

**EDC15D014**

**Title:** EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY  
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**Issue:** this report is from the working group reporting to the Equality Committee established to consider future strategy and focus for Equality and Diversity work at the University

**Recommendation:** this paper recommends the areas for prioritisation and establishes the grounds for extra resource for the central Equality (E&D) Office.

**Recommended areas for prioritisation (in order shown)**

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender
- Religion

**Policies, Language and Expression:** the Group recommends that a full list of policies linking to equality is established by the central E&D Office, fully reviewed for accurate legal reference, current language usage and expression and subsequently reviewed at regular intervals.

**Dignity and Respect:** the Group recommends that a new policy is established within the next twelve months and subsequently reviewed for effectiveness at regular intervals.

**Awareness Raising:** in the form of an annual event designed to celebrate diversity.

**Training:** additional training is recommended for those managing other staff and those in front line positions in future years (for example, Hubs, Library, Catering, Estates),

**Revision of the membership of the E&D Committee** with effect from the 2016/17 academic year.

**Resource Implications:** The central Equality and Diversity Office estimates it will need one additional full time person in order to achieve expansion of Athena SWAN, and work on the additional areas outlined which are critical to evidencing the University's inclusiveness.

**Risk Implications:** the University is increasingly expected to evidence advances in equality and diversity to support applications for research funding and to comply with

legislative requirements. There is also an increased reputational risk if the University falls behind its competitors in this respect.

**Equality and Diversity: Key aspects of** Equality and diversity are at the core of the paper.

**Timing of decisions:** A final paper will be presented to ET.

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**Background:** the Working Group has been established to assess and recommend priorities from a University perspective and any implications for resource.

**Discussion:** the attached paper outlines the outcomes of work and recommendations by the group.

# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

## WORKING GROUP REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Background

The Equality Strategy Working Group was established by the Equality and Diversity Committee in October 2015 as a 'task and finish' group to identify the University's direction and priorities (which it is recommended be reviewed annually) for work on equality issues.

The membership and full Terms of Reference for the working group can be seen at Appendix 1.

### 2. Recent Focus

Since 2012 the Athena SWAN agenda has gained increasing focus and has expanded to cover Schools in all four Faculties. Due to the detailed nature of the work and links with the allocation of research funding Athena SWAN has gained priority and time allocation over other areas of work of the Equality and Diversity (E&D) Office. Liaison with the Business Intelligence Unit to gather statistics disaggregated by protected characteristic is on-going which will help avoid duplication of survey or information gathering exercises and will inform business activity from an equality perspective. Ad hoc projects have been carried out by the E&D Office as far as possible to support other protected characteristics such as disability, sexual orientation and transitioning students and staff, but the amount of time available to devote to protected characteristics other than gender has greatly diminished.

### 3. Context: Opportunities and Risk

The requirement across the HEI Sector to evidence work on a range of indicators of equality and inclusiveness is undoubtedly growing. A number of funders and audit agencies (NIHR, RCUK, Ofsted, HEFCE) have indicated they will look for a range of evidence demonstrating action taken to further equality and inclusion when deciding levels of funding or awarding grants. This typically (but not exclusively) takes the form of progress against a recognised standard such as Athena SWAN (gender), Stonewall WEI (sexual orientation), or the recently launched Race Equality Charter Mark for which the first University awards have been made. If we are unable to evidence progress in this way, or in one area only rather than across the full range of protected characteristics, we undoubtedly risk being unable to secure essential levels of funding at a later date. The University may also be perceived as having an outmoded culture for both study and work if it doesn't keep pace with its competitors, many of whom view this work as essential and are rapidly moving ahead. Falling behind will equate to being 'closed' to some of the available staff and student markets both in the UK and internationally. A modest increase in resource centrally will enable us to achieve a substantially greater range of work than is currently feasible.

