

## **Fol 18/00537– Email correspondence between officials**

**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** Commissioner For Fair Access

**Sent:** 29 January 2018 10:46

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** FW: Today's report on retention and success

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 25 January 2018 14:52

**To:** Commissioner For Fair Access

**Subject:** RE: Today's report on retention and success

Dear [Redacted]

Many thanks for this. I entirely take the point about the subject level data, but it would be good at least to see the institutional level data and I look forward to hearing whether it is feasible to do so. It might be that you do not wish to publish it but in that case perhaps it might be possible to consider whether it might be shared with me on a confidential basis given my role as [Redacted].

I look forward to hearing from you again in due course.

Best wishes

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted] **On Behalf Of** [CommissionerForFairAccess@gov.scot](mailto:CommissionerForFairAccess@gov.scot)

**Sent:** 25 January 2018 2:47 PM

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Today's report on retention and success

[Redacted]

Thank you for your interest in the discussion paper that was published this week. I provide analytical support to the Commissioner and helped produce the paper. Peter asked me to respond to your request on his behalf.

We didn't reproduce the full range of tables and charts for individual institutions when developing the paper but we will look into whether it's feasible to do so.

As you know, the number of students from SIMD20 areas is relatively low at several of the smaller institutions, to the extent that drilling down to subject level is likely to leave us with very little in the way of meaningful percentages for retention, outcomes and destinations. That's the main reason we grouped institutions by type – doing so meant we could include data for all institutions, allowed a reasonable degree of granularity and allowed institutions to 'benchmark' their own performance to some extent.

Thanks

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
**Sent:** 25 January 2018 11:54  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Today's report on retention and success

Dear [Redacted],

Thanks. As you suggest, I think it is best for you to send a holding reply to [Redacted] including the kind of points you make in your email to me and saying that you and I, and the rest of the team, will give further consideration to this and let back to them. On your second point my concern is that I don't want to increase the demands on you.

The discussion paper seems to have generated a fair amount of interest / discussion, which of course is the point. So thanks you very much.

All the best,

Peter

On 25 Jan 2018, at 11:12, [Redacted] wrote:

Peter

Please see data request below relating to this week's discussion paper. [Redacted] has also provided feedback indicating how helpful it would be to make institution level data available.

We didn't actually produce a full range of data for individual institutions so I'll have to do that first and look into whether we can share it. The number of SIMD20 students is relatively low at many institutions, to the extent that drilling down to subject level might leave us with numbers that are too small to disclose. That's one of the main reasons we grouped institutions by type. Are you happy for me to send a holding response on your behalf, explaining the issue and that we'll look into it?

More generally, it would be helpful to discuss whether/how we make analysis from the discussion papers part of regular reporting. The data from the latest discussion paper, for example, would make a useful addition to the SFC Report on Widening Access – they already include SIMD20 retention data but not degree classification or destinations data. The UCAS analysis we did last year could also be updated annually and would offer a useful indication of how institutions offer making behaviour is changing. The UCAS analysis wouldn't be a natural fit for the SFC report though so we'd have to find another home for it – maybe it could be included in your annual report or published alongside it.

We could discuss with the rest of the team when you're next in [Redacted]?

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 January 2018 10:31  
**To:** Commissioner For Fair Access  
**Subject:** Today's report on retention and success

Dear Peter

I read with interest the report including your commentary.

I would like to ask you to make the data available (or point us to the source) by individual institution as well as by groupings (ancient, pre-92 etc.). How otherwise are we to be able to understand which universities may be performing better than the average and so might be a source of good practice? This would be most helpful for [Redacted]. But we need to start looking at the data in a clear eyed way, so anything you can do to help institutions to be able to access this data at an institutional level will be most helpful.

If you believe my query should be directed elsewhere, eg to Scottish Government, please do let me know and provide me with the relevant contact.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 25 January 2018 10:06  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: New Discussion Paper from Commissioner - retention, outcomes and destinations

Hi both,

Please see [Redacted] feedback on the discussion paper. This was for the [Redacted] but I said I would also pass it on to you. It is relevant to the discussions we had yesterday on reporting at an institutional level.

