***The Open University******Acme Company***



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties**

**Annual Progress Report**

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| Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:  <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives> | |
| **Signature:** | |
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**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2021 and March 2022**

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| **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**  **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice** | |
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| **1** | In 2021-22, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.  *Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*  **Equality Scheme** |
|  | The University’s equality scheme was originally launched in April 2016. A mid-term review was conducted in 2018, which was overseen by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, chaired by Professor Josie Fraser. Key stakeholders were consulted for their views about the equality scheme. The review focused primarily on two elements: the evaluation of the approved institutional objectives against the SMART principle, and the evaluation of the governance and management of the scheme. The refreshed equality scheme was in place from 2018 to 2022.  A refreshed Equality Scheme for 2022-2026 has now been developed and will be reported on in next year’s APR following university wide consultation and consultation with our S75 consultees in the Autumn. Concurrently, we are pleased to report the development of an institutional EDI Plan. The aim of this inaugural plan is to provide strategic direction and guidance on how we can work towards embedding equity, diversity and inclusion within our structures. The Equality Scheme provides readers with the ‘why’ EDI is a priority. The EDI Plan provides readers with the ‘how’ to address inequities.  Direction for the Institutional EDI Plan was initially provided by a gap analysis that was conducted in July 2020 by the an external consultancy. Following extensive consultation, it is proposed the plan will focus on 8 key strategic areas, (Leadership and Governance; Cultural Change; Staff Networks; EDI and Reporting; Learning and Teaching; Staff Experience; Student Experience; Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Exchange). Each of the eight priority areas within the EDI Plan have objectives and actions designed to generate institutional change. Each of the priority areas also have draft ‘success measures’ that will be fully developed with timelines, targets and accountability. The design of the EDI Plan ensures alignment to the Institutional Strategy Equity Goal, Equality Scheme,Learning and Teaching Plan, Research Plan and Charters.  A further consultation process across the university is underway ahead of the EDI Plan and Equality Scheme being finalised for approval by the university’s governing bodies this Autumn, and a full summary of the new plan and scheme will be provided in next year’s report and during the forthcoming consultation in Northern Ireland.  The University’s commitment to achieving these aims is evidenced by the core role they play in the development of the new University Strategy (2022 –2027), the preparation for which began in October 2020 and which we report on below.  **New University Strategic Plan 2022-2027: Learn and Live**    A key aim of the new strategy is a commitment to diversifying our staff base and curriculum and reaching new kinds of learners. Central to this success is creating a greater local presence in order to reach a wider group of students and alignment with the local skills-focussed agenda in each nation and our Access,Participation and Success Strategy targets. The proposed new Strategic Goals are:   1. **Greater reach**, offering unrivalled choice, quality and flexibility to more people from all parts of society through a range of channels and learning opportunities, with the University’s core offer of qualifications and accredited learning at its centre 2. **Success for our students**, supporting them to achieve their goals, whoever and wherever they are, with outcomes that are equitable and open up new opportunities in life and work. 3. **Societal impact** locally and globally through research, enterprise and skills development that shape the future 4. **Equity**, greater diversity at all levels, and inclusion in every aspect of how we work and what we achieve 5. **Environmental and Social Sustainability**   This strategy was approved by the Council on 23 November 2021 to guide the next five years of the University’s planning. Over the next 5 years, the university has committed to   * Ensure all aspects of hiring, professional development and promotion address diversity, tackling and overcoming bias in our recruitment, selection and promotion processes and delivering acceleration programmes to bring through well qualified people from groups currently underrepresented in particular roles. * Deliver our comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion action plan to make change happen, led and informed by those with lived experience of inequity. * Ensure that EDI objectives are evident in all staff appraisals and in line management conversations so that accountability for change occurs across the workforce. * Establish a meaningful and effective allyship programme for all protected characteristics. * Deliver our Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.   We are committed to creating a culture of respect and belonging so that everyone is meaningfully included in the University’s ways of working and way of life, addressing under-representation or exclusion of voices that should be heard. Guided by our values to be inclusive, innovative and responsive, we ask of ourselves and others that we take personal responsibility for our behaviour and hold each other to account for our words and actions to achieve the equity, diversity and inclusion that will make us an even better university. Our aim is to become the university of choice for people who want to work or study at a university committed to being anti-racist and culturally responsive to the needs of our students, learners and employees.  We regard diversity in our workforce and student body at every level to be key to a successful university. Diverse student groups enable better learning and diverse teams have higher levels of productivity and problem-solving success. To address inequity and enrich learning and our work at the OU, we will use meaningful data and make credible commitments to inform our strategies and policies with ambitious equity, diversity and inclusion principles that have real effect. We aim for far more than mere compliance, but our plans will be aligned with relevant equality legislation across the four nations, our equality scheme and charter action plans.  **In Northern Ireland**, The Open University is working with the Department for the Economy and elected representatives to support the current Higher Education Strategy and the new “Skills for a 10x Economy” ten year strategy to identify how our model of higher education can continue to enhance the lives of citizens. We have enhanced engagement with employers, developed new partnerships with the further education sector, implemented a successful widening access plan and developed knowledge exchange capability – all of which are priorities in this strategic period. University-wide initiative include the introduction of Personal Learning Advisers (PLAs) who provided specialist guidance and works alongside tutors and other specialist services to support students from under represented and disadvantaged backgrounds, and an inclusive curriculum tool which aims aims to facilitate the development of a culture in which conversations around inclusive curriculum inform decision making, from the earliest stages of module design to the review of existing materials and qualification refresh.  **Progress against protected Characteristics**  Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination statements  The subject of racism and discrimination has been discussed at a societal level for generations, and events in 2020 both globally and locally brought about a renewed momentum around these issues.  At the OU, inclusivity and openness are an implicit and intrinsic part of our mission, but implicit is no longer enough. That is why we are pleased to be publishing the anti-racism and anti-discrimination position statements.  These statements are designed to make our position as a University clear to all staff, students and external stakeholders. In publishing these statements, we are committing to adopting a zero-tolerance approach towards racism and discrimination, and taking an active role in challenging these issues in the communities in which we live and work.  The statements will be used to inform and reinforce our institutional decision-making when building upon our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goals, including work on the Race Equality Charter and implementation of Universities UK recommendations for tackling racial harassment. To read our Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination statements please follow these links:  [Open University Anti-Racism Statement | About The Open University](https://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/strategy-and-policies/policies-and-statements/open-university-anti-racism-statement)  [Open University Anti-Discrimination Statement | About The Open University](https://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/strategy-and-policies/policies-and-statements/open-university-anti-discrimination-statement)  Open University adoption of IHRA and JDA definitions of Antisemitism  Following approval by Senate and Council, the OU adopted the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism) and the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA)](https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/) as a guide to interpreting and understanding antisemitism.  The OU is committed to upholding the law on racial discrimination, including our responsibilities under the Equality Act to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. Antisemitism is one example of completely unacceptable discrimination and our commitment extends to all forms of discrimination and harassment. The IHRA working definition and JDA do not affect the legal definition of racial discrimination and does not change the OU's approach to meeting our legal duties and responsibilities.  