As part of our UEA UEA Plan 2016-2020 we have made a clear commitment to developing our institutional culture (Strategy #4). The following section outlines a range of work which will underpin and assure the University's competitiveness in this respect and enable UEA to evidence clear progress on equality and inclusion.

#### 4. Recommended Future Priorities

The Working Group have identified the following areas as key priorities (in the order shown) for future focus and direction:

**4.a Gender:** work will continue via the Athena SWAN framework. It has recently emerged that Athena SWAN Bronze will be a critical achievement for all Schools prior to REF 2020 in which it is anticipated it will form part of the essential criteria under 'Environment'. Additional resource will be needed to maintain those Schools already engaged in Athena SWAN while engaging those who have not yet started the process. Currently, this project, while undeniably worthwhile, dominates the work schedule of the central Equality Office to the extent that, on current resource, gender marginalises all other areas of work on equality. Future plans for Athena SWAN involve three School submissions in each round (in April and November each year) and development of cohesive initiatives across the campus for our next University submission which will aim to take us to Silver award level within the next three years. The Silver Award will be critical to the University and the connection of Athena SWAN to REF 2020 implies a doubling of workload on this project alone, centrally. Additionally, as the framework requires renewal of awards every four years Athena SWAN represents an on-going commitment.

**4.b Race/Ethnicity:** to date, there has been no in-depth analysis nor has there been any information gathering exercise from the perspective of race/ethnicity in work and study with either staff or students. Given the University's aspirations to be a University with 'global reach and influence' it is important to create a culture in study and work which ensures we attract the best from all communities and, importantly, that we can retain those people once they are here. With the increase in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students over the last eight years and, to a lesser extent staff, the working group recommends that the University prioritise more work in this area. Suggested work includes an initial survey to ascertain baseline data and views (which can be linked with the Athena SWAN annual survey) and establishing a BAME staff network which would complement the Staff Pride (LGBT\*) and Access All Areas groups. It is worth noting the increased profile of matters regarding ethnicity and race at national level partly due to the Race Equality Charter Mark launch in January by the ECU and recent commentary on research which suggests there may be potential negative bias on the part of students' feedback towards minority ethnic staff (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/biased-students-give-bme-academics-lower-nss-scores-says-study>). The initial actions of a UEA survey and network would help inform next steps, one of which will be to assess the Race Equality Charter Mark with a view to UEA potentially gaining a Bronze award. It is recommended that the University treats this area as a priority particularly in supporting its aims under the **UEA Plan, Strategy #4, Action #4.2**.

**4.c Disability:** the recently formed Access All Areas network involves disabled staff and students and is proving a successful forum for improving access issues in connection with the built campus. However, a network with a broader focus for disabled staff in particular is desirable (students having established 'Chronic', their own network facilitated in the Dean of Students Offices).

In addition, the following areas have been identified to form part of the Equality Strategy:

- Clear information and signposting available to both staff and managers about support available to staff with disabilities who need adjustments;

- Clarifying changes to funding and practise resulting from the national changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and ensuring the transition from one system to the other is fully supported in time for students arriving for 2016/17 academic year.
- Clear information and signposting available to students, staff, managers and other individuals about the support available for students and staff with mental health problems and for those who are supporting others with mental health problems.
- Commitment to continue with Mental Health First Aid Training to build on the work already established.
- It is recommended that the University counts this area as a priority (**UEA Plan Objective #1.2**) particularly in respect of its aspirations to be a key global research institution (**UEA Plan: Key Goal #4, Objective #4, Objective #6, Objective #10**).

**4.d Sexual Orientation:** the University has successfully relaunched its Staff Pride group after a prolonged period of inactivity. A good working relationship has been maintained with Stonewall and we currently benefit from a very proactive Stonewall contact, providing a wide range of guidance and regular visits. It would help us identify gaps in our practice and evidence a good standard of work to engage with and submit to the annual Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (quoted by RCUK as one of the sources of evidence it would look for when assessing funding applications). Initial work has begun on this with a view to submitting the first application in September 2016. It is recommended that the University counts this area as a priority particularly in respect of **UEA Plan Objective #6.1 and Objective #7**.