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 25 January 2018 09:42  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: New Discussion Paper from Commissioner - retention, outcomes and destinations

Hi all,

[Redacted – out of scope]

I read Peter's paper and the press articles which followed. A couple of points to contribute to the discussion:

Dividing the HEIs into the ancient, old, post-92, specialised categories is possibly convenient for stats purposes and focusing attention on the ancient HEIs (I presume this is why this methodology is used). However, it does not pick up the radically different numbers evident across HEIs within each of these groups and leads to the press just printing off general statistics and statements, which are not accurate for all HEIs. In this way, the press coverage bears no relevance to [Redacted] performance in WP and leads to us having to constantly go back the press to point this out. This is also what happens when stats are released collating the data for [Redacted] by the SFC.

If we are to really move on this work, being a bit more granular with the data, i.e. by individual HEIs, would give a more accurate picture and allow us all to engage with data meaningful to each of our HEIs.

[Redacted]

This is not satisfactory from an institutional reputation standpoint, but more importantly, the damage this does in terms of potential applicants reading newspaper headlines and thinking there is no point in applying to a university because it does not take in 'the likes of me' should not be underestimated either.

I appreciate Peter can't control what the press say and how they twist what's in the report, but publishing the more granular data would go some way to mitigating this.

Apart from this, I concur with the reports main messages and it confirms, with the data, albeit at this grouped level, what we know is happening across the sector.

Happy to discuss this further at the next meeting, but I hope this is useful to contribute to the discussion.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 24 January 2018 12:20  
**To:** [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** press reports on Discussion paper

Hi all,

As well as the two reports highlighted in the media monitoring email, the Scotsman has an article, 'Poor students outperformed by rich at universities', <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/poor-students-outperformed-by-rich-at-universities-1-4669759>

Regards

[Redacted]

Scotland's universities blighted by institutional class bias, says equalities tsar

**Rebuking the efforts of university bosses, Professor Sir Peter Scott said the prejudice ingrained in higher education against those from poorer backgrounds “has to change”.**

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/politics/scottish-politics/585772/scotlands-universities-blighted-institutional-class-bias-says-equalities-tsar/>

1. **Barriers facing poorer students at university are likened to racism**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/barriers-facing-poorer-students-at-university-are-likened-to-racism-3dk090rrt>

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[Redacted]

| Access to Higher Education | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 23 January 2018 10:11

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Publication - 22 Jan - Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations

Hi [Redacted],

When the publication is live on beta I'll add the link. It should be on later this morning.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Website Manager | Scottish Government | [Redacted] | [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 23 January 2018 09:55

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Publication - 22 Jan - Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations

[Redacted]

The discussion paper is now live on the website. Here's the URL:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/01/1674>

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

On 23 Jan 2018, at 09:48, [Redacted] wrote:

Hi all,

The Commissioner has today published a new Discussion Paper on retention, outcomes and destinations. It should be of interest to [Redacted] and may be worth discussing at our meeting on Thursday. Please find a copy of the paper attached.

Regards

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

| Access to Higher Education | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 January 2018 17:02

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** CONFIDENTIAL: For Action at 9.30 am tomorrow re publication of tomorrows CFA discussion paper

Hi All

**Arrangements for publication of the CFA's 4<sup>th</sup> Discussion Paper on Retention, Outcomes and Destinations.**

As arranged by [Redacted], the paper will be published at 9.30 am tomorrow in the publications area of the SG website and a link will be created to the document on the CFA web pages.

On publication an email containing a link to the paper and the text below should be issued in 3 separate emails – [Redacted] I'd be grateful if you could action this along with the tweet:

**Emails**

Please find attached a copy of, and link to, the latest Discussion Paper produced on behalf of Professor Peter Scott, the Commissioner for Fair Access. The paper is on Retention,

Outcomes and Destinations. It was published this morning at 9.30am. The Commissioner would like you to have sight of this.

