**Introduction**

This action plan sets out the University’s equality objectives for the period 2015-2020 in line with the University’s strategic plan. These objectives support the University’s commitment that all students, staff, visitors, and others we have contact with are treated fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect.

Equality and Diversity issues are not considered to be the responsibility of specialist individuals at the University but are intended to form part of a mainstreamed approach towards equality of opportunity that is reflective of the culture and ethos of the university. The University adopts an evidence based approach to planning, implementing and evaluating its impact on Equality and Diversity. In this context data is used to examine the variability in the rates of enrolment, retention, progression, achievement and employability across all protected characteristics. Through the analysis of data trends the University identifies and implements enhancements to its functions and activities with the purpose of improving equalities outcomes for students at all stages of their higher education journey. Objective setting, planning, implementation, and impact assessment are undertaken as part of an annual cycle of strategic planning and review, and a commitment to collaboration, continuous improvement, and sharing best practice is built into the governance arrangements.

Protected Characteristics

Each action plan objective is related to at least one of the Equality Act protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Equality Duty

The objectives also support at least one element of the Equality Act equality duty to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic;
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

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| **Equality Actions 2014 to 2015**  | **Success measures**  |  | **Protected Characteristics** | **Equality Duty** |
|  Age |  Disability |  Gender Reassignment | Marriage & Civil Partnership |  Pregnancy & Maternity  |  Race |  Religion or belief |  Sex |  Sexual orientation | Eliminate unlawful discrimination | Advance equality of opportunity | Foster Good Relations |
| **Objective 1 – Mainstream the Equality Duty into the everyday business of the University** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ⚫ | ⚫ | ⚫ |
| *Rationale – Equality and diversity considerations increasingly become core to the day to day work and values of the University such that equality issues becomes embedded, thought about up-front and evidenced* | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. The University Executive Team/Senior Management Team to identify the key activities and outcomes required to embed equality and diversity firmly in the leadership and governance of the University.
 | i) Member of UMT appointed to provide corporate leadership ii) Equality and Diversity set as a corporate theme and is part of the University’s strategic values. | UMT responsibility for Equality and Diversity |
| 1. The Student Experience Committee (SEC) to promote awareness and understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to all staff and students.
 | i) E&D is a standing agenda item at SEC and at School level SECii) Through information published on the webiii) The inclusion of E&D considerations in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Partnership Agreement between the University and the Students’ Unioniv) Minutes of Inclusive Student Experience Group and annual report presented to SEC | Chair of Student Experience Committee/ Director SAS |
| 1. Through the operation of the University Inclusive Student Experience Group
 | i) Production of meeting minutes and an annual report of the main issues arising during the academic year reported to SEC. ii) submission of the approved OFFA agreement annually to HEFCEiii) Co-ordination of OFFA activity across the university.iv) Oversight of progress on Equality & Diversity priorities included in the SEC action plan | Chair of Inclusive Student Experience Group |
| 1. To embed equality considerations into HR policies, procedures, and training of all new and existing staff. Raising the cultural awareness of staff to enhance the student experience; addressing the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and encourage strategies for the promoting Equality and Diversity.
 | i) Refer to the HR EDAP.ii) Increase the number of new and existing staff receive E & D training with training impact report submitted to ISEG annuallyiii) report on training impacts to be included as part of social impact reporting via ISEG annually | Director of Human Resources, Deputy Deans and Heads of Departments |
| 1. All new and amended policies and procedures agreed by SEC and AQSC in relation to academic matters and student experiences have suitable equality impact statements.
 | i) completion of Equality Impact Assessments in accordance with University policy and procedure for all new or amended policies and procedures agreed by SEC or AQSCii) ISEG to review all equality statements for new and amended policies and procedures agreed by SEC and AQSC iii) ISEG to include within its annual report. | Chair of ISEG |
| **Objective 2 – Increase direct engagement with students on equality issues** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ⚫ | ⚫ | ⚫ |
| *Rationale – Consultation and involvement with students is key to an evidence-based approach to equality* | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. Enable engagement, debate and consultation with student representatives and students from each of the protected characteristics to ensure that their views are reflected
2. Enhanced application of the student engagement matrix across the university
 | i) Improve levels of engagement via student representatives, Student Services, the Students’ Union and UCEE, ii) provide a wide range of formal and informal engagement mechanisms to capture a wider ‘student voice’iii) Student union to report progress on the application of the matrix against protected characteristics to SEC annually | Deputy Director of Student Services, VP Engagement and Participation, President of the Students’ Union, Head of UCEE |
| **Objective 3 – Raise awareness of equality issues and increase the visibility of equality initiatives** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ⚫ | ⚫ | ⚫ |
| *Rationale – To support the embedding of good practice across the University* | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. Promote equality and diversity issues via Open Days, Welcome Week, events on campus, the intranet and web, staff and student-specific communications, publication of calendar of E&D events including religious dates and festivals

