UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER⌗

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair)	M F Larsen
	Professor A Hughes (Co-Chair)	C Lloyd
	T Bangia	T Mills
	H Boahen	E Mureddu
	Professor P Catterall	A Norris
	Dr D Husbands	S Razzaq
	Dr K Juddoo	Dr C Robertson
	Professor M Kirkup	J Smith
IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Observer)	E McMillan (Minutes)
APOLOGIES:	C Ata (attendee)	D Hirani
	D de Silva	M Linfoot
	H Doon	C Molloy
	J Fenton	T Patki (Secretary)
	C Hendricks	
ABSENT:	C Benyon	

22.50. ANNOUNCEMENTS

22.50.1. Co-Chair, Professor Alex Hughes, welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and confirmed that she would be the Chair for most items on the agenda.

22.50.2. The Co-Chair welcomed Mandy Chan who was observing the meeting in preparation for taking on the role of EDI Committee Secretary from September 2023.

22.50.3. Members noted apologies and absences as recorded above.

22.50.4. The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

22.50.5. The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no requests to discuss the starred items or to raise matters not on the agenda.

22.51. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

22.51.1. The Co-Chairs provided an update on recent activities and progress made since the last meeting:

- 1-2-1 meetings held with most members, with the remaining 1-2-1 meetings scheduled for early August 2023.
- Queering academia conference attended by approximately 90 participants, including many students.
- Black History Create programme and celebration.
- Co-Chair, Professor Dibyesh Anand, has been appointed to the EDI Expert Advisory Group for Research England for a three-year term of office.
- Presentation to the Court of Governors on progress against the EDI Strategy and the EDI strategic key performance indicators (KPIs).

22.51.2. Co-Chair, Professor Hughes, congratulated Professor Anand on his appointment to the Advisory Group and noted that the appointment provides an opportunity to make an impact on a very important area relevant to this Committee.

22.52.   GOVERNANCE MATTERS

22.52.1.   The Co-Chair presented the EDI Committee terms of reference 2023/24 (Document EDI 230723A), which had been reviewed at a previous meeting.

22.52.2.   Members noted proposed updates to the terms of reference, which recognise the new name for the department and Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing.

22.52.3.   In response to a member's query about whether members could invite colleagues to shadow them in their work as a member of the Committee, the Co-Chairs expressed concerns that Committee meetings would become too large and unmanageable.

22.52.3.1.   **ACTION Co-Chair Professor Anand and the Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance** to discuss the suggestion further outside the meeting.

22.52.4.   **AGREED** Amended EDI Committee terms of reference 2023/24 to be submitted to the University Executive Board (UEB) for approval.

22.52.5.   The Co-Chair presented the timeline for the annual EDI Committee effectiveness review (Document EDI 230726B).

22.52.6.   Members noted that this year the review will contribute to a wider review of the effectiveness of UEB and its sub-committees, which will also include a review of the scope, terms of reference and relationships between the committees responsible for EDI, wellbeing and the Sustainable Development Goals.

22.52.7.   Members noted a correction to the timeline – the deadline for submitting responses to the online survey is 11 August 2023 not 2022.

22.52.8.   The Co-Chair presented the proposed EDI Committee standing orders 2023-26 (Document EDI 230726C).

22.52.9.   In response to a member's query, the Co-Chair confirmed that any changes to the current role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (People and Culture) would be reflected in the standing orders.

22.52.10.   **APPROVED** Updated standing orders to be implemented with effect from 1 September 2023.

22.53.   EDI AND SENIOR PROMOTIONS

22.53.1.   Members received the annual report on senior appointments and promotions (Document EDI 230726D).

22.53.2.   A member requested clarification about the basis for the comment in the report that there is currently no evidence to suggest that internal promotion is more likely to result in a diverse appointment. A member commented that if the basis for the comment is that the University does not collect the evidence then this should be addressed.

22.53.2.1.   **ACTION Clerk to the Court of Governors** to refer the query to the Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing and the Senior HR Adviser (Resourcing and Reward).

22.53.3.   A member queried what action the Committee could take to encourage inclusion of those with responsibility for EDI in the selection panels for senior positions[1].

