



Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education

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Acknowledgements

The Higher Education Academy gratefully acknowledges the support provided to the Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme by Equality Forward, and the contributions of Linda McLeod in particular. We also value and appreciate the contributions of Professor Christine Hockings to the summit programme and the inclusive learning and teaching research synthesis.

We are especially grateful to the institutional teams that participated fully in the Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme, and who have generously shared their reflective papers and inclusive learning and teaching resources with us to benefit others in the sector.

I. Foreword

In the context of increasing student diversity, institutional commitment to improve student retention and success and the forthcoming Equalities Act, inclusive learning and teaching is a priority for many higher education institutions. I think it is significant that the Higher Education Academy is leading work in this area to facilitate institutions to undertake strategic cultural change to enable all students to engage fully with their HE learning experience and maximise their personal, economic and social outcomes as graduates.

This publication provides a guide to developing inclusive learning and teaching in HE by exploring how 15 institutional teams from across the UK tackled this challenge, from defining inclusive learning and teaching to engaging staff and students and measuring impact. What I think is striking is the commitment of the individuals involved, the innovative approaches they have developed to enthuse and engage others in the process of change, and the changes they achieved.

Participating institutions have freely shared their learning gained through our programme. Furthermore, the report is grounded in the research and literature about inclusive learning and teaching, extracted from the HEA's synthesis of the same name, which is summarised in this publication.

It is hoped that this is a valuable resource that will challenge and enable institutions to further develop their work to ensure learning and teaching in higher education is inclusive, with positive outcomes for students, staff, institutions, the economy and society.

Craig Mahoney
Chief Executive
The Higher Education Academy

2. Inclusive learning and teaching and the Higher Education Academy (HEA)

2.1 An inclusive approach

The HEA has adopted and developed an inclusive approach to widening participation, equality and diversity, and improving student retention and success through a series of change programmes and associated research, publications and events. An inclusive approach:

... 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.

(May and Bridger, 2010, p.6)

The expansion of the higher education system to approximately 50% of school and college leavers, and more mature learners, has resulted in greater student diversity. This, in part, has been driven by the widening access and participation agendas in all the UK nations, and the equalities legislation. Increased diversity has been coupled with concern about student success in HE and beyond nationally (e.g. NAO, 2007) and within institutions (Action on Access, 2010).

The sector-wide commitment to broadening access and ensuring success requires institutions to have a more sophisticated understanding of diversity and to engage in institutional development and change to attract these students into HE and enable them to successfully complete their HE study and become effective graduates. Student diversity can incorporate difference across a number of dimensions, namely previous education, personal disposition, current circumstances and cultural heritage, summarised with examples in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Student diversity

Diversity dimensions	Examples
Educational	Level/type of entry qualifications; skills; ability; knowledge; educational experience; life and work experience; learning approaches.
Dispositional	Identity; self-esteem; confidence; motivation; aspirations; expectations; preferences; attitudes; assumptions; beliefs; emotional intelligence; maturity; learning styles; perspectives; interests; self-awareness; gender; sexuality.
Circumstantial	Age; disability; paid/voluntary employment; caring responsibilities; geographical location; access to IT and transport services; flexibility; time available; entitlements; financial background and means; marital status.
Cultural	Language; values; cultural capital; religion and belief; country of origin/residence; ethnicity/race; social background.

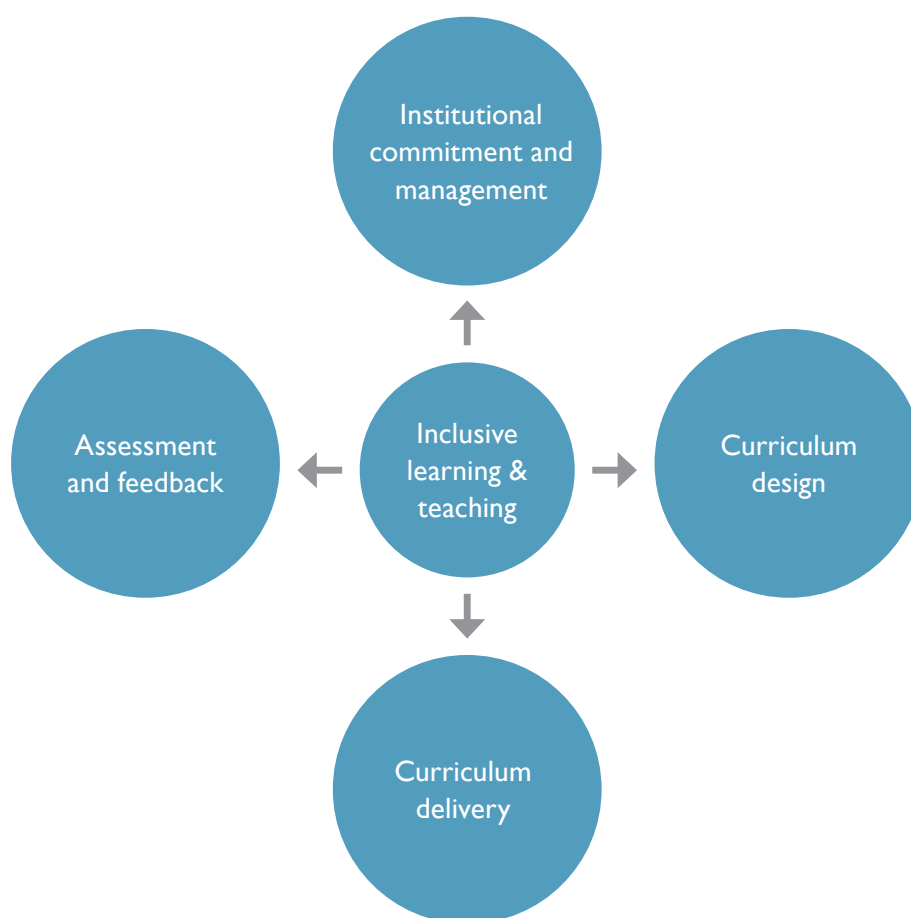
Our inclusive approach does not focus on specific target groups or dimensions of diversity, but rather strives towards proactively making higher education accessible, relevant and engaging to all students. This is informed by the simple but challenging maxim that “students don’t want to stand out as different yet want to be recognised as individuals” (Hockings, 2010a). We believe that an inclusive approach is engaging, and this in turn has positive outcomes for students and institutions in relation to student retention, achievement and progression.

2.2 Inclusive learning and teaching

Drawing on research literature (see Section 3 of this report), the experience of institutional teams (see Section 4 of this report) and a group of experts from across the sector, we have been considering what inclusive learning and teaching is. We identified four dimensions that need to be considered in relation to developing and implementing inclusive learning and teaching:

- institutional commitment to and management of inclusive learning and teaching;
- curriculum design and contents;
- pedagogy and curriculum delivery;
- student assessment and feedback.

Figure 2.1: Elements of inclusive learning and teaching



These issues are considered in more detail in relation to the literature in the following section, and they underpin much of the work undertaken by the institutional teams.

2.3 Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme

In 2009 the Inclusion Team at the HEA delivered an Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme. This recognised that inclusive learning and teaching is a challenging issue for institutions, as there can be confusion as to what constitutes inclusive teaching and learning; concern about how to develop inclusive learning and teaching policies and practices in specific contexts and disciplines; and some resistance to change. The

summit programme, which was delivered in association with Equality Forward, worked with cross-institutional teams to facilitate them to:

- develop a deeper understanding of inclusive learning and teaching to support the success of all students in higher education;
- reflect on and review learning and teaching policy and/or practice within their institution in relation to supporting diversity, promoting inclusive learning and teaching and improving student retention and success;
- consider disciplinary differences and perspectives;
- informally benchmark institutional policy and/or practice with other institutions in the sector;
- identify, develop and implement an aspect of institutional change to improve inclusive learning and teaching;
- integrate evaluation into the process of change;
- engage others in the institution in the process of change;
- evaluate and reflect on outcomes and plan future activity.

Fifteen institutional teams¹ were selected to participate in the Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme from 25 applications. The programme began with a start-up meeting in March 2009 to provide information about the summit programme process, to advance understanding of inclusive learning and teaching, to situate institutional concerns and priorities in wider activity in the sector and research evidence and to promote inter-institutional networking and support. In addition, teams spent time developing a vision of the changes they would aspire to make. This event was followed by a two-day residential for wider teams in May 2009. It provided an opportunity to revisit and refine institutional visions of inclusive learning and teaching, and to undertake action planning and impact evaluation planning. These activities were supported by plenary sessions, workshops and cross-team networking. A review meeting was held in December 2009 for institutions to provide an update

¹ Aston University, University of Bangor, University of Bedfordshire, University of Central Lancashire, University College Falmouth, University of East London, University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University, London South Bank University, University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute, University of Northampton, University of Stirling, University of Sunderland, University of the West of Scotland and University of Winchester.

on their progress, to share successes, reflect on challenges and identify future plans. Three months later institutions submitted a reflective paper documenting the work undertaken over the preceding 12 months and reflecting on the process. It is these documents that have been analysed to inform this report on the Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme. It is recognised that it is unlikely that a process of institutional change can be initiated and completed within such a short time period, but rather the programme was intended to stimulate and inform the process, and nurture it to a point that the process of change would be sustained. A summary of the individual programme of work undertaken by each institution is provided in Appendix I and further details are available on the HEA website: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/learningandtech/ILTSummit.

This report is the overarching output from the HEA's Inclusive learning and teaching summit programme, organised and delivered by the Inclusion Team in 2009. The preparatory work began prior to 2009, and follow-up work has taken place in 2010 and is continuing.

3. Learning from the literature about inclusive learning and teaching in higher education

In this section, the key learning points about inclusive learning and teaching in higher education (HE) are extracted from a research synthesis prepared by Professor Christine Hockings (2010b), University of Wolverhampton. The synthesis was undertaken as part of the summit programme and is available on the Higher Education's Academy's website: www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/evidencenet/Inclusive_learning_and_teaching_in_higher_education_synthesis.

The research synthesis defines inclusive learning and teaching as the ways in which pedagogy, curriculum and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view that diversity stems from individual differences that can enrich the lives and learning of others.

The four key topics addressed are: (1) curriculum design; (2) curriculum delivery; (3) assessment; and (4) institutional commitment to and management of inclusive learning and teaching.

3.1 Inclusive curriculum design

To be inclusive, institutions should consider the diversity of the student body and embed principles of equality in the design, planning and evaluation of programmes, courses and modules. These considerations should be made in relation to many aspects of the design process including the learning outcomes, content and choice of pedagogical and assessment approaches. They should also consider the ways in which the curriculum plans to engage all students as well as take account of their entitlements, previous experiences, current interests and future aspirations.

a) Popular curriculum models do not always take sufficient account of students' heterogeneity, which should be considered in the design of the curriculum

Biggs' popular curriculum design model (2003) argues for constructive alignment of curriculum objectives; expected levels of understanding; teaching methods; and assessment tasks; with student interactions and the institutional climate in order to bring about the intended outcome. While this is a popular model, it has been criticised for not sufficiently considering student diversity (Hounsell *et al.*, 2004). Rather Warren (2002) proposes a three-dimensional approach to curriculum design in which 'skills' are embedded as 'process knowledge' in subject-based teaching, learning and assessment;

where there is space within the curriculum for 'less-prepared students' to develop fundamental skills; and where further individual help with discipline-specific issues is provided (see also Waterfield and West, 2006).

b) Particular student groups have been marginalised or excluded by the content of the curriculum. Institutions should recognise and take steps to avoid the curriculum advantaging certain student groups

Research finds that curriculum design can exclude certain students. Marginalisation relates to class (Quinn, 2006), gender (Quinn, 2006; Francis, 2006), sexuality (Toynton, 2007), and disability (Fuller *et al.*, 2008, 2009), and often within particular subject disciplines. The 'hidden curriculum' is argued to privilege some students and disadvantage others (Bowl, 2005; Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2004; Solar, 1995).

c) Tailoring or targeting the curriculum for particular communities and/or target groups can widen participation and promote retention

A number of studies focus on what can be done to make the curriculum more inclusive to address specific interests (Gorard *et al.*, 2006); to meet changing needs (Pickerden, 2002); to promote student choice (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007) or promote student development (Crosling *et al.*, 2008).

d) The curriculum design process can be used to minimise the need for retrospective (or individual) adjustments

Universal Design approaches (Higbee, 2003; Hall and Stahl, 2006; Barajas and Higbee, 2003; Bruch, 2003) integrate adjustments into curriculum design, and so students should not find it necessary to disclose hidden differences. Institutions should seek to follow Universal Design principles and avoid the need for students to disclose differences.

e) Technology can promote flexibility in curriculum contents and delivery, but institutions should ensure that certain student groups are not disadvantaged

Forman *et al.* (2002) argue that e-learning can act as a catalyst for educational diversity, freedom to learn and equality of opportunity, and technology can make learning available to students away from the institution (Hegarty *et al.*, 2000; Newland *et al.*, 2006; Seale, 2006; Taylor, 2008). There are, however, concerns that e-learning can result in feelings of isolation and alienation (Alexander, 2006; Crozier *et al.*, 2009; Hughes, 2007, 2010), frustration or dissatisfaction and withdrawal (Levy, 2007), insensitivity around cultural factors (Alexander, 2006), and student disengagement (Maltby and Mackie, 2009).

