

(OU Appendices 1-4 attached)

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Authority Five Year Review Report

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions under the twelve key elements of an equality scheme. Please enter information at the relevant part of each Section in the template and ensure that it is submitted to the Commission electronically (by completing this template) **and** in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive (or equivalent).

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

The Open University

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

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Executive Summary

Please provide some main conclusions in terms of:

a) To what extent has your public authority's approved scheme provided a workable basis for mainstreaming the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations into policy-making over the past five years?

(Enter text below)

- In the period of the Review the OU's Section 75 'mainstreaming' in Northern Ireland took place locally within the context of a UK-wide organisation whose ethos and approach to open supported learning is founded on equality, diversity and social justice.
- This is reflected in the mission of The Open University which aspires to be 'open to people, places, methods and ideas' – its stated purpose is to promote educational opportunity and social justice.

- A summary of The Open University's mission statement and its statement of commitment and the principles which guide its equality and diversity work is attached as Appendix 1 to this document
- The highest strategic priority is therefore given to equality and diversity the delivery of which is entrusted centrally to the OU's Equality and Diversity Office – this office is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for 'mainstreaming' equality and diversity across all activities of the organisation.
- In partnership with OU regions, including Northern Ireland this office co-ordinates and presents a series of in-house equality and diversity training and awareness programmes to which OU staff and student representatives in Northern Ireland are invited.
- Some recent examples which illustrate the range of these programmes and initiatives are as follows:-
 - 'Delivering disability equality in partnership with disabled people'
 - The gender duty consultation
 - 'Delivering an inclusive curriculum – good practice shared'
- The OU's commitment to equality and diversity is therefore intrinsic to all aspects of its operations – through such programmes together with web-based guidance and briefings OU staff are kept up-to-date and reminded of their responsibility in this dimension.
- This intrinsic nature of OU 'mainstreaming' of equality and good relations is also evidenced by the impact of projects and initiatives presented by the OU during the course of its routine work locally in Northern Ireland.
- Examples of these include the presentation of the OU 'Openings' programmes for migrant workers, OU learning support for people in prison, for people with disabilities and for people on low incomes.
- The administration and support of these programmes is provided by OU staff in Northern Ireland who are committed to programme outcomes which promote equality and diversity locally.
- Equality and diversity is an intrinsic and mainstream feature of staff development in The Open University.
- Locally there is an ongoing staff development programme on student support from the perspective of additional requirements. For example during the period of the Review, 50 Associate Lecturers in Northern Ireland attended sessions about mental health issues and 21 Northern Ireland regional staff attended sessions about dyslexia. All OU teaching staff locally received briefings on OU support schemes for students with disabilities and additional requirements (DAR). The context for this is that since 2006 the number of OU students studying with disclosed disabilities in Northern Ireland has risen by over 2%.

- At a practical level the University's Equality Scheme in Northern Ireland provided a reference and working template for the development of equality of opportunity and good relations throughout OU operations in Northern Ireland (OUNI).
- In relation to influencing 'mainstreaming' across the University, Section 75 compliance in Northern Ireland has assisted the University in meeting the challenge of identifying and equality screening policies across all units in a large and complex organisation.
- It has informed, and in some cases guided, the University's thinking and practical approach to equality and diversity practice eg. screening policies and EQIA templates in the UK.
- Locally, the Scheme introduced OUNI staff to Section 75 equality and good relations training which was aimed specifically at mainstreaming the equality dimension into all of their operational activities.
- The University's Section 75 Equality Officer in Northern Ireland was appointed at senior management level. The seniority of this post helped to ensure that mainstreaming equality of opportunity and good relations was integral to OUNI policy, strategy and day to day operations.
- Progress on mainstreaming was reported in successive annual reports to the Equality Commission.
- It is anticipated that the results and actions arising from the 2 EQIAs which commenced in Year 5 of the Review, ie. in relation to all OUNI staff and students will further reinforce mainstreaming *and* provide important information about mainstreaming issues which will be addressed in the post 5-year revised Scheme.

**b) What key lessons have been learnt over the past five years in terms of effectively implementing the approved equality scheme?
(Enter text below)**

Key lessons learnt about implementation are:-

1. The commitment and willingness of OUNI staff to embrace and support equality and diversity practices reflecting the ethos and culture of The Open University to be open to everyone.
2. The willingness of OUNI students to engage in associated activities such as the external survey conducted by the Northern Ireland Higher Education Equality Consortium (NIHEEC) which attempted to gauge the extent of 'good relations' in NI universities and university colleges.
3. The realisation that we need to improve and extend communication about equality and diversity matters in Northern Ireland - especially where there are examples of good practice which are not known about in other parts of the OU or in Northern Ireland externally.
4. The realisation that the University is engaged in a number of routine operations such as widening participation projects in Northern Ireland

which have a substantial impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and diversity.

5. The challenge to present and deliver an equality agenda in a large complex organisation such as the OU – particularly during the period of the Review when the University was faced with the emergence of devolved administrations with different funding and reporting bodies across the UK.
6. That working in partnership ie. as a member of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) Northern Ireland's Higher Education Equality Consortium (NIHEEC) was of particular benefit in the early stages of the Review period.

c) What more needs to be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the nine equality categories?

