

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2025 AT 2PM IN THE PAVILION ROOM, 115 NEW CAVENDISH STREET

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair) Dr D Husbands (Co-Chair) R Begum C Benyon J Boston S Bunbury ¹ A Goreeba M Jula Y Kaplan	E Lees C Molloy A Musani S Owen C Peterson Dr C Robertson S Sarialtin R Shah Z Surooprajally
IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Secretary) A Lynch ² K Robinson ³	G Sherry (for Minute 25.4) Z Williams (for Minute 25.5)
APOLOGIES:	D de Silva Professor M Dwek P Mashumba	K Patrick J Smith Dr N Weingarten

25.1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 25.1.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chair welcomed all members and attendees, in particular the following new members:
- Sevgi Sarialtin and Zahrah Surooprajally – new Women of Westminster Network (WoW) Co-Chairs – ex officio members
 - Romy Begum – new School EDI Lead representative – nominated member
 - Akash Goreeba – new Professional Services (PS) EDI Lead – nominated member
- 25.1.2. All members and attendees introduced themselves.
- 25.1.3. **Apologies:** Members noted the apologies as recorded above.
- 25.1.4. The Co-Chair noted that the meeting would be ended at 4pm to facilitate colleagues to prepare for Yom Kippur.
- 25.1.5. **AOB and starred items:** The Co-Chairs agreed to two requests to discuss:
- A proposal about displaying national flags on campus from the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) under AOB (Minute 25.10); and
 - Starred agenda item 13.1 Code of Conduct (Minute 25.11).
- 25.1.6. **Declarations of interest:** The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

¹ Attended via Teams.

² Representing P Mashumba, Associate Director, Organisational Development.

³ Representing K Patrick, Interim Director, Student and Academic Services.

25.2. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

25.2.1. The Co-Chair Dibyesh Anand provided an update on key activities and discussions since the last meeting:

- The year began positively with strong student engagement and successful home undergraduate recruitment, despite challenges on international student recruitment.
- The Westminster Programme for Enhancing Inclusion, Belonging and Sustainable Development is now funded by the University (Minute 25.13) through the DVC Global Engagement and Employability Office, replacing the previous QHT (Quintin Hogg Trust) funded EDI programme, and is embedded as a mainstream University initiative.
- Cross-departmental collaboration on inclusion was repeatedly highlighted as a key strength at the University Executive Board (UEB) away day and the Executive and Operational Leadership Forum.
- The Co-Chair will share the chairing role of the London Higher EDI Network with a colleague from a peer institution.
- AdvanceHE reached out to the University to collaborate on work around antisemitism and islamophobia, and has been invited to join the Annual Challenging Racisms Conference in May 2026.
- The Co-Chair is now the University lead for the Access and Participation Plan (APP) implementation, aligned with the broader EDI agenda.

25.2.2. The Co-Chair Debrorah Husbands provided an update on key activities and discussions since the last meeting:

- The Black History Year Researchers Network won the Research Culture Impact Award at the Vitae Impact, Culture and Engagement Awards 2025.
- The University's first bespoke career empowerment coaching programme for Black colleagues has concluded and is being evaluated for effectiveness.
- Collaborative projects with other institutions focus on racialised doctorate students' experience and the impact of hybrid working on Black women academics.
- The Co-Chair was invited to join the International Reference Group on Undergraduate Psychology Outcomes, working with 40 countries to strengthen subject relevance.
- The Co-Chair was recognised as the rising star by KINSIS, an organisation developing sector-wide initiatives to address awarding gaps.

25.2.3. James Boston, EDI Accreditations Project Lead, reported on progress with accreditation applications, including reviewing action plans, launching colleague and student surveys, and consolidating the policy reviews into a centralised document through the Policy Review Working Group.

25.2.4. A member noted the importance of aligning Athena Swan and the University Mental Health Charter application work to streamline processes, including reviewing survey questions for consistency with the Charter principles. Members noted that survey data is expected to be ready by January 2026.

25.3. EDI STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2025-26

25.3.1. Clare Peterson, EDI Manager, presented the EDI Strategy implementation plan 2025-26 (Document EDI 251001A), which outlines the EDI priorities based on colleague feedback.

