked within the decision-making structures of the institution. They utilised their internal networks and opened up the lines of communication with those in positions to influence inclusive policy and practice. They sought senior manager involvement to bring about the required changes.

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Image downloaded from: <http://itstrategyblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/7-s.JPG>.

- ‘Systems’ (i.e. daily activities and procedures staff engage in): team members targeted routine tasks, policies and procedures for change as part of the process. They also conducted and embedded equality impact assessments within these policies and procedures to identify, target and monitor the priority areas.
- ‘Shared values’ (i.e. core values, culture, and ethic): as part of the process, teams reflected on their vision for inclusion and took steps to ensure it was shared by the team and across the institution. Teams identified whether corporate values were consistent with inclusion, and sought to align those values to the changes proposed to strengthen their rationale.
- ‘Style’ (i.e. leadership): the process caused teams to consider the way in which inclusive policy and practice was being developed and embedded within the institution. It highlighted the extent to which the institution was aiming to develop an inclusive culture or simply seeking to be compliant, and the extent to which the development was an integrated and collaborative process rather than one being managed in isolation of other processes and/or without stakeholder engagement.
- ‘Staff’ (i.e. employees): teams sought to engage a range of different stakeholders in the change process. This was to reflect the importance of shared responsibility for the agendas and also the benefits of sharing ownership and commitment.
- ‘Skills’ (i.e. skills and competences): continuing professional development was a key approach by which the ten institutions planned and sought to embed inclusive policy and practice. The methods used sought to go beyond raising the awareness of staff about the agendas, to improving their understanding and encouraging them to take action.

The McKinsey model also highlights the fact that, in creating whole organisational change, attention must be paid to different elements of the organisation. This supports our findings about the need to take a multi-pronged approach, be systematic and holistic, take an embedded approach, and target multiple institutional functions. The model shows the inter-relationships between the factors that together support institutional effectiveness and shows how changes in one area can have knock-on effects for other areas demonstrating the need for any proposed change to be looked at in relation to the whole.

This interaction between the individual and the organisation is also reflected in Bronfenbrenner’s multi-layered model (Figure 6), depicted earlier in the chapter. The layers depict the range of contexts that could be identified across the participating institutions, which serve to reinforce the finding that it was necessary to target both

institutional and individual factors to bring about sustainable change. Individuals were found to operate within:

- a personal context (i.e. juggling personal and work commitments, within a set time frame, and having their own set of customary operating principles and practices);
- a faculty/department context (i.e. working alongside other colleagues within an established set of customs and routines);
- an institutional context (contributing to the implementation of a corporate plan, mission and policies, and working within prescribed conventions); and
- a socio-political context (responding to policy priorities).

To talk of one of these contexts in isolation of the others can be misleading due to the complex inter-relationships between them. The two-way arrows in Figure 6 portray the mutual influences of individuals on their wider environment and of the wider environment on individuals. Over time, it may be possible to observe patterns of change as individuals interact in, and exert influence on, their personal and wider contexts. It may also be possible to observe individuals being influenced by the wider contexts in which they operate.

Bronfenbrenner and other developmental theorists and models emphasise the incremental nature of change. Achieving inclusive policy and practice required an investment of time, on behalf of both the institution and individuals within it, and was a process that could certainly not be achieved overnight.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This research study aimed to generate a greater understanding of the processes involved in developing inclusive policy and practice within higher education institutions. It has identified the institutional teams' experience of implementing change and the journey travelled by them throughout the process. The study was undertaken for the purpose of enabling the higher education sector to benefit from the learning of those who took part in the Academy's programme.

7.1 Conclusions

There are three key emerging conclusions – that change is required at both an institutional and individual level to bring about inclusive policy and practice; that it is essential to build an evidence base from which to bring about change; and that a multi-method, tailored approach is necessary involving different stakeholder groups across the institution. These conclusions are expanded upon in the sections that follow:

7.1.1 *Take a holistic approach to an inclusive culture*

The UK policy and legislative context for widening participation and equality promotes cultural change and provides an impetus for institutions to address inclusion in its fullest extent. Sustainable and effective cultural change will only occur through institutions focusing simultaneously on change at both institutional and individual levels. Attention to one requires attention to the other and changing one has implications for the other. To achieve inclusive policy and practice, it is necessary to target multiple aspects of the institutions functioning and delivery for change.

Individual members of staff can be facilitated to act as change agents within their own institutions and through managing change initiatives, which in turn can help contribute towards the development of an inclusive culture. Participating in external programmes, such as the one led by the Academy, can undoubtedly act as a catalyst by facilitating and brokering change through a series of focused, time-bound events and activities.

To maximise impact, attention should be paid to the terminology or messages used to communicate 'inclusion'. Language is a powerful instrument by which to move towards an

inclusive culture. As part of the process of developing an inclusive culture, it is necessary to reflect on and revise how the language of widening participation and equality is used across the institution, whether in the mission, the institutional goals and/or the policies, to ensure positive and inclusive messages are used. Identifying and using affirmative messages (as opposed to barriers or deficits), together with the student voice (rather than staff), makes a significant contribution towards the development of an inclusive culture.

7.1.2 Build an evidence base for change

Evidence plays a significant role in the process of change. Evidence provides the means to demonstrate an imperative to change, the benefits of change and how it might be delivered. It also provides a point of reference from which to evaluate impact and assess the progress made by the institution in the future. Building a compelling case for change can help engage key stakeholders. It is necessary to generate and draw on robust evidence that is pertinent and tailored to the particular institutional context and the different stakeholder groups. Having a clear rationale for the change and an understanding of the potential implications or outcomes of the action are necessary within the process of change.

7.1.3 Employ a multi-method approach to change

A variety of methods are needed to facilitate inclusive policy and practice. No one method is sufficient, particularly given the nature and scale of change required to bring about inclusive policy and practice.

Methods should be adapted to fit the context in which they are being applied and the different stakeholder groups targeted for change. To be effective as change agents, individuals should draw on their extensive knowledge of their own institutional context. Having a diverse team, with different roles, views and experiences, can contribute to an initiative's success.

Bringing about effective change in inclusive policy and practice is less to do with the specific method or approach employed and more to do with ensuring that a range of stakeholder groups is sought and an appropriate range of methods or approaches are used that are fit for purpose by being both relevant to the context and to the particular groups they seek to engage.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Policy makers

- Promote dialogue and debate with and among institutions about the meaning of inclusion within the context of the social, economic and political climate.
- Recognise that inclusion is an intrinsic aspect of effective operation and delivery and encourage the sector to treat it as a mainstream issue. Encourage institutions to embed inclusion within every division of their organisations, to include: learning and teaching; research; widening participation; economy and society; finance and assurance; leadership, governance and management.
- Recognise the shared nature of responsibility for inclusion at all levels of institutional policy and practice and facilitate institutions to interpret these responsibilities for different role groups.
- Take every opportunity to listen to institutional experiences and challenges so as to tailor the provision of support to the sector.
- Recognise the need for appropriately tailored advice and guidance to support the development of inclusive cultures within institutions and help them to embrace both policy and legal requirements to the fullest extent possible.
- Allocate resource to further the development of inclusive cultures within higher education institutions and sharing of effective approaches.

7.2.2 Higher education institutions

- Take a holistic and proactive approach to developing an inclusive culture, simultaneously addressing both policy and practice and targeting all functions and groups of staff across the institution.
- Facilitate a shared responsibility and accountability for inclusion, using a range of different methods (including performance management, curriculum design and continuing professional development) tailored to particular roles.
- Acknowledge inclusion as part of an ongoing process of institutional enhancement of the student experience, rather than as an additional consideration.
- Identify agents for change to facilitate all staff to operationalise their responsibilities and to support the embedding of inclusive practice within institutional policy. Allocate resource (such as time, staffing, funding) as appropriate.
- Take steps to ensure there is a common vision and understanding of inclusion and its

associated practice across the institution. This requires attention to be paid to both institutional strategies and their interpretation and implementation by individuals.

Refresh the language used within policy and practice to reflect this vision.

- Collect and triangulate different sources of evidence (such as external, internal, empirical and statistical data) as part of the process by which to develop an inclusive culture. Use robust and appropriate evidence to generate a clear rationale for change that responds to institutional context and is tailored to the responsibilities of stakeholder groups. Also put in place strategies for the measurement and evaluation of the impact of the changes implemented.
- Employ appropriate (and often different) approaches to the process of embedding inclusion within institutional policy and facilitating individuals to develop inclusive practice.
- Ensure that whatever methods are used to bring about change, they are adapted to the particular contexts in which they are being applied (e.g. departmental, job role, institutional function).
- Take a flexible, opportunistic approach to change by 'piggybacking' on, or taking advantage of, current developments.
- Cultivate positive cross-institutional partnerships (between departments, staff groups, as well as between staff and students), as part of working towards the creation of an inclusive culture.
- Use a variety of methods to engage students in the process of developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice. Raise the profile of the student voice and further their role as agents of change and co-contributors in this process.

7.2.3 *Individuals*

- Understand that you have a shared responsibility to contribute to the development of an inclusive culture. Seek advice and information proactively about what you can do to promote change through your role, using internal and external sources.
- Work with champions or nominated change agents and in partnership with staff in other departments/roles.
- Recognise that working towards an inclusive culture is an incremental and ongoing process of enhancement and as such the undertaking is never complete.
- Ensure equality and widening participation is routinely considered as part of all institutional functions, activities, processes and future plans.
- Actively seek to engage students in developing inclusive practice and recognise

them as partners and key change agents in developing an inclusive culture. Foster positive relationships with students in order to ensure your individual practices and approaches are effective in promoting the success of all students.

- Look for opportunities to enter into dialogue and discussion about the meaning and implications of inclusion with colleagues.
- Engage in a range of activities (such as continuing professional development; events; advisory/action groups; research; self-assessment toolkits) to promote your understanding and use of effective inclusive practice. Use such activities as an opportunity to share effective practices and experiences with colleagues, as well as to reflect on any personal prejudices or misassumptions you may have about particular equality or student groups.

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Institutional case studies

Anglia Ruskin University

Equality proofing the curriculum

HEI context

Anglia Ruskin University is a large university with a total student population of more than 25,000. It is therefore one of the largest universities in the country with over half its students studying part-time. It is currently growing its proportion of international students, studying both on campus and in their home countries, thus further increasing the diversity of its student body.

The University has been proactive in addressing the needs of students since 1992 and has well-developed services and support for disabled students. The University is proactively addressing its statutory duties in respect of race, disability and gender equality and is aware of the need to address the newer areas of equality, namely sexual orientation, religion and age. The Equality Proofing the Curriculum (EPC) project was co-ordinated by Inspire, the University centre for learning and teaching, informed by the 2006 Combined Equality Scheme. This documented six core strategic objectives, stating a commitment to “deliver an accessible, inclusive, equality-proofed curriculum which meets the needs of a diverse student population”, in order that “students do not encounter discriminatory barriers to learning and teaching”.

The development of this change initiative was driven by the University’s mission statement and three specific strategic objectives, namely:

- to deliver all activities to a high quality and be recognised for excellence in learning and teaching;
- to achieve satisfaction that exceeds expectations;
- to develop a highly skilled and motivated staff committed to Anglia Ruskin’s mission and to achieve high levels of professionalism.

Description of the change initiative

This change initiative was set within an ongoing suite of research and development work being undertaken across the University to continue to build and embed its commitment to equality and diversity. The focus for Anglia Ruskin University's change initiative was to draw upon and co-ordinate the expertise of staff from different areas of the University to assist academic staff in auditing and equality proofing the curriculum. For this reason, the core team included the diversity specialist from Human Resources, the Head of Modular Programmes, and members of the Inspire learning and teaching and web development teams. The wider team included representatives from the Students' Union and the Learning Support team from Student Services. Additional input came from colleagues across the University.

