

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT 2021
7. EQUALITY OUTCOMES PROGRESS AND REVIEW

- 7.1 The University's first set of Equality Outcomes were developed in 2013. Since then, the Outcomes have evolved through consultation and evidence-gathering. The Outcomes were fully reviewed and updated in 2017.
- 7.2 The progress made, in the last two years, in relation to furthering the Equality Outcomes is documented below.

Outcome 1

The principles of Equality and Diversity will be a day-to-day consideration within all of the University's activities, both strategically and operationally;

Progress	Date
A participative exercise for developing the University's Strategic Plan, Aberdeen 2040 was undertaken, with Inclusive being at the core of the University's strategic priorities for the next twenty years.	Feb 2019 – Feb 2020
Schools have created local EDICs to drive EDI initiatives within academic units	September 2020
New online mandatory EDI and race bias training has been procured and launched with a range of other online trainings available on EDI	January 2021
Anti-racist training, with provider identified through a competitive tender process, delivered virtually to 360 staff, SMT and UMG	January 2021 – March 2021
Accessibility and Inclusion Policy in Education and guidance being developed	Ongoing
Accessibility Checklist for teaching staff developed and launched	August 2020
Blended Learning and Remote Working EQIA developed and shared with staff to highlight issues raised by the Covid-19 pandemic	March 2020/ongoing
REF work guided by EDI Code of Practice	Ongoing
Transgender Equality Policy approved	January 2020
Digital Accessibility Working Group developed and shared documents and training for staff to uphold highest standards of digital accessibility	November 2020/ongoing
FAQs created for staff and students on the provision of reasonable adjustments in the light of the pandemic	April 2020

Outcome 2

Staff will have greater understanding of their responsibilities in Equality and Diversity and apply this in their practice to positively advance equality;

Progress	Date
Nominated School staff received Unconscious Bias training and Professional Services staff were offered training within Inclusion Week 2019	April 2019 – December 2019
Staff involved in recruitment and selection are required to complete specific equality training	ongoing
Staff survey indicates a significantly increased level of awareness in relation to equality matters and policies	November 2020
Training on GBV delivered in partnership with Rape Crisis - 19 staff members trained to date	January 2020/ongoing
Suicide Prevention training rolled out – 20 members of staff trained to date	April 2019/ongoing
University Management Group (UMG), Senate and Court received presentations from the Senior Race Equality Champions on the anti-racist listening activities to raise awareness of the scale of systemic racism in the HE sector with resources provided for self-education and reflection	February 2021 – March 2021



The Diversity section of the 2-Day New Lecturers Programme has been revised to include case studies and practical guidance for new members of staff and moved to a virtual format during the pandemic	Ongoing
Stammerers through University Consultancy workshop delivered to 25 staff and students	17 February 2021

Outcome 3

The University will be an inclusive community where staff and students are able to fulfil their full potential in their work or studies;

Progress	Date
Employee Assistance Programme has been introduced to support staff on 24 hour/7 days a week basis with telephone counselling	Implemented 2017 and ongoing
Schools continuing to nominate and support colleagues to attend the AHE Aurora Leadership programme	ongoing
Diversity Calendar developed and launched to raise awareness of equality dates and events so that we can aim to be as inclusive as possible when organising University events/communications https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/2019%20Diversity%20Calendar.pdf	Launched January 2019 and updated annually
British Sign language Action Plan developed and implemented following extensive consultation both within and external to the University and first report to Deaf Action submitted to contribute to Scottish Government reporting requirements	August 2020
Staff Wellbeing Coordinator service updated to Workplace Dignity Network	2019
Most successful International Women's Day conference to date held	March 2020
Significant work has been undertaken to improve the support available to staff and students who have experienced gender-based violence and to implement the Equally Safe in HE Toolkit	Commenced work in Jan 2018 and ongoing
The University is part of a European Universities Network which was generated through a desire to put tolerance and inclusiveness at the heart of all of the 9 institutions in the network. This has resulted in positive connections and a sharing of ideas. The University provided a presentation to the conference on approaches to gender equality.	Joined 2016 with biannual meetings. Presentation delivered May 2019
Induction Fayre introduced which incorporates information about the equality networks	2017 and ongoing
First University Silver Departmental Athena Swan award achieved	November 2020
Research Culture Working Group established to review the report published by the Wellcome Trust which details the experiences of researchers and their challenges particularly related to inclusion, trust and security. The Group has provided a presentation on its work to EDIC and will continue to do so, consulting with the Committee on recommendations in relation to Inclusion in the research environment.	2020 and ongoing
Working Group established to review the report of the Higher Education Commission: <i>Arriving at Thriving: learning from the experiences of disabled students</i> , with a remit to ascertain the University's progress against the recommendations	December 2020

