



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

16 November 2020 at 14:00 – 16:00

- Present:** Principal Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Mr Liam Brady, Prof Frank Coton, Ms Bonnie Dean, Dr David Duncan, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Prof Neal Juster, Miss Elle McCabe, Prof Roibeard O Maolalaigh, Dr Robert Partridge, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Lesley Sutherland, Ms Mhairi Taylor, Dr Dania Thomas
- Apologies:** Prof Muffy Calder, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Prof Jill Morrison, Prof Satnam Virdee
- Attending:** Dr Katie Farrell, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk), Dr Mark Mortimer, Ms Kerry Revel, Ms Paola Tisi

1. Welcome & apologies

The Convener welcomed members and acknowledged the apologies received. He stated Prof Satnam Virdee had been invited to speak to agenda item 6, however he was unable to attend.

The Convener then welcomed Dr Dania Thomas, attending in her capacity as the new JULC nominated Trades Union representative, and Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith Members who had taken over the Learning and Teaching Committee's representative role.

Members noted Dr Mark Mortimer and Ms Kerry Revel were joining the meeting for Agenda Item 5 only. Members also noted Dr Katie Farrell was attending to speak to Agenda Item 9.1 and would also observe the meeting along with Ms Paola Tisi, Ambitious Futures Graduate, as part of her placement within EDU.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/2020624/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from previous meeting – Paper 1

The Convener referred members to Paper 1, noting most were marked complete. The following verbal updates were provided:

Action 1 – SFC-Advance HE Evidence Group

M Taylor was not selected to participate in the SFC-Advance HE Evidence Group.

Action 2 – Equality and Diversity Essentials Training Statistics

M Taylor advised, due to the COVID-19 related workload of the majority of staff over the summer, it was felt adding to this further by asking staff to undertake the training would not be ideal. This will be followed up in the new year.

ACTION: EDU

Action 4 – Dignity at Work and Study Policy

M Taylor confirmed EDU would review the name of this policy as part of the routine review, which will take place next year.

ACTION: EDU

Action 5 – Student Equality Data

M Taylor confirmed EDSC would receive reports based on the QlikSense data at the last EDSC meeting of this academic year.

ACTION: EDU

Action 6 – UCU Report ‘The Realities of Casualisation at the University of Glasgow’

M Taylor confirmed an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been completed and discussed recently with the Trades Unions. She reported the EIA indicated there was a differential impact for both younger staff and staff from an ethnic minority background; a smaller impact for Disabled staff, with no difference when looking at Sex. She advised the Trades Unions now want to gather qualitative data and want to look at whether there are any differences when considering socio-economic status.

C Barr confirmed a noticeable impact for staff from minority ethnic background which would be considered within the Action Plan to be discussed under Agenda Item 6.

M Taylor confirmed the EIA would be circulated to members, with a request for feedback. Resulting actions will be discussed and decided with the assistance of the Union’s Anti- Casualisation Group and the Race Equality Group. **ACTION: EDU**

4. Terms of Reference and Membership – Annual Review – Paper 2

Members noted no changes were proposed to the remit of the Committee and agreed this for another year.

R Sandison noted the job title for Emma Gilmartin should be updated following the restructure of the Communications teams. M Taylor confirmed this would be updated. **ACTION: EDU**

The Convener asked that EDSC record its thanks to Dr Helen Stoddart, the previous Learning and Teaching Committee representative for her previous contributions.

Members noted the committee’s gender split was just short of the 40/40/20 requirement.

5. REF2021 – EIA on selection of outputs for submissions – Paper 3

M Mortimer referred members to Paper 3. He took members through the EIA and explained the processes adopted by REF Output Scoring Committees, following completion of the Interim Research Review Process, to mitigate potential sources of bias in output selection, along with the two-part analyses of the scores given to the outputs reviewed on completion of the interim research review process by age and sex.

Members noted the conclusion of the first analysis of over 900 outputs found there no differences in relation to output scores and the age of the author, however a correlation was found in relation to output scores and the sex of the author. As a result of this the REF Project Board requested a further analysis be carried out; requesting all scored outputs which were in contention for inclusion in the REF submission be considered. After removing outputs with mixed sex authorship 5,575 unique outputs were analysed. Following this further analysis, detailed within the paper, the REF Project Board took the view that the scoring committees were not making decisions in a way that would disadvantage female authors.

