

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority 2012 – 2013 Annual Progress Report on:

- **Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and**
- **Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006**

This report template includes a number of self-assessment questions regarding implementation of the **Section 75 statutory duties** from *1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Part A)*.

This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of **Section 49A of the DDO** from the *1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 (Part B)*. Please enter information at the relevant part of each section and ensure that it is **submitted** electronically (by completing this template) and in hardcopy, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his / her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive to the Commission **by 31 August 2013**.

In completing this template it is essential to focus on the application of Section 75 and Section 49. This involves progressing the commitments in your equality scheme or disability action plan which should lead to outcomes and impacts in terms of measurable improvement for individuals from the equality categories. Such outcomes and impacts may include changes in public policy, in service provision and/or in any of the areas within your functional remit.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

The Open University

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

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Part A: Section 75 Annual Progress Report 2012 - 2013

Executive Summary

- What were the key policy / service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?

Although it did not occur between April 2012 and March 2013, the major good news to be reported in this annual report is the approval of the Open University Equality Scheme 2012-2016 by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in June, covering the entire organisation across the UK, and superseding the old separate schemes for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This will be reported on fully in the next annual report. The year also saw preparations for the transfer for of the University's teaching funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England to the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, officially making it the third Northern Ireland University.

Other major developments during the year include the following:

Equality management strengthened

The Open University's Equality and Diversity Management Group is responsible for providing leadership in the development and implementation of equality strategy, ensuring institutional compliance and promoting best practice across the institution. Following an effectiveness review carried out in 2011/12, some changes are being made to strengthen the group and clarify its relationship to the newly appointed senior accountable executives identified for the University's Equality Objectives.

A new Equality and Diversity Strategic Management Group (EDSMG) will be created, chaired by the University Secretary, and will meet annually to agree strategy and priorities, and manage risks. The existing Equality and Diversity Management Group will now meet twice each year and continue to develop and implement policy, respond to emerging issues, and promote innovative practice. All parties will come together for the important annual development meeting to review performance and progress.

Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity Activities across the OU

In addition to our development work to tackle specific inequalities, we continue to work to mainstream equality in core processes, so that every part of the organisation gives due regard to relevant issues at the most appropriate time, and in the most appropriate place. Here are some examples of the work that different departments have carried out in the past year to mainstream equality further:

a) The Strategy Office

The OU Strategy Office has embedded the requirement for equality analysis (equality impact assessment) within the main business planning process. Departments across the University now determine which business changes are equality relevant at the start of the year, and flag these for equality analysis to be carried out at the most appropriate time in the year, and identify who will take responsibility for the process.

The OU in Northern Ireland now produces its own business plan, and from 2013/14 there will be a public document for the OU's plans and priorities for Northern Ireland, also to be made available on the new public website, currently in development.

b) Human Resources

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, Human Resources has reviewed a wide range of staff learning and development resources and updated these to reflect the new legislation. The review was an opportunity to strengthen discussion of equality in a number of mainstream learning programmes.

c) Finance

The Finance department has updated the procurement process, so that providers of goods and services are now required to confirm compliance with equality law, disclose information about equality-related legal proceedings and subscribe to the University's equality vision and principles. A general equality condition is now included in all contracts and guidance has been developed for staff with responsibility for creating and approving contracts to determine which contracts should have more specific equality-related award criteria and conditions.

d) Development Office

One of the functions of the Development Office is to encourage and manage donations and legacies to support the University's access and success strategy, and international development work. Donors occasionally ask for funds to be restricted to particular groups of students, and the office has now introduced a systematic assessment and recording of information on restrictions to ensure that these are lawful.

Links

The most recent Annual Equality and Diversity Report (November 2012) for the Open University is located at:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/node/10>

The Open University's Equality Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/node/32>

The timetable of measures for Northern Ireland is located at:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/sites/www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/files/pics/d136238.pdf>

- **What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?**

The University commissioned consultants to review the current OU equality analysis method through a database exercise and to give recommendations for improvement (received in June). The outcome of the review will be reported to ECNI in the next Annual Progress Report

We continue to take a two-pronged approach to advancing equality at the OU:

- By distributing responsibility for mainstreaming equality across all functions and departments, which is implemented through our annual business planning process
- By developing 'positive action' initiatives –activities that are driven from the centre, by the Equality and Diversity Management Group and Team, and increasingly by project teams established to implement our new equality objectives.

