



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee
 Minutes of Meeting held on 17 March 2021
 Zoom Meeting

- Present:** Principal Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Mr Liam Brady, Ms Bonnie Dean, Dr David Duncan, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Prof Neal Juster, Miss Elle McCabe, Prof Jill Morrison, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Ms Mhairi Taylor, Dr Dania Thomas
- Apologies:** Prof Muffy Calder, Prof Frank Coton, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Prof Roibeard O Maolalaigh, Dr Robert Partridge
- Attending:** Mrs Clare Craig, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk), Ms Paola Tisi, Ms Jane Weir

1. Welcome, Introductions and apologies

The Convener welcomed existing members and noted the apologies received. Members noted Mrs Clare Craig and Ms Jane Weir would be joining the meeting later to discuss Paper 5 only. Members also noted Ms Paola Tisi, Ambitious Futures Graduate, would observe the meeting as part of her placement within EDU.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20201116/Minutes1.1

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising

Members noted several actions were not complete. M Taylor noted the first three actions from the previous meeting are for completion by future meetings, so updates are not yet available.

Action 4 – UCU Report ‘The Realities of Casualisation at the University of Glasgow’

M Taylor reminded members the completed EIA was circulated for information, along with the draft EDSC minutes, on 10 December 2020. She confirmed a further meeting had also been held with UCU.

Action 6 – REF2021 – EIA on selection of outputs for submissions

M Taylor confirmed the final EIA will be discussed at the next EDSC meeting in June 2021.

Action 6 – Discussion on Adoption of IHRA definition of anti-Semitism

M Taylor advised the University’s decision on the adoption of the IHRA was discussed at the recent People and Organisational Development Committee (previously known as HR Committee).

The Convener advised, based on the responses received, there was a balance of positive and negative views on the approach the University has taken. D Duncan advised the President of Queen Margaret Union (QMU) had raised the adoption at the recent Student Experience Committee (SEC) however, on hearing the approach the University has taken on this issue, he was now satisfied with it. Members welcomed this.

4. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Reporting

M Taylor advised 2021 is the end of the current 4-year PSED reporting cycle. As such, Papers 2, 3 and 4 require to be approved and published by 30 April 2021.

4.1 Equality Outcomes – Paper 2

M Taylor referred members to Paper 2 which, as in previous versions, sets out the progress made with our previous 2017-2021 Outcomes, challenges faced both past and present, and then the internal and external influences which shaped the strategic approach taken in drafting the 2021-2025 Equality Outcomes.

M Taylor noted as this reporting period ties in with the University's own strategic review cycle, it presented the opportunity to align the University's Equality Outcomes with the various new strategies. She highlighted Section 3 outlines the range of consultation activities undertaken which helped bring together the proposed Equality Outcomes for the next PSED period.

The six proposed Equality Outcomes cover the following areas:

- Sex/Gender and campus culture
- Race – taking an anti-racist approach
- Disability – taking a whole university approach to disability support for students and staff
- Working towards zero-tolerance to bullying and harassment
- Fully inclusive approach to learning and teaching
- Engendering a wellbeing centred approach

M Taylor noted two significant areas are not specifically mentioned:

- An 'Intersectional' approach – this has proved difficult to incorporate due to the specific nature of the Outcomes approach, as well as the current Equality structure at the University.
- 'Class and widening participation' – it is expected the SFC will look at this separately from the Equality Outcomes.

