EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND


This report template includes a number of self assessment questions regarding implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. This template also includes a number of questions regarding implementation of Section 49A of the DDO from the 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. 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 2010.

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 in Ireland

Equality Officer (Enter name and contact details below)

S75:
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DDO (if different from above):

S75 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?
The key policy/service developments made by The Open University in Northern Ireland in 2009/10 were carried out against the background of The Open University (OU) introducing a single equality scheme in anticipation of a new single equality duty being introduced in Britain.

In relation to which the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland made it clear that whilst the OU in Northern Ireland could work within the framework of a single scheme for the University it was legally required as a designated public body in Northern Ireland to comply specifically with the duties of Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

So whilst the OU in Britain incorporated its Disability Equality Scheme, its Gender Equality Scheme and its Race Equality Policy into a single Equality Scheme the OU in Northern Ireland continued to discharge its equality, good relations and disability duties in compliance with local legislation.

The key developments in relation to which were the analysis and action taken following the equality impact assessment of the University’s recruitment and appointment procedures for staff in Northern Ireland and the screening of its policy to relocate its student support and teaching operations from The Open University in Ireland’s National Centre at 40 University Belfast and temporary premises at 21 Ormeau Avenue Belfast to new customised premises at 110 Victoria Street, Belfast.

The most significant outcomes achieved were a better understanding of the OU’s staff profile in Northern Ireland and the identification of actions to correct imbalances identified across the 9 categories. This information was shared with staff and the imbalances have been addressed. With regard to the relocation of premises some adverse effects were also identified and addressed – the details of these actions are contained in section of this report.
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 overarching objective of the University remains the same ie. to be open to everyone through the promotion of educational opportunity and social justice. In Northern Ireland the main initiatives relating to staff stem from the imperative that all reasonable efforts are made to ensure that the staff cohort is reflective of the composition of the adult population. This requires regular monitoring and reviewing of staff numbers and profile across the 9 categories.

- With regard to OU students in NI the initiatives will result from a review and assessment of the effectiveness of staff in the new location and whether it will be possible to carry out an EQIA which assures anonymity of student admissions policies in NI.

Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3 and reference the title of the relevant EQIA in the space provided below:

<p>| Persons of different religious belief | Ensure that OU recruitment adverts are reaching all communities in NI | √ |
| Persons of different political opinion | Same as above as well as recognizing that political affiliation is not pertinent to everyone in NI | √ |
| Persons of different racial groups | Ensure recruitment adverts are placed within reach of all ethnic groups in NI | √ |
| Persons of different age | Ensure that younger applicants are encouraged to apply | √ |
| Persons with different marital status | Ensure that a ‘chill factor’ is not apparent towards unmarried staff | √ |
| Persons of different sexual orientation | Ensure that diversity continues to be welcomed particularly that new staff are comfortable being ‘open’ in this regard | √ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men and women generally</th>
<th>• Continue to address the need to attract more males to apply</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons with and without a disability</td>
<td>• Ensure that the OUNI’s new premises and systems in Belfast are fully accessible</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with and without dependants</td>
<td>• Communicate more positively the range and benefits of OU’s flexible working policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. These changes to policies and practices were reported to the University’s central Equality and Diversity Management Group (EDMG).

- Title/s of EIQAs referenced:
  - Equality Impact Assessment of The Open University’s staff recruitment, selection and appointment policies in Northern Ireland.
  - Screening for possible Equality Impact Assessment of the Open University in Northern Ireland’s relocation to new premises at 110 Victoria Street, Belfast.
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 2008-09

- Presentation given to all OUNI staff on results and implications of EQIA of the staff recruitment, selection and appointment policies with particular emphasis on the actions required to overcome imbalances identified in gender, religion and political groupings.

- The presentation took the form of a seminar in which participants were encouraged to express their view on the imbalances and any adverse effects these might have on good relations amongst staff.

- This inclusive approach enhanced understanding of the overall staff profile, a greater awareness of the sensitivities some people had in relation to dependants, sexual orientation and politics – all of which helped to engender a greater understanding of how to encourage good relations.

Section 2: Screening

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of policy subject to screening</th>
<th>Was the Full Screening Report or the Result of initial screening issued for consultation? Please enter F or R</th>
<th>Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? Yes/No</th>
<th>Is policy being subject to EQIA? Yes/No? If yes indicate year for assessment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relocation of student support and teaching operations to new premises</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No – agreed that full assessment not required and to review operations after 12 months in the new location.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2009-10, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2009-10

EQIA Timetable – April 2009 - March 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Policy EQIA</th>
<th>EQIA Stage at end March 09 (Steps 1-6)</th>
<th>Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University staff recruitment selection and appointment policies</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>See previous section and appendix to this report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2009-10 (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.