(Enter text below)

- As reported in successive annual reports to the Commission it was our intention to carry out two EQIAs of policies which were regarded as critical and fundamental to the University's operations in Northern Ireland.
- These policies were the Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy and the Student Admissions Policy respectively.
- The purpose of both EQIAs was to assess if our mission to be 'open to people' is truly reflected and delivered by these policies as reflected in our staff and student population in Northern Ireland in relation to that of the wider community there.
- At the time of this report the results and implications arising from these EQIAs are being analysed and the outcomes for individuals across the 9 categories are being assessed.
- However, we can confirm that using the Commission's guidelines we have collated monitoring data for both EQIAs across the 9 categories and there are initial indicators that consideration needs to be given to such outcomes.
- In carrying out the EQIAs an online approach connected to an interpretative database was devised by The Open University in Northern Ireland specifically for this purpose and is a model which the University may consider using for similar exercises in other parts of the OU.
- A benefit of using this approach is that it was found to be 'user-friendly' which was of considerable help especially in relation to alleviating the sensitivities around some of the category questions and helping to yield a very credible response rate.
- The Annual Report for 07/08 will contain specific details on what more could be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the 9 categories.

1. A general introductory statement specifying the purpose of the scheme and the public authority's commitment to the statutory duties.

1a) To what extent were senior management involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period and what further steps could be undertaken to ensure effective internal arrangements?

Prompts – Identify any changes to arrangements for managing scheme implementation, and what were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring scheme implementation?

(Enter text below)

- The OU's 'Senior Management Team' in Northern Ireland consists of the Regional Director and 3 Assistant Directors – as stated in the Scheme the Regional Director is directly responsible to the University Vice-Chancellor for the implementation of the Section 75 Equality Scheme locally.
- Further, Section 6.1 of the Scheme states, "that the Regional Director will establish a small working group of the Region's Equal Opportunities Committee to co-ordinate and manage the implementation of the Scheme, thus ensuring that the necessary actions are progressed in accordance with the Scheme's commitments and timetables".
- Whilst this was achieved in practice, the reality, operationally, was that this 'group' met to consider equality matters as an integral business item within the Region's Senior Management or Directorate Team which met on a weekly basis during the first four years of the Scheme.
- Therefore OU strategy and day-to-day administration in Northern Ireland was informed by both Section 75 equality compliance and good practice – this pervaded all areas of responsibility in NI ie. from staff appointments to student curriculum and projects.
- Liaison with, and guidance from, the University's Equal Opportunities Unit, latterly the University's Equality and Diversity Management Group (EDMG) was maintained and led to a sharing of good practice in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.
- As an Assistant Regional Director the OU's Equality Officer in Northern Ireland is a member of the Region's Senior Management Team. He is also a member of the EDMG, which co-ordinates the OU's UK Equality and Diversity Strategy and programmes and which advised upon Section 75 compliance.
- The University's senior management and the group report directly to members of the Vice-Chancellor's executive.
- Therefore the Assistant Regional Director represents the OU's senior management in Northern Ireland and in his position as OUNI Equality Officer, he represented the OU in matters relating to equality and diversity at

meetings of external bodies such as the Commission and the DEL sponsored Northern Ireland Higher Education Equality Consortium (NIHEEC).

- He also attended and contributed to meetings of the UK Equality Challenge Unit's N.I. Group.
- He liaised with the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) on the implementation of Section 75 good practice across Northern Ireland and reviewed and replied to local consultation documents from other NI public bodies.
- The Northern Ireland Higher Education Equality Consortium (NIHEEC) provided an excellent forum and enabling agency which enhanced the opportunities to share equality and diversity issues and good practice locally.
- As a result of this Review it has become evident that there is further scope for sharing examples of good practice from other parts of the University with OUNI staff. Also that there is a need to formalise the University's reporting mechanisms about Section 75 internally. Both these actions are included in the post-Review Action Plan attached as Appendix 4.

1b) Outline annual **direct** expenditure of resources to ensure that the statutory duties were complied with, in terms of staff and money over the past 5 years, and comment on the extent that all necessary resources were allocated.

Prompts – Identify costs related to equality unit staff, use of consultants, allocation of budgets to training/publications/research, extent of in-year bids and/or reallocation of resources. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring resourcing? What could the public authority do in future to ensure effective allocation and monitoring of necessary resources?

Year	Full Time Equivalent Staff	£'s
2001/02	20% FTES	10,000
2002/03	20% FTES	10,000
2003/04	20% FTES	10,000
2004/05	20% FTES	10,000
2005/06	20% FTES	10,000

(Enter text below)

- In Section 2 of our Scheme a commitment is given by the OU Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive to “ensure that appropriate internal arrangements are put into place, including a commitment to the allocation of necessary resources to ensure that the Equality Scheme can be implemented...”

- The reality is, similar to most other public institutions, that what is operationally possible, is as good or otherwise, depending on the budget available annually and the commitment and endeavour of the staff involved.
- The estimated figures set out above reflect approximate and if anything cautious projections.
- It is considered that if all aspects of Section 75 activity during the period of the Review had been costed directly and charged to a dedicated budget this could well have added a further £25,000 to the estimated total particularly if support from OU colleagues outside Northern Ireland was included.
- An immediate consequence of this Review is our intention to ‘cost’ Section 75 ‘mainstreaming’ and associated activities as a dedicated budget centre and include this in our Annual Unit Plan locally – this will not only provide actual cost figures but will also promote informed decision-making and cost management in relation to our Section 75 activity in Northern Ireland.

2. An outline of how the public authority intends to assess its compliance with the Section 75 duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant.

2a) Outline impacts and outcomes (for the public authority and/or individuals from the nine equality categories) over the past five years and what further steps could be undertaken to build on these or address underreporting?