She noted specifics around KPIs figures would be updated once these had been agreed. **ACTION: EDU**

Members discussed the proposed wording for Outcome 4. L Brady and E McCabe noted the University must be able to live up to a claim of 'zero tolerance', citing students' lack of faith in the University's current commitment with bullying and harassment complaints not being seen to be dealt with effectively. D Duncan agreed the term may be misleading or could be misinterpreted but agreed the University must make it clear it will follow through with all processes to the best of our abilities. L Sutherland suggested, rather than focussing on negative behaviours, moving beyond zero-tolerance to promoting a culture free from violence or threat of violence. **ACTION: EDU**

The Convener expressed concern that there was a lack of trust and confidence in the University in dealing with these matters and asked for the processes to be reviewed, particularly around Gender Based Violence, to ensure they are fair to all parties. **ACTION: GBV Group reporting to GESG**

J Morrison noted where incidents are reported in the press, the University is unable to fully respond to their queries to ensure confidentiality for all involved. She advised the Code of Student Conduct

had recently reviewed and should be approved for implementation for the new academic year. She advised the proposed changes should help to ensure students are fully supported.

M Taylor echoed the concerns over the lack of confidence, though noted all universities struggle with being able to reassure complainants that, when appropriate, sanctions do take place. She stated ways must be found to build trust in the processes without breaching GDPR restrictions.

E McCabe highlighted part of the issue, from students' perspective, is the perceived lack of action on Gender Based Violence as there is little visibility of all the work being done. She noted social media feeds have focussed on individual 'performative' events and stated more must be done to make students aware of the breadth of work already done, in progress and planned in this area.

L Brady noted the wording of Outcome 3 around 'campus opportunities' seems too limited in its scope and asked for this be expanded upon. M Taylor agreed to look at rewording this. **ACTION: EDU**

D Thomas referred to Outcome 1 and asked what was planned around creating a positive culture around menopause, as this affects a large proportion of the University community; not just those going through it but also colleagues supporting or line managing them. M Taylor advised members EDU has started work on this, in collaboration with Institute of Health and Wellbeing and Adam Smith Business School. An event held as part of International Women's Day and a framework and guidance is already being developed. In addition, an open Menopause Café will be held on 26 March.

D Thomas noted the report mentions the impact of COVID-19 and asked if any data will be collected to measure the effects of Long COVID. M Taylor and C Barr confirmed the University has been recording COVID-19 related sickness absence but not specifically Long COVID. C Barr advised the University's People First initiative had been looking at the various impacts of COVID-19 and reviewing related sickness absences would be one of the ongoing strands.

M Taylor thanked members for the input and would discuss updated versions with relevant parties, prior to finalising for publication. **ACTION: EDU**

The Convener noted C Craig and J Weir had joined the meeting and suggested their item be discussed next, prior to continuing with the remaining PSED papers. Members agreed.

5. Review of Provision for Students with Disabilities – Paper 5

J Weir reported the full review process, which R Partridge had previously informed members of, had been completed ahead of planned deadline. She confirmed both the Student Experience Committee and Disability Equality Group had already had the opportunity to review the report. The Convener noted Court had also had sight of the PwC audit.

C Craig referred members to Paper 5, and outlined the various processes and methods used to undertake the review; which included amongst others a targeted survey questionnaire, an audit of the Disability Service, undertaken by PwC, and focus groups with disabled students, which were facilitated by the SRC.

C Craig highlighted the recommendations, shown at Section 9 (page 11) of report, are currently high level, as each area will require a more detailed and involved action plan. Members welcomed the thorough review process and the resulting report, noting the extensive and wide-ranging recommendations.

R Sandison acknowledged External Relations' recruitment and admissions teams and systems play an important role in the student journey and was therefore keen to ensure the flow of disability related information was shared effectively and securely, to assist with onboarding of new and returning disabled students.

J Morrison, as Chair of the Working Group, stated the Review and Report provided the University with the opportunity to make wholesale changes to the support infrastructure and systems which will benefit students and staff but also protect the University, but the changes must be properly funded in order to reap the full benefits. She noted a significant and immediate upfront investment in a fit for purpose case management system is required to replace the current paper based, time consuming and high-risk processes which were highlighted in the PwC audit.

C Craig echoed this, noting the required changes must be implemented to give the specialist Disability Staff time to fully utilise their expertise, which will in turn allow them to collaborate, engage and support learning and teaching staff, benefiting both them and their disabled students.