The OU's [Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom](https://help.open.ac.uk/documents/policies/academic-freedom-principles-statement) recognises that all members of the University have freedom within the law to hold and express opinions, question and test established ideas, develop and advance new ideas, and present controversial or unpopular points of view, acting with courtesy and respect to others. Our commitment to academic freedom is fundamental and views presented in a manner consistent with these principles would not be deemed antisemitic.  At the OU, we acknowledge the different forms that antisemitism takes and are committed to implementing the principles of the OU's [equality scheme](https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-equality-diversity-inclusion/PublishingImages/Pages/What-We-Do/Equality%20Scheme-2018-22_accessibile_pdf%20version-rev-May-2021.pdf) to combat anti-Jewish prejudice in all its forms.  The adoption of the IHRA Working Definition on Antisemitism and JDA are an important development in the pursuit of the OU's vision to create an inclusive University community, a society where people are treated with dignity and respect and where inequalities are challenged.  Union Black  September 2021 saw the public launch of our new short course *Union Black: Britain's Black cultures and steps to anti-racism*. Developed in partnership with Santander Universities this is part of a UK-wide initiative to tackle racial harassment in Higher Education.  This free course has been designed for HE students studying at institutions across the UK to increase understanding of Black British history, race, and racism, and how individuals can make a positive difference.  It is also being offered free of charge to HE staff.  Here at the OU it is not compulsory to complete the course, however we are encouraging everyone who can to take part as it will help to build an understanding of key issues and is a crucial step forward on our journey to becoming a truly anti-racist institution.  [Please follow this link to view a trailer for the course](https://youtu.be/Er2ix3cWKTE)  Open Futures Scholarship for Black Students  We are committed to driving change and ensuring that academic institutions remain inclusive and accessible for all members of society. In March 2022, The Open Futures Scholarship for Black Students will generously provide 50 scholarships in academic year 2022/23, giving new, UK-resident students who identify as Black the opportunity to study for free. An update on the success of this scholarship will be presented in next year’s APR.  Diversity in Marketing  In February 2022, The Open University launched a campaign in partnership with Alamy, [spearheading better representation of Black and Asian students in marketing imagery](https://ounews.co/around-ou/the-ou-partners-with-alamy-to-build-a-photo-collection-to-better-represent-black-and-asian-students/).  The aim of The Alamy Legacy Collection is to create an ever-growing portfolio of images other organisations can use in their marketing materials and is inspired by four portraits, commissioned by The Open University by Press Association’s photographer Inzajeano Latif.  The portraits depict the stories of four students, each with their own unique path that led them to The Open University  Tackling Disparities in STEM education  As part of the NI Science Festival in February 2022, The OU hosted a roundtable discussion with leading figures from the scientific academic community in Nothern Ireland. Black and Asian communities are drastically unrepresented in the STEM industry within Northern Ireland. Higher education institutions have a responsibility to encourage more Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students into STEM subjects and shift this industry wide disparity.  Representatives from The Open University, Queen’s University and Ulster University met to discuss and hear the stories behind some of Northern Ireland’s leading STEM academics They shared their work, and opinions on why they think this disparity is still so prevalent and discussed what can be done by higher education institutions to encourage more students from diverse backgrounds to take up STEM subjects.  The roundtable was hosted by **Clem Herman**, Professor of Gender Technology at The Open University, with participation from **Moira Dean**, Professor in Consumer Psychology and Food Security at Queen’s University**, James Uhomoibhi**, Lecturer in Engineering and Head of the Mixed Augment and Virtual Reality Research Laboratory at Ulster University and **Osas Omoigiade**, Associate Lecturer at The Open University and CEO and founder of Deep. Meta.  Gender Equality and Research Funding  From 2022, Horizon Europe require that those bidding for EU funding provide evidence of their gender equality initiatives. Other funders are also looking to incorporate greater scrutiny of gender equality work.  The Open University is committed to embedding gender equality across the institution and much of our work towards Horizon’s mandatory Gender Equality Plan is covered in our Athena Swan work. The OU has been a member of Athena Swan since 2012 and has held a Bronze award (twice renewed) since 2013. All seven of our STEM Schools have an Athena Swan award (three Silver and four Bronze) and in 2021, the Business School became the first non-STEM School to receive an award. All OU Schools will have applied for an award by the end of 2023.  Through extensive consultation and analysis of data on staff profile, recruitment, promotion and training in the preparation for this submission, we have identified a range of areas to further gender equality at the OU, including improvements to maternity and paternity leave practices, a revision of our transgender staff policy and greater support and guidance for managers around key transition points in staff careers and the employee lifecycle. We hope to develop sector-leading policies to address such issues as endometriosis, menopause, miscarriage and infertility in the workplace, and consultation with staff will continue throughout the process.  In addition to our institutional award the [School of Environment, Earth & Ecosystem Sciences](https://www.open.ac.uk/stem/environment-earth-ecosystem-sciences/node/185) has secured its first Bronze award and the [School of Life, Health & Chemical Sciences](https://www.open.ac.uk/stem/life-health-chemical-sciences/) has also renewed its Bronze status.  Gender equality in recruitment and career progression  The University’s recently approved Recruitment Diversity Strategy aims to increase the diversity of the candidate pool to redress under-representation where identified. In 2022, the OU will undertake a thorough review of its recruitment practices, instituting new processes such as positive action guidance for all hiring managers.  The University now uses fewer criteria in job descriptions to encourage women to apply and software for distinguishing gendered language in advertisements.  In Northern Ireland, we recently began trialling Anonymous Recruitment, which has positive benefits of encouraging a more diverse range of candidates through to hire, and early evidence suggests a lower rate of attrition for staff recruited through this method.  Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap 2021  Our pay gaps are an equality measure that show the difference in the average hourly earnings between men and women (gender pay gap) and the difference between our white and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees across the whole organisation (ethnicity pay gap).  The data for both our gender and ethnicity pay gaps was taken as a snapshot of our staffing population and their pay on 31 March 2021.   * The Open University mean gender pay gap is 8.7% and the median pay gap is 13.3%. This is an increase from our 5.7% mean and median pay gaps in 2020. * The Open University mean ethnicity pay gap is 13.2% and the median pay gap is 20.1%   We have seen an increase in our gender pay gap and our ethnicity pay gap is significant in its first year of publishing. The data demonstrates that we need to take important action to address both pay gaps and we are responding to this as an institutional priority.  The primary reason for both our gender and ethnicity pay gaps is the distribution of men, women, and those who identify as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic across our pay quartiles. We have more men and white colleagues in senior roles than we do women and minority ethnic colleagues. This is where we need to focus our commitment to change. This is partially driven by the increase in the number of additional hours worked by male Associate Lecturer colleagues as a result of a change of contractual status for this group.  In our goal to be an equitable institution, we need to ensure that everyone has a chance to progress and work at their full potential. Our ambition to close the pay gap is to improve the representation of women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in senior roles through specific, measurable actions that will diversify our candidate pool and support staff to progress no matter their background or circumstance.  We are in the process of developing our EDI Institutional Plan and reviewing our Equality Scheme to ensure that our EDI commitments accelerate the change we want to see, not just for gender and racial equality, but for all colleagues. More information on this will be available soon and shared with consultees.  [Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021](https://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/sites/www.open.ac.uk.equality-diversity/files/files/gender-ethnicity-pay-gap-report-2021.pdf)  New safe space reporting system  In December 2021, The OU launched Report and Support, a new safe space reporting system where staff, students, learners and visitors can report incidences of harassment relating to the [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) protected characteristics](https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-equality-diversity-inclusion/PublishingImages/Pages/What-We-Do/Equality%20Scheme-2018-22_accessibile_pdf%20version-rev-May-2021.pdf).  