➢ The intention to carry out an EQIA of Student Admissions policies has been held up because of the practical difficulties presented by the need to ensure anonymity across a large number of respondees.

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities  April 2009- March 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring</th>
<th>Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</th>
<th>Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University staff</td>
<td>Differential impacts</td>
<td>Adverse impacts have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment, Selection And Appointment policies</td>
<td>have reduced</td>
<td>reduced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Please outline any proposals, arising from the authority’s monitoring for adverse impacts, for revision of the policy to achieve better outcomes from the relevant equality groups:
Arising from an adverse impact identified consistently by the University’s Associate Lecturers in Northern Ireland, concerning the implications and results of the University’s compulsory retirement at 65 years policy, a strongly worded proposal to review this was relayed to the University centrally.

2010-11 EQIA Time-table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2010 – March 2011</th>
<th>Existing or New policy?</th>
<th>Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Possible EQIA of student admissions policies</td>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Nov 2010 – March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Review of policy to place all OUNI staff in one main building</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Jan 2011 – April 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 4: 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.
  - Seminar on results of staff EQIA
  - Attendance by OUNI Equality Officer at Training/Informational events organised by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; in-house equality and diversity events organised by the University’s Equality and Diversity Management Group.

Section 5: 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.
➢ Report on staff EQIA results, implications and actions shared with all staff at special seminar event.
➢ Reports to bi-weekly meetings of the OU in Ireland’s Directorate team.
➢ Regular progress reports to the University’s Equality and Diversity Committee.

Section 6: 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.

➢ Statistical and qualitative results of Staff Survey augmented existing data and information

• Please outline any use of the Commission’s Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

➢ Used as reference and guideline document for the collation of monitoring data for the Staff EQIA.

Section 7: 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 relocation to new premises improved public access to The Open University’s services and products in Northern Ireland. The new building also provided modern access facilities for people with disabilities.

➢ In line with University policy information about the University is available in accessible formats.
Section 8: 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.

  ➢ None received

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

• Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.
• Please outline any use of the Commission's guidance on consulting with and involving children and young people.

  ➢ Members of public invited to inspect and try the study facilities and learning opportunities offered in the new building.

  ➢ Various public body representatives and representative groups have been invited to the new building including the ECNI, colleges of further education, schools, universities and community representatives.

Section 10: 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.

  ➢ The importance of maintaining good relations and how better to do this was an outcome of the seminar on the results of the staff EQIA.

  ➢ As a result there was increased recognition of the interdependence of equality and good relations

• Please outline any use of the Commission’s Good Relations Guide.

  ➢ Reference to it and commendations of it at Staff Seminar.
Section 11: Additional Comments

• Please provide any additional information/comments

- It would be encouraging to receive acknowledgement of receipt of this report from the ECNI.

- It would be useful for the ECNI to highlight and share any particular points of good practice arising from Annual Reports.
Annual Report 1 April 2009 / 31 March 2010
‘Disability Duties’ Questions

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

- 4
  Fully Achieved

- 1
  Partially Achieved

- Not Achieved
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Public Life Action Measures</th>
<th>Outputs¹</th>
<th>Outcomes / Impact²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National³</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional⁴</td>
<td>Opening of new headquarters at 110 Victoria Street, Belfast</td>
<td>- organisation of open days/events</td>
<td>Increase in enquiries and registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local⁵</td>
<td>Development of student disability database and proactive support</td>
<td>- increased use of support tools and interaction with individual students</td>
<td>Increase in retention numbers and studies’ satisfaction ratings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ 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.
² 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.
³ National: Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
⁴ Regional: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
⁵ 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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Action Measures</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcome / Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Training Day for support staff on digital audio information system (DAISY)</td>
<td>Practical demonstration of OU learning materials for students with hearing difficulties</td>
<td>Greater understanding of how DAISY works and what students experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Follow up sessions by OU Disability/Deaf Adviser on hearing impairment</td>
<td>Focus on communication issues for associate lecturers in tutorial situations and providing further support for students who are deaf or hearing impaired</td>
<td>Enhanced understanding of how to support deaf students in tutorials and one-to-one learning situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications Action Measures</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcome / Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  The 2 training measures in 2 (b) above enhanced communications and understanding in this area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encourage others Action Measures</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcome / Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The 2 training measures in 2 (b) above encouraged others in this area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes / Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Measures partly achieved</th>
<th>Milestones⁶ / Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes/Impacts</th>
<th>Reasons not fully achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Measures not met</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 EQIA of student recruitment and admissions policies in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Complexity of surveying 3K+ students anonymously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.
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
- student numbers analysis

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(b) Quantitative
- student satisfaction returns

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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:  **Yes** / **No**
If yes please outline below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised/Additional Action Measures</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?