Prompt – Were outcomes delivered for all of the nine equality categories? Were annual progress reports critically reviewed before or after submission to the Commission? What examples of good practice from other public authorities could be adopted?

(Enter text below)

- Our annual Progress Reports are critically reviewed before submission to the Equality Commission.
- Our 5-year Review has been shared with OUNI staff and stakeholders. It will be disseminated and shared across the University – it will be published and presented on the University’s Equality and Diversity website.
- Preparing the Review Report over the last 6 months has already influenced and refreshed our thinking about future Section 75 compliance and strategy – specifically around our intention to increase dialogue and formalise the reporting in relation to Section 75 and related matters to the University centrally and vice-versa.
- Our future strategy will also be informed by the analysis and outcomes of the two EQIAs which took place towards the end of the Review.

- The methodology for EQIA consultation and dissemination of outcomes by DEL and the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges (ANIC) provide excellent examples of good practice from other public authorities locally.

2b) Outline the number of equality scheme related consultation exercises undertaken by your authority over the past five years. Set out the number and percentage related to screening exercises and to EQIAs and indicate the extent that your scheme helped you to engage with external stakeholders.

Prompt – Identify your authority’s most and least successful means of consultation in relation to s75 categories. Why were some means of consultation more or less successful in relation to particular equality categories?

(Enter text below)

- With regard to Section 75 in Northern Ireland the most voluminous responses came from consultees on the OU Equality Draft Scheme.
- Thereafter, there was a noticeable decline in responses to Section 75 Equality documents shared in the external environment. We know from colleagues in the NIHECC and from other HE sector institutions that they experienced a similar situation. This was identified as ‘fatigue’ across public bodies and consultees in Northern Ireland at the sheer volume of material circulating about Section 75. In the early years of the Scheme it became clear that agencies and institutions had become increasingly more selective in their responses.
- Together with the other NIHECC members we invited consultees to comment on our policies and received no responses – information and discussion evenings at venues across Northern Ireland were set up by the NIHECC and despite publicity nobody attended.
- Our evaluation with regard to consultation about equality schemes would be that the older the Schemes became the less likely people outside the organisation and its sector will participate with equality related consultation exercises. We are not in a position to adjudge but informal feedback and the overall decline in responses suggest that as part of the Commission’s overall review, consideration could be given to a more focused, segmented approach to external consultation.
- An example of a major consultation took place in June 2006 when the universities, and university colleges in Northern Ireland, including The Open University, which constitute the NI Higher Education Equality Consortium (NIHEEC), conducted a ‘Good Relations’ audit as part of their compliance to the second part of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998).
- This audit recorded a just about acceptable level of response from staff whilst a low response was received from students to an on-line questionnaire.
- 22% of NI staff and 8% of NI students responded - it was acknowledged that student responses to questionnaire studies locally tend to be low – however this was in the face of an intense publicity and communication campaign – it was

further acknowledged that a strength of the study was that all HE students across Northern Ireland were given the opportunity to respond. This was the first time a questionnaire of this scale and scope had been attempted by the universities and university colleges jointly in Northern Ireland.

- The main finding of the consultation which included focus groups, was that current relations across the NI universities and colleges between staff and students of different religious belief, political opinion and racial groups are generally positive.
- Other findings included: that the promotion of good relations was generally effective; that most students felt fully able to express their religious beliefs and political opinions; staff and students strongly agreed they had a responsibility to promote good relations and that more could be done to incorporate good relations and diversity issues into academic programmes.
- With regard to the work of The Open University's Equality and Diversity Office across the University in the UK a total of 110 university policies and associated processes were screened for disability and gender equality relevance. Of these 16 policies, all of which encompass OUNI staff have been identified for full disability and/or gender equality impact assessment in 2008 and 2009.
- In carrying out this OU wide screening and identification of policies for the EQIAs the OU Equality and Diversity Office acknowledged and took cognisance of the University's requirement to carry out equality impact assessments of its policies in Northern Ireland as specified under Section 75.
- Specific reference was made in the OU's UK Consultation Booklet to the University's compliance duties in relation to Section 75 in Northern Ireland and the contribution of good practice to these.

2c) Indicate if your list of consultees was amended during the 5 year period and what further steps could be taken to develop your level of engagement and consultation?

Prompt - Outline the extent your authority did or did not move away from formal consultation and on what criteria was any such consultation targeted? To what extent were requests to be included and/or objections from those not included in the consultation process received and how were these addressed?

(Enter text below)

- In light of the 'fatigue' factor referred to in 2b) above the list of consultees locally decreased during the five years of the Review with a focus on those agencies and organisations who were identified as having a direct interest in Section 75 equality and good relations in higher education – essentially those agencies and community organisations who had responded consistently and in doing so had revealed genuine commitment to advancing equality and good relations in HE.
- Counteracting this decrease was a growth in the number of consultation exchanges on an *informal* basis during the 5-year period, especially with

- We did not receive any requests to be included and/or objections from anyone not included in our consultation process.
- We *did* receive important feedback from community organisations with whom we have been partnering within widening participation projects and initiatives such as OU 'Openings'. We are considering how we could do more to map this important source of feedback into our Section 75 strategy and post Review Equality Scheme.
- Similarly, with regard to further steps to develop our level of engagement and consultation, the analysis of our EQIAs will be instructive and will be acted upon accordingly – these imperatives will also feature in our revised Scheme.
- It is anticipated that the actions arising from these EQIAs, particularly where negative impacts are identified will require us to shift our focus from consulting mostly with representative organisations towards consulting more with *individuals* affected by our policies and services – this shift reflects one of the key recommendations arising from the Commission's Effectiveness Review of Section 75 Equality Schemes. Therefore a feature of the post 5-Year Review Revised Equality Scheme will be a higher degree of consultation with directly affected individuals as alluded to in the next section.