25.3.2. The EDI Manager highlighted that the five-year EDI Strategy targets will be phased in over time throughout the implementation process, and that the implementation plan cross-references the APP, Mental Health Charter and Athena Swan, with further scope to consolidate accreditation action plans and the national pay gap plan in future.

25.3.3. The EDI Manager invited members to provide any further feedback within the next 10 days, before the implementation plan is published on the EDI webpage and SharePoint site. The EDI Manager noted that the EDI team will regularly update and refine the implementation plan.

- 25.3.4. Members commended the team for producing the implementation plan in a clear and concise format, but raised the following concerns:
- Colleagues need timely information on student adjustments, potentially linked to enhancements in the admissions protocol.
 - Data gaps in the implementation plan and the approach to addressing them.
 - Assigning senior or directorate-level leads to action items is important to ensure accountability.
 - Responsibilities and timelines should be clearly assigned for all activities, even if not fully defined, to enable EDI Committee oversight through published updates.
- 25.3.5. The EDI Manager committed to raising the student adjustment and admissions protocol issue at the EDI (Education) Steering Group, which meets the following day, and will then determine whether it should be included in the implementation plan for the APP or the EDI Strategy.
- 25.3.6. The EDI Manager acknowledged the data gaps, especially around research and knowledge exchange and mental health, and will meet with relevant leads to address the gaps in the next week. The EDI Manager also noted that the team, together with the PS EDI Leads, are engaging the PS Directors and their management teams on EDI commitments as reflected in departmental operating plans.
- 25.3.7. **AGREED** Members delegated authority to the Committee Co-Chairs to approve the EDI Strategy implementation plan 2025-26 once they get the updated version from the EDI Manager.

25.4. COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENT EDI PRIORITIES

- 25.4.1. The Co-Chair briefed members that college and department operating plans currently do not align with the EDI Strategy due to different timelines and noted that this agenda item aimed to provide an overview of how inclusion and wellbeing priorities are being addressed across schools and departments.
- 25.4.2. Gemma Sherry, Strategic Planning Manager (SPM), presented the EDI priorities identified from the operating plans (Document EDI 251001B), highlighting that:
- Inclusion and wellbeing actions often overlap, sharing similar goals and outcomes.
 - Detailed analysis of dependencies or cross-functional initiatives was challenging due to the large volume of data.
- 25.4.3. The Co-Chair noted that wellbeing, inclusion and sustainability are interconnected and taken seriously across schools and departments broadly although approaches vary as some areas treat inclusion as 'business as usual', leading to occasional inconsistency.
- 25.4.4. The Committee commended the EDI priorities summary and recommended:
- Integrating the EDI Strategy implementation plan into the strategic planning process to support alignment and objective setting across schools and departments.
 - Providing training on the operating plan development and the use of student data.
 - Capturing qualitative data from informal conversations or survey focus groups to better track progress.
- 25.4.5. The SPM welcomed the feedback and outlined several future developments in the strategic planning process:
- Collaborating with the Director for Digital Capability and AI Leadership to make planning more dynamic through Artificial Intelligence.
 - Refresh of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by the Business Intelligence team.
 - Shifting from outcome-based measures to success criteria reflecting both qualitative and quantitative progress.

- Creating a single SharePoint site to provide guidance and support to colleagues on the planning process.

25.4.6. The Co-Chair thanked the SPM for contributing to the discussion, acknowledging the challenges of maintaining focus on key priorities under the ‘fewest things matter most’ principle.

25.4.6.1. **ACTION EDI Manager** to share the finalised EDI Strategy implementation plan 2025-26 with the SPM to inform the strategic planning process for the following year.

25.5. EDI INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

25.5.1. Zoe Williams, Communications Officer (Colleagues), presented an update on internal EDI communications (Document EDI 251001Cii), highlighting that:

- The Communications Officer now holds fortnightly catchups with the EDI team to coordinate updates.
- Work continues with the EDI Accreditations Project Lead on Athena Swan promotion.
- A communication planner is being developed for the Black History Year and Black Lives Matter.
- The internal communications team encourages colleagues to contact them for EDI activities promotion.

25.5.2. The Committee thanked the Communications Officer for their good work over the years in promoting EDI internally. The Co-Chair noted the University has stronger EDI internal communications compared to other universities.