Kind Regards,

**Professor Sir Peter Scott**

Commissioner for Fair Access

<< File: Commissioner for Fair Access - Discussion Paper - Retention Outcomes and (2).pdf >>

One should be sent from the Commissioner's mailbox blind copied to:

[Redacted]

One should be sent from the Commissioner's mail box blind copied to the following stakeholders:

[Redacted]

One should be sent from the Commissioner's mail box blind copied to the members of the Access Delivery Group:

[Redacted]

### **Tweet**

A link to the report should also be tweeted from the Commissioner's account with the following picture inserted:

<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

The tweet should read: "Read the @CommFairAccess latest discussion paper that considers retention, outcomes and destinations".

[Redacted] grateful if you could give any help needed with this and can we have a chat about '@ing' people into the tweet in the morning please.

Happy to discuss all/any of this.

Regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Higher Education and Science Division

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 January 2018 15:25

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** Publication - 22 Jan - Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations

[Redacted]

We're publishing a paper tomorrow on behalf of the Commissioner for Fair Access.

The paper will go live on the publications section of the SG website at 9:30am. It's called "Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations".

Could you set up a link to the publication on the Commissioner's section of the SG website please?

<https://beta.gov.scot/about/how-government-is-run/directorates/advanced-learning-and-science/commissioner-fair-access/>

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 22 January 2018 15:01  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: discussion paper publication

Hi,

I just gave her the title and time of publication so that she could find the link on the publications page.

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 22 January 2018 15:00  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: discussion paper publication

Thanks for the reminder - I haven't done that yet. Do I need to provide [Redacted] with the URL?

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 22 January 2018 14:57  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** discussion paper publication



Hi [Redacted],

Have you arranged for a link to be added to the Commissioner's page when the discussion paper is published tomorrow?

To do so, you need to email [Redacted], copying in the WEBSITE mailbox, and then send a reminder on the day of publication.

If you are not around tomorrow, I'm fine to send the reminder.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Access to Higher Education | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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From: [Redacted]  
Sent: 18 January 2018 15:31  
To: 'Scott, Peter'  
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted]  
Subject: RE: Discussion Paper commentary

Yes, 9:30 on 23 January. It's with the web publishers now.

We could send a link to [Redacted] from the Commissioner mailbox on your behalf on Tuesday morning.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government  
[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Scott, Peter [mailto:[Redacted] ]  
Sent: 18 January 2018 15:20  
To: [Redacted]  
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
Subject: Re: Discussion Paper commentary

Dear [Redacted],

Thanks. It looks good. I don't think there is anyone else I want you to send it too right now, although I think it is worth sending it to [Redacted]

All the best,

Peter

On 18 Jan 2018, at 15:13, [Redacted] wrote:

Peter

Here's the final pdf of the Discussion Paper. We were planning to send briefing to the Minister tomorrow, in line with approach we followed for the previous papers.

Would you like us share this one with anyone else (in confidence)?

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 18 January 2018 10:32

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** Discussion paper

[Redacted]

Just checking whether or not you are in the office today. I wanted a quick chat with you about the comments section in the discussion paper.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 18 January 2018 09:21

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Checking

I know you said you fixed the footnotes, but just in case, footnote four is first referenced on page 1, but the description is on page 2.

That's us finished, nothing else jumps out at us. Can give it a nother read if you are not sending it till later?

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Education Analytical Services

The Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 18 January 2018 08:58

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Checking

I fixed the footnote after sending - that's changed the layout a bit so should take care of the other formatting issues.

Have fixed chart 5 – sorry [Redacted – out of scope]

Will change to academic years on time series charts, only 3 of them I think.

Split last sentence in two.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 18 January 2018 08:51

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Checking

Comments so far:

All charts, they have single years, not academic years. Assume you know this and it on purpose. Not to bothered as you have academic years in title.

Chart 5 – it hurts [Redacted] this goes to 110%.

Page 6 – No footnote 5?

Page 6 – would be great to get the first few words on the previous page.

Page 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> para, Last sentence is long and complicated “However, .....outcome”

Still checking other sections.

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Education Analytical Services

The Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 18 January 2018 08:48  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Doesn't need to go to APS at bang on 9 by the way, but I'll need to head in to the office around 10 [Redacted – out of scope].

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 18 January 2018 08:40  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Cool.

Just reading the paper and will make comments but something noticed, in the text when the charts are first mentioned they say they only show 1 year worth of data (2015-16) not the combined 3 years.

