UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER ⊞

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2024 AT 2PM IN THE CAYLEY ROOM, REGENT STREET CAMPUS

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair)	C Lloyd
	Dr D Husbands (Co-Chair)	P Mashumba
	C Benyon	A Musani[3]
	J Boston[1]	C Molloy (from minute 24.10)
	S Bunbury (up to minute 24.9)	C Peterson
	D de Silva	S Razzaq
	Professor M Dwek (from minute 24.6)	Dr C Robertson
	E Johnson	R Shah
	Dr K Juddoo	Dr C Smith (up to minute 24.8)
	Dr S Kehoe[2]	J Smith
	Rev M Linfoot	Dr N Weingarten (up to minute 24.10)

IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Secretary)	E McMillan (minute 24.4)
	C Emery (minutes 24.6 & 24.7)	Z Williams (minutes 24.6 & 24.7)
	A Lynch (minutes 24.6 & 24.7)	I Wilmot (minute 24.9)
	S Mcaulay (minutes 24.6 & 24.7)	

APOLOGIES:	D Airan	M Jula
	Professor V Gillies	S Owen

24.1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

24.1.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chair welcomed members and attendees to the first meeting of the Committee in 2024/25.

24.1.2. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

24.1.3. **Apologies:** Members noted apologies as recorded above.

24.1.4. The Co-Chair reminded members to send their apologies to the Secretary in advance if unable to attend meetings.

24.1.5. **AOB and starred items:** Members did not request to add any items to the agenda or to discuss the starred items.

24.1.6. **Declarations of interest:** The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

24.2. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

24.2.1. The Co-Chairs provided an update on key activities since the last meeting:

- Held various EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) events under the Westminster Café, Westminster Festival and the Student EDI Champions scheme.
- Secured one-year funding for the QHT (Quintin Hogg Trust) EDI programme for 2024/25.
- Reviewed and streamlined EDI processes to enhance efficiency.

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[1] Attended via Microsoft Teams
[2] Q+ Network Co-Chair, and represented UCU at this meeting
[3] UWSU President's representative

- Delivered a keynote at a Westminster Insight conference.
- Continued partnership with AdvanceHE.

24.2.2. The Co-Chair encouraged members to share their views via the EDI Committee Teams Chat.

24.3. **TRIBUTE TO FORMER COLLEAGUE**

24.3.1. The Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of a former colleague, Dave Laycock, recognising his contributions to disability communities.

24.4. **EDI COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW 2023/24 – OUTCOMES REPORT**

24.4.1. Elaine McMillian, Clerk to the Court of Governors and Head of University Governance, presented a report on findings and recommendations from the Committee effectiveness survey (Document EDI 241009A), which will also be submitted to the University Executive Board (UEB).

24.4.2. Members discussed the following views and topics:

- The importance of connecting the EDI work outside the Committee with the EDI Committee.
- Including qualitative comments in the report helps members to understand the context.
- The possibility of having a Committee away day focused on survey feedback, especially around a suggestion that discussions can be dominated by the Networks and Unions.
- Governance training for members.
- Benchmarking sector EDI practices through the Co-Chair's role in the London Higher EDI Network.
- Differential provisions between Professional Services (PS) colleagues and students.
- The role of the Performance Development Review in supporting the Committee's effectiveness and diversity.
- Time allocation for members' commitment to the Committee.
- Streamlining communication to better engage colleagues with EDI.

24.4.3. In response to members' feedback, the Co-Chair noted the following:

- EDI Leads meet annually at the EDI Open Forum.
- An EDI Lunch Mixer is scheduled for 13 November 2024, bringing together EDI leaders from across the University.
- The Committee will continue to engage a wider constituency without overloading its membership.
- The Co-Chairs will explore governance training opportunities, including induction, with the Clerk to the Court.
- There is a positive view of the University's EDI practices by external partners.

24.4.3.1. **ACTION The Co-Chairs** to explore with the Clerk to the Court for possible governance training opportunities for the Committee.

24.4.4. Members thanked the Clerk to the Court for the report.

24.5. **EXPERIENCES AND ISSUES OF SCHOOL EDI LEADS**

24.5.1. Dr Caroline Smith, the School EDI Lead representative, shared challenges faced by the Leads, following a meeting with the Co-Chair on 13 September 2024.

24.5.2. The School EDI Lead representative highlighted concerns about maintaining momentum and good practices, especially with six new Leads recently appointed and the EDI Open Forum held annually.

24.5.3. In relation to these concerns, members suggested:

- Pairing new Leads with former Leads as co-Leads to facilitate transition, following the

practice of the School of Architecture and Cities.
- Sharing good practices across Colleges.
- Regular updates to the Leads about the activities shared at the EDI Open Forum.
- Utilising the EDI Lunch Mixer for cross-University sharing.

