UNIVERSITY OF
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WESTMINSTER

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2026 AT 2PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair) Dr D Husbands (Co-Chair) J Boston S Bunbury D de Silva (Up to Minute 25.35) N Donohue Professor M Dwek D Gururani M Jula Y Kaplan	F Kolyda (From Minute 25.35) P Mashumba A Musani S Owen C Peterson S Sarialtin R Shah Z Surooprajally E Trevisanello Dr N Weingarten
IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Secretary) (Up to Minute 25.39) L Izzard B Lynn	E McMillan (Minute 25.39) C O'Connor (Minute 25.32) K Robinson (Up to Minute 25.35)
APOLOGIES:	C Benyon E Lees	C Molloy Dr C Robertson

25.29. ANNOUNCEMENTS

25.29.1. **Welcome:** Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, in particular

- Dipika Gururani as the UNISON representative, a new nominated member of the Committee.
- Louise Izzard – Widening Access Manager, and Becca Lynn – Widening Access Officer, as observers of this meeting.
- Catherine O'Connor – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Education, for her first meeting of the Committee.

25.29.2. Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand explained the meeting procedure and reminded members to include both Co-Chairs in any emails relating to the Committee.

25.29.3. **Apologies:** Members noted the apologies as recorded above.

25.29.4. **AOB and starred items:** Members did not request discussion of the starred items but raised matters for discussion under Any Other Business (AOB) at the meeting.

25.29.5. The Co-Chairs agreed to discuss those matters raised at AOB (Minute 25.38) and reminded members to notify the Secretary of any AOB items at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure appropriate consideration.

25.29.6. **Declarations of interest:** Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

25.30. ONE MINUTE SILENCE IN MEMORY OF JANET SMITH

25.30.1. The Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of the late Janet Smith, recognising Janet's dedicated contribution to the Committee since its inception.

25.31. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

25.31.1. Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand reported that:

- The EDI annual report (January to July 2025) is now pending official publication.
- The University continues to deliver a strong suite of EDI activities and events under the umbrella of Westminster Programme for Enhancing Inclusion, Belonging, and Sustainable Development;
- There is increased sector engagement around EDI, including his keynote speech on EDI and academic freedom at Advance HE Annual EDI conference.

25.31.1.1. **ACTION EDI Manager** to update members, via the Committee Secretary, on the publication date of the EDI annual report (January to July 2025).

25.31.2. While the recently announced Voluntary Leaver Scheme is not within the Committee's remit, Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand - in his capacity as a University Executive Board member – invited members to contact him directly with any questions.

25.31.3. Co-Chair Deborah Husbands reported on her external activities showcasing the University's growing global profile and impact on EDI work, including:

- engagement with an external psychology association's governance review;
- the University's globally recognised research on museum accessibility, which is funded through the Pioneering UK-US Breakthroughs Award from UK Research and Innovation;
- Black History initiatives;
- and the Vitae award-winning Black History Year Researchers Network's annual conference on 1st July 2026.

25.32. EDI AND EDUCATION, STUDENT SUPPORT AND INCLUSIVITY

25.32.1. The DVC (Education) outlined her vision for EDI and education:

- The Education Strategy is the key driver of the EDI agenda through collective ownership, the need for open and challenging conversations, and the importance of critically examining teaching, assessment and student outcomes to address awarding gaps.
- Key priorities include inclusive curriculum and assessment design that recognises diverse student experiences (including pre-university experiences), strengthening transition and attainment through a more joined-up framework, expanding flexible educational provision beyond traditional degrees to meet diverse learning needs, and actively engaging under-represented student voices.
- Achieving authentic, transformative and personalised education requires a shift towards inclusive practice by design, informed by compassionate curiosity, data-informed reflection, and a willingness to challenge established approaches.

25.32.2. In response to members' queries, the DVC (Education) noted that:

- Sustaining change requires consistent leadership reinforcement, active listening to colleagues and the effective use of data to identify where practice is slipping and where further support is needed.
- Addressing the imbalance between a diverse student body and under-representation in senior academic and leadership roles will take time and shared institutional commitment, including inclusive recruitment and greater visibility of diverse colleagues.
- While not all colleagues are expected to monitor social media, colleagues should follow up student concerns identified online as worrying or inappropriate, even if not fully representative.

25.32.3. Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand thanked the DVC (Education) for sharing her vision and priorities and encouraged members to contact the DVC (Education) directly with any ideas on EDI and education.

UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER

25.32.4. Kristy Robinson – Interim Head of Student Support and Residential Life (SSRL) – updated members on the progress of the University Mental Health Charter application (Document EDI 260422A).

25.32.5. In response to a query, the Interim Head (SSRL) confirmed that the primary risk remains resourcing and capacity, particularly in relation to colleague time, commitment and project requirements.

25.32.6. Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand thanked the Interim Head (SSRL) for leading the application work and invited members to raise any additional comments directly with the Interim Head.

25.33. ATHENA SWAN ACCREDITATION APPLICATION UPDATE

25.33.1. Miriam Dwek – Chair of the Athena Swan Accreditation Self-assessment Team (SAT), and James Boston – EDI Accreditations Project Lead – presented an update on the Athena Swan accreditation application (Document EDI 260422B).

25.33.2. Co-Chair Deborah Husbands noted that the application should give equal prominence to intersectional issues affecting both colleagues and students and should explicitly acknowledge the contribution of the 'critical friend' team.

25.33.3. Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand thanked the team and invited circulation of the revised draft application - incorporating Advance HE feedback and the five-year action plan - to members when available, noting that EDI Committee sign off will be required prior to submission to Advance HE.

25.33.3.1. **ACTION Chair of the Athena Swan Accreditation SAT and the EDI Accreditations Project Lead** to share the revised draft application with the Committee and seek Committee approval prior to submission to Advance HE.

25.34. EDI PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR COLLEAGUE NETWORKS

25.34.1. The Network Co-Chairs provided an update on the activities, priorities and challenges faced by the Networks:

(a) **Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) Network:**
Priorities**:** Strengthening University accountability for anti-racist practice, keeping equality policies and charters current and meaningful, and improving representation of racialised minority colleagues, particularly in leadership roles. ***Key challenges***: Limited time and capacity, succession planning, low and inconsistent engagement, and the need for more proactive and sustained senior leadership involvement.

(b) **Faith, Spirituality and Belief Colleague Network:** ***Priorities***: Delivering antisemitism and anti-Muslim hostility awareness training, progressing design work for multifaith spaces, and collaborating on an event with the Q+ Network. ***Key challenges***: Low member engagement and limited visibility, the need for better institutional data capture through adding a free text faith option to the Colleagues Wellbeing Survey.

(c) **Q+ Network**: ***Priorities***: Continuing planned meetings and events where possible and sustaining the Network through forward planning. ***Key challenges***: Capacity constraints, low engagement, and leadership sustainability with limited protected time and recognition making recruitment and retention difficult and placing the Network's long-term sustainability at risk.

(d) **Women of Westminster (WoW) Network**: ***Priorities***: Maintaining continuity while developing a clear focus on women's health around menopause and endometriosis through events, mentoring, workshops and collaboration with the parent and carer sub-network. ***Key challenges***: Capacity and inclusion, as differing caring responsibilities and workload pressures limit participation, despite strong attendance and engagement at events.

25.34.1.1. **ACTION EDI Manager** to follow up on the faith-related question in the Colleagues Wellbeing Survey.

25.34.1.2. **ACTION Committee Secretary** to circulate the priorities and challenges of the Colleague Disability Network with members, in consultation with the Colleague Disability Network Co-Chairs.

[Post-meeting notes: The priorities and challenges of the Colleague Disability Network (CDN), as provided by the CDN co-chairs, were circulated to members on 6 May 2026 and are recapped here for maintaining a proper record.

CDN Priorities

- Claire and Daniela set up the network in 2021; therefore, we are now at the end of five years (maximum term) as co-chairs. A priority is therefore to find new co-chairs to take over in July/August this year.
- Engagement with network meetings shows increasing momentum, and the focus on raising/ addressing aspects relevant to colleagues (not students) first is a huge win (as too often, we focus on students first)! We are very keen to continue growing this, and a key aspect scheduled to increase membership is the creation of a Neurodiversity sub-committee (led/managed by Jade Bolger and Laura Boubert) to emphasise our goal of integrating equal consideration for professional services/academic colleagues into how we run our network. We are following the ideals set out by WOW in their Menopause initiative and are in the process of writing an ethics application to launch a survey and plan some research on wants/needs to drive the work done in this subgroup.
- Challenges raised/ voiced to the Physical Accessibility Committee are often 'blue sky' ideals (e.g., facilities overview at Marylebone requested an additional lift in the Chiltern Building, a larger lift in the library, and an expanded toilet size in the PhD room). We need to push better reporting of challenges faced/ ideal 'wants' and 'needs' across the full university estate, and to prioritise 'quick wins' that can make a difference and be clearly communicated as responses to colleague requests.