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 18 January 2018 07:43  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Checking now

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Education Analytical Services

The Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 18 January 2018 07:18  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Updated version for proof-reading/sense check. Data attached too if you'd like checking a couple of charts against SAS output.

Looking to send to [Redacted] by 9.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 17 January 2018 18:15

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Checking

Basic quick comments

Couple of spelling/grammar mistakes 'furst' and 'the the'.

[Redacted]

Still got destinations to check, but need to go now – sorry!

[Redacted – out of scope]

Ta

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Education Analytical Services

The Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 17 January 2018 17:42

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Checking

Do you have time to give this a quick read before 6?

Don't worry if you don't, I can run it past [Redacted] first thing.

Not looking for detailed notes, just your thoughts on whether everything looks sensible enough data-wise.

I'm still adding the charts.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 17 January 2018 13:57  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Happy you have copied the tables over from SAS and used the formulas match up from my spot checking.

I'm assuming that you got the retention figures from SFC.

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 17 January 2018 12:35  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Checking

Thanks [Redacted].

Excel file attached now. Grateful if you could check I've not done anything daft in my formulas etc. please.

I've gone back and changed the code for the cross-tabs to give me 3 years combined instead of a single year, otherwise I lose a lot of subject breakdowns and the specialised institutions data due to small numbers.

The percentage tables down the right are the ones I'll be using for the charts – I'm working on a template just now and I'll circulate a copy of the text and charts for checking when I'm done.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 17 January 2018 10:38  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] **Subject:** RE: Checking

Hi [Redacted],

Happy with the code.

Thanks

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 17 January 2018 09:35  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Checking

Hi [Redacted]

I've saved my SAS code here: [Redacted]

Could you check it over please? It's pretty straightforward – my main concerns are that I'm consistently using the correct variables and that the populations I'm coming up with look sensible.

Excel file and final paper to follow - still working on those.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 17 January 2018 17:07  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion Paper commentary

[Redacted]

It's fine to point out the inequality in postgraduate entry, I just don't want to say merits further investigation unless we've identified it as a priority in our/cfa's work schedule. I think your revised text is fine.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 17 January 2018 16:28

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Discussion Paper commentary

Thanks [Redacted].

Page 4 – If this is said in the CFA’s discussion paper, then it implies he – or someone else - should be looking at postgraduate access. Was this the intention? The representation of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in postgraduate study is, of course, an access issue in its own right **and merits further investigation.**

Maybe ‘access to postgrad’ should be added to our list from yesterday, I think Peter has mentioned it before. In the meantime I could say something like: “The representation of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in postgraduate study is a (distinct) access issue in its own right” **or just not mention it.**

Page 4 – I am not sure about the line: (Please note these trends will reflect external factors outside the control of institutions and students more than the retention and outcomes data e.g. economic factors.)

I will remove this line as it could be misinterpreted as you’ve pointed out.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]



**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 17 January 2018 15:56

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** FW: Discussion Paper commentary

[Redacted]

Should the word be added to the second sentence of the commentary? Felt it could read like we don't want them to get good degrees?

Difficult as it is to increase the proportion of entrants from the most deprived social backgrounds, it is more difficult to make sure they succeed - which means making sure they don't drop out, and (they) get good degrees and graduate jobs.

No other proofs for the CFA comments.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 17 January 2018 15:38

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Discussion Paper commentary

[Redacted]

Another useful paper- thank you for your work on this. I have some minor comments below based on the pdf you attached to the email below. Apologies – I should probably have added comments to a version of the document.

I'll look at Peter's commentary next.

Thanks

[Redacted]

Page 1 – On first read I thought it odd that the Commissioner's paper was quoting a Minister's statement in parliament. I think it is probably right that the paper notes that the Government sees this as a priority area; however it may be better to refer to the Minister highlighted this as a priority area at the first meeting of the Access

Delivery Group. I have attached the steering brief which gives an idea of what the Minister planned to say at the meeting – you won't be able to quote her but could draw on this to show the point she made.

Page 2 - The last para *before* the 'Outcomes' section appears to be talking about outcomes!

Page 4 – Under Destinations – had to read this line a couple of times – have suggested changes but it may just be me?

