



The Higher
Education Academy

**Developing and Embedding
Inclusive Policy and Practice within
Higher Education**

Summary

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the programme

The Higher Education Academy's inclusion change programme 'Developing and Embedding Inclusive Policy and Practice in Higher Education' was launched in April 2007 and was open to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK.

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 to effect change across the institution. Twenty nine proposals were received from institutions. Ten institutions were selected to take part, having clearly demonstrated that they had met the inclusion criteria specified in the call.

The programme was originally inspired by Change Academy¹ - a year-long programme of support for teams from higher education institutions that enables them to develop the knowledge, capacity and enthusiasm for achieving complex institutional change. The Academy has provided institutions on the inclusion programme with a framework, centred around a series of four events, which has brought together teams of staff from across institutions, to work alongside others focusing on similar themes. The events were designed to facilitate the planning, implementation and dissemination of their change initiatives over the 14 month period.

1.2 Aims of the programme

The overall aim of the programme 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. It aimed to create a space for institutions to focus on, and exchange ideas about, policy and/or practice development and implementation.

1.3 Key features of the programme

The key features of the Academy's inclusion programme include:

- **Self-identified change:** to ensure the change proposed by participating HEIs was aligned to their institutions' mission, strategy or policy development, whilst effecting change across the institutions.

¹ Change Academy is run by the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation in Higher Education.

- **A facilitative programme:** to support the institutions to focus on, and exchange ideas about, policy and/or practice development and implementation through a mix of institutional, role-based and cross-team working.
- **A longitudinal programme of engagements** (rather than one off events): to facilitate and guide the change initiatives through a process of planning, implementation, and dissemination.
- **The involvement of institutional teams:** to facilitate a cross-institutional approach towards embedding.
- **Working alongside other institutions on inclusion:** to allow for the sharing of experiences, challenges and solutions and to facilitate networking across institutions.
- **Promoting the development of evidence-informed practice:** to build on existing research into widening participation and disability (eg. Thomas and May, 2005, UUK; Gorard et al, 2006; May et al, 2006).
- **Sharing of learning with the sector:** 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 Overview of the programme

April 2007	Programme call for proposals launched Interested institutions invited to submit a short proposal.
May 2007	Deadline for receipt of proposals 29 proposals were received and reviewed against pre-defined criteria. The programme was extended to include 10 institutions.
June 2007	Institutions notified Successful institutions were informed and agreed to be part of the programme. Unsuccessful institutions were signposted to existing and planned activity within the Academy and other organisations.
July 2007	Start-up meeting For all institutional teams, to facilitate the planning of their individual change initiatives through team and shared activities.
Nov 2007	Three-day residential For all team members, designed to create the space and time 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.

May 2008	Follow-up meeting For all team members to jointly reflect on key achievements and research findings, as well as develop strategies and mechanisms for evaluation and sustainability.
Sept 2008	Dissemination event For Academy and team representatives to share the outcomes of the programme and individual change initiatives with the sector, as well as facilitate discussions based on emerging themes arising from the teams' experience of the development and embedding of inclusive policy and practice with the sector.

2 Research

2.1 Aims and objectives of the research

The research conducted by the Academy during the course of the programme aimed to explore the institutional teams' experience of implementing a change initiative to develop and embed an aspect of inclusive policy and practice. It sought to capture the 'journey travelled' by the teams in managing and implementing their 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.

2.2 Overview of methods employed

The research involved a series of observations, reflective questions, institutional visits, focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

Method	Purpose
Contextual Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis of initial HEI proposals ○ Initial telephone interview with initiative leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To gain a understanding of the institutional context ○ To gain an understanding of the starting point for each change initiative ○ To encourage teams to reflect on anticipated risks, barriers and successes
Non Participative Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observation undertaken on facilitated programme days and HEI visits (team meetings) ○ Team of observers briefed prior to each programme day ○ Observation prompts used to guide observation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To better understand the development of each change initiative ○ To observe the development of each team's understanding and approach to embedding inclusive policy and practice ○ To understand the processes developed by teams to plan and implement their initiative and how they have decided on these processes ○ To evaluate the impact of a facilitated programme and cross-HEI working