The project took an organisational development approach to embedding inclusive teaching practice with a view to removing, as far as possible, identified barriers to disabled and other students' learning experiences and, at the same time, impacting on inclusive teaching practice for all students. The vision of this initiative was to facilitate academic staff to become skilled and empowered to develop and deliver a reflective, self-sustaining, embedded, inclusive curriculum, meeting the needs of a diverse student body.

The initiative's specific aim was to audit, co-ordinate and develop inclusive teaching practice within the University. In order to achieve this aim the following objectives were set out:

- establish the training needs of academic staff;
- deliver dedicated training and development;
- embed management processes to support staff in developing an inclusive approach to teaching through:
 - the provision of appraisal criteria related to meeting students' diverse learning needs;
 - the refinement of module/pathway validation processes to include questions about inclusiveness in module design, delivery and assessment;
- create an inclusive teaching website resource.

This initiative was designed to take advantage of work already being carried out within the University so as to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' in the development of its resources and support to academic staff. Rather, the notion of co-ordination and dissemination of effective practice was at the heart of the initiative.

Rationale for change

The University recognises its responsibility to ensure that its diverse student base is able to benefit from an appropriate and inclusive student experience. This initiative has been developed to take forward whole institutional developments in respect of inclusive curriculum and teaching practice, building on specific equality and diversity project findings and developments that are ongoing across the University. An example is 'Mind the Gap', a project supporting students with mental health difficulties. This has successfully raised awareness and developed understanding of the needs of students with mental health disability.

Research undertaken within Anglia Ruskin University by equality and diversity related projects has identified key findings in respect of developing organisational change to embed inclusive curriculum and teaching. Findings indicate that to facilitate a climate within an organisation where equality and diversity issues are embedded, staff development must address these issues in an appropriate way. In addition, the commitment of an organisation to inclusive practice is best demonstrated where individuals are required to be both responsible and accountable for the delivery of inclusive practice as part of employee appraisal/performance assessment and CPD provision.

During the academic year 2005–06, the University undertook significant curriculum change, with all modules being revised into either 15- or 30-credit formats. As part of this review the opportunity to address curriculum issues that might present barriers to some learners was identified. Project leaders had collaboratively written a set of 12 practical tips for academic staff in 2004, providing generic advice on ensuring inclusive teaching practice. However, as the review of curriculum progressed it became apparent that academic staff still found it difficult to address the challenge of taking an inclusive teaching approach. A need was therefore identified to undertake further research and to develop appropriate resources, taking a proactive approach to ensuring that all staff are engaged with the development of inclusive practice.

The EPC initiative addressed both this need for practical solutions to overcoming barriers within the curriculum and the lack of engagement by staff with the process of developing inclusive teaching.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The development and delivery of Anglia Ruskin University's change initiative has been founded on a firm base. It was focused on specific actions to achieve change through an evidence-informed strategy of supporting individual staff to take responsibility for embedding inclusive practice. This has been supported by the University's proactive commitment to inclusive practice driven by both its mission and the legislation. It was also recognised at the outset that the impact of the initiative would benefit not only disabled students, but the wider student population, as inclusive teaching practice necessitates the consideration of a range of learning styles and needs.

The team has achieved the following outcomes/outputs:

- a regular survey of disabled students, looking at their experience as students at Anglia Ruskin in order to identify their issues relating to equality and diversity practice;
- a survey of academic staff in order to identify existing good practice, and assess staff development needs and preferred modes of delivery;
- the development of an inclusive learning and teaching website resource called TeachInclusive (www.anglia.ac.uk/teachinclusive) addressing issues identified above. TeachInclusive provides a number of short mini videos of staff talking about their practice and is designed to WC3 accessibility standards;
- inclusion of specific reference to inclusive practice in the University document *Expectations of an Academic at Anglia Ruskin – the evolving role*. This document is issued by the Deputy Chancellor with the remit for human resources and the student experience and is used in academic staff recruitment;
- inclusion of specific reference of student mental health and workplace diversity issues in the 2007 revised Combined Equality Scheme and Action Plan;
- the refinement of academic administration/quality assurance processes concerned with module and pathway validation. These now include questions on how an inclusive learning environment will be provided through module/pathway design, delivery and assessment;
- team members, including the Associate Director of Learning and Teaching Development and the Head of Modular Programmes, worked with the Retention Working Group and developed workshops that explicitly address issues of student diversity and inclusion based on their research findings. Student feedback led to key issues being identified. Strategies to address these provided the framework for the 'Getting Started' pages of the TeachInclusive website;

- a 150-hour blended learning module on inclusive practice has been recognised by SEDA and is being delivered to both academic and non-academic staff;
- a ten-minute online Reusable Learning Object on ‘Making our documents accessible’ is nearing completion. This will be made available via the TeachInclusive and Inspire (www.inspire.anglia.ac.uk) websites;
- Anglia Ruskin University has also been reinvigorating and developing the role of the personal tutor. Staff development workshops for this are running during 2009–10.

The strategy developed by the EPC team to bring together staff in cross-university functions, relevant to the areas of work to be developed, was one of the project’s strengths. The team was co-ordinated by the University’s centre for learning and teaching, INSPIRE, who have been able to draw together specialist expertise and organisational knowledge, which in turn has enhanced delivery. For example, representation from human resources (HR) ensured that the key element of the initiative, namely to embed personal and professional responsibility for inclusive practice, was taken forward into a revised staff appraisal scheme (although it has not been included in promotion criteria).

The team also identified the need for visibility of their work at an early stage. They built on the staff survey, the subsequent development of resources for staff and the population of the website to increase staff awareness and engagement. In order to achieve all these outcomes the engagement of stakeholders became a critical element in the success of the initiative. They identified the need to engage with staff, particularly at a senior level, in order to ensure that their message was cascaded across the institution. This was achieved by ensuring that they had the direct support of the Vice-Chancellor, tapping into his engagement with the inclusion agenda. In addition, the team identified those members of staff who were already engaged with, or had expressed an interest in, learning more. Working with these staff members has ensured that the initiative developed advocates and champions who will subsequently influence those members of staff who are more reluctant to engage. The team have also recognised that the language used in promoting inclusive practice has an impact on how it is perceived by stakeholders. As a result they moved away from a deficit notion of student ‘need’ to that of ‘entitlement’, in order to demonstrate the positive impact of an inclusive approach.

While this initiative contains a substantial HR element, the team recognised that its focus on academic learning and teaching practice through INSPIRE is ensuring that this work is being driven into the heart of the University’s core business of providing an education for its students. This will also ensure that outcomes are further developed and sustained.

Next steps

This work continues to be driven forward by INSPIRE and HR, ensuring that accessible curriculum practice is integrated and normalised and that appropriate resources are provided to support its delivery.

There is strong support from proactive academic colleagues for an initiative to make the creation of accessible documents standard practice.

Key messages

Anglia Ruskin University recognises that stakeholder engagement is key to the success of such initiatives, in particular:

- engaging the support of high level managers;
- working with those who are interested to learn more – they will become your champions and advocates.

They also recognise the importance of making the best use of all available resources by:

- engaging a team whose members are representative of as many University functions as possible;
- promoting and disseminating outcomes and outputs across the institution to ensure that others do not 'reinvent the wheel'.

The EPC team welcomed the opportunities provided by the Higher Education Academy for focused and reflective dialogue about inclusion and diversity with colleagues both within and outside their University. Their involvement in the project provided a catalyst for integrating several inclusion and diversity threshold concepts, such as the shift from 'needs' to 'entitlements'. Perhaps the most fundamental of these was recognising that students have an entitlement to inclusive learning and teaching practice, which can in turn lead to an increased sense of belonging.

University of Bradford

Changing together – enhancing learning, teaching and assessment strategies and practices for disabled students

HEI context

The University of Bradford is committed to widening participation and ensuring the success of its students through the whole student life cycle as set out in its mission and Corporate Strategy. Currently 48% of its students come from low socio-economic groups, 54% come from minority ethnic groups and 70% of new students are in receipt of a fees grant. The University has an improving retention rate, although its proportion of disabled students has fallen below the sector average over the last two years.

The University's Corporate Strategy identifies widening participation and inclusive learning, teaching and assessment as key priorities. The aim of developing inclusive practice is highlighted within its Learning, Teaching & Assessment (LTA) Strategy.

The University has worked in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission to enhance learning, teaching and assessment practice in order to ensure greater inclusivity for disabled students. Specialist consultants were engaged to assist in this process, feeding into the development of inclusive policy and practice and particularly the University's Disability Equality Scheme.

Description of the change initiative

The University of Bradford's change initiative set out to develop, implement and embed a whole university approach to deliver greater inclusivity for disabled students through the University's LTA strategy and practice. It set out to build on the University's commitment to the implementation of change management through the development and embedding of innovative practice into mainstream activities, supported by comprehensive staff development. The initiative's key message has been 'support to succeed'.

Its specific aims were to:

- achieve a more inclusive approach to LTA across the University as a means of enriching not just the disabled student experience but the experience of all students;
- promote the benefits and advantages of securing such an approach to LTA across the University, recognising the value of the student voice in such a process.

These aims have been supported by the following objectives:

- to map the process to move from reliance on interventions from specialists in the delivery of LTA to one that shifts the responsibility and knowledge to academic staff, as part of an embedded approach;
- to ensure that access to learning, teaching and assessment for disabled students is effective and inclusive;
- to build external perspectives and a dissemination process into the initiative through involvement of partners;
- to develop, promote and review a dynamic approach to staff development across the University;
- to establish an effective monitoring, review and evaluation process that captures the disabled student voice, as part of regularised and mainstream activity.

In addition, the initial project plan set out the following outputs:

- a review of the academic assessment process and criteria for disabled students;
- the development of best practice in preparation of learning materials and in the use of the VLE;
- the establishment of effective means of securing feedback from disabled students;
- building of disability issues into course approval criteria;
- the embedding of disability issues within the annual course monitoring and review process;
- the commissioning, provision of advice and review of a University-wide staff development programme for all teaching staff;
- the establishment of an effective impact assessment process for the initiative.

The scope of the project was to address the whole University curriculum, working with all teaching and support staff. It was recognised that this was an ambitious undertaking,

but it secured approval from the University's Senate who have set a two-and-a-half-year timescale. Therefore, within the 14-month Academy programme time frame, this initiative set out to focus on review, development and piloting of work across all University Schools and the drawing up of an achievable plan to ensure that work would be completed within Senate's timescale.

The change initiative was based on a balance between the management of change across the institution and the development and implementation of inclusive policy and practice. It was therefore recognised from the outset that staff development would be a critical element of the initiative's success.

The initiative also included the involvement of a partner university in order to provide an external perspective and enquiry. It was anticipated that this would also aid dissemination.

Rationale for change

The University of Bradford's approach to diversity and inclusion addresses the whole of the student life cycle, from access, through participation, experience and success to employability. It has therefore identified that taking a holistic approach will provide the best means to ensure it is an inclusive institution.

The University of Bradford's change initiative is building on work already ongoing across the institution, both with regard to its infrastructure and the support it offers to disabled students both centrally and at School level. A key part of this work is focused on enhancing the learning experience for students. It is being assisted by the specialist consultants who have worked with the University to review its policies to identify how disability issues are being addressed, and is informed by qualitative and quantitative research into LTA practice to draw on the experiences and views of both staff and students. This work has informed the action that the University needed to take in order to ensure greater inclusivity of practice.