M Fischbacher-Smith supported the Report's recommendations and called for Advising Staff to be involved in the develop of the proposed case management system, to ensure benefits can be seen across all supporting structures. M Taylor reported DEG had overwhelmingly welcomed the recommendations and had endorsed the proposed review of the Disability Co-ordinators role and their training.

She also advised the Estates representative on DEG had noted accessibility issues had not featured significantly in the Focus Group or Survey outputs. This did not reflect the normal experiences and suggested this was due to the current COVID situation; as students are not on campus and are not having to deal with the significant challenges and limitations of the campus-built environment and the related timetabling issues. Whilst significant accessibility investment has been made in the new facilities, Estates proposed a long-term investment programme to improve the accessibility of the existing estate would reap further inclusion focussed benefits.

D Duncan confirmed the full funding requirements were significant but essential, with initial investment already committed to strengthen the Disability Service team. He noted it will take some time to fully implement all the recommendations.

The Convener thanked J Weir and C Craig for their time and members for their feedback. He asked for the funding requirements to be fully taken into account in any upcoming budget discussions. He stated EDSC will monitor progress and asked to receive regular updates on progress.

ACTION: D Duncan/R Partridge

6. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Reporting – continued

6.1 Staff Monitoring Report – Paper 3

M Taylor referred members to the Executive Summary. She highlighted the milestone of 33% of Grade 10 positions being held by Females, meeting the KPI set back in 2017, along with the increase in Females on SMG and the increase in the number of staff returning to work following maternity leave. She also noted several challenges highlighted by the data, including the increasing percentages of ‘unknowns’ – particularly for ethnicity and disability.

She advised HESA have highlighted the significant amount of non-declarations and confirmed EDU and HR Systems colleagues have already been discussing ways to address this. She noted by providing staff with information on the benefits of declaring, for both staff and University, and highlighting the secure nature of the data it was hoped this will build trust, allowing staff to feel comfortable declaring their diversity information.

Members requested amendments to the following points within the report:

Chart 3 – Data label to be amended and Core system to be updated to correct wording.

Chart 33 – Wording and spelling of narrative to be corrected.

ACTION: EDU

In response to L Sutherland’s comment about disparity between the ‘Unknown’ figures in the Recruitment charts, M Taylor advised this year’s Recruitment statistics were an amalgamation of data from two recruitment systems; the previous I-Grasp and the new e-recruitment systems. M Taylor reported the new e-recruitment system is part of Core HR and so, from now on, information provided as part of the recruitment process will be carried over into successful staff’s profiles. In time, this will help reduce the amount of ‘unknowns’ overall. In addition, the move to use the new e-recruitment system when recruiting Graduate Trainees and Demonstrators will also help to address the lack of data for this large cohort of staff.

M Taylor again highlighted one way to build trust in the University’s systems is transparency. She noted the Case Management section of the report has not previously been published and asked members to consider if this was now appropriate. Members agreed, with the provision that is also agreed by the Data Protection Office.

ACTION: EDU

6.2 Mainstreaming Report – Paper 4

M Taylor advised members the Mainstreaming Report forms the third legally required PSED report and reflects the 2019-2021 period. It follows the same framework as previous versions; structured under the three components of the Equality Act General Duty.

Members noted the Report showcases significant key developments in mainstreaming activity and projects but acknowledged these represent only a small portion of the extensive work done across the institution throughout the period.

The Convener welcomed the Report, noting it showed good progress across the various strands. Members approved the Report for publication.

ACTION: EDU

7. **Student Items**

7.1 Disabled Students – Exam arrangements and Attainment Gap

E McCabe highlighted the anxiety experienced by those disabled students who would normally have received additional time in timed exams, as this was removed in favour of 100% extra time for all. She noted this anxiety would have been mitigated by more consultation and clearer explanations for the reasons behind the decision and asked that lessons be learnt for any future changes to exam arrangements.