New / Revised Equality Schemes

- Please indicate whether this reporting period applies to a new or revised scheme and (if appropriate) when the scheme was approved?

The new Equality Scheme for the Open University 2012/2016 was formally published to the University following its approval by the Equality Commission Northern Ireland on 26th June 2013. It had been available as a draft prior during much of the reporting period 2012/13.

The scheme builds on our previous arrangements and much of these remain unchanged. However, the following are noteworthy changes:

- Rather than managing two schemes, we now have a single scheme covering Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- The merger of the schemes was possible as a result of the help and support of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and a number of amendments were incorporated as a result of these discussions.
- There are now eleven different characteristics to be considered across all our functions incorporating the Section 75 characteristics, when screening decisions and policies.
- The responsibilities for students and different staff groups are now more clearly defined.
- The equality staff learning and development programme is more clearly articulated.

Our vision of a fair and just society and our equality principles remain at the heart of the scheme, and we continue to emphasise the importance of equality analysis, involvement and monitoring, both at institutional and departmental levels.

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

- Please outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting *equality and good relations objectives*, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2012-13.

The Open University's Equality Objectives for the period 2012-2016 are set out in the Equality Scheme. Progress during 2012/13 is set out in the table below.

Objective	Section 75 Duty/Equality Category	Approach	Progress during 2012/13
1. Maintain the proportion of new disabled undergraduates (currently 3.4%)	Yes	Agree marketing target and budget; marketing and media relations campaigns across UK; personal and on-line support to disabled student enquirers; discussions with governments in all four Nations of the UK with regard to funding of disabled students.	The performance during 2012/13 was 11.3% (target 3.3%) and this indicates a strong need to review and refine the KPI. The numbers are boosted by very high levels of disclosure of mental health conditions and dyslexia.
2. Increase the satisfaction of disabled students (Currently 82% to 84% by 2015)	Yes	Conduct analysis and quantitative research, improve accessibility standards during course development; enhanced staff learning and development, including the development of an Accessibility Hub, a front facing entity to develop good	Overall student satisfaction (87.2%) declined in 2012, but less so for disabled students (84.6%), which meets the target level. Numbers based on End of Module Survey.

		practice; further development of online resources	
3. Reduce Ethnicity Attainment Gap (Currently the difference between the proportion of white and black students obtaining a "good pass" on level 2 and 3 modules is 28.8%, with a target of 25.8% by 2015)	Yes	Develop resources for staff and students and action research.	On the most recent information, the gap has reduced by 1.3% to 27.3% (2009/10)
4. Increase the proportion of younger academic staff under 35% (currently 12% to 14% by 2015)	Yes	Review recruitment arrangements, guidance and training to identify and address bias, review job roles to create opportunities for younger academics, develop positive attitudes and career paths	Currently 11.1% of OU academic staff (including researchers) are under 35. A range of measures are in place to take this objective forward in the longer term, including a review of recruitment practices, internal communications and the development of a placement scheme.
5. Increase the satisfaction of ethnic minority staff (intention to leave reduced from 14% to 10% by 2014, reduce difference in job satisfaction from 9% to 6% by 2014)	Yes	Sponsor leadership mentoring, engage BME staff network, qualitative research, enhance and promote cultural diversity	The difference in intention to leave between white and ethnic minority staff in 2012 Staff Survey data is 10% and the difference in job satisfaction is 4%.
6. Increase the satisfaction of disabled staff (reduce difference in job satisfaction from 6% to 4% by 2014, reduce difference in respect, recognition and status from 7% to 5% by 2014)	Yes	Sponsor leadership mentoring for disabled staff, support disabled staff network, conduct qualitative research to identify and address barriers to staff satisfaction	The difference in intention to leave between disabled and non-disabled staff in 2012 Staff Survey data is 6%. No data is currently available on perceived difference in respect, recognition and status.
7. Reduce gender pay gap (from 8.5% to 6.5% by 2015)	Yes	Understand best practice, respond to identified barriers to progression, review procedures and guidelines, increase pay transparency	Gender pay gap for academic staff remains at 8.5%, unchanged since 2010.
8. Improve equality monitoring information (to including caring responsibilities, improve accuracy for maternity, improve declaration for religious belief and sexual orientation for staff to 65% and for students to 50% by 2015, improve monitoring of community background by introducing question to electronic self-service system)	Yes	Define specifications and classifications to ensure consistent data, promote benefits, embed revised questions at point of student registration and staff recruitment; encourage staff and students to keep their records current.	Improvements planned for recording data on staff with caring responsibilities and returning from maternity leave. On track to be able to measure declaration of religion, community affiliation in NI and sexual orientation from staff data. On track to be able to measure declaration of religion or belief and sexual orientation for students.
9. Improved guidance for transgender staff and students by 2012 Improve guidance for students during pregnancy and maternity, improving guidance for students religion and belief by June 2013 Improved policy and guidance for staff and students with caring responsibilities by December 2013	Yes	Involve people with relevant characteristics and representative groups in development of new policy and guidance, test policy and guidance prior to implementation, ensure policy and guidance is easily accessible, evaluate to ensure effective implementation	Policy and Guidance for Transgender Staff and Students at an advanced state of preparation. Plans in place to implement new policy and guidance for students' religion or belief. Work to improve policy and guidance for staff and students with caring responsibilities to be developed in 2013/14.