24.5.4. The School EDI Lead representative raised another concern on accessing Access and Participation Plan (APP) data to address continuation and awarding gaps. Members emphasised the importance of connecting the EDI Committee, EDI (Education) Steering Group, School EDI Leads and Student EDI Champions.

24.5.5. The School EDI Lead representative noted the marginalisation of non-management School EDI Leads and the time pressures on those with dual EDI and management roles.

24.5.6. **AGREED** The Co-Chair to schedule a semesterly meeting with all School EDI Leads to maintain momentum and share good practices.

24.5.7. Members noted the recent appointments of Student EDI Champions and International Student EDI Champions and looked forward to productive collaboration between students and School EDI Leads.

24.6. COLLEAGUE WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT SURVEY OUTCOMES REPPORT

24.6.1. Ailbhe Lynch, Organisational Development Manager (ODM) presented the outcomes of the Colleague Wellbeing and Engagement Survey, focusing on the new EDI-related questions (Document EDI 241002B).

24.6.2. Members shared the following feedback, which the ODM will relay to the OD team for further consideration:

- Success rate of disabled applicants in recruitment.
- Providing examples to clarify survey question interpretation.
- Comparing the survey questions with other university surveys for consistency.
- Including more demographic data to drive changes, especially distinguishing between academic and PS colleagues for minority ethnic groups.
- Concerns over colleagues' wellbeing as majority of colleagues are on contract terms.
- Offering targeted interventions to ensure inclusivity across all levels of colleagues.
- Ensuring careful communication of survey results, given some colleagues reported lower levels of wellbeing.

24.6.3. In relation to a question on respondent representation, the ODM confirmed that the demographic data at University level is reflective of the University colleague community.

24.6.4. A member queried whether analysis had been done for the identified differences in the survey report. The ODM reported that the overall trends were consistent across Colleges and People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW) are working with Colleges to address gaps.

24.6.5. A member emphasised the importance of treating the cultural competency framework holistically, going beyond a tick-box approach. Pela Mashumba, Associate Director (Organisational Development) suggested further discussions on the framework's direction in a future meeting.

24.6.5.1. **ACTION Committee Secretary** to schedule the discussion of the cultural competency framework in a future meeting.

24.7. EDI INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

24.7.1. Craig Emery, Head of Marketing and Campaigns (HMC) and Zoe Williams, Communication Officer (Colleagues) delivered a presentation on the EDI internal and external communications.

24.7.2. In response to a member's query, the HMC agreed to consult School EDI Leads on future

communication campaigns.

24.7.3. Members noted that Zone29, which will be opened in 2025, will be step-free accessible.

24.7.4. A member queried whether EDI is consistently included on all University committee meeting agendas. The Co-Chair emphasised the importance of this, and the Secretary reported that the Governance team will conduct a review of the terms of reference for all major committees to ensure EDI is appropriately integrated.

24.7.4.1. **ACTION Committee Secretary** to work with the Governance team to ensure EDI is properly integrated into the terms of reference of all major committees in the University.

24.7.5. Regarding a member's query on use of X (formerly known as Twitter), the HMC confirmed that it is currently a low priority for the University, with Instagram and TikTok being the top focuses.

24.7.6. A member explored the possibility of increasing the social media visibility of Colleague Networks, similar to the University's main accounts. The HMC explained this requires extensive internal and external coordination, and further discussion would be needed.

24.7.7. A member requested that the video links in the slides are shared on the EDI Committee Teams Chat.

(Post-meeting note: The Committee Secretary shared the slides with the video links and the EDI Communications Calendar with members on 17 October 2024.)

24.8. EDI ACTION PLAN 2024/25

24.8.1. The Co-Chair informed members that the EDI Manager will review and integrate the EDI Action Plan 2024/25 with the APP, creating a more cohesive and comprehensive plan for the year.

24.8.2. The EDI Manager will provide an update on the EDI Action Plan 2024/25 in a future meeting.

24.8.2.1. **ACTION Committee Secretary** to schedule the discussion of the EDI Action Plan 2024/25 in a future meeting.

24.9. EDI PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOLS AND PS DEPARTMENTS

24.9.1. The Co-Chair welcomed Ian Wilmot, University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO) to the discussion.

24.9.2. The Co-Chair outlined the EDI priorities for Schools, based on the EDI Open Forum and the School operational plans, which include addressing the awarding gap, improving graduate outcomes on employability, enhancing student engagement, and fostering a sense of belonging for both colleagues and students.

