



University
of Glasgow

Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 30 July 2024 at 14:00
Zoom Meeting

- Present:** Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Dr Neil Bowering, Ms Iris Duane, Dr David Duncan, Dr Katie Farrell, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Ms Kirsteen Fraser, Mr Pablo Morán Ruiz, Ms Rachel Sandison
- Apologies:** Prof Muffy Calder, Prof Sara Carter, Ms Uzma Khan, Prof Iain McInnes, Mr Tom Rice (vice for Mrs E Gilmartin)
- Attending:** Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk), Mrs Emma McDougall

Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed P Morán Ruiz and I Duane in their roles as SRC President and Vice President Student Support. The Convener also welcomed Dr N Bowering, Executive Director of Student and Academic Services, to his first meeting. The Convener acknowledged the apologies received, noting the meeting was quorate.

Members noted E McDougall was attending to observe the meeting in her newly seconded role as Equality, Diversity Inclusion Policy & Project Lead.

Members noted, although a number of apologies had been received, the meeting was quorate.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20240318/Minutes 1.0

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising – Paper 1

K Farrell provided relevant information and updates on the following items:

Action 1 – SFC’s ‘Persistent Inequalities’ and National Equality Outcomes (NEOs)

K Farrell advised, following discussions, with the Financial Accounting (FA) team, it had been concluded it would not be appropriate, or more efficient, to include NEO reporting in the University’s Financial Reports. As such FA representatives had not attend the SFC and EHRC’s first NEO focussed sectoral event in May.

Action 6 - Domestic Violence & Abuse (DV&A)

K Farrell reassured members a review of current employee related policies and guidance has established significant signposting to DV&A support services already exists. She added the Policy Review Group will be consulted to establish the scale of issues Trade Unions’ members are encountering around this and to consider if there are any gaps in the current guidance and support provision. The Gender Equality Group and EDSC will be updated on conclusion of this work.

ACTION: EDU

Action 7 – Reporting Systems

K Farrell confirmed she had updated H Pentleton-Owens, P Moran Ruiz and I Duane on progress made in

reviewing, aligning and streamlining the respective student and staff reporting systems. Further progress will be shared during the new quarterly meetings between EDU and the SRC.

Action 9 – Guidance for Staff Supporting Sanctuary/Students Affected by Conflict

Following discussions with the new Sanctuary Manager, K Farrell advised that colleagues supporting affected students should initially signpost them to the International Student Support team for individualised guidance. The Sanctuary Working Group will discuss whether further guidance is required at their October meeting.

Action 10, 11 & 12 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Governance

K Farrell confirmed discussions with the relevant Equality Champions to review each Equality Groups' membership and terms of reference have concluded. EDSC will be further updated at the next meeting.

ACTION: EDU

Action 13 – Discussion on the IHRA 'Definition' of Antisemitism

The Convener advised the planned working group to review University's previous adoption of the IHRA 'Definition' of Antisemitism had been postponed following strong representation from both the Jewish Students' Society (JSoc) and some individual Jewish colleagues. Their views were that it was not appropriate to reconsider the University's position at this time. The Convener confirmed further discussions may be held with UCU and the other Trade Unions, however there are currently no plans to convene the working group.

3. Student Support and Wellbeing Framework Update – Paper 2

N Bowering provided a brief background to the Student Support and Wellbeing Framework, prompted by the two reviews carried out by Dr Andrew West in 2021 and 2023, and referred members to Paper 2.

Members welcome the improvements are already implemented:

- Counselling and Disability Services brought together under one wellbeing unit.
- Creation of new Safeguarding Team
- Introduction of a 24hr Counselling and Advice line for students
- Implementation of new triage and crisis support process, working closely with Security colleagues
- Jointly funded NHS liaison nurse to help navigate student referral pathways into the NHS

N Bowering noted current work includes developing a concise student wellbeing support information 'digital hub'. He also acknowledged further work is required to better integrate the Student Support Network, managed through the Schools, with the services within Student & Academic Services (S&AS).

N Bowering advised the plan to professionalise the Residential Life services, in partnership with Commercial Services, have been postponed until the next academic year, to ensure the expected improvements in service to students can be delivered effectively.

Members welcomed the proposal put forward to the Student Review Implementation Group to map student experience pathways in order to create a student-centric and holistic approach, bringing together S&AS, the Library, Residential Service and the academic advising colleagues. N Bowering stated draft models are being developed, with the expectation that the new model will be ready for implementation by April 2025. Members fully supported these plans but noted further work on the digital hub must include

removal of current web content, to ensure out of date content does not cause confusion.

K Fraser welcomed the development of the 'digital hub' but called for a diverse range of information to be included, such as LGBT Health Care and for support for Student Parents. She also expressed the view that it presented an ideal opportunity to standardise approaches to the application and implementation of support policies across Schools, citing differing experiences of implementing of policies such as Student Maternity, Student Carers and Disability support. The Convener noted such issues should also be addressed through the Student Experience Committee.

4. British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan 2024-2030 – Paper 3

K Farrell reminded members the University's initial BSL Action Plan had been approved by EDSC in 2018. She referred members to Paper 3, which sets out the new draft 2024-2030 plan, noting it was modelled on the six priorities within the Scottish Government's National BSL Action which are most relevant to the University.

