

COMMITTEE OF SCOTTISH CHAIRS

Policy Statement

The members of the Committee of Scottish Chairs of HE Institutions believe that gender balance, diversity and equality of opportunity on governing bodies strengthen governance. They have resolved to work together with other members of their governing bodies to do everything which they reasonably can to achieve gender balance in the membership of their governing bodies consistent with existing laws and the Code of Good HE Governance. In particular they will aim to achieve, on a timescale which may vary according to the circumstances of each Institution, a minimum of 40 percent of each gender among the independent members of the governing body; and will measure success by the extent to which this has been achieved for the sector by 2018.

HEIs already comply with the provisions of the Code of Good HE Governance by establishing appropriate goals and policies in regard to the balance of their independent membership in terms of equality and diversity. Already a third have expressed their goals for gender balance in quantified terms. This Code will be reviewed in 2016 in the light of experience. The significance of this policy statement is that in advance of that review the leaders of governing bodies are collectively undertaking to use their best efforts to see quantified goals and timetables adopted for gender balance among independent members across the sector.

These will not be quantified goals for the whole membership of Courts/Boards, only of independent members. The composition of Institutions' governing bodies varies considerably but all have some members who are chosen by groups of staff and students and some also have members chosen by external stakeholders. Chairs recognise the right of all these stakeholder groups to make their own choice but will seek their support for the principle of gender balanced governing bodies and will encourage them to use their best efforts to identify and encourage diverse candidates for the positions on governing bodies which they fill by appointment or election.

April 2015