The system streamlined our current reporting processes, but importantly, the processes and policies for handling the cases have not changed. The new system offers targeted support via the support section of the system, including articles which cover a range of topics, as well as pages which provide further information and FAQs. In addition to this, Report and Support provides us with some other key features such as the ability to:   * Report an incident on your own behalf, or on behalf of someone else, as well as being provided with the option to report incidents anonymously, or with contact details. * Provide confidence that if an anonymous report is made, the specific individual is protected against unsubstantiated claims, since when an anonymous report is made, only limited information will be taken for monitoring purposes and no free text information can be provided. This route does also mean that the university cannot follow up on such reports. whilst we are unable to follow up on these reports, monitoring allows us to identify problem areas. * Provide assurance that the person making the complaint, and the person who the complaint is about, know their options, the next steps, and the process for escalation. * Provide users with process maps for what happens when they submit a report.   **Promoting good relations with all sections of the community in Northern Ireland**  [Stormont Parliamentary Building 01.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stormont_Parliamentary_Building_01.JPG)  During 2021/22, the OU in Northern Ireland continued to liaise with elected members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, MPs, Departmental officials and other people in public life from all major political parties.  The OU continues to be a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly’s All-Party Groups on Disability, Learning Disability and Science. The University’s engagement plan includes a series of regular meetings with elected representatives from the main political parties, attendance at the party conferences of the five largest parties and attendance at briefing sessions run by the political parties themselves. To date, we have attended major party conferences online in the reporting period and held a range of meetings and briefing sessions with MLAs and Councillors from the main five political parties. We have also undertaken regular updates with the Department for the Economy and Department for Communities.  OU Ireland Manifesto  In March 2022, the OU in Ireland launched its vision for the Northern Ireland Assembly. The manifesto, entitled 'The Future is Flexible' calls for the embedding of a culture of lifelong learning in society with part-time, flexible higher education at its heart. The manifesto makes three key asks of the Northern Ireland Assembly:  • A statutory right to lifelong learning  • A sustainable and equitable funding model for part-time students  • The prioritisation of investment in future and green skills.  The drop-in event was held in the Long Room at Stormont Buildings and was attended by Ministers, MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly), local representatives and invited guests. Speakers included John D'Arcy Director, OU in Ireland, Josie Fraser, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Sarah Jones, President of the OU Students Association.  [Our manifesto can be read here](https://www.open.ac.uk/northern-ireland/OU-manifesto)  Community Partnership Programme  The CPP (Community Partnerships Project) initially began as a pilot in 2011 in partnership with Falls Women’s Centre. In July 2021, there were four centres within the partnership; Falls Women’s Centre, Ballybeen Women’s Centre, Shankill Women’s Centre and Kilcooley Women’s Centre.  Students typically study the 30-week long OU Access module ‘People, Work and Society’. This module gives learners an introduction to a range of subject areas such as psychology, childhood and youth, social science, health, business and law. It is specifically designed with learners who do not have high levels of prior educational experience in mind.    From the OU, students receive:   * Face-to-face/online study sessions delivered by an OU Associate Lecturer who directly supports them with both their understanding of the academic content and the development of higher-education level study skills; * Scheduled contact from their Belfast-based Student Support Team to check on their progress and to advise on other funding and support that is available to them; and * “Next Steps” planning sessions that explore potential future study options and employment opportunities with additional support provided by an OU Careers Consultant.   The participating Women’s Centres provide:   * Promotion of the CPP within their local communities and with their service users; * Additional face-to-face wrap-around support; * The development of a peer community of learners; * Use of facilities to enable the face-to-face study sessions to take place; * Access to ICT provision and support with digital skills; * Access to childcare facilities   The Community Partnerships Project currently aims:   1. To work with cross-community stakeholders to promote the benefits of life-long learning to women who face significant barriers to participating in higher education; 2. To enable the OU to meet its commitments in our Widening Access and Participation Plan to bring learning to individuals who fulfil several of the Departmental and OU widening access target groups; 3. To provide enhanced support to learners in a community environment that is familiar to them; 4. To realise the benefits of life-long learning in low participation communities including increased well-being, confidence, individual empowerment and employability.   As part of an expansion of the Community Partnerships Project, the OU is focussing on developing further community partners in areas with high levels of multiple deprivation; particularly with regard to educational deprivation and low higher education participation. A specific attempt will be made to recruit cohorts from those areas in the lowest 10% in terms of educational deprivation, providing a supportive community infrastructure exists.  We expect that, as is the case for the majority of current CPP students, that a significant proportion of these students will be considered economically inactive.  We also began to establish community partners beyond solely Women’s Groups, as is currently the case.  These students will receive intensive support as compared to typical Open University Access students, including: face-to-face tutorials in their local community every two weeks, study skills sessions, careers and employability sessions, enhanced support from the Northern-Ireland based student support team and support from their local community organisation.  We will aim to ensure that at least 50% of these Access students will progress to degree-level study for the following year. These students will benefit from being offered bespoke, one-to-one coaching throughout their first degree level module to give them the best possible opportunity to succeed at that level of study.  During 2021-22, the OU was successful in gaining funding from the Department for Economy to significantly expand the reach of this programme as a pilot for the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23. As part of our recruitment, we anticipate that all students will fall within at least one of, and likely a number of, widening participation target cohorts, as outlined in our Access to Success strategy, including:   * SEC groups 5-7 * Disability * Low participation neighbourhoods * Adult learners.   Further to that, we also anticipate supporting a large number of students who are:   * Economically inactive * Carers * From Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds (e.g. we have recruited several individuals with refugee status on previous CPP cohorts).   We look forward to reporting on the progress of this pilot in next year’s report, including details on our educational partners, student cohort and project successes. |
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| **2** | Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2021-22 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*). |
|  | In pursuit of The Open University’s four revised objectives set out in the Equality Scheme 2018-2022 and the annual action plan posted on the Open University’s public website ([*http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives*](http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives)) the University has developed the following KPIs by which Equality Objectives were measured:  1. To reduce the retention gap between Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and White students, for any cohort, from registration to qualification.   * A reduced retention gap between white students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students at Year 1-2, from a 5-year average of 5.4% to a 5-year average of 2.4%, by the end of 2023/24 * A reduced retention gap between white students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students at Year 2-3, from a 5-year average of 4.5% to a 5-year average of 1.5%, by the end of 2024/25 * A reduced retention gap between White students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students at Year 3-4, from a 5-year average of 3.8% to a 5-year average of 0.8%, by the end of 2025/26   2. Reduce the degree awarding gap between by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and White students for “good” degrees, to be in line with the Sector average.   * A reduced ‘good degree’ awarding gap of 4 percentage points from a 4-year average of 19% to a 4-year average of 15%, by the end of 2025/26   3. Improve the representation of disabled, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, and female staff in senior roles   * An increased proportion of female staff who get promoted from 6.4% to 10% by 2022 * An increased proportion of disabled staff in senior roles from 2.9% to 6% by 2022 * An increased proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in senior roles from 8% to 11% by 2022   4. Improve line managers’ capability to recruit, manage and develop diverse teams.   * 50% participation achieved by 2020, and 80% by 2021, on the following line manager development modules: * Management Practices * Prevent * Safeguarding * Unconscious Bias * ​Equality Essentials * By 2022, every interview panel member to have received training on the following module. * Recruitment, Selection and Interviewing (includes unconscious bias) * A reduced gap in Staff Survey results between disabled staff and non-disabled, for the following two metrics by 2022: * Satisfaction with line management (i.e. staff report that they are satisfied with line management) – from 5% (2017) to 2% (by 2022) * Satisfaction with managerial support (i.e. staff report that they receive positive managerial support) from 7% (2017) to 4% (by 2022)   As reporting on these objectives has been delayed by the pandemic, it is hoped fuller progress can be recorded on in 2022-23 ahead of the university embarking on it’s new Equality Scheme.  