Members noted several actions within the new plan have been rolled over from the original plan. K Farrell confirmed this was either to ensure continued commitment or to address where limited progress had been made. She also confirmed all new actions had been added following consultation with each Action Owner.

K Farrell highlighted the plan includes a commitment to review and report progress within three years, to align with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and mainstreaming reporting requirements for 2027, with the Disability Equality Group and EDSC receiving regular updates.

Members noted the commitment to deliver BSL/Deaf awareness courses for staff represents a more accessible way of raising awareness that recognised the limited availability of suitable BSL language tutors and the time commitment required for the full 10-week courses.

Members welcomed and approved the action plan for publication and translation but highlighted the need for awareness raising across the University community. D Duncan offered to contact Peter Aitchison, retired Director of Communications, who was involved with the development of the original plan due to his personal experiences, may be keen to support the dissemination of the new Action Plan.

ACTION: D Duncan

5. Staff Related Items

5.1 Inclusive Community – Online Reporting Update

K Farrell provided a presentation on the latest statistics from both the student and staff online bullying, harassment and sexual violence reporting system. K Farrell reminded members that reporting parties could identify multiple Report Types and Targeting Factors. Members noted the following:

Student Reports:

- Total of 577 reports received since January 2021, with 190 received in 2023-24 (comparable with reports received in 2022-23).
- 392 recorded with a Status of 'Closed', 130 are 'In Progress', and 55 remain as 'Logged'. 'Logged' denotes a report has been made but no progress has been recorded within Ivanti.
- Where an outcome was recorded, 35 were referred to Wellbeing Services, 11 were referred to Senate, 13 were referred on to Police Scotland or other external services. 199 reports have an

outcome of 'Closed - no further action'.

- 134 cases currently have no outcome recorded. These are legacy cases, prior to the full implementation of the Safeguarding Team, in October 2023, who now manage all student reports.
- There may be duplicated entries as First Responders currently have to create a 'report' after having spoken to a Reporting Party in order to provide an update on the case.
- Bullying, discrimination, Harassment were the most common report type, with sexual violence and sexual harassment the next most frequently chosen by the reporting party.
- Gender/Sex and Ethnicity remain the most commonly reported targeting factor.

Colleague Reports:

- Total of 183 reports received since March 2022, with 97 received in 2023-24 (31% increase on the numbers received in 2022-23).
- Excluding those identified as spam (50), the number of reports was 133, with 82 received in 2023-34 (increase of 105% on the reports in 2022-23).
- 174 reports show a status of 'Closed', and 9 current reports shown as 'In Progress'.
- All 'Closed' reports have an outcome recorded. Colleague reports have a wider variety of outcome options. These include designations for spam reports (50); Formal process pursued by Reporting Party (3); Closed at the request of the reporting party (7), Informal resolution reached (16), transfer to P&OD Case Management (17), no response from the Reporting Party (9) and anonymous reports where full investigation was not possible, but some details were flagged to local PO&D (25).
- Bullying, harassment and discrimination were the most common report types, followed by victimisation, other and sexual harassment.
- Targeting factors broadly echo those of student cases, with the highest number of incidents relating to Gender/Sex and Ethnicity, however Disability has become the next highest targeting factor.

Members noted planned actions include:

- Aligning the Student and Colleague Reporting Forms to allow for a single reporting route.
- Revise Student Report outcomes to better support analysis.

K Farrell also noted this work was aligned with the Ross Report Recommendations. She also noted the Safeguarding Team now also receive 'Notes of Concern' from Advisers of Study, teaching staff and Student Support Officers via their designated email address.

Members welcomed the update, noting the increased usage from colleagues should be seen as a positive result of previous and continuing awareness raising campaigns. Members noted communications are already planned to highlight both 'Together against Racism' and 'Together against GBV' campaigns and the University's expectations of both students and colleagues as an inclusive community.

K Fraser highlighted colleagues' previous scepticism about using the tool and their anxiety about being 'tracked' when using it to report anonymously. She suggested communicating this data may help alleviate colleagues' anxieties, together with highlighting the restricted ability to investigate issues and take action when reporting issues anonymously. She also called on the University to ensure that where cultural and hierarchical issues are being reported these are fully investigated and dealt with appropriately.

The Convener suggested for the next reporting cycle it would be useful to know how many of the anonymous reports which are flagged to P&OD colleagues lead to formal processes.

ACTION: EDU

6. Student Related Items

P Morán Ruiz and I Duane confirmed all student related items had already been raised through the relevant Equality Groups.

7. Equality Champions Updates

7.1 Age

K Farrell confirmed there was nothing to report in this area. I Duane expressed the SRC's concern that the last substantive report on the area of Age Equality was received by EDSC in July 2023, which may indicate a lack of progress in support specific student cohorts, such as mature students.

The Convener acknowledged I Duane's concern and requested a written update be provided at the next meeting, should the Age Equality Champion not be able to attend.