Section 2: Examples of Section 75 Outcomes / Impacts

Given the renewed focus of Section 75 aiming to achieve more tangible impacts and outcomes and addressing key inequalities; please report in this section how the authority's work has impacted on individuals across the Section 75 categories. Consider narrative in the following structure:

- Describe the action measure /section 75 process undertaken.
- Who was affected across the Section 75 categories?
- What impact it achieved?

One specific example for Northern Ireland of a Section 75 action measure has been the replacement of the old paper system for recording Fair Employment on recruitment. The data is now primarily captured on a revised Equal Opportunities template on the on-line recruitment form. Candidates for posts in Northern Ireland are requested to answer an additional question on "Community Affiliation". This now means that the recruitment process in Northern Ireland can now be the same as for the rest of the University. The new Equal Opportunities Template also seeks data on Religion, according to a standard classification and sexual orientation, and but for the Community Affiliation question, all candidates are requested to disclose the same data items.

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices using **screening or EQIA**, which have resulted in **outcomes or impacts for individuals**. If the change was a result of an EQIA please indicate this and also reference the title of the relevant EQIA.
Not applicable, but an EQIA on the corporate identity of the OU within Northern Ireland has been completed this year and will be reported in the next Section 75 Report.

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **action measures** undertaken as part of your Section 75 action plan:
Not applicable.

- Please give examples of **outcomes or impacts on individuals** as a result of any **other Section 75 processes** e.g. consultation or monitoring:
Other Section 75 measures

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes
Persons of different religious belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New questions on equal opportunities template for job applicants on 1) religion for all applicants and 2) on community affiliation for posts in NI • Staff may record their religion on new self-service online tool, which updates their HR record
Persons of different political opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to develop our policy and public affairs work with the NI political parties and elected representatives
Persons of different racial groups	<p>See section1 Equality Objectives</p> <p>3) Evidence that the attainment gap for white and black students has diminished</p> <p>5) The proportion of ethnic minority staff intending to leave has reduced to 10%, which was the target to achieve by 2014. The difference in job satisfaction between white and black staff is now 4% against a target of 6%.</p>
Persons of different age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section 1 Equality Objective 4, on increasing the proportion of academic staff aged under 35, which is low compared to the HE sector as a whole. Limited progress in changing proportion may a number of initiatives in progress, e.g. review of recruitment practices and placement scheme.
Persons with different marital status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report
Persons of different sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New question on equal opportunities template for job applicants on sexual orientation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff may record their sexual orientation on new self-service online tool, which updates their HR record • New Transgender Policy not at advanced draft stage.
Men and women generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section 1 Equality Objective 7, limited progress on reducing gender pay gap.
Persons with and without a disability	<p>See section 1 Equality Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Target for disabled undergraduates exceeded 2) Reduced dissatisfaction amongst disabled students, but a lower reduction than for all students 5) The difference in “intention to leave” between disabled and nondisabled staff remains at 6% (target 4%).
Persons with and without dependents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to report

Section 3: Screening

- Please provide an update of new / proposed / revised *policies screened* during the year.

For those authorities that have started issuing of screening reports in year; this section may be completed in part by appending, to this annual report, a copy of all screening reports issued within the reporting period.

Where screening reports have not been issued, for part or all of the reporting period, please complete the table below:

Most policy issues are determined through the University’s main governance and committee structure, largely based at the main campus in Milton Keynes. Some issues are determined within NI, see Section 3 below for an example.