Our data for 2021 indicates that the Open University in Northern Ireland is performing well in a number of other priority areas, including having the highest proportion of part-time students amongst HEIs in Northern Ireland who have a disability (17.7% of cohort), while 0.8% reported an ASC against a sectoral average of 0.6%. Of the three HEI institutions, the OU has the highest proportion of its part-time students from the most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland. Conversely, it also has the lowest proportion of its own student population from the most disadvantaged areas, indicating more work needs to be done on recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.  Data source: DfE [Higher education ad hoc tables | Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/higher-education-ad-hoc-tables)  Furthermore, we have increased accessibility to study for students in receipt of the Disabled Students’ Allowance with over c.100 assessments and referrals made during the reporting period, in line with the university’s commitment in our [2020-25 Access, Participation and Success Strategy](https://www.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation/sites/www.open.ac.uk.about.wideningparticipation/files/files/APS%20Strategy.pdf) regarding fees and funding to enable students who identify with characteristics associated with underrepresentation and disadvantage to be supported in the financial models available to them. |
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| **3** | Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | |
|  |  | Yes |  | No (go to Q.4) |  | Not applicable (go to Q.4) |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | |
|  | Please see sections 1 and 2, particularly with regard to anonymous recruitment for internal staff, the extension of the Community Partnership Programme and tools available for managers to improve and celebrate diversity within teams | | | | | |
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| **3a** | With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category? | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | |
|  | Please see section 1 and 2 | | | | | |
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| **3b** | What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)* | | | | | |
|  |  | As a result of the organisation’s screening of a policy *(please give details):* | | | | |
|  |  | | | | |
|  | As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):* | | | | |
|  |  | | | | |
|  | As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):* | | | | |
|  | In the reporting period the he OU has continued to work on an organisation-wide initiative to identify the root causes which prevent students and staff from the global majority to reach their full potential. The reduction of institutional objectives is intended to give maximum focus on the more intractable issues of student success among staff, and issues relating to career progression for women, those with disabilities and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds. There has been immense progress with some previous equality objectives, such as recruitment of students with a disability (now around 18% overall), and some objectives are now devolved to units within the OU rather than being institution-wide objectives. The establishment of specific targets (as outlined in Question 2 above) is intended to introduce accountability and self-scrutiny into the process, and units must now include in their respective business plans equality objectives with associated KPIs. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is now expected to be a standing item on Senior Management Team and directorate meetings, and work is underway to include equality objectives within individuals career and development staff appraisals. | | | | |
|  | As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*: | | | | |
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|  |  | Other *(please specify and give details)*: | | | | |
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| **Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **4** | Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | Yes, organisation wide | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Yes, some departments/jobs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Not applicable | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | This is not a requirement but the OU regularly updates its statement on diversity and inclusion for prospective applicants and which is published on all vacancies. The OU’s current statement is  **The Open University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, which is reflected in our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We aim to foster a diverse and inclusive environment so that all our staff can reach their potential and attract diverse candidates.  We recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.**  **We offer a range of inclusive employment policies which include family and carer friendly flexible working arrangements and have many supportive staff networks and wellbeing services. We also endorse the principles of Athena SWAN, with commitment from all levels of the organisation in promoting gender equity.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **5** | Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | Yes, organisation wide | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Yes, some departments/jobs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Not applicable | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | While this is not currently a Scheme commitment, the inclusion of equality objectives within business plans and prospective equality objectives for individuals means from 2022-23 this will likely become a commitment. However while not currently a commitment, adherence to equality and diversity responsibilities (the duties and all protected characteristics covered by Section 75 and other UK legislation) is included in all job descriptions.  The university has made compulsory for new and continuing staff to undertake modules in Equality Essentials, while modules in Diversity and Understanding Unconscious Bias are mandatory at a unit level. All unit managers are expected to complete our Effective Recruitment and Selection module, to aid with reducing bias in the recruitment process | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |
| **6** | In the 2021-22 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Yes, in some departments/jobs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation’s ongoing corporate plan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | No, the organisation’s planning cycle does not coincide with this 2021-22 report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Not applicable | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples:  The Open University planning system requires all Units within the University, of which the Open University based in Northern Ireland is one, to produce an annual business plan. Objectives within the plan, such as those relating to widening access to higher education for people from socially disadvantaged groups and for those with other protected characteristics, may also be included in the institution-wide Equality Diversity and Widening Access Plan, which is in effect the Action Plan for the OU and the Widening Access and Participation Plan submitted to the Department for Employment and Learning. For this business planning cycle, the university also required units to create Unit Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Access, Participation & Success (APS) Objectives which were linked to the new university strategic areas of ‘Equity’ and ‘Living our Values’ (please see section 1).  Objectives of business plans which have a significant impact on equality and diversity for staff and/or students must be subjected to Equality Analysis. One objective required equality analysis in 2021/22 which was conducted centrally by the EDI team. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Equality action plans/measures** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **7** | Within the 2021-22 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Actions completed: | | | | | | See below | | | | | | | Actions ongoing: | | | | | | | | See below | | | | Actions to commence: | | | | | See below |
|  | Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | The Open University’s Annual Objectives and regular monitoring reports are published on its website and the current plan includes objectives for Northern Ireland specifically, as well as for the entire University. We are currently awaiting publication of reports pertaining to the period 2021/22, and when published they will be made available here:  <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **8** | Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2021-22 reporting period *(points not identified in an appended plan)*: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | We are pleased to report the development of an institutional EDI Plan. The aim of this *inaugural* plan is to provide strategic direction and guidance on how we can work towards embedding equity, diversity and inclusion within our structures. The institutional EDI Plan is being developed for launch in November 2022. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **9** | In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2021-22 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **10** | Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | All the time | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | Sometimes | | | | | | | |  | | Never | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **11** | Please provide any **details and examples** **of good practice** in consultation during the 2021-22 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | See below | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **12** | In the 2021-22 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | Face to face meetings | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Focus groups | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Questionnaires | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Internet discussions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Telephone consultations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | Other *(please specify)*: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees’ membership of particular Section 75 categories: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | A consultation on the refresh of the Equality Scheme was carried out in early 2020. The Open University has been undergoing a major period of strategic change in all parts of the United Kingdom and an early consequence of the pandemic was a noticeable absence of consultee responses. The University will attempt a further consultation in 2022 on the Disability Action Plan and new university Equality Scheme for 2022-27. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **13** | Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | Yes | | | | |  | | | | No | | | | | | | | |  | | Not applicable | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **14** | Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | Yes | | | | | |  | | | | No | | | |  | | | Not applicable – no commitment to review | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**  [<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-analysis-reports>] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **15** | Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*): | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 19 | | | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **16** | Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2021-22: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 0 | | | Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | | | Policy consultations conducted **with an** **equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | | | Consultations for an **EQIA** alone. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **17** | Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | The OU has been conducting a review of its Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process with a view to embedding EDI considerations more consistently within its working practices. The central Equality and Diversity Team in Milton Keynes has revised the template and guidance to provide greater support to staff in completing EQIAs. Example EQIAs will be available to illustrate good practice and regular training courses will be provided to offer additional support. Once the revised process is promoted in Autumn 2022, we anticipate an increase in the volume, range and quality of EQIAs produced. This will contribute to our strategic goal of becoming a truly inclusive university. The new EQIA will the subject of the next consultation with the Commission and with Section 75 consultees. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **18** | Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | Yes | | | | | | | |  | | | | No concerns were raised | | | | | | | | |  | | No | | |  | | Not applicable | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | A number of university policies were submitted for review after consultation with staff, including the Learn and Live Strategy, Student Intervention Platform (SIP) use and our cleaning services contract tender. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **19** | Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | Yes | | | | |  | | | | | No | | | |  | | | | Not applicable | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **20** | From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2021-22 reporting period? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | Yes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  | | | No, already taken place | | | | | |
|  | | | | | No, scheduled to take place at a later date | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  | | | Not applicable | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | The OU is currently revising the manner in which it collects and presents monitoring data, with a more robust and integrated system which is intended to support reporting to units. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **21** | In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | Yes | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | No | | | |  | | | | Not applicable | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details and examples: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **22** | Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2021-22 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | N/A – in the monitoring period there was no monitoring activity specific to Northern Ireland. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **23** | Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | The Open University in Northern Ireland submits a Widening Access and Participation Plan to the Department for the Economy each year and this establishes three year targets for a number of student groups including people from the lowest socio-economic quartile, young men from this quartile, disabled students, students in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. This can be made available to the Commission on request. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **24** | Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2021-22, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | As an educational institution, the OU has a strong commitment to providing learning and development opportunities for staff to enable them to be effective in their roles and to fulfil their potential.  Everyone working at the OU needs to know something about equality and diversity. Staff working directly with students need to be able to respond to a wide range of needs and circumstances. Staff who develop learning materials need to know how to create inclusive and accessible resources. Managers need to know how to manage a diverse workforce effectively. Some staff need more specialist equality knowledge, such as those involved in advising others.  All staff need to know about their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Great Britain) and the Section 75 duty (Northern Ireland). Our core training for all staff, the mandatory **Equality Essentials** module, provides full details of institutional and individual responsibility. It introduces staff to equality and diversity at The Open University, and promotes the impact and benefits that can be achieved from positive and fair behaviours. The **Understanding Unconscious Bias** module introduces staff to the idea of unconscious or 'hidden' bias, and how it can impact in the workplace. It provides staff with the opportunity to think about situations where their own unconscious bias might affect their ability to make objective decisions or judgements. This non-compulsory module has currently been completed by 90% of unit staff  Line managers and those involved in recruitment are required to complete awareness training via the **Recruitment, Selection and Interviewing at The Open University**, a sector leading module which scrutinises the end-to-end recruitment process in line with best practice (<https://www.gov.uk/employer-preventing-discrimination/recruitment>) .  In 2021-22, staff had the opportunity to complete Union Black: Britain's Black cultures and steps to anti-racism (reported above in section 1). We are encouraging everyone who can to take part as it will help to build an understanding of key issues and is a crucial step forward on our journey to becoming a truly anti-racist institution. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **25** | Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Among the many courses available to staff are the full range of Open University courses offered to the general public and also a range of internal staff development and training courses as described in the previous section.  In Northern Ireland we have included in our annual business plan ensuring that all staff take the **Understanding Unconscious Bias Module**. This has been implemented fully, with the module now compulsory for new members of staff. Additionally, staff complete the module **Understanding Equality Essentials** which introduces the Equality Act 2010 and the concept of protected characteristics, while a recently launched **Understanding Gender Identity** course offers the opportunity to increase their awareness of trans identity.  Student-facing staff also undertake regular training on **Disabled Students Allowances, Mental Health** and other issues.  A number of staff in the reporting period have undertaken training delivered by the university to become Mental Health First Aiders.  Senior staff avail of training opportunities offered by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **26** | Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2021-22, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please refer to sections 1 and 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **27** | How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2021-22? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Insert number here: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Section 3: Looking Forward** | | |
| **28** | Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review: | |
|  | The university has completed the review of its Equality Scheme in the academic year 2021/22, and hopes to publish it in Autumn 2022. | |
|  |  | |
| **29** | Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)* | |
|  | The institutional equality objectives are being focused on promoting and advancing equality of opportunity, the promotion of those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, disabled people and women to senior posts and to the issues of unconscious bias, as detailed above. The University is committed to achieving recognised charter marks in pursuit of these objectives (Race Equality Charter, Athena SWAN, Disability Confident Scheme). | |
|  |  | |
| **30** | In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)* | |
|  |  | Employment |
|  | Goods, facilities and services |
|  | Legislative changes |
|  | Organisational changes/ new functions |
|  | Nothing specific, more of the same |
|  | Other (please state):  New language and culture arrangements in Northern Ireland as a result of the implementation of New Decade, New Approach and the anticipated legislation arising from the Identity and Language Bill. |

