UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVESITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2022 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair) Professor A Hughes (Co-Chair) C Benyon H Boahen Z Butt Professor P Catterall J Fenton D Hirani	Dr D Husbands Dr K Juddoo Professor M Kirkup M F Larsen E Mureddu A Norris S Razzaq Dr C Robertson J Smith
IN ATTENDANCE:	J Lamarque (Observer) Professor A Linn (Minute 2.4)	T Patki (Minute Taker) M Wigg
APOLOGIES:	D Barratt O Burchiellaro D de Silva H Doon	C Hendricks M Linfoot C Lloyd E McMillan (Secretary)

22.1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

22.1.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chairs welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

22.1.2. **Apologies:** Apologies were noted as above. The Co-Chairs welcomed Emma Mureddu, Faith Network representative, at her first EDI Committee meeting. Members noted that Michael Wigg was attending on behalf of the Students' Union.

22.1.3. **Declaration of Interest:** The Co-Chairs confirmed that there were no interests to declare.

22.1.4. **Requests to discuss starred items and notification of AOB:** The Co-Chairs confirmed that there were no requests to discuss starred items or items of business not on the agenda.

22.2. CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

22.2.1. **The members were updated on recent activities and progress made since the last meeting.**

22.2.2. The Co-Chairs' updates included reference to the end of year report on the first successful year of the QHT funded Community and Communities EDI programme. The end of year report covers work led by the Students' Union and by the University. Activities including EDI forums, colleague conferences and Black History related events, and funds are available to do more in the coming two years.

22.2.3. Members were informed that Head of Learning and Development, Professor Anand and the PVC for People and Culture attended the Executive and Operational Leadership Forum (EOLF) in order to present on EDI matters. This was very successful, with a focus on culture change and diversity and representation. Future actions were identified. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for People and Culture emphasised the significance of EOLF as a decision making body.

22.2.4.   The Co-Chairs turned to the topic of the Westminster Conversations EDI series, thanked members for contributions to date, and invited members to be involved as organisers in upcoming events. Members were prompted to identify and discuss new themes and it was noted that a range of activities have already been planned for this year. New themes were addressed in the discussion.

- The Co-Chairs invited members to suggest events for the series specifically related to disability.

- Members were invited to contact Zahrah Surooprajally, EDI programme co-ordinator, about Women of Westminster events and budgets for events.

22.3.   EDI STRATEGY UPDATE AND EDI ACTION PLANS 2021/22 and 2022/23

22.3.1.   Members received the annotated 2021/22 EDI action plan (Document EDI 220928A). The Co-Chairs thanked the Head of Culture and Inclusion for capturing work by colleagues across the University and noted that some tasks had been carried forward.

22.3.2.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion presented the EDI action plan 2022/23 (Document EDI 220928B). Members were informed that there will be two updates during the year to check on progress against the plan.

22.3.3.   Members' comments and suggestions on the report referred to:

- The value of replacing the phrase 'hard to reach' with 'seldom heard' in the final block of text on page 20

- The intention to build further on the extensive colleague development work

- Known issues with lifts and accessibility problems in Regent Street and elsewhere; colleagues should be informed which buildings are accessible and which ones are not

- The need for gender neutral and accessible toilets and to improve the condition of available toilets

- The need for information boards around the estate to clearly signpost any EDI related work carried out

22.3.3.1.   **ACTION** Head of Culture and Inclusion to amend the plan's terminology as discussed.

22.3.3.2.   **ACTION** Members to email the Co-Chairs on accessibility and related issues related to EDI so they can take it up with estates.

22.3.4.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion informed members that he will be meeting with the Director of Estates, Planning and Services to discuss key issues in relation to the estate's long term investment.

22.3.5.   A Co-Chair noted that physical accessibility had been added to the digital accessibility area of the plan. There were no estates related matters in last year's EDI plan.

22.3.6.   In response to a member's query, the Head of Learning and Development confirmed that exit interviews are being explored.

22.3.6.1.   **ACTION** Co-Chairs to remind the Executive Operational Leadership Forum about the EDI Checklists and their use.

22.4.   EDI RESOURCING FOR THE YEAR 2022

22.4.1.   Members were informed that the Head of Student Support and Residential Life and her team are working on a proposal to create two roles to support student mental health and well-being, using the Ofs Mental Health Transitions funding to significantly improve services currently on offer.

22.4.2.   Members heard that there is ongoing funding from the HR budget for the Colleague EDI Networks. The funding is currently £2000 per network, and there is additional funding for Black History Year.

22.4.2.1.   **ACTION** The Head of Culture and Inclusion and the Head of Learning and Development to reflect on EDI related aspects of employee retention and on the provision of exit interviews.

22.4.3.   Members heard that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer has now been appointed and is working with EDI school leads to collate priorities for the next year and support Colleague Network Co-Chairs.