3.2 Learning and teaching delivery

To be inclusive, institutions should consider the delivery of the curriculum and the engagement of students with it. The research on learning and teaching focuses on the type and range of methods used and the learning environment fostered by academic staff.

a) **The research promotes student-centred, collaborative approaches to learning and teaching, although some studies find they are not appropriate for all students**

Student-centred pedagogies, with their emphasis on collaborative learning, are generally accepted as effective in encouraging students from different backgrounds to engage in learning in higher education (Bamber and Tett, 2001; Haggis, 2006; Haggis and Pouget, 2002; Thomas, 2002). Furthermore, much of the literature around confirms the relationship between student-centred pedagogies and student success, as established by earlier studies (Marton *et al.*, 1997; Prosser and Trigwell, 1999). Not all students, however, feel comfortable with student-centred learning, including international students (De Vita, 2000) and students with Asperger's syndrome or other forms of autism (Taylor, 2005; Martin, 2006; Madriaga *et al.*, 2007). These students need to be enabled to engage effectively.

b) **Research studies evidence the importance, as well as the ways, of taking students' varying levels and types of prior knowledge and experience into account in the delivery of the curriculum**

Connecting with students' interests, aspirations and future identities has been identified as a key factor in engaging students in learning (Hockings *et al.*, 2009a; Williams *et al.*, 2009; Zepke and Leach, 2007). Northedge (2003) used the rich and diverse resource of experience and knowledge within the group to build a knowledge community in which those with or without prior knowledge and experience could participate equally. Hockings *et al.* (2008b) advocate a strategy that involves creating opportunities in class for sharing and developing the knowledge and skills within the group.

c) **Staff should avoid basing their teaching on assumptions about students' knowledge, lives or interests. It is important to use flexible approaches to learning in order to engage all students, whatever their previous experiences or interests**

Teachers, however, often base their teaching on their assumptions about students' lives and interests, or on their beliefs about what 'the average' student should know (Hounsell *et al.*, 2004). Activities, materials and other resources chosen to connect with one group's interests on the assumption that they will appeal to all students may

leave some students disengaged (Hockings *et al.*, 2008b). Flexible learning and teaching strategies that allow students to apply what they are learning to their own interests are likely to engage a wider range of students (Hockings *et al.*, 2009a; Zepke and Leach, 2007). Hounsell *et al.* (2004) argue that there is a tension between the benefit of aligning the curriculum closely to one group of students and the risk of “under-stimulating or demotivating others” (p.7).

- d) It is important to consider the classroom climate, and the ways in which power is exercised and dynamics are managed, as these can advantage or disadvantage particular students or groups. A positive attitude towards diversity and opportunities for students to voice differences in opinion and/or perspective can make a difference

Clegg *et al.* (2000) found that patterns of teacher and student interaction can potentially disadvantage female students, while Bowl (2003, 2005) raised questions over the suitability of the formal curriculum for mature students. Mertz (2007) and Bowl (2005) suggest that teacher identity, teaching approaches and methods of questioning, facilitating and chairing discussions are key factors influencing who speaks and who remains silent in teaching sessions, and thus who is included and who is excluded. They argue that if students’ backgrounds and experiences are not given voice, the differences that they reflect may be pushed to the margins of subject discourses and curriculum. Mathews (2009) looks at disabled student identity and the conditions under which they can express their differences and disclose issues. The classroom conditions are important in promoting a “positive attitude towards diversity among the whole student body” (p234; see also Jacklin *et al.*, 2007; Cottrell, 2003). Mathews notes that some teachers avoid the discussion element thereby limiting students’ opportunity to engage academically. Hockings *et al.* (2009b) and Zepke and Leach (2007) argue that teachers’ understanding of, and attitudes towards, student diversity can influence their teaching practice.

- e) Teachers may benefit from being given the skills to handle potentially sensitive issues related to diversity

Tomalin (2007) explores sensitive issues related to cultural and religious diversity, and how these impact on teaching and learning practices. Warren (2002, 2005) and Bowl (2005) promote a range of strategies for tackling staff defensiveness and denial about sensitive issues, and for dealing constructively with potential conflict. Cousin (2006) explores the need for ‘emotional capital’ among staff for the mastery of issues connected to diversity.

3.3 Inclusive assessment

Inclusive assessment refers to the design and use of fair and effective assessment methods and practices that enable all students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.

a) Research suggests HEIs should question the principles, reliability and fairness of traditional forms of assessment

The principles of objectivity, clarity and transparency are considered to be essential elements of a fair and valid system of assessment (Sambell *et al.*, 1997), emphasised in the quality assurance literature (QAA, 2000; Yorke *et al.*, 2004) and endorsed by students (Drew, 2001; Lizzio *et al.*, 2007). However, recent studies challenge many of the assumptions that underpin established assessment practices and suggest that the systems and practices for judging students' learning and assuring standards are not as reliable as they appear. For example, Orr (2007) problematises what she sees as the 'positivist' view of assessment with its emphasis on objectivity and measurement. Bloxham (2007, 2009) exposes the "fragile enterprise" of grading students against only "tacitly understood" criteria. Sadler (2009) questions the validity of preset marking criteria and the notions that they increase openness for students and produce more objectivity in grading.

Furthermore, a number of studies explore whether traditional forms of assessment are fair for students from non-traditional backgrounds. For example, social and cultural groups differ in the extent to which they share the values that underlie some assessment tools (Leathwood, 2005). Read *et al.* (2005) and Hartley *et al.* (2007) found evidence of bias relating to the gender of the student in the assessment of students' essays, while some feminist researchers argue that conceptions of the 'good' essay are gendered both in content and structure (Burke and Jackson, 2007; Francis *et al.*, 2001). Hatt and Baxter (2003) and others (e.g. Payne, 2003; Leathwood and Hutchings, 2003; Francis, 2006; Hounsell, 2007; Hoelscher *et al.*, 2008; Ertl *et al.*, 2009) argue that students who enter university through alternative routes such as vocational qualifications are disadvantaged by the assessment regime in HE. Other studies raise concerns about the differences in the degree classifications awarded to students from different ethnic groups (Connor *et al.*, 2004; Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Richardson, 2008) and a range of factors including family background, income and class contribute to these differentials (The Higher Education Academy and Equality Challenge Unit, 2008).

- b) A range of assessments at the programme level can benefit all students and minimise the need for alternative assessments for particular individuals or student groups

Alternative assessment is most likely to be offered to disabled students, although Fuller and Healey (2009) report that disabled students have concerns about the lack of consistency in the practice of making reasonable adjustments throughout their courses and between subjects. Furthermore, Waterfield and West (2006) are critical of this approach because it treats disabled students on an individual basis while mainstream provision remains unchanged. Earlier studies advocate greater use of formative assessment fully integrated in programmes, rather than offered as an optional extra, as a way of making assessment more appropriate for long-term learning to ensure that all students get feedback on their learning (Sambell *et al.*, 2002; Hounsell, 2003; Yorke, 2001, 2003; Sambell and Hubbard, 2004). A mainstream approach can offer a variety of assessment so that all students, whether disabled or not, have the opportunity to choose the form of assessment that enables them to demonstrate their learning most effectively (Quinn, 2005; Chan *et al.*, 2006). Alternatively each programme of study can utilise a range of assessment methods that recognise and incorporate different intelligences and diverse cognitive and stylistic profiles (Hounsell, 2007), rather than privileging one or two modes of assessment and thereby disadvantaging some students.

- c) Students can benefit from working in partnership with the institution throughout the assessment process

A number of recent studies promote the benefits of the involvement of students as active partners at all stages in the process of assessment (Boud and Falchikov, 2006; Bloxham, 2007, 2009; Sadler, 2009).

3.4 Institutional commitment to and management of inclusive learning and teaching

The institution's commitment and management of inclusive learning and teaching should be reflected in their policies, procedures, structures and systems, and the interrelationship between them. Senior managers should lead inclusive learning and teaching and play a key role in promoting the consistency of quality and performance in teaching. Where inclusive principles are embedded, inclusive learning and teaching is more readily recognised as core activity.

- a) Inclusive learning and teaching may remain piecemeal unless there is strong commitment and leadership from senior staff. Management style is important if all staff are to fully engage with this agenda

Leadership and the management of change in higher education offer insights into improving learning and teaching too (Ramsden, 1998; Martin, 1999; Knight and Trowler, 2000; Beaty and Cousin, 2003). Some research critiques the neo-liberal management practices and discourses that dominate UK higher education. For example, Riddell and Weedon (2009) focus on the experiences of specific groups of students in higher education and question new managerialist tools and techniques, such as target setting and equality audits, as simply encouraging minimal performance. Powney (2002) specifically deals with leadership and management of diversity and widening participation in HE and offers a number of suggestions aimed at staff and institutions for successful implementation of strategies for student diversity.

- b) It is important to take a strategic approach to embed equality and diversity within policy and practice, from design to delivery, as part of an ongoing process of enhancement

Shaw *et al.* (2007) identify elements of a business case for promoting, understanding, implementing and embedding strategies for widening participation and student diversity. May and Bridger (2010) conclude that embedding equality and diversity requires: (a) co-ordination at both institutional and individual level; (b) a strong evidence base to demonstrate the need for change; (c) use of a mixed method, tailored approach involving different stakeholder groups; and (d) the use of updated language to bring about change. They suggest, along with Fuller *et al.* (2009), Shaw *et al.* (2007) and Waterfield and West (2006), that institutional responses to equality and widening participation can be represented on a continuum, which reinforces the idea that addressing equality and widening participation should be seen as part of an ongoing process rather than something that can be 'ticked off' a list.

4. Institutional approaches to improving inclusive learning and teaching

The remainder of this publication is drawn from an analysis of the reflective papers submitted by participating teams² to explore how the teams addressed the challenge of embedding more inclusive learning and teaching across their institutions, and to draw out guidance for others in the sector. The papers were reviewed and key themes identified that related to the main activities undertaken. These were not explicitly prescribed by the programme, but rather emerged as common approaches, which it is hoped will be of value to others. In summary, the following approaches or methods of making learning inclusive were identified:

- i. define inclusive learning and teaching;
- ii. review the current situation;
- iii. develop the institutional strategic framework;
- iv. secure senior management engagement;
- v. engage and develop academic staff;
- vi. engage students;
- vii. use data, evaluation and research to underpin the process.

2 Reflective papers were submitted by all teams except the University of Bangor and the University of Stirling.

Figure 4.1: What the institutional teams did

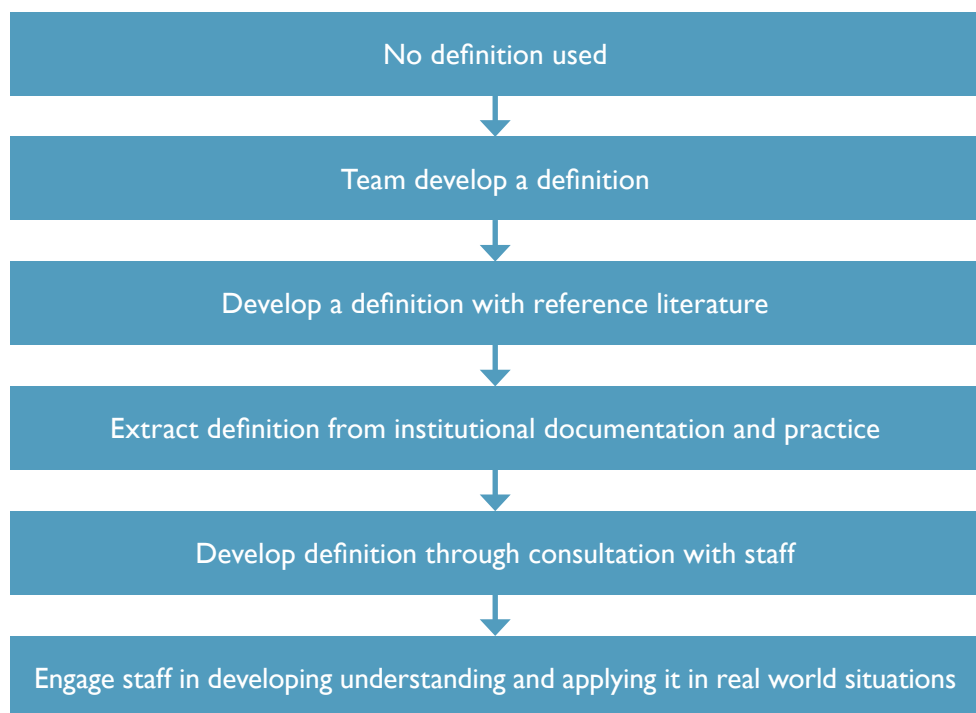


4.1 Defining inclusive learning and teaching

The summit programme did not provide an explicit definition of inclusive learning and teaching. Rather, the start-up meeting and the residential provided structured opportunities to reflect on what inclusive learning and teaching means, and provided input based on the inclusive learning and teaching literature synthesis. It is therefore interesting to explore how teams addressed the issue: ‘what is inclusive learning and teaching?’

An analysis of the reflective papers produced by institutional teams identifies a range of approaches to defining, or otherwise, inclusive learning and teaching, which are summarised in the figure below. In reality, some teams may be somewhere between these approaches as they are described below, some may have combined approaches, and some may not have included detail about this in their paper, but have undertaken work to define to what inclusive learning and teaching is.