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Number of action measures** for this **reporting period** that have been: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **8** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fully achieved | | | | Partially achieved | | | | Not achieved | | | |

2. Please outline below details on all **actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Communications Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
| 1 | Implementing reasonable adjustments for students, including sharing of essential information with key personnel to support students. | Continuous | Providing a reasonable response, clear and consistent procedures to implement support such as alternative formats of study materials, curriculum modification, 1-1 non-medical help and assistive technology. |
| 2 | The OU has appointed a Senior Disability Support Assistant who alongside specialist colleagues, provides ongoing support and information to students with disabilities. This includes supporting students through the DSA application process. | Continuous | Availability of dedicated staff with key knowledge to offer consistency in supporting and advising current students and enquirers. This includes information and advice on internal and external support options. |
| 3. | Disabled Students’ Allowances Needs Assessment Survey | Continuous | Students who have a DSA needs assessment with the OU in Ireland are given the opportunity to submit feedback verbally and also via a survey. The feedback is used to monitor and inform service delivery and also to communicate the interests of OU disabled students at regional DSA meetings with DfE and representatives from higher and further education institutions, therefore assisting in development of policy. |
| 4. | The OU in NI has adopted measures to make disability support services more visible to prospective students and enquirers. | Continuous | Designing Open Days (online at present) and events to ensure there is a dedicated area for Disability Support queries, with a knowledgeable member of staff available to speak to students and enquirers. Enquirers feel more comfortable to ask questions and are aware that there are staff who can assist in this area. |
| 5. | Increased numbers of students applying for DSA. | Continuous | In 2021, 17.7% of students with a declared disability registered to study, with 17.1% of those in receipt of Disabled Student’s Allowance (DSA) |