ACTION: EDU

7.2 Disability

C Barr provided members with an overview of recent disability related activities:

- The draft BSL Action Plan was reviewed by the Disability Equality Group (DEG)
- The newly established Estates Accessibility Working Group (EWAG) chaired by Peter Haggarty, Executive Director of Estates, held its first meeting on 29 July 2024. This Group will report to DEG.
- K Farrell met with Safety and Environmental Protection Service colleagues, along with Disability Coordinator and Disability Service representatives to clarify roles and responsibilities for developing and disseminating Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) for disabled student and colleagues.
- A review of School-based Disability Coordinator role is being undertaken by Student Wellbeing & Inclusion, looking to streamline and standardise the support provided to both disabled students and to teaching staff to ensure they understand their responsibilities to those students.
- Following two well attended focus groups, an 18-point action plan has been developed which is hoped will improve the workplace experience of disabled colleagues. Actions include a planned University-wide disability related campaign and the establishment of a Disabled Colleagues Network.
- A new Accessible Formats Service has been established within the Library. This team will support print disabled¹ students and assist teaching staff to create more inclusive and accessible teaching materials. The Service is due to launch in August.

The Convener welcomed the new EWAG group and the action plan to support disabled colleagues. Members acknowledged the breadth of ongoing work being undertaken.

7.3 Gender (Sex)

K Farrell advised External Relations plan to issue further 'Together against Gender-based Violence' communications to new incoming students, as well as reminding current students of University's

¹ A print-disabled person is a person who cannot effectively read print because of a visual, physical, perceptual, developmental, cognitive, or learning disability.

expectations. I Duane welcomed this, as previous years have seen a spike in GBV reports received by the SRC Advice Centre and the GBV Support Advisers around Freshers Week. K Farrell agreed to ensure External Relations keep the SRC informed of their plans.

ACTION: EDU

K Farrell also reported following good feedback from Garscube campus students and colleagues, the Molly Hankinson exhibition will remain in situ there for longer.

Members noted the Gender Equality Group has now assumed oversight of the implementation of the Ross Report Action Plan.

7.4 Mental Health – Paper 4

D Duncan referred members to Paper 4, which comprised the minutes of the last two Mental Health Group meetings. He noted the use of the service provision (both online and in-person) is relatively stable at the moment.

Members welcomed the University highlighting Able Futures' delivery of the Scottish-based mental health support for those in work which is funded by the Department of Work and Pensions. D Duncan noted this support is available in addition to the provision already by Health Assured.

K Fraser highlighted the recent BBC investigation into Health Assured. D Duncan acknowledged the concerns and confirmed questions have been asked of Health Assured.

7.5 LGBT+

M Fischbacher-Smith reported both students and colleagues participated in June's Glasgow Pride March.

7.6 Race

K Farrell advised the most recent Race Equality Group was cancelled due to last minute apologies. REG was due to consider the report by KMPG following their audit of the implementation, findings, and recommendations of the 'Understanding Racism and Transforming University Cultures' (URTUC) Action Plan – this will now be discussed at the first REG meeting of the new academic year. The Convener proposed an update on those discussions be provided at the next EDSC meeting.

ACTION: U Khan

7.7 Religion and Belief – Paper 5

Members noted I McInnes had provided a written update due to being unable to attend today's meeting.

7.8 Sanctuary

R Sandison provided members with an overview of recent activities:

- As part of June's Refugee Week, the University supported the [Refuwegee](#) 'Letter fae a local' campaign which was well received by the students and colleagues across the University.
- The new Sanctuary Manager is now in post, working within External Relations.
- The University's [Sanctury Hub](#) webpages have been established to communicate the full range of activities and support available.
- The number of Sanctuary Scholarships will increase from 20 to 30 in academic year 2025/26.
- The University is providing three Masters and two PhD Higher Education Scholarships for Palestinians (HESPAL) through the British Council.

- The Dima Alhaj Scholarship, set up in 2024 in memory of a University of Glasgow alumna, will now run in perpetuity.
- In addition to the existing eight Cara (Council For At-Risk Academics) Fellowships, further support has been pledged. The University will also host a Cara Networking event on 23 September 2024 where Cara Fellows will share their personal reflections, and Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director of Cara, will provide information on planned future Cara developments.
- The University has committed to support the Technical Education Support Initiative (TESI) program, spearheaded by An-Najah National University in Nablus, West Bank, that allows students from Gaza to continue their education online. Further work will be required to establish exactly what form that support will take.
- The University will host the launch of the Scottish Government's 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: Delivery Plan 2024-2026' on 19 August 2024, with Scotland's Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP expected to be in attendance.

Members welcomed the extensive work in this area. They also noted that while the Sanctuary Scholarships £5000 per year stipend (to cover study costs) has not been increased, the scholarship also comes with free university accommodation throughout the duration of the degree. The Sanctuary Working Group would keep the level of stipend under review.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Additional Religion and Belief Update

D Duncan advised members that the new University Chaplain, Rev Scott Blythe would be joining the University in August. D Duncan also noted the University is assisting the Muslim Students' Association (GUMSA) in finding suitable prayer facilities close to the University.

No other items of business were raised.

Date of Next Meeting: 5 December 2024 at 14:00 – 16:00