It has highlighted the need for a whole university approach that takes forward the integration of inclusive practice into the heart of curriculum practice. This change initiative has therefore been focused on enhancing LTA practices for disabled students, but also recognises that it will make a significant contribution to its commitment to

widening participation, enhancing an inclusive LTA experience for all students. In this way attitudes, behaviour and practice are changed through engagement and debate. In the context of this change initiative this has necessitated a whole University focus, an emphasis on staff development and the need to ensure appropriate monitoring, evaluation and impact.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The development and delivery of the University of Bradford's change initiative has been an iterative one. The Academy programme enabled the team, through honest and open debate, to undertake a process of understanding and analysing the concept of inclusion and practical elements of the changes to be made across the institution. They identified their turning point as the residential element of the programme in November 2007.

At this point, and as a result of their debate and discussion, the team was able to reach a common understanding of what they wanted to achieve and consequently were able to clarify their vision of an inclusive campus, taking account of all aspects of the University's operation.

In order to address what was clearly an ambitious aspiration for this initiative, the team recognised that they needed to break down and understand all aspects of the process of change they wanted to initiate. This was achieved through the visual articulation of the vision in the form of a concept map. The concept map gave the team a comprehensive overview of the process of change, enabled them to understand the impact of the changes to be made and to identify where barriers might occur and develop solutions to tackle them.

The concept map became the team's project management tool, supported by an action plan, which included regular reporting on progress towards achieving milestones and measures of success. It was revisited and developed on an iterative basis.

With regard to achievements the team has taken the following forward:

- a clear process for the implementation of the initiative's vision of an inclusive university;
- the development of a university-wide policy in respect of inclusive assessment for

disabled students, which has become an integral part of the University's LTA strategy. This has now been approved by the University's Academic Policy Committee and will be implemented through the Curriculum Assessment and Review Teams. As part of the development of a new LTA strategy, inclusivity has been integrated as a key element;

- revisions have also been made to various University policies including programme specification templates, policy and guidance on assessment for disabled students and disability disclosure procedure. The induction programme has also been reviewed to take account of inclusivity and focused careers guidance work is being undertaken with disabled students;
- the development of an e-learning module in respect of inclusive curriculum development/learning and teaching practice, which was piloted in the academic year 2008–09. Its focus was designing curriculum that is fit for purpose, and it is to be included in the University's Quality Enhancement Strategy and cited on the web as a resource for staff. In addition, staff workshops on inclusive practice began in June 2009 and are scheduled to continue;
- in order to support the development of inclusive curriculum an investigation is being carried out using Bloom's taxonomy⁶ into inclusive learning outcomes. This piece of work will consider the notion of an inclusive learning outcome and whether current methods of assessment actually deliver learning outcomes. Learning outcomes and assessment will be considered/rewritten for a selection of modules;
- in recognition of the fact that academic staff are key stakeholders in ensuring that change is achieved, the team have grounded their work in empirical research in order that it becomes an academic initiative. For example, the collection of evidence in respect of the experience of disabled students alongside research into the experience of all diversity groups. This is being supported by the publication of journal articles and conference papers and the dissemination of the initiative through a robust evidence base for change;
- the commitment of senior management to this change initiative was translated into financial support to buy out time from two members of the team. This will ensure that momentum is maintained and that further progress can be achieved. New senior staff have also joined the initiative's steering group, which has now become an ongoing working group reporting to the new Learning and Teaching Committee.

6 Bloom, B.S. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*. Chicago: Susan Fauer Company, Inc, pp. 201–207.

These outcomes are significant in themselves. However, what the team regard as equally significant is the fact that the drive for achieving inclusivity is moving away from a regulatory approach, through quality assurance mechanisms, to an approach that is driven by the desire to enhance the quality of practice and provision within the University at School level rather than as a centrally driven process. It has been noticed that diversity and inclusive practice is being recognised as a means to improve both the social and educational experience of students rather than being related to legal obligation and regulatory requirement. This is opening up opportunities for the team to further implement their concept map.

In addition, the commitment and mutual understanding that was developed across the team, which was a mix of academic, service, support staff and students, aided the process of development and implementation, as did the relocation of Disability Services into Learner Support Services. This has served to bring the 'academic' side of the University closer to the work of Disability Services, demonstrating its impact on student learning and the fact that it is not merely a welfare service.

Next steps

The team will continue to drive this initiative forward. They are taking advantage of new structures and senior cross-institutional posts to take forward new approaches to academic development and extend best practice across the institution.

This will include: the implementation of a new staff development programme with e-learning; the continuation of empirical research considering the experience and outcomes of disabled and other diversity groups to establish a robust academic evidence base and generating further conference papers and publications; an investigation of inclusive learning outcomes; and development and piloting of inclusive assessment practice.

Further staff development resources will be developed and delivered and greater student involvement and engagement is being sought.

All the work being undertaken will continue to be disseminated, monitored and evaluated in order to ensure that practice is continually developed and its impact

recognised. The team are aware that they need to further develop the means to measure impact and will be mapping data, supported by qualitative evidence. This will also be linked to the University's impact assessment.

Key messages

The University of Bradford team has identified key learning from their change initiative, including the importance of:

- being innovative, entrepreneurial and not shying away from risk taking;
- understanding the impact of change across all parts of the process of implementation, including where barriers might be encountered;
- establishing and maintaining internal partnerships;
- recognising where and how resource, both human and financial, can be drawn upon;
- keeping focused through the development and regularly reviewing an initiative plan.

University of Hull

Disability equality impact assessment and academic approvals: inclusion at the heart of institutional change

HEI context

The University of Hull has a strong track record of attracting, recruiting and supporting disabled students. The University's monitoring data demonstrate that the number of students disclosing a disability to the University has risen from 342 in 2000–01 to 1312 in 2006–07, with a 50% increase in the number of staff declaring a disability. In addition it consistently performs above both the national average and the HEFCE benchmark for the proportion of students in receipt of disabled students' allowance.

The University has already undertaken significant proactive work to address barriers for disabled students, identified for example in *Review of widening participation research: addressing the barriers to participation in higher education (2006)*, and has a track record of undertaking projects to promote inclusive practice; for example, the Professional Education and Disability Support project. The University is also currently supporting a number of projects to address wider diversity issues; for example, a survey of all Black and minority ethnic students to examine the extent of racially motivated abuse and/or attack, and an initiative using personal development planning to identify and address disabled students' learning needs off campus.

The driver for this initiative has come from the University's Disability Equality Scheme 2006. The University regards learning and teaching as core activity and the embedding of inclusive programme design and approvals is a means of ensuring that disability equality is at the heart of the institution.

Description of the change initiative

The principle aim of the University of Hull's initiative was to establish how best disability equality impact assessment can be included as a required part of the academic approvals stage for new modules and new programmes.

This change initiative set out to develop and demonstrate the delivery of an informed disability impact assessment as part of the academic approvals stage for new modules and new programmes. This would be achieved through a phased approach, starting with consultation and evidence generating. It was anticipated that policy and procedure developed as a consequence of the project would be embedded into the University's wider diversity agenda and impact assessment for all equality strands.

Four key objectives were identified:

- to examine and explore the current evidence base in relation to equality impact assessment as part of the academic approvals stage for new modules and new programmes with a particular focus on curriculum;
- to establish an appropriate mechanism for impact assessment at Faculty level with appropriate checks at Academic Approvals Committee stage;
- to facilitate a successful programme of change management to embed equality and diversity;
- to examine ways to successfully involve collaborative partners and key stakeholders in undertaking equality impact assessment for academic approval.

It was anticipated that the initiative would be delivered in five phases:

- information gathering (July to November 2007);
- consultation (November 2007 to February 2008);
- staff development (March to April 2008);
- disability impact assessment (May to August 2008);
- action planning and change management (September 2008 onwards).

Rationale for change

This change initiative has been driven by the University of Hull's response to its duty to promote disability equality under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). It regards the legislative framework as setting out a baseline of obligations towards all students, staff and members of the public and is demonstrating this commitment through its Disability Equality Scheme.

An e-consultation was undertaken with disabled staff and students between July and October 2006 as part of the development of the University's Disability Equality Scheme. The consultation revealed that there were specific staff concerns relating to learning and teaching and the demands of making reasonable adjustments. Inclusive design for modules was identified as an important way of addressing this issue and this initiative is intended to support and facilitate this. In addition the University has already established mechanisms for impact assessment of policies and procedures. Therefore the development of an evidence-informed approach to impact assessment in respect of academic approvals represents a logical step in the institution's drive to address equality.

This initiative was timely for the University as at its inception it was undertaking an institution-wide review of the academic approvals process. Therefore it was anticipated that outcomes would directly influence the development of an evidence-informed approach to equality impact assessment. The team were able to link up with both the approvals process review and the undertaking of impact assessments in order to take advantage of internal drivers for change and ensure the greatest impact for this particular initiative.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The University of Hull has identified that over the course of the programme they succeeded in delivering significant tangible outputs as a result of undertaking this change initiative. They have achieved the following:

- a literature review to identify relevant literature in respect of equality impact assessment as part of the academic approvals process;
- the collation of institutional data in respect of disabled students;
- the development of a guidance document and *Top Tips for Inclusivity for Academic Staff*;
- the integration of the *Top Tips for Inclusivity* and *Guidance on Inclusion* into the annual training and development programme for approval panel members. The training aims to improve consistency of decision making and to facilitate the sharing of expertise and experience. The training is offered both as bespoke faculty sessions and as a University-level staff development session;
- the development and piloting of a *Programme Approval Panel Members' Workbook* including guidance on inclusive practice to support the above training on an ongoing basis;

- the subsequent development of the *Top Tips for Inclusivity Checklist and Guidance on Inclusion* into a draft tool to be used both by programme/module developers and as part of the approvals process;
- the piloting of a draft tool by a member of academic staff in the development of a new programme in order to provide an illustrative example of the tool in practice. The tool will be used in future training and made available to module and programme developers through both the University's Quality Office website and the re-launched Learning and Teaching Support Unit website;
- a workshop entitled 'Building Disability Equality into the Approvals Process: Implications for Teaching & Learning' was delivered at the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference 2009;
- engagement with the Quality Office to work with Disability Services on the content of the training and workbook.

The team are able to report not only the achievements above but also a move towards changing institutional practices. These achievements are significant as the biggest challenge faced by the University of Hull was staffing, with the loss of key team members. Notwithstanding, the change initiative has evolved as a result of both participation in the Academy programme and as a result of the process of reflection the team has undertaken in response to its circumstances. This has been achieved by taking a flexible, pragmatic approach to the delivery of the initiative, focusing on what could be achieved in a short time frame and with limited resources. This approach is evident in the overall delivery of the change initiative.

They had initially anticipated that, following consideration of the evidence base, they would be able to implement an appropriate mechanism as part of the approvals process in order to embed change. However, the lack of documentation and evidence meant that the team had to reconsider its methodology for developing this mechanism. They therefore looked to other sources of evidence in order to move forward.

Consideration was given to a consultation undertaken with academic staff that revealed they did not have enough information and understanding about reasonable adjustment and inclusive programme design. The team therefore reasoned that the development of knowledge about reasonable adjustment and inclusive programme design could of itself build the capacity of staff to check that inclusivity was being embedded into modules and programmes at approval stage. This resulted in the

development of one tool that could be used both by those designing and developing programmes and modules and by approval panels. This would ensure that developers were able to reflect on how their module or programme could be made more inclusive and that approval panels could identify the evidence that inclusive design had been taken on board.

Further consultation with staff and with expert sources, e.g. TeachAbility, informed the decision to focus on a limited number of areas where it is known that reasonable adjustments are most frequently requested. This would provide the greatest cost/benefit ratio in respect of staff time, increasing the knowledge of academic staff and providing impact for disabled students. The result was the *Top Tips for Inclusivity Checklist*, which highlights five specific actions that can be taken by teaching staff in order to address the most frequently encountered reasonable adjustments. The checklist has now been piloted in both course development and approval.