In view of decreased resource and increasing numbers of student enquiries and registrations no significant revisions are planned at this stage.
1. Statutory Duty and Context

1.1 In line with its statutory duty as a designated public body for the purposes of compliance with the equality and good relations duties of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, The Open University in Ireland (OUI) has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the University’s staff recruitment, selection and appointment policies in Northern Ireland.

1.2 The EQIA was carried out in line with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) Guide to Statutory Duties, Annex 1 pages 71-78, January 2005.

1.3 The purpose of the staff EQIA was two-fold:- (i) to assess if The Open University staff cohort in Northern Ireland was reflective of the composition of the adult population in Northern Ireland and (ii) to further assess if the OU policies applicable to this cohort afforded any adverse imbalances in equality and diversity.

1.4 As well as being in accordance with guidelines recommended by the ECNI the assessment was carried out with guidance and support from The Open University’s Equality and Diversity Unit.

1.5 The EQIA consisted of four stages as follows:-

(i) The collection of monitoring data encompassing all OU staff resident and working in Northern Ireland – a total of 210 people including Associate Lecturers from whom monitoring data was requested anonymously across the 9 equality categories commended by the ECNI.

(ii) The presentation of a questionnaire/survey to all staff about the University’s staff recruitment, selection and appointment policies in Northern Ireland.

(iii) The sharing of the monitoring and survey templates with shareholders including, chiefly, the NI Equality Commission.

(iv) With assistance from the University’s Equality and Diversity Unit and guidance from the Equality Commission, responses to the consultation
were considered carefully and where necessary, actions to address any adverse imbalances were carried out to improve current policy. These actions are highlighted in section 3 of this report.

1.6 It was decided at an early stage in the process that if possible the Staff EQIA should be conducted anonymously and as far as possible, online, with alternative formats available.

1.7 The monitoring data forms were designed ‘in-house’ for online presentation by the OUI IT Co-ordinator and the efficiency and ‘user-friendliness’ of her design and the online approach was complimented upon by the Commission and respondees.

1.8 The questionnaire and survey was presented in paper document form and distributed at a time of year which suited most people and helped to ensure a credible response rate.

2. Monitoring Data

2.1 The data was collected in accordance with the ‘Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities’ published by The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in July 2007.

2.2 The ECNI’s introductory note on the role and practicalities of monitoring provides a useful introduction and overview of the relevance of equality impact assessments.

2.3 “Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 was intended to make a difference. Its purpose was to change the culture of policy formulation and decision-making throughout the public service – to ensure that equality of opportunity and good relations were central to the process of government and public service. A related purpose was to ensure that it worked; that it was effective. As part of the realisation of the latter purpose the legislation provided for the continuing process of monitoring the impact of policies to determine whether they had any adverse consequences. That mandatory process underlines the practical focus of Section 75; it is there to make a difference. It also underlines the intention to put this to the test by diligently evaluating the impacts of all policies.

2.4 The purpose and scope of the guidance document is to provide practical assistance and advice to public authorities in monitoring for the purposes of Section 75. Monitoring is more than data collection, it is also about analysing information that is relevant to, and necessary for, the objective of which is to highlight possible inequalities and why these might be occurring”
2.5 The ECNI further explains that equality legislation in Northern Ireland has a wider reach than NI fair employment legislation, covering the 9 equality categories of age, sex, marital status, disability, dependants, race, religious belief, political opinion and sexual orientation. It also acknowledges the sensitivity surrounding the collection of monitoring information across this range of categories.

2.6 The Commission points out that whilst its legislation does not insist upon statutory monitoring of 5 of the 9 categories i.e., age, sex, disability, race and sexual orientation it commends regular monitoring of these categories as exemplary practice using its Codes of Practice and Guidance.

2.7 Applying the 9 equality grounds or categories commended by the ECNI complements the OUNI’s legal obligation under The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 which requires NI employers to collate and submit information detailing the composition of their workforce by community background, sex and occupational grouping and whether they were employed for more or less than 16 hours per week.

2.8 In designing its online monitoring data survey the Open University in Ireland applied the illustrative set of definitions and classifications for authorities to use as commended and set out by the Commission in the Appendix A of its 2007 Monitoring Guide.

