

Equality Framework 2012-2017

Introduction

Our commitment to promoting equality and diversity is long-standing and is a substantial strand through the current strategic plan. The Board of Governors has consulted extensively with students, staff and the wider community on the new strategic plan for the period 2012- 2017. The Plan is now in the final stages of consideration by the Board and will be published later this year. This document includes links to the current draft strategic plan and will be revised in the light of the final version of the strategic plan.

Overview

1. The values of the University are set out in the strategic plan;
 - Intellectual openness, honesty and love for learning
 - Human equality and dignity
 - Democracy and mutual respect
 - Social inclusion
 - Environmental sustainability and social responsibility
 - Ethical and professional behaviour
 - Active engagement and partnership

Extracts from the Strategic Plan

'We believe that every individual matters and we aim to help our students, staff and partners to make the most of their own rich human potential.

We are conscious of the changing external environment and the importance that universities are able to demonstrate the wider role they play in society and their contribution to public benefit: the transformational role they play in the lives of people through widening access and inspirational learning and teaching; their contribution to the social and cultural lives of the communities they serve; the improvements they make in the health and wellbeing of people, through the application of research and knowledge exchange to public and other community services.'

2. The University's current student and staff population has been analysed and significant highlights are identified below.
 - The proportion of **disabled** students and staff within this University is higher than in many other universities; 10% of all students and 9% of all staff have disclosed a disability. Students are supported to succeed through our approach to learning and teaching, and additional needs for staff and students are met through various support services. The recent institutional audit commended the proactive approach towards disabled students. Future investment in The Arena will provide a significant new location for disabled sportspeople.
 - The **gender** balance within our staff shows that we have a high proportion of women, at all levels including the most senior and recent appointments to our governing body are changing the gender balance. The promotions criteria and processes are monitored for impact on people according to 'protected characteristics' and the professoriate is 47% women, compared with 19% in higher education nationally. Within the student body, over 66% are female and a greater proportion achieve 'good' degrees than our male students.
 - The proportion of people who identify themselves as being from '**black and minority ethnic**' groups is increasing and is at 6% for all staff; within the student body there has also been an increase to 10%. This is slightly lower than the national picture for higher education, but it is recognised that regional population demographics have an impact on this data, and within the region the total population from BME groups is 3.9%.
 - The **age** profile of our staff is 22% under 35 years, 54% 35-54 years, and 24% over 54. Our student body is currently 55% 'mature' and this is decreasing nationally and within the University.

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- Information about the other five protected characteristics of religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership will be collected from staff and students during the period of this first Equality Framework.
- We have a Harassment Advisory Network; a confidential advice service for both staff and students experiencing bullying or harassment, and the policies and procedures for dealing with incidents have been revised
- We have invested in new facilities and services that provide support to people of different beliefs in the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Centre
- We have made available to all staff an Equality and Diversity online training course; developed and delivered a range of equality-related courses; have a commitment to Two Ticks accreditation and Mindful Employer; and work with Stonewall is helping us to support the experience for newly qualified teachers in dealing with homophobic behaviour in schools.

Our Equality Objectives

3. This Equality Framework (hereafter referred to as ‘the EF’) has been developed to meet the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. This will be the University’s first single equality framework. Previously we have had separate schemes for disability, gender, and race equality. This EF aims not simply to merge our existing suite of equality and diversity schemes, policy statements, codes of practice and action plans but to provide a framework that will help us fulfil both our legal obligations and core values. This EF and the new strategic plan are a re-affirmation of the University’s commitment to inclusive values, to equality and diversity and to the creation of an environment that allows every individual to realise their full potential.

The objectives set out within this EF are identified below and action plans have been developed. Other strategies and policies that will help to deliver these objectives are identified.