<p>Reflective Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formulation of questions by Academy research team ○ Email circulation of questions to all participating team members between events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide ongoing qualitative information on each team's process of developing their initiative ○ To encourage teams to consider the approaches being employed and the resultant changes which have taken place ○ To allow team members to reflect on their own learning and participation in the programme
<p>Telephone / Email Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academy support available to all participating team members ○ Telephone contact made with teams as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To provide an ongoing open dialogue between the Academy team and participants ○ To follow up questions and visits in order to gather further qualitative data
<p>Visits / Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 – 2 visits to each HEI during the course of the programme ○ Observation of team meetings ○ Semi structured interviews with each team member as appropriate ○ Interview structures informed by responses to reflective questions / email and telephone discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To capture the process of change initiative implementation and what changes / impact has been achieved ○ To capture the experiential learning of each team ○ To understand how the programme has enabled participants to develop their own learning in respect of inclusion and embedding and of how to effect change

3 Summary of change initiatives

3.1 Anglia Ruskin University

Equality-Proofing the Curriculum

This change initiative aimed to develop and embed inclusive practice across the University, following a major curriculum review in 2005-6. At that time, there was an opportunity to identify and re-design curricula which may have presented barriers to some learners. This was deemed challenging by many academic staff and hence this initiative was developed. The team have worked to develop appropriate training opportunities and guidance for staff in order to promote good practice for inclusive teaching. They have also reviewed the performance management criteria to establish the ways in which a commitment to meeting the learning needs of all students might be demonstrated within individual job roles. In the process, the team have engaged colleagues from a range of University services such as Learning and Teaching, Student Services and Human Resources.

During the course of the Academy's inclusion change programme, the team have conducted surveys of students and staff to help identify the areas for further development. The findings of these surveys have helped to identify specific areas in need of improvement from the perspective of disabled students, as well as staff's preferred modes of professional development. The surveys also helped to identify examples of existing good practice which the team were keen to build upon. The outcome has been the development of an inclusive learning and teaching website, including some short videos of colleagues talking about their practice.

Latterly, the team have focussed on ways of ensuring that inclusive practice is mainstreamed for all staff. For example, a statement on inclusive practice will be included within a key 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. In addition, the team are working to embed reflection on inclusive practice within the appraisal process for academic staff. The team have also secured references to inclusive practice within the University's Student Retention Strategy and will continue to develop the web resource to support the implementation of this strategy. A further achievement has been the development of a blended learning module on inclusive practice, accredited by SEDA, which will be available to both academic and support staff.

Through mainstreaming, the project is expected to be sustainable and its success will be evaluated in future through staff and student feedback mechanisms, appraisal summaries, website usage, and take-up of the inclusive practice SEDA module.

3.2 University of Bradford

Changing Together: Enhancing learning, teaching and assessment strategies and practices for disabled students

This change initiative aimed to develop, implement and embed a whole University approach to changing the Learning, Teaching and Assessment practice and strategy to ensure greater inclusivity for disabled students. It was intended to build on the University's commitment to change to promote, develop and embed innovative practice and was designed to lead to key changes across learning, teaching and assessment practices to address the needs of disabled students supported by a comprehensive staff development approach. Its key message was to 'support to succeed'.

The team have designed a holistic approach to the development of an inclusive campus. They have written a policy on inclusive assessments for disabled students, which became an integral part of the learning and teaching assessment strategy following a meeting of the University's Academic Policy Committee in June. They have started the development of an e-module for all

staff on inclusive curriculum development and practice to be piloted in 2008/09 and are undertaking an investigation into inclusive learning outcomes and assessment methods to deliver them. The team have also undertaken various dissemination activities, both internally and externally, and now plan to produce a publication to promote the initiative.

