

**EDC15D007**

**Title:** Review of the Terms of Reference  
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**Issue:** The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index is a framework through which an inclusive workplace for LGBT staff can be evidenced

**Recommendation:** this paper is an update only.

**Resource Implications :** time required from a range of UEA staff and potentially, additional central resource

**Risk Implications:** the University is increasingly expected to evidence advances in equality and diversity to support applications for research funding. Participation and progression in the index would provide relevant evidence.

**Equality and Diversity:** Equality and diversity is at the core of the paper.

**Timing of decisions:** A paper will go to ET before Christmas 2015.

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**Background:** an initial paper was put to the Committee in May 2013 and a subsequent paper was put to the Committee and supported in May 2015.

**Discussion:** the attached paper evaluates UEA's current position vis a vis the framework in greater detail, building on the information given at May 2015.

## 1. Background

Stonewall is a national charity working for equality and justice for lesbians, gay, bisexual and, from April 2015, transgender people. The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) was launched in 2005 as an effective way to measure an organisations efforts and impact in tackling discrimination and to create an inclusive workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees.

Currently more than 800 employers have taken part in the WEI using a set of criteria as the basis for a model of good practice. Each year Stonewall produces their 'Top 100' employers list based on evaluation of submitted Indexes. Every employer who takes part will be giving a ranking even if they are outside the 'Top 100'. Stonewall revises the criteria every three years and 2015 will be the first year of the new WEI.

The deadline for submitting the WEI is the first Friday in September each year. The submission is completed and submitted online using a secure website which allows for supporting evidence to be uploaded. Evidence is an essential part of the application. The typical timescale taken for an employer to gain a place in the Top 100 would be between three and five years. Stonewall provides verbal face-to-face feedback from their regional Adviser once the WEI has been processed and a ranking given.

RCUK quoted work with Stonewall as a means of evidencing progress on equality in its statement on the importance of evidencing equality in gaining research funding. Athena SWAN was also quoted and the University's focus has been very much on that framework since 2012. However, it is important in a number of ways that the University evidence progress on all protected characteristics. Engagement with the Index will be a means of doing this although it should be recognised the University is unlikely to make the Top 100 without evidencing sustained progress over time.

## 2. The Index

The WEI is divided into 10 sections, with sub-sections comprising of "Foundations", "Next Steps" and "Best Practice".

Appendix 1 shows a spreadsheet version of all the questions included in the WEI 2016. This will be used as a progress plan to evidence what has been/can be completed on the actual submission form.

A tick next to the question and its components indicate areas which the University can either confidently currently fulfil or which we will be able to demonstrate by the time the submission date (3/9/16) arrives.

Overall the WEI has 52 questions – UEA could currently show 21 fulfilled/evidenced or definitely will be by submission date. Other areas have been shaded as those it would be possible to progress relatively easily in the next 12 months.

There are six broad areas which current assessment suggests UEA might find difficult to evidence or possibly too resource intensive to engage with.

- Bullying and Harassment/Respect and Dignity issues (Section 2)
- Management training specifically, on a number of equality issues (Section 2)
- Role Profiles (Section 4)
- Allies Programme (Section 4)
- Specific Career Development programmes (Section 6)
- Specific Equality Monitoring (Section 7)

More detail is given below in 'Current Evaluation'.

The UEA has its own Stonewall Representative (Luise Usiskin) who has confirmed she is happy to review and comment on a draft submission prior to actual submission and a meeting will be arranged in the first quarter of 2016 to get her view on submission and potential improvements to the draft.

As Senior Management will need to voice and demonstrate a clear commitment to completion of the WEI and commit resources in terms of people/time to complete the application a paper will go to the Executive Team in the fourth quarter of 2015.

### **3. Current Evaluation**

A basic review of the template and guidance suggests the University would have some strong evidence in its favour, but also some areas which would be weak in the context of the WEI and would need improvement:

***(References to Sections and Page numbers relate to the Stonewall WEI Template)***

#### **Strengths:**

- Employee policy (Section 1, page 2 of the WEI template) – broadly, our policies do explicitly reference and take account of those with same sex partners;
- Training (Section 2, page 3) – particularly since the mandatory E&D training covers sexual orientation NB the Index consistently refers to 90% or more of staff having completed relevant training – this is more difficult to evidence for particular groups (e.g. 90% of staff with management responsibilities)
- Monitoring (Section 7, page 12) – already in place for both staff and students, with options for sexual orientation, including prefer not to say, and reported in annual profiles of staff and students. This might need extending to, for example, participation in training.
- Community Engagement: we have some very strong past examples of this (e.g. hosting the bi-ennial transgender conference, Staff Pride Group attending Norwich Pride, public lectures during LGBT History Month etc)

**Opportunities:**

- Dignity and Respect (Section 1, page 2) – the whole policy is currently under review so we have a good opportunity to embed the approach from the WEI at this point.
- Institutional support (Section 4, page 7: ‘All Staff Engagement’) – there is now the opportunity to embed the aims and desired outcomes from the Index into our Corporate Plan
- Training (Section 2, page 3) – there is an opportunity to build in any missing elements to our future training sessions following a summer review in conjunction with CSED/HR colleagues
- Staff network group (Section 3) – has been relaunched (September 2015) and will be built up with regular meetings during the year. Next meeting is in early December.
- Senior Management (Section 4, page 8) – this would need some sensitive exploration, but it is possible we could have several role model stories which could be highlighted with case studies.
- Induction (Section 4, page 7) – review information in the central pack with CSED colleagues over the summer; combine with work on Athena SWAN at School level. Would need to engage with central divisions to ensure an inclusive review of induction materials
- Line Managers (Section 6, page 11) – this might prove one of the most challenging aspects to consider as ‘line management’ is much less observed in Schools than in Central Divisions. Clear support for initiatives in this section from Deans and Directors would be needed.
- Procurement (Section 8, page 13) – this would involve review of existing practice and the full engagement of the procurement team and Estates Division; some discussion has taken place and was met with a positive response.

**4. Conclusion**

This paper provides an update to that of May 2015 and is for information only. If the Executive Team indicate support for the initiative then an update will come to each meeting of the Equality Committee as a standing item.