

Board of Governors

Meeting of 10 November 2015

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Presenter: Marion Lowe (University Secretary and Clerk to the Board) Board of Governors

Annual Report on Equality & Diversity

1 Summary

1.1 There is a statutory requirement to provide an annual update to the Board of Governors on equality and diversity. This report provides an update on equality and compliance for the academic year 2014-2015.

2 Recommendation

2.1 The Board of Governors is invited to **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** this Report.

3 Contents of the report

3.1 Overview of Equality & Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) activities during the academic year 2014-2015.

3.2 Update on the Equality and Diversity Objectives for 2014-2015.

3.3 Summary of the Annual Monitoring 2014-2015.

4 Overview of EDAG's Activities

4.1 Below is a brief summary of matters considered and progressed within the academic year 2014-2015.

4.2 Monitoring of the Protected Characteristics

4.2.1 EDAG continues to monitor staff and student diversity data. The challenge of collecting staff and student diversity data and addressing staff and student concerns in relation to anonymity of data were discussed. This would be addressed in future staff surveys by inclusion of an explanatory narrative setting out data protection requirements and the benefit to employees of supplying a full range of data when the 2015 data survey is issued.

4.2.2 Staff Diversity Data

EDAG approved the proposal that the University should hold more equality and diversity awareness events to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues and encourage staff to disclose protected characteristics data. EDAG also considered the practical implementation of Equality Champions in Schools with the object of encouraging and raising equality and diversity issues within the schools.

4.2.3 Student Diversity Data

EDAG considered the option of collecting student diversity data at enrolment in encrypted form to assure anonymity to address the challenges of collecting student diversity data for HESA purposes. Registry Services will investigate the practicability of this proposal and provide an updated.

4.3 SuperReading Course for SpLD Students

4.3.1 A SuperReading Course was introduced which is aimed at Students who have been diagnosed with and have disclosed a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia to help improve their reading ability and comprehension. This two month course is designed to increase student reading effectiveness, comprehension and accuracy.

4.3.2 Due to the success of the SuperReading Course, EDAG discussed the option of expanding the course to Further Education Students subject to availability of funding. This will to be explored with the Heads of Schools.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Training for Academic Staff

4.4.1 Equality and diversity training for staff has been implemented in the past academic year. Training events will continue to run and will be scheduled at a suitable time to encourage and increase attendance.

4.4.2 EDAG also commissioned a formal report on equality and diversity training for staff.

4.5 EDAG Terms of Reference

4.5.1 The Terms of Reference have been reviewed and updated in order to ensure that its activities are focussed on the Equality Duty and the measurement of the University's achievement of its objectives. The revised terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.

4.6 University Mental Health Policy and Procedure

4.6.1 EDAG reviewed and supported the Mental Health Policy which sets out the procedure for support of students with mental health difficulties. The Policy will enable staff to distinguish poor behaviour from mental health issues by providing guidance on the different types of behaviour associated with mental health issues and the procedures to adopt in line with the Counselling Policy. This will be included in the 'cause for concern' procedure which is currently being developed.

4.6.2 EDAG made two recommendations, firstly for the critical incidence guidance to be detailed in a separate stand-alone document and secondly, for the introduction of trained Mental Health First Aiders to deal with critical emergency mental health instances.

4.7 Equality & Diversity Policy

4.7.1 The revised and updated Equality and Diversity Policy was received and noted by EDAG.

4.8 Update on Equality and Diversity Objectives

- 4.8.1 The University continues to implement its Equality Objectives which are “to raise awareness of equality and diversity considerations across the University community” and “to raise awareness of the needs of cared for students”. It will review these objectives in 2015/16.

5. Equality & Diversity Monitoring for 2014-2015

5.1 Diversity among the governing body

- 5.1.1 HEFCE annually require equality and diversity monitoring data for the governing body. The University commenced action to address the imbalance of female and ethnic minority on the governing body in 2011-2012. Since that time, the University has successfully appointed four new governors on merit after a rigorous process, three of whom were women and one from ethnic minority group. The Chair of the Board and the University Secretary are exploring ways of promoting the forthcoming vacancies to try to attract more female candidates in particular.

5.2 Diversity among the senior staff

- 5.2.1 The University’s senior team (including the Vice Chancellor’s Executive, Heads of School, and Heads of Central Services) has a good balance of male and female members. The age profile of the senior management team is diverse with a range between 35-64 years.
- 5.2.2 The University employs a significantly higher proportion of women (47%) in the top earning group (top 5% of earners) in comparison with the sector average at 32% (based on the DLA Piper Workforce Performance Indicators 2014).

5.3 Staff disability disclosure and representation

- 5.3.1 The University’s main challenge is to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process and ensure that staff with disabilities are supported in their day to day working life.
- 5.3.2 The University’s application form provides the opportunity for monitoring protected characteristics during the recruitment process and encourages candidates to inform the University of any disabilities and specific adjustments required. The University also operates a ‘guaranteed interview scheme’ for applicants with disabilities.
- 5.3.3 The University has guidance in place on appraisal training in respect of disability and on retention of disabled staff which is supported by various policies on equality and diversity and sickness management.

5.4 Student Attainment between equality groups

- 5.4.1 Student attainment of good degrees (1st and 2.1s) at the University was consistent across gender and age with equal proportions of males and females achieving good degrees.
- 5.4.2 There is an attainment gap for BME students at the University like the sector as a whole. Addressing this gap remains a high priority of the University’s equality strategy.
- 5.4.3 The University’s student support and mentoring scheme has almost doubled in size from 156 drop-in users and 67 mentor pairings in 2012-2013 to 334 drop-in users and 115 mentor pairings in 2014-2015.
- 5.4.4 Under this mentoring scheme students have access to a mentor who is able to provide direct support and refer students to key University services. The scheme enables mentees to improve academically and provides assurance and helps in building student confidence.

5.5 Student Participation

5.5.1 The University has a successful track record of addressing participation gaps between equality groups. Since 2011 student participation has increased in the following equality groups:

- Female students from 60.4% in 2011-2012 to 62.7% in 2014-2015
- Black and minority ethnic students from 54.1% in 2011-2012 to 56.7% in 2014-2015
- Students with a disability from 7.1% in 2011-2012 to 8.7% in 2014-15

5.5.2 The University has increased its proportion young UG FT entrants from State Schools or Colleges from 96% in 2013-14 to 98% in 2014-15. Of the UG FT entrants 50% were from social classes 4 to 7 in 2014-2015 which has increased by 8% from 2012-2013. Both measures are significantly above the sector average. In 2014-2015, 59% of new UG FT entrants came from households with incomes of £25,000 or less.

5.5.3 The University remains committed to improving its widening participation at all levels and will continue to develop strategies to engage further with under-represented groups in Higher Education.

6 General

6.1 The University became a member of Stonewall in 2014.

6.2 The University has been re-accredited with the 'two-ticks' positive about disability award, for employers who have made a commitment to employ, retain and develop the abilities of disabled staff.

6.3 The University has rolled out an e-learning module for all staff setting out Diversity in the Workplace which covers, equalities legislation; broad equality and diversity issues; rights and responsibilities as a member of staff; and negative effects of discrimination. It is intended that this will be compulsory.

7 Conclusion

7.1 EDAG will continue to progress equality issues and ensure the implementation of the support measures to accomplish the University's Equality Objectives.

October 2015