



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 21 March 2022 at 10:00

Zoom Meeting

- Present:** Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Dr David Duncan, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Ms Uzma Khan, Prof Iain McInnes, Dr June Milligan, Prof Jill Morrison, Prof Roibeard O Maolalaigh, Dr Robert Partridge, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Eva Simmons, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Ms Mhairi Taylor
- Apologies:** Prof Muffy Calder, Miss Ella McCabe, Dr Dania Thomas
- Attending:** Dr Katie Farrell, Rev Dr Carolyn Kelly, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed members, noting U Khan was now attending EDSC in her capacity as the new Race Equality Champion, following the retirement of B Dean. He acknowledged the apologies received. The Convener noted Rev Dr Carolyn Kelly was joining the meeting to assist discussions in relation to agenda item 3 and Dr Farrell, from the Equality and Diversity Unit, was observing the meeting.

Members also noted R Sandison, who was in transit from an international meeting, would join the meeting once able to provide an update on Refugee and Asylum related items and then leave.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20211220/Minutes1.1

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising – Paper 1

Members acknowledged a number of actions had not yet progressed. The following updates were provided.

Actions 1 (Dignity at Work and Study Policy)

M Taylor confirmed the Policy review will be undertaken later in the year.

ACTION: EDU

Actions 3 (Sanitary Bin access in all toilets) & 4 (Changing Places facilities)

D Duncan confirmed these items were being considered as part of the main Campus Development Plan which is the budgetary planning stage. He noted this is due to be completed by June 2022 and hoped to be able to report back on these items at the next meeting.

ACTION: D Duncan

Action 5 - Provision and facilities for prayer and reflection spaces

M Taylor advised this would be discussed as part of agenda item 3.

Action 6 - UofG Awarding Gap Data Analysis

M Taylor noted an update on this item would be provided at a future meeting.

ACTION: S Naeem/T Scotto

Action 7 - Gender Based Violence and Sexual Misconduct

M Taylor confirmed this would be discussed as part of agenda item 5.

Action 10 - QC-Led Investigation

Members noted the investigation by Morag Ross QC was still under way, and no update was available yet.

ACTION: D Duncan/Convener

Action 11 - College Engagement Survey – Diversity Results

M Taylor acknowledged this item had not been progressed but would report back at the next meeting.

ACTION: EDU

Action 13 - Wellbeing Framework for Students

Members noted an update would be provided at the next meeting in June 2022.

ACTION: R Partridge

3. UUK Tackling Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred report – Paper 2

I McInnes thanked C Kelly and M Taylor for their assistance with developing Paper 2 and invited members to comment on the UUK report (appendix A) and the responses to it, described in the paper and discuss the recommendations made in section four.

Members agreed the increasing staff and student population warranted a comprehensive review of the current provision for Muslim prayer facilities but recognised the limited availability of potential sites for further development. D Duncan, I McInnes and U Khan to discuss further with C Kelly on how best to take this forward, ensuring any design or implementation is done in consultation with the community.

ACTION: D Duncan/I McInnes/U Khan/C Kelly

M Fischbacher-Smith observed including awareness of Islam within Decolonising the Curriculum work would require specialist knowledge and in-depth consultation to ensure it is accurately reflected, though she also cautioned against highlighting one religion over others in this work. M Taylor suggested the related Community of Practice should be involved in those discussions.

Members noted the need to engage the whole University community (staff and students) to widen the audience for interfaith and cultural learning opportunities and events which will in turn support a more diverse faith experience for all. D Duncan observed senior management's engagement with the different faith groups appears to be the most effective and is very valued by the groups.

Members reflected on the proposal relating to the need for further resources for the Chaplaincy and considered how the University's engagement with the Prevent strategy should be reflected in the report and recommendations.

M Taylor, C Kelly and I McInnes agreed to review the report's recommendation in light of EDSC comments and would develop a draft action plan. The Convener thanked C Kelly for her attendance and requested the updated report and action plan be circulated electronically for comment prior to the next EDSC.

ACTION: M Taylor/C Kelly/I McInnes

4. Refugee & Asylum Seeker Equality Champion Update

R Sandison joined the meeting and thanked members for allowing her to provide her update prior to the other Equality Champions.

R Sandison advised no agreement had yet been reached on a new title for her expanded Equality Champion role. She confirmed discussions would be held with M Taylor before the next EDSC and confirmation of the new title would be circulated to members electronically.

ACTION: R Sandison/ M Taylor

Members noted the outcome of the University of Sanctuary application, submitted last year, would not be available until after a site visit and interview by the panel. It is expected this will take place before the new academic year. R Sandison confirmed EDSC will be informed once an outcome was known.

