



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE DIGEST

Welcome to the **EDIC Digest** where you will find a rundown of the discussions held at EDIC on 25 Jan 2023.

UPDATE FROM STAFF EQUALITY NETWORKS:

- The Networks had been present at the New Staff Engagement Event in November 2022 and this led to an increase in membership across the Networks
- The Menopause Network had expanded to welcome PGR students
- The Women's Development Network collaborated with the Events Team to develop the programme for International Women's Day 2023.
- The LGBTQ+ Network had delivered a successful in-person event for National Coming Out Day, in collaboration with BeWell and Inclusion Week.
- The Race Equality Network had focused on the PGR experience and had established a sub-group to discuss issues
- The Parents and Carers Network had been supporting its members with the teacher strikes. Work had been continuing on the Carers Policy and the Perinatal Loss Group had engaged in training and external networking
- The Disability Network was seeking a new co-chair. As part of Disability History Month, they delivered a plant potting wellbeing event and drop-in picnics were continuing and had been well received
- The Equality Network chairs will be meeting regularly to discuss collaboration opportunities and to share experiences

GENDER EQUALITY STEERING GROUP/ SELF-ASSESSMENT TEAM – TERMS OF REFERENCE

EDIC discussed and approved draft Terms of Reference for a new Group to take forward Aberdeen 2040 commitments related to gender equality and to act as the Self-Assessment Team for the University's silver-level Athena Swan submission by 2026.



RACE EQUALITY CHARTER SURVEY RESULTS

EDIC had an opportunity to discuss the results of the Race Equality Charter Staff and Student Surveys undertaken in 2022 and noted that they indicate that inequalities exist in the University. The results align with issues identified previously through race-listening activities in the University and wider research undertaken across the sector, and the University will be continuing its work to address the issues raised, including setting out the required actions in an Antiracism Strategy Action Plan.

The results of the surveys also indicated that there was low awareness of and trust in reporting procedures. The University's Online Reporting Tool represents one route for reporting racism and racist incidents. The Tool is currently under review following feedback from University groups and committees with changes effective from April 2023. The full results of the surveys can be seen here: [REC-Survey-Report-2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)

WELLBEING STRATEGY UPDATE

A significant level of activity had been taken forward to deliver the Wellbeing Strategy. A particular success had been BeWell Week 2022 which attracted over 1800 staff and students. A Cost-of-Living Crisis Working Group had been established to coordinate the University's support to staff and students at this time of financial concern.



ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASSOCIATION (AUSA) EDI ACTIVITIES AND LIBERATION FORUMS

EDIC welcomed a presentation by AUSA on EDI activities. The sabbatical team is creating safe spaces for students through student societies and Liberation Forums. AUSA had been drawing on internal and external expertise to enhance diversity and to conduct an antiracist and democratic review. A range of events on social justice issues had been delivered and AUSA had contributed significantly to Black History Month.

COLLECTION OF PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC DATA

Methods of collecting updated protected characteristic data from staff have been proposed in line with Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) requirements. The Staff Equality Network chairs have been consulted on the proposed categories/questions and staff will be invited to update their protected characteristic data information shortly.



RELIGION AND BELIEF POLICY

EDIC reviewed the updated Religion and Belief Policy. A sub-group of EDIC had reviewed the Policy and made the following amendments, which EDIC welcomed:

- Widening the scope of the Policy to include staff, prospective staff, Court members, suppliers of goods or services to the University and contractors.
- Providing a definition of Religion and Belief
- Including information about the University's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Addressing freedom of speech
- Detailing internal and third-party support available for staff and students
- Including an appendix of the nine general principles for responsible public debate from the RSE Young Academy of Scotland, which the University has adopted.



GAELIC LANGUAGE PLAN ANNUAL RETURN FORM

The University's Gaelic Language Plan Annual Return Form 2021/2022 is shortly due to be submitted to Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The Form sets out how the University has progressed actions in its **Gaelic Language Plan**. Notable actions include:

- A bilingual news story on a Hebridean study exploring the link between genes and disease was shared on the University's webpage which can be viewed here: [Hebridean study to explore disease and genes link](#) | News | The University of Aberdeen ([abdn.ac.uk](#))
- The student accommodation team continues to bilingually ask students when they apply for accommodation if they would like to share with other Gaelic-speaking students
- Introductions and welcomes at graduation ceremonies being provided in Gaelic as well as in Scots and English

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT GROUP

EDIC noted a paper from the EDI Events and Engagement Group that highlighted activities undertaken to mark and celebrate Disability History Month, Black History Month, Transgender Awareness Week, Care Experience Week, National Coming Out Day, University of Sanctuary event, LGBTQ+ Christmas Get-together and BeWell Week. International Women's Day events will be held on the 8th of March 2023. The programme for this can be seen here: [International Women's Day 2023 | What's On | The University of Aberdeen](#) ([abdn.ac.uk](#))