22.53.3.1.   **ACTION Co-Chair, Professor Anand**, to discuss with the Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing how to achieve more consistent involvement of a School EDI Lead or a member of the EDI Committee in senior appointments.

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[1] A member proposed that senior positions be defined as Assistant Heads of Schools and roles senior to that

22.53.4.   A member queried whether it would be possible to record and report on diversity in terms of social background for those in senior positions.

22.53.4.1.   **ACTION Co-Chair, Professor Anand**, to discuss the suggestion with the Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing.

22.53.5.   In response to a member's comment, the Co-Chairs proposed that the Committee discusses methods to encourage greater diversity in applicants for senior positions. The Co-Chair reported that selection panels brief executive search agencies on the need for a diverse shortlist and that this is also being addressed through the work of the Organisational Development (OD) team.

22.53.5.1.   **ACTION EDI Officer** to add a discussion on this topic to the schedule of business 2023/24.

22.53.6.   Members discussed encouraging those in senior positions to disclose relevant characteristics as an example to other colleagues. The Head of Culture and Inclusion confirmed that communications will continue to encourage those in senior positions and other colleagues to update EDI information in the Human Resources online record.

22.54.   DISABILITY DISCLOSURE PROCESS

22.54.1.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion presented the recommended actions from the Colleague Disability Disclosure review (Document EDI 230726E).

22.54.2.   Co-Chair of the Colleague Disability Network, Claire Richardson, informed members that the process must be auditable with reliable baseline statistics and measurable improvements over time. The Network Co-Chair noted that the desired approach is one of empowerment.

22.54.3.   A member commented that representation of other characteristics and intersectionality should be factors when establishing the membership of the proposed Disability Disclosure Task Group. Another member noted that representation of colleagues of different role grades is also important.

22.54.4.   A member noted that it is important to establish the Task Group urgently so that the process can be implemented in time for the next year.

22.54.5.   In response to a member's query about any changes to the reasonable adjustments process, the Network Co-Chair explained that the current priority is delivering training and guidance for managers to support consistent application of the process.

22.54.6.   **AGREED** Recommend actions to be implemented with immediate effect.

22.54.6.1.   **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion and EDI Officer** to add the actions to the EDI action plan 2023/24.

22.55.   ACTION PLANNING FOR EDI 2022/23 AND 2023/24

22.55.1.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion informed members that the EDI Officer has received all updates from Action Owners on progress against the actions in the 2022/23 EDI action plan and the responses are being reviewed.

22.55.2.   Members heard that the Head of Culture and the EDI Officer will meet with the Committee Co-Chairs to review the draft 2023/24 EDI action plan, which will be submitted to the next meeting.

22.55.3.   The Co-Chair reminded members that the EDI strategic KPIs feature in strategic workstream charters and the 2023/24 EDI action plan will state clearly where actions contribute to those strategic KPIs.

22.55.4. A member commented that the Committee should identify why the University was behind the benchmark university in the Sutton Trust report and identify actions accordingly, ensuring that both colleagues and students are the focus of activities.

22.55.5. A member suggested that the University could invite other universities – some that are performing well and others who are not performing as well – to identify what works and what doesn't and share that practice with each other.

22.55.6. A member commented on inconsistencies in management support for colleagues with responsibilities to deliver Quintin Hogg Trust funded projects, which contribute to achievement of the EDI strategic KPIs.

22.55.6.1. **ACTION Co-Chair, Professor Anand**, to remind members of the Executive and Operational Leadership Forum before start of next term that line managers should be flexible around EDI-related work.

22.55.7. In response to a member's comment, the Colleague Disability Network Co-Chair confirmed that the Network is aware of the difference in services available for colleagues and students with disabilities and is working with the OD team to improve training for managers on the issue.

22.55.8. Members discussed interaction between the Workload Allocation Model and reasonable adjustments and confirming hours for EDI work through the professional duties and scholarship allocation in the Model.

22.56. EDI AND WELLBEING

22.56.1. The Head of Culture and Inclusion briefed members on findings of the colleague wellbeing survey, which have been reported to UEB, the Resources Committee and the Court of Governors and will be communicated to colleagues through the Westminster Weekly newsletter.

22.56.1.1. **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion** to send the findings report to members.