ACTION: R Sandison

R Sandison advised SMG will receive a paper tomorrow with recommendations on support for those affected by the situation in Ukraine, as well as expanding the University's humanitarian and refugee scholarships to include any student seeking sanctuary from any conflict across the globe. She advised the paper will also report on the expansion of existing work with, and commitment to, [CARA](#) in their support of 'at risk' academics.

R Sandison reported she was pleased to have been asked to join a new UUK International Task and Finish Group on Ukraine which will produce guidance and recommendations on collective action that universities can take, initially on Ukraine but the principles will go wider. She confirmed the University will continue to signpost on support available and has been involved in agreeing collective statements by [The Guild](#), [CIVIS](#) and [Russell Group](#). She referred members to the [University's dedicated webpage](#) which sets out our own response and support, noting the student Emergency Hardship appeal had already raised £75,000. The Convener highlighted the QMU Hub which had been collecting vital donations for direct distribution in Ukraine.

The Convener thanked R Sandison for her comprehensive report and hoped she would be in a position to share outputs from the Task and Finish Group with members in future.

5. Student Experience Strategy – Paper 3

R Partridge noted the Strategy had been developed through initial work with the Student Experience Committee, in collaboration with the SRC President, E McCabe, and then further developed by a small working group, which also included the current President of GU Sport.

R Partridge talked members through the Strategy's 5 Principles, 3 Pillars and 3 Enablers noting the Strategy was still in the consultation phase and then welcomed members' comments.

E Simmons noted the SRC welcomed the Strategy and welcomed the further opportunity for consultation with SRC Council and other student bodies, as well as through focus groups.

R Sandison suggested existing University strategies, in particular Global Glasgow, along with our networks and alliances, such as Universitas 21, should be used to further develop some areas of the Strategy – particularly within the Opportunity section.

I McInnes supported the development of the Strategy but counselled the challenge will be to carefully position its future launch to ensure it tells the story of the great work already being done and is not seen as placing a further burden on staff.

R Partridge noted the Strategy is framed around the great experience already provided to many students but also points to areas where we might focus particular attention in the future. He agreed with L Sutherland's comments, acknowledging the third pillar, inclusion, reflects and celebrates that students experience Glasgow differently whilst ensuring that every student can feel part of our community.

The Convener suggested the Strategy should reference and respond to the University's ongoing work in Gender Based Violence and anti-racism within the inclusion section.

D Duncan noted some outcomes from this Strategy will see an emphasis on improving facilities and infrastructure, student development and stronger ties with student associations. He also confirmed the Strategy, and its action plan will be revised considering members' comments and will work with Planning, Insights & Analytics colleagues to incorporate appropriate measurements to ensure delivery and accountability.

ACTION: R Partridge/D Duncan

6. Gender Based Violence – Update

C Barr noted the investigation by Morag Ross QC was still ongoing and acknowledged the work of EDU in preparing and collating the extensive documentation being reviewed.

C Barr provided an update on the GBV action plan, last seen by EDSC at the December 2021 meeting. She highlighted:

- Development of a draft Code of Professional Conduct, which will apply to all staff, is in initial stages of consultation.
- SMG's participation in specific Gender Based Violence training, delivered by Rape Crisis Scotland.
- Policies being reviewed as part of the Action Plan have been discussed with Trade Unions.
- Legal guidance has been sought on our ability to share outcomes from formal procedures with those who report GBV.
- Student Online Reporting Tool has been reviewed and improved.
- Guidance launched for colleagues who receive a report of GBV from both students or their peers.

M Taylor noted a fuller update paper will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: EDU

R Partridge reminded members the University is currently revising the approach to non-academic student misconduct. He acknowledged the need to align both the student and staff Codes of Conduct and will work closely with M Taylor and colleagues in People and Organisational Development.

ACTION: R Partridge

7. Understanding Racism, Transforming University Cultures: Action Plan Update – Paper 4

M Taylor referred members to Paper 4, noting significant progress has been made across all areas. She highlighted work is now progressing on the more in-depth, longer term, areas in the Plan:

- Decolonising the Curriculum
- Degree Attainment Gap
- Issues relating to ethnicity in recruitment

M Taylor highlighted the degree attainment gaps had significantly reduced, not only in ethnicity but also

across all protected characteristics, over the last two years and more detailed investigation will be required to establish the reasons for this. This work will lie within the Learning and Teaching Committee remit.

M Fischbacher-Smith noted the assessment and feedback and curriculum design workstreams associated with the Learning and Teaching strategy would take forward the inclusion work from the URTUC plan and would be informed by the evidence base from existing studies elsewhere and will consider the complex nature of this area.

U Khan noted the original attainment gap data previously presented at EDSC did not appear to control for entry qualifications and wondered if this might be useful to consider as part of the future analysis.

M Taylor agreed and noted the data would need to be re-analysed.

ACTION: EDU/PI&A

The Convener and other members reflected on the positive effect for them in making their URTUC objectives public and noted the support from EDU colleagues has been greatly beneficial.