**4.e Transgender:** gender identity forms part of the new Athena SWAN framework and both staff and student Pride groups also welcome trans members (UUEAS also has a Trans and Non Binary Officer and Caucus). Work is taking place in the central E&D Office and in UUEAS on a range of guidance for students and staff who may be transitioning or supporting others who transition, including an updated policy, as part of a medium term project likely to be completed in 2017. It is recognised that this is currently a very dynamic area, quickly becoming more openly discussed and acknowledged than in previous decades. It is also the case that this group can be far more alienated and vulnerable (including a substantially higher risk of suicide) than others and meriting robust institutional understanding and support.

It is recommended that the University counts this area as a priority and following the completion of the guidance documents, and in connection with Athena SWAN activity, gauges what further action may be needed. It is likely that training requests increase as we improve institutional understanding in this respect. (**UEA Plan, Strategy #4, Action #2**).

**4.f Religion & Belief:** currently, the University is well served with a Multi Faith Centre and Islamic Prayer rooms. The Faith representatives are managed by the Dean of Students who is also a member of the Equality and Diversity Committee. It is recommended that the University treats this area as a priority (as part of the *UEA Plan Strategy #4*)

**The one area in need of urgent review is the scheduling of examinations during Ramadan, the timing of which will meet the main examination timetable until 2018:**

**2016: 6 June – 5 July (n.b. students and staff will be fasting from 2.26 a.m. until 9.13 pm every day during this period)**

**2017: 27 May – 26 June**

**2018: 16 May – 14 June**

**2019: 6 May – 4 June**

**2020: 24 April - 23 May**

## **5.0 Secondary priorities**

**5.a Family Friendly:** the University has a range of robust policies to support family friendly working. These will remain on the agenda through work on Athena SWAN and it is currently felt these will be sufficiently covered under that remit.

**5.b Age:** age is considered in connection with other characteristics in Equality Impact Assessments, and referred to explicitly in training, both on-line and face to face. Currently, data and feedback do not suggest this is a high priority area although it will be monitored and reconsidered when the strategy is reviewed.

## **6.0 Widening Participation**

Whilst Widening Participation has a clear framework and agenda with a separate Working Group there is a need to improve understanding of intersection between POLAR\* groups and other protected characteristics. It is recommended that future strategy include this monitoring and uses the information to better inform Outreach activity in Faculties and Schools (*UEA Plan Action #3*).

*\*POLAR: A five point scale developed by HEFCE and HESA, to represent the proportion of young people in a particular area who progress to full-time higher education. 1 is lowest participation: <16%; 5 is high participation: > 40% ; 1 and 2 are defined as low participation neighbourhoods. Very broadly speaking, it is expected that working class people (NS-SEC 4 to 7) are predominantly found in areas with a low POLAR statistic (POLAR 1 and 2).*

## **7.0 Overarching Areas**

In addition to work on specific protected characteristics there are also certain elements of work which underpin/overarch all aspects of fairness.

**7.a Celebration of diversity:** the University has a dynamic and rapidly developing student and staff population. While a great deal of work has already taken place to underpin this it is not readily transparent and the University doesn't currently specifically run a dedicated event to celebrate diversity and inclusion. A modest increase in resource would enable us to run an annual event, ideally in conjunction with UUEAS, to celebrate achievements, inspire students, staff and visitors and raise awareness of our achievements, aspirations and goals. (*Strategy #4 '...innovation will be absorbed within a culture that celebrates success and values equality, diversity...'*)

**7.b Policies, Language and Expression:** the Group recommends that a full list of policies linking to equality is established by the central E&D Office, fully reviewed for accurate legal reference, current language usage and expression and subsequently reviewed at regular intervals.

**7.c Dignity and Respect:** the Group recommends that a new policy for staff is established within the next twelve months and subsequently reviewed for effectiveness at regular intervals (*UEA Plan Action #6*).