Figure 4.2: Approaches to defining inclusive learning and teaching



Some institutional teams do not use an explicit definition of inclusive learning and teaching and do not engage in a process to evolve a definition. This is perhaps worrying as it suggests that they are working towards an objective that is not defined, and therefore is more difficult to achieve; that is likely to mean different, and potentially contradictory, things to different audiences; and impact cannot be measured. Other teams devised their own definitions of inclusive learning and teaching and used these to

inform their work. For example, the University of Winchester team is very clear about its definition of inclusive learning and teaching:

Throughout the programme our key definition of inclusive learning and teaching was: 'The design of curriculum and pedagogy to facilitate an inclusive community of learning for all students, whatever their background, and which challenges and supports individuals to achieve their full potential.'

This definition was one of the most interesting tasks of the process as many other institutions had somewhat varying views or perspectives on what the term meant.

When a definition is presented in the reflective papers it is not always clear where it has emerged from. Some teams, however, were explicit about how they devised their definitions. For example, the University of Northampton refer to and cite extracts from their Strategic Plan, their Equality and Diversity Policy, and their Learning and Teaching Operational Plan; the institution's approach to inclusion is drawn from research, and the purpose of participation in the summit programme was to develop and implement an inclusive approach:

The University's strategic direction in relation to inclusion is informed by insights drawn from the ESRC TLRP project Enhancing the Quality and Outcomes of Disabled Students' Learning in Higher Education, in seeking to avoid 'limited and formulaic' anticipatory reasonable adjustments, especially in relation to assessment. We aspire to build on best practice to ensure a consistent student experience across the institution, particularly in 'inclusive arrangements' (Fuller and Healey, 2009), by making a choice of alternative assessments available to all students. A key rationale for this work is to develop a fully inclusive approach to formative and summative assessment underpinned by the student voice.

The University of Northampton, in common with some other teams, used an institutional definition to further their work. In other cases the definition was extracted from institutional documentation and from accepted good practice. For example, the University of Sunderland refers to its institutional values, its diverse student body and the University's Academic Strategy, all of which informed the definition that the team used:

The University has long been acknowledged as being at the forefront of supporting a widening participation agenda but inclusivity to the University means more than just widening participation. Although we have a large number of widening participation students we also have a large number of international students who are culturally diverse. We have many students who declare a disability, or who are part-time or work-based or off-campus or distance students. The term inclusive could, and does, relate to any of these categories and still be pertinent to us. At the same time we didn't wish to separate out any individual group of students and class them as being different. As a result we decided that in our terms being inclusive was about including everyone regardless of who or what they are so inclusive for one means inclusive for all. This definition is reinforced by the University's Academic Strategy: Enhancing the Student Experience.

A significant number of institutional teams decided not to define inclusive learning and teaching, but rather to involve a wider staff, and in some cases student, group in developing an institutional definition. For example, the University of Bedfordshire team decided:

Rather than start by writing a vision, it was agreed that we would engage the wider academic community in articulating what, collectively, we mean by inclusivity and developing the associated vision statement during the course of the year.

At University College Falmouth inclusive learning is built into institutional strategies and frameworks. The summit programme team felt they need to consult with staff from across the institution about understanding of inclusive learning and teaching, and that this would contribute to institutional development and change:

... it was deemed that a holistic consultation approach would be important in terms of developing a tangible shift in culture around inclusivity. Therefore the team identified the need to consult across college hierarchies, job functions and discipline boundaries to develop a shared understanding of the institutional take on inclusion – or at least an appreciation of the lack of a shared understanding within the institution. It was felt that through this broad stroke approach, a picture could be drawn which would identify gaps in understanding

and process. The approach taken was to consult initially with colleagues posing four questions: what was understood by the term inclusive learning and teaching, in what areas the institution should focus efforts, what developments/ and or changes should be made and what challenges would be faced.

Engaging staff in the process of developing a definition and/or understanding of inclusive learning and teaching is valued by teams as it offers the opportunity for capacity building, learning from others and engendering a sense of ownership and commitment to this area of work. The importance of engaging staff is highlighted by Liverpool John Moores University:

We were aiming to shift attitudes from a feeling that inclusivity means coping with disabled students and is the responsibility only of certain key members of staff, to inclusivity being all embracing, student-centred and is the responsibility of all staff The focus of the work has been to develop discursive approaches to exploring inclusive teaching and learning with staff and students. This has emphasised raising awareness and providing a non-threatening and supportive environment in which staff and students can consider and share their perspectives and ideas for change. Without this kind of developmental activity there is a danger that designing inclusive and learning and teaching is relegated to rhetoric and offers little more than the inclusion of standard sentences in every programme handbook.

Teams devised a range of strategies to involve staff (and students). For example, London South Bank University used Appreciative Inquiry, and the University of Sunderland delivered developmental workshops:

These workshops concentrated on the idea of an ideal practitioner and an ideal student and as such are transferable to any subject area. Staff were asked firstly to identify the particular characteristics of a practitioner in their specific subject area. This was followed by identifying the particular characteristics of an ideal successful graduate in that subject. Staff then considered what their students typically looked like and asked to reflect on how they could transform a typical student to an ideal graduate. These characteristics were backed up by evidence from research undertaken by their subject centre on student characteristics. This simple approach stimulated great discussion and reflection on the issue of developing an inclusive curriculum to produce ideal graduates.

There is evidence that this approach to engaging staff in developmental work to engender understanding of inclusive learning and teaching is taken further in some of the institutions participating in the summit programme. They therefore engaged staff in practice-based dialogue about inclusive learning and teaching, for example in relation to curriculum review. The University of Central Lancashire is using equality impact assessments to inform the course review process and engage staff in the process of understanding and owning inclusive learning and teaching:

In 2009–10 we have six Schools undergoing a Periodic Course Review. We have asked these Schools to consider E&D issues as part of that review... This is designed to ensure that EIAs are locally owned; undertaken at School level; and are relevant and meaningful. We have designed a portfolio of UCLan EIA toolkits (pro formas) to help staff carry out their EIAs on curriculum and strategy/policy/practice areas.

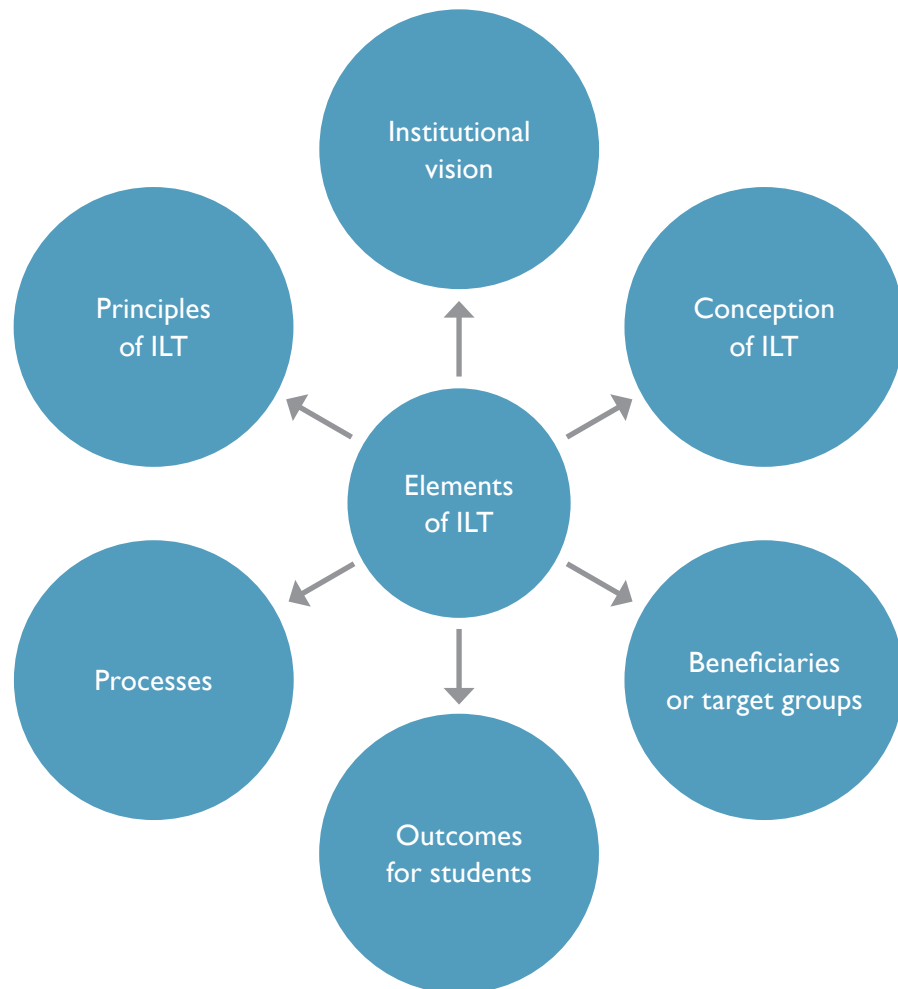
This review suggests that institutions have not adopted a single definition of inclusive learning and teaching, and in some cases they have not developed a particular definition at all, but rather key principles. These approaches are sensitive to institutional contexts, and teams have implicitly asked themselves some important questions:

- i. Do we need a definition of inclusive learning and teaching, or key principles, to inform our work across the institution?
- ii. Is it sufficient to develop a definition as a project team, or do we look more widely?
- iii. Is there a definition of inclusive learning and teaching already in use in the institution or implied in institutional documents?
- iv. What does existing research and literature tell us about inclusive learning and teaching, and how can this be applied to our institutional context?
- v. Is there accepted good practice across the institution that we should draw upon to inform our understanding and definition?
- vi. Is the definition consistent with the institution's mission and priorities?
- vii. How can we consult staff and students about our understanding and definition of inclusive learning and teaching?
- viii. How can we engage staff and students in developing their understanding of inclusive learning and teaching in relation to practice?

Most teams spent considerable time developing their understanding of inclusive learning and teaching, and in some case creating and refining a definition to be used across the institution. Not all reflective papers presented an agreed definition, but those that were presented included some or all of the following elements:

- i. **Inclusive learning and teaching vision for the institution** (e.g. stretching, challenging, vibrant, multi-cultural, ambitious, highest academic standards).
- ii. **Conceptualisation of inclusive learning and teaching** (e.g. addressing curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, and management and co-ordination; moving beyond traditional methods of learning and teaching; employing a range of student-centred approaches; working across the curriculum planning, design, delivery and evaluation cycle; working across the student life cycle).
- iii. **Target groups to benefit from inclusive learning and teaching** (e.g. equality groups, socio-economic profile, internationalisation, for all students).
- iv. **Outcomes for students of inclusive learning and teaching** (e.g. to maximise learning outcomes; to offer a transformative experience; to improve retention, achievement and progress).
- v. **Process for achieving inclusive learning and teaching** (e.g. working in partnership with students, engaging staff, taking a research-informed approach, dialogue with a range of stakeholders).
- vi. **Principles of inclusive learning and teaching** (e.g. respect, valuing diversity, enabling, culturally and socially sensitive, flexible, interesting, relevant and meaningful).

Figure 4.3: Elements of a definition of inclusive learning and teaching (ILT)



4.2 Reviewing the current situation

Institutions are using a range of methods to review the current situation to identify strengths, gaps and areas for improvement. This is often viewed as an essential first step to inform future work about inclusive learning and teaching. For example, a number of institutions undertook an audit of institutional policies (e.g. University College Falmouth and the University of Liverpool) to explore how the concepts and practices of inclusivity were represented and embedded with them.

University College Falmouth undertook an audit of current institutional policies regarding inclusivity to ensure that future activities would be underpinned by existing policy and to uncover policies that were not being implemented. This audit was also designed to uncover any gaps in their inclusivity policy.

Other institutions undertook a review of the curriculum to assist course and programme teams to develop a more inclusive curriculum.

At the University of Liverpool a project team member is attending curriculum review 'roadshows' being held in each school and then contacting the Head of School to offer customised support in reviewing their curriculum. This is seen as a way of working with faculty in developing accessible curriculum and identifying resources that could support their practice.

Liverpool John Moores University has developed a form of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that operates at programme level. It is intended to encourage reflection on current activities and identification of best practice, thus it centres on a conversation between assessors and representatives of the programme team.

4.3 Developing the institutional strategic framework

A number of institutional strategies (i.e. policies or procedures) were targeted for change during the course of implementing inclusive learning and teaching. Institutions were conscious of the need for policy and procedure to reflect the institution's commitment to inclusive learning and teaching and also promote the widespread use of inclusive practices across the whole institution. In the vast majority of cases this meant revising existing policies and procedures to ensure that inclusion was integral, rather than develop additional policies or procedures. In this way, teams could ensure that inclusive learning and teaching was understood by all staff (and students) to be core activity and associated with the quality of the learning experience for all students.