Progress towards meeting the objectives will be reported to the Diversity and Equality Committee and to the new University Executive. Decisions on the priorities for action will be made through a process of consultation, informed by analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

- a. **To continue to build the knowledge, understanding and commitment to equality and diversity of all members of the University community**

Links to the Strategic Plan

A positive impact on society

A major contribution through research and knowledge exchange to society and the local economy

A professional university with inclusive values

A highly participative community– the right to be heard, to respect; the responsibility to listen to and respect the views of others

The University will continue to seek to ensure that all members of the University community are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities and legal duties in relation to equality and diversity by providing training, promotional activities and publicity campaigns.

The University will continue to make clear that it expects all students, staff and visitors to treat each other with dignity and respect; there are appropriate procedures in place to deal with any complaints of unacceptable behaviour.

The University will continue to seek to embed equality and diversity within its policies and procedures to increase accountability and heighten awareness of the issues.

Policies that will support the achievement of this objective include;

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- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Charter for Students
- Staff Development Policy and programme
- Dealing with Bullying and Harassment
- Research and Knowledge Transfer
- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech
- Ethical review Procedures

b. To provide a living, studying and working environment that is inclusive and in which all students can learn, achieve and prosper.

Links to the Strategic Plan

An outstanding University at which to be a student and of which to be a graduate

A selecting and inclusive University

The University is proud of its diverse student community and aims to maintain this by continuing to provide access to higher education for all those able to benefit from its educational provision. The University will continue to seek to provide wider opportunities for participation to those from under-represented groups and applicants from non-traditional routes.

Prospective students will be encouraged to declare a disability and the University will continue to anticipate the requirements of disabled students and the adjustments to be made.

Academic staff will continue to be encouraged and supported to develop and implement inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practices.

The University will continue to seek to ensure that students have an opportunity to develop their employability skills in a variety of ways, including via work placements and studying abroad.

The University aims to increase levels of student engagement and will obtain and use feedback from students about their experiences to inform future policy and practice.

Policies that will support the achievement of this objective include;

- Access Agreement
- Admissions policy
- Learning, teaching and assessment policy
- Assessment arrangements for disabled students
- Curriculum Design guidance
- Work based and placement learning policy
- Earn as You Learn provisions

c. To maintain and, where possible, increase the diversity of the staff and deliver a fair and supportive working environment for all

Links to the Strategic Plan

An outstanding education experience through inspiring and relevant teaching and research

Make the most of the University's most important resource: the people who work here.

Provide a working environment where people are included, respected and where health and wellbeing is assured

Enhance equality and diversity policies ensuring that they are comprehensive and exemplars of good practice

The University recognises that a well-informed, diverse staff population can identify and meet the needs of a diverse student population and that different perspectives inspire creativity and innovation. The University will continue to ensure that its recruitment policy encourages applications from people with as wide a range of backgrounds, skills and experiences as possible. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure staff have equal opportunities to develop and progress, and these will be monitored and enhanced, where required.

The University is committed to remaining a TwoTicks employer. Job applicants and staff will be encouraged to declare a disability and the University will take a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments.

The University will continue to measure staff engagement by providing opportunities for staff to give feedback on their experience of being a member of staff. This information, together with management information, will be used to identify and address any equality issues and inform decision-making and objective-setting.

Policies that will support the achievement of this objective include;

- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Staff development policy, framework and programme
- Job evaluation, pay and grading including promotion and contribution pay
- Health safety and wellbeing arrangements including those for disabled people

d. To promote and enhance access to our services, premises, facilities and information for the benefit of students, staff and the wider community

Links to the Strategic Plan

Invest purposefully in the University's facilities, ensuring that they are first rate and fit for purpose

The University is committed to maintaining an environment in which people as students and/or members of staff feel able to reach their full potential and providing accessible and person-centred support services is critical to this. Many of the recent investments in physical facilities have been with this objective in mind and we will continue with our programme of improvements to the physical environment, and to improving services for students and staff.

The University is committed to ensuring that all members of the University community are able to participate as fully and equally as possible. We recognise that the provision of comprehensive, accurate information in a variety of formats is essential in enabling people to make informed choices.

The University will continue to meet its statutory responsibilities regarding accessibility and exceed these as far as reasonably practicable.