2d) To what extent did your authority consult directly with directly affected individuals as well as with representative groups, particularly in relation to young people and those with learning disabilities, and was this sufficient?

Prompt – How effective was your authority at providing feedback to consultees as a result of consultation exercises? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to consulting directly with affected individuals? What could your authority do in future to provide effective consultee feedback?

(Enter text below)

- During the course of the Scheme we consulted strategically and directly with affected individuals and representative groups who were involved in or associated with, OU projects, initiatives and programmes aimed at widening access, and increasing participation in Higher Education. These programmes included young adults and people with learning disabilities.

Examples of these, cited in our Annual reports are:

- Migrant workers*
- Trade Union representatives
- Prisoners and Prisoners' representative groups
- Disadvantaged young people and their parents

- Financially disadvantaged individuals
 - People with disabilities.
 - Social Economy agencies
- It is standard OU practice to evaluate the merit, effectiveness and value of all of its programmes – this evaluation focuses on responses from individual participants.
 - OU course teams are required to evaluate experience and outcomes for students under different demographic dimensions – guidance is provided in the OU ‘Curriculum Management Guide’. We also analyse and act upon feedback received from the End of Course surveys as referred to above – these are also carried out by surveying different demographic groups.
 - This represents a valuable source of feedback in relation to equality and good relations – a source which we plan to take more cognisance of in relation to Section 75 development in our revised Scheme.

** To highlight one example - the OUNI organised and hosted a successful all-island conference about the inclusion of migrant workers through learning partnerships in the workplace. This event was presented in partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.*

3. The authority’s arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3a) Outline and discuss the number of policies your authority subject to screening over the past five years, setting out the number and percentage of ‘policies screened in’ on the basis of equality considerations and the percentage ‘screened in’ on the basis of the good relations duty.

Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to screening in terms of, screening criteria and priority factors? Are there any other criteria which could usefully be included? What lessons are there regarding responsibility for screening at regional level and subsequent screening of local policy? What could your authority do in future to ensure effective screening arrangements? Set out in an appendix a list of all policies screened out during scheme implementation.

(Enter text below)

- As referred to in Section 2b) of this report, the University’s Equality and Diversity Office screened 110 university policies and associated processes across the University for disability and gender equality relevance.

- At local/regional level in conjunction with the OU Equality and Diversity Office OUNI decided to 'screen in' 2 areas of policies initially for the purposes of EQIAs, these were respectively Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policies and Student Admissions Policies.
- Our decision to subject these policies to Section 75 EQIAs in Northern Ireland was based on our judgement that these policies have the greatest equality relevance and provide significant opportunity to promote equality of opportunity locally.

3b) To what extent did your authority's consideration of the screening criteria **not** identify equal opportunity implications on any of s75 categories, but for which consultees then highlighted problems?

Prompt – Identify the extent the collection of quantitative and qualitative data informed screening processes. Outline the extent consultations with representative groups produced data to inform the screening process which was not otherwise available to your authority. Outline any difficulties in identifying policies and equality implications using the definition of policy set out in the Guide to the Statutory Duties.

(Enter text below)

- No 'highlighted problems' received.

3c) Outline over the past five years how many EQIAs your authority commenced as a result of i) initial screening and ii) as a result of screening new/revised policies subsequently, and discuss the extent that your authority has become more effective at identifying equality of opportunity dimensions in its policies.

Prompt – Were changes made to the screening process? Outline any examples of any changes made to policies to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations, rather than to address any perceived differential impact, as a result of screening policies that were 'screened out'?

(Enter text below)

- Staff across the University screened approximately 110 policies and to date have identified 16 policy areas which are subject to full EQIAs. Of these, 4 are completed and published, 6 are in progress and a further 6 are scheduled over the next two-year period.
- In addition, at the time of writing of this Review, two further extensive EQIAs in Northern Ireland are being analysed and any negative impacts and opportunities to promote equality of opportunity through these policies are being considered.

3d) Outline over the past five year period the percentage of your authority's initial EQIA timetable that reached i) stage 6 of the EQIA process i.e. decision making, and ii) stage 7 of the EQIA process i.e. annual monitoring & publication of results, and indicate the extent that your authority has become more effective at progressing EQIAs.

Prompt – Explain any slippage that occurred and what was done to rectify it. To what extent did you notify representative groups of this slippage and what was their reaction? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring EQIAs?

(Enter text below)

- The details of outcomes to EQIAs carried out by the OU centrally is attached as Appendix 2 to this document.
- Locally, slippage occurred with regard to the identification and decisions as to which policies should be subject to EQIAs because of an underestimation of the process involved in identifying policies across a large and complex UK-wide organisation.
- This was reported upon in annual reports to the Commission.

4. The authority's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

4a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to collect data relating to the nine equality categories to monitor the impact of policies and what could your authority do in future to develop monitoring arrangements?

Prompt - What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to monitoring and developing new/additional quantitative data over the past five years? Did your authority consult its own employees or collaborate with other authorities to collect data? Did your authority engage with representative groups to develop monitoring arrangements?