M Taylor noted gender bias in citations could affect scoring of REF submissions. M Mortimer advised it had not been possible to do that level of analysis.

Members endorsed the thorough approach taken throughout this process and thanked M Mortimer, K Revel and all involved.

M Mortimer advised a further full EIA will be undertaken following the final REF submission and EDSC will have sight of this once completed. **ACTION: R&IS**

6. Understanding Racism Transforming University Culture – Report and Action Plan - Papers 4 & 5

M Taylor referred members to the draft Report and Action Plan, noting again, co-author Prof Satnam Virdee was unfortunately unable to attend today. She reminded members of discussions at the last EDSC which detailed the background for this work and the resulting project undertaken by the EHRC Tackling Racism Working Group and EDU's previous Ambitious Futures Graduate, Cassie Masterton.

The Convener reminded members the Report and Action Plan remain in draft format and were not for further dissemination at this stage. M Taylor stated some EDSC members had already had sight of previous versions, with feedback from those meetings incorporated into the latest iterations. She asked members to provide any further comments, particularly on tone, noting the need to ensure the report galvanises support for the actions required to affect the changes which are clearly needed.

B Dean recognised some concern had been expressed about the sample sizes of the student survey and staff interviews, however she stated the lived experiences captured within the report will help people to understand what forms of racism people experience and the full impact it has on them.

Members commented:

- The Report is well written and has an appropriately challenging tone which gets the desired messages across.
- The Trades Unions welcomed the report's holistic framing, which goes beyond simple PSED compliance, and expected it would set a standard for the sector.
- The Trades Unions are keen to assist with this work but noted, given the different structural problems affecting staff and students, they would have liked to see staff issues given more specific focus.
- Additional actions should include outreach into schools targeting pre-arrival students, to ensure those incoming students are made aware of the University's anti-racist stance and given clear guidance on our expectations, including information about the consequences of not meeting those expectations. This would tie in with work already started in relation to pre-arrivals. This should also be reflected in the recruitment of new staff. **ACTION: EDU**
- As Figure 5, within the report, shows many students experienced racial harassment in an academic setting this might be fully addressed.
- People will only report if they feel safe, supported and confident to come forward and be assured that doing so will not have any impact on them.
- It is vital the University is transparent and honest about the findings.
- External Relations will work with colleagues on the publication of the report, assist with managing any resulting external feedback and media approaches and also with planning the proposed related University campaign. **ACTION: EDU**
- Publication should also be used as an opportunity to bring the University community together to address this, as well as engaging beyond the institution to affect change.

M Fischbacher-Smith noted the new Learning and Teaching Strategy, currently being finalised, features inclusion and diversity prominently and includes a statement on the need to decolonise the curriculum, using the expertise and obvious commitment already in evidence across the University.

The Convener advised the University is discussing setting a top-level Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for staffing, as it did for the outgoing Strategy, which would send a clear signal of the importance of this work. N Juster confirmed discussions have already begun around whether to articulate a KPI specifically for Race or whether to have a more open 'inclusion' KPI.

C Barr suggested a 'compound' KPI with Race, Disability and LGBT+ aspects, would be a welcome step forward. She confirmed the new "World Changers Together" strategy will provide an ideal opportunity to emphasise and embed our values, one of which will be 'Inclusive Community'.

In response to members' feedback, M Taylor stated the best way to ensure staff and students feel safe to report is to ensure they can easily access our reporting tools, then to regularly and openly report on issues and find ways, while maintaining anonymity, to demonstrate actions taken to address issues raised. This will build confidence in both the system and the University's commitment.

The Convener stated he would, in advance of HR Committee meeting in the new year, report direct to Court on the Report and Action Plan. **ACTION: Convener**

Members agreed the Report be taken to SMG on 10 December with the recommendation that the Report and Action Plan are published. They noted publication may create both positive and negative reactions and External Relations colleagues would be called upon to help manage this. Members recognised the extensive work to be done, and while not all of it would fall to EDU, additional resources within EDU will be required to drive this forward.

The Convener thanked members and all those involved with producing the Report.