The University's facilities make a direct contribution to the wider community with developments such as The Hive and The Arena. These developments and other services will assist with increasing the awareness of the role and value of higher education to society, and help to raise the educational aspirations of people locally and more widely.

Policies that will support the achievement of this objective include;

- Estates strategy
- Student Accommodation guidance and support
- Student Services advice and guidance
- Recreation and sport facilities

e. To ensure that major strategic decisions are made with an awareness of their consequences for different groups of people and those with managerial responsibilities demonstrate inclusive leadership behaviours

Links to the strategic plan

Further enhance the University's reputation as a well governed and well led University.

The University recognises the important role that senior leaders have in promoting a culture that is inclusive and espouses dignity and respect and that effective communication and education are critical to this. Senior leaders will continue to be expected to take every opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity and uphold the University's values.

The University expects those businesses and organisations it works with to operate in accordance with equality legislation and will take this into account when considering whether to offer a contract, enter into a partnership or host an external service provider.

The University will ensure that service providers are aware of their commitment to promoting equality of access and will work with them to identify best practice and suggest ways to improve access where necessary.

The University will continue to monitor the equality profile of its committees, senior management team, and Board of Governors and take steps to increase the diversity where it is felt necessary.

Policies that will support the achievement of this objective include;

- Articles of Governance and arrangements for ensuring governors effectiveness
- Partnership and Collaborative provision
- Planning for the long term
- Procurement policy and management of contractors

Evidence base

4. Our equality objectives have been informed by evidence from a range of sources. The data collected is both quantitative and qualitative.

Equality monitoring

5. The University currently collects information on the protected characteristics of age, gender, ethnic origin, nationality and disability from members of staff and students. This information is confidential and is used anonymously to compile annual statistical reports, by protected characteristic.

The University is committed to reviewing its equality data collection and analysis to ensure the information it gathers and publishes demonstrates how it has complied with the general equality duty.

Legal background

6. The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination law, consolidating it into a single act. The public sector equality duty replaces the previous separate equality duties for race, disability and gender.

The nine protected characteristics under the Act are:-

- **age**
- **disability**
- **gender reassignment** (defined as 'where a person has proposed, started or completed the process to change his or her sex'. Individuals do not have to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law).
- **marriage and civil partnership**
- **pregnancy and maternity**
- **race**
- **religion or belief** (religion is defined as 'any religion, including a lack of religion', belief is defined as 'a religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of belief')
- **sex**

- **sexual orientation** (defined as person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex. This means the Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people)

7. Under the general equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 the University has obligations as both an employer and as an education provider. We will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition, we will:

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty across our functions;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives
- Publish the information and the objectives in a manner that is accessible to the public

Types of Discrimination

8. There are four types of discrimination; direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All of these are illegal and are defined under the Act as follows:-

Direct Discrimination

- a. Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person **because of** a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (**discrimination by perception**), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (**discrimination by association**). Under the Act, disabled people are protected from **discrimination 'arising from disability'** which occurs when someone has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability as opposed to 'because of' the disability itself.

Indirect Discrimination

- b. Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule, policy or practice is neutral on the face of it but its impact particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment

- c. Harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

Victimisation

- d. Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence relating to such a complaint or because they are suspected of doing so.

Sources of advice and information

9. The Personnel team and Student Services can provide advice and guidance on good equality practice and the requirements and responsibilities arising from legislation.

The [Equality Challenge Unit](#) supports the higher education sector in promoting equality and diversity in higher education. Their website provides a wide range of information relating to each of the 'protected characteristics'.

The [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) has a statutory remit to promote and monitor human rights. They offer information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues via a helpline service.

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The [Government Equalities Office](#) has responsibility within the Government for equality strategy and legislation. Their website provides details of existing and forthcoming equality legislation.

The [Higher Education Equality Opportunities Network](#) provide support, information, stimulation, validation, encouragement and sharing of good practice for those seeking to achieve and sustain equality of opportunity, diversity and widening participation in Higher Education, including matters relating to employment, career progression, student admission, retention and progression, learning and teaching, research and enterprise.