(Enter text below)

- Across the University key performance indicators were identified in 2007 for Equality, Diversity and Widening Participation – these are set out in Appendix 3 of this Report.
- Locally, with regard to our Section 75 EQIAs OUNI took the decision to collect data across the nine categories commended by the Commission and then

designed and implemented an on-line, user-friendly and anonymous survey for this purpose.

- In terms of good practice we consulted about the scope of the Monitoring Data Surveys and the EQIA's with OUNI staff, staff/trade union representatives student representatives.

5. The authority's arrangements for publishing the results of equality impact assessments and of monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

5a) Indicate the number of reports published outlining the results of EQIAs and monitoring over the past five years, and outline what your authority could do in future in relation to improving the publication of EQIA results and monitoring.

Prompt – Identify the number of reports that were provided in alternative formats. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to publishing the results of EQIAs and monitoring?

(Enter text below)

- With regard to the OU centrally refer to Appendix 2.
- Please note that as indicated in this Appendix details of EQIA reports from across the University can be found at http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/p12_1.shtml
- With regard to OUNI locally it is planned to publish two comprehensive reports arising from the 2 EQIAs carried out – these will be shared initially with the University's Equality and Diversity Office and senior management, then stakeholders and external consultees locally.
- The reports and findings from the consultations thereon will be published on the Equality and Diversity section of the OU's website.
- These findings will be reflected in the post Review Revised Equality Scheme and in our 2007-08 Annual Report to the ECNI.

6. A commitment that in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, that the public authority shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

6a) In terms of the number of EQIAs that reached stage 6 i.e. decision making to what extent were mitigation measures and alternative policies adopted?

*Prompt - Outline the extent to which your authority produced EQIAs that did **not** identify adverse impact on any of s75 categories, but which consultees then gave an indication of adverse impact of s75 category and/or proposed mitigation measures or alternative policies.*

(Enter text below)

- Until analysis of two local EQIAs is complete it is too early to identify any indications of adverse impacts which could lead to changes in policy.
- For centrally co-ordinated EQIAs, in about half of the EQIAs conducted or in progress, some minor changes to policy have been made, however the main actions that have been taken as a result of each EQIA is that opportunities have been identified to further promote equality of opportunity, and these often sit outside of the policy itself. For example, the full EQIA on the Award of Honorary Degrees identified that we could do more to encourage a greater diversity of individuals to put forward nominations each year and actions have been put in place to address this. The actual policy for awarding Honorary Degrees however did not require any changes. This approach has been typical across policy areas, whereby the implementation and processes surrounding policies are often what required adjustment in order to promote opportunities more effectively.

6b) To what extent did consideration of EQIAs and consultations contribute to a change in policy, as opposed to policy decisions which would probably have been made in any event by your authority?

Prompt - Set out any key examples. What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to making a decision and taking into account an EQIA and consultation? What could your authority do in future to ensure decision making effectively takes these issues into account?

(Enter text below)

As above

7. The authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties.

7a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to develop and deliver a training programme in accordance with scheme commitments?

Prompt - Was the training programme focused on the initial period of scheme implementation or did it effectively cover all

five years? To what extent were outside trainers from representative groups used in designing or delivering training? Was focused training for staff in management and roles associated with aspects of scheme implementation provided on an ongoing basis?

(Enter text below)

Three types of training took place during the 5 years of the Review:-

- (i) Locally, general Section 75 equality and good relations awareness training was offered to all staff, the introductory components of which were delivered by external consultants – this ranged from induction about the implications and delivery of Section 75 to all staff-sessions on consequent topics such as good relations and diversity.
- (ii) Also locally, specific equality and diversity training took place for the Equality Officer ranging from EQIA training to good relations. This training was delivered in-house and externally by a range of equality practitioners and agencies, including the ECNI.
- (iii) Across the University, Equality and Diversity are embedded within all OU Human Resources Learning and Development activities available for individuals, managers and teams. The University has devised a series of short development sessions which provide an introduction to the key issues affecting equality and diversity and support increased knowledge and teach practical skills. There are 3 of these currently on offer:
 - i. **Diversity a Personal Responsibility** – which aims to promote awareness of diversity issues across The Open University and encourages staff to take personal responsibility for their behaviour. It uses a variety of innovative training techniques such as forum theatre and postcard action planning to encourage personal behaviour change.
 - ii. **Diversity - All you need to know as a Manager** – which looks at the main strands of diversity such as age and disability and encourages managers, both new and longstanding, to learn about the impact of diversity on their role. Participants have the opportunity to explore the policies and legislation surrounding one or more quality group and discover their own responsibilities as a manager.
 - iii. **Diversity E-learning Module** – this enables employees:
 - 1. to become familiar with Equal Opportunities legislation;
 - 2. to gain an understanding of the broader issues of diversity and equality;

3. to know their responsibilities and rights as employees,
as well as visiting the E-Learning Module and the OU's
'Valuing Diversity' website.

7b) Have all staff received awareness training and what could your authority do in future to deliver an effective training programme?

Prompt – Does the authority have evidence that over the past five years staff understood their role in implementing the scheme? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to communication and training?

(Enter text below)

- All OUNI staff have been offered awareness training – it would be timely to update and refresh this programme following the 5-Year Review.
- The general perception would be that there is an understanding of why OUNI needs to comply to Section 75 but not a full understanding or appreciation of its scope in day-to-day work and application.
- As a result of this Review application consideration will be given for inclusion in the post 5-year revised Scheme as to how we address this – particularly with regard to applying the principles of equality and diversity more centrally in day-to-day work – guidance will be sought on this centrally from the OU's Equality and Diversity Office and locally, from the Commission.