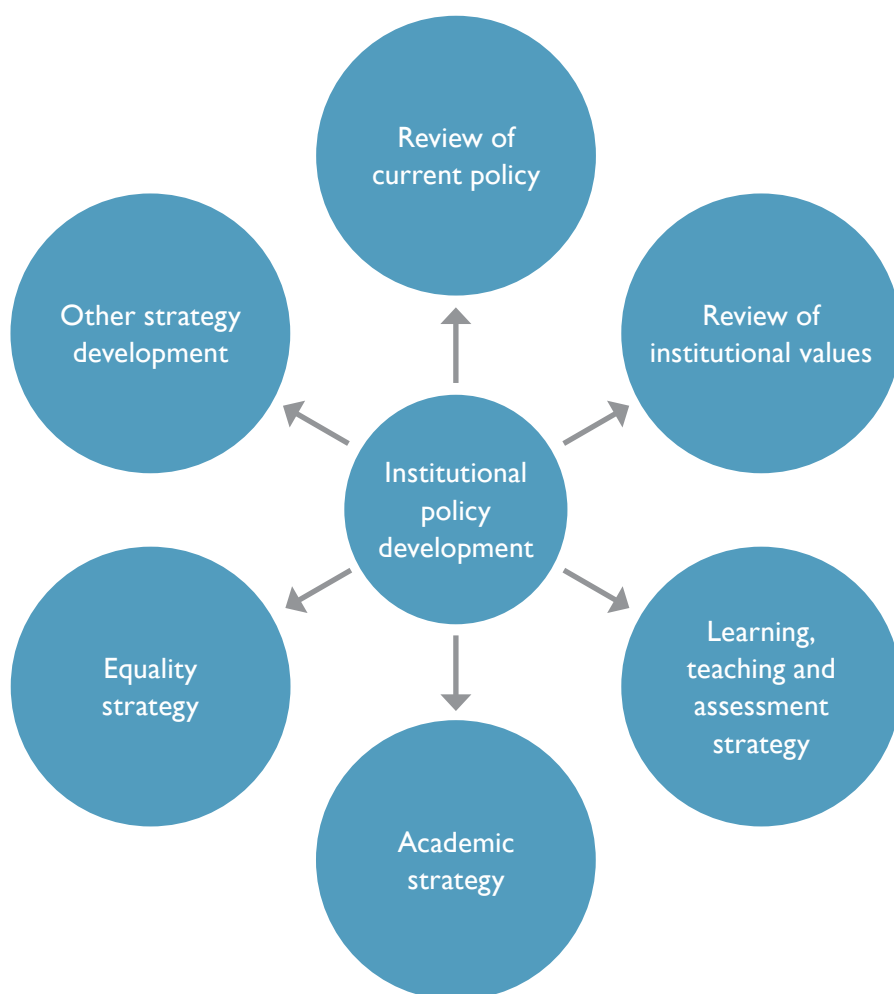
The development of institutional policy and procedure clearly required, and indeed benefited from, the active involvement of senior staff and key staff. To this end, teams approached and worked with a range of senior staff and also, in some cases, recruited staff or allocated specific responsibility for developing inclusive learning and teaching. There were those who evaluated whether an appropriate infrastructure was in place to monitor the effective implementation of policy and procedures (e.g. representative forums/committees). Institutions also aligned their work with other strategic initiatives (e.g. enhancement of employability) and current developments (e.g. curriculum review) to further the success and impact of their work. They also collected evidence to underpin the development of policy or procedures and piloted changes to policy and procedure within one part of the institution (e.g. those undergoing periodic review).

Analysis of the reflective papers identified a number of different types of policy or procedure that were targeted for change. These are detailed in two subsections, firstly covering policy and then procedures. It is notable that, overall, relatively less effort was spent on developing institutional strategy than on the engagement of staff in the use of inclusive practice.

4.3.1 Institutional policy development

This subsection details the policy developments implemented by participating institutions in the course of developing and implementing inclusive learning and teaching. The policies are illustrated in Figure 4.4, and then discussed in the parts that follow.

Figure 4.4: Institutional policy developments



a. **Review of current policy**

In two institutions (the University of Liverpool and University College Falmouth), an audit of current policies was carried out to review the way inclusion was portrayed and the extent to which it had been considered, within policy documentation. The findings informed the priorities for the institution and for the team.

The University of Liverpool undertook a review of policy, identifying current references to and definitions of inclusion as well as areas where no such references existed.

University College Falmouth used their policy audit review to help create a business plan, which they presented to Academic Board.

b. Review of institutional values

A small number of teams used their participation in a national initiative as an opportunity to review and revise their institutional values and/or reflect on how values related to inclusion are reflected within institutional policy.

At the University of the Highlands and Islands, the team developed a vision statement for inclusion, which was subsequently submitted to the Learning and Teaching Committee. As a result, their vision was aligned to the core values statement, which was in development at the time, as part of the Scottish Graduates for the 21st Century Enhancement Theme.

c. Learning, teaching and assessment strategy

For some of the institutions, participation in the summit coincided with plans to revise the institution's learning and teaching strategy. Teams used this as an opportunity to ensure inclusive learning and teaching featured in any new strategy for the future. The team at the University of Winchester ensured that the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2009–11) and associated implementation plan placed an emphasis on inclusivity and learning experience of all students.

At University of East London, the team embedded inclusive practice into core activity by incorporating 'Equality and Inclusion' as one of six key themes in the institution's new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

d. Academic strategy

Over the course of the summit programme, some institutions were also in the process of developing or implementing a new academic strategy, featuring aspects of inclusion.

At the University of Sunderland, the team related their work to objectives in the institutions' new Academic Strategy 'Enhancing the Student Experience'. The revised strategy promotes equality of opportunity and a culture that values the diverse student community and listening to and engaging with students. Thus the work undertaken by the team made a contribution to the implementation of the strategy.

At the University of Winchester, the work undertaken during the programme will inform developments under discussion by a working party who are tasked with revising the institution's academic structure.

e. Equality strategy

Some teams developed or implemented their institutional equality scheme as part of their work on the summit programme. The University of Aston team, for example, worked on the development of their Single Equality Scheme Action Plan in order to promote the development of inclusive learning and teaching.

f. Other strategy development

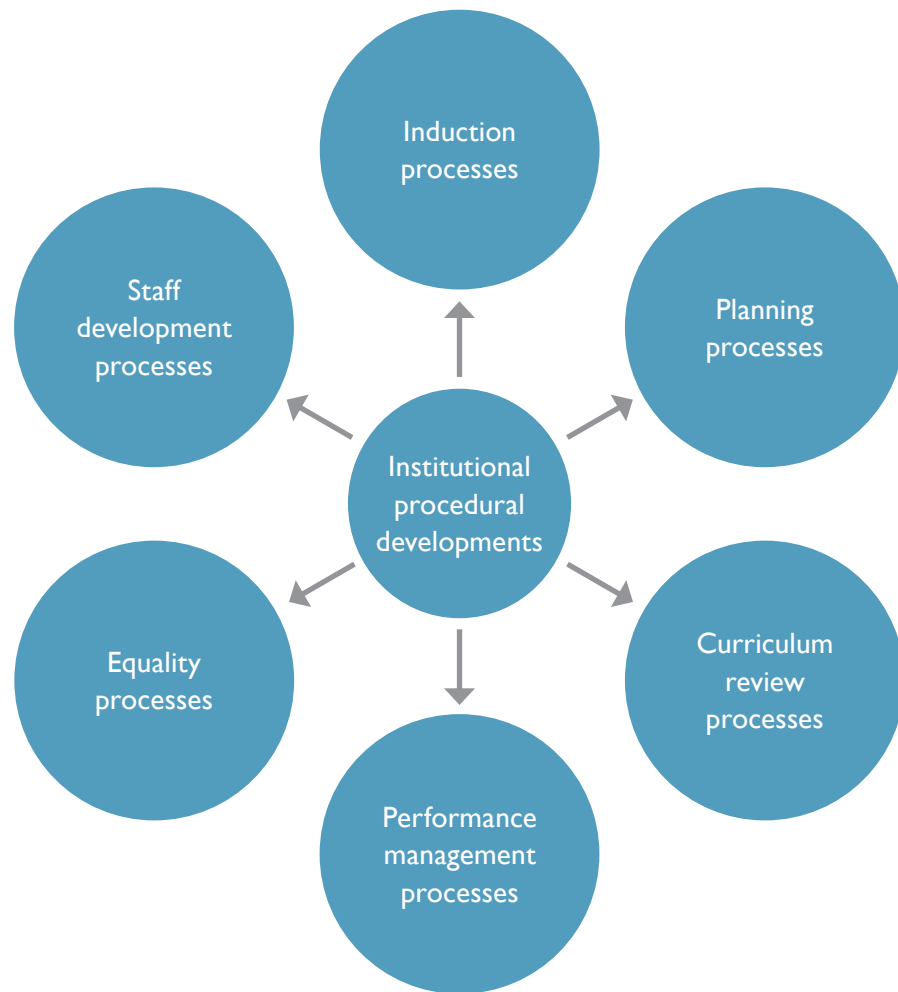
Institutions reported developing new or existing strategy as a vehicle for engaging staff and students in the use of inclusive practice. The University of Winchester developed their Student Support, Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Strategy with a view to raising the profile of inclusive learning and teaching.

At the University of Bedfordshire, a communication strategy was developed to help disseminate the outcomes of the work, but also to seek to engage the wider university community in thinking about the issues and informing a developing definition and vision for inclusive learning and teaching.

4.3.2 Institutional procedural development

This second subsection details the procedures targeted for change by participating institutions. These are summarised in Figure 4.5 below and detailed in the parts that follow.

Figure 4.5: Institutional procedural developments



a. Induction process

The process by which new staff and students are inducted into the institution was identified as being important to inclusive learning and teaching in some participating

HEIs. The University of Winchester developed a pre-enrolment programme of activities for students designed to promote dialogue between academic and students to support students' transition and induction. In the University of the West of Scotland, the team reported a future plan to change the induction process for new academics to incorporate material on inclusion in the curriculum.

At Liverpool John Moores University, an induction initiative for students was developed in the Faculty of Health and Applied Social Sciences. This involved the running of workshops for students focused on contemporary equality issues that had been the focus of significant media coverage, and with which the new students would be familiar, to promote discussion.

b. Planning process

Changes were made (or agreed) to the planning process in a number of HEIs, as a result of participating in the summit programme. Such changes include plans to set high-level objectives for improving inclusiveness in the curriculum (the University of the West of Scotland); plans to collect, analyse and use equality data in the planning process (Liverpool John Moores University); and the incorporation of inclusivity into the development of an online planner to support and facilitate university-wide curriculum development (the University of Liverpool). At University College Falmouth, the team instigated a more integrated approach to planning, bringing together widening participation and learning and teaching.

c. Curriculum review process

It was widely recognised by participating institutions that inclusive learning and teaching needed to be built into the design of the curriculum, which in turn prompted a number of them to influence the process by which curricula are validated, reviewed and evaluated. This enabled inclusive learning and teaching to become a core consideration, which was systematically addressed by all relevant staff across the institution. To influence the process, the teams worked closely with senior managers and those in quality assurance and enhancement roles.

At the time of the summit programme, the University of Liverpool were undergoing an institution-wide curriculum review. This provided the opportunity to influence the process. The team met with the Pro-Vice Chancellor leading the curriculum review to explore and agree ways in which inclusive learning and teaching could be integrated.

At the University of Central Lancashire, six schools were undergoing a periodic course review during the summit programme. The teams influenced the review process to require those schools to address equality and diversity as part of that review.

d. Performance management process

It has been recognised previously (May and Bridger, 2010) that performance management processes (such as appraisal, reward or promotion) can play a key role in promoting and assuring the use of inclusive learning and teaching. The University of the West of Scotland report that they plan to review the performance management criteria for academic managers and academics to include an element of inclusive curriculum design as part of their personal objectives.

e. Equality processes

Under the current equality legislation, institutions are required to collect evidence, by which to assess impact and demonstrate progress in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. Accordingly, over the course of the programme three participating institutions (the University of Central Lancashire, the University of Winchester and Liverpool John Moores University) evaluated their procedures for undertaking equality impact assessments and collecting equality data.

The team from the University of Central Lancashire designed a portfolio of impact assessment toolkits (or pro formas) to help staff carry out an impact assessment in relation to curriculum as well as policy and practice areas. Their Deputy Vice-Chancellor also worked with colleagues from the Student and Academic Support Service, the Strategic Development Service, and Equality and Diversity to establish and agree a clear format for presenting student equality data to their schools.

