



## JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ Cumbernauld College

### Equalities Data Tool

#### Summary

All FE and HE institutions are now required to analyse learner retention and attainment performance at course level in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. This analysis should lead to review and improvement where appropriate. To assist this analysis at Cumbernauld College, a tool was designed and developed using the FES (Further Education Statistics) return, which is completed by every FE college in Scotland. Using the annual raw data collated by the Scottish Funding Council, the college's Quality Manager in partnership with the Head of Information Systems and Technology have created a tool which is efficient, accessible and simple to use and produces reports that can be used by both management and staff alike to analyse equality data and thereby feed into the college's quality improvement process.

#### About Cumbernauld College

Cumbernauld College has two campuses. The main campus is situated in the centre of Cumbernauld town, close to many local amenities including the Tryst Sports Centre, Broadwood Stadium, Cumbernauld Theatre and the town centre shopping complex. The second campus is based in East Dunbartonshire.

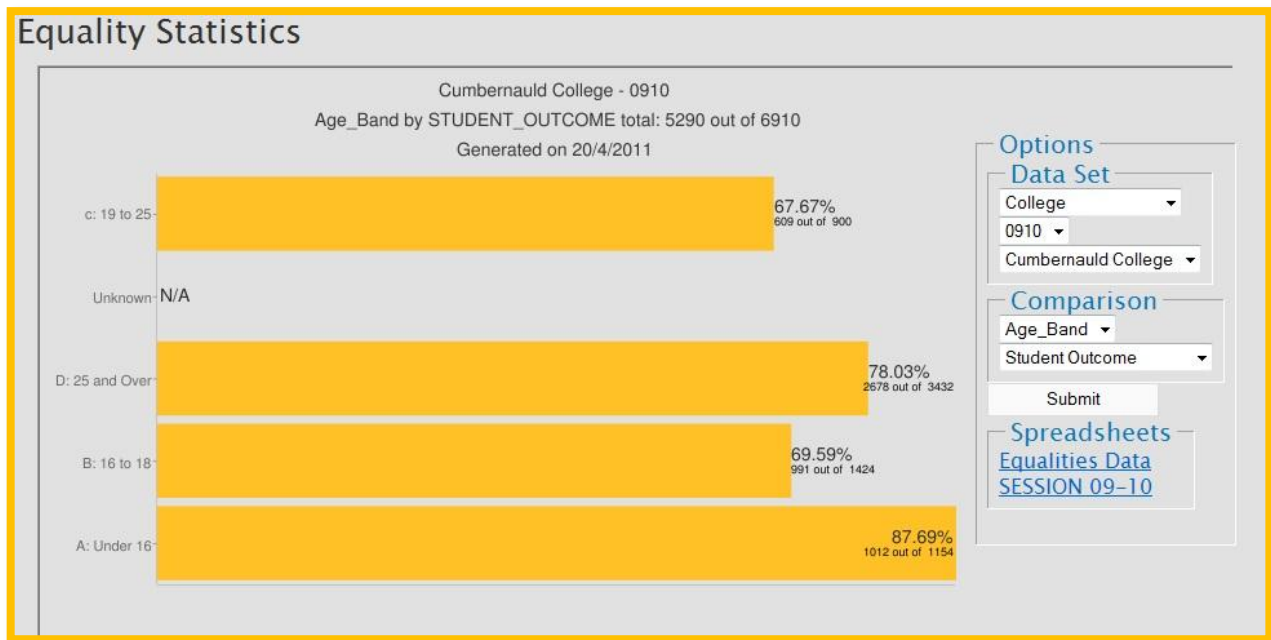


#### The challenge

To analyse learner retention and attainment performance at course level in relation to gender, age, ethnicity, and disability, course teams did not have access to the required data. Although there was some availability, it required specialist knowledge of databases to extract it, putting it out of reach for most teaching staff. The challenge was to design and develop an online tool to meet the needs of staff that was accessible when and where they wanted, was simple and straightforward to use and so aid the analysis of equality data for staff, quickly and easily.

## The activity

A tool was developed to allow course teams to pull out the main performance indicator data at course, faculty and college level to allow monitoring and benchmarking across the four main equalities groupings. In fact two tools have been developed, one (Equalities Data tool) which is used to produce statistical charts and information on a wide range of equality data and another (Annual Course Review tool) which has equality data embedded within the template. The tools have been developed using a combination of MS SQL and Google charts with a simple, clear and intuitive interface.