8. The authority's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the authority.

8a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to ensure and assess public access to information and to services provided by the authority?

Prompt - Was an audit of information provision undertaken? To what extent did you provide accessible formats without specific requests? What were the lessons learnt in terms of enablers and impediments to ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services? What could your authority do in future to ensure equality of opportunity in public access to information and to services?

(Enter text below)

- In line with sections 13 and 14 of the Scheme the OU will assess the effectiveness of its undertaking and provision and arrangements to provide its Section 75 information and developments in alternative formats and as widely as possible.

9. The authority's timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.

9a) Outline the extent to which measures set out in the original timetable have been implemented. Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

Prompt – Update any progress previously reported as underway or delayed. Has a mechanism been developed to report by exception i.e. on specific issues that have not been progressed?

(Enter text below)

- In the five years of the Review significant progress was made in relation to the general duty to promote equality of opportunity through the activities outlined in Section 2d) of this report. Progress was also made in understanding the extent of good relations across the universities and university colleges in Northern Ireland and progress was made in training and developing staff to understand their responsibilities.
- Annual progress and associated developments were reported and noted in Annual Reports to the ECNI.
- When the analysis of the two local EQIAs of OU staff and students in NI is completed the measures set out in our original timetable will have been addressed.

9b) If your authority was to be reconstituted in the next five years what would be the main scheme actions/equality considerations that an incoming authority should address? Any detailed information should be included as an appendix to the report.

Prompt – Outline what arrangements could be put in place to transfer equality scheme knowledge.

(Enter text below)

- The Open University is unlikely to be reconstituted within the next five years.
- With the OU's Equality and Diversity Office centrally an Action Plan arising from this Review has been agreed.
- A copy of this plan is attached as Appendix 4 to this document.
- The plan will commence with the actions arising from the 2 local EQIAs.
- The details of the EQIAs and actions will be reported upon in our next Annual Report to the Commission.

10. Details of how the scheme will be published.

10a) Were scheme commitments in this section delivered and what evidence supports this view?

(Enter text below)

- The Scheme was published in line with Sections 13 and 14 therein.
- It also features on the Equality and Diversity section of the OU's website.

11. The authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.

11a) Outline the number and nature of complaints received by your authority, and what your authority could do in future to develop its complaints handling process and learn from complaints.

Prompt – Outline the nature of complaints and scheme element e.g. screening, consultation. What effect did complaints have on the operation of your scheme?

(Enter text below)

- During the five years of the Scheme OUNI did not receive any complaints arising from failure to comply with its Equality Scheme.

12. A commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and to forwarding a report of this review to the Equality Commission.

12a) What has been your authority's experience of conducting this review? To what extent has the Commission's guidance been useful in undertaking the review?

(Enter text below)

- The Review was carried out with the OU's Equality and Diversity Office and has refreshed our thinking and approach to equality, good relations and diversity in Northern Ireland and across the University.
- Indications of changes already made and about to be made have been referred to in this document - these are set out in the Action Plan attached in Appendix 4.

- The Commission's guidance template was very helpful and was used as the basis for this report.

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Equality and Diversity

The Open University is open to people, places, methods and ideas. We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

(Summary of the Open University's Mission statement)

1. Our statement of commitment

- 1.1 Our mission expresses our founding aspiration to provide opportunities to all. As such, equality and diversity have been part of the core values of the Open University since its inception.
- 1.2 Our continued dedication to social justice and equality of opportunity is embodied in the following commitments:
 - a. We are committed to being a leader in the field of equality and diversity. We will seek innovative solutions to address inequalities and we will achieve more than legislative compliance.
 - b. We are committed to 'making it happen!'. We will focus less on documenting the actions we take and more on measuring the outcomes we achieve.
 - c. We are committed to providing an inclusive culture in which all individuals are encouraged to participate fully and are treated on the basis of their abilities.
 - d. We will treat individuals with dignity and respect and provide an environment that is free from prejudice, bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination. We will take action to challenge inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practice.
 - e. We recognise that different people and groups have different needs and that people have multiple-identities and multiple-needs. We will make reasonable adjustments and proportional changes to our processes and procedures in order to meet the needs and circumstances of our students, customers, staff and partners.

- f. We will ensure that legislative requirements or other demands do not create a hierarchy between different aspects of equality and diversity in our community.
 - g. We will provide our staff and associates with the knowledge and skills they need to understand and meet their equality and diversity responsibilities.
- 1.3 Through delivering these commitments, we will strengthen our position as a university of choice.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The following principles guide our equality and diversity work:
- a. We value diversity highly. We recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, opinions, histories, knowledge and culture and that this difference brings great strength.
 - b. Discrimination, direct or indirect, based on a person's age; disability; family circumstance; gender; political opinion; race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background, trade union membership or other distinctions is unjust and will not be tolerated. Such forms of discrimination represent a waste of human resources and a denial of opportunity for individual self-fulfilment.
 - c. We recognise that patterns of inequality in society are also reflected at the University and that under-representation and differences in outcomes for our students and staff need to be challenged through programmes of legitimate positive action.
 - d. We understand that actual or perceived differences in beliefs or values can arise between different groups in society. We respect the rights of individuals and groups to hold their own views and values, but will not allow these to be manifested in a way that intimidates or humiliates, or is hostile or degrading to others.
 - e. A successful equality and diversity strategy requires the active support of the entire university community; staff, students, customers, partners and contractors. Commitment, involvement and good practice is therefore encouraged and expected from the entire community in the implementation of this strategy.