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Training Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
| 1 | Ensure relevant Open University staff in Northern Ireland continue to receive relevant and up-to-date in-house disability awareness training and guidance. | Ongoing | Improved knowledge of disability issues amongst staff. Regular training opportunities are provided including briefings on specific topics such as mental health, inclusive language, auxiliary support services for students with disabilities and DSA. A range of training materials on topics such as equality for example, are also available to staff and included in induction training for new staff. |
| 2 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Communications Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
| 1 | Implementing reasonable adjustments for students, including sharing of essential information with key personnel to support students. | Continuous | Providing a reasonable response, clear and consistent procedures to implement support such as alternative formats of study materials, curriculum modification, 1-1 non-medical help and assistive technology. |
| 2 | The OU has appointed an Educational Advisor (Disability) who alongside specialist colleagues, provides ongoing support and advice to students with disabilities. This includes supporting students with complex needs and signposting dedicated personal learning advisor services. | Continuous | Availability of dedicated staff with key knowledge to offer consistency in supporting and advising current students and enquirers. This includes information and advice on internal and external support options. |
| 3. | Disabled Students’ Allowances Needs Assessment Survey | Continuous | Students who have a DSA needs assessment with the OU in Ireland are given the opportunity to submit feedback verbally and also via a survey. The feedback is used to monitor and inform service delivery and also to communicate the interests of OU disabled students at regional DSA meetings with DfE and representatives from higher and further education institutions, therefore assisting in development of policy. |
| 4. | The OU in NI has adopted measures to make disability support services more visible to prospective students and enquirers. | Continuous | Designing Open Days (online at present) and events to ensure there is a dedicated area for Disability Support queries, with a knowledgeable member of staff available to speak to students and enquirers. Enquirers feel more comfortable to ask questions and are aware that there are staff who can assist in this area. |
| 5. | Increased numbers of students applying for DSA. | Continuous | In 2021, 17.7% of students with a declared disability registered to study, with 17.1% in receipt of Disabled Student’s Allowance (DSA) |