The team were mindful of the fact that they needed to ensure that what had been developed should become part of mainstream practice and embedded. What is significant, therefore, is that the team have engaged the Quality Office directly in the development and delivery of staff training and in the development of the training, workbook and checklist in order to foster ownership and responsibility for these resources. In the same way they have also entered into discussions with the PGCertHE team to ensure that these resources are embedded in this programme.

In addition, despite the fact that the original team will no longer operate and given the staffing issues previously highlighted, those members that do remain will take on responsibility for further actions to support the process of embedding inclusive design and validation. They have taken responsibility for engaging other staff and will act as champions and advocates across the institution to ensure that the embedding process can continue without the existence of the team as a specific resource.

Next steps

The resources that have been developed will continue to be revised and updated as a result of feedback gathered through the training programme. Both the training and the workbook will have been implemented on campus during 2008–09 and will be used

with the University's collaborative provision programmes from September 2009. This represents a major step towards embedding and mainstreaming the responsibility for inclusive practice in the development and approval of provision.

As a result of considering how far inclusion and support for disabled students is embedded in current CPD for staff, discussions are now underway with PGCertHE staff in order to ensure that this provision addresses issues related to inclusive curriculum design. In addition, a free elective module on inclusion and inclusive practice is currently being developed for both staff and students, as part of their programme of study. Work is also being done to support the University Equality and Diversity Officer to develop disability equality training across the institution in order to ensure that it meets its duty under the DDA. It is recognised that this will facilitate the sharing of expertise across the institution in a way which is sustainable.

Key messages for other institutions

The University of Hull team has identified the following key messages:

- the development of a cross-university team who would not normally work together not only provided secondment and development opportunities for the staff involved, but also facilitated the understanding of other University functions. The building of relationships across the institution provided different perspectives that enriched the change process;
- the structure and deadlines that the Academy programme provided were key in driving delivery and gave the change initiative credibility and leverage across the institution;
- flexibility within a change initiative is paramount in order to respond to actual need within the institution rather than perceived need;
- being understanding and responsive to the needs of staff is vital to gain buy-in and ownership. This involves consultation;
- focusing on core activity and addressing core procedures will facilitate embedding and culture change – it becomes 'the norm';
- know your institution – and be realistic.

Leeds Trinity University College

Success for all: From widening participation to improving attainment: a whole institution approach

HEI context

Leeds Trinity University College was originally founded as a Catholic institution in the 1960s. It is a founding member of the Confederation of Church Colleges offering a variety of vocationally oriented degree programmes. These are provided through Faculties of Education, Business, Media and Journalism and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The institution now has degree awarding powers, setting itself up to be the third university in Leeds.

Description of the change initiative

The change initiative that the University College developed took a holistic approach to widening participation and achievement by embedding inclusive policy and practice across the student experience and the student journey, with a particular focus on pre-entry and the first year.

The overall aim of the project was to drive internal institutional change in order to provide a personalised learning and support infrastructure to promote access, remove barriers to entry, improve retention and progress, and enhance achievement for all.

Specifically the initiative identified the following objectives:

- to increase staff awareness of equality and diversity;
- to develop targeted and coherent widening participation activities that support the recruitment of students from under-represented groups;
- to facilitate their transition to higher education and improve retention;
- to develop the University College's approach to personalised learning during the early stages of the student journey, recognising the different support and learning

needs of individuals;

- to take a holistic approach to student needs and encourage the integration of learning support within the curriculum.

The initiative set out to address widening participation and widening attainment at all stages of the student life cycle, ensuring that they became embedded in all aspects of the student experience. It was anticipated that the implementation of the initiative would lead to a planned, personalised programme of activities for each student, acknowledging that students are individuals with different needs and learning preferences that need to be addressed in order that they can achieve their full potential in higher education.

The scope of the project extended across the whole of the institution with buy-in and management at senior level through their Executive Team. This was seen as a key aspect of the project in order to demonstrate to staff the importance of the initiative in taking the inclusion agenda forward within the University College, facilitating staff engagement, development and awareness.

The following key outputs were identified:

- audit and analysis of internal institutional data and literature to identify areas for action and best practice;
- literature and best practice review;
- student focus groups to obtain qualitative data in respect of the student experience at key stages of the student life cycle;
- review of admissions policy and the development of an appropriate bursary scheme;
- development and delivery of effective, focused pre-entry and transition activities;
- curriculum development and delivery to assist transition to higher education and inclusive learning and teaching practice;
- increased staff awareness of diversity issues and student needs through staff development and dialogue;
- the strengthening of relationships between academic departments and central student support.

Rationale for change

The change initiative developed by Leeds Trinity was informed by its corporate mission and values, which provides the context for their commitment to widening participation as demonstrated in their Strategic Plan 2007–12:

... [the] belief in what higher education can do to enable individuals to achieve their potential. The impact of this on economic and social development is enormous.

The University College therefore takes both a social justice and a social cohesion approach in order to address social disadvantage and the need for higher education to enhance the skills of the workforce and to be economically relevant.

The initiative responded to the need to enable all students to acquire the skills and competencies, educational independence and appreciation of values that they need to meet their personal and career aspirations. It was aligned with the newly developed Strategic Plan, addressing the need to empower individuals and engage with communities, placing the student at the heart of their operation. The change initiative therefore encompassed the whole of the student life cycle from pre-entry through to employment.

It had been identified that while Leeds Trinity performs above average against the HEFCE benchmark in respect of the socio-economic background of its students, its student population is dominated by those progressing from Year 13 onto full-time undergraduate programmes. However, there was an awareness that students from non-traditional backgrounds tended to be less satisfied with their experience and were more likely to drop out of study. They also recognised that they needed to encourage a more diverse student base, to include those from vocational and work-based backgrounds and those moving onto part-time as well as full-time programmes of study. Currently these students are often not retained. Therefore both issues in relation to retention and the development of a more flexible, accessible curriculum were identified within the initiative as areas of priority to focus on.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The Leeds Trinity team set out with a holistic institutional vision for their change initiative. In order to take this forward they focused on specific aspects of the student experience.

They have achieved the following outcomes:

- the building of an institution-specific research evidence base through an access, equality and diversity in higher education literature review.

An awareness of the external evidence base for an inclusive approach to the student experience existed, but this needed to be contextualised in order to relate to this institution. Key areas to emerge were:

- i) transition;
- ii) integrating policies and practices;
- iii) curriculum delivery.

Conclusions and recommendations from the review will be used to inform further work to achieve an inclusive student experience across the institution;

- internal evidence has also been gathered about student engagement and attainment. This will be used to identify areas for action;
- student focus groups have been held to gather evidence about students' perceptions and experiences of inclusion at the University. A DVD presenting this evidence has also been produced. This resource will continue to inform further institutional developments in respect of an inclusive student experience and staff development activities;
- staff development sessions have been delivered as part of the institution's staff development day;
- agreement has been reached on the need to connect the pre- and post-entry aspects of the student experience. Consequently a new post has been created with a brief that will cover the whole of the student experience/journey from pre-entry to employment;
- as a result of the work the team have undertaken, the Executive Team has agreed to embed this change initiative as an ongoing piece of work entitled the 'Progress Project'. Funds are to be allocated in order to take it forward and a steering group will be established.

The Leeds Trinity team regarded these achievements as significant over the lifetime of the Academy programme as they experienced loss of key staff, which made progress difficult.

The programme provided the team with the opportunity to develop their thinking about the implementation of their change initiative and as a result of discussion facilitated by the programme the team developed an in-depth understanding of their initiative and its implications for the institution. They concluded that the balancing of a holistic and strategic overview with specific, practical actions would be the most appropriate approach to its implementation.

They identified that while it was important to retain a whole institutional vision for creating change, they would need to focus on key aspects of delivery in order to have a visible impact in the short term. This short-term impact would serve to build a case for further commitment to, and development of, this work over a longer period of time. This was a particularly important decision for the team and enabled them to manage the staffing issues they experienced while still achieving positive outcomes.

It was also identified, in considering how to engage with stakeholders across the institution and demonstrate a case for change, that an evidence base was a key tool, to be enhanced on an ongoing basis through the development of successful activities. In taking an evidence-based approach to driving change, the team successfully began the process of influencing hearts and minds within the institution and secured commitment, funding and a specific post to further implement their inclusion agenda.

The Progress Project objectives were agreed by Governors in July 2008 to:

- establish educational partnerships and progression agreements with key partner schools, colleges and employers;
- clearly define and monitor the progress of the WWP target groups;
- ensure that appropriate funding streams (especially HEFCE) are understood and accessed;
- target outreach work on the basis of recruiting and retaining students from these groups;
- develop and implement the access agreement and contribute to the ongoing development of the admissions policy;
- guide the development and use of bursaries and other measures;
- interact and develop projects with key agencies, including Aimhigher, the Lifelong Learning Network and HEFCE;

- further develop the 'Fusion Programme' as a holistic programme for students from pre-entry to the end of first year of the course;
- ensure personal support arrangements exist for students who may be at risk and monitor regularly;
- work with academic and other departments to develop greater understanding of the needs of students from diverse backgrounds;
- inform institutional planning by advising on WWP targets for inclusion within the annual student number planning exercise.

These objectives develop and focus the work undertaken through Success for All.

Next steps

The appointment of the new post has brought together the pre- and post-entry aspects of the student experience and the Progress Project is now taking forward the overall vision, aims and objectives of this change initiative, building on what has been achieved through the Academy programme. Senior management commitment and funding will ensure that this work will have a long-term positive impact within the institution.

Key messages

The Leeds Trinity University College team highlighted the following elements as vital to creating and sustaining change:

- a developing evidence base to demonstrate the case for change, to be communicated at all levels with senior level support;
- senior management buy-in and commitment in order to create advocates at the highest level;
- ongoing support for staff through CPD and quality enhancement to ensure the development of best learning and teaching practice.

Manchester Metropolitan University

Building curricula for the 21st-century learner – a toolkit for diversity review

HEI context

Central to Manchester Metropolitan University's mission and embedded in its strategic plan is "the provision of a high quality learning environment for its students that will equip them with skills to enable them to remain effective lifelong, independent learners and able to make a significant contribution in their subsequent employment".

Further, in its widening participation strategy, the University sets out its commitment to consolidating and further developing its strong record of inclusivity and recruiting a student population that exceeds HEFCE benchmarks.

The University is currently undergoing a major agenda for change and development, which encompasses academic, support, staffing and physical infrastructure projects. As part of its change agenda, the University aims to strengthen the student experience with emphasis on high-quality teaching and course provision.

To this end curriculum innovation is being considered, driven by pedagogical knowledge and understanding, and the University's CPD scheme is being used as a tool to promote and embed best practice. In addition, the University is seeking to increase international partnership and possible home country delivery of programmes. Consequently, internationalisation of the curriculum is high on the agenda.

Description of the change initiative

The change initiative developed by the Manchester Metropolitan University team focused on inclusivity across the student life cycle with specific reference to inclusion and diversity in curriculum content and learning, teaching and assessment. It builds on diversity projects and reviews already carried out within the University and set out to draw this work together in order to provide a set of tools and guidelines to be used

by programme teams to ensure that programme content, delivery and assessment are suited to the institution's diverse cohorts of students.

As a result of drawing on the pilot work already carried out within three faculties, and drawing on data from other disciplinary areas, the initiative sought to develop a cross-disciplinary set of tools, which would be evaluated in contrasting settings. Once any adjustments had been made a strategy for implementation across the University would be developed, with staff development workshops being employed to roll out the toolkit, ensuring that it contributes to the University's CPD programme and its PGCert in Academic Practice.

The initiative encompassed two aims:

- to enhance the student learning experience across the life cycle;
- to develop and embed tools for diversity review and enhancement of the design and delivery of programmes across the University.

