

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Priorities 2026-2030

Introduction:

Building on our existing EDI work, including gains made through our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Priorities 2020–2025, this strategic plan forms the vision for how the University will advance equality, diversity and inclusion for our staff community and bring about a cultural change.

These priorities have been developed to advocate the University's responsibilities related to the protected characteristics within the Equality Act covering age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan is aligned with our organisational commitments and core values for Inclusivity, Trust and Aspiration and will be supported by metrics developed in conjunction with the People Strategy. This ensures a collaborative approach to achieving our targets and desired outcomes.

The Foundations of Our EDI Strategy

We have taken a collaborative and strategic approach to developing our EDI Strategic Plan, ensuring engagement across the University.

The strategic plan is fully aligned with our overarching University and People Strategies, and is designed to support, reinforce, and work alongside the Digital and Data Strategy, Estates Development Framework, Student Experience Strategy and Learning and Teaching Strategy among other initiatives. This reinforces our commitment to embed EDI principles in every area of institutional activity, from governance and policy to teaching, research, and student experience.

Our approach is transparent, flexible, and driven by robust data, enabling us to monitor progress and adapt as needed. We are committed to an intersectional lens that recognises the complexity of identities and experiences, and we have aligned our objectives with sector benchmarks and frameworks to maintain accountability.

To support successful implementation, we are developing a comprehensive action plan and communications strategy that will promote awareness, foster understanding, and drive cultural change across the University.

These will be structured around SMART objectives, covering immediate, medium-term, and long-term priorities.

For 2026-2030 the key EDI priorities have been identified as follows:

Objective 1: Build a culture where trust and inclusion thrive guided by equality charters that set the standard for excellence.

- We will work to achieve equality charters accreditation for the Race, Athena Swan and Stonewall Proud Employers
- We will work together across departments to make EDI part of everything we do
- We will be data led and collect and use data to identify barriers and drive action.
- We will embed equality impact assessments in our work

Key Actions:

Priority Actions	Time Frame
Achieve the Bronze Race Equality Charter by 2027	2026-2027 YR 1 & 2
Strengthen LGBT+ inclusion by engaging with the Stonewall Proud Employers Framework.	2026-2027 YR 1 & 2
Drive Gender Equality initiatives and move forward with the Athena Swan self-assessment process.	2027-2030 From YR 2, YR 3 & YR 4
Embed learning into policy change: Require all new policies to include EIA outcomes before approval.	2026-2030 YR 1
Integrate accessibility checks into Equality Impact Assessments for all new digital tools and systems	2026-2030 YR 1

Key Measurements

- Meaningful engagement leading to the development of SMART action plans that tackle race, gender and LGBT+ inequalities across the university.
- Completion of Race Equality Charter self-assessment by agreed deadline and submission of Bronze Award application to Advance HE within the target timeframe.
- Increase in voluntary disclosure rates for sexual orientation and gender identity (target %)
- % of new and revised policies undergo Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
- Track completion and implementation of EIA action plans within 6 months.
- Publish annual EIA summary report for transparency.
- Increased positive feedback from staff engagement surveys on inclusivity and belonging

Objective 2: Increase workforce diversity across all levels

- We will conduct audit of workforce demographics
- We will review recruitment policies and practices
- We will set measurable diversity targets
- We will build partnerships for talent pipelines

Key Priorities:

Priority Actions	Time Frame
Review our current recruitment practices	2026-2027 YR 1 & 2
Build relationships with external partners including community organisations, and professional networks to build diverse talent pipelines	2026-2030 YR 1,
Conduct a comprehensive audit of current workforce demographics	2026-2027 YR 1 & YR 2
Review and revise recruitment policies to remove any bias and promote inclusive hiring	2026-2030 YR 1
Enhance training for colleagues around inclusive practices and panels.	2026-2030 YR 1
Work with Staff Network groups to support this work	2026-2030 YR 1
Establish measurable diversity targets for race, gender, and LGBTQ+ initiatives, and implement a quarterly reporting process that includes benchmark data and findings from self-assessment frameworks.	2027-2030 YR 2- YR 5

Key Measurements

- Year-on-year improvement in workforce diversity across underrepresented groups (GEM, disability, LGBTQ+).
- Year-on-year improvement in the diversity of leadership roles across the University to strengthen decision-making, organisational performance, and build a more inclusive culture.
- Increased positive feedback from staff engagement surveys on inclusivity and belonging

Objective 3: Enhance progression in the workplace for all

- We will create structured career pathways with published criteria for progression
- We will launch leadership programs targeting underrepresented groups
- We will provide mentoring and sponsorship to support growth
- We will monitor internal progression

Key Priorities

Priority Actions	Time Frame
Create structured career pathways with published criteria for progression	2027-2030 YR 2
Launch targeted leadership programs for underrepresented groups with measurable participation goals.	2027-2030 YR 2
Provide targeted support addressing specific challenges faced by minoritised colleagues, through targeted mentoring, sponsorship, and leadership development programmes based on evidence and data reviews	2026-2030 YR 1

Key Measurements

- % of staff progressing internally or engaging in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- % of utilisation of local staff development budgets
- % of staff undertaking qualifications (including apprenticeships)
- Increased positive feedback from staff surveys on inclusivity and belonging

Objective 4: Create a culture of inclusion and belonging

- We will strengthen inclusive leadership training
- We will invest in building the capacity of Staff Networks to enhance and expand employee voice across the University.
- We will review policies for equity and safety across the organisation
- We will provide training on constructive challenge

Key Priorities

Priority Actions	Time Frame
Strengthen inclusive leadership training for managers.	2026-2030 YR 1
Empower and resource Staff Networks and forums as strategic partners in shaping policy and driving cultural change	2026-2030 YR 1
Embed inclusion and belonging as a core theme in all internal communications by publishing monthly stories, spotlighting diverse voices, and sharing progress updates on EDI initiatives to foster awareness and engagement across the organisation.	2026-2030 YR 1
Build continuous review of policies and guidance to ensure they support equity and psychological safety.	2026-2030 YR 1
Offer training on constructive challenge and respectful dialogue to increase employee voice	2026-2030 YR 1

Key Measurements

- Track inclusion metrics (e.g., engagement scores, retention rates by demographic).
- Report progress transparently to all colleagues and at the EDI Forum and People Strategy Board.
- Increased positive feedback from staff engagement surveys.