She then noted recent data analysis, via the QlikSense tool, showed a reduction in the attainment gap for disabled students in the 2020 exam results. This had initially been attributed to the 'No Detriment' policy but she suggested this may have resulted from disabled students being able to perform better during the 24hr exam periods and hoped this might be explored further.

7.2 SRC Courses for Students

E McCabe advised members the SRC was in process of finalising 'Mind Your Mate' workshops, a GBV online module for Moodle and Resilience Training for students. She noted the GBV Module will include University information with the hope this can form part of a student induction programme.

M Fischbacher-Smith reported there is a commitment to provide new students with more pre-arrival information and will discuss the potential inclusion of these course with colleagues.

ACTION: M Fischbacher-Smith

R Sandison advised External Relations was keen to look at how these could be incorporated in applicants' information and to work more with the SRC in general. E McCabe welcomed this but again stated more must be done to make students aware of the full breadth of proactive work being done to address issues. R Sandison agreed to take this forward with the various teams.

ACTION: R Sandison

7.3 On-campus activities

E McCabe stated the SRC hope to prioritise safe on-campus activities as soon as conditions allow, allowing students to have their 'University experience'. D Duncan advised the University would do everything possible to facilitate this. He confirmed the marquee will remain in place in the quadrangles and Sports hope to open their facilities from 26 April.

8. **Equality Champions Updates**

8.1 Refugee & Asylum Seekers – University of Sanctuary - Paper 6

Members reviewed the draft submission for University of Sanctuary status, noting the Working Group which developed it will likely continue to meet to ensure actions are followed through on. R Sandison advised the Working Group included representatives with lived experience which helped to inform the submission and action plan.

She highlighted progress has already been made in areas such as Admissions and Fee Status, as well as support for students and training for staff. Online delivery will be piloted and dedicated digital resources for potential and current refugee and asylum-seeking students will be developed. She also advised a review of the current Scholarship offering will be undertaken and the resulting paper will be discussed at SMG in May.

She also noted there is an ongoing resource implication in the relation to the University of Sanctuary status but confirmed External Relations will absorb this. Members expressed their support for the

submission and looked forward to hearing further.

ACTION: R Sandison

8.2 Age

M Taylor reported the main age-related work being undertaken is the Menopause Policy and Guidance already discussed, together with the Institute of Health and Wellbeing's Older Workers Project which is being funded via MVLS's ISSF funding.

8.3 Race - URTUC Report Update and Change the Race Ratio – Paper 7

B Dean advised members she had a useful meeting the SFC and Scottish Government officials along with the Convener, M Taylor to discuss the URTUC Report. The Convener noted the SFC sees the University as leading in the HE sector in Scotland in this area of work. B Dean confirmed meetings are also ongoing with College Management Groups to see how they can support related actions at local levels.

B Dean advised further internal conversations events about the URTUC Report are to be arranged; members will be advised when these will take place.

ACTION: EDU

B Dean referred members to Paper 7 showing details of the CBI's 'Change the Race Ratio' pledge around increasing greater racial and ethnic diversity at Board level. She noted the pledge was modelled on the successful 30% Club, which seeks to increase female representation at Board level. P Tisi advised, as the requirements of the pledge/commitment are already contained within the URTUC Action Plan, little extra work will be required if the University chooses to become a signatory.

The Convener and D Duncan agreed the University wants to make good progress in diversify the membership of Court. The Convener suggested membership of this pledge could, in turn, help to attract a more diverse applicant pool for our Court positions.

8.4 Disability

M Taylor reported the Disability Equality Group (DEG) meeting received a demonstration of the new QlikSense tool. Examinations arrangements for disabled students were discussed extensively. DEG also learnt of the Universities Scotland review into the challenges in the HE admissions processes faced by disabled students. As noted earlier, an Extra-Ordinary DEG meeting was held to discuss the Review of Provision for Students with Disabilities report in advance of this meeting. DEG welcomed and endorsed all the recommendations.