The principal means of screening in use in the Open University, both within Northern Ireland and more widely is through the annual business planning cycle.

The faculties and divisions of the University or “units” produce annual business plans according to a common format and timetable, including the Open University In Northern Ireland. The outcome of the planning process is timed to coincide with the annual financial cycle and when likely income and expenditure for the next financial year can be predicted.

Units set out their objectives for the year, either linked to overarching objectives in the OU Strategic Plan or in addition to these. Where an objective is seen to require an equality analysis, the right hand column of the template details who will conduct the equality analysis and when. Examples might include revisions to curriculum or student services, which may impact adversely on some groups, or changes to the structure of the organization.

Guidance on how to conduct an equality analysis are provided for staff on the Equality and Diversity Team intranet site.

Eleven protected characteristics are to be considered in the screening process and these ensure full compliance with legislation in all parts of the UK. The characteristics being:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment (transgender);
- marriage and civil partnership;
- caring and dependency;
- political opinion;

- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

Where a policy or decision impacts on people with any of the characteristics a full equality analysis is undertaken in order to 1) to identify unintended consequences and mitigate them as far as is possible, and 2) to actively consider how change to policy might support the advancement of equality and fostering of good relations.

Section 4: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2012-13, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2013-14.

- EQIA Timetable: April 2012 - March 2013

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 2013 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
<p>Gender Equality Analysis Report - Staff Learning and Development - February 2013 (753KB)</p> <p>This and previous equality analyses can be found at: http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/equality-information-and-reports/equality-analysis-full-reports</p>	6	None required

Where the EQIA timetable for 2012-13 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

No EQIA was conducted in the Northern Ireland office prior to 31st March, but one has been completed in September (on corporate identity)

- Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2012- March 2013

The table below sets out the indicators we will monitor each year for the next five years, and takes into account the information we have analysed and published in previous years.

These monitoring arrangements will help us to assess any adverse impacts arising from our policies.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Undergraduate and postgraduate UK students	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment
Postgraduate research students	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal
Non-UK/ Overseas students¹	Participation	Participation	Participation	Participation	Participation
All students	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data
Senate and Council governing bodies	Composition		Composition		Composition
Associate lecturer staff	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location and faculty Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Development Pay gap Staff survey data ²	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location and faculty Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Development Pay gap Maternity leave return Staff survey data	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers
Internal staff	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Promotions Development Pay gap Staff survey data	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Promotions Development Pay gap Maternity leave return	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers

¹ Domicile and geographic area is used instead of ethnicity, as ethnic classifications used in the UK are meaningless for non-UK students.

² Our ability to publish staff survey data in any given year is dependent on when the previous survey took place. A comprehensive survey is not undertaken every year.

Equality Monitoring Schedule					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Staff survey data				
Agency temporary staff	Workforce composition		Workforce composition		Workforce composition
Consultants		Workforce composition		Workforce composition	
Residential schools staff	Recruitment		Recruitment		Recruitment

Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority's monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes the relevant equality groups:

A review of the Open University's Equality Analysis process was conducted early in 2013/14, and was presented to the Equality and Diversity management Group in June at its annual development meeting.

The key findings, with recommendations for action, are summarised below:

- To more consistently embed equality analysis into business planning by units.
- To have leadership from the top of the University to promote equality analysis.
- To ensure senior managers understand the business rationale for equality analysis.
- To extend the role of Equality Champions to embed equality analysis more widely.
- To embed equality analysis in operational processes such as project planning, policy development, mainstream reviewing and auditing processes, performance development and risk registers.
- To achieve full engagement by the nations and regions in the equality analysis of University-wide policies and initiatives.
- To enhance knowledge and skills about EA eg by embedding it in core training such as project management and policy development, simplifying the EA guidance, facilitating peer support through on-line forums, exploring staff views on equality in a staff survey.