**7.d Awareness Raising:** it is recommended that the University commits to an annual event with the aim of drawing together many of the achievements and areas of good practice along with engaging and interactive activities for students, staff and visitors. This will help raise awareness of the work undertaken, celebrate our multicultural campus and aim to inspire and enthuse the audience to participate, increase their knowledge and increase the institutions capacity and appetite for improving equality across the campus.

Additionally, an annual equality event could be promoted externally across the sector/internationally and would have the potential to generate funds from attendees as well as contributing to the University's progression to Silver/Gold on Athena SWAN in the form of Beacon Activity.

**7e Training:** training on equality issues is considered essential for the following reasons:

- It increases understanding at all levels across the institution
- By increasing understanding it improves institutional capacity, at an individual level, for proactivity and appropriate problem solving
- It establishes and embeds clear boundaries by improving knowledge of legal requirements and desired organisational attitudes.

The central E&D Office/CSED run a number of training sessions each year on both a general and bespoke basis. In addition, online training on basic equality and diversity awareness is mandatory for all staff (90% completion rate).

Additional on-line courses are being researched for students and for staff on Unconscious Bias. Funding for these will be requested separately in the 2016/17 academic year.

As the focus of bespoke courses recently has been towards Schools, additional training is also recommended for staff in front line positions in future years (for example, courses for people managing others as well as those working in specific functions, e.g. Hubs, Library, Catering, Estates) as this has not taken place for some time.

This work increases our institutional capacity and potential for moving to a more embedded approach and proactive position on all equality issues. Additional resource is critical to enable training to continue not only at a sustainable level but at a pace which adds value and capacity, underpinning work within Schools and Divisions.

## **8.0 Equality and Diversity Committee**

The Equality and Diversity Committee was established in 2008 and is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs). Its membership is currently drawn primarily from senior management groups (Deans and Directors) and one or two members whose roles are directly connected with an equality remit. UUEAS and the three campus Trade Unions are also represented. It is recognised that this Committee needs to hear a wide range of perspectives, as diverse as, and representative of, the groups it is considering.

It is recommended that:

- That a review is undertaken during the summer of 2016 to identify a means of including a wider range of views and feedback from a wide range of minority groups.

- This may involve garnering views via surveys, sharing draft papers more widely before bringing them to Committee or inviting Chairs of network groups to present collated views or documents.

## 9.0 Costs and Benefits to UEA

Performing well on fairness and equality has a clear link to the business case for a sustainable, global University. Our ambition to be in the forefront of global research is reflected in our UEA Plan (*Goal 4*). Our strong ambitions to attract high quality students and underpin their success and achievement are clearly reflected in *Strategy 4*, which also requires us to work proactively to achieve equality, dignity and respect across the institution. For UEA to attract and retain the best students and staff from all sections of the population nationally and globally, it is important to realise that key competitors (e.g. UCL, Imperial, Sheffield, York, Manchester) also engage heavily in best equality practice. This can manifest as a ‘feel’ of the campus on a visit, or an underlying awareness pricked by marketing material or behaviour of staff on open days.

### 9.1 Resource

The current E&D team comprises two people, the majority of whose time is spent on Athena SWAN or related activities. With current resource levels we can continue to support gender but it must be noted that we will not be able to expand to include the additional Faculties wishing to engage with Athena SWAN and will only be able to support the other priority equality areas outlined in Section 4 above at a very cursory level well below the aspirations outlined in this paper. The level of training provided would reduce rather than increase. This would result in highly limited progress.

To support the University’s ambitions, including REF 2020 which will include the need for all UOAs to be linked to Schools with an Athena SWAN Bronze award, we request an additional one person, grade 6, full time to work in the central office. This role would enable us to work with all Schools on Athena SWAN and increase our capacity to move forward on a range of other priorities outlined above. The benefits of this small increase in resource are intrinsic to the success of the University and comparatively low in cost in comparison to the maintenance and development of the built campus, for example.