Furthermore, they have secured enough funding to enable two members of the team to continue working on the initiative's sustainability. The work will include development and delivery of resources for staff, on-going building of the evidence base, and dissemination and evaluation of outputs and outcomes.

3.3 University of Hull

Disability Equality Impact Assessment and Academic Approvals: Inclusion at the heart of institutional change

This change initiative aimed to ensure disability equality was a required part of the academic approvals process for new modules and new programmes. It included a review of the current evidence base in relation to equality impact assessment and examined appropriate mechanisms for impact assessment at Faculty Level involving the Academic Approvals Committee. It also looked at ways of involving collaborative partners and key stakeholders in equality impact assessment for academic approvals.

The team implemented a phased approach, with the first action being the development of an evidence base to inform the project work. In addition to the review of the literature, institutional data on disabled students was also collected. Consultation with staff was undertaken to identify their needs for information and development and to ensure that this informed the approach to change management.

As a result of the consultation and evidence gathering some practical support mechanisms and tools for staff have been developed. An inclusive practice guidance document which includes *Top Tips for Inclusivity* has been developed and a draft checklist/tool to be used by both programme /module developers and as part of the approvals process. The tool has been piloted by a member of academic staff in the development of a new programme to provide an illustrative example of its use in practice. In conjunction with the Quality Office, the key elements of the draft checklist have now been embedded into the annual training and development programme for Approval Panel members and their workbook. This aims to ensure inclusive practice, improve consistency of decision making, and facilitate the sharing of expertise and experience. It will be used in future training and made available to module and programme developers through the University's Innovation and Quality website. The team also delivered a workshop entitled *Building Disability Equality into the Approvals Process: Implications for Teaching and Learning* which was delivered at the University's Annual Learning and Teaching Conference.

3.4 Leeds Trinity and All Saints University College

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

This change initiative, implemented by Leeds Trinity and All Saints University College, aimed to widen 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 initiative sought 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, facilitate their transition to Higher Education (HE) and improve retention. The initiative also targeted the university's approach to personalised learning for development, through creating links between central student services and academic departments. The team sought to take a holistic approach and encourage the integration of learning support within the curriculum.

A number of activities have been developed to support these aims. Firstly, the team have developed an evidence base to underpin their approach to inclusive practice. For example, a literature review of access, equality and diversity issues in HE has been undertaken, and has been supplemented by the analysis of university-specific information. The key areas emerged as transition and integration of policies and practices, and curriculum delivery. Secondly, internal data was gathered on student engagement and attainment to identify areas where further action was needed. In addition focus groups gathered evidence on students' perceptions and experiences of inclusion at the University and a DVD presenting this evidence has also been produced. The evidence will be fed into staff development sessions. The team plan to continue to develop these resources to inform further institutional development.

The team's approaches to embedding inclusive practice have been recognised at a senior level in the university and have resulted in the creation of a new post with a brief covering the whole of the student experience from pre entry to employment. In addition the University's 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.

3.5 Manchester Metropolitan University

Building Curricula for the 21st Century Learner - A tool kit for diversity review

The change initiative taken forward by the team at Manchester Metropolitan University centred on the development and implementation of an equality toolkit. The toolkit was to provide the means to evaluate equality and diversity

within the University's programme development and review cycle, as part of its quality enhancement procedures. The initiative stemmed from a desire to reflect on University practice and consider the appropriateness of traditional methods of delivery, in the light of an increasingly diverse student body (arising from increased part-time learners, work-based learning, sub-degree provision, employer engagement and internationalisation).

The team established an evidence base to inform their approach by conducting a literature review on equality and diversity in higher education. They have sought to create synergies between this work and other equality procedures, including equality impact assessments.

The team have worked on a number of activities to support the development of inclusive practice amongst staff, including a proposal for a one day conference in partnership with the University's Diversity Community of Practice. They have also produced a staff development tool, which includes a DVD to demonstrate how and where potential issues about inclusive practice occur. The scenarios in the DVD are based on actual incidents at the University, acted out by current students. The DVDs are supported by other training materials so that staff are able to develop their understanding and practice with respect to equality, diversity and inclusive practice.