To obtain a copy of our equality and diversity strategy, race equality policy, disability equality scheme, gender equality scheme, Northern Ireland equality scheme, or to find out more about our equality and diversity work, visit the equality and diversity website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity>

Summary of outcomes following screening of OU policies and processes for disability and gender equality relevance

In December 2006, the University published its current Disability Equality Scheme and in April 2007, published its current Gender Equality Scheme. These schemes set out a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments in relation to University policies and processes and are available from the University's equality and diversity website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity>.

Annex A shows a list of the policies and processes that were screened in 2007/08 by University units (departments). A number of departments have not completed the work at the time of publication and this list will be updated once the work is completed. The final column indicates which policies or processes the University intends to introduce or continue equality monitoring for (action short of a full assessment). Where monitoring is deemed as unnecessary, this is because either;

- a) the policy is considered to be not relevant to equality, or
- b) the potential for negative impact to arise is extremely unlikely given the robustness of the policy/process.

Annex B shows a summary of the policies and processes that are considered to require a full equality impact assessment. These have been selected following the screening exercise and particularly include those policies where;

- a) there is evidence of adverse impact, or
- b) there is significant potential for negative impact to arise and we have not yet verified that this is not occurring, or
- c) there is significant potential to use a major University policy to meet one or more of the positive equality duties, particularly the duty to promote equality of opportunity.

Importantly, even where there is no specific monitoring in place and no requirement to conduct a full equality impact assessment, the University has identified and documented a wide range of existing and new actions that can further promote disability and gender equality. In line with the principle of transparency established in equality legislation, the University has published documents from individual units which set out the findings of screening and these positive actions. In most cases these documents consist of a short summary report and/or action plan from each unit. These reports are available on the Equality Impact Assessment page from the University's equality and diversity website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity>.

The University welcomes feedback on the outcomes of this exercise and if you have any queries or comments, these should be directed to the Senior Manager, Equality and Diversity – contact details on the above website.

April 2008

Annex A: List of policies and processes screened for disability and gender equality relevance in 2007/08.

Unit	Policies/processes screened	Full assessment or monitoring (short of full assessment)
Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publication Editorial Policy 2. Publication and Exhibition Photography Sourcing 3. Advertising and Acceptance policy 4. Internal Communications Editorial Policy 5. Web Editorial Policy 6. Web Photography Sourcing 7. Visitor and caller procedures 8. Media release and information processes 	
Computing Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Function Screening report for Gender 10. Function Screening report for Disability 	10. Disability assessment (Systems development)
Estates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Accommodation Strategy 12. Catering Strategy 13. Estate Strategy 14. Events policy 15. Fleet 16. Maintenance Strategy 17. OU Affiliated clubs 18. Procurement of services 19. Recruitment Practice/HR 20. Travel Plan (car share, bus services, bicycle scheme) 	17. Monitoring
Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Gender and Disability function screening report 	21. Monitoring (Equality relevant contracts)
Human Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Bullying and Harassment 23. CDSA/Appraisal 24. Code of Practice on the employment of disabled people 25. Disciplinary procedure 26. Employment of Consultants policy 27. Grievance Procedures 28. Health and Safety Policy 29. HR Strategy 30. Job Grading 31. Leave policy 32. Pay and Rewards 33. Probationary policy and procedures 34. Psychometric policy 35. Recruitment and Selection 36. Redundancy and redeployment (inc. reallocation of duties) 37. Removal and disturbance allowances, travel and subsistence, child minding 38. Smoking policy 39. Staff Development Policy 40. Terms and conditions of service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Monitoring 25. Monitoring 26. Monitoring 27. Monitoring 32. Monitoring 35. Gender & disability assessments 36. Monitoring 39. Monitoring & Gender assessment
Learning and Teaching Solutions*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 41. 	

Unit	Policies/processes screened	Full assessment or monitoring (short of full assessment)
Library	42. Community Statement 43. Email inbox Policy 44. Leave policy 45. Library Staff Bulletin editorial policy 46. OU records management Policy 47. Regional/Partnership Strategy 48. Space Strategy 49. Staff Development Policy 50. Visitors' Policy 51. Workforce Development Plan	50. Monitoring
Marketing	52. Marketing function	52. Gender & disability assessments
Open Broadcasting Unit*	53. Gender Screening Report 54. Disability Screening Report	
OU Development Office	55. OU Development function (Fundraising; Alumni Relations; Data Management)	
OU Validation Services	56. Staff Recruitment 57. Staff Appraisal 58. OUVS Admissions Regulations for Approved Institutions 59. OUVS Handbook for validated Awards 60. Student Guide to studying a programmes validated by the OU 61. Approval of new institutions 62. Validating Committee 63. Appointment of panel members to validation panels 64. Appointment of Academic Reviewers 65. Appointment of External Examiners and external examiner duties 66. Appeals and complaints procedure for students on OU validated programmes	56. Monitoring 58. Monitoring 63. Monitoring 64. Monitoring 65. Monitoring 66. Monitoring
OU Worldwide Ltd.	67. Screening report for international services; media and product sales, academic fellowships and company management	67. Monitoring (academic fellowships)
Strategy Unit a) Curriculum & Awards Office	68. Annual report from programme committees 69. Annual Review of Collaborative Provision 70. Award Approval 71. Award Specification form proposing the introduction of a new award 72. External assessment of courses and packs 73. OU Futures-strategic objectives and priorities relating to curriculum and awards 74. Programme Committees: Model Terms of Reference; Role of programme directors and programme managers 75. Requirements for Foundation Degrees 76. Requirements for Honours Degrees 77. Role of External Advisers 78. Stage gate process 79. The OU Qualifications Framework 80. Unique Study Rule	68. Monitoring 73. Gender assessment

Annex B: List of policies and processes that require full disability and/or gender equality impact assessment in 2008 and 2009.