The following objectives were set out to support the achievement of these aims:

- establish issues of diversity that may impact on the ability of students to engage with, and benefit from, their higher education experience;
- establish mechanisms for adapting programmes to minimise impact on student performance;
- adapt and develop cross disciplinary tools for reviewing diversity aspects of the design and delivery of curriculum;
- develop mechanisms for integrating such tools in the curriculum development process;
- explore ways to facilitate curriculum innovation;
- develop strategies to embed the approach into Programme Assessment Review and Monitoring procedures (PARM).

The team identified the following outputs as a result of the delivery of their change initiative:

- a literature base to support understanding of pedagogic issues associated with diversity in higher education;
- contributions to the University's CPD programme in areas such as student recruitment, student support, LTA, employability, disability and working with international students;

- workshop materials for staff development;
- guidance materials and templates for curriculum review.

A key strategy for the implementation of the initiative was to link into, and engage with, not only all faculties and departments but also core student and academic services such as the Centre for Learning & Teaching, the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement, and HR. In addition, it was identified that newly established communities of practice, whose membership includes teaching staff, members of core service teams and senior learning and teaching fellows, would provide a resource to influence programme development at departmental level.

In order to further engage across the University and draw on all available resources, it was decided that the role of the Steering Group for the project should be taken on by the University's Widening Participation Champions Forum, an advisory group representing all faculties.

Rationale for change

Manchester Metropolitan University is currently undergoing significant change to reposition itself in order to address the current challenges in higher education. It recognises that in addition to its widening participation agenda, changing social contexts are contributing to greater diversity within the University's student body. It has been noted that changes to the equality legislation (e.g. the Disability Discrimination Act) and new forms of pre-entry qualification (e.g. vocational qualifications and 14–19 diplomas) will continue to contribute to a greater diversity of the student body.

It also recognises that there are significant changes in the sector that will necessitate that HE institutions review the way in which they develop and deliver programmes of study. These include: changes in the nature of demand for higher education through the introduction of variable fees; the need to generate income through CPD and international recruitment; the employer engagement agenda that brings with it the need to increase sub-degree provision; the Leitch review with its recognition of the need to grow a skilled workforce; and recognition of the importance of education for social well-being.

This initiative is being developed not only in response to this environment of external change but also in response to internal evidence about progression and retention, and focuses on the enhancement of the student experience across the life cycle. Research into retention issues and the first-year experience at the University has shown that gradual withdrawal of support to encourage independence and autonomy in students is essential to prevent non-progression at Level 2 and beyond, suggesting that any diversity review should encompass the entire student life cycle.

The rationale for this initiative draws together work across the University in respect of the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The approach employed was to draw together work that had already been undertaken across the University and to develop this further using the drivers outlined in the rationale for the initiative above. As a result the team has achieved the following outcomes:

- a literature review looking at equality and diversity in higher education. This has provided an evidence base to inform the approaches developed through the project. The review also identified where there are gaps in the literature, particularly with respect to religion and sexuality;
- the development of a staff development tool. DVDs demonstrating issues relating to inclusive practice form the central aspect of this tool. The DVDs have been based on actual incidents that have occurred at the University and have been acted out by current students to demonstrate how and where potential issues of inclusion can occur. The DVD is now being distributed widely both internally and externally;
- the DVDs have been supported by the development of other training materials in order to help staff to develop their understanding and practice in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusive practice;
- as part of the embedding process the dissemination of the staff development tool has resulted in its becoming part of the University's PGCert in Academic Practice programme;
- the team has participated in an Aimhigher research network symposium to disseminate their research;

- the team has developed relationships and linked up with the equality impact assessment team to ensure that their work provides a synergistic approach across the University;
- a template checklist has been developed for diversity review of programmes at programme review and validation stages;
- a programme of academic writing has been initiated to pull together all aspects of the change initiative. This is providing staff who have been involved in the change initiative with a personal development opportunity through writing for academic papers and journals;
- evidence of culture change across faculties. Staff are demonstrating increased understanding of issues relating to inclusive practice, demonstrated by an increase in requests for help and support for, and interest in, the activities that are being undertaken across the University to drive forward the inclusion agenda.

From the outset the team recognised that their institution was in the process of undergoing a significant programme of change. While they were able to tap into the drivers for this wider change in order to demonstrate the need, and build a business case, for their initiative, they also found that it acted as a barrier. Staff across the institution were already experiencing high levels of upheaval and therefore the introduction of further change through this piece of work was met with some resistance.

As a result of the planning process the team also identified early on in the development of their change initiative that a key strategy for its success would be engaging with, and influencing, key stakeholders. They realised that the biggest barrier they would encounter in achieving change and ensuring it was embedded would be the resistance of staff. This was particularly significant given the difficult environment in which they were working, as outlined above.

To this end they targeted senior management and particularly the Vice-Chancellor in order to secure high-level support and to raise awareness of the initiative and what it had set out to achieve. They also used their Steering Group members, who have a widening participation remit within their faculties, as advocates. These Faculty champions took the agenda on board within their area, raised awareness and ensured buy-in. This in turn ensured that the aims of the initiative and the work of the team were communicated on an ongoing basis to both academic and support staff across the institution.

Where barriers have been encountered the team have had to adapt their action plan accordingly. As the team developed their initiative they were able to identify the best strategies for designing and promoting their staff development tool. They realised, for example, that innovative approaches, 'something different', would engage staff and have greater impact. They therefore developed DVDs, working with students, to demonstrate how and where practice could both directly and indirectly disadvantage a diverse student population. Using scenarios that had actually happened in the University, staff were involved in the writing of the scripts and students were involved in the making of the DVDs. The impact of this approach has been greater than is the case with static staff development materials.

While the team feel that they have not made as much progress as they would have liked in a practical sense, they are beginning to notice the impact of their work. There is greater awareness across the institution of the issues identified by this change initiative and team members report that they are being approached by a range of staff on a regular basis to talk about their work. This they regard as possibly their greatest achievement, as through this discussion and debate understanding will be further developed, the issues will be addressed and cultural change will become embedded.

Next steps

This initiative will move forward as follows:

- publication of the literature review;
- dissemination of the staff development tool, including embedding within the PGCert in Academic Practice, to promote inclusive teaching practice;
- development of further web-based materials;
- further development of awareness and understanding of inclusive practice across the University through the networks, champions and advocates that have been developed;
- continued work to gain buy-in from the Academic Standards and Quality Unit and to ensure that it is embedded within the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.

Key messages

The key messages that the team has identified are:

- secure engagement from the top. Strategic support and a champion in a high place is crucial;
- link the change initiative with other initiatives that are ongoing across the institution to ensure that inclusive policy and practice is raised as an issue and becomes part of these other initiatives;
- ensure that every available opportunity is taken to promote the initiative; for example, by ensuring that it becomes an agenda item on all relevant (and not so relevant) committee agendas.

The Open University

Bridging the digital divide: widening participation and e-learning

HEI context

The Open University has always been at the forefront of the use of educational technology in higher education and continues to work to develop the use of ICT in teaching and learning.

In addition, its policy of open access has ensured that widening participation is embedded in the Open University's mission and core values. In February 2007 it launched an institution-wide, three-year Widening Participation Action Plan. Its two priority target groups are students from ethnic minority backgrounds and those from low socio-economic groups (defined as students with no higher education qualification who live in the 25% most deprived super output areas, as defined by the index of multiple deprivation). Those from low socio-economic groups currently make up 15.1% of the Open University's new undergraduate student population. The institution recognises that it needs to address issues related to access, retention and curriculum in order to ensure that this large proportion of its student body is able to benefit from the best student experience.

Description of the change initiative

The change initiative developed by the Open University aimed to ensure that students from low socio-economic groups were able to successfully access and benefit from the University's e-learning and online communications in order to enhance their student learning experience.

The following objectives were set out to support the delivery of the above aim:

- ensure that the challenges of e-learning experienced by students from low socio-economic groups are accurately and widely understood across the University and addressed proactively both in business processes and at individual level;
- enable all students to access ICT hardware and internet connections through adequate financial support and access to community-based ICT provision;
- build confidence and skills in the use of ICT through student support and curriculum

development as appropriate;

- use feedback from students to promote inclusion in University systems and structures.

In order to deliver the above objectives five key areas of activity were identified:

- the recruitment of a group of students from low socio-economic groups and reflecting the diversity of the Open University's student body, as a consultation group for the project. Their involvement would be threefold:
 - a. to participate in qualitative research into the challenges faced in accessing ICT and in the development of personal skills and competence in its use;
 - b. to act as a reference group together with course tutors and widening participation staff;
 - c. to assist in the evaluation and measurement of the success of the project;
- ensuring that the Open University's financial support systems adequately meet the costs of providing ICT access, addressing the issue of connectivity as well as hardware;
- building a national partnership/series of local partnerships to provide community-based access to ICT facilities and skills development;
- addressing the ICT needs of students from a low socio-economic background as part of the Open University's review of Student Support to ensure that the specific support needs of students from low socio-economic backgrounds are integrated into new structures and systems;
- exploring the potential for further development of students' ICT skills through and across the curriculum to result in a series of recommendations as to how this can be embedded through and across the curriculum.

As part of its commitment to developing the best student experience in an e-learning environment, this initiative set out to address these issues across the whole of the institution in order to embed this approach in all aspects of academic and student support delivery.

Rationale for change

This change initiative responds to the institution's strategic priorities for both widening participation and the development of innovative pedagogy and educational technology, as set out in its strategic plan. The Open University are aware of the potential tension between these two priorities, given evidence that students from low socio-economic groups have both less access to ICT and lower levels of skill and confidence in using it (ONS, 2007).

The initiative also draws on national research into resources and support to enable students to access e-learning, e.g. JISC (2007), and on the team's own consultation with students on the issue of access to ICT.

The Open University is currently undertaking a review of Student Support across the institution, including the academic delivery of courses. Phase 1, which has been completed, identified a strategic role for ICT in the delivery of Open University provision. Phase 2 will identify specific areas for action to be supported by the activities developed within this initiative.

It was anticipated that it would significantly support the delivery of the Open University's strategic priorities as outlined above, impacting on both professional academic practice and the delivery of support to a diverse student body.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The Open University team identified that the Academy programme had helped them to focus on the practical outcomes that they needed to achieve in order to move their change initiative forward in their institution. As a result they have been able to successfully deliver the following outcomes:

- a student survey on ICT issues for students from different backgrounds. The results of this survey have ensured that the student voice forms part of the development of the initiative and has been used to inform the approach taken by the team;
- further ongoing research to identify the impact of the pilots that are being put in place and how to effectively tailor support to students;
- a business case for investment in computer provision to students prior to course commencement has been developed based on research evidence as this is identified as a significant barrier to accessing Open University provision. As a result the waiting time for hardware for new students on financial assistance fund has already been reduced;
- the development of a pilot project to ensure that students in low socio-economic groups have access to ICT hardware through community locations prior to the commencement of their course and throughout its duration. This has been developed in partnership with public libraries and UK online centres across England;
- the team are now also investigating the possibility of commissioning an external

- company to provide an ICT 'set-up-at-home' service for new students;
- the development of an ICT skills module to ensure that students are equipped with the skills to enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum. This has been piloted as a five-credit module from September 2009 in conjunction with a Level 0 Openings course;
 - an investigation into the provision of ICT up-skilling support to those considering becoming an Open University student and for whom this presents a barrier.

The Open University team has also increased its own understanding of issues of inclusion relating to ICT for a diverse student base and particularly for those from low-income backgrounds. As a result of the research that was undertaken they also established that they do not give enough emphasis to publicising the support that is already available to students and that this needs to be addressed.

An organic approach was taken to working as a team. As the change initiative developed, staff from different levels and with particular knowledge and skills were drawn in to support the core team, whether to address matters relating to curriculum development or to financial support for students. This ensured that activity being developed was relevant and appropriate and that it drew on expertise within the institution. In addition, the team identified that the active involvement of the Director, Students (who is a member of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive) would be critical in enabling them to influence and engage more widely across the University.