Outcome 4

The diversity of the University community will be celebrated and recognised so that all staff and students feel respected and valued;

Progress	Date
Varied and extensive Black History Month programme delivered successfully virtually with over 400 attendees enjoying events across the month	October 2020
The University's equality networks have become integral to decision-making.	ongoing
New equality network groups have been created – Race Equality Network and Women's Development Network and Parents and Carers Network expanded to include carers. All equality networks have been expanding in terms of memberships and issues covered.	2020



University is a Disability Confident Committed Employer highlighting the University's commitment to disability equality	Awarded 2017 and planning enhancement of award
EDI Events and Engagement Group established to achieve a planned approach to the dates highlighted in the Diversity Calendar. Funding secured from the Development Trust.	December 2020
Disability History Month celebrated with profiles on staff e-zine, podcasts and ASK sessions for students	November/December 2020
LGBT History Month celebrated with A-Z of LGBT sessions, podcasts internal and external speakers, launch of LGBT resources	February 2020 and February 2021

7.3 EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2021 – 2025

The University has fully reviewed its Equality Outcomes which covered 2017 – 2021 and has agreed new Equality Outcomes in consultation with EDIC (which comprises Staff Equality Networks, student representatives and AUSA) and the student equality forums. External groups such as Aberdeen's Ethnic Minority Forum, NHS Grampian and Grampian Regional Equality Council have also been consulted. The new Outcomes and the rationale for them are noted in Table 8 below, however, overall, EDIC agreed that the previous Outcomes could be reviewed to reflect more closely the key, most pressing and significant priorities and inequalities identified through an evidence-based approach. The previous Outcomes have been useful in addressing overarching EDI concerns and it was agreed that a more targeted and refined approach should be adopted for the period 2021 – 2025. This would support awareness-raising of the key challenges and priorities across the University and would provide a clearer set of objectives which could be measured effectively. The new Outcomes also align strongly with Aberdeen 2040 (our strategic plan, developed and approved through an inclusive consultation exercise) and other documents such as the Student Partnership Agreement, which includes a specific section on Accessibility and Inclusion, detailing KPIs on: disability accessibility, race equality, digital accessibility/poverty and mental health and wellbeing. This alignment points to a coherent and robust approach to EDI which will facilitate engagement and positive impacts for staff and students.

Table 8: University Equality Outcomes 2021-25

Outcome	Rationale	Equality Act 2010 General Duty Needs Addressed	Relevant Protected Characteristics	Success Measure
Outcome 1 Achieve the highest recognition in equality and diversity through achievement of awards in accreditation initiatives such as Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index	The University has been able to lead EDI initiatives and gain buy-in across Schools through striving for accreditations. By participating in such schemes, the University is better able, within a framework, to take an evidence-based approach using quantitative and qualitative data and make changes which will impact on the outcomes of groups in the University.	Eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation through robust qualitative and quantitative analysis which leads to evidence-based actions Advances equality of opportunity through the achievement of actions in SMART action plans related to each accreditation initiative and which span the staff and student journeys and address barriers identified at each stage	This Outcome specifically covers gender, race and sexual orientation currently, but intersectional aspects are considered within this too e.g. race and gender, race and religion, sexual orientation and gender	The University achieves the awards it seeks and builds on these by achieving increasing levels e.g. Bronze, Silver and Gold awards Cultural shifts in awareness of EDI issues is indicated through surveys and data collection and analysis required by the accreditation initiatives



<p>Outcome 2 Tackle mental health stigma to improve outcomes and experiences for staff and students who have mental ill health</p>	<p>The University has made significant progress in implementing its Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Increased resources have been allocated to this area and dedicated staff have driven an extensive programme of work. As such a key area of work, this Outcome demonstrates the University's ongoing commitment.</p>	<p>Eliminates discrimination through raising awareness of mental ill health and how and when discrimination can occur</p> <p>Advances equality of opportunity by ensuring that individuals with mental ill health or mental health conditions are supported to reach their full potential</p>	<p>This Outcome relates mainly to disability, but intersectional approaches are considered within this too. For example, the University recognises the links between race/ethnicity and mental ill health and the links between LGBT+ and mental ill health. In addition, bullying, harassment and discrimination can impact the mental health of an individual as can the reliving of trauma in relation to this</p>	<p>Staff and student survey results indicate that mental health is supported in the University</p> <p>Feedback from Mental Health Champions and Mental Health First Aiders indicates that stigma is reducing and that more open conversations on mental health are taking place</p>
<p>Outcome 3 Eliminate barriers which may present due to multiple intersectional protected characteristic identities</p>	<p>Approaches which recognise intersectional identities are necessary to further understand and raise awareness of the impact of these on the outcomes for specific groups of staff and students</p>	<p>Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by recognising the additional barriers faced in some circumstances through intersectional identities</p> <p>Fosters good relations between people from different groups by raising awareness of the common challenges faced by people identifying with protected characteristics</p>	<p>This Outcome covers all protected characteristics</p>	<p>The EDI Events and Engagement Group activities and the feedback from those indicate that intersectional identities are being addressed and profiled</p> <p>EDIC engages in the concept of intersectionality and addresses this as an integrated aspect of its work</p>
<p>Outcome 4 Create an antiracist university by tackling racial harassment and fully embedding the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report</p>	<p>Tackling racial harassment is a key priority for the University. It wholeheartedly accepts the findings of the EHRC and UUK reports which point to systemic racism in UK universities and is putting in place a range of actions to address this</p>	<p>Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by encouraging proactive action to address systemic racism and to challenge racism and microaggressions when they occur</p>	<p>This Outcome relates to race.</p>	<p>Tackling Racial Harassment Action Plan actions are achieved</p> <p>Staff and student race surveys indicate that annual progress is being made</p>