The change initiative has started to collect evidence that the culture is beginning to change across the University's faculties. Staff are beginning to demonstrate an understanding of issues relating to inclusive practice through a rise in requests for help and support. There has also been a noticeable increase in interest in activities to drive forward the inclusion agenda.

3.6 The Open University

Bridging the Digital Divide: Widening participation and e-learning

This initiative aimed to address the tensions between two of the Open University's strategic priorities: the increasing move towards e-learning, and widening participation. It explored and developed ways of ensuring that all students, and particularly those from low socio-economic groups, have access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) hardware and opportunity for appropriate skills development before they commence their study at the Open University. Evidence indicates that these students may have fewer opportunities to access ICT and be less confident in an e-learning environment, with a subsequent impact on their success.

The team sought to include course tutors, outreach workers and participating students, establishing a reference group to guide the proposed changes and assist in measuring success. The change initiative included a research component, a strand considering financial issues, establishing community based partnerships to enable local access to ICT facilities and support, developing models of student support and producing recommendations for embedding ICT skills development across the curriculum. An evidence base

has been drawn from the results of a survey on IT issues with students from different backgrounds. The outcome has ensured that the 'student voice' has influenced the development of the initiative and has been used to inform the approach taken by the team.

Four inter-related pieces of work have been progressed to provide a cohesive package of support to students as they join and begin their studies with the OU. These are:-

- Early provision of financial support to enable students to purchase computers as near as possible to the course start date
- 10 pilot projects with local libraries and uk online centres to provide community based access to ICT hardware
- A booklet providing basic advice about how ICT is used in the OU, how to purchase hardware and how to access training
- The development of an accredited ICT skills module to bridge the gap between the University's introductory level "Openings" courses (which are not ICT dependent) and other areas of the Level 1 curriculum

In undertaking this initiative, the team have also increased their own understanding of inclusion issues relating to ICT for a diverse student body, and particularly for those from low income backgrounds.

3.7 Queen Mary, University of London

Widening Participation and Students' Writing in the Disciplines

The change initiative implemented by Queen Mary, University of London, aimed to review and enhance the ways in which the university identified and responded to the language proficiency, academic literacy and professional communication needs of students, with particular reference to under-represented groups and international students. As part of this initiative, the team undertook to work towards a College strategy document, setting out approaches that could benefit both students and staff and identifying the staff development and the resource requirements to support widening participation and improve the student learning experience.

During the course of the Academy's change programme, the team consulted academic staff and students on the nature of disciplinary writing, curriculum models, and teaching methodologies, including assessment and feedback. They gathered information on attitudes towards and problems with writing, as well as on the extent to which central provision for writing development has been effective. Members of the Language and Learning Unit also undertook an internal review of its provision and identified other areas of the College, which offer complementary support (for example, the library, advice and counselling). The team also commissioned an external evaluation of an established 'Writing in the Disciplines' initiative (Thinking Writing) which has worked with departments for a number of years on curriculum development and teaching methodologies.

Results of these review processes are feeding directly into the College's Student Support Strategy in which the notion of support for academic writing development is embedded. They have helped build an evidence base for the development of a College writing strategy and increased the range of internal stakeholders engaged in debate and discussion around the nature of the student body and how different pedagogical approaches can support students. A deliberative workshop with stakeholders (c40) was held in May and over the coming year a range of draft documents and proposals will be the subject of further College-wide consultation.

3.8 Sheffield Hallam University

The Development and Implementation of an Integrated Approach to Equality and Diversity

The team at Sheffield Hallam aimed to develop and implement an integrated approach to diversity and equality for the University, seeking to find a systematic and co-ordinated way of bringing together the widening participation and diversity agendas.