8.5 Gender

J Morrison reported a successful programme of events in recognition of International Women's Day were held across the University. Despite the online nature of the events, there appeared to be good engagement. She highlighted the [poem and related video](#) by Hannah Lavery and the panel discussion which followed the streaming of the award winning 'Picture a Scientist' documentary. She advised a year's streaming license had been purchased, so all Schools and Research Institutions, both staff and students can now access it via [Moodle](#).

Other items of note were:

- A Menopause Café scheduled for 26 March.

- The Student Maternity and Adoption Policy is to be reviewed.
- The GBV group provided a report to GESG. From this workstream, training will be delivered to the First Line Responders and Rape Crisis have been providing a series of training sessions for staff involved in investigating complaint cases relating to GBV.
- The student version of the Report and Support tool will be moving to the Ivanti helpdesk solution. There is no date as yet for this, as testing is still ongoing.

J Morrison then reported, the appeal on the outcome of University's Athena Swan Silver award submission was unsuccessful and the University has had its current Bronze Award renewed. She expressed the huge disappointment felt by all colleagues involved and confirmed a meeting with Advance HE will be held to discuss the feedback received in more detail. Members echoed the disappointment felt, noting this outcome did not reflect the breadth of work, clear and positive outcomes which have resulted from the University's engagement with the Charter. J Morrison reminded members the Charter itself is going through a very in-depth review at present.

The Convener agreed a period of reflection would be needed, given the unease across the sector with the Charter but expressed his hope the review would provide a clearer way forward for ongoing and future engagement.

8.6 LGBT+

M Taylor provided members with a brief overview of the University's extensive LGBT History Month programme, organised by both staff, student groups and the SRC. She reported this year a group of staff felt empowered to pull together their own events and these were all very successful.

Of note throughout the month were:

- Queerfest organised by the GULGBTQ+ students' society
- A 'Power Hour' interview with US Senator Sarah McBride, the first transgender senator.
- Alumni Discussion panel event with MP Mhairi Black, Colin McFarlane, CEO of Stonewall Scotland and Jordan Daly, co-founder of Time for Inclusive Education.

The Convener welcomed all the activities and advised members it was pleasing that half of the declared candidates for the upcoming Rector elections were from the LGBT+ community.

8.7 Mental Health

D Duncan reported the ongoing COVID situation has seen unprecedented pressure on both the Critical Crisis Team and Counselling & Psychological Services; support for these areas has been expanded. He noted usage of the provision for staff, provided via our Employee Assistance providers PAM Assist, had dropped.

8.8 Religion and Belief

N Juster reported discussions were held with the Muslim Student Association (GUMSA) about provision for prayer and ablutions facilities in the new buildings.

M Taylor advised GUMSA had been consulted on the possible adoption of the definition of Islamophobia and had agreed not to adopt the current definition. She reported that GUMSA had

requested the University mark Islamophobia awareness month, and we will consider doing this at the correct point in the year. **ACTION: Chaplaincy/EDU**

9. Items for Information

9.1 Advance HE's Persistent Inequalities – Draft Report – Paper 8

M Taylor advised the Advance HE draft report had been referenced in the committee's version of the University's PSED Reports but was for information only. She speculated it had been issued most likely because the SFC's recommendations on the persistent inequalities had not been published yet.

10. Any other business

10.1 Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB) community in HE Pledge

R Sandison reported the EDU had been approached by Dr Iain Rowe about the possibility of the University signing a pledge to support GTRSB students into and within Higher Education. M Taylor noted the University of Strathclyde is one of 5 institutions to have already signed the Pledge. She noted the Pledge requirements are already in place at the University but confirmed a meeting with Widening Participation colleagues will be held. Members agreed to consider signing the Pledge and will respond to M Taylor. **ACTION: ER/EDU**

11. Date of Next Meeting

14 June 2021 – 10:00 – 12:00