



Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 25 November 2022 at 09:00
Zoom Meeting

- Present:** Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Prof Sara Carter, Dr David Duncan, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Ms Kirsteen Fraser, Ms Uzma Khan, Miss Ella McCabe, Prof Iain McInnes, Dr June Milligan, Miss Rachel Sandison, Ms Mhairi Taylor, Ms Rinna Vare
- Apologies:** Prof Muffy Calder, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Ms Hailie Pentleton, Dr Robert Partridge
- Attending:** Dr Katie Farrell, Mr Craig Chapman-Smith, Prof Jo Gill, Mr Jonathan Jones, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk), Dr Nighet Riaz

Welcome and apologies

The Convener welcomed existing and new members and acknowledged the apologies received. He also welcomed C Chapman-Smith and J Jones, joining to present on the Student Experience Strategy agenda item. He advised Prof Gill, along with Dr Farrell and Dr Riaz from the Equality and Diversity Unit, were observing the meeting.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20220613/Minutes1.0

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters arising – Paper 1

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

Action 1 - Dignity at Work and Study Policy

M Taylor advised the Policy will also be reviewed in line with any recommendations from the KC-led GBV Investigation/Ross Report.

ACTION: EDU

Action 2 – Estates Related Items

D Duncan confirmed work is progressing to provide the Accessible/Changing Places Toilet facilities in the Committee Rooms area of the Gilbert Scott building, utilising a reorganisation of the kitchen area and Carnegie Room. The identified lift access issue has been resolved, with cooperation from the Adam Smith Business School. He noted further accessible facilities are also planned for the Concert Hall area. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: D Duncan

Action 3 - UofG Awarding Gap Data Analysis

M Taylor advised discussions with Planning, Insights and Analytics (PI&A) are ongoing to incorporate tariff entry data into Awarding Gap analysis.

Action 4 - KC-Led GBV Investigation

The Convener provided members with an extensive verbal update on the report by Morag Ross KC. He advised, while the investigation process had concluded, the resulting report is not yet available for publication as it is currently being reviewed for GDPR and legal considerations.

Members noted the report will make 16 recommendations, the majority of which relate to the processes and resources required to respond effectively to the non-academic student conduct case workload. The Convener stated no major concerns around the staff processes were raised, though areas for improvement were the need for investigations to be concluded more swiftly and to consider how complex cases were handled.

K Fraser expressed the view that, to ensure true engagement and embed the cultures the University wishes to foster, communications about the report findings should not be cascaded solely digitally. Members discussed the need for the University to use this report to move forward, engaging the whole University community, upskilling line managers with the knowledge to be able to deal with similar situations more effectively and to clearly set out the University's expectations around issues of sexism and GBV.

C Barr noted face-to-face culture and values work is already ongoing in some Colleges and Schools which will be followed by a programme of training and development to reinforce that. She suggested the Trade Unions were in a position to help influence the changes in culture and behaviours expected.

M Taylor noted the University's existing GBV Action Plan had already been updated prior to release of the report and will be further updated, drawing on the recommendations. She pointed out that a University campaign on GBV issues was originally part of the GBV Action Plan and External Relations colleagues are already planning for this.

D Duncan advised a sub-group of the Senior Management Group (SMG), along with representation from the Students' Representative Council (SRC), will be formed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations, with an expectation that all recommendations will be implemented before the start of 2023-24 academic year. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: D Duncan/Convener

The Convener confirmed the finalised report is expected to be available for the December meetings of Court and Council of Senate and fully cascaded afterwards.

Action 6 - Wellbeing Framework for Students

M Taylor reported on behalf of R Partridge that an external review of the Wellbeing Framework will be undertaken. A further update will be provided at the next meeting. She reminded members the Student Experience Strategy would be discussed later in this meeting.