Over the course of the Academy's Inclusion Change Programme, the team has developed a University-wide Equality and Diversity Strategy. They have worked in collaboration with a steering group comprising key stakeholders from the University's staff and students as well as representatives from external communities. This strategy document merges the race, gender and disability equality schemes in one, and outlines the way in which the University will embed equality and diversity within aspects of its core business including learning, teaching and assessment, quality procedures and impact assessment. Comparative research has been conducted to underpin the strategy's development and identify priority areas for action. This included a survey of the learning, teaching and assessment experience of just under 500 students, comparing those with and without disabilities, as well as studies comparing students' attainment with their perception of their learning experience and self-efficacy.

In addition, the team has contributed to the implementation of the strategy through a series of activities. They have produced a diversity calendar for staff and students and held a week-long event to celebrate diversity. Owing to the success of the week, next year the activities will be delivered in partnership with the University of Sheffield and Sheffield City Council. The team has also collated good inclusive practice and staff development resources in an Equality and Diversity Toolkit and will be working to influence the integration of WP and Equality and Diversity within the institution's new Corporate Plan.

3.9 University of Westminster

Embedding Inclusive Curriculum Practices through an Institution-wide Approach to Learning and Teaching

The change initiative, implemented by the team at the University of Westminster, has aimed to develop a sustainable University-wide approach to inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment that will support the learning of all students, particularly disabled students. In addressing this aim, the team have worked on four key objectives [1] to support the development of inclusive curriculum and teaching practices; [2] to identify good practice and barriers in existing learning and teaching approaches; [3] to review the curriculum validation and review processes; and [4] to promote inclusive approaches in mainstream processes. The initiative has been set up to fulfill the University's commitment to widening participation and providing learning and teaching methods that meet the learning needs of a diverse range of students, as outlined in its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy.

The team have worked with students and staff at all levels within the University, to ensure that inclusive approaches are informed by current good practice, both internally and externally. To achieve this, twenty-two focus groups with staff and students have been conducted. This has established an evidence-base, which comprises good practice examples, barriers to inclusion, and areas for improvement and development. This evidence has subsequently informed the development of a series of nine learning and teaching guides and staff and student case studies. These are intended to support the design and delivery of an inclusive curriculum, based on real life examples and personal experiences. The team have delivered several staff development events, as a contribution to the University's quality enhancement. Information about inclusive curricula for disabled students has been produced for inclusion in the postgraduate certificate in Higher Education and training for the course team is now planned.

The initiative has targeted the development, delivery and assessment of inclusive curriculum in the core process of Validation and Review and to this end the team have revised the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook to include information about inclusive curricula and associated requirements. They have secured the placement of inclusive curricula on the agenda on validation planning meetings and incorporated inclusive curricula into pre-validation workshops for new programmes from autumn 2008.

A website has also been developed as a means to disseminate the initiative and provide a resource for staff development.

3.10 University of Worcester

Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education

The aim of the change initiative at the University of Worcester was to improve the learning experience of disabled students by furthering the embedding of effective inclusive practices in learning, teaching, assessment and curriculum design throughout all its academic departments, including provision delivered in partner colleges. The team set out to achieve this aim through the creation and implementation of an innovative continuing professional development package for all staff, namely '*Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education*'. This was to build on the University's existing SCIPS (Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programmes of Study) online resource and form an integral part of its Continuing Professional Development framework.

The team wanted to ensure that their staff development package was evidence-informed. They conducted a staff survey on inclusive teaching, exploring staff understanding and current practice, in order to identify their learning needs and areas for development.

With support from the Academy's programme, the team selected an appreciative inquiry methodology, involving students as primary researchers, to further the development of the staff development package. The approach focuses on the identification and strengthening of positive factors – *what we do well*, rather than those that are negative (i.e. barriers) – *what we don't do*, which was deemed to reinforce a deficit perspective. Students were central to its delivery, acting as the primary researchers in one academic department, which acted as a pilot for this initiative. Engaging students was deemed to be crucial to ensuring that outputs were appropriate and relevant. A staff and student research summit was held to disseminate research findings, gather feedback and engage with other academic departments. The approach has been regarded as developmental and innovative and consequently has had greater success in engaging academic staff.

