

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion - Strategic Plan 2022-24

Introduction

To a University like Wolverhampton, which has a proud record of serving its communities going back over 180 years, the issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are of paramount importance. As the University of Opportunity, it is crucial that we do everything we can to enable all individuals to succeed. This is not simply about promoting acceptance of equal opportunity for all; that is giving everyone the identical opportunity; but is more about recognising the different journeys people have in front of them, understanding and meeting their needs.

The University is committed to removing barriers to ensure that all can participate and achieve their potential. We will develop our approach guided by the lived experience of our staff and students. As well as the social model of outcome, adapting the way we work to suit individual needs, adding value to their experience and ensuring they become successful ambassadors for the University of Wolverhampton.

Our values are:

- Behaving respectfully and ethically in all that we do.
- Being inclusive and fair in our interactions with each other and with our wider community.
- Acting professionally, transparently, confidently, collaboratively, and challengingly when engaging with our communities, locally and globally.
- Listening and learning from others.

EDI Vision

Our vision is to create an inclusive work and study environment by:

- Identifying and addressing Institutional, structural, and cultural inequalities to ensure both staff and students can reach their full potential.
- Ensuring all staff and students are treated with respect and dignity in a safe environment.
- Creating a diverse Workforce that reflects local demographics and our student population at all levels within the University.
- Utilising and valuing the diverse skills, experience and knowledge of our staff and students.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Our Equality and Diversity policy (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/equality-diversity--inclusion/policies-and-governance/>) makes it clear that the University is fully committed to the advancement of equality and the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. It also values the benefits that a diverse student and staff population brings to the University.

The University strives to treat all its staff and students with respect and seeks to provide a positive environment free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

EDI Management, Reporting and Governance structure.

We have in place a robust and transparent [EDI management and reporting structure](#) to ensure accountability for the EDI agenda. This structure allows for devolving and then ownership of EDI throughout the University and localised intervention, for example addressing disproportionality and underrepresentation. Operating in this way we can work towards mainstreaming and embedding the EDI agenda into the 'DNA' of the University.

One of the key roles of the central EDI team (within HR), in this management structure is to function as a centre of excellence in providing, support and guidance to the groups and committees below.

Action Plans

Our approach to developing an EDI action plan, has been not to develop a generic EDI action plan. Instead, we have got actions plan on 'Race' and Gender, which are part of our Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter Marks (REC) work.

We have used the same approach, i.e., the REC framework to develop a Disability Equality action plan. We have set up LGBTQ+, and Religion or Belief working groups to develop actions plans like those below:

The EDI action plans are on the University EDI pages and can be accessed by the following links:

- <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/equality-and-diversity-unit/documents/2022-Athena-Swan-ACTION-PLAN---Copy.pdf>
- <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/equality-and-diversity-unit/documents/Disability-Equality-Action-Plan.pdf>
- <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/media/departments/equality-and-diversity-unit/documents/Race-Equality-Charter-Action-Plan-22-23-Version-1.pdf>

By using this approach, we have ensured that interventions to address inequalities are focused and specific. This also addresses intersectionality.

Our key priorities within our EDI action plans are:

- **Improve recruitment and selection practices and procedures to ensure equity, parity and transparency in staff recruitment and promotion.**

We will ensure that our recruitment and selection procedures do not disadvantage under-represented groups by:

- Ensuring we advertise job opportunities in ways that are inclusive of everyone, including using positive action statements to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- Developing job descriptions and person specifications that do not include irrelevant requirements or gendered language as well as using language that is culturally sensitive regarding age, race and religion, disability, and sexual orientation.

- Increasing the training provided to members of recruitment and promotion panels, to ensure they understand how to avoid bias in their decision making.
- Stopping any recruitment or promotion panel from proceeding if it is not diverse especially in relation to ethnicity and gender as per our commitments to Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter Mark.
- Chairs of recruitment panels to seek advice from the Disabled staff network in relation neurodiverse applicants.

➤ **Improve personal development for staff members so there is a greater diversity of people being promoted.**

We will ensure that all staff members have the same access to training and developmental opportunities by:

- Providing clear and detailed information and guidance to those applying for promotion so that they can tailor their applications, including working with the staff diversity networks to deliver workshops and Q&A panels for potential applicants.
- Running targeted developmental programmes for women such as Aurora that are tailored to their unique needs and experiences.
- Development of a leadership programme for our global majority staff.
- Collaborating with professors and readers to ensure that early-career academics from those that have protected characteristics have equal access to support and developmental opportunities, including senior academics acting as career mentors.
- Ensuring line managers are using personal development reviews to facilitate the future aspirations of all staff members with equity.
- Ensuring reasonable adjustments are made for staff with disabilities.

➤ **Change policies and practices to better promote a positive work-life balance including improved support for working parents and those with disabilities.**

We will ensure that we proactively support staff members in maintaining a healthy balance between work and life by:

- Creating a culture within the University that is more welcoming of flexible working and reviewing the opportunity for flexibility in positions at all levels.
- Providing more support for parents, including ensuring those breastfeeding can safely and comfortably work and study on campus.
- Ensuring that those taking a long-term absence from the University are fully supported by their line manager, can stay connected with the University during leave, and are properly supported upon their return to work.
- Ensuring all our buildings and facilities are accessible for staff and students with disabilities.

➤ **Better use data to shape and evaluate the University's work on EDI.**

We will ensure that everyone can fully understand how diversity affects the staff and student experience by providing greater access to data by:

- Creating EDI dashboards as well as using Tableau to introduce complimentary diversity reports for staff and student data.