Action 9 - Non-academic student misconduct

M Taylor noted, with the [Code of Professional Conduct](#) launching through Heads of School and Executive Directors of Services earlier this week and to the wider colleague community next week, Robert Partridge has confirmed the student version will be aligned with it as soon as possible, as well as considering the recommendations from the KC report. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

ACTION: R Partridge

Action 11 – Evidentiary ‘grey areas’ in relation to disciplinary cases

K Fraser will investigate with JULC colleagues on what information D Thomas was to provide M Taylor with in, relation to her request for guidance around evidentiary ‘grey areas’ in relation to disciplinary cases.

ACTION: K Fraser

Action 12 – Student ‘Cases’ & Student Liaison Officer role

M Taylor again reported on behalf of R Partridge, that the introduction of a Student Liaison Officer role will be reviewed considering the recommendations from the KC Report.

The Convener advised, due to imminent travel commitments, in a change to the agenda order R Sandison, U Kahn and I McInnes will provide their Equality Champion updates next.

3. Equality Champions Updates – Part 1

3.1 Sanctuary Update

R Sandison reported the University has now been formally recognised as a University of Sanctuary and thanked all colleagues involved. A new working group will be formed, including Students’ Representative Council (SRC) and Student Action for Refugees (STAR) representatives, to oversee the implementation of the related action plan, ensuring the University meets its responsibilities and targets for the required annual assessments.

Members noted the update on the Ukrainian universities twinning programme and welcomed the plans to develop longer term ties. Members also welcomed the University’s swift response in addressing a recent hate crime incident. The University’s approach had drawn supportive messages from the Ukrainian community.

3.2 Religion and Belief Update

I McInnes reported on recent Chaplaincy activities, noting a recent a tree planting ceremony as part of Interfaith meeting with all the Honorary Chaplains. He also advised on collaborative work with the Church of Scotland in Malawi, integrating ongoing research work by the Blantyre-Blantyre Research Facility with some of their missionary work.

Members noted discussions with the Glasgow University Muslim Students Association (GUMSA) around suitable accommodation for Friday prayers, in particular during Ramadan, remain ongoing and positive. Members also noted the University hosted the new Archbishop of Glasgow to celebrate a Mass, which was well attended.

M Taylor advised she and the University Chaplain had met with members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Antisemitism as part of a wider report expected next year.

3.3 Race Equality Update

U Khan provided an update on the recent launch of the University’s [‘Together Against Racism’](#) campaign which consists of digital and physical resources, along with supporting guidance housed in a dedicated webpage. She confirmed the campaign has been positively received, both internally and externally.

Members noted, though not solely related to racism, there has been an increase in harassment and discrimination reports. M Taylor confirmed this reflected a similar increase following the University’s 2016

'Full Stop' campaign. U Khan also suggested expectations have been raised for positive outcomes for every report. The Convener emphasised that while all reported incidents will be dealt with properly, there can be no automatic assumption of the outcome.

Members noted reports continue to be received from the Chinese student community, and although these mainly involve external parties, the University would continue to monitor the situation.

K Fraser endorsed the need to visibly support and reassure Chinese students, due to their feelings of isolating from the wider campus and student community. R Vare advised, in recognition of this, the SRC have organised outreach sessions, hosted in the private accommodation blocks where the majority of Chinese students stay.

M Taylor confirmed the Race Equality Group are already looking to include representation from the Chinese student community, with the SRC's current International Officer joining the next meeting.

4. Student Experience Strategy – Presentation

J Jones confirmed College Management Groups (CMGs) and the Professional Services Group (PSG) have already had sight of the presentation. Student organisations will also see it next week. Engagement with these and other groups will continue throughout the next 12-18 months, as project plans are rolled out.

J Jones detailed the reasons behind the development of the strategy, the other linking University strategies, and the overall Student Experience Strategy objectives. Members noted the key themes of Improving Opportunity, Prioritising Wellbeing, and Ensuring inclusion and belonging would be underpinned by improving students' digital and on-campus experiences. J Jones also detailed the portfolio of planned projects and the expected outcomes. Within each thematic area, he highlighted equality and inclusion related aims and related projects. The programme of work is expected to begin from January 2023.