Additionally, resources will be developed, trialled, and made available to staff to help them gain knowledge, skill and confidence in effecting changes to teaching/learning/assessment practices without compromising academic and/or competence standards. A guide to appreciative inquiry has been written to facilitate University-wide application of the approach. The team have also secured core funding to facilitate the roll out and embedding of the initiative across the University.

4 Emerging findings

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

The findings of the research are summarised on the table below:

Emerging theme	Key findings
<p>4.1 Developing and embedding the language of inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All teams reflected on the meaning of inclusion and reviewed how inclusion was articulated within their institution (e.g. through its mission, strategies, policies and resources) in order to understand the potential ways by which inclusion could be embedded and linked to key institutional drivers and priorities. ▪ Carrying out impact assessments helped avoid the perpetuation of deficit or negative language. ▪ Teams found it beneficial to agree a shared vision of an inclusive university on commencing the initiative and found it helped if the mission of the university reflected this vision. ▪ Teams modified their language to reflect positive messages about diversity and inclusion in progressing the development of an inclusive culture, for example, referring to student ‘entitlement’ rather than ‘need’. ▪ Teams sought to tailor the case for inclusion to the different stakeholder groups they were targeting.
<p>4.2 Drivers for change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teams drew on a range of political drivers to embed inclusion across the institution, for example, addressing equality legislation, WP targets and performance indicators, and funding priorities. ▪ A range of government policy agendas (such as employer engagement, higher level skills, lifelong learning) provided the context within which teams were able to build the case for inclusive policy and practice. ▪ Internal drivers were broadly similar across institutional types and reflected institutional priorities such as retention, expanding international markets, demographic changes

	<p>and increasing numbers of part-time and mature learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The desire to improve teaching and learning emerged as a key driver for change. Teams made use of the National Student Survey findings to demonstrate a need to improve teaching and assessment practices. ▪ A clear driver for change was a corporate commitment to social justice and serving the needs of local and regional communities.
<p>4.3 Strategic approach to change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to embed inclusion, teams instigated change at multiple levels including the individual (e.g. attitude, practice), departmental (e.g. disciplinary practice) and institutional (e.g. procedures, structures and systems). ▪ All teams identified the need to collate research evidence, which they used to make the case for change, identify stakeholder priorities and demonstrate impact. ▪ Common to all change initiatives was the use of a multi-pronged approach to embedding inclusion. Some, but not all, took a holistic approach addressing all aspects of institutional function and delivery. ▪ The change initiatives encouraged a proactive approach within the HEI to the development of inclusive policy and practice. ▪ Institutions differed in their approach to defining and developing their change initiatives, with some defining and executing their approach through collaboration with stakeholder groups, and others pre-defining and working through a set of tasks as a team. ▪ Teams targeted senior management and academics as key stakeholder groups, and in particular those who were interested or 'consciously unknowledgeable' (rather than resisters), with the aim of creating a 'tipping point' where a greater number of staff were using inclusive practices than not.
<p>4.4 Focus of change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than one strategic institutional function was targeted by the change initiative. ▪ Teams identified a need to focus on changing both institutional (policy, structures, processes, environmental) and individual (attitudes, behaviour, practice) aspects. ▪ Academic practice was the focus for change in the majority of initiatives, including teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design.

<p>4.5 Mechanisms for achieving change</p>	<p>Mechanisms included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing continuing professional development, and where possible, tailored to the needs and practice of particular staff groups. ▪ Identifying and working with diversity champions from across the institution. ▪ Enlisting senior management leadership for inclusion to help, for example, in assuring resourcing; approving change; setting an example and engaging other staff. ▪ Consultation or collaboration with students. Collating and promoting different student perspectives. ▪ Using reward and recognition or performance management approaches to encourage the use of inclusive practice. ▪ Identifying, collating and disseminating effective and evidence-informed practice. ▪ The production of resources, such as guidance material or bespoke websites. ▪ Encouraging and supporting communication amongst staff across departments and functions on inclusion or diversity issues, such as the provision of a diversity week, debate forum, seminar, meeting or committee. ▪ Embedding inclusion by linking the change to current quality management and enhancement activity.
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5 Key learning points