25.5.3. In response to a query on enhancing awareness of the Colleague Networks, the Communications Officer suggested using relatable stories and imagery to make the communications more personal, supported by consistent messaging through social channels rather than standard intranet pages to increase visibility and engagement.

25.5.4. In relation to a query on supporting colleagues to discuss EDI topics confidently and safely, the Communications Officer noted that some underrepresented colleagues may feel hesitant to share externally or internally, and suggested highlighting positive work and safe spaces, consulting with the Press or Public Relations team, and ensuring use of inclusive language and terminology. The Communications Officer will reach out to the relevant Network Co-Chairs for further discussion.

25.5.5. Caroline Benyon, Director of Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications, supported greater promotion of Colleague Networks by sharing their purposes, impact and ‘friendly faces’ through campus communications. The Co-Chair suggested the Colleague Networks could take turns leading the campus promotion.

25.5.6. In relation to the EDI events calendar, members noted that:

- Holocaust Memorial Day celebration takes place annually in January/February.
- Key events should continue to be recognised even during quieter months with limited student/colleague presence.
- The Communications Officer will pre-schedule three to four key communications for August and September each year, focusing on resources-based and informational content.

25.5.7. Regarding social media posts and content creation, the Communications Officer noted:

- The external communications team focuses on sharing success stories and they will seek feedback from the team on the selection of National Days posts.
- The social media and student teams can help content creation to improve consistency, while trained colleagues in PS departments and Colleges can publish independently with available resources and training. A member shared positive experience of working with the Social

Media Manager and Social Media Ambassadors to train student associates for content creation.

- Intranet enhancements to improve searchability will take effect in October 2025.

25.5.8. The Co-Chair reminded the EDI Officer to ensure EDI Student Champions receive training on social media content creation.

25.5.9. A member raised a concern about difficulties in reaching out to design and marketing colleagues for promotion of Colleague Network events. The Communications Officer explained the design and marketing team workflow and will raise the concern with the team for feedback.

25.6. EDI EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OUTCOMES REPORT 2024-25

25.6.1. The Co-Chair presented the EDI effectiveness review outcomes report 2024-25 (Document EDI 251001D), highlighting a positive upward trend in the perceptions of the Committee's effectiveness, reflecting its collegiality and mutual respect over the past year.

25.6.2. Members discussed the report's recommendations and noted that:

- The Committee held **induction sessions** for new members and these will continue in the future.
- **KPIs** are embedded in the EDI Strategy, with an implementation plan to drive progress.
- **Benchmarking** could focus on key events, recognising varying EDI challenges across universities. Current benchmarking includes the Athena Swan application and gender pay gap data via the Government portal, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association and the Universities Human Resources organisation.
- **Time commitments** for Network Co-Chairs and School EDI Leads are outlined in the Workload Allocation Model and there is a separate framework for PS colleagues. Further discussion may be held if required.

25.6.3. **AGREED** Members accepted the report's recommendations, noting that the time commitment recommendation may require separate discussion.

25.6.4. A member proposed reintroducing the 30-minute one-to-one end-of-year review to allow members and Co-Chairs to reflect on progress, success, challenges and priorities, linking to induction discussions.

25.6.5. **AGREED** Members identified a fourth action to implement one-to-one reviews for reflection and feedback to the report.

25.6.5.1. ACTION Committee Co-Chairs and Secretary to arrange one-to-one reviews following the final meeting of each academic year.

25.7. RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EDI IN 2025-26

25.7.1. Caragh Molloy, Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW), reported the resources allocated to EDI activities in 2025-26 from the PCW budget:

- **Budget:** funding for Colleague Networks and Black History Year remains unchanged.
- **Ongoing projects:** the '100 Black Women Professors NOW' programme continues, with impact to be reviewed to determine investment level. Disability awareness training will continue.
- **New project:** there is funding allocated to explore initiatives supporting neurodiversity.

25.7.2. The Co-Chair noted that:

- Expansion of the EDI team has strengthened capacity despite sector-wide recruitment and funding challenges.

- Maintaining EDI funding at current levels is positive amid broader institutional budget cuts and broader EDI challenges, with an emphasis on strategic, cost-effective use of resources.
- The Empowerment Programme and EDI Student Champions initiative will continue at current scale, alongside Sustainable Development Goals Student Champions and other internship programmes, focusing on impact rather than expansion.