The team found that they benefited from having focused, tangible outcomes, which the Academy programme had helped them to identify. In this way they were better able to see how their activity would inform the bigger picture across the University and the next stage of delivery. This was also helped by the fact that the initiative was very clearly meshed with the Open University's core mission and values and the delivery of its strategic priorities. The development of a research-informed evidence base has resulted in a tangible change in approach to these issues and as a result further investigation of particular issues will be undertaken.

The team has also been proactive in dissemination, taking advantage of the fact that ICT is a current strategic issue for the University and that there is a drive to address it as a priority. They have created a critical mass of support in order to ensure that the project becomes mainstreamed.

Next steps

The change initiative at the Open University is being moved into a second phase to include:

- moving from a 'pilot'-focused approach to dissemination and implementation more widely across the institution;
- the establishment of a working group from all areas of the University. This group is now mapping out the issues highlighted by the initial phase against the student journey in order to draw up a systematic plan. This plan will be used to gain buy-in and ownership at Faculty meetings in order to input into curriculum design;
- further research work to fully understand the issues facing students from low socio-economic groups relating to access to, and use of, ICT in an e-learning context, and to identify the numbers of students affected by these issues;
- the development of a framework for understanding ICT skills across the curriculum;
- involvement in the initiative has now spread from the national widening participation team to planning, student services and teaching and learning solutions, drawing in more staff, raising knowledge and awareness of the needs of disabled students, and ensuring embedding.

Key messages

The Open University team identified the following messages as being key to ensuring sustainable impact:

- ensure that a senior member of staff is part of the team, is engaged and will act as a champion across the institution in order to push for change and for resources;
- build an evidence base in order to understand the size and nature of the issues that are being tackled. This evidence base will be an important tool in the development of a case for change;
- be persistent – do not become disheartened. Keep the issues on the institutional agenda by linking with strategic priorities and objectives.

Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL)

Widening participation and students' writing in the disciplines

HEI context

Queen Mary, University of London has a strong tradition and good track record in attracting students from a wide variety of social backgrounds consistently exceeding the HEFCE benchmarks for widening participation. The University is situated in a culturally diverse part of London and in 2004–05 over 50% of its student population comprised students from minority ethnic groups. The University's aspiration to support "academic achievement amongst under-represented groups", expressed in its 2006–2010 Strategic Plan, begins with school-level initiatives and is sustained through the transition to HE and into its degree programmes.

This project builds on the ongoing Thinking Writing initiative within the institution, which has addressed writing and literacy at departmental curricula level and as part of centralised provision for writing development and support.

Description of the change initiative

This project has focused on the ways in which QMUL identifies and responds to the language proficiency, academic literacy and professional communication needs of students with particular reference to under-represented groups and international students. Its aims are to:

- develop a coherent and responsive set of approaches across the institution to the development of students' language, academic literacy and professional communication skills within their curricular programmes;
- produce a strategy document and identify staff development and resource implications that will support the implementation of these approaches.

Coinciding with the external evaluation of the ongoing Thinking Writing initiative, this project set out to review the full range of ways in which writing development is

delivered across the institution in order to assist in meeting widening participation objectives and to ensure that pedagogical practices in respect of writing support enhance student retention, progression and graduation for employability. Consideration was given to students' experience and the range of curriculum models and teaching methodologies available across the University and more widely in order to develop a strategy document setting out possible approaches, together with staff development and resource implications, articulating the benefits for widening participation and the student learning experience.

The project was planned over a three-year period, with the first 14 months being supported by the Higher Education Academy programme.

Rationale for change

This initiative is responding to work currently being undertaken by the University to develop policy and practice that impacts on key areas of the student learning experience, to include: transition to university; embedding, transfer and development of key literacy skills; engagement with the curriculum; assessment and feedback; and active and peer learning.

Since 2000 the University has taken specific steps to adapt its approach to teaching a diverse student body. One vehicle for these developments has been the 'Writing in the Disciplines' initiative Thinking Writing, which works with academic departments to put in place embedded approaches to academic literacy. Thinking Writing's approach is characterised by an emphasis on the constitutive role of language in generating thinking (writing to learn) as well as explicit attention to the writing process and written outcomes (learning to write). Staff are helped to unpack and critique the assumptions behind their pedagogic and assessment practices – for example, reliance on the standard essay – and to develop strategies that recognise the diversity of student needs, backgrounds and approaches to learning.

In order to support Thinking Writing, this initiative was designed to review and evaluate its methods and approach, further develop the provision for supporting writing development and ensure that the development of academic writing is embedded at strategy level across the institution.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The change initiative at QMUL has delivered the following outcomes:

- the report from the consultation on academic writing and the findings of the external evaluation report on Thinking Writing have ensured that the change initiative has been embedded into the Student Support Strategy for the University, which has, in turn, ensured that it is embedded into the agenda of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Committee and into the new LTA Strategy;
- the team working on the change initiative was expanded into a University-level Student Writing Working Group to include a broader faculty and department representation and reporting to the LTA Committee. This has created a forum for dialogue and action that is now ongoing. The group has identified a shared aim of embedding writing development in all faculties. This has facilitated greater buy-in and ownership across more faculties and departments;
- the working group is now taking forward five work packages with responsibility for each divided up across the group:
 - i) research into the role of writing for graduates in employment;
 - ii) investigation into the variability of the emphasis placed by different departments on the quality of student writing in their final year and third-year assessment;
 - iii) survey into what practices are employed by departments to support students in their first year of study; survey into what departments are doing to support writing in schools;
 - iv) investigation into how plagiarism is dealt with as an institution;
 - v) consideration of how central services can work together with departments to support students' writing.
- aspects of the Language and Learning Unit have been reconfigured in order to ensure that the Thinking Writing team are able to support both departments and students, joining up with the widening participation strategy.

The QMUL team has also identified 'soft' outcomes from the delivery of this change initiative that are generating debate and discussion around the nature of their diverse student body and how different pedagogical approaches can support these students. They include:

- a more strategic approach to academic writing is being taken across the institution as a result of the embedding of academic writing development as a strand in both

- the Learning, Teaching and Assessment, and Student Support strategies;
- there has been an increase in awareness among both academic and support staff in respect of academic writing development. This has been evidenced by the increase in cross-institutional discussion that is taking place. There appears to be a growing consensus that academic writing development needs to be understood and appropriately addressed.

As a result of participating in the Academy programme the team has been able to establish an increasingly clear vision for their work. While this has been a challenging process they have been able to deliver their aim of embedding the Thinking Writing approach in core institutional strategies.

This has been achieved by taking a proactive approach to engaging with key stakeholders across the institution; for example, senior management and Heads of Department. This has necessitated presenting their case for change in different ways for different groups of staff, backed up with credible evidence and using internal and external levers to facilitate change (e.g. institutional strategies and participation in the Academy programme). While the team commented that navigating their way through institutional structures and protocols has been challenging, this has not hindered the outcome.

Having established institutional strategic commitment, they recognise that they now need to establish delivery plans to ensure that this translates into appropriate support for students and also to design the means by which to measure progress and impact. This will require greater consultation with students and the establishment of a student voice as part of the development of innovative pedagogical approaches and services to support them.

The team has found that, within QMUL, the Academy programme has been a significant lever in enabling them to make progress, helping them as a team to develop the aims, scale and scope of their change initiative and supporting its delivery. They have been able to gain greater clarity of objectives and have used the programme exercises to develop their delivery methodology. For example, the team moved on from just engaging the Vice-Principal for Teaching and Learning as a champion of the initiative to identifying other key staff to develop a groundswell of support. They have also observed the value in working in a cross-institutional, diverse team, which has brought together staff members from the Education Staff Development Unit and the Language & Learning Unit, responsible for student academic support and 'home' of Thinking Writing.

The team are aware that conversations are taking place across the institution about the academic writing agenda. The agenda is now more visible and debate is taking place across a wider constituency group. In addition, as academic writing has now been embedded in the Student Support and LTA strategies, the initiative has gained recognition and has a platform from which to work. Writing will also be part of QMUL's statement of Graduate Attributes. In summary, the work of the team is now being driven at a more strategic level and they are able to promote a whole institution approach to writing.

Next steps

As well as the five strands of ongoing work identified above, and in order to move the initiative forward and ensure that change in pedagogical and student support practices continue to develop, the team will drive forward the following:

- co-ordination of the production of a Writing Strategy. This will ensure that the commitment embedded into the Learning, Teaching and Assessment and Student Support strategies is translated into delivery;
- continued informal discussions with Education and Staff Development for embedding the approach in the PGCertHE.

Key messages

QMUL has identified the following as key messages for the sector in taking forward this type of change initiative:

- in developing and delivering this type of change initiative, it is vital to nurture engagement, intellectual interest and ownership at a departmental and individual level; alignment with institutional mission and strategies is, of itself, no guarantee of change;
- a shared understanding, through discussion and debate, needs to be established between team members in order to facilitate successful development and delivery of the initiative.

Sheffield Hallam University

The development and implementation of an integral approach to equality and diversity

HEI context

Sheffield Hallam University has a long history of institutional engagement with the access, widening participation and diversity agendas. It is committed to providing a high-quality and cutting-edge learning experience for its students.

The University's commitment to inclusion is articulated in key strategy and policy documents, including its vision and values statement, its Corporate Plan, Learning Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy and disability, race and gender equality policies and schemes.

While the University's Corporate Plan sets out its commitment to maintain opportunities for a diverse range of students, the LTA strategy identifies a key aim to "be forward thinking in the design of [its] courses and programmes in supporting lifelong learning and anticipating and responding to changes in demand and need, providing vibrant and challenging learning opportunities". The strategy prioritises activity to target support for students from diverse backgrounds, with specific reference being made to the use of pedagogic approaches sensitive to learners' previous educational experiences.

The commitment to understanding and respecting diversity and the principles of equal treatment are embedded within the University's equality policies. The University has adopted a social model of disability and accepts that disability is socially created. It has taken the approach that responsibility lies with the University to identify barriers and obstacles that exist and to work towards removing them to support disabled learners to complete their programmes of study.

Description of the change initiative

Sheffield Hallam University's change initiative set out a multi-stranded, whole institution approach to embedding equality and diversity. Its overarching aim was to create a

learning environment that embraces and values diversity and maximises the use of inclusive policies and practices.

The following objectives were set out to support the achievement of this aim:

- development of the infrastructure needed to support the development of a co-ordinated and integrated approach to diversity and inclusion;
- production of an overarching Diversity Equality Strategy;
- piloting of an Equality Impact Assessment tool on identified policies and practices relating to LTA and the student experience;
- embedding of research findings relating to diversity and inclusivity;
- identification of an evidence base to inform policy change, through the provision of statistical information and internally commissioned research;
- provision of a record of institutional change.

The focus of the project was to build and capitalise on the existing strategy/policy drivers and infrastructure within the University. It therefore set out to establish a Diversity Equality Strategy Steering Group, supported by a Diversity and Inclusivity Forum as a reference group. These groups were to comprise key stakeholders across all University staff and students and external community representatives. These groups were to oversee the development of an integrated University-wide Diversity Equality Scheme, incorporating the disability, gender and race equality schemes and other areas of equality legislation. It was envisaged that this strategy would complement, and be synergistic with, the University's WP strategy.

The initiative set out to embed research evidence and undertake equality impact assessment in order to enhance inclusion in respect of policy and practice relating to learning, teaching and assessment and the student experience. Five specific areas of activity were identified early on, namely:

- improving the disabled students' learning contract system to ensure that student support requirements are communicated in an accessible way and acted upon. This involved embedding research that had already been undertaken and developing and implementing an action plan;
- building on a diversity e-learning module aimed at raising the awareness of diversity among staff and the development of diversity awareness teaching materials aimed at

- students, which could then be incorporated into programmes of study and linked to personal development plans and employability;
- the promotion of diversity and inclusion through a high-profile 'celebrating diversity' event, targeting both staff and students and involving the Students' Union and local partners;
 - the promotion of positive images to ensure that the visual images used by the University portray positive images that are acceptable to people from diverse backgrounds.