From the discussion at the June meeting, two main areas for action were agreed:

- To more consistently embed equality analysis in University processes such as business plans, policies, projects and surveys.
- To facilitate a deeper understanding about the need for equality analysis and more widespread staff development and briefings, including the introduction of peer buddying, and use of case studies

2013-14 EQIA Timetable

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2013 – March 2014	Revised or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
In Northern Ireland Open University letter heading and	Revised	September 2013

logo use in Northern Ireland		
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Timetable of measures proposed in OU Equality Scheme

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Develop summary scheme	Head of Equality and Diversity	June – July 2012
Communicate the equality scheme	Head of Equality and Diversity	August – November 2012
Review and revise action plans	Heads of Units	January – March annually
Review monitoring information and access to information and services	Head of Equality and Diversity	April – June annually
Review timetable for measures and list of consultees	Assistant Director, The Open University in Ireland	April annually
Publish revised action plans	Head of Equality and Diversity	June annually
Review progress towards equality objectives	University Secretary and Director, Students	June and November annually
Section 75 progress report	Assistant Director, The Open University in Ireland	August annually
Evaluate implementation and effectiveness of training	Head of HR Development	September annually
Publish monitoring information	Head of Equality and Diversity	September annually
Publish annual report	Head of Equality and Diversity	December annually
Assess compliance and promote best practice	Equality and Diversity Management Group	Ongoing, quarterly meetings
Publish equality analysis templates (where policy is relevant to functions in Northern Ireland)	Head of Equality and Diversity	Ongoing, as completed
Review appropriateness of equality objectives	Equality and Diversity Management Group	June 2014

Review of full equality scheme	Project team appointed by Equality and Diversity Management Group	Completed by June 2016
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Section 5: Training

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties / Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.

Full information on the Equality and Diversity Staff Learning and Development Programme is detailed in the Section 3.2 of the OU's Equality Scheme.

- <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/sites/www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/files/pics/d136235.pdf>

All members of staff are expected to complete the Diversity Compliance e-learning module as part of their Open University induction. All tutors, who have the closest relationship to OU students, are required to complete an equality and diversity on-line module.

The OU has retains an equality training intranet site, Valuing Diversity, and this contains video case studies of students and tutors talking about diversity and also a message from the Vice Chancellor, Martin Bean.

A range of specialist training courses and materials is continuously available (e.g. on supporting students with mental health needs, dyslexia etc.), both to full time staff and to tutors.

In the Belfast Office, a programme of training on supporting students with additional requirements is held each year, and this is detailed below.

Section 6: Communication

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact / success of such activities.

The Open University's communications to staff are led by the Communications Unit in the main Milton Keynes staff and are augmented by a vast range of ongoing internal communications within departments and across the University. The landing page of the OU intranet site, OU Life, regularly carries equality and diversity related news items, such as the Equality and Diversity Awards 2013, the agreement of the Equality Scheme, the annual Equality Report, about the success or achievement of a wide range of individuals

Section 7: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken / commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories

covered by Section 75, including the needs and experiences of people with multiple identities.

a) An annual online survey of staff attitudes is compiled. This includes a range of questions and the analysed data is considered by the Vice Chancellor's Executive and by Heads of Unit. Issues raised are acted on and can feed in to equality objectives. For example two of the Universities Equality Objectives relate to the satisfaction of ethnic minority and disabled staff, and the monitoring data used to evaluate the progress on these objectives are partially obtained from the survey.

b) During 2012/13 the OU's Staff Self Service website was extended to enable all staff to enter information about their sexual orientation. Staff can already maintain a number of centrally held data items such as sexual orientation. A publicity campaign to staff was launched to encourage staff to record this and other details, such as religion, disability etc. Information from this new monitoring question will help us to verify that outcomes such as staff promotions and student attainment are not disproportionate³. In addition to staff and student monitoring, this year we also introduced sexual orientation monitoring for the University Council for the first time. We have decided not to introduce monitoring for gender identity (transgender). We have a duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned to a new gender and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. Our approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on more qualitative information through consultation and research.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

Consulted in preparation of this return.

Section 8: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Please provide details of any initiatives / steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services; including provision of information in accessible formats.

The OU has a significant track record in providing access to students in accessible formats.

One of the University's strategic objectives is to foster greater opportunities to engage students in the UK and around the world in the journey from informal to formal learning. The development of new open media platforms present the opportunity for people across the world to access free audio, video and text content (e.g. iTunes U, Openlearn) and engage with Open University materials. It is hoped that in so doing that many individuals will be encouraged to take their studies forward by registering for an Open University course.

The OU's OpenLearn website has achieved W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) standards. Technical advice was sought from internal and external specialists around site usability and accessibility.

Following user testing, changes have been made to improve accessibility for people using screen readers and the improvements have resulted in a more user friendly experience for all.