<p><i>Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged (2019) and the Universities UK report Tackling Racial Harassment in HE (2020)</i></p>		<p>Advances equality of opportunity by promoting understanding of antiracism, racism and its impact, and requiring a 'whole university' approach to ensure Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students can reach their full potential</p> <p>Fosters good relations between people from different groups by raising awareness of the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students, encouraging active allyship, supporting staff and students to share experiences and creating a self-learning culture which promotes understanding of different perspectives</p>		<p>Online reporting tool provides insights into prevalence of racial harassment and appropriate action is taken to address issues raised</p> <p>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students report increased levels of a sense of belonging, measured through staff and students' surveys, feedback from Race Equality network and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Forum</p>
<p>Outcome 5 Create a culture where gender-based violence is eradicated within the University community and staff or students who do experience this can seek effective support</p>	<p>Significant progress has been made in tackling gender-based violence and this continues to be a priority for the University. Close liaison with the Drouet family has ensured that the University is able to understand and implement initiatives which will make an impact for staff and students.</p>	<p>Eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation by ensuring robust policies and procedures are implemented to demonstrate the University's commitment and to provide effective routes for raising instances of gender-based violence</p>	<p>This Outcome relates to gender equality.</p>	<p>Online reporting tool is successful in measuring prevalence of gender-based violence and appropriate actions are taken in response to that</p> <p>Staff and student surveys indicate that support received in relation to gender-based violence is appropriate</p>
<p>Outcome 6 Eliminate barriers to learning, progression, promotion and physical accessibility for disabled staff and students by taking actions to continuously</p>	<p>The University has a regular process for supporting staff and students who require reasonable adjustments and for reviewing the accessibility of the campus. Recently the University has been working with the Disabled Students Forum and the</p>	<p>Eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation by addressing the barriers faced by disabled staff and students and therefore eliminating discrimination on the grounds of disability</p>	<p>This Outcome relates to disability equality.</p>	<p>Staff and student surveys indicate positive experiences for disabled people</p> <p>Feedback from the Disabled Students Forum and the Staff Disability Network is positive in relation</p>



<p>improve the working and learning environments for disabled staff and students</p>	<p>Staff Disability Network on a range of accessibility issues and it is critical that these are a key focus for the University. The University's specialist Disability Team is responsible for coordinating the study-related support for disabled students and is currently undertaking a review of its procedures and practices with the aim of improving the support provided to students.</p>	<p>Advances equality of opportunity by understanding and addressing the barriers faced by disabled staff and students and by making the campus, teaching and working environments more accessible opportunities for disabled people are enhanced. Fosters good relations between people from different groups through raising awareness of the lived experiences of disabled staff and students and highlighting how their experiences can be improved through organisational and individual change</p>		<p>to work and study experiences and opportunities</p>
<p>Outcome 7 Reduce the level of discrimination reported in the staff survey from 11% to 5% in 2022</p>	<p>Although the Staff Survey 2020 was overall positive and showed significant cultural shifts since the previous survey in 2018, one area of concern was that 11% of staff reported being discriminated against. Although this is in line with the sector benchmark, the University is committed to reducing this figure.</p>	<p>Eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation by analysing the data collated from the staff survey and using it effectively to identify the specific areas where discrimination was reported and implementing appropriate targeted actions to address this</p>	<p>This Outcome relates to all the protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Staff survey results in 2022 show a reduced level of reported discrimination</p>

7.4 An action plan detailing how these Outcomes will be met is in Appendix 1 and the 2023 report will provide an update on progress.