It was anticipated that impact assessment reports would include recommendations for changes to policies and practices supported by an action plan for implementation.

In order to identify further areas for action and to demonstrate the impact of the work being undertaken, statistical analysis and the collation of information relating to admissions and achievement/performance was to be undertaken, together with the identification of changes made to policies and practices, enabling periodic review of progress, provision of a transparent process, identification of accountability and the facilitation of the sharing good practice.

Rationale for change

The values and commitments set out in Sheffield Hallam's vision and key strategic documentation present a key driver for the development and implementation of this initiative for change. It builds on its history of widening participation and engagement with the access to higher education agenda.

This initiative represents a programme of activity that builds on, and is a natural progression of, work that has already been initiated within the University; for example, the commitment to ensure that a diverse range of learners can benefit from higher education. The University also has a well-established infrastructure to support this work. It has recently made central appointments to support the development of diversity and inclusivity, including a senior level Diversity Co-ordinator. This ensures that the University is able to drive forward the inclusion agenda in a systematic and co-ordinated way. In addition, each faculty within the University is required to have a member of academic staff with a remit for diversity and inclusion thus ensuring that there is a mechanism to embed an inclusive culture at the heart of the institution's core business.

In supporting the University's key strategic drivers and by taking a whole institution approach, this initiative sets out to make a significant contribution to the improvement of the experience of students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, it will enable the institution to meet its legislative requirements, taking a proactive approach to addressing equality, diversity and inclusion.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The Sheffield Hallam team developed a whole institutional vision approach for developing and embedding inclusive policy and practice. In order to take this forward, the team's primary achievement has been the development of a University-wide Equality and Diversity Strategy to address and embed equality and diversity. The strategy has a focus on addressing core aspects of University business, particularly learning, teaching and assessment, quality procedures and impact assessment.

In order to implement the strategy the following have been delivered:

- consolidation and continued meeting of the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, Equality and Diversity Forum and staff diversity fora, which, together with other existing strategy groups and fora, are steering and co-ordinating the ongoing development of inclusive policy and practice;
- the ongoing development of an Equality & Diversity Toolkit, bringing together good practice and staff development resource;
- a staff development workshop on learning and teaching from a disabled student's perspective;
- the initiation of an annual Diversity Week event, which has taken place twice since the inception of the Academy programme. The events have taken place across the University to celebrate diversity both internally and externally focused. As a result of the first event, the second was delivered in partnership with the University of Sheffield and Sheffield City Council and included a high-profile debate about the importance of diversity within education, involving the two Sheffield universities and a local MP;
- the marketing of the change initiative through the production of a diversity calendar;
- two pieces of institutional research to collect institutional evidence to identify what and where the key issues in respect of equality and diversity are, as follows:

- Student Experience – to identify differences between disabled and non-disabled students in respect of their experience of learning, teaching and assessment. A total of 484 students were surveyed. Results were analysed in order to identify what LTA issues exist and priority areas for action. The key findings of this research have been disseminated into the learning, teaching and assessment experiences of both disabled and non-disabled students, which have highlighted the benefits of Learning Contracts for disabled students, in supporting academic achievement;

Students as Learners – this research compared students' attainment with their perception of their student experience and particularly their view of their effectiveness of themselves as learners. It has set out to identify where there are differences between groups of learners in order to develop a better understanding of learning, teaching and assessment issues. It is taking a self-efficacy approach with students coupled with an analysis of attainment;

- mapping of university policies and practices and prioritisation of key areas for Equality Impact Assessments. Pilot EIAs initiated in several areas;
- successful operation of a conference for disabled students (Engage) in March 2009, providing a valuable opportunity for students to provide feedback to the University;
- establishment of an Inclusive Practice post within the Disabled Student Support Portfolio, to develop inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

All the above developments will also be used as mechanisms to take forward the University's equality impact assessment and support its single equality scheme.

The team were aware as they began to take forward this change initiative that the scope of what was proposed was very broad and ambitious. They were able to use the Academy programme to sharpen their thinking, reach common understandings and identify clear milestones in order to drive the initiative forward. Involvement in the programme enabled the institution to focus its attention on a range of initiatives to achieve shared goals within a specific time frame, and facilitated institution-wide collaboration and engagement. They were able to identify where barriers existed and what specific issues they had to overcome, and also to develop a shared vision of what embedding inclusive practice and diversity into the learning provision would mean for the University.

As a result of developing their own understanding of an inclusive university and student experience, the team recognised that creating sustained change went further than the delivery of their initiative. The institution as a whole would need to more fully develop its understanding of diversity and inclusion in its own context. As a result of identifying their 'tipping point' the team agreed that a university-wide debate on diversity that involved staff and students as participants would facilitate this. To this end the development of mechanisms to encourage debate and raise awareness were established, e.g. Diversity Week, in order to ensure that all staff had the opportunity to engage with, and understand, inclusion and diversity in context. They also used key internal levers to facilitate buy-in and action, namely: promoting the diversity of their student population and the need to take an inclusive approach to student engagement; highlighting the requirements of diversity legislation and equality duties; and pointing out key findings from research into the experiences and achievement among some equality/under-represented groups and the need to adopt inclusive practices to ensure a quality student experience and maintaining academic standards.

The team also recognised at an early stage that any change that was achieved needed to be sustained and supported by the establishment of a clear evidence base. This will provide the team with a platform from which to secure funding and resources to maintain the process of change started by this initiative.

The team placed great value on the time afforded to them through the Academy programme as it enabled them to share thinking and understanding across a diverse range of University stakeholders, which has benefited the successful implementation of the initiative. As a result it has recognised that stakeholder engagement is a key factor in the successful embedding of inclusive practice across the institution.

Next steps

The Academy support programme has been regarded as a developmental phase of this change initiative. The work to deliver the Diversity and Equality Strategy will continue, driven centrally by the Diversity Co-ordinator and supported by team members and colleagues across the University. The following actions are ongoing:

- utilisation of the Equality and Diversity groups and fora;
- engagement with Equality Impact Assessments;
- further research into the experiences and achievements of equality/under-represented groups;
- continuing attention to ensure that the inclusion agenda is reflected in strategies resulting from the new Corporate Plan.

Key messages

Sheffield Hallam University would like to share the following key messages:

- the team is key – ensure that team members are able to make or to influence strategic decisions;
- make sure that the team is representative of all stakeholders and includes those who will challenge as well as support;
- establish a stable team with members who can be long-term deliverers and advocates.

University of Westminster

Embedding inclusive curriculum practices through an institution-wide approach to learning and teaching

HEI context

The University of Westminster's historical mission is to improve access to higher education for students from backgrounds with no tradition of going into higher education. It has a strong track record of attracting students from non-traditional backgrounds and, in 2006, was cited as the best higher education (HE) institution in London for widening participation.

This initiative was funded through HEFCE's Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) from 2006 to 2009. It was set up to address two of the principles of the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Policy:

- *the University is committed to widening participation, to helping students develop essential qualities so that they can benefit fully from their studies and to supporting groups of students who may face barriers in the employment market;*
- *learning and teaching methods are selected to meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students (including international students and those with disabilities), with attention to issues of fair access and equal opportunities.*

The LTA policy, together with the University's strategic commitment to inclusive practice, has created the driver for this initiative.

Description of the change initiative

The University's change initiative has been developed as part of a TQEF-funded initiative, Inclusive Curriculum for Disabled Students (ICDS). ICDS aims to develop sustainable University-wide approaches towards inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment that will support the learning of disabled students, are beneficial to all students and contribute to embedding disability equality and widening participation throughout the University.

Delivery of this aim has taken place through the following four objectives, to:

- support new and existing staff to continue to develop inclusive curriculum design and inclusive learning and teaching practices that will reduce barriers to learning for disabled students and will recognise a diversity of learning styles;
- involve staff and disabled students in identifying good practice and barriers in existing learning and teaching approaches;
- review the University's processes for curriculum validation and review in relation to inclusion for disabled students;
- promote inclusive approaches for disabled students that are embedded in mainstream processes and practices.

These aims and objectives have been supported by the activities undertaken as part of the Higher Education Academy programme.

The ICDS initiative and the activities undertaken within the Academy programme have sought to facilitate change at a fundamental level that could be sustained and continued beyond both the duration of the programme itself and the TQEF funding that supported it. Activities have focused on disabled students but are relevant to the wider diversity agenda. They set out to remove or reduce barriers to learning and participation, recognising that people learn and communicate their learning in different ways, by the developing of an inclusive approach to curriculum design and delivery, ensuring that provision for students with disabilities is embedded within the mainstream and supports students with a diversity of learning styles and requirements. Identification of good practice in existing learning, teaching and assessment practices, together with any barriers to be addressed, fed into the development of materials and case studies to support staff development for both new and existing staff.

A key element of the initiative was to work with students and staff at all levels across the University, through seminars and focus groups, to ensure that inclusive approaches are informed by current good practice, internally and externally. Curriculum developments set out to address the students' overall learning experiences, including transition to HE from school/FE, PDP and the exploration of employment opportunities. It was also anticipated that mainstream processes would be developed to become equally appropriate for the University's diverse student body.

Rationale for change

The project is deeply rooted in the sound practices in widening participation within the University and in the policy of embedding disability equality and widening participation at all organisational levels. The institution recognises that working on an ongoing basis to remove barriers to learning for disabled students is often of benefit to students more widely and is likely to enhance retention, progression and achievement.

This change initiative was developed and delivered as part of a TQEF-funded initiative, supporting and adding value to its outcomes. It was identified that it would provide a means to both review practice and to take forward staff development in respect of inclusive practice for disabled students. The development of Learning and Teaching Guides to review practice would help academic and academic-related staff meet their legal duties under the Disability Discrimination Act to both anticipate the needs of disabled students in general, and to make the additional adjustments required by individual disabled students. The Learning and Teaching Guides would be supported by a set of case studies.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

The University's team has addressed the delivery of the initiative on the basis of the four objectives outlined above and has achieved the following outcomes:

- delivery of 22 University-wide focus groups for staff and student groups. Student focus groups have involved disabled students with different impairments at each of the campuses. Staff focus groups have included a wide range of academic and academic-related staff and support staff. Each focus group concentrated on a particular aspect of learning and teaching and sought to gain information on barriers to inclusion, examples of good practice and areas for improvement and development;
- development of a series of thematic Learning and Teaching Guides informed by focus group findings and developed in consultation with staff and disabled students. The purpose of the guides is to support the delivery of an inclusive curriculum for disabled students and, additionally, to benefit a diverse student body. Twelve guides have been produced and are available from www.wmin.ac.uk/page-16413. The guides plus case studies were launched on 23 June 2009. The guides are as follows:

1. ICDS Introductory Guide;
2. Barriers and Solutions;
3. Inclusive Validation and Review;
4. Inclusive Recruitment and Selection;
5. Inclusive Enrolment and Induction;
6. Inclusive Placements, Work Experience and Off-Campus Learning;
7. Inclusive Learning and Teaching Resources;
8. Inclusive Lectures, Seminars and Tutorials;
9. Inclusive Laboratories, Studios and Workshops;
10. Inclusive Assessment;
11. Inclusive Research Programmes;
12. Inclusive Course Monitoring.