### 9.2 Costs

Estimated costs to the University for the above post are:

Assume appointment from 01/08/16 at bottom of Grade 6, costs are:-

2016/17	31,946
2017/18	34,297
2018/19	36,816
2019/20	39,515

It should be emphasised that without the requested resource the team will be unable to meet the required objectives, including the expansion of Athena SWAN.

### 9.3 Expansion of Faculty Based posts:

It should be noted that within Faculties additional resource with an internal-to-Faculty focus has been added in a piecemeal fashion. As a result there are currently:

1 x FTE School of Medicine, fixed term for three years Role divided between Athena SWAN and Work Load Modelling; managed within the School.

1 x FTE Faculty of Science, permanent, starting May 2016. Role to support all six Schools in the faculty, managed by Head of E&D.

Neither of these roles provides direct support to the work of the central E&D Office and the following proposal is not connected to the above request which would focus on the activities of the central office.

As two more Faculties (comprising 9 additional Schools) join the Athena SWAN initiative there are a number of questions:

- Should the additional two Faculties also have such a post each?
- Could they share a post? Should they be managed in the Faculty or centrally?
- Should the post in the Medical School be extended to cover the School of Health Sciences (HSC) who are aiming for a silver submission in November?

Alternatively, this presents an opportunity to review the University's approach to such support and consider:

1. employing one extra Faculty focussed person to support HUM and SSF (it is understood the Faculties have identified budget for this purpose),
2. having all three of these posts managed centrally by the Equality and Diversity Office so they can be flexible and deployed where the need is greatest and can work on additional projects if time allows – for example, the Race Equality Charter Mark is likely to require activity within Schools and Faculties for which support would be useful.
3. Moving the funding of these posts to the centre at the same time as the change in management line.

This would mirror the approach taken in ARM with Faculty Marketing Managers.

There are several benefits to this approach including more opportunities for economies of scale, consistency of approach and institutional message and more focussed career development/support for those within the team.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

It is not just desirable but critical for UEA to pursue best practice in equality, not only because legislation requires the institution to be *proactive*, but also because of the potential impact on our success and ambitions to be a global if we fail to perform well in this area. A very modest increase in resources will help us move into a far greater level of proactivity than has been possible to date. Best practice enhances our business case, improves the working and learning environments for all and ultimately, improves student and staff retention, individual success rates and the capacity of the University to achieve its ambitions.

The Committee are asked to:

- approve the objectives
- agree the request for additional resource to the central office
- agree the period for review of the strategy
- agree the proposal to alter line management structure for Faculty Athena SWAN posts.

***Helen Murdoch***  
***Head of Equality and Diversity***  
***April 2016***

### Terms of Reference

Equality Strategy Working Group is a sub-committee of UEA Equality and Diversity Committee. It is intended to make recommendations on:

1. University priorities on equality and diversity
2. Arrangements most suitable to deliver E&D objectives

In order to do the report will cover:

- An overview of current E&D activities in relation to protected characteristics and areas of legislation relevant to the University as a provider of Higher Education (such as Widening Participation)
- An assessment of key costs and benefits of delivering the equality and diversity objectives outlined in the UEA plan.
- A statement on the likely direction of equality and diversity developments (legislation?) relevant to HE.

### Membership of the Working Group:

Jane Abson	Disability Co-Ordinator
Jonathan Colam French	Director of Information Services
Jacqueline Collier	Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences
Sara Connolly	Professor of Personnel Economics
Santha Forder	Human Resources Manager, with Equality
remit	
Natasha Gales	Assistant Catering Manager/Trade Union
Representative (Unison)	
Gurpreet Gill	Senior Staff Development Officer
Matthew Gooch	Project Officer – Athena SWAN
Helen Murdoch	Head of Equality and Diversity
Jo Swo	UUEAS – Welfare Officer
Yvonne Tasker – Chair	Dean of Faculty of Humanities
Thompson Zulu	Head of Application Support