

**EDC14D017**

**Title:** STONEWALL WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX  
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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:** the Committee recommend that UEA commits to this initiative

**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 in the index would provide relevant evidence.

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

**Timing of decisions:** Decision taken by this Committee will enable a paper to ET and work to begin during summer 2015.

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**Background:** an initial paper was put to the Committee in May 2013

**Discussion:** see attached paper

## 1. Background

- Stonewall is a 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.

## 2. Timescale

- 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.

## 3. The Index

- The WEI is divided into 10 sections, with sub-sections within most parts comprising of "Foundation", "Next Steps" and "Best Practice".
- Appendix 1 gives a summary of the headings for each section.
- Stonewall provides a [template to complete and a guidance document](#) as well as support from their regional representative.
- Ideally, an organisation should complete all sections and sub-sections as marks are divided across the whole WEI application. However, it is possible within the first application to just complete the "Foundation" subsections as this will provide the applicant with a ranking and allow a benchmark from which to improve in future years.
- The responsibility of completing the WEI should not lie with just one individual so it should be the case that one person co-ordinates and delegates sections to others, for example the Procurement section should be completed by the UEA Procurement Department with the caveat that support is available from the Equality and Diversity Office as needed.
- Evidence is a strong part of the application, so this will include pasting relevant sections from central policies, copies of training materials etc.
- It is possible to use the same evidence for multiple sections if relevant to more than one question.
- 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.
- 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.
- An Action Plan comprising SMART objectives and goals will need to be developed to ensure we move our ranking upward from whichever position we begin.
- Best practice doesn't mean having to provide a huge amount of financial resource – for example, working with UEA Pride in consultation on policies for example is an example to illustrate this.

## 4. 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 - will be promoted via central communications but would need some support/facilitation centrally as the WEI requires evidence of initiatives, events, seminars etc. The Equality Office is not currently resourced to arrange events but will be developing a Communications Plan over the summer for the forthcoming year which will have elements from the WEI embedded
- Senior Management (Section 4, page 8) – this would need some sensitive exploration, but it is possible we would 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 some review of existing practice and the full engagement of the procurement team

#### **5. Conclusion**

The WEI is a respected and established framework for improvement in a specific, and often hidden, area of equality. Participation would help us evidence our commitment and improvements as work progressed. However, there are areas in which our evidence would be relatively weak to start with and part of the journey involves a shift in culture in some parts of the organisation which takes time to establish.

- Commitment would need to be combined with a realism that the WEI will be work in progress over several years to reach the 'Top 100'.
- It will require a clear statement of values from the Executive Team to all staff that work in this respect is part of our corporate goal.

- The ultimate goal is evidencing an inclusive workplace but initially any ranking is an institutional commitment to create an inclusive workplace in all areas of the University.

## 6. **Next Steps**

If the Committee agrees it is an area of work the University should pursue then a paper can be put to ET allowing discussion and a decision whether the commitment and associated work is aligned with UEA values.

If a positive decision is reached the work can be initiated over the summer with a draft submitted to Stonewall for an initial informal evaluation before deciding whether to submit formally in September 2015 or 2016.

In light of workload under Athena SWAN, further commitment to co-ordinating the Index would form part of a request for additional resource in the central team.