Liverpool John Moores University developed an equality impact assessment that works at a programme level designed around a conversation between assessors and representatives of the programme team. The process has been planned to encourage staff to reflect on the impact of current activities on particular students or groups, and identify 'best' practice.

f. Staff development process

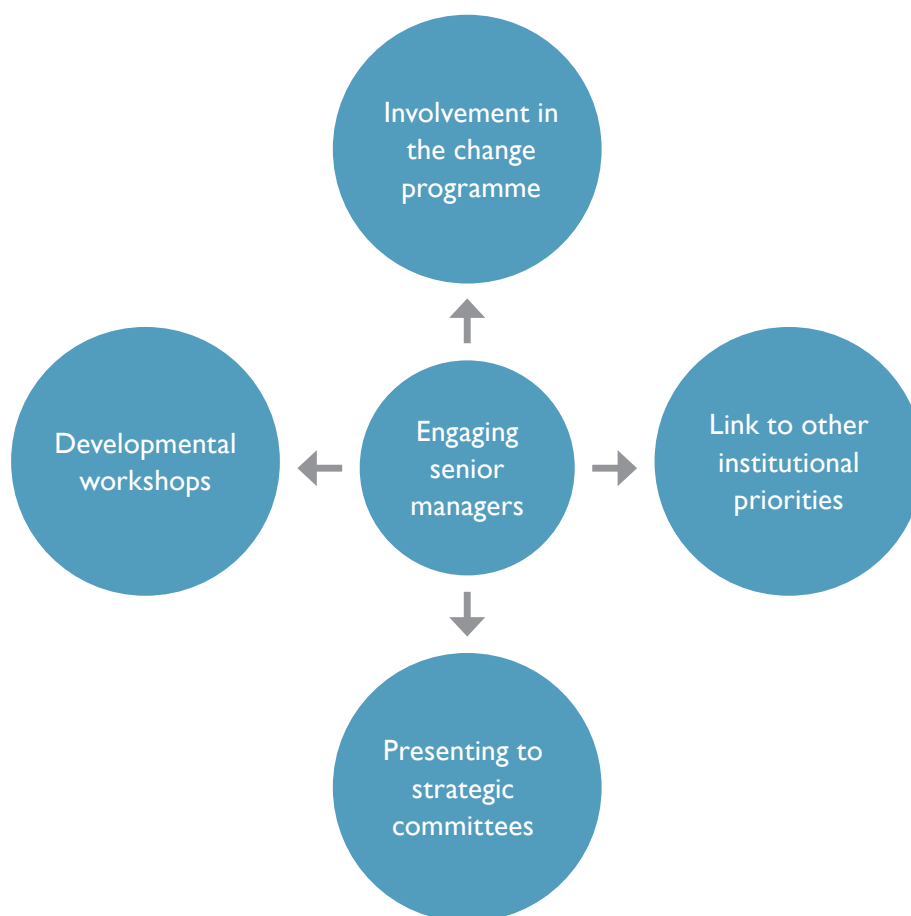
While all participating institutions promoted inclusive learning and teaching through bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, events and activities, some also influenced the process by which staff became engaged in CPD over a period of time. Some teams embedded inclusive learning and teaching into their institution's certificated programmes of learning and teaching in higher education, influencing the guidance provided to all new academic staff. In other institutions, a systematic process was developed to ensure all staff received training.

The team at the University of Central Lancashire developed a comprehensive three-year training programme, to reach all staff over a three-year period. It offered guidance on the equality strands, conducting equality impact assessments and equality monitoring. The training was specially designed for different groups of staff including senior management, management, academic staff and support staff.

4.4 Securing senior management engagement

It is widely recognised that senior manager leadership and support is crucial to institutional change, especially in relation to inclusive learning and teaching where it may be necessary to change institutional policies, structures and processes, and the institutional culture (attitudes, practices and ways of being). Teams that participated in the summit programme used four key ways to engage senior managers in developing and/or promoting inclusive learning and teaching (summarised in Figure 4.6). This in turn is seen to be key to engage other staff across the institution (discussed below).

Figure 4.6: Ways of engaging senior managers



a. **Involve them in the change programme**

A number of institutions took a direct approach to engaging senior managers by involving them directly in the change programme, and thus encouraging them to take ownership for the process of change.

University College Falmouth is working with influential staff and managers to encourage them to take an active part in the implementation and dissemination of the programme to ensure buy-in.

Liverpool John Moores University actively involved senior staff such as the University's Director of Corporate Communications, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Administration) and the Director of Teaching and Learning Development in aspects of the project to help take forward the dissemination of the findings of the project. In addition an equality and diversity handbook was produced for the University Governors and Senior Management Team helping to raise their awareness of equality and diversity issues.

One of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors at Aston University undertook research about cultural competency within the institution, which resulted in a refereed conference paper.

b. [Link inclusive learning and teaching to other institutional priorities](#)

Senior managers can be engaged more in this work if it is linked to other institutional priorities, such as increasing student satisfaction, or improving student retention and success. This approach was adopted by the University of Liverpool.

At the University of Liverpool members of the Senior Management Team were consulted in order to influence policy via the committee structure. A key meeting was held with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor leading the curriculum review to explore ways in which the project could integrate with the process of curriculum review.

Aston University's Curriculum and Learner Development Working Group (a sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee) is further developing the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan to take account of inclusive learning and teaching.

c. Presenting to strategic committees

One approach to strategic engagement within institutions is through high-level committees. For example, presenting a paper to a committee provides a way of raising the importance of an issue, increasing the profile of the project, and looking for senior-level engagement and commitment to the issue.

University College Falmouth planned to present a paper examining the implementation of inclusive learning and teaching practices within the developing curriculum to the Learning, Teaching and Access Committee to garner management support and to increase their understanding of inclusive learning and teaching and the work of the project.

d. Developmental workshops

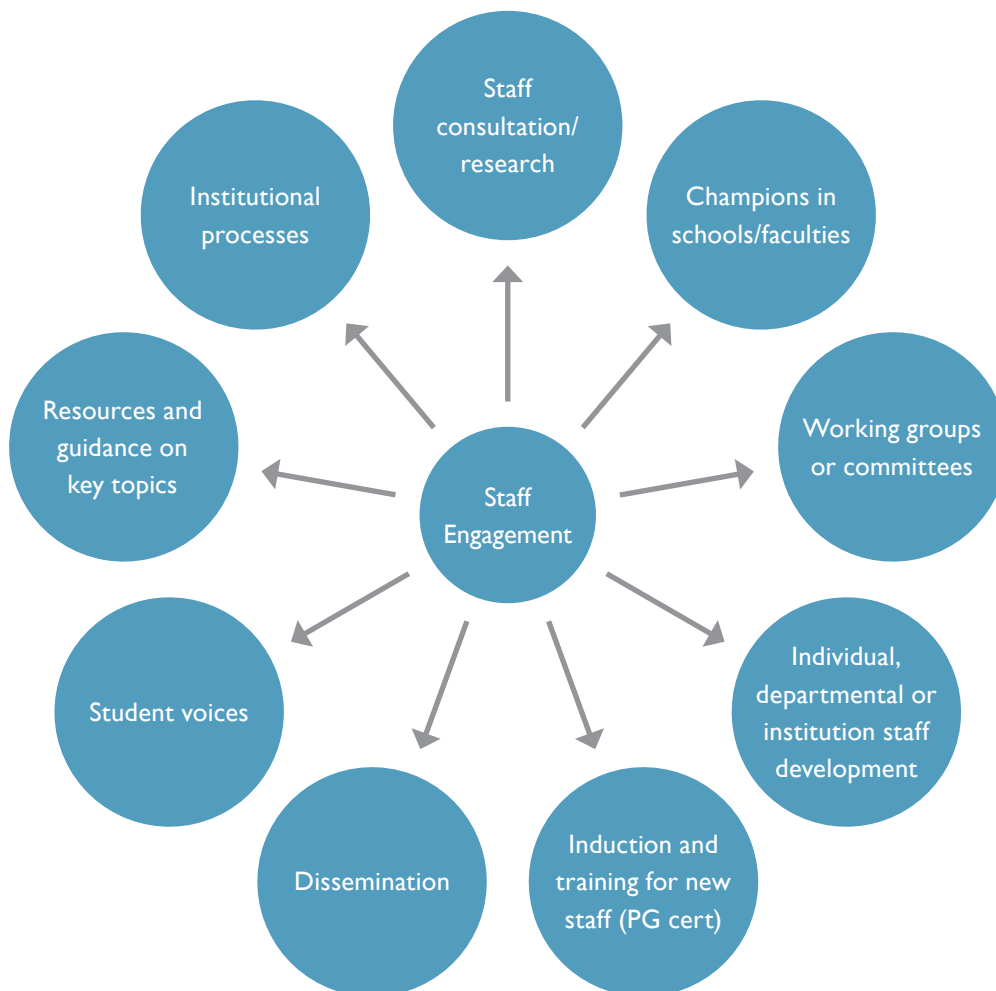
Staff development activities are a popular way of seeking to engage academic staff in the institution, but they are less frequently targeted at senior managers: this, however, is what the Aston University team is doing.

Aston University is developing intercultural diversity workshops for all staff, including for those at senior level. The workshops aim to raise awareness and develop inclusive practice in learning and teaching. The workshops will be developed through co-operation between Staff Development, the Disability and Additional Needs Unit, and the Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice.

4.5 Engaging and developing academic staff

Central to developing inclusive learning and teaching is academic staff engagement, as they are responsible for the design and delivery of the curriculum in HEIs. Institutions used a wide range of methods to engage academic colleagues, which have been grouped into nine categories, illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 4.7: Ways of engaging and developing academic staff



a. **Staff consultation and research**

Some institutions have undertaken staff consultation and similar activities to engage staff more fully in inclusive learning and teaching. This has included asking staff how they feel about inclusivity, involving them in the development of an institutional definition and identifying good practice for dissemination across the institution. These activities

are valuable for the information they generate, but also contribute to helping staff develop ownership and commitment to inclusive learning and teaching in general, and/or the project more specifically.

University College Falmouth undertook a staff and student consultation on current activity, opinion, knowledge base, understanding, perception, aspirations and gaps at teaching and learning level. Staff were asked to provide details about how they feel about inclusivity and to provide sufficient information to enable the identification of good practice to be shared across the institution.

The team from the University of Bedfordshire decided that rather than start by writing a definition of vision for inclusive learning and teaching, they would engage the wider academic community in articulating what, collectively, is meant by inclusivity, and developing the associated vision statement during the course of the year.

One of the tasks the University of Liverpool's team did was to identify and consult with individuals across the University who might offer examples of good practice and details of existing resources, which could be shared with others across the University. Meetings were organised with a wide cross-section of teams; they served the dual purpose of disseminating information about the project and the concept of inclusive/accessible learning and teaching, and identifying examples of good practice that could be used as case studies. The project team felt that local examples of good practice and case studies would have more impact than would those from other institutions.

The London South Bank University team used the annual learning and teaching conference as a way of raising awareness about inclusive learning and teaching and incorporating ideas from colleagues across the institution into the project. This shaped the conference theme: 'One curriculum for all: an inclusive approach – richer learning, improved retention, enhanced progression.'

b. Champions in schools and faculties

A commonly used approach to develop and expand activity in schools and faculties is the use of champions. These are often individuals who already have an understanding of and commitment to the issue – inclusive learning and teaching – and who exemplify effective practice. In a voluntary or more formal capacity these champions undertake to promote the issue to colleagues in their school or faculty. This can involve setting up structures (e.g. committees or task groups), contributing to the development of policy and practice at school/faculty level, encouraging networking and the sharing of effective practice.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) established the role of Equality and Diversity Lead in every school and service. The aim of the role is for the Lead to advise and assist the Head of School (and the School Executive Team) about inclusive learning and teaching issues, to: embed UCLan's equality and diversity aims within the Single Equality Scheme into all aspects of the school's activities; create a more inclusive learning and teaching environment to enable students to achieve their potential in the context of the diversity of the student body; effect change that links to the overall equality and diversity key performance indicators in relation to staff, students and visitors of the University; use existing research to build an evidence base; and share best practice and experience through inter-team working across the University.

The University of East London used champions at the school, programme and discipline levels to stimulate interest and debate and engage colleagues about inclusive learning and teaching.

c. Establishing working groups or committees to promote engagement

One tactic used by teams to engage staff more actively in inclusive learning and teaching is to establish a wider group of people from across the institution to work on a specific issue. Again, the working groups or committees undertake valuable work, and the process of participating is a method of securing the engagement of a wider group of people in the work of the project and inclusive learning and teaching more generally.

Across the University of East London a working group was convened, the Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Working Group (ILTAWG), to plan, implement and support the inclusive agenda at a local level, raise awareness and share good practice across schools and disciplines, and to link local initiatives to central initiatives. It also identifies the necessary initiatives and CPD activities that are required to ensure effective implementation.

The University of Sunderland implemented a new Academic Strategy and associated committee structure that has inclusivity at its heart. The objectives from the Academic Strategy, which include promoting equality of opportunity, engendering a culture that values the diverse student community, and engaging with and listening to students in a supportive manner, are reflected in the University's policies, structures and modus operandi, and thus impacts across the whole of the University.

University College Falmouth established working groups of staff, students, policyholders and directors, who were tasked with forward planning and active implementation of pilot projects, evaluation and a launch event to disseminate the findings.

d. Staff development

A frequently employed approach to engaging staff in inclusive learning and teaching, and enabling them to become more effective practitioners is staff development. Staff development can be oriented towards raising awareness of the issues, making the case for change, and/or developing practical capabilities. It can be organised at different levels, including individual, departmental and institutional. There are examples of a wide range of types of staff development across the institutions participating in the summit programme, including training aimed at senior managers, online training and discipline-based training.

A number of institutions have mandatory training for staff across the institution, and often this makes use of a combination of online learning and face-to-face activities. In addition, the importance of operating at a disciplinary level is recognised by some universities, and of providing practical skills to assist inclusive curriculum development.

Liverpool John Moores University has an online diversity module that all staff must complete. This has proved a useful way of raising awareness of inclusive learning and teaching across the institution; and staff who have completed the online module have commented that it was informative and interesting, and some are considering how to use the material with students. The University has now developed online resources for students on its virtual learning environment (VLE).

Mandatory professional training underpins the inclusive curriculum agenda at the University of East London. The initial 'Towards Inclusion ...' training is online and at an individual level, followed by face-to-face training at a school/discipline/service level. Following consultation, the face-to-face training is specifically and individually tailored to the needs of colleagues in discipline areas to ensure relevance and engagement. This training provides a vehicle to promote inclusive learning, teaching and assessment for all students, and to inspire and inform colleagues, encourage open debate and share good practice.

At the University of the Highlands and Islands a series of equalities development days have been run in each of the four faculties. This has been complemented by updating the staff manual.