22.4.3.1.   **ACTION** The Head of Learning and Development and the EDI Officer to set up a meeting with the Women of Westminster (WoW) Network Co-Chairs to discuss resourcing support.

22.4.4.   A member mentioned that 10 October 2022 is Mental Health Day and suggested that it is essential to promote the importance of Mental Health, in the University and in the Teaching and Excellence Framework submission.

22.4.4.1.   **ACTION** The Head of Culture and Inclusion to look at ways to promote Mental Health Awareness Day on 10 October 2022 and to link it to well-being.

22.4.5.   Members were informed that the Head of Student Support and Residential Life was leading in this area on programmes aimed at students, and it was suggested that joint student and colleague events could take place.

22.4.6.   A member pointed out the need to improve the visibility of EDI on the website. It was suggested that the EDI content on the website should be more accessible from the main page of the website.

22.4.6.1.   **ACTION** The EDI Officer to discuss making EDI content more prominent on the University website at the next EDI Communications meeting.

22.4.7.   Members discussed administrative support for bigger EDI events and were advised to contact the Events Manager & the QHT funded EDI Programme Co-ordinator. Members were also informed that it is possible to hire student interns for events to help with administration support.

22.5.   KEY ISSUES IN EDI – DIVERSITY AND THE WORKFORCE (Confidential)

22.5.1.   The PVC for People and Culture informed members about different actions being taken or proposed in relation to workforce diversity and EDI more generally. It was noted that that the focus was on action as opposed to discussions.

22.5.2.   **[REDACTED]**

            [REDACTED]

22.5.3.   The PVC for People and Culture informed members that as the current Professional Development Review (PDR) form has no questions directly relating to EDI, it is proposed to add questions which will encourage colleagues to express their feelings about how they have felt included, supported and valued and will provide an opportunity for colleagues to reflect on the previous PDR.

22.5.4.   Members' responses on the proposal mentioned the following:
- The need to ascertain who is responsible for checking the PDR form is completed and followed up successfully
- The fact that some colleagues may be reporting to more than one line manager, which may in turn entail workload allocation issues
- Line managers should be provided with training to help them engage successfully with the new review process, given its relevance to culture change
- The review process may be negatively affected if the colleague does not have a positive professional relationship with their line manager
- The proposal will be subject to ongoing conversations with EOLF
- The process may entail some risk if the focus is disproportionately on the feelings of the employee

22.5.5.   The PVC for People and Culture noted that in some cases it does not have to be the line manager who does the PDR interview.

22.5.6.   Members were asked to email comments on the wording of the revised PDR form directly to the PVC for People and Culture.

22.5.1.   Members were invited to comment on the proposal that an Executive Shadow Board might be created. It was proposed that the shadow board would have the same number of members as the University Executive Board and that its members would be drawn from diverse groups across the University, providing a unique opportunity for leadership and management development.

22.5.2.   Members were invited to send comments and suggestions on Shadow Board proposal directly to the PVC of People and Culture.

22.5.2.1.   **ACTION** The PVC for People and Culture and the Head of Learning and Development to circulate slides and questions to the members for consideration.

22.6.   KEY ISSUES IN EDI - RESEARCH

22.6.1.   The PVC for Research presented an update on how EDI is integrated into research strategy, policies, and practice.

22.6.2.   The PVC for Research reported on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 and members heard that the University was placed 52/129 for Impact. Impact case studies were strong, with a focus on access to professions and improving opportunities.

22.6.3.   The members were informed that as a result of the REF score, the allocation of research grant income has gone up from £4.4 million to £6.5 million. Members also heard that the REF sub-committee, including the EDI group, has been reconvened with Miriam Dwek (College Director – Research and Knowledge Exchange) as Chair and Fiona Ross, independent governor, as a member.

22.6.4.   The PVC for Research informed members about the £3,776,384 income received by the University in the form on 47 new research awards. A wide range of EDI topics were notable in the projects receiving awards.

22.6.5.   Members were also reminded that the Researcher Development programme was available to colleagues, with a range of options on offer.

22.6.6. In response to a member's query about representation in research from the BAME community and about related work, the PVC for Research confirmed that representation is broadly in line with the demographic make up of the University.

22.7.   MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

22.7.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the EDI Committee meeting of 27 July 2022 (Document EDI 220928C) as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

22.7.2. Members noted that the action log (Document EDI 220928D) needed further updating.

22.8.   SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2022-23

22.8.1. Members noted the updated EDI Schedule of Business (Document EDI 220928E)

22.9.   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

30 November 2022 via Microsoft Teams
15 February 2023 via Microsoft Teams
26 April 2023 via Microsoft Teams
14 June 2023 via Microsoft Teams
26 July 2023 VC's Boardroom (RS109) and via Microsoft Teams

22.10.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22.10.1. No other business was discussed