7. Discussion on Adoption of IHRA definition of anti-Semitism – Paper 6

N Juster referring members to Paper 6. He advised the University was formally approached about adopting the working definition, shown on page 3, by the President of the Glasgow Jewish Students Society during the summer, when a commitment to discuss it at today's meeting was made. Members noted the UK Government's Education Secretary had recently written to all English universities advising them they may face sanctions if they did not adopt the IHRA definition; this had resulted in a number of other approaches from students and alumni.

N Juster noted similar discussions are taking place across the sector in response to the Education Secretary's intervention and sustained pressure from Jewish student societies. He also noted he was aware academics, including those from Jewish groups, across the UK are less inclined to adopt it due to the complex academic freedom issues involved.

N Juster reminded members the University currently does not have any 'group' definitions within our Equality and Diversity Policy and adopting the IHRA definition may mean we need to adopt other 'group' definitions to ensure parity. He stated, in his view, this may not cause any issues provided they have been consulted on and agreed; indeed Paper 6 states if the University adopts the IHRA definition it should then consider adopting the working definition for Islamophobia from the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on British Muslims'.

M Taylor highlighted specific definitions of protected characteristics are only defined in a legal context, such as environmentalism, support for Scottish independence and more recently veganism.

N Juster noted whatever decision is made by EDSC, wider discussions may take place across campus, including at Senate. The Convener recognised any subsequent discussions at Senate would need to be handled carefully but reminded members it is EDSC's responsibility to make this decision and then report it to Court.

N Juster highlighted Paper 6 makes no specific recommendation and asked members for their views.

Members discussed the IHRA definition and the contemporary examples and how any possible adoption would affect the University and the academic community.

D Thomas stated UCU's position is clear; in that it rejects the definition. She also highlighted Kenneth Stern, who originally drafted the definition, has previously stated it was never intended to be applied to universities and the academic community and doing so would harm academic freedom and freedom of speech.

L Brady advised the SRC were also under pressure from many in the student community to adopt the IHRA definition. He reported the SRC had been in dialogue with the Jewish Society about a number of issues which have arisen on campus this year which clearly indicate anti-Semitism is an issue. E McCabe echoed this position, stating it was important for the University to show its support for this group of students.

M Taylor noted adopting the definition would not affect how incidents of anti-Semitism are dealt with, advising these dealt with in a very professional and efficient way, including reporting to the [Community Security Trust](#). Many incidents involve graffiti or posters being put up and where we know who is involved this is dealt with appropriately.

M Taylor advised the University Chaplain, Rev Carolyn Kelly, had advised she would be supportive of adopting both IHRA and APPG definitions but with caveats attached to them.

M Taylor highlighted the Scottish Government had recently adopted the IHRA definition and had not commented further.

Members then extensively discussed the complexity of the issue. They noted the earlier discussions on race equality and the upcoming University Strategy launch may present a useful foreground should the University decide to adopt both the IHRA definition and the APPG's definition of Islamophobia.

Members agreed the University must continue to reject all forms of racism and discrimination. To this end, the Committee decided to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Members also agreed the University must remain committed to protecting academic freedom and freedom of speech. Finally, the Committee agreed GUMSA should be consulted on the APPG's definition of Islamophobia.

M Taylor agreed to confirm if the Muslim Council of Britain had endorsed the APPG's definition and to consult with GUMSA.

ACTION: EDU

8. Student Related Items

8.1 – Disability Support Review/Mental Health - Update

R Partridge advised members the University is undertaking a fundamental review of the support for disabled students, looking at pre-arrivals, learning and teaching considerations, support provision and outcomes for this cohort. The review is being chaired by Prof Jill Morrison, in her role as Clerk of Senate. He confirmed the review should be ready to report early in the new year and EDSC will receive this.

ACTION: R Partridge

R Partridge reported, though not unexpected in the current COVID situation, the University had experienced a huge increase in the numbers of students seeking support for issues relating to mental health. This increase had exposed gaps in our provision, in particular peer to peer and professional support provision. To address this the University is looking at how Advisors of Study could help assist/support students in need.

9. Staff Items

9.1 – Athena Swan update – Paper 7

K Farrell referred members to Paper 7 which provides information on the ongoing transformation of the Athena Swan Charter. Members noted the recent announcements by the UK government on reducing the burden of bureaucracy for the research, innovation and university sectors which impacts Athena Swan and other charters.