For the purposes of this analysis we have used the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey of graduates, which graduates **complete** six months after leaving university.

Page 4 – If this is said in the CFA's discussion paper, then it implies he – or someone else - should be looking at postgraduate access. Was this the intention? The representation of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds in postgraduate study is, of course, an access issue in its own right **and merits further investigation.**

Page 4 – I am not sure about the line: (Please note these trends will reflect external factors outside the control of institutions and students more than the retention and outcomes data e.g. economic factors.)

Economic factors will obviously impact on overall graduate employment, but it implies that they contribute to the inequality, as that is the point being made in the preceding sentence. And some would say that universities should do more to help their access graduates – so, not as much within their control as, say, degree qualification attained, but perhaps not entirely outside their control either?

Page 4 – possible typo? Also, should it be 'is or was', given you have said 'varied'? Chart 14 shows that the percentage in professional jobs varied considerably by subject and the percentage ~~is lower~~ for graduates from SIMD20 areas is lower for almost all subject areas.

Page 4 – Should it be 'However' rather than 'furthermore' as inequality is still existing even when you take account of your first point? The degree outcomes data showed that qualifiers from SIMD20 were less likely to leave with a 2:1 or better. Chart 15 shows that graduates with a 2:1 or better are more likely to have found a professional level job which suggests this is contributing to the difference between SIMD20 graduates and graduates from other areas. Furthermore, even when comparing graduates who obtained a 2:1 or better, the percentage from SIMD20 areas in professional level jobs was lower i.e. graduates from SIMD20 areas were less likely than other students to find a professional level job even after accounting for subject, institution or degree outcome.

[Redacted]

[Access to Higher Education](#) | [Higher Education & Science Division](#) | [Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science](#) | [Scottish Government](#)

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted]  
Sent: 16 January 2018 10:49  
To: [Redacted]  
Subject: RE: Discussion Paper commentary

Hi [Redacted],

Here is a version of the paper with some typo corrections.

Thanks  
[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
Sent: 16 January 2018 09:08  
To: [Redacted]  
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted]  
Subject: Re: Discussion Paper commentary

Thanks, [Redacted] - it reads / looks fine, Peter

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted]  
Sent: 15 January 2018 18:14  
To: Scott, Peter  
Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted]  
Subject: RE: Discussion Paper commentary

Forgot that .pub files aren't really supported on other platforms. PDF attached.

Thanks  
[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government  
[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
Sent: 15 January 2018 17:26  
To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
Subject: Re: Discussion Paper commentary

Dear [Redacted],

Thanks. My Broadband wasn't working this afternoon so I have just seen this. I can't read your document. My Mac can't open .pub files.

All your / [Redacted] comments are fine. Don't worry about checking the nursing point. It just occurred to me nursing is (almost) entirely in post-1996 universities which have more SIMD20/40 students but I hadn't thought that you had taken medical etc. degrees out (which on the whole have better-off students). Anyway the commentary is quite long anyway so it wouldn't do any harm to lose a few words.

All the best,

Peter

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 15 January 2018 16:43  
**To:** Scott, Peter  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion Paper commentary

Peter

Thanks for turning this round so quickly, it reads well. [Redacted] and I have suggested a few changes to try and make the 3 options clearer. Do you think this helps?

I've attached a draft of the analysis section too, minus the charts which I'll add tomorrow once my stats colleagues have signed off the datasets.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

> On 15 Jan 2018, at 16:42, [Redacted] wrote:  
>  
> <Performance discussion document-commentary (2).docx>

**From:** Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
**Sent:** 14 January 2018 16:17  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Discussion Paper commentary

Dear [Redacted],

Here is a draft of my commentary. Let me know what you think? Maybe my bit about nursing and ordinary degrees doesn't hold water (it just occurred to me), in which case cut it. Also, if it's too long, you can cut the Brecht quote, although I am rather attached to it.

All the best,

Peter

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**From:** Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
**Sent:** 12 January 2018 10:44  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations - publication date

Thanks, [Redacted] - that should be fine. I'll to write it over the weekend, Peter

Sent from my iPhone

On 12 Jan 2018, at 10:31, [Redacted] wrote:

Peter

Do you think you would be able to get a draft to me before Wednesday based on the summary I sent on?