The opportunities are being actively pursued with partner organisations, including other Universities in Northern Ireland, centering on the development of MOOCS

³ Further information about declaring sensitive personal information and how we protect this data is available on our website at: http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/p6_3.shtml.

(Massive Open Online Course Providers) and 2012/13 is a year in which significant ground work has been laid for the launch of these later in 2013.

Library student induction video

A student induction video outlining resources and services provided by *Library Services* was produced in 2011-12. Services for disabled students were outlined in the video.

Synthetic voice for DAISY

Student Services' Disability Resources Team in collaboration with the University's material production area (*Learning & Teaching Solutions*), produced synthetic voiced DAISY digital talking books as new accessible alternative format provision for 21 modules.

Our updated 'Studying While You Care' website provides study advice, information about support provided by the OU, and useful links to additional advice about studying and financial support.

SeGA: The Securing Greater Accessibility (SeGA) plan is the outcome from a workshop held in April 2009, when it was agreed that accessibility actions and information must be properly embedded in all of the University's relevant policy, processes and procedures.

The second year of the SeGA implementation plan was a period of change with many achievements and challenges that culminated in the development of a new strategy that moved from implementation to business as usual and future plans.

Accessibility Specialists

An Accessibility Specialists Group has been created which includes eight Associate Deans and sixteen faculty-elected accessibility specialists. This group is now well established within faculties and also includes staff from the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP).

Support for specialists

A series of monthly workshops have taken place since October 2011 and throughout 2012 with accessibility specialists and Associate Deans encouraged to attend these and related events, such as:

- A Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS) road-show.
- The annual disabled students' conference organised by Disabled Student Services.
- Institute of Educational Technology (IET) and Library accessibility services.
- The role of Disabled Student Services in supporting disabled students.

Section 9: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
 - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
 - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
 - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

Nil received in Belfast National Centre.

Section 10: Consultation and Engagement

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with *individuals* and representative groups during the year.

No Section 75 related consultations held in reporting period.

In addition to the consultees referred to in the Appendix to the Equality Scheme, the Equality Officer of each political party represented in the NI Assembly will be sent the OU Equality Scheme and will be contacted in all further consultations.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

The OU has limited involvement with delivering services to children and young people, and even this declined during 2012/13 with the end of the University's programme for young students studying in schools or at home. Some younger students are still enrolled on OU modules but higher education funding changes have made this more exceptional.

Section 11: The Good Relations Duty

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

Within Northern Ireland, a Policy and Public Affairs function was established in May 2012. The aim has been to monitor the NI Executive and Assembly activities in relation to higher education and related policy. The aim has been to encourage the widest participation in higher education by any and every part of society, but also to present a modern and proactive account of the University to all interested stakeholders. 2012/13 was a year in which decisions about the future public funding of the Open University within Northern Ireland have been made and during the next reporting period the funding of undergraduate and post graduate students will transfer from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), making the Open University the third Northern Ireland University.

Representatives of the University attend meetings of the Assembly and relevant committees in Stormont, including the Employment and Learning Committee. Liaison with political representatives has been developed and occurs on a near daily basis, with senior staff attending major events. The OU has been represented at the conference/ard fheis of every major political party in Northern Ireland.

The Open University has also staged a number of cultural events, such as Belfast Culture Night, where in addition to music, there were readings of compositions from students on the Open University Creative Writing course.

In February, the University displayed its oil paintings as one of many public bodies participating in the BBC Your Paintings programme.

The Open University will be developing a new public internet site in the coming year to highlight its activities and public engagement within Northern Ireland. The University has an extensive programme of public events across the year.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.

Not referenced in current reporting period.

Section 12: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments.

The Athena SWAN Charter is a scheme which recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in science, engineering technology and subjects allied to medicine (STEMM) in higher education and research. As a member of Athena SWAN. The OU is strongly committed to the advancement and promotion of the careers of women in STEMM areas. It is proud to have gained an Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award in April 2013. The Award recognises the good practice in place to support women academics, and celebrates our inclusive culture. Our Action Plan, developed for the submission and approved by the University Research Committee commits the OU to further development and progress over the next three years.

Part B: 'Disability Duties'
Annual Report 1 April 2012 / 31 March 2013

1. How many action measures for this reporting period have been

4

Fully
Achieved?

Partially
Achieved?