25.7.3. Members welcomed the neurodiversity project, highlighting the need to address under-disclosure and raise awareness among colleagues and students, and querying how line managers can support implementation. The Director (PCW) noted the project is at an early stage and confirmed that further details will be shared as plans develop and that guidance will be provided once outcomes are clear.

25.8. UPDATES ON MEMBERS' EDI ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

25.8.1. Members shared examples of their activities outside the Committee, including:

- Completing/updating e-learning modules on sexual harassment and disability confidence.
- Organising and participating in cultural and festival events such as Black History Month, Diwali, Hanukah, a global diversity event and International Women's Day.
- Developing initiatives including Wellbeing Wednesday, neurodiversity awareness and student programmes such as Black History Parade, Elevating Future programme, Black student mental health survey.
- Supporting student wellbeing through partnerships with One Westminster and Brent Centre, student support and residential life services like the 24/7 Spectrum Life wellbeing platform and the University Mental Health Charter application.
- Training for new School/PS EDI Leads and EDI Student Champions and the recruitment of EDI interns.
- Producing diversity-focused media, including campus and graduation videos.
- New roles and positions related to widening access.
- Engaging through talks, University of London podcasts, the first Research Culture Symposium by the Black History of Researchers Network, discussion around spiritual belief awareness training and a presentation on racialised students at the House of Lords.

25.9. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

25.9.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 23 July 2025 (Document EDI 251001E) as an accurate record.

25.9.2. Members noted progress on actions from previous meetings (Document EDI 251001F) and confirmed the completed items.

25.10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25.10.1. Adil Musani, UWSU President, presented a proposal on displaying national flags on campus to represent Westminster's student body (Document EDI 251001G).

25.10.2. The Co-Chair reminded members that, under its terms of reference, the Committee is not empowered to approve the proposal but invited discussion.

25.10.3. A member welcomed the initiative to promote inclusiveness but stressed the importance of clear communications to the wider University community to avoid misunderstanding or tension.

25.10.4. Some members supported the proposal's intention but raised concerns about potential disputes over flags, particularly in the current political climate. Members further noted that a contingency plan for conflicts may be needed and that the proposal could be broadened to include other representations such as food, landmarks or museums.

25.10.5. The Co-Chairs shared their recent personal experiences of racism in the city and highlighted the wider challenges for the University in addressing issues related to national flags.

- 25.10.6. A member highlighted a plan for a luncheon series beginning in November 2025 to provide a space for students to discuss and navigate discomfort arising from the current political climate.
- 25.10.7. The Co-Chair shared feedback from an absent member, who questioned the practicality of displaying 165 national flags and suggested potential solutions.
- 25.10.8. The Co-Chair thanked the UWSU President for the proposal and recommended that they refer the Committee's feedback to the UWSU management team for further consideration and governance.

25.11. CODE OF CONDUCT

25.11.1. To facilitate in-person meetings, the Co-Chair proposed that if one Colleague Network Co-Chair is able to attend the meeting, the other may be excused due to extenuating circumstances, provided that they review papers in advance and communicate their views through the attending Network Co-Chair. The Committee noted that attendance and absence requirements are set out in the EDI Committee Standing Orders.

25.11.2. Members noted feedback from an absent member about missing links in the Code of Conduct⁴.

25.11.2.1. **ACTION Committee Secretary** to update the links in the Code of Conduct (Document EDI 251001H).

25.11.3. **AGREED** Members reaffirmed their commitment to the EDI Committee Code of Conduct.

25.12. UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP

25.12.1. **AGREED** Members confirmed the proposed update to the membership (Document EDI 251001I) for submission to UEB for approval.

25.13. UNIVERSITY EDI PROGRAMMES 2025-26

25.13.1. Members noted the University EDI programmes for 2025-26 for enhancing inclusion, belonging and sustainable development (Document EDI 251001J).

25.14. SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2025-26

25.14.1. Members noted the updated schedule of business 2025-26 (Document EDI 251001K).

25.15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

21 January 2026

22 April 2026

15 July 2026

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

⁴ Nolan Principles of Public Life: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

Office for Students' Public Interest Governance: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/registering-with-the-ofs/registration-with-the-ofs-a-guide/public-interest-governance-principles/>