 1. Equality impact assessments to be undertaken on all marketing activities and initiatives
 | i) improve data capture and analysis of the impact of the promotion of equality initiatives to students across a range of communications channelsii) increase the impact and range of events and activities held on campus designed to promote Equality and diversityiii) Publication of E&D events and ways for students and staff to share In celebratory eventsiv) Annual report to SEC from Students’ Unionv) Report on implications of issues identified in impact assessments reported to ISEG. | Director of Marketing/Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services, President of the Students’ Union |
| **Objective 4 – Monitor and improve student disability disclosures and monitor the implementation of reasonable adjustments across the University** |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ⚫ | ⚫ | ⚫ |
| *Rationale – Disabled students have specific needs that the University has a legal duty to address* | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| a) Improve levels of disclosure so that reasonable adjustments can be made to improve student experience. b) Evaluate the impact of reasonable adjustments that are made for students.  | i) Report on uptake and feedback from students at ISEG ii) Annual report to ISEG from Student Services iii) Annual review of Learning Opportunities that reports to SEC and Senate | Deputy Director of Student Services |
| **Objective 5 – To increase the proportion of disclosed disabled students in employment or study 6 months after graduation** |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ⚫ | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale – Support disabled graduates in to employment*  | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| a) Reduce inequalities for those with disabilities in post study progressionb) Improve graduate employability rates for those with disabilities to levels comparable to those without disabilities | i) Refer to the OFFA operational plansii)Refer ASSIST operational planiii) Refer to the first year experience project planiv) refer to UCEE delivery plan | Head of UCEE |
| **Objective 6 – Reduce the gap between the achievement of white students and Home BME students in relation to ‘good degrees’.** |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  | ⚫ | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale – To address historical attainment gaps between BME and white students* | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| a) improve the success rates of BME students obtaining good degreesb) close the attainment gap between BME students and white students c) Develop the University’s work on BME student attainment by providing targeted academic support and raising the confidence levels of BME students | i) refer to the School Quality, Standards, and Enhancement Plansii) refer to Learning and Teaching plan | Head of Learning and Teaching; Deputy Deans of Academic Schools  |
| **Objective 7 – Increase the number of male students into subject areas where, historically, they are under represented**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale –To address historical under-representation of male undergraduates and postgraduates into particular courses e.g. Early Years/Primary Teaching*  | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. Support and facilitate male students to enrol and succeed in courses where they are historically under represented

b) Improve the enrolment, retention, attainment, and completion rates of male students on programmes where they are historically under represented and/or fail to complete  |  i) refer to the Schools’ OFFA operation plans | Deputy Deans/ Chair of ISEGISEG |
| **Objective 8 – Increase the number of BME students into courses where, historically, they are under-represented**  |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ |  |  |  |  | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale –To address historical under-representation of BME undergraduates and postgraduates into particular courses e.g. Early Years/Primary Teaching*  | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. Support and facilitate BME students to enrol and succeed in subject areas where they have historically been under represented e.g. Early Years/Primary Teaching

b) Improve in the enrolment, retention, attainment, and completion rates of BME students in subject areas where they have historically underperformed e.g. Early Years/Primary Teaching | i) refer to the Schools’ OFFA operational planii) refer to the first year experience projectiii) refer to the School Quality, Standards, and Enhancement Plans | Deputy Deans / Chair of ISEG  |
| **Objective 9 – Increase the percentage of ‘good’ degrees awarded to part time undergraduates.**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale –To enhance the value of the part time student experience.*  | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| a) improve in the percentage of ‘good degrees’ awarded to part-time undergraduates  | I) Refer to the Schools’ OFFA operational plansii) refer to the School Quality, Standards, and Enhancement Plans | Head of Learning and Teaching; Deputy Deans  |
| **Objective 10 – Improve retention, progression, completion, and success indicators by** **developing capability in learning design, innovation and excellent teaching practice.**  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ⚫ |  |
| *Rationale – To enable all students to gain from the transformational learning experiences articulated in the University Learning & Teaching Plan.*  | **Responsibility** |
| **Priorities** | **Actions** |  |
| 1. Achieve targets set for retention, progression, completion & success and monitor that improvements are shared by students with protected characteristics

b) Students with protected characteristics share in proportionate improvements in progress and achievement arising from the University Learning and Teaching Plan (2012-15): Retention-Progression-Completion-Success. | i) Refer to Schools’ Rolling Action Plansii) Refer to Schools’ OFFA Action Plansiii) refer to the School Quality, Standards, and Enhancement Plansiv) refer Learning and Teaching plan  | Deputy Deans of Academic Schools; Director L&T; Head of UCEE  |