CDN Challenges

- Colleagues have not joined CDN because they do not consider themselves 'disabled'. Like Disability Learning Support, we routinely receive requests from colleagues to rename our network, but with momentum growing, we are not sure this is the best time. A focus of the survey will therefore include 'terminology' to ensure colleague perceptions are clearly summarised/ reviewed. (We have run the first 'Empower Abilities' mentoring group with students this year, and within our network, will continue to emphasise this empowerment goal in all we do).
- Communication/ understanding of challenges experienced by colleagues impacted by disabilities are typically 'corridor conversations,' which may not be reported. These need to be recorded to ensure challenges faced are recognised and managed whenever feasible. A process review is being conducted (led by Clare Peterson, with input from Bryony McPeake and Niamh Nelson), with input from CDN (concerns raised include how colleague disclosure of disability/ sick leave is recorded/ managed; how a review of needs is conducted/ followed up following an OSHENS report; how managers action adjustments needed for colleagues when funding is limited/ procurement delays impact). Colleagues appear to remain largely unaware that Report & Support is a staff and student system, do not feel confident using it to report concerns, and are unsure how to manage challenges that have been raised but remain unresolved. The network chairs are often contacted for advice/ support, and we need to change that.]

25.34.2. The Co-Chairs noted that Colleague Networks now face sustainability challenges arising from changes in context since their establishment, and that engagement issues are shared and structural. The Co-Chairs highlighted the need to reflect on the Networks' purposes and impact, with the EDI Open Forum in June 2026 offering a potential forum for discussion.

25.34.3. Members also shared their views on the challenges faced by the Networks:

- **Participation, workload and recognition**: Engagement is hindered by unrecognised and unfunded workload, particularly for Professional Services colleagues, highlighting the need for clearer time allocation, recognition, and more inclusive participation and leadership models.
- **Engagement and focus**: Reduced engagement may reflect recent successes, suggesting a need to refresh focus while retaining the Networks' support role.
- **Working groups:** Purposeful working groups previously added value and could be re-introduced, with clearer promotion of impact and minimal added workload.

25.34.4. Co-Chair Deborah Husbands thanked members for their contributions and noted that their views would inform a future discussion between the Network Co-Chairs and the EDI Manager on the direction of the Colleague Networks.

25.35. UPDATES ON MEMBERS' EDI ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

25.35.1. Members shared updates on their activities outside the Committee via the Teams chat. Examples included University of Westminster Students' Union awarded an 'Excellent' rating for the LEDI (Liberation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) section in the Quality Students' Unions accreditation, and participation in the London Marathon to raise funds for the London Community Foundation.

25.36. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

25.36.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 21 January 2026 (Document EDI 260422C) as an accurate record.

25.36.2. Members noted progress on actions from previous meetings (Document EDI 260422D) and confirmed the completed items.

25.37. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25.37.1. In response to a query about neurodiversity training, the EDI Manager advised that free webinars are available, work is underway to improve communication of these webinar opportunities, and the People, Culture and Wellbeing directorate is developing support for neurodiverse colleagues and their line managers.

25.37.2. In response to a query on the circulation of the updated School EDI Lead role profile, Co-Chair Deborah Husbands advised the EDI Manager to liaise with the Committee Secretary following the meeting.

25.38. A WORKSHOP ON GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS AS A COMMITTEE

25.38.1. Members participated in a development workshop led by Elaine McMillan, Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance, and Clare Peterson, EDI Manager.

25.39. SANCTUARY AT WESTMINSTER WORKING GROUP

25.39.1. **APPROVED** The Committee established a Sanctuary at Westminster Working Group reporting to the EDI Committee with immediate effect and with terms of reference and membership as presented (Document EDI 260422E). The Working Group will lead on the University of Sanctuary award application.

25.40. EDI ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMITTEES REPORT

25.40.1. Members noted the survey report on the EDI engagement with committees in 2024-25 (Document EDI 260422F).

25.41. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2025-26

25.41.1. Members noted the updated schedule of business 2025-26 (Document EDI 260422G).

25.42. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

15 July 2026
30 September 2026
20 January 2027
21 April 2027
14 July 2027

All meetings take place between 2pm and 5pm and are held in person.