1

Not
Achieve

2. Please outline the following detail 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:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁴	Outcomes / Impact ⁵
National ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the proportion of new disabled undergraduate students • Improve the experience of disabled students • Increase the satisfaction of disabled staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the proportion of new disabled undergraduate students • Improve the experience of disabled students • Increase the satisfaction of disabled staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of new disabled UG students is 10.48%, compared to 6% the previous year. • Satisfaction of disabled students increased by 2% in the 2012 National Student Survey. • The difference between disabled and non-disabled staff is now 5%, against a target of 4% and an original level of 6%, so good progress.
Regional ⁷	n/a		
Local ⁸	Continued development of student disability database and proactive support	Wider use of support tools and enhanced interactions	

⁴ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

⁵ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

⁶ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁷ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁸ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	See below		

a) **Disability Awareness Event 4th December 2012**

The first Disability Awareness Event focusing on support for disabled students took place on 4 December 2012 on the Milton Keynes campus. Exhibitors included the Disability Resources Team, Disability Advisory Services and colleagues from the OU Institute of Educational Technology, who support curriculum accessibility. In addition, representatives from the Development Office and Library Services were available to talk to staff about how they provide support to students who have declared a disability or health condition which may impact on their ability to study. Staff also attended a seminar on the range of alternative formats and assistive equipment that is available to disabled students.

b) **Staff training/development initiatives held in within Northern Ireland** on issues concerning supporting students with disability/additional requirements : 1st April, 2012 – 31st March, 2013:

- Staff Induction Programme. Provided for all new staff (internal staff and Associate Lecturers), including:
 - legislative responsibilities (under both the Equality Act 2011 in GB, except N.I; and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (N.I.) Order (2005) and Amendment (F & HE) N.I. 2006)
 - completing the Diversity e-Learning module (all staff)
 - advising on University procedures to ensure that support is timely and targeted at individual need
 - opportunity to attend a training workshop in Disabled Student Services in Milton Keynes
- Mental Health Liaison Workers (tutors who work with students who have disclosed MH issues) staff development workshops (September/November 2012; February, 2013)
- Rolling programme of 'quick guides' in specific issues have taken place throughout this whole period, targeted at frontline Student Services staff. Matters covered included:
 - disclosure /'reasonable adjustments' (legislative responsibilities: see Act and Order , as above)
 - advocacy
 - accessibility (alternative format materials etc)
 - support schemes (DSA and the University's Access to Technology scheme, as well as its 'interim' (whilst waiting for DSA/ATLS to come through) and small equipment loans

- All staff, taking place over several sessions in 2012-13: workshops and ‘awareness-raising’ in relation to dealing with students who are distressed /suicidal (University policies and referral structure). This training was aimed at both staff internally and Associate Lecturers.
- 2012 presentation and discussion session for OU Student Services Staff highlighting updates in resources and information available to all staff supporting students with disabilities and additional requirements
- October and February 2012: session for groups of Associate Lecturers (part time tutors) on dealing with student behaviour in ‘difficult’ situations.
- March, 2012: workshops on mental health issues (for all Associate Lecturers)
- March, 2012: information presentation, followed by workshop and discussion on Asperger’s Syndrome (again, for all Associate Lecturers)
- SpLD (dyslexia) training for internal staff, focusing on (amongst other matters) range and overlap in considering ‘neurological difference’ (Feb., 2013)
- Staff training sessions in procedures associated with disclosure and subsequent writing student disability/additional requirement profiles. This occurs after detailed advisory discussion about support facilities required has taken place with each student individually. March, 2013 (and ongoing).

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	No specific Northern Ireland action measures. See Section 75 Report		

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
2	No specific Northern Ireland action measures. See Section		

	75 Report		
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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	No specific Northern Ireland action measures. See Section 75 Report		

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁹ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	No specific Northern Ireland action measures. See Section 75 Report			

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1		

⁹ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

	No specific Northern Ireland action measures. See Section 75 Report	
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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

No new additional tools in 2012/13

(b) Quantitative

No new additional tools in 2012/13.

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?

Please delete: No

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?

Within Northern Ireland will review its Disability Action Plan, which was produced in 2009 during 2013/14 and ensure that it is reviewed against the range of Disability work delivered in the Open University and its policies, procedures and services for disabled staff and students, in order to ensure it remains fully compliant with NI legislation and good practice. The Open University in Northern Ireland is a small subsidiary of a larger body with 60 staff based in Belfast out of a total of 4600 staff across the UK and with 3% of the University's 160,000 students.