<i>Policy area</i>	<i>Equality strands</i>	<i>Rationale</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
Associate Lecturer Recruitment	Disability and Gender	The proportion of staff with disabilities is low and unchanged for several years. Monitoring has revealed that men are less likely to be appointed to Associate Lecturer posts and there is significant occupational segregation.	2008 (Disability) 2009 (Gender)
Award of Honorary Degrees	Disability and Gender	The conferment of an Honorary Degree can impact on individual's status in society and therefore has significant potential to directly promote equality of opportunity.	Completed and published in 2007
Curriculum Strategy	Gender	There is significant occupational segregation across some subject areas which we may be able to influence to some extent. There is evidence of the student body becoming increasingly feminised overall.	2009
Marketing Strategy	Disability and Gender	There is evidence of a slow down in the proportion of new disabled students choosing the Open University and of the student body becoming more feminised. The Marketing strategy can challenge these trends through proactive campaigns.	2008 (Gender) 2009 (Disability)
Recruitment and Selection	Disability and Gender	Monitoring has revealed that applicants with disabilities and men are less likely to be appointed.	2008
Research Assessment Exercise	Disability and Gender	The potential to discriminate in the selection process is high, particularly as selection outcomes are linked to external funding streams.	Assessment is complete and report will be published shortly
Staff Training and Development	Gender	Some evidence to suggest that female staff are more likely to take advantage of development opportunities and the promotion rate is higher.	2009
Systems Development	Disability	The potential to select and/or build key University computer systems which are not fully accessible is significant. Work is being planned to improve existing decision making and documentation processes to prevent this occurring.	2009

Note: There are a number of policy areas where screening is still taking place at the time of writing or where additional data collection is required and further policies may therefore be identified for full disability and/or gender equality impact assessment.

Summary of Equality and Diversity and Widening Participation key performance indicators

Students

	Actuals			Targets (if applicable)		
	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09
Percentage of new UK undergraduate students with low socio-economic status	14.1	13.5	14.3	14.8	15.1	15.4
Percentage difference between course completion rate for all UK undergraduate students with low socio-economic status and all students	12.7	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.1	8.9
Percentage difference between course attainment rate at level 2 and level 3 for all UK undergraduate students with low socio-economic status and all students	13.1	12.3	12.6	12.4	12.2	12.0
Percentage of new UK undergraduate students from ethnic minority backgrounds	9.6	9.4	10.8	11.2	11.7	12.3
Percentage difference between course completion rate for all UK undergraduate ethnic minority students and all students	8.4	6.6	7.1	6.3	6.1	5.8
Percentage difference between course attainment rate at level 2 and level 3 for all UK undergraduate ethnic minority students and all students	16.5	15.8	17.1	15.2	14.9	14.6
Percentage of new UK undergraduates with declared disability	4.4	3.7	3.4	-	-	-
Percentage difference between course completion rate for all UK students with disabilities and all students	9.3	8.1	7.8	-	-	-
Percentage of new UK undergraduates that are men	37.6	38.0	36.7	-	-	-

Internal Staff

	Actuals			Targets (if applicable)	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Percentage of internal staff from ethnic minority backgrounds	5.7	5.9	6.1	7.1	8.0
Percentage of ethnic minority staff in senior posts	3.4	3.7	4.5	3.0	4.5
Percentage of internal staff with declared disability	2.0	1.7	1.6	-	-
Overall median FTE salary for women as a percentage of overall median FTE salary for men	-	-	81.3	-	-
Percentage of grade 10 academic related staff that are women	-	-	32.0	-	-

Associate Lecturers

	Actuals			Targets (if applicable)	
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Percentage of Associate Lecturers from ethnic minority backgrounds	4.6	4.7	5.0	5.2	5.6
Percentage of Associate Lecturers with declared disability	3.4	3.6	3.5	-	-

5 YEAR REVIEW OF NORTHERN IRELAND EQUALITY SCHEME

Actions arising from the Review

(These actions have been agreed with the University's Equality and Diversity Office centrally, to form the basis of an action plan locally, for the next 1-2 years, to be incorporated into the OUNI's Unit plan and post 5-year Review revised Equality Scheme)

1. Complete and publish Equality Impact Assessments for Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy and Student Admissions Policy respectively.
2. Consider issues arising from the findings of the two EQIAs and develop positive action measures as appropriate.
3. Increase dialogue and formalise the reporting relationship between OUNI and the OU Equality and Diversity Management Group so that OUNI benefits from initiatives driven and managed by central functions and that central functions benefit from experience and initiatives led by OUNI.
4. Develop revised training or resources for staff in OUNI which help staff to understand and apply the principles of the equality duty and the equality scheme to their day-to-day work and decision making.
5. Taking into account revised guidance and requirements of ECNI, develop a new tool to enable staff to screen policy decisions for equality relevance at the earliest stage of development.
6. Utilise the OU Equality and Diversity website to a greater extent in order to increase transparency and create greater opportunity for stakeholder involvement.
7. In co-operation with other HE institutions, review the benefits and future working arrangements for the Higher Education Equality Consortium.