The project to develop both these tools demonstrates a strong and effective working partnership between Quality and IT, and in the case of the Annual Course Review tool, with teaching colleagues. Both tools have been enthusiastically welcomed by staff and there have been clear benefits in terms of efficiency and improvements in quality procedures. With regard to the Annual Course Review tool, the timescale for development and implementation was very short. Although the Equalities Data tool was launched early in session 2010/11, the review and improvement process leading to the development of the Annual Course Review tool incorporating embedded equalities data was commenced on 22 November 2010, with a launch date of 14 February 2011.

What is clear is that the key to the successful development was the partnership between staff, clear project planning, decision making and activities, clearly keeping to targets. Curriculum staff indicated that they wanted an online tool that would alleviate much of the administrative paperwork involved in course review. From the outset, eight lecturing staff that volunteered were involved in the whole review of existing procedures and design of new procedures using technology. The project was managed by the Quality Manager and apart from one face-to-face meeting, all decision making, planning and monitoring was managed using a Moodle course set up specifically for the project. Once the working group had agreed the

parameters for the new tool, a technical specification was drawn up by the Quality Manager and then passed to the IST manager, who worked with a colleague to design the new course review tool, in the two weeks prior to the scheduled launch at the annual Quality Development day.

The course review tool is mapped to the quality framework and as staff complete it, areas for improvement are seamlessly incorporated into the associated Quality Improvement Plan, which feeds into the operational planning process for the next academic year. In addition to the initial staff development session delivered on using the tool, teaching staff requested further development sessions on evaluative writing skills. The first of these has been delivered, with further sessions scheduled to take place during the annual staff development week in August 2011.

## CEC Annual Course Review (2011)

NC SOCIAL CARE

Overview	February	November	QIP
----------	----------	----------	-----

- 1. Mid-Year Review**
- 2. Interim Unit Success**
- 3. Early Student Retention**
- 4. Equalities Data**

HNC SOCIAL CARE - NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP (HNCCECNL-D101A, )  
Course

HNC SOCIAL CARE (HNCCECSC-F101A, HNCCECSC-F101B, HNCCECSC-P101A, HNCCECSC-P101B, )  
Course

NC CARE/SOCIAL STUDIES INTERMEDIATE 2 (SNCCECCS-F101A, SNCCECCS-P101A, )  
Course

NC SOCIAL CARE (SNCCECSC-F101A, SNCCECSC-P101A, )  
Course
- 5. Questions**
- 6. Identify Any Actions**
- 7. Review and Complete**

Tick the submit box in this section when the February update has been completed.

### The outcomes

The tool was made available on the intranet, accessible in and out of college. Staff across the college have wholeheartedly adopted the use of the new online system. In fact, the course tool has been designed so that teaching staff have access to 3 separate course review areas, one each for November, February and June. It is clear that staff being involved, having ownership in the development, working in partnership with IT and quality has led to a very successful project in terms of staff engagement, efficiency, improvement in quality and reporting.

## **The impact**

The college met all equalities requirements during the recent HMle Core Review, and a key component of this was the evaluation that was carried out using the Equalities Data tool. Additionally, the Annual Course Review tool has streamlined the evaluation of learning and teaching in a number of ways, for example by removing the need for teaching staff to gather data for inclusion in a report. Instead, their efforts are concentrated on evaluating the data which has been pre-populated into the report template. This development is potentially of great interest to all Scottish colleges, as it addresses the need to analyse not just equality data but to undertake course review to inform future planning. There has been further development in how staff review courses in that the process has encouraged a more evaluative rather than descriptive response, helped by illustrative examples of evaluative writing embedded in the tool's interface.

## **Lessons Learnt**

A longer testing period of the Annual Course Review tool would have been preferred, as the very tight development and launch timescale led to some refinements being implemented during the initial stages in the days and weeks after the staff started to use it. These early issues with regard to speed of access have now been remedied.

## **Useful Links**

[www.cumbernauld.ac.uk](http://www.cumbernauld.ac.uk)

[www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk/best\\_of\\_the\\_west/BoW.htm](http://www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk/best_of_the_west/BoW.htm)

## **Disclaimer**

*The Regional Support Centre (RSC) supports the development of educational e-learning. We may refer to specific products, processes or services. Such references are examples and are not endorsements or recommendations and should not be used for product endorsement purposes.*