K Farrell highlighted, in addition to the transformation, the current SFC funding package for Advance HE, which allows all Scottish universities to participate in Athena Swan subscription free, comes to an end in 2021. It is unclear whether this funding package will continue in the same form, however any change will likely result in financial implications for the University.

Members noted K Farrell is now a member of the Athena Swan Governance Committee (ASGC) which will provide assurance, expert advice and guidance to the Advance HE Board on matters relating to the transformation and ongoing enhancement of the charter. K Farrell assured members the University's commitment to gender equality are well represented through the ASGC and other fora.

K Farrell confirmed EDSC would be updated once the outcomes of the Athena Swan transformation, and any update on SFC funding plans, are known. **ACTION: EDU**

10. Equality Champions Updates

The Convener drew members attention to Paper 8 and invited R Sandison to speak to it.

10.1 - University of Sanctuary Bid Draft Action Plan

R Sandison reported a number of universities have already gained University of Sanctuary status. She stated, by becoming a University of Sanctuary, the University has an opportunity to recognise all the current support it provides refugees and asylum seekers and allows us to set ambitious targets and KPIs for the next three years.

R Sandison reported a short life working group, with a wide range of expertise and representation from both staff and student communities, and importantly those with lived experience, has been established to initially facilitate the background work prior to an application in early 2021. She advised this working group will remain in place to receive reports on progress across the three-year period of the action plan. R Sandison asked EDSC to approve the application.

Members acknowledged the extensive support already provided by the University but recognised the amount of work required to support refugees and asylum-seeking students should not be underestimated. Members welcomed and supported the application.

Members agreed that, due to the time constraints, EDU would circulate an update based on the minutes from the other Equality Group meetings. **ACTION: EDU**

11. Public Sector Equality Duty 2021

M Taylor provided members with an overview of the work required to meet the next Public Sector Equality Duty reporting deadline, 30 April 2021.

She advised members the University must report on the progress of the Equality Outcomes, set in 2017 as well as set new objectives for the next period. She noted many of the 2017 Outcomes have progressed well,

while a small number have not moved forward as much as would have been liked, as such these would likely continue into the new Outcomes.

She reminded members of the previous EDSC discussions in relation to the SFC and EHRC Memorandum of Understanding, which now sees the SFC oversee the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It had been hoped the SFC would have already indicated the 'persistent inequalities' which they will expect the sector to address in the new set of Equality Outcomes, however these have not yet been communicated.

M Taylor noted the following challenges and opportunities for this next PSED reporting deadline:

- The lack of an overall Staff Survey to use as a data set, however pulse survey data could be used.
- No requirement to report on Institutional Gender Action Plans means a lack of public visibility of some of the great outreach work to tackle gender imbalances in participation being done by specific subject areas.
- The new QlikSense tool, previewed at the last EDSC meeting, will play a key role in identifying, and measuring progress for any student related Outcomes.
- The opportunities presented by the Race equality work discussed earlier in this meeting.
- The new University Strategy having inclusion at the heart of it.

M Taylor stated, while work would normally have begun by this stage, due to the lack of information from SFC the consultation plan will be restricted but will include discussions with the various Equality Groups, the SRC, Trades Unions, and other relevant committees. She confirmed EDSC would receive an update at the next meeting, to allow for Court to approve the final Equality Outcomes prior to the reporting deadline.

ACTION: EDU

12. Sustainable Business Travel Guidance – Paper 9

Members reviewed the proposed guidance developed by the Sustainable Business Travel working group.

M Taylor noted many equality considerations, such as ill health, caring responsibilities and age had been taken into account during the drafting process but confirmed a full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out.

ACTION: EDU

While members generally welcomed the guidance, the following comments were provided:

- Clarification on what the proposed changes to the promotion criteria will be required.
- Implications of COVID on business travel will not be known for some time.
- Digital poverty in other countries must be considered when proposing alternatives to travelling to them.
- The guidance has been written from a western/European approach to sustainability. Cultural considerations in other countries where partnerships have been established or will be sought must be taken into account. Members noted many of the current partnerships would not have been possible without face to face, in person, meetings.

M Taylor agreed to feedback EDSC comments to the Sustainable Business Travel working group.

ACTION: EDU

13. Any Other Business

No further business was raised, and the Convener closed the meeting.

14. Date of Next Meeting

17 March 2021 – 14:00 – 16:00