The University of Sunderland delivered a workshop on developing an inclusive curriculum in one faculty. This was followed up by staff development sessions on inclusivity being offered to teams within the faculty.

e. **Induction and training for new staff**

A number of institutions are reaching out to engage staff as early as possible when they join the institution, through induction, staff handbooks and training for staff. For example, a number of institutions are embedding inclusivity into their learning and teaching postgraduate programme for new staff.

The University of the West of Scotland is planning improvements to the induction process for new academics including material on inclusiveness in the curriculum.

Inclusive learning and teaching has a very prominent emphasis within two modules of the University of Winchester's Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. These sessions are available to all staff as staff development, and there has been a 'Collaborative Enhancement of Teaching' lunch to draw the attention and thoughts of academics to inclusive learning and teaching.

At the University of Liverpool, Educational Development runs the Certificate in Professional Studies (CPS) in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, a first-level qualification. The CPS curriculum is currently being reviewed and this provides the opportunity to embed inclusivity and model good practice in the delivery of inclusive/accessible learning and teaching.

f. Disseminate research outcomes

A number of institutions used the dissemination of research outcomes as a way of engaging staff in thinking seriously about inclusive learning and teaching. The University of Northampton made widespread use of research, including a literature review on inclusive assessment that informed other stages of their work across the institution, and a comprehensive dissemination strategy. A number of institutions have utilised their learning and teaching conferences to engage the wider staff body in thinking about inclusive learning and teaching and developing their current practices.

At the University of Northampton dissemination is through the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee, by workshops at the learning and teaching conference, through an article in the institution's e-journal *Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education*, through a poster at the EARLI conference and through Higher Education Academy and Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) networks.

Educational Development at the University of Liverpool organises an annual internal learning and teaching conference. The work of this project has been influential in developing the focus of the 2010 conference, 'Rethinking the Curriculum', which has diversity and inclusion as one of its themes. It is intended that staff and students who contributed case studies to the project will make a major contribution to this theme thus reinforcing and consolidating existing good practice. Validation of staff already working in an inclusive/accessible way has been an important outcome of the project.

g. Student voice

A number of institutions used student voice as a way of engaging staff and encouraging them to become more inclusive in their learning and teaching practices. It can be influential for staff to hear what their own students are saying, and it informs understanding of their students' diversity, including previous learning experiences, learning expectations and preferences and suggested improvements to their learning and teaching experience.

At the University of Aston the Student Guild is co-ordinating an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) student research project, involving student researchers, to elicit student perspectives on good practice in inclusive learning and teaching across the University. The findings will be presented to staff and the University Council to help influence policy and practice.

At the University of Liverpool the Student Support team is working with five students who have agreed to tell their stories of studying at the University, focusing on challenges they faced and what helped to overcome them. It is intended to collect more stories as more students come forward. It is anticipated that these stories, which will be accessible on the University website, will engage staff and inform policy and practice.

h. Resources and guidance on key issues

Many of the institutions participating in the summit programme have generated resources and guidance on key issues to support staff across the institution to engage with inclusive learning and teaching and to develop their practice. Much of this material is made available electronically, often beyond the institution. Institutions are making use of student stories, video and audio clips, and drama to make the material engaging. Notably, the University of Liverpool are tailoring their guidance to individual course teams in a more personalised way, and complementary approaches are being developed by other HEIs (a full list of resources is provided at the end of this report).

The University of Aston has developed a number of resources, including guidance to staff on how to incorporate the principles of equality and diversity into curriculum development through a leaflet for all staff and an inclusive learning and teaching checklist to aid programme and module development.

The University of the West of Scotland, together with the HEA, have created a curriculum audit tool, intended to be used by academics to review their own practice.

The University of Northampton plans to provide guidance for course teams in recognition that the wording of assessment tasks is crucial to inclusive learning and teaching, as exemplified in video or audio clips on the web.

UCLan has produced a guidance document for academic staff on 'Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum'.

The University of Liverpool is bringing a wealth of information together into a website. The website will cover the main methods of teaching delivery and contain for each; case studies from within the University, 'top tips', links to useful resources and underpinning learning and teaching theory. The project team aims to synthesise such theory into a readily accessible format for faculty. This website draws together the materials

collected from interviewing individuals and groups across the University in the earlier stages of the project. Individuals will be able to submit their own ideas to the site on an ongoing basis. Student comments collected during the project will also feature. The website will be formally launched to an invited audience of staff and students involved in the earlier stages of the project and other key stakeholders. A workshop will follow the presentation to identify ways of extending the development of inclusive/accessible curriculum and learning and teaching across the institution. Following the official launch further opportunities will be available for staff not previously involved in the project to learn about the website and discuss ways forwards. In addition a programme of CPD sessions is being developed to accompany and build on the website and further disseminate inclusive/accessible learning and teaching. An evaluation of the resources placed on the website will need to take place using staff/student feedback. A system for the ongoing sharing of good practice will be developed in consultation with staff who have been supporting this initiative.

Project team members at the University of Liverpool are providing tailored support to faculty staff to develop accessible and inclusive curriculum. A project team member is attending curriculum review 'roadshows' being held in each school and following this by contacting the Head of School to offer customised support in reviewing their curriculum. This is seen as a way of working with faculty in developing accessible curriculum and identifying resources that could support their practice.

i. Institutional processes

A more managerial approach to engaging staff in inclusive learning and teaching is to build it into institutional processes. At the individual level this covers recruitment, annual review and performance management processes. For example, staff may need to provide evidence in their annual review of taking an inclusive approach to curriculum design and/or delivery, or having undertaken professional development or updating in this area. A number of institutions have indicated that this is an aspiration for the future. Institutions can also engage staff by integrating inclusivity into other institutional processes, such as validation, quality assurance and programme review.

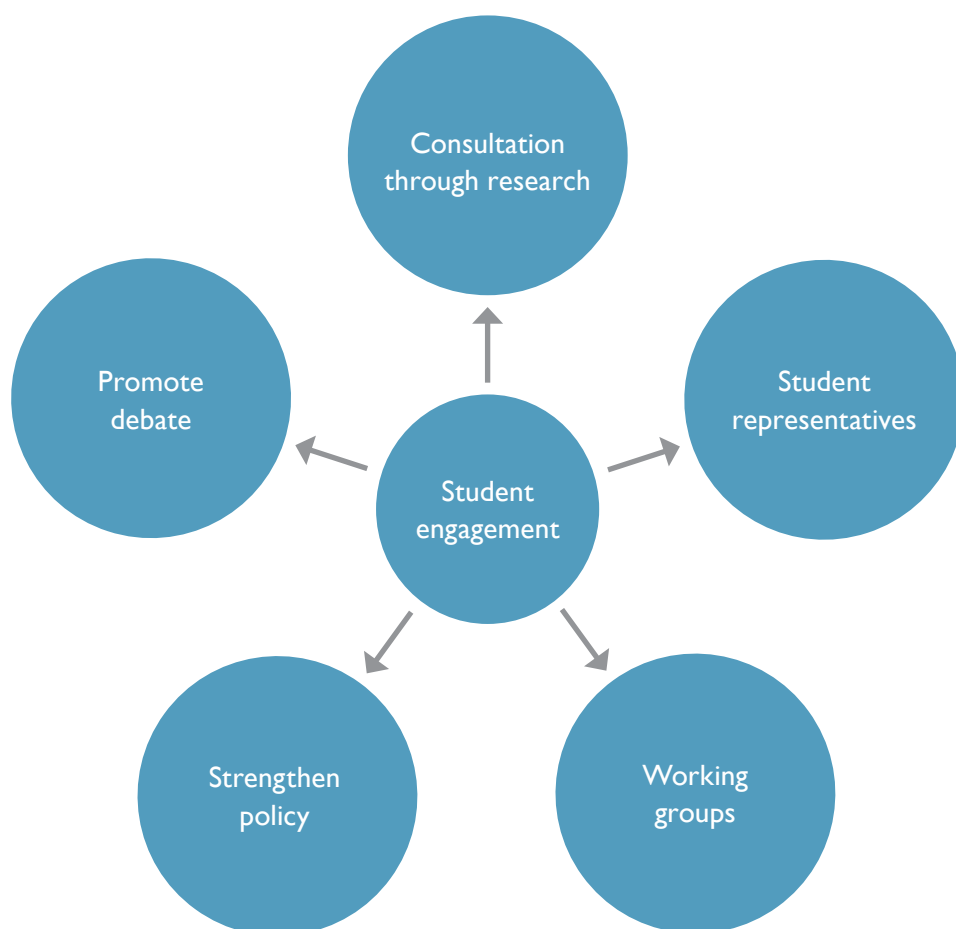
The University of the West of Scotland plan to introduce a programme of curriculum development to allow academic staff the time and resources to equip them with the skills to develop a more inclusive curriculum. They have established new staff development workshops to support this aim. Alongside this they plan to work on changes to performance management arrangements for academics to reward curriculum development activities.

Liverpool John Moores University is trying to embed changes so that developing inclusive practice becomes part of the University's processes and procedures rather than an added extra. The staff from the Quality Enhancement team have been involved in the project's advisory group to ensure that work relating to inclusivity is included in programme review, validation and quality assurance processes. One approach they have developed is a form of Equality Impact Assessment that works at programme level and is operated in such a way as to encourage reflection on current activities and identification of best practice. To achieve this, the proposed approach centres on the development of conversation between assessors and representatives of the programme team to improve the inclusiveness of provision through the programme review process.

4.6 Student engagement

In the course of developing inclusive learning and teaching, institutional teams sought the engagement of students. Analysis of the reflective papers revealed that a variety of methods were used to bring about student engagement across the participating institutions. These are summarised in Figure 4.8 and discussed further below.

Figure 4.8: Methods to engage students in developing inclusive learning and teaching



a. **Consultation through research**

Across all but two institutional reflective papers, it was evident that research involving students had been carried out to inform the development of inclusive learning and teaching. A variety of research methods were used across participating institutions including storytelling, questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, quantitative data analysis and appreciative inquiry.

For several institutions, research was used for the purpose of better understanding students' experiences and perspectives of learning and teaching. In the majority of institutions, the research was qualitative in nature, with the exception of

the Universities of Winchester and Northampton, who also used quantitative data, examining students' achievement, retention and progression. Either way, the findings were used to inform and shape the actions taken forward or planned by the institution. There was evidence in two institutions that the outcomes of the research were disseminated among staff and students, through an event (University College Falmouth) and the website (the University of Liverpool).

Much of the research was conducted by staff, with the exception of the University of Northampton and Aston University where student researchers were recruited and trained to conduct the research with other students. The purpose for doing so was articulated by the University of Northampton, where they reported that a student researcher may build a better rapport so to facilitate discussion and generate new insights.

At University College Falmouth, staff consulted students as part of their audit, to inform a better understanding of their current activity and any areas for development from the students' perspective. They drew on student case studies from within the institution, as well as responses from student mentors and representatives. They used questionnaires and focus groups to identify the current situation, barriers to progress, and gain students' ideas for development of learning and teaching.

b. [Link with student representatives](#)

A small number of institutional teams reported having benefited from collaboration with their Students' Union and with student representative forums. The University of the Highlands and Islands included a member of their student association on their team, and reported this as one of their key achievements for the summit programme.

The team at Liverpool John Moores University involved the Students' Union in discussions, so that an accessibility campaign would promote the equality and diversity module the team had developed.

c. [Working groups](#)

In some cases, students were invited onto working groups organised by the universities in the course of developing inclusive learning and teaching. This provided the

opportunity for students to shape the actions taken forward and for their perspectives to inform the decision-making process. Only a relatively small number of participating institutions chose to involve a student as a member of team but where they did so, it was reported to be beneficial to the change process.

University College Falmouth set up working groups involving staff, students, policyholders and directors. These groups were tasked with forward planning and active implementation and evaluation of pilot initiatives. They also organised a launch event to disseminate the findings.

d. Strengthen policy

In the course of developing inclusive learning and teaching, there were two teams that strengthened institutional policy that related to, or made use of, student engagement. The University of Sunderland's academic strategy incorporates an objective around listening to the student voice and engaging with students, which the teams could draw on to strengthen their case for inclusive learning and teaching. Two institutional teams informed the development of a student charter as part of their work. At the University of the Highlands and Islands, a commitment has been made to engage students in high-level policy setting in the future.

An important objective for the work undertaken by the University of the Highlands and Islands was to map out the current and future context of the student experience and articulate it in their Student Charter. Their Charter identifies what a student can expect and is entitled to from the University. It also identifies what students are responsible for: they are perceived by the University to be active and independent co-creators of their own learning.

e. Promote debate

One institution engaged students in a debate about inclusive learning and teaching, and thus acknowledged that it is a contested notion that can be interpreted differently by diverse individuals. In many ways, the use of debate aligns with using research in the sense that both methods seek to ensure that the development of learning and teaching is informed by different perspectives.

At the University of Winchester, students were invited to join a debate about inclusive learning and teaching. Information was presented online as well as through more formal contact to inform the debate. The outcomes were fed into a ‘collaborative enhancement of teaching’ lunch and as part of the institution’s Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

4.7 Using data, evaluation and research to underpin the process

Much of the work to create more inclusive learning and teaching in higher education is informed or underpinned by the collection and use of data, research and evidence. The analysis of the ways in which institutions are working identified six aspects to the collection and use of data (although it should be noted that these are not mutually exclusive). These are shown in Figure 4.9, and then discussed below.

Figure 4.9: Collection and use of data



a. **Undertaking research with staff and students**

Institutions are engaging directly with staff and students to explore understandings of and attitudes towards inclusive learning and teaching, and to identify good practice. This includes large scale-surveys and smaller, more qualitative approaches.