Members noted the Student Experience Strategy will be a long running framework based on a partnership with the four student bodies. D Duncan confirmed refurbishment of existing learning and teaching spaces and social spaces, such as the Queen Margaret Union (QMU) and Glasgow University Union (GUU) facilities, together with facilities on the outlying campuses, are included in the planned projects.

J Jones confirmed the presentation will be made available to members via EDU. C Chapman-Smith confirmed the Strategy team are already looking at how best to communicate the plans and expected outcomes for the student audience. C Chapman-Smith agreed to provide J Milligan with the draft slide already prepared for this purpose and confirmed the business case includes costings for the delivery of effective student communications relating to the Strategy. **ACTION: J Jones/C Chapman-Smith/EDU**

K Fraser highlighted, as the staff experience directly impacts the student experience, adequate resourcing for, and good communication with, staff will also be vital.

5. EDSC Terms of Reference – Paper 2

Members approved the Remit and Membership, while noting the current gender balance does not meet the principle of 40% of either gender.

6. Staff Related Items

6.1 2022 Annual Staff Monitoring Report – Paper 3

M Taylor reminded members the majority of the data in the report is a snapshot as at 31 July 2022. She took members through the Executive Summary, highlighting the three diversity Key Performance Indicators (KPI) statistics. She noted, though the percentage of senior women had decreased slightly to 32.8%, the latest round of promotions which took effect on 1 August 2022 had brought the figure back up to 33.6%. The other two KPI targets, Declared Disability rates and UK Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) representation, had both increased to 5.3% and 4.9% respectively.

M Taylor confirmed the continuing disproportionate difference in the percentage of applicants compared to success rates for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants is already subject to ongoing analysis by Planning, Insights & Analytics as part of the Understanding Racism, Transforming University Cultures (URTUC) action plan. C Barr advised People and Organisational Development are also in the process of recalibrating the current pay and grading structure, with expected implementation at the start of the next academic year. This will include a review of career pathways, job descriptions and essential criteria providing the opportunity to ensure any potential recruitment barriers are removed.

6.2 Colleague Engagement Survey - Presentation

In advance of discussing the latest results, M Taylor took members through the actions undertaken to address the prioritised equality related findings from the last survey. Members noted participation rates for all declared protected characteristics have increased in this latest survey, with the majority above the University population (based on the Annual Staff Monitoring Report statistics).

M Taylor highlighted the 'Dignity and Diversity' themed questions again received the highest positive response rate at 80%, however in comparison to the 2021 responses the percentage of positive responses to all three individual questions have dropped slightly.

Members noted colleagues who identified as being from 'mixed or multiple ethnic groups' and 'any other background' and those within College of Arts, College of Social Sciences and University Services are more negative than the average University responses across all survey questions.

When considering all disabled colleagues, the responses continue to be more negative than the average University responses across all survey questions, while within Colleges, the College of Science and Engineering had the most negative responses when compared with the average.

Members noted Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual + (LGB+) staff responses were variable, however staff identifying as 'Other sexual orientation' provided more negative responses.

Members noted references to bullying and harassment had increased in the survey's free-text comments. M Taylor noted as the University raises awareness of expected behaviours and the routes available to report bullying and harassment, such rises will be expected until the culture improves. C Barr highlighted there were improved areas for the University as a whole, such as colleagues feeling valued and seeing people living the University values, development opportunities and support from line managers. However, these improvements are not being reflected when looked at the protected characteristics level.

K Fraser noted increased workloads plays a huge part in the wellbeing of colleagues and their experiences are reflected in the survey responses. She also highlighted the need to ensure disabled staff are fully supported in the workplace.

M Taylor confirmed these results will be discussed with the relevant Heads of HR, looking for good practices in areas which can be replicated/utilised to address the issues seen in others. The Equality Groups, the new Global Majority Network and the LGBTQ+ Staff Network will also be consulted.

7. Student Related Items

R Vare expressed the SRC's support for the KC-led report and confirmed commitment to supporting all actions resulting from it. She highlighted the SRC hope to launch their own GBV campaign, which has been developed with input from Successful Women at Glasgow and other student bodies, soon.