The paper would need to be with the company doing the online conversion by the end of Wednesday to guarantee it will be ready for the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
**Sent:** 10 January 2018 15:50  
**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations - publication date

Dear [Redacted],

Thanks - and Happy New Year.

Either date is fine with me. But I have a fairly easy week next week, so I would be able to write a draft of my commentary in time for January 23 publication.

All the best,

Peter

On 10 Jan 2018, at 15:22, [Redacted] wrote:

Peter

Happy new year, hope you had a good break!

I'm looking to set a publication date for the discussion paper we postponed last year. If we stick to Tuesdays (generally the best day for releases like this) then our options are 23 January or 6 February. There are college stats coming out on 30 January and they usually receive a fair bit of coverage so would suggest we avoid that day. I know you're unavailable w/c 22 January but the content would need to be finalised the week before.

I'm still finalising the figures but I've attached a summary of the main findings to allow you to have a think about your commentary.

Grateful for your thoughts.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 09 January 2018 14:59

**To:** [Redacted]

**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** Forthcoming Statistics on Higher and Further Education - January 2018 Update

**Forthcoming Statistics on Higher and Further Education – January 2018 Update**

For general awareness

Please find attached a publication schedule for Higher and Further Education statistics for the year ahead. Let me know if you want removed from the list, or if others should be added.

A full copy list of recipients is included at the foot of this e-mail.

[Redacted – out of scope]

6) End of January (Date TBC)

Commissioner for Fair Access – Discussion Paper: Retention, Outcomes and Destinations

This paper presents data on retention, outcomes and destinations of students from SIMD20 areas.

Any question or comments, please let me know.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

\*\*\*

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 November 2017 13:19

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Fortnightly update - updates by close Thursday 23rd

We should let the minister know that the Commissioner has decided to publish his Discussion Paper on Retention, Outcomes and Destinations in January, rather than in the weeks before his annual report.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 November 2017 12:30

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** Fortnightly update - updates by close Thursday 23rd

Hi,

If you have any updates for inclusion in this week's access fortnightly update, please let me know by close tomorrow.

Thanks,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Access to Higher Education | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government | 6<sup>th</sup> floor | 5 Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow | G2 8LU

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 November 2017 11:08

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Forthcoming Statistics on Higher and Further Education - November 2017 Update

The Commissioner's Discussion paper on retention outcomes and destinations has been moved to January and I've updated your spreadsheet to reflect this.

The annual report will come out on December 13<sup>th</sup> as planned and Ministers are already aware.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 22 November 2017 11:01

**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]

**Subject:** Forthcoming Statistics on Higher and Further Education - November 2017 Update

[Redacted]

Anything to add? [Redacted] – do you want to reference the CfFA papers? I can send another update before the annual report if this helps?



I want to get this away today as the Minister is not yet aware of the changes.

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 20 October 2017 11:41

**To:** Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; First Minister; Minister for Employability and Training; Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Director of Advanced Learning and Science; Macdonald R (Roddy); Smart P (Paul); [Redacted]

### **Forthcoming Statistics on Higher and Further Education – November 2017 Update**

For general awareness

Please find attached a publication schedule for Higher and Further Education statistics for the year ahead. Let me know if you want removed from the list, or if others should be added. The copy list is large and covers many topic areas, please only include relevant colleagues if replying.

**There are a number of releases coming out in the next two weeks:**

[Redacted – out of scope]

Any question or comments, please let me know.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Education Analytical Services

The Scottish Government

[Redacted]

\*\*\*

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 20 November 2017 15:08

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: SIMD data set

Yes please. I'll be looking at entrants, qualifiers and destinations for the Discussion Paper in January.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 20 November 2017 15:06

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: SIMD data set

The data set is created using the instance time series, so the variable xpsr01 is already used. So if you used xpqual01 = 1 you wouldn't get the full qualifiers data set.

Will be easy enough to re-run my code starting with the qualifiers data set if you want me to.

Similar would be true if you wanted me to create a DLHE timeseries. It is just a case of changing the starting data set.

Do you want me to create these?