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others’** to promote the two duties:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Encourage others Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
| 1 | Appointment of a Educational Advisor (Disability) | Ongoing | Greater staff and student awareness of disability support. |
| 2 | Specific training for staff in student support roles on inclusive approaches to language. | Ongoing | Increased confidence and understanding of the importance of inclusive language and promoting self-awareness of language used in communications with students. |
|  |  |  |  |

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures) | Outputs | Outcomes / Impact |
| 1 | The Open University offers a Disabled Veterans’ Scholarship Fund which can assist 50 eligible students with fees, disability support and careers support. Promoting this to students and enquirers as appropriate verbally, via OU website and through social media. | Ongoing | Increased awareness of support available for disabled veterans. Encouraging and supporting disabled veterans to disclose disabilities, access support and engage in education. |
| 2 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Action Measures partly achieved | Milestones/ Outputs | Outcomes/Impacts | Reasons not fully achieved |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Action Measures not met | Reasons |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
|  |  |  |

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Disabled Students’ Allowance Needs Assessment Survey – issued to all students who receive a DSA needs assessment with the OU in Northern Ireland. The survey obtains qualitative and quantitative data.

Non-Medial Help Follow Up Feedback – students who receive DSA funded non-medical help are contacted at intervals throughout the academic year to offer feedback on their experience.

(b) Quantitative

Disabled Students’ Allowance Needs Assessment Survey – issued to all students who receive a DSA needs assessment with the OU in Northern Ireland. The survey obtains qualitative and quantitative data.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

* made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
* taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

If yes please outline below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Revised/Additional Action Measures | Performance Indicator | Timescale |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?