London South Bank University undertook various strands of research with staff and students to identify good practice across the institution and disseminate it to others. Appreciative inquiry interviews were undertaken with nine students registered as dyslexic to explore what they valued in their learning experience. Focus groups were conducted with 20 members of academic staff (including five heads of department). Analysis of these interviews and focus groups allowed them to identify six themes or areas to address, and create vignettes to use with staff to illustrate the issues.

The University of East London ran an extensive number of focus groups with students with disabilities to establish the impact of current assessment approaches on their attainment and an online survey asking disabled students about the impact of current curriculum content, materials and delivery on their learning.

b. **Applying academic research to practice**

Two teams have explicitly made use of academic literature to inform the work of their project. The University of Liverpool are synthesising learning and teaching theory into a readily accessible format for staff to apply to their own practice and the University of Northampton used a literature review to inform direction of the project.

The University of Northampton undertook a literature review about inclusivity in assessment in higher education. Critical engagement with the literature revealed four key strands that informed the direction of the project. These were: study skills, especially academic writing; assessment feedback; alternative assessment; and inclusion in the context of assessment.

c. Making better use of institutional data

Three of our teams are developing strategies to make better use of data. This has included interrogating institutional data to inform strategy development and interventions to improve inclusive learning and teaching as part of this project, and developing better approaches to support the routine use of institutional data.

The University of Northampton undertook analysis of a sample of students from across the University who had struggled to pass year one (level 4) assignments but not failed completely (the 'scrapers'). The sample was defined as 'level 4 students who in the year ending Summer 2009 had achieved 50% of their marks at grade D' (the University operates a grading system where pass is from A+ to D-). The sample size was 114, about 3% of the total cohort of first-years. Data included: the University school of study (or FE college); age; gender; disability; WP background; and ethnicity. The analysis showed that no school was over-represented in the sample and so being a 'scraper' did not seem to depend on subject of study, although doing joint honours might be a risk factor for issues emerging around inclusive assessment. Further analysis enabled a set of risk factors for 'scraping' to be drawn up: young (under 21); male; BME (British African, British Caribbean, British Indian and British Pakistani); non-A-level entrant; and declared dyslexic. Incomplete data from students made it not possible to analyse the impact of socio-economic status.

At the University of Central Lancashire the Deputy Vice-Chancellor has worked with colleagues from the Student and Academic Support Service, the Strategic Development Service, and the Equality and Diversity Manager to establish and agree a clear format for presenting student equality data to schools. These data will be produced for all schools (priority is given to those undergoing periodic course reviews, and a publication schedule is being prepared for all the other schools) in order to facilitate their work.

d. Piloting and evaluating new interventions or approaches

The programme sought to embed evaluation into the process of change, but there is limited evidence of this in the project reports. However, it is worth noting that some teams included pilot initiatives in their work, or only rolled things out in one faculty or school to test if it works. The importance of testing and evaluation should not be underestimated.

The Aston University team used the summit programme as an opportunity to develop and test resources and interventions. This included an inclusive learning and teaching checklist to aid good practice in programme and module development. The checklist will be piloted by the School of Life and Health Sciences during 2010, and by the participants of the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice. Two extended pilots of pre-entry e-mentoring were introduced, one in Interdisciplinary Studies with 30 e-mentors and 30 e-mentees, which will now be extended to programmes within the School of Life and Health Sciences. The second pre-entry e-mentoring pilot targeted new international students, and involved over 200 student e-mentors and e-mentees.

e. **Dissemination of findings**

Data, evaluation and research will only impact on inclusive learning and teaching if it is used, therefore disseminating findings is essential. This includes engaging colleagues in the process of change, using routine data, presenting information about cohorts of students that are underperforming, and sharing effective practice. Popular mechanisms include learning and teaching conferences, but some institutions recognise the importance of utilising a range of methods.

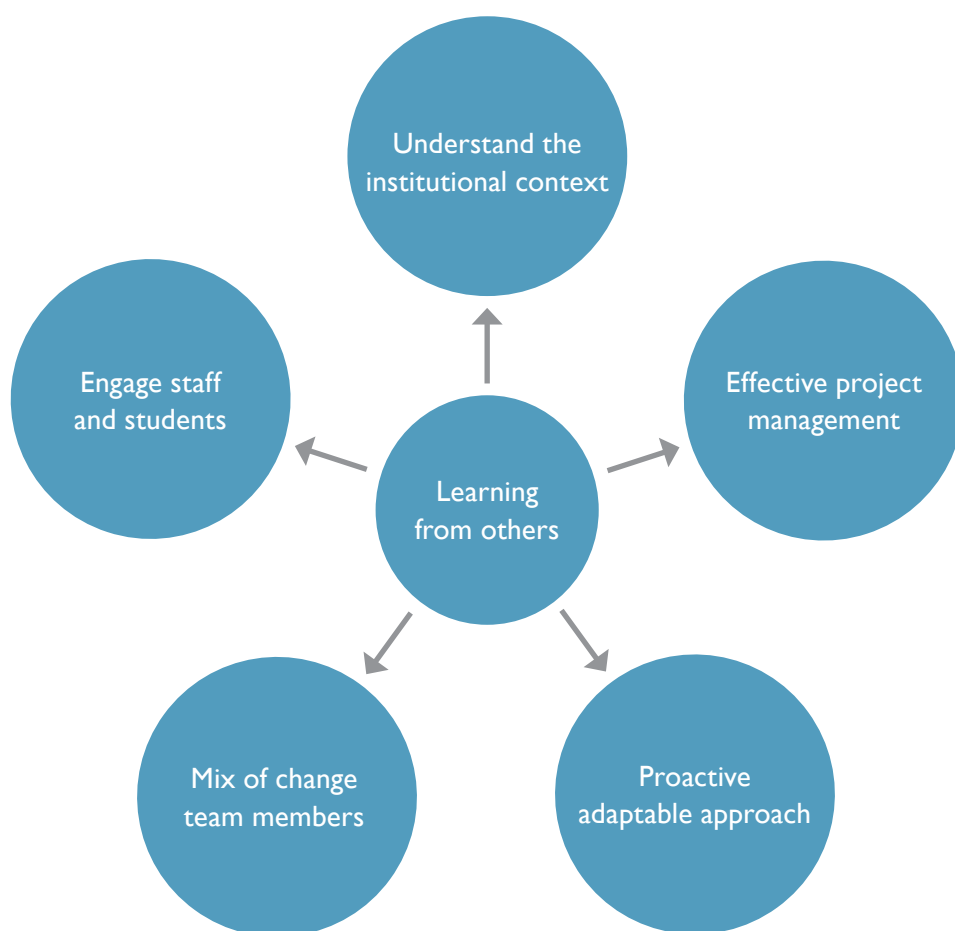
The University of Bedfordshire is developing a communications strategy. The strategy will be about disseminating outcomes but will also seek to engage the wider university community in thinking about the issues and informing the developing definition and vision.

The University of Northampton is using a multi-pronged approach to dissemination of findings from its programme of quantitative analysis, review of the literature, student interviews, staff focus groups and semi-structured discussion with a cohort of participants on the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. Dissemination will be through the Learning and Teaching Committee and Equality and Diversity Committee, by workshops at the learning and teaching conference, through an article in the institutional e-journal *Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education*, through a poster at an international conference and through HE networks.

5. Learning from participating institutions

Participating institutions were asked to reflect on the key lessons learned so that other institutions can benefit from their experience. This section highlights a number of factors that they advise other institutions to consider in the process of developing inclusive learning and teaching. These have been categorised around the emerging themes shown in Figure 5.1 and discussed below.

Figure 5.1: Key lessons from participating teams



5.1 Take time to understand the institutional context

For a number of HEIs, it was important that any plans to develop inclusive practice began by seeking to understand the status quo within the institution. For those who did so, it achieved a number of purposes:

- a) Firstly the proposed change should build on current effective practice, whether this be through identifying ‘champions’ already using inclusive practices or the practices that students valued and appreciated. Accordingly institutions used a variety of mechanisms to review and identify effective individuals and/or practices such as research, self-assessment toolkits, and ‘showcase’ events.
- b) Secondly, the proposed change would be embedded into current activities and processes or aligned to change in progress. Such alignment sought to achieve staff engagement and buy-in as well as position inclusive learning and teaching practices as a core (rather than additional) consideration.
- c) A third purpose was to ensure that inclusive practice be aligned to the values, vision, priorities or corporate plan of the institution. In many institutions, these refer to one or more principles of inclusion (e.g. collaboration, respect, equity), and thus provide an internal driver for the enhancement of inclusive practice.
- d) Fourthly, clarification of the institutional context helped establish a baseline from which progress could be more easily assessed, as well as impact and effectiveness demonstrated and measured.
- e) Finally, the upfront collection of context-specific information provided the basis from which to establish any areas for development and future priorities.

5.2 Use effective project management approaches

A number of suggestions for other institutions were focused around the management and co-ordination of change, including the allocation of resources, time management, planning, setting priorities and evaluation. Suggestions for managing the development of inclusive practice included:

- a) Ensure sufficient and realistic resources are in place – including the provision of staff or time to implement required actions and the allocation of ‘ring-fenced’ budget to fund particular activity.
- b) Create a business case – including a rationale for the change with accompanying evidence (i.e. of the need or benefit of the change), which demonstrates an alignment with the institutional policies and processes.

- c) Develop clear, shared goals and objectives – to ensure all staff (or change teams) have a common understanding of what is to be done, and a collective commitment to, and responsibility for, developing and using inclusive practices.
- d) Set realistic milestones and priorities – linked to key institutional agendas.
- e) Include an evaluation strategy – to include clearly defined outcomes, plans and targets from which to evidence and measure progress.

5.3 Take a proactive, adaptable approach

Participating institutions provided advice around the nature of the approach required to develop inclusive learning and teaching. The suggestions around approach included the need to:

- a) Be flexible – make sure that plans are not too prescriptive so that the team can respond creatively as situations and opportunities emerge.
- b) Be realistic about what can be achieved – ensure that plans are not too ambitious so not to jeopardise quality over quantity.
- c) Use a top-down and bottom-up approach – work with both senior managers to change policy and procedure and with those responsible for learning and teaching to change practice. It can help also to encourage and focus effort on the boundary between policy and practice.
- d) Maximise upcoming opportunities – capitalise on every opportunity (e.g. chance meetings, alignment with other change processes) to embed inclusive learning and teaching.
- e) Take a tailored and personalised approach – the success of an approach may be increased by ensuring that any method used to promote change (e.g. staff development) is tailored to specific roles or subjects, or is personalised (e.g. drawing on evidence from students).
- f) Share learning and resources – learn from the experiences of other institutions and repurpose their materials where appropriate, which can reduce time.

5.4 Build an effective change team

Participants particularly valued the opportunity to work with colleagues from across their institution, whether this was to reflect, bounce ideas off one another, plan or think. They thus recommended that other institutions should consider the make-up of any team tasked with developing inclusive learning and teaching, in order to maximise progress. An effective team may be characterised as one involving:

- a) Senior staff responsible for institution-wide leadership and management.
- b) Staff from different services and departments across the institution, who may not have worked together previously.
- c) Staff with specialist knowledge, understanding and responsibilities for inclusion e.g. equality and diversity, widening participation, disability services.
- d) Students or student representatives treated as equal partners in the change process.
- e) Enthusiastic and committed individuals with a wide mix of skills, knowledge and experience.
- f) Creative individuals prepared to question current policies and practice, and generate imaginative solutions.

5.5 Engage staff and students across the institution

There was clear recognition of the importance and value of involving a range of staff and students in the development of inclusive learning and teaching. This was reflected in a number of recommendations about the different stakeholder groups it can be helpful to engage in the process of change:

- a) Senior management – to support, promote and lead the agenda, through commitment, advocacy and influence.
- b) Operational management – to aid the implementation of change.
- c) Champions or allies – who are currently modelling or leading the development of effective inclusive policy and/or practice.
- d) Influencers – those in a position to influence or drive forward change within the institution.
- e) Students – seeking meaningful ways to engage students in the design, delivery and evaluation of learning and teaching.

6. Resources from participating institutions

1. Tool by which to identify and rate effectiveness of methods used to implement inclusive learning and teaching. The Higher Education Academy, adapted by the University of the West of Scotland.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/inclusion/I_UWS_MethodsTool.doc
2. Inclusive Learning and Teaching Checklist – a tool to identify barriers and biases in course-related materials and activities. University of the West of Scotland.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/inclusion/2_UWS_InclusiveCurriculumChecklist.doc
3. Curriculum Audit Record – a tool to identify issues, changes and impact of methods used to implement inclusive learning and teaching. University of the West of Scotland.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/inclusion/3_UWS_CurriculumAuditRecord.doc
4. Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum: Self-evaluation framework – a tool by which to review and evaluate progress towards embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum. The Higher Education Academy.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/ourwork/inclusion/embedding_eandd_self_evaluation_framework
5. Research syntheses – a series of research syntheses looking at the experience of diverse groups of students in higher education and strategies to promote their success. Commissioned by the Higher Education Academy.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/alldisplay?type=resources&newid=ourwork/inclusion/Inclusion_Research_Syntheses_Main_Page&site=york

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Appendix I: Summary details of projects undertaken by institutional teams

Aston University

An inclusive learning experience for all students at Aston University does not mean equal treatment and support for all as students have individual needs, but rather an equal opportunity to achieve a fulfilling and rewarding outcome. A programme of actions was developed to enhance good practice and embed inclusivity in our learning and teaching practice across Aston University, including:

- The development of an equality checklist of questions to aid the development of new programmes and modules.
- The provision of improved guidance to staff on how to incorporate the principles of equality and diversity into curriculum development.
- Establishing a staff Equality and Diversity ‘module’ on the VLE with useful information such as exemplars, case studies, short focused briefings, etc., along with the Single Equality Action Plan, staff handbook and policy documents.
- The development of workshops for all staff, including for those at senior level, to raise awareness and develop inclusive practice in learning and teaching. The workshops will be developed through co-operation between Staff Development, the Disability and Additional Needs Unit, and the Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice.
- The development of a pre-entry peer e-mentoring scheme to support the student transition to higher education.

