

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT 2021

ENHANCED EDI GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2019 - 2021

3.1 CENTRAL/STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE

In 2019 the University, in line with the start of the development of Aberdeen 2040, recognised that EDI activities required to continue to be positioned as a strategic priority in an enhanced and strengthened manner and to have a governance structure which supported that. The Advisory Group on Equality and Diversity, referred to in the University's 2019 report, had no clear standing in the formal governance structure of the University and had 'drifted' somewhat in its direction. A review of the Group resulted in the establishment in July 2019 of the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#) (EDIC), under the continued convenorship of the Senior Vice-Principal.

3.2 EDIC reports to Policy and Resources Committee (PaRC) which reports to the University Court, providing a clear strategic link. Figure 1 below shows the University's Committee structure and EDIC's position within it. EDIC provides a report to PaRC following each of its meetings and at least an annual report to Court, providing the University's Governors with information to support them in their role to ensure that the University is complying with equality legislation as well as meeting strategic aims linked to EDI. EDIC currently meets four times per year, but this is under review, given the extent of EDI issues and activities ongoing in the University.

3.3 The groups which report to EDIC can be seen in Figure 2 below, with this diagram clearly showing the extent of the remit of EDIC and how it is supporting the mainstreaming of EDI across the University. Full, challenging, honest and progressive discussions take place at EDIC because of the voice of lived experience featuring heavily in the composition and membership, which includes undergraduate and postgraduate students. To bolster strategic thinking, EDIC now includes a strong complement of senior staff e.g. Director of External Relations, Director of People, Vice-Principal Education, Vice-Principal Research, University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, and two Heads of School.