22.56.1.2. **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion and EDI Officer** to show in the 2023/24 EDI Action Plan which actions relate to the survey findings.

22.56.2. Members discussed the findings and comments included:

- Clear line management responsibility and accountability is important.
- Remote working can have a positive and negative impact from the perspective of EDI and reasonable adjustments.
- Management training should be prioritised for those areas where colleagues are reporting more negative experiences of wellbeing.
- Reductions in contractual hours as a reasonable adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic continuing post-pandemic.
- Wellbeing guidance to include protocols on not responding to emails during periods of annual leave and on managing expectations for responses to student queries.

22.56.3. In response to members' queries, the Head of Culture and Inclusion confirmed that he is reviewing the free text comments from the survey and that EDI-related actions to address the findings will be included in the 2023/24 EDI action plan and reported to this Committee and other matters will be addressed through the People Strategy implementation plan.

22.56.3.1. **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion and EDI Officer** to add the actions to the EDI action plan 2023/24.

22.56.3.2. **ACTION EDI Officer** to add a report on the EDI actions arising from the survey to the schedule of business 2023/24.

22.56.4.   A member noted that there is potential for colleagues to experience 'survey fatigue' if survey responses are requested too frequently.

22.57.   KEY ISSUES IN EDI: ACCREDITATION

22.57.1.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion presented an update on progress made in 2022/23 for Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Disability Confident accreditations (Document EDI 230726F).

22.57.2.   Members reflected on experience at other institutions and considered that dedicated project management/leadership and administrative support is necessary to progress accreditation applications. The Head of Culture and Inclusion confirmed that project management resources are under discussion.

22.57.3.   Members discussed linking support for Athena SWAN accreditation with the Aurora leadership programme.

22.57.4.   **AGREED** Proceed with applications for Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Disability Confident accreditations, subject to confirmation of dedicated academic project leadership, project management and administrative support.

22.57.4.1.   **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion** to establish the accreditation submission groups when resourcing is confirmed.

22.58.   EDI REPRESENTATION IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

22.58.1.   The Head of Culture and Inclusion confirmed that the Professional Services (PS) Directors supported the proposed approach of appointing three EDI Representatives across Professional Services and that the PS EDI representatives would have working hours allocated to the role.

22.58.2.   Members noted the following feedback from the PS Directors:

- Roles should be open to all grades and the process should encourage colleagues from more junior grades to put themselves forward.
- Roles to be rotated within each cluster.
- Recruitment material will emphasise that all PS EDI Representatives are expected to work on the priorities in the EDI action plan.
- There should be interaction between the PS EDI Representatives, School EDI Leads and Union EDI representatives as well as with students and UWSU.
- The recruitment process should be clear and transparent.
- Line managers should not be able to veto an individual being appointed to the role.

22.58.3.   Members welcomed the proposed approach and progress made to introduce these roles.

22.58.4.   In response to members' queries, the Head of Culture and Inclusion explained that the working hours allocation would be managed by the line manager and the relevant PS Director; the clusters are yet to be decided; and the roles will be introduced from September 2023.

22.58.5.   A member commented that urgent action is required so the roles are in place for the new academic year and that there should be diversity in the group of representatives.

22.59.   MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

22.59.1.   **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 14 June 2023 (Document EDI 230726G) as an accurate record, subject to a correction to the members present.

22.59.1.1.   **ACTION EDI Secretary** to correct the minutes prior to publication.

22.59.2.   Members noted a summary of progress in actions from previous meetings and confirmed the completed actions (Document EDI 230726H).

22.60.   SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2022/23

22.60.1.   Members noted the updated schedule of business 2022/23 (Document EDI 230726I).

22.61.   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

11 October 2023
22 November 2023
31 January 2024
20 March 2024
29 May 2024
24 July 2024

All meetings are held 2pm to 5pm and onsite.

22.62.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22.62.1.   Co-Chair, Professor Hughes, informed members that this would be her last meeting as Co-Chair and thanked members for their support, commitment and insights.

22.62.2.   Members expressed their thanks to and admiration for Professor Hughes and her dedication to progressing the work of the Committee through leadership and action.

22.62.3.   Co-Chair, Professor Anand, thanked Professor Hughes for all she did to establish the Committee and to make it work.