24.9.3. The USCOO shared that PS departments have similar priorities:

- Embedding EDI in PS operational plans, focusing on graduate outcomes.
- Reaching out to students in need, with the support from the Director of Strategic Planning and Performance (SPP).
- Improving communication with students by reviewing all documents sent to students.
- Creating a safe and inclusive environment for the University community.
- Focusing on wellbeing and mental health of the University community.
- Investing in the EDI team.
- The appointment of the PS EDI Leads.

24.9.4. Members expressed concerns about accessing data to address the awarding gap. The Co-Chair emphasised the need for university-wide collaboration. The Director of Student and Academic

Services (SAS) added that the University is collaborating with the Students' Union to obtain the data, and the support from SPP to enhance data accessibility and analysis is crucial.

24.9.5.   A member proposed providing PS support at the College/School level to meet data needs for addressing awarding gaps, drawing from the business partner model for communications and PCW. The USCOO noted that the Director (SPP) is working on enhancing data models and accessibility.

24.9.6.   In relation to a member's query about risk assessment in School operational plans, the Co-Chair mentioned that the awarding gap and APP are included in the University risk register, and there are mixed approaches to risk management across Schools currently.

24.9.7.   The USCOO highlighted the importance of ongoing feedback on operational plans, targeted actions aligned with the APP, and close collaboration between the new EDI team, EDI Leads, EDI Committee and the wider University community to enhance the EDI environment.

24.9.8.   The Co-Chair thanked the USCOO for their contribution.

24.10.   KEY ISSUES: RESEARCH – ATHENA SWAN SAT STRUCTURE

24.10.1.   Professor Miriam Dwek, Chair of the Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) EDI Subcommittee presented the proposed terms of reference and membership of the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team (SAT) (Document EDI 241009F).

24.10.2.   The Chair of the RKE EDI Subcommittee noted that the University received the Bronze award in 2015 but could not follow up over the years adequately due to various challenges including Restructuring in 2018. Members heard that the current focus is to address the gaps from that period, ensuring effective data collection, proper workload recognition and focus on action plan for Athena Swan application to be made by March 2026.

24.10.3.   Members were informed that the SAT will provide regular reports to the EDI Committee.

24.10.3.1.   **ACTION Committee Secretary** to include a report from the SAT in a future meeting.

24.10.4.   A member questioned the effectiveness of the Athena SWAN accreditation, noting that it can create excessive workload by over-relying on metrics. The member also cited examples from peer institutions which have achieved fair research workload distribution through other accreditation charters.

24.10.5.   The Co-Chair, along with the Chair of the RKE EDI Subcommittee, the Director (PCW) and the EDI Accreditation Lead acknowledged the accreditation process is lengthy; however, stated it is crucial for fostering positive changes, and its success depends on how the University implements these processes to achieve meaningful outcomes. The Co-Chair reminded members that the University is going for Athena Swan accreditation on the formal recommendation from the EDI Committee in 2023.

24.10.6.   The Co-Chair suggested the member that they contact the EDI Accreditation Lead for further clarification on the process and impacts.

24.10.7.   **APPROVED** Terms of reference and membership of the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team to be implemented with immediate effect.

24.11.   UPDATES ON MEMBERS' EDI ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

24.11.1.   Members shared updates on recent or on-going activities aimed at strengthening EDI efforts in the wider University community, through both work-related and personal initiatives.

24.11.2.   A member provided an update on the recent opening of new prayer and contemplation rooms, with details available on the University website: University of Westminster opens new prayer and contemplation rooms | University of Westminster.

24.12.   MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

24.12.1.   **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 24 July 2024 (Document EDI 241009D) as an accurate record.

24.12.2.   Members noted progress on actions from previous meetings (Document EDI 241009E), confirmed completed items and received the following update from the Director (SAS):

- Action item 151 (minute 23.62.5.1): The keyword integration for the Sustainable Development Goals impact ranking exercise is complete.
- Action item 156 (minute 23.66.4.2): Discussions with Directors of PCW and SPP confirmed that all operational plans now include a section on inclusion.

24.13.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24.13.1.   Members did not raise any other matters for discussion.

24.14.   RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EDI IN 2024/25

24.14.1.   Members noted the resources committed by PCW and SAS to support the EDI Strategy and action plan for 2024/25 (Document EDI 241009G).

24.15.   EDI PROGRAMMES AND QHT

24.15.1.   Members noted the update on the EDI QHT funded programme in 2024/25 (Document EDI 241009H).

24.16.   SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2024/25

24.16.1.   Members noted the updated schedule of business 2024/25 (Document EDI 241009I).

24.17.   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

5 February 2025
9 April 2025
23 July 2025

All meetings take place between 2.00pm and 5.00pm and are held in person.