8. Equality Champions Updates

8.1 Mental Health

D Duncan agreed to circulate a written update for members, as he needed to leave the meeting to attend to another. (See Clerks Note below)

8.2 Age Equality

M Taylor reported a survey has been launched to investigate mature students' experiences and asked those with student links to encourage participation.

8.3 Disability Equality

C Barr advised the last group meeting discussed the proposed 'Principles applying to the assessment of students' which Prof Martin Hendry, Clerk of Senate, presented. Other issues discussed included the poor accessibility of the main Estate and its huge impact on timetabling and study options for disabled students. She also highlighted the need for new build projects to fully implement the University's agreed Design Standards. She also commended the work of Disability Services and Counselling & Psychological Services, led by Clare Craig.

M Fischbacher-Smith advised the 'Principles applying to the assessment of students' is still being developed but will be presented at the next Senate Business Committee.

8.4 Gender (Sex) Equality

S Carter advised the first meeting of the year has been postponed until 7 December, to allow for discussions on the KC-led report. Activities over the summer have included the launch of the Menopause and Hormonal Changes Policy with related specialist webinars and Menopause Cafes which have all been well attended and received very positive feedback. Work continues on four Athena Swan renewals due next year, with the outcome of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies' renewal submission awaited. Equality and Diversity Unit, Research & Innovation Services and Finance's Pay and Pensions team are looking at options for the University to be able to pay childcare costs where they are already included and approved in research grant funds.

8.5 LGBT+ Equality

M Fischbacher-Smith highlighted new UofG rainbow lanyards and tote bags are available from the Gift

Shop. She reported issues have been raised with Information Services and the MyCampus team relating to system processes which particularly impact trans students. She advised the Gilbert Scott building will be lit up red on 1 December to mark World AIDS day. It is also hoped to light the South Front in rainbow colours to mark the start of LGBT+ History Month on 1 February 2023.

M Fischbacher-Smith also reported a recent post on the University's Yammer site resulted in complaints from staff. However, the use of Yammer is not currently covered by any existing University policy. The absence of any framework to address the complaints meant the issue could not be dealt with fairly for all parties. The team developing the new Social Media Policy have been made aware of the importance that Yammer is covered within that.

CLERK'S NOTE:

8.6 Mental Health update provided by email following the meeting

- Despite increased numbers of students coming forward with mental health issues the crisis team, led by Jane Weir, is doing an excellent job responding to cases quickly and professionally.
- The revision of counselling, led by Clare Craig, has been very effective, with better triage and more resource, including specialist GBV resource. The most urgent cases are seen more or less immediately, and average waiting times are down from 25 days to 14 days.
- We are working hard to make sure that everyone is aware of escalation routes for student-facing mental health provision. Important roles, in addition to CaPS, include Student Support Officers in the four Colleges, Living Support Assistants in the residences, Security across the campuses (Security staff deal on a daily basis with reports and often act as first responders), the SRC Advice Centre and academic advisers. The Student Wellbeing Strategy has been in place for some months resulting in several improvements in provision however a review of the strategy and related actions will also happen this year.
- Following publication of the staff Wellbeing Strategy, developed by Elise Gallagher and colleagues, we have re-tendered for an externally provided employee assistance programme and will be rolling out a new service in the new year. This will provide for face-to-face support and online support where needed and can also be accessed by students. This will represent a significant enhancement of our mental health provision.
- Staff Engagement Survey results will be reviewed from a mental health perspective with P&OD colleagues to consider what further interventions can be made in response to the growing incidence of mental ill health in the staff population. There is an ongoing dialogue on this with the campus trade unions in the Joint Union Liaison Committee (JULC) and at the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee.

9. Any Other Business

M Taylor noted the next EDSC meeting will receive the University's updated Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, required by the Public Sector Equality Duties. She noted, following the Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Memorandum of Understanding with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), guidance is still awaited from either body regarding any requirements relating to the 'persistent inequalities'. She confirmed if this is received in advance of the next meeting it would be circulated to members.

ACTION: EDU

Date of Scheduled Next Meeting: 13 March 2023 at 10:00