Thanks

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 20 November 2017 15:01

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: SIMD data set

Just to confirm, I can use this dataset to look at entrants (XPSR01=1 and XFYRSR01=1) and qualifiers (XPQUAL01=1), but to look at destinations I would need to link on the DLHE files year by year?

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 20 November 2017 14:34  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** SIMD data set

[Redacted],

Due to the large files that are needed to create the final data sets I have created a SIMD time series (2008-09 to 2015-16) data set and a POLAR time series dataset in the SAS HESA library.

*HESA.COWA\_SIMD\_ANALYSIS.*

*HESA.H07TS\_POLAR*

I've used the postcode SAS files and removed and postcode deleted before the start of the academic year. Data set includes all Scottish Domiciled so need to cut to just looking at Scottish institutions. SIMD2009 used from 2008-09 to 2010-11 and SIMD 2012 after this. They are separate variables (i.e SIMD2012 or SIMD2009) or combined under SIMD.

[Redacted]

The POLAR data set still needs to be looked at by someone other than myself, before I would recommend using it.

*Subjects have also been linked on.*

If you have any questions happy to discuss.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

ALSA – Advanced Learning Statistics

Scottish Government

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 16 November 2017 12:03  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables

Hey [Redacted],

I've attached the requested retention tables. Let me know if you have any questions (or If I've missed anything!).

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 15 November 2017 11:02  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables

Just realised I'll need an additional table, if that's okay.

For the Scotland level time series table, could I have data for each of the quintiles rather than just SIMD20 and the rest please?

In the other sections (outcomes, destinations) I'm planning to show the high level trends across quintiles then focus on SIMD20 vs the rest for the more detailed breakdowns. I'd ideally like to follow the same structure when looking at retention.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 14 November 2017 16:21  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables

Hey,

Yeah, that should be fine. I'll get you them by the end of this week. So much of my time this week is taken up with meetings that I just wanted to check the urgency so I know how to best spend the time at my desk!

Just for a quick look (OA definition) I've attached retention by subject for the sector. The report is designed to show retention at a chosen institution compared to Scotland – the attached shows Scotland compared to Scotland so you can ignore the second figure!

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 14 November 2017 12:15

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Retention tables

We're aiming to release the paper on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November which means I need to have it finalised a week in advance i.e. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Is that a realistic timescale for producing the retention tables? If not, I'm happy to explore how we could cut down the request. Were the patterns similar across years when you looked at this previously? If so, combined 3-year tables would do, if that saves any time.

Don't worry about formatting etc. by the way, I won't be including tables in the paper, just referencing key figures and creating charts.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]

**Sent:** 13 November 2017 18:08

**To:** [Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Retention tables

Hi [Redacted],

Yeah, that's no problem. I actually had a look at some of these breakdowns ahead of the publication - with SFC definitions unfortunately!

What are your time scales? I know the sooner the better – but how would by the end of next week at the latest work for you?

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 10 November 2017 14:50  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Retention tables

Hi [Redacted]

Thanks for offering to produce some retention tables for me. I'm planning to keep my analysis for the Commissioner's paper fairly high level so I only need a few breakdowns of the retention tables you published in [Redacted].

### **Coverage**

Retention no. and % for Scottish domiciled full-time first degree entrants

SIMD20 and least deprived 80%

Three academic years (2013-14 to 2015-16) and a total, in case numbers are very small in detailed breakdowns

### **Breakdowns**

Table 1 - by institution type

Table 2 - by subject

Table 3 - by institution type and subject

Does this look like a reasonable ask?

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

\*\*\*

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 14 November 2017 14:14  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** CFFA Discussion Paper 4 - Summary

[Redacted]

As requested, this should give you an idea of what the next discussion paper will say. Grateful for your thoughts on whether/how some examples of good practice might fit in.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 30 October 2017 11:43  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Continuation Rates

The data would be used by SG analysts supporting the Commissioner for Fair Access to produce the next in a series of discussion papers which are published on his [webpage](#). The proposed paper will look at retention, outcomes and destinations of students from deprived areas.

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 30 October 2017 11:33  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Continuation Rates

[Redacted], [Redacted],

Just to keep you up to date on this.