8. Respect Advisers: Recruitment

M Taylor reporting the recent recruitment campaign for volunteer Respect Advisers saw an unprecedented 40 plus applicants, with 38 taken forward to the training stage. Members widely welcomed this and also noted the new recruits represented all Colleges & University Services, job families and were from diverse backgrounds.

The Convener noted the planned training programme for those in this valuable role which contributes to an inclusive culture, supporting colleagues and students to resolve issues informally.

9. Student Related Items

9.1 Economic Inequality

E Simmons raised the issues faced by many students trying to deal with the increasing cost of living. She noted although they have to work to support themselves and their studies, it has been increasing difficult to find suitable paid employment and asked if the University could look at more ways to assist such students.

The Convener noted economic inequality cuts across many of the protected characteristics. He noted the Student Experience Committee should be involved in looking at this and asked E Simmons and M Taylor to raise it through that committee.

ACTION: SRC/EDU

10. Staff Related Items

10.1 Equality and Diversity Training: Completion rates and review – Paper 5

The Convener requested this item be carried forward to the next EDSC for a fuller discussion on the meaning of 'mandatory' for ED&I training courses; how that could be enforced, recognising there is no legal requirement as there is for Health and Safety related courses; and whether to expand the current 'mandatory' list of ED&I e-learning courses. He asked members to provide comments and thoughts on this direct to M Taylor as soon as possible to allow her to produce a discussion paper for the next meeting incorporating those views.

ACTION: Members/EDU

10.2 Annual Staff Equality Monitoring Report – Paper 6

The Convener and M Taylor referred members to Paper 6, noted the recommendation to publish the Case Management section including the new data on Disability and Ethnicity in this area. Members agreed the report should be published in full.

ACTION: EDU

11. **Equality Champions Updates**

The Convener noted the meeting was nearing its allotted time and asked those Equality Champions in attendance to provide brief updates.

11.1 Religion and Belief Equality Champion

I McInnes reported the University will welcome the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, along with the newly appointed head of the Faith Action Group, for discussions on a potential role for the University in proposed organisational changes in the Church.

11.2 Age Equality Update

Members noted Dr Nighet Riaz from EDU presented at a recent Research Development's ECR Network on undertaking a PhD later in a career – this had been well received.

11.3 Disability Equality Champion

C Barr advised she chaired her first Disability Equality Group meeting as Champion in December. The main topics discussed were the progress on implementing the actions from the Student Disability Review, provision for online exams, recording lectures and blending learning. The Group also received a presentation on the Colleague Wellbeing Strategy. She noted recruitment issues and the provision of support for disabled colleagues will be future topics of discussion and investigation.

11.4 Gender (Sex) Equality Champion

J Morrison noted in addition to the earlier update on GBV, she highlighted the Gender Equality Steering Group discussed how to ensure that work is fully incorporated into the work of the Group. She reported the SFC have recently announced universities are no longer required to publish an Institutional Gender Action Plan, however we will continue to use the existing plan to help fulfil our statutory duty to tackle inequality. She noted International Women's Day was once again marked with a number of events.

11.5 Mental Health Champion

D Duncan noted demand for support has been high, particularly from students, having seen an increase in both crisis cases and those seeking support for general anxiety and depression. He highlighted the introduction of new College-based Student Support Officers roles. He noted Mental Health continues to be the main reason given for staff absences however the existing support networks and mechanisms, as signposted in the Wellbeing Strategy, appear to be being used effectively. He highlighted the existing Employee Assistance Provider contract is due to undergo a retendering process which may see a new provider.

11.6 LGBT+ Equality Champion

R O Maolaligh confirmed, after discussions and strong support from members of the LGBTQ+ Equality Group, the University renewed its Diversity Champion membership with Stonewall Scotland. This year's

LGBT History Month was again very successful, with a full programme of events delivered by colleagues and student groups alike.

He also noted the Group discussed a recent [UCAS and Stonewall report](#) into the experiences of LGBTQ+ students preparing to start further and higher education which highlights the need for support services which recognise the needs of LGBTQ+ students, and in particular for Trans students. He advised the Transitions Working Group has an action to follow up with Student Support colleagues on the findings from the report.

He also noted the staff and student networks have been receiving a number of inquiries from international PGT students, with an increasing number of Trans students experiencing challenges following their arrival in the UK.

The Convener thanked R O Maolalaigh and asked for the next EDSC to receive a report on how the UCAS report findings are being taken forward across the University. **ACTION: EDU/Transitions Working Group**

11.7 Race Equality Champion

U Khan confirmed there were no further updates which had not already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

12. Any Other Business

No further items for discussion were raised.

Date of Scheduled Next Meeting: 13 June 2022 at 14:00 – 16:00