Through these and other initiatives we aim to engage others in the institution in the process of change.

University of Bedfordshire

The University of Bedfordshire had developed a curriculum framework (called CRe8) that is designed to address the learning needs of a diverse student population across a wide range of subjects and qualifications.

CRe8 has five interrelated strands: personalised learning; effective curriculum design; the learning experience; employability; and assessment. Together these are designed to create an effective, transparent and inclusive curriculum. The purpose of

engagement with the summit programme was to help ensure that CRe8 meets its aims to be inclusive and to maximise student potential. The team recognised that inclusivity is a complex and problematic notion and that a more detailed understanding of what is actually meant by inclusivity, and when it really matters, was required before a more detailed evaluation of the inclusivity of the framework could be undertaken. Work has therefore been started to develop and consult on an institution-wide understanding of inclusivity. This will encompass the development of principles and practices of inclusivity in teaching, learning and assessment that are consistent with the University's distinctive mission, secure wide commitment among key stakeholders and provide the basis for action planning. This is underpinned by an action plan to engage staff and embed inclusivity into institutional processes.

University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

The aim of our project at UCLan is to influence the development of inclusive learning and teaching through University structures, curriculum design and equality impact assessments.

- **Structures:** The University has established a strategic group, the Equality and Diversity Executive Group to provide direction on all equality and diversity matters relating to both staff and students and receives assurance that the objectives within the University's Single Equality Scheme are being implemented. The University also appointed an Equality and Diversity Manager to manage the implementation of the scheme. The role involves working very closely with senior staff to ensure equality and diversity are mainstreamed across the University, embedded into the curriculum, and that all staff and students are adequately supported.
- **Curriculum design:** We are keen to ensure that all our programmes are inclusive both in delivery and content, and this aspiration is now reflected in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Developing a curriculum that confronts inequality and celebrates diversity requires a conscious shift in which basic assumptions are discouraged, examined and, at times, challenged. We aim to address this awareness and understanding through the rollout of a comprehensive three-year Equality and Diversity Training programme, which has been specially designed for specific groups of staff, based on their roles and responsibilities.

- **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):** In 2009–10 six schools are undergoing a periodic course review and have been asked to consider equality and diversity issues as part of the process. The other 13 schools have been requested to nominate an equality and diversity project on one of the following issues: curriculum; student recruitment or student experience; or the impact of gender/ethnicity on degree attainment. This is designed to ensure that EIAs are locally owned, undertaken at school level, and relevant and meaningful. We have designed a portfolio of EIA toolkits to help staff carry out their EIAs.

University College Falmouth (UCF)

At the point of applying for the HEA Inclusive learning and teaching programme, UCF was a small specialist institution focused on art, design, media and performance in the midst of considerable change. A recent merger with Dartington College of Arts and a stated objective to achieve university status provided the platform from which wide-scale review of curriculum content and process could be reviewed against a strategic plan informed by three cross-cutting themes: ‘removing barriers to higher education’, ‘building an inclusive community of learners’ and providing ‘staff and student opportunities to engage in internal-institutional and cross-cultural dialogue’. Our initial proposal detailed the need to establish inclusive learning and teaching practices to support – in particular – effective assessment and feedback processes; interdisciplinary project learning; and the production of a more mindful appreciation in the student body of the benefits accrued through the development of a ‘toolbox’ of transferable skills. On engagement with the programme, it became clear that the team (along with colleagues back in the institution) were not truly informed about precisely what wasn’t working. With high-level strategic intent clearly signalling the need to support equitable engagement and some clearly effective practices of inclusive learning and teaching in play in parts of the institution, the team felt it necessary as a first step to audit the inclusive reality in order to see where the gaps actually lay. The result is an amended action plan, including an institutional policy audit; a student and staff consultation institutional practice audit; comparative analysis of data; development of an action planning and working group; and dissemination.

University of Liverpool

The University’s development of a new strategic plan has meant a review of its policies. Subsequent implementation plans will include a major curriculum review. The vision of the team is that all programmes will be designed to be inclusive and that staff delivering

these programmes are familiar with the concept of inclusive or accessible curriculum and able to implement them to maximum effect. The strategy adopted was to:

- Review university policies with a view to:
 - considering ways in which these might be modified to better encompass inclusion and so provide informed advice to appropriate committees;
 - identifying ways in which these policies might be embedded into the revised curriculum.
- Determine, through discussion, reflection and review of the literature our own definition of inclusion and to seek ways to share this across the University (for example, through the development of a workshop on inclusion to be used when meeting various representative groups as part of the project, and to be used for the staff CPD programme).
- Seek to raise awareness of inclusion and to explore and identify examples of good practice in inclusion as it pertains to the curriculum.
- Compile a structured repository of examples of good practice and case studies from across the institution and beyond that would be easily accessible to staff via a web interface, and to provide commentary on the individual case studies and clear, practical tips on their implementation.
- Offer ongoing support for colleagues involved in curriculum review and beyond. This would include a developing network of individuals and groups identified as employing good practice in specific areas that are willing to offer advice to colleagues (an ever-widening community of practice).

Liverpool John Moores University

The project team focused on the Faculty of Health and Applied Social Sciences to raise awareness of inclusion and diversity issues. The aim was to encourage a shift in attitudes and responses to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. The project centred on a planned programme of awareness-raising activities, including workshops, focus groups with students and discussions with programme teams. As part of this, we have developed and piloted a new approach to staff and student induction for diversity and equality; an approach centred on discussion to an equality impact assessment for programme design; enhancements to our disability strategy; and improved equality-related data collection and analysis processes.

The focus of the work has been to develop discursive approaches to exploring inclusive teaching and learning with staff and students. This has emphasised raising awareness and providing a non-threatening and supportive environment in which staff

and students can consider and share their perspectives and ideas for change. The aim of this approach is to create a sense of ownership of these issues among managers, within programme teams and across the student body that is informed by accurate and relevant data. The activities undertaken will be evaluated in order to inform policy and procedures for the University.

London South Bank University

The Inclusive Curriculum and Accessibility project aims to gather evidence of existing good practice in inclusive curriculum design and delivery at London South Bank University. It will disseminate this practice and build upon it. An important output will be continued training and support for those designing and delivering programmes to ensure sustainability. The aims of the project are:

- to work with students to identify barriers to learning;
- to build on good practice that already exists within the organisation;
- to foster enthusiasm for bringing about change in staff perceptions about disability;
- to deliver an inclusive curriculum.

Cross-departmental working and using an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach are key components in the project. The aim being to achieve best possible impact of outputs within the University and, by using AI, to provide rich, positive, qualitative data that would underpin change. We are extremely pleased with the quality of the information we have collected through the interviews and focus groups and feel that the Appreciative Inquiry approach has complemented existing problem-centred evaluative data. The amount of good practice we have identified with the project will be beneficial for the University as it will bring about positive change, rather than focusing on a deficit model of correcting what has 'gone wrong'.

The project has raised the profile of issues around dyslexia and brought about engagement with academic teams across the University. It has also been established as part of the ongoing training programme by the staff development unit for senior members of academic departments. This will go to ensure there is sound and equitable practice across all faculties within the university.

University of Northampton

The University of Northampton has been investigating issues around inclusivity in assessment in the Assess4success project. Drawing on quantitative data from the

institution suggesting specific groups are more likely to struggle with summative assessment in Year 1, and qualitative data exploring both sample student experiences in relation to assessment tasks and staff experiences in relation to assessing those tasks, a series of generic recommendations to enhance assessment practice both in the host institution and across the sector are offered:

- **Preparedness:** provide better information to facilitate student understanding of assessment.
- **Study skills:** support students to become more confident in managing assessment tasks.
- **Feedback:** greater use of formative assessment earlier in the student journey and prompt feedback.
- **Alternative assessment:** greater use of a range and choice of 'alternative' assessment tasks.
- **Inclusion:** introduce the expertise of our Centre for Academic Practice (CfAP) and dyslexia support tutors as proactive change agents in the validation process and guarantee CfAP workshops embedded in all non-standard courses.

University of Sunderland

After discussion we decided that in our terms being inclusive was about including everyone regardless of who or what they are, so inclusive for one means inclusive for all. We have undertaken a suite of activities to develop an inclusive learning and teaching culture including:

- Implementation of a new Academic Strategy and associated committee structure that has inclusivity at its heart.
- Launch of a University-wide staff development activity based upon material purchased from Leeds Metropolitan University on cultural inclusivity and hands-on internationalisation. These booklets were provided to all our academic staff during Autumn 2009, alongside discussion and training sessions.
- Pilot staff development activities within one faculty.
- A University teaching and learning conference to take place in July 2010.
- A regional conference on diversity in the curriculum to take place in March 2010.

University of East London

Our vision for change has been to develop a fully inclusive curriculum comprising content, materials, delivery and assessment in order to maximise student engagement, development and achievement. The focus is on the whole of our student body, moving away from differentiation, labelling and the 'reasonable adjustment' model of support. Our vision is comprehensive: it ranges from programme design in collaboration with key stakeholders, to content, delivery methods/materials, through to learner choice in a range of alternative and equivalent assessments and CPD for all staff. We envisage a situation in which every staff member who is engaged in either curriculum delivery or learner support will be required to audit their own practice and engage with inclusive processes. Responsibility for inclusive practice will be embedded at both an individual and institutional level, co-ordinated at a school/discipline/department level and monitored through school/service learning and teaching plans. To date our major successes have been:

- embedding inclusive practice into our Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy 2009–12, 'Inspiring Excellence and Achievement';
- establishing a fully representational Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Working Group (ILTAWG) to drive the initiative and influence and engage colleagues at a local level;
- 'Towards Inclusion for People with Disabilities' – ongoing provision of mandatory, staff development using a blended learning model.

Current projects include development of greater assessment choice for students, comprising selection from a range of alternative and equivalent assessments and a project to capture the student voice in relation to delivery of the curriculum, entitled: 'What works 4 U?'

UHI Millennium Institute

The overall aim of the UHI Inclusion programme is to ensure that the UHI learning experience supports the individual success of all our students, without discrimination. It is an initiative with two distinct phases:

- Phase 1: Clearly articulating where we are and where we want to be in relation to the UHI student experience.
- Phase 2: Making inclusion part of everyday practice – the normalisation of inclusive practice.

As part of phase I we undertook an institutional analysis in relation to inclusive learning and teaching. This identified institutional strengths, internal and external drivers for change, and enabling factors to promote inclusivity.

University of the West of Scotland (UWS)

The UWS programme was designed to help create an inclusive learning culture through strategic planning and senior management leadership. Our goal is to provide a high-quality, student-centred learning and teaching experience for all students, recognising that they come from an increasingly diverse range of backgrounds. We aim to build a welcoming and supportive culture that removes any barriers to access and ensures equality of opportunity for all who wish to work or study within the University. This will be achieved through embedding inclusiveness in curriculum design; in quality enhancement processes; and in learning, teaching and assessment practices. We plan to introduce a programme of curriculum development to allow academic staff the time and resources to equip them with the skills to develop a more inclusive curriculum. We have established new staff development workshops to support this aim. Alongside this we will work on changes to performance management arrangements for academics to reward curriculum development activities. Other initiatives will focus on running learning and teaching conferences, reviewing our Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (PG Cert) programme for lecturing staff and identifying, collating and disseminating good practice both internally in UWS and externally to the wider sector.

University of Winchester

Throughout the programme our key definition of inclusive learning and teaching was: “The design of curriculum and pedagogy to facilitate an inclusive community of learning for all students, whatever their background, and which challenges and supports individuals to achieve their full potential.” To work towards this, a number of activities have been completed or are in progress:

- raising the profile for inclusive learning and teaching at the strategic level, e.g. via the revision of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2009–11 and its subsequent Implementation Plan;
- drawing together innovative and good inclusive practice to enhance relations between students and staff, and among students;

- integrating inclusive learning and teaching into two modules within the PGCLTHE;
- a funded project looking at retention of the best performing programmes against the worst performing and investigating the variables that impact upon student outcomes;
- engaging both staff and students in the debate on inclusive learning and teaching by presenting relevant information online;
- providing examples of good practice on inclusive learning to staff;
- monitoring and communicating why students withdraw. Our ambition is to look at the good practice of Bournemouth University and the University of Glamorgan in identifying 'at risk' students and supporting them in additional ways so as to help them achieve their potential and prevent them suffering in silence;
- the University has looked to enhance the data being collected and utilised by programmes in order to better inform future developments by programme teams through their Action Plan and Review. Data on the inclusion and retention of students within their programmes facilitate the development of better practices.

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September 2010

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