Drawing on the success of the change initiatives, there are a number of emerging learning points from which other institutions could benefit:

- **Defining a shared vision of an inclusive university**
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 being taken forward. Whilst for some reaching a common understanding took time, it paid dividends as the initiative progressed and team members sought to address a common goal. Teams articulated this vision to others to further engage staff across the institution which acted to increase the effectiveness and scale of the change. Furthermore, where there was alignment of this vision to the mission or values of the university, this acted as a lever and impetus for the change.
- **Upholding a philosophy of inclusion**
During the course of implementing the change, institutions had cause to reflect upon their interpretation and response to widening participation and

disability equality. They considered their use of language and how inclusion was articulated within institutional goals, vision or mission and further interpreted in policy and practice. In some cases, institutions felt compelled to change the language they were using (such as referring to student entitlement rather than needs; developing inclusive practice for all students rather than just disabled students), in order to remain true to the philosophy of inclusion they were seeking to develop. At the heart of each change was a desire to move away from a deficit perspective, towards valuing difference and developing an inclusive culture which fosters the success of all students.

- **Building an evidence-base**

Each of the institutions benefited from building an evidence-base as an intrinsic part of the change being implemented. 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 gain buy in to the change) and/or monitoring the progress and impact of the change being taken forward.

- **Taking a systematic and holistic approach**

All institutions undertook a multi-pronged approach to the change being implemented. They identified and worked with a number of different stakeholder groups within their institutions and used a variety of approaches to bring about the change. They sought to target different aspects of institutional policy and practice to achieve change (including structures, procedures, strategies, as well as individual attitudes, behaviour or practice), and also focused on more than one aspect of institution service delivery (including teaching and learning, staff development, admissions, library, student services, disability support services, human resources).

- **Taking a proactive approach**

The nature of the change initiatives was such that it encouraged a proactive (rather than reactive) approach to the development of inclusive policy and practice. Each initiative sought to embed inclusive practice into the very fabric of the institution – its mission, policies, procedures and systems – in order to stimulate change and limit the number of retrospective adjustments required for individual students. In different ways, the initiatives have contributed to the development of an institutional culture, ensuring that ultimately the institution is better equipped to provide for an increasingly diverse student body.

- **Providing leadership for inclusion**

In many cases, the success of the initiatives depended on the commitment and engagement of senior management in the change being taken forward. Where senior managers were part of the programme teams they acted as catalysts to drive forward the change; where they were not on the team, they were targeted by the teams as key stakeholders and enablers in the process of moving the change forward. Notably several institutions

refer to securing senior management commitment as one of their key achievements.

- **Engaging internal stakeholders**

Teams recognised the need to work with a range of internal stakeholders. The success of their change initiatives depended on gaining 'buy in' from these stakeholders, raising their awareness and understanding, as well as sharing the ownership of the change being instigated. Institutions employed a number of strategies to enable this to happen 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.

- **Focusing on changing academic practice**

The targeting of academic practice for change, including teaching, learning, curriculum design and assessment, was a common approach amongst the change initiatives. Pedagogy and the teaching/learning interface has, arguably, the biggest impact on the student learning experience, given that (for most) gaining an education is their *raison d'être* for being at university. The institutions each used a multi-method approach, targeting academic structures, procedures and processes for change (e.g. revising strategy documents, validation processes or promotion procedures), as well as academic practice (e.g. teaching or assessment methods, staff development).

- **Keeping open the channels of communication**

Common to each team's approach was the provision of opportunities to open up communication with a number of different stakeholder groups within the institution. Key success factors were the provision of ongoing opportunities for, and encouragement of, open dialogue – an approach which begins with listening, encourages reflection and collaboration, the focus being on the co-generation of insights and ideas. Institutions also benefited from communicating with external sector bodies and other institutions to identify resources, share experiences and/or learn about different perspectives.