HESA seem quite persistent in wanting the information on where we intend to publish. Though they are now saying that the fact we will publish is unlikely to impact the cost. If you can let me know, where you would intend on publishing I can send this on.

I emailed [Redacted] with regards to the SFC's access to the variable, and [Redacted] has passed on to [Redacted]. So just waiting on a response. [Redacted]

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

ALSA – Advanced Learning Statistics

[Redacted]

Scottish Government

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 12 October 2017 13:49  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Yeah that's how we do it, I believe the retention file doesn't come with full student details so we merge them to allow analysis.

It is [Redacted] who does that process and works with the files that we get directly from HESA – I just work with the final file so unfortunately I don't have much more detail that that..

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 12 October 2017 09:58  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

I don't think so, but I've double checked with [Redacted] team. Do you get it as a completely separate dataset that needs to be merged?



Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 11 October 2017 16:29  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Does that mean you don't have the retention data file at all? Sorry - I didn't realise!

I guess the code I sent has been no use so far then..

Let me know what HESA say, I can look to see if we can share the merged file we create with retention data and student details with you if that helps?

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 11 October 2017 16:02  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Thanks for your help. I'll get in touch with HESA, see if they can send us the marker data too.

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 11 October 2017 15:24  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Hey [Redacted],

The continuation marker is based on a HESA derived field and not something that we create ourselves so it will follow HESA methodology. We get the retention/continuation data from HESA and then merge this with the student data we hold to create our retention file.

Hope that helps!

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 10 October 2017 13:56  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

[Redacted]

The code you sent on uses a variable called 'continuation marker'. Could you explain how this is calculated please?

Does it follow the methodology outlined in the UK PI technical notes (bottom of page):  
<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/non-continuation/technical>

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 October 2017 11:47  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

I added some quick notes that will hopefully help!

There's a bit of guidance in our OA Technical Guidance on the fields we use in the retention files if that's helpful – (pages 17-21)

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI\\_SFCGD222016\\_UniversityOAGuidance1718/SFC\\_GD\\_22\\_2016\\_University\\_OA\\_guidance\\_2017-18\\_Annex\\_B\\_technical\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD222016_UniversityOAGuidance1718/SFC_GD_22_2016_University_OA_guidance_2017-18_Annex_B_technical_guidance.pdf)

Any questions, let me know

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 October 2017 11:33  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Whatever suits. Don't feel you have to make it 'presentable'. Should be fine if I can follow what's going on enough to adapt it to work on our datasets.

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 05 October 2017 11:27  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Retention tables code

Hey [Redacted],

Yeah no problem. Would you prefer I send the file over now, or after I have a little time to tidy it up?!

Thanks

[Redacted]

**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 04 October 2017 13:23  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Retention tables code

[Redacted]

As you know, I'm working on some destinations analysis for the Commissioner for an upcoming discussion paper. I'm also planning to look at retention so was wondering if you would be happy to share the methodology/code used for the retention tables published in [Redacted]? I'd like to make sure my analysis is consistent with the published figures

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis | Scottish Government

[Redacted]

\*\*\*

**From:** Scott, Peter [mailto: [Redacted] ]  
**Sent:** 22 August 2017 16:43  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Cc:** [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Re: Plans for Discussion papers

Dear [Redacted],

Thanks. That's my recollection of what we agreed too.

All the best,

Peter

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 22 August 2017 15:56  
**To:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Plans for Discussion papers

Looks accurate to me [Redacted].

Thanks

[Redacted]

[Redacted] | Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis

[Redacted]

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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 22 August 2017 13:16  
**To:** [Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Plans for Discussion papers

Hi all,

We agreed today to move towards the publication of two further Discussion Papers this year:

## **Discussion Papers – due for publication by mid-Oct**

### **1. Retention, progression and outcomes**

- Retention and degree outcomes

- HESA destination data
- Inclusion of college data on retention and completion (inc. notes of any gaps or patchy data)
- HEA/Paul Hamlyn Foundation 'What Works?' reports

[Redacted – out of scope]

Was there anything else? Have I noted our discussions correctly?

Many thanks

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

| Access to Higher Education | Higher Education & Science Division | Directorate for Advanced Learning & Science | Scottish Government

[Redacted]