3.4 All of the issues discussed in this report will have been deliberated by EDIC.

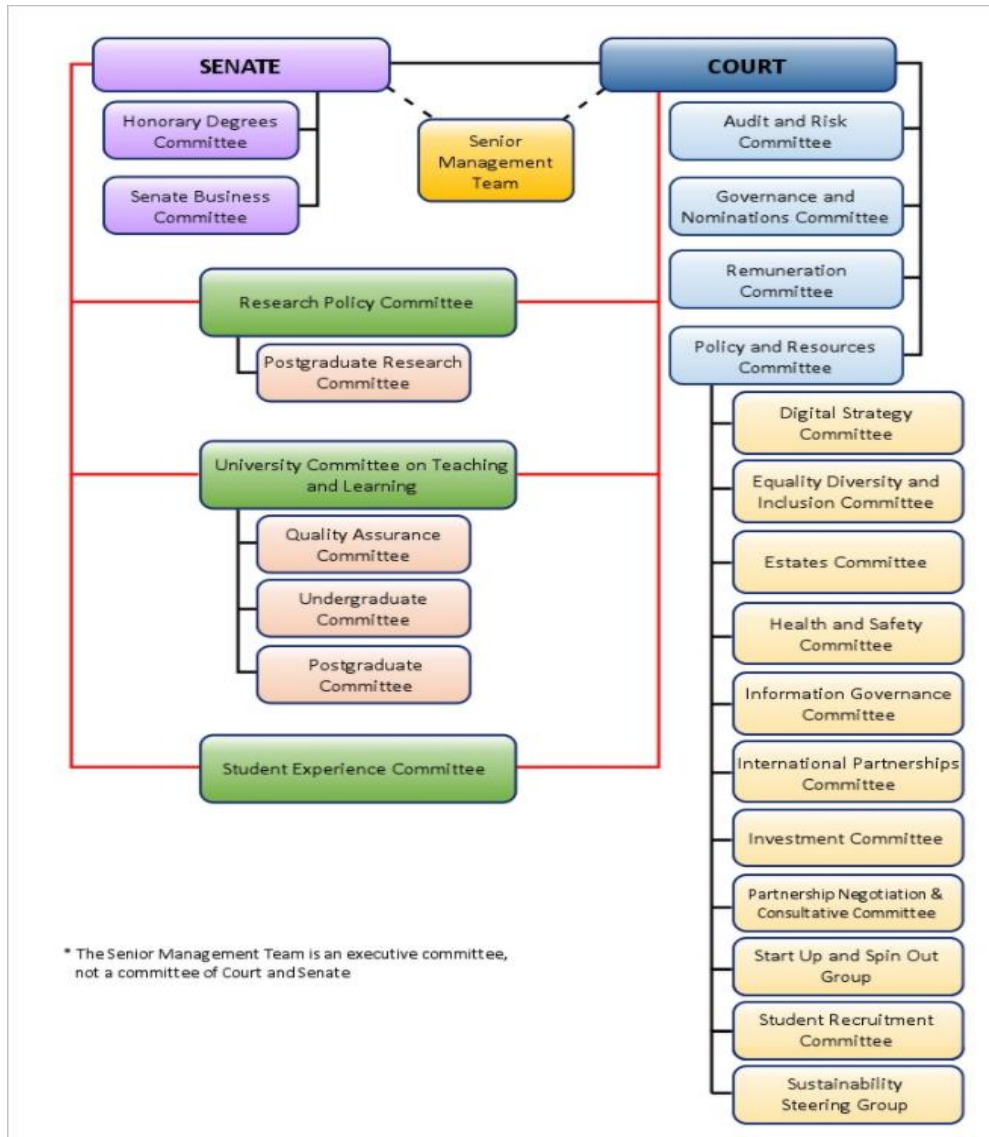


Figure 1: University Committee structure

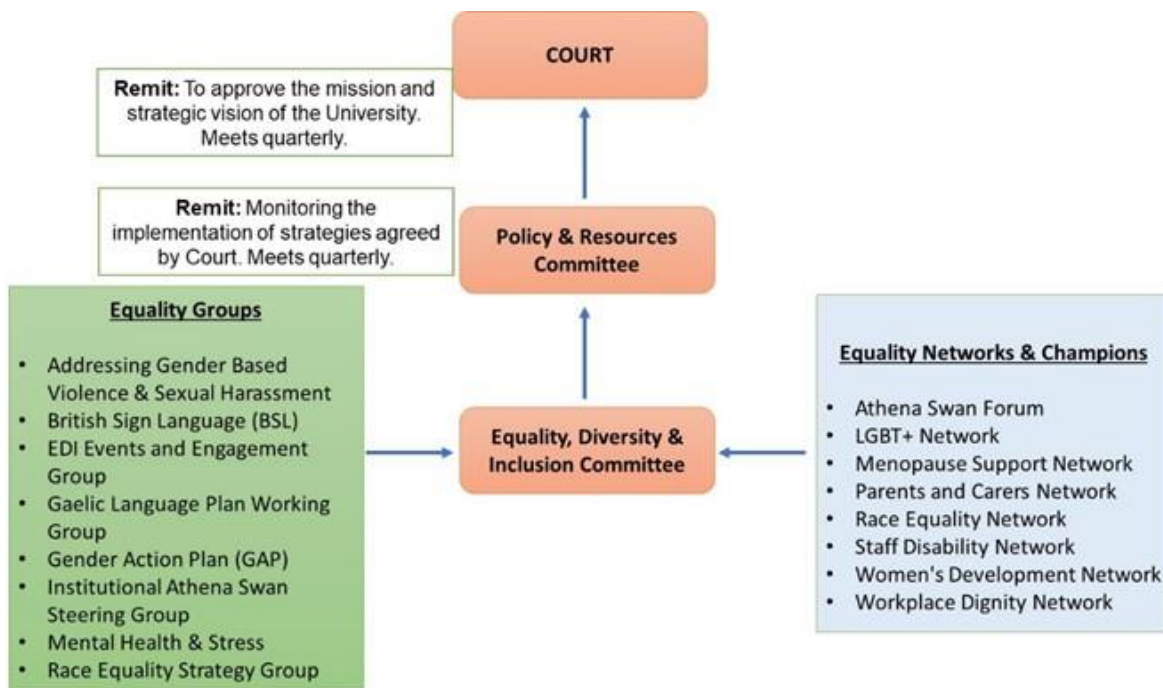


Figure 2: Groups reporting to EDIC

3.5 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT OF EDI

In 2020, an analysis of current School management and governance arrangements was undertaken with a view to (i) identifying areas of commonality and areas of difference, (ii) identifying and sharing best practice and (iii) highlighting key issues for further consideration. SMT then approved the introduction of a suite of Guiding Principles for School Management and Governance Arrangements.

3.6 The Guiding Principles state that an effective committee structure would be established in all Schools to underpin decision-making processes and that the structure should include, amongst other criteria:

- A School EDIC (the remit of pre-existing Athena Swan Committees will be incorporated within the remit of the EDIC and the membership of the School EDIC established in line with Athena Swan criteria).

3.7 Reporting to the School Executive, the School EDIC supports the Head of School by leading the strategic oversight of EDI matters within the School. It has responsibility for implementing University EDI policies within the School, including the development of local policies and practices.

3.8 School EDICs will link closely with the University EDIC and will have oversight of EDI action plans and accreditation processes within the School, including (but not limited to) Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter.

3.9 This enhanced governance structure centrally and, in the Schools, will support communication and implementation of EDI initiatives and provides a robust platform for achieving the Inclusive commitments in Aberdeen 2040.

3.10 Actions:

Review the frequency of meetings of University EDIC, with a view to adding one more meeting per year by September 2021 (Action 8.1)



Review the operation of EDIC to ensure that it retains its remit as a strategic body. Consider an operational arm of EDIC to present the key questions to be discussed by EDIC by September 2021 (Action 8.2)

Support the School EDICs to link into the University EDIC to support consistency in approaches (Action 8.3)