- Providing regular diversity updates to faculties and professional services across the University, so that any gaps and inequity problems can be quickly identified and solved.
- Conducting staff and student surveys to gather feedback about their experience of EDI as well as their lived experience at the University.
- Using data to report on disability, gender and ethnicity pay gaps including data based on intersectionality.

➤ **Empower staff and students across the University to drive EDI improvements within their teams.**

We will create opportunities for staff and students to identify and address the unique EDI challenges they face locally by:

- Encouraging staff to join and support the staff diversity networks.
- Encourage staff and students to join thematic sub-groups and EDI Projects/initiatives such as 'Reverse mentoring.'
- Providing information and guidance to Faculty and Professional Services Group Equality and Diversity Committees, so that they can confront inequalities within their areas.
- Offering extensive training to those working on EDI (for example EDI champions and Inclusivity leads) to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to achieve change.

➤ **Improve governance and monitoring of the University's commitments and work on Advance HE Charter Marks – Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter**

We will ensure that we successfully deliver the promised EDI changes in our Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans by:

- Providing regular updates to the University Executive Board and EDI Committee about progress against the Action Plans identified above, so they can hold those who have failed to deliver sufficient progress to account.
- Working with Faculty Equality and Diversity Committees to ensure progress is being made within all Schools and Institutes.
- Form a new Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Teams to evaluate the impact of the Gender Equality and REC action plans. Working towards renewal of both charters in 2024 and 2025.

➤ **Improve communication of the University's commitment towards EDI**

We will ensure staff and students understand the University's commitment to EDI by:

- Regularly promoting best practice in EDI through regular communication channels, including the Vice-Chancellor's Update and WLV Insider.
- Ensuring that senior leaders and line managers are personally committed to EDI, and regularly stress its importance.
- Maintaining up-to-date Gender Equality, REC and Disability Equality action plans on the University's website and provide staff members with a full update about all the progress made against them every year.
- Annual report on the online Incident reporting tool by protected characteristics, University area, type of incident, action taken and staff or student.

➤ **Close the Awards and Progression gaps for Global Majority, Mature and Disabled Students**

We will work to close award and progression gaps between different groups of students by:

- Working to support students' assessment literacy – the understanding of what they are being asked to do for an individual assignment task – through:
 - Providing a glossary of terms.
 - Promoting academic integrity and highlighting the implications of academic misconduct.
 - Promoting the use of student-led 'understanding my assessment' sessions.
- Further developing our Academic Coaches scheme.
- Introducing a suite of digital badges for students with the aim of helping students to identify the skills they are developing whilst studying for their disciplinary award.

➤ **Close the Employability Gap for Global Majority Students**

We will do this by:

- Developing course-level strategies for employability and targeted support for those courses with the highest number of Global Majority students.
- Supporting courses to embed work experience in the curriculum. As well as providing traditional placement years, we will develop other routes for students to engage in similar activities which are embedded within their course.
- Developing digital badges to support students in articulating their own professional development.

➤ **Increasing the Sense of Belonging and ensure a zero-tolerance work and study environment to discrimination and harassment for all our staff and students.**

Feeling a sense of belonging to the University makes a student far more likely to engage, and succeed, in their studies. We are increasing students' sense of belonging by:

- Working in collaboration with our Students' Union to update our research on students' sense of belonging. We will use the results of this research to address any issues identified.
- Continuing to embed our Inclusive Curriculum Framework across all subjects and courses.
- Encouraging our students to become co-creators of curriculum.
- Working with the Students' Union to ensure that all student groups have the confidence and opportunity to provide feedback on their lived experiences of the University.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity KPI's for the University of Wolverhampton 2022-24

| Strategic Plan Goal | Key Performance Indicator | Equality Objective |
|---|---|--|
| Maximise individual potential for all students. | KPI 1: Growth in size and diversity of our student population | Increase student recruitment from currently underrepresented demographics groups. |
| | KPI 1: Growth in size and diversity of our student population | Increase student retention from currently underrepresented demographics groups. |
| | KPI 2: Our students progress and achieve at, or above, the expected levels and there are no differences between student demographic groups. | Increase student achievement, continuation and progression of currently underperforming demographic groups. |
| | KPI 3: We exceed the expectations of all our students | To promptly address any instances of differential dissatisfaction of a demographic group. |
| | KPI 4: Our students gain graduate level employment with no differences between demographic groups | Increase student employability of currently underperforming demographic groups. |
| Maximise individual potential for all staff. | KPI 5: We have a diverse, highly skilled and motivated staff team. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase recruitment of staff from currently underrepresented groups. • Improve personal development for staff members and create Inclusive, transparent decision making so there is a greater diversity of people being promoted to address underrepresented demographics groups in senior roles |
| | KPI 6: We are recognised for addressing and promoting Gender and Race equality at the University. | Renew our Athena Swan Equality Charter Mark in October 2024 and the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award OR go for a Silver award in July 2025 |
| | KPI 7: Promote Disability equality and the social model of Disability. | Develop, Implement, monitor the Disability Equality Action Plan (DEAP) Evaluation of DEAP by September 2025. |

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| | <p>KPI 8: Promote LGBTQ+ equality and Increase understanding of the religious customs and cultures of our staff to be more inclusive.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a LGBTQ+ working group to develop LGBTQ+ equality actions and work towards Stonewall Workplace Index submission by 2026. • Set up Religion or Belief working group to develop good practice and guidance. |
| <p>Be renowned as a university that makes impact regionally, nationally and internationally</p> | <p>KPI 9: We are seen by partners, funding bodies, and the communities we serve as effective and successful in improving the regions we operate within.</p> | <p>Raise local and national awareness of the diversity of our research and staff/students through engagement with Equality and Diversity-themed festivals and campaigns</p> |