- staff and student case studies have been developed based on information gained from focus group sessions. These will be used to support the Learning and Teaching Guides as part of ongoing staff development and are available as above. Case studies from disabled students at the University have been based on their personal experiences, providing examples of the ways in which learning has been made accessible and of how curriculum delivery or design causes barriers to learning with suggestions for improvement. Those from staff provide examples of practice that works and promotes inclusion, explaining how practice has overcome barriers to learning and how and why it works. They will look at the implications for other staff who may be considering adopting this practice – its transferability, resources required and prerequisites for success;
- delivery of staff development events, contributing to the quality enhancement activity in the University in respect of learning and teaching; for example, in contribution to the 2008 Learning and Teaching Symposium;
- agreement of the following in order to embed the development, delivery and assessment of inclusive curriculum in the core process of validation and review:
 - information about inclusive curriculum and associated requirements for the validation process will be provided in the revised Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook from 2008;
 - inclusive curriculum will be one of the agenda items at validation planning meetings;
 - inclusive curriculum will be an aspect of the pre-validation workshops run for course teams validating new programmes from Autumn 2008 onwards;

- the inclusive curriculum learning and teaching guides and case studies will support staff to consider inclusive curriculum issues when designing new programmes;
- information about inclusive curricula for disabled students has been produced for inclusion in the PGCertHE and training for PGCertHE course teams is also planned;
- a website has been developed as a means to disseminate the initiative and as a resource for staff development.

The team have identified that the development of this initiative has been facilitated by the following key elements:

- their ability to be associated with, and draw resources from, the TQEF aspect of this initiative. This has ensured that this change initiative is clearly placed within the institution and it has benefited from resources to support team members; for example, by the buying out of time. The additional benefit has been the availability of funding to enable the use of external consultants to take forward the focus groups. This has enabled staff and students to feel more confident in speaking freely, which might not have been the case had the focus groups had been facilitated by internal staff;
- the Higher Education Academy programme, which has enabled the team to develop their thinking and understanding of embedding of inclusive practice. They have been able to identify the importance of tailoring their message in order to engage different stakeholder groups. For example, they made the decision to remove the word 'disabled' from the title of their Learning and Teaching Guides in order to give them a broader appeal and to demonstrate that inclusive practice can benefit all students;
- the focus groups, which have formed a critical part of the development and delivery of the initiative and underpinned all its activities. They have provided information to inform the development of the guides and case studies, while also enabling the team to identify gaps in provision and areas for development;
- current structural change taking place in the University, particularly in respect of committee structures. This has provided the team with the opportunity to engage with new committees as they are established in order to ensure that inclusive practice is embedded in validation and review processes.

Next steps

This initiative will continue to be taken forward through TQEF funding. The Learning and Teaching Guides are now being used to develop staff development materials in order to continue to drive forward staff development activity and quality enhancement.

The team are also now addressing issues of sustainability, engaging with advocates and ensuring that they are able to demonstrate impact in respect of the quality of the experience of their student body. This will include a communication strategy designed to involve more staff across the University and gain greater buy-in.

Key messages

The key messages that the University of Westminster team would like to share with the HE sector are as follows:

- they have benefited from the opportunity that the Academy programme has provided to share good practice and network with other institutions. More similar opportunities would be very welcome;
- in the process of developing and facilitating change the team have identified the importance of ensuring that this should be facilitated through quality assurance in respect of processes and structures, as well as quality enhancement through staff development.

University of Worcester

Embedding inclusive practices in teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design through a disability-related staff development programme

HEI context

The University of Worcester's institutional vision features a pledge to "being a high quality University with an international reputation for excellent, inclusive education". A core element of its mission statement is "to provide consistently excellent higher education in an inclusive, open, innovative, creative environment characterised by a profound commitment to equality of opportunity".

These commitments are embedded in the University's Strategic Plan and a respect for diversity and a commitment to anti-discrimination and inclusive practice is highlighted in the Equal Opportunities policy and in the Race Equality and Disability Equality Action Plans. These values are also embedded in the Learning and Teaching Policy through aims and objectives designed to deliver inclusive learning and teaching.

The University has an established disability service and student feedback indicates high satisfaction levels. It recruits higher than average proportions of disabled students and has a strong reputation for student support. The University recently established the Centre for Inclusive Learning Support to lead on research, development and consultancy activity in the field of inclusion and with particular reference to students with disabilities.

Description of the change initiative

The University of Worcester's change initiative aimed to:

- improve the learning experience of disabled students in HE;
- embed effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design within the University of Worcester.

The change initiative set out to deliver these aims through the implementation of an innovative staff development package ‘Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education’. It was intended that this package should form a core element of a wider continuing professional development programme at the University that would address staff needs in both teaching and non-teaching roles. The package would focus on 16 dimensions of the curriculum, underpinned by a research approach and taking account of the legal framework as prescribed by the DDA, and guidance published by bodies such as the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Higher Education Academy.

In order to support the above developments, the change initiative set out to develop and trial resources for staff to disseminate and build on existing knowledge, skills and confidence in effecting changes to teaching, learning and assessment practices without compromising academic and/or professional body standards [competence standards (DDA 2006)]. In addition, it was intended that the University’s existing online resource, Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study (SCIPS), would be extended to encompass all subject areas, providing supplementary support for all teaching staff.

The project is being developed and delivered in three phases. It was identified at the outset that the initiative would run beyond the lifetime of the Academy programme and that at the end of Phase 3 staff development would be further rolled out to partner colleges and specific elements of the programme embedded into the University’s staff induction and PGCertHE programmes.

Rationale for change

The rationale for the University of Worcester’s change initiative is firmly grounded in both research and the institution’s strategic priorities.

A clear and overt commitment to widen participation for all traditionally disadvantaged learners throughout the student life cycle, including disabled people, is firmly embedded in the University’s Strategic Plan 2007–2012. Moreover, inclusion has long been championed as a central feature of University policy. The project is therefore supporting the University’s strategic commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion in all its activities. It is also committed to ongoing staff development, encouraging staff to “maximise their achievement and fulfil their potential, whilst ensuring individuals are treated with dignity and respect” (University of Worcester Strategic Plan).

In addition, the team have identified through research findings (Chapman and Carlisle, 2006) that many academic staff continue to have concerns about how they might teach and/or support traditionally disadvantaged learners and in particular disabled students. They are unclear about the implications of the DDA on their teaching practice both in respect of 'reasonable adjustment' and 'competence standards'. The initiative was, therefore, designed both to enable staff to overcome these concerns and develop their teaching practice, and to support the continuing development of its CPD framework. The framework includes relevant CPD learning outcomes and a programme tailored to help teaching staff within the University and its partner colleges to become more inclusive in their teaching, learning and assessment practices and curriculum design.

Development and implementation of the change initiative

As a result of undertaking this initiative the University of Worcester team have made significant progress in addressing their aims and objectives.

They have moved through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the delivery of the project and have achieved the following outputs:

- development of an appreciative inquiry methodology for the collection of evidence and as a developmental tool;
- the development of the appreciative inquiry research within one department as a pilot including the identification and engagement of student researchers and the delivery of briefings and training for this group. The research has been disseminated within this faculty, has been very well received and resulted in the development of a priority action plan;
- a staff survey on understandings and practice in respect of inclusive teaching in order to identify need and areas for development. All survey findings have been collated and disseminated. The staff survey brought a 78% return and has generated significant interest in the appreciative inquiry approach;
- a staff/student research summit to disseminate research findings, gather feedback and engage with other departments;
- a *Guide to the Appreciative Inquiry Approach* for University-wide application;
- use of the Guide as a tool to inform further planning and the embedding of staff development activities for inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practice. In

addition, a staff development resource providing tips on developing inclusive practice has been developed, as has a student guide to diagnosing dyslexia, which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students with a disability self-referring;

- a small TQEF budget has been secured to facilitate roll-out of the appreciative inquiry approach and the embedding of inclusive practice;
- a research assistant has been appointed to take forward pedagogical research on the student experience across different student groups;
- papers on inclusive practice have been presented to the Learning & Teaching and Student Experience Committee resulting in increased interest among staff for staff development and undertaking the appreciative inquiry process;
- the initiative has also been disseminated at external conferences and seminars.

The project team were clear from the outset that the development of their staff development package should be evidence based. However, the research methodology for the collection of this evidence was identified and developed as a result of discussion and debate within the team and with the support of the Academy programme. This moved the team from a conventional action research approach to one of appreciative inquiry, which included students as primary researchers. An appreciative inquiry methodology has impacted on the way in which the team members articulate their understanding of inclusive practice, moving from a deficit approach – *what we don't do* – to a positive approach – *what we do well*. This has already been taken on board by the participating academic department, with significant interest from staff generated.

The team was also aware from the outset that the engagement of students in the development of inclusive practice would be a critical factor in ensuring that CPD outputs were appropriate and relevant. This has been achieved through the appreciative inquiry approach and its impact has been that students have been central to its delivery and consequently moved from merely being the subjects of the collection of research evidence to being meaningful participants in the process. As a result, students have been able to develop their own skills and increase both their academic and personal confidence.

The team also developed their understanding of how crucial it is to engage with key stakeholders in other departments in order to roll the initiative out and the need to identify champions and advocates for the development of inclusive practice and

using this innovative approach. This has been coupled with an appreciation of the need to identify 'gatekeepers' within departments who would assist and facilitate the delivery and embedding of the initiative. Next steps have been influenced by this understanding.

As they began the delivery of their initiative, they were very aware that a potential barrier to success would be securing the interest of academic staff. The benefit to delivery of using appreciative inquiry has been that it is being regarded as developmental and innovative and consequently has had greater success in engaging academic staff. There has been an increased awareness of appreciative inquiry as a change management tool that works and the process will be repeated because of its impact within the pilot faculty.

Alongside this, gaining commitment from key staff within departments has acted as an enabling factor. This has meant that delivery in the pilot department has been successful and the department for roll-out has been identified. This has been achieved through networking, the ability of the team – particularly the team leader – to influence and persuade, and through the use of research-based evidence.

There have also been factors that have facilitated and enabled progress. The fact that they have been able to 'badge' what is being delivered as a Higher Education Academy initiative has ensured support for a concept, which may not otherwise have been the case. As a result of its success a small amount of institutional funding has been earmarked to support the roll-out of the approach across the institution.

Next steps

Phase 3 of this change initiative is now being taken forward with the appreciative inquiry approach being gradually rolled out with the support of institutional funds, as highlighted above.

The team are aware that they cannot go through this process with all University departments in order to achieve embedding. Therefore the Appreciative Inquiry Guide will provide a key mechanism for moving forward and a tool for building capacity and embedding within departments.

The next two academic departments to take on the approach have been identified and the project leader will work with those departments to facilitate the process.

In addition, an evaluation of the impact of the process on learning, teaching and assessment for disabled students through consultation with disabled students themselves will be undertaken. Staff will also be consulted in order to evaluate the changes made to practice. Roll-out will continue across the institution and will be extended to partner colleges.

It is also anticipated that a general guide to the appreciative inquiry approach can be shared across the sector via the Higher Education Academy.

Key messages for other institutions

The University of Worcester team are very clear about their key messages:

- a champion for your cause is paramount – an advocate enables you to access areas that might not otherwise be penetrable;
- focus on the positive rather than the deficit – this applies to both staff as well as students;
- move away from a compliance culture – pick up on the positive impact on your core functions, e.g. teaching, learning and assessment.

The University of Worcester has also put in place resources to build capacity in departments, used an evidence-based case to influence and persuade and as a result secured institutional commitment and supporting funds to roll out and disseminate the initiative across the institution and beyond.

The Higher Education Academy

The Higher Education Academy supports the sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students. It does this by:

- providing national leadership in developing and disseminating evidence-informed practice about enhancing the student learning experience
- operating as an independent broker, enabling expertise to be shared across institutions and subject areas
- working at multiple levels, with individual academics, subject communities, departments, faculties and institutions
- working across all parts of the UK, recognising the distinctive policy contexts and priorities of the devolved administrations but also providing opportunities to share expertise among them.

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