2.9 The Monitoring Data Survey was brought to the attention of all Open University staff resident and working for the OU in Northern Ireland – a total of 210 people.

2.10 This total consists of 59 regional admin. and support staff and 151 Associate Lecturing (AL) staff.

2.11 A credible response rate of 146 people or close to 70% of all staff was achieved – this breaks down as 66% admin/support staff and 71% AL staff.

2.12 The 9 equality categories were analysed in the following sequence: AGE, GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, DISABILITY, DEPENDANTS, ETHNIC ORIGIN, RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, POLITICAL GROUPING.

2.13 Where possible comparisons with the NI adult population were included and some smaller percentage figures were rounded or omitted as too small for reliable quotation.

2.14 To further help the analysis the OUNI staff cohort was distributed into Standard Occupational Classifications(‘SOCs’) as far was reasonably practical in line with the

For the purpose of the OUNI analysis the ‘SOCs’ used were:

SOC1  Manager and Senior Official i.e. OUNI Senior Management
SOC2  Professional Occupations i.e. OUNI Staff Tutors/Unit Managers
SOC3  Associate Professional and Technical Occupations i.e. OUNI Associate Lecturers
SOC4  Administrative and Secretarial Occupations i.e. OUNI Admin and Secretarial Support

This choice and range was felt to be the best fit for OUNI for comparative purposes in the HE Sector – to this extent it can be regarded as a ‘helpful’ rather than an ‘official’ classification.

3. Analysis, Findings and Actions

3.1 Age

- Over 90% of OU staff in Northern are aged 35 or more.
- There are very few Associate Lecturers under the age of 35.
- This compares to a higher proportion of Associate Lecturers under 35 (@33%) across the rest of the University.
- The higher age profile of staff in Northern Ireland can be explained in part by a higher rate of retention in face of a more limited job market historically - a consequence of which has been the retention of experienced tutors.

- Action: Awareness of current age profile has been fed into current and future recruitment process with a view to encouraging younger applicants to apply. In 2009 additional staff were recruited within the 25 - 35 age group.

3.2 Gender

- Overall 60% female/40% male mix
- In comparison to the OU’s overall female/male balance this is skewed slightly more towards female staff in NI.
- Currently OUNI is not attracting as high a proportion of males into academic posts and very few males are being recruited to ‘SOC4’ i.e. admin and secretarial support.

- Action: The gender imbalance in the OU NI staff cohort is
being addressed by raising awareness of the need to attract more males to apply – this is being assisted by ensuring a more balanced male/female composition of recruitment panels.

3.3 Martial Status

- Close to 80% of OUNI staff are married.
- This possibly reflects attractive and supportive workings conditions for married people and high retention of staff.
- Action: To raise awareness of OUNI staff that there is a high proportion of married people in the staff cohort and that this should not engender a ‘chill factor’ towards staff who are unmarried.

3.4 Disability

- In comparison to rest of the OU, there is higher rate of declared disability in the NI AL cohort – close to 10%.
- In the context of NI where 9.5% of working age population is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – this is twice the rate for Great Britain.
- Actions arising from this: (i) ensuring that OUNI’s new premises are fully accessible (ii) to ensure that disclosure of disability in ‘SOC1’ and SOC2’ staff groupings is being fully communicated and (iii) that consideration be given to assessing more fully the needs of existing ALs with declared disability.

3.5 Dependants

- Overall, close to 50% of staff have children.
- Some staff have other caring responsibilities.

- Action: Raise awareness and communicate more positively the range and benefits of OU’s flexible working policies.

3.6 Ethnicity

- Overall over 95% in ‘White UK’ or ‘White Irish’ groupings
- Within the context that 98% of NI population falls into these categories i.e. one of the smallest ethnic minority populations within the European Union.
- Only in ‘S03’ which encompasses Associate Lecturer staff is there anyone registered in ‘Other Ethnic Group’.

- Action: Notwithstanding the OUNI characteristics of high retention of staff, a relatively small number of staff overall in comparison to other OU units and the limited diversity in the NI population, there is a need to ensure that recruitment adverts are placed within reach of all ethnic groups in N.I.
3.7 Religion
- Nearly 2/3 of OUNI staff declared in 2 main denominations i.e. Protestant (@ 35%, Roman Catholic @ 29%).
- Significantly almost 1/3 declared ‘none’
- This equality category is also reported upon annually in the OUNI’s Fair Employment Return.
- There is an absence of denominations outside ‘Protestant’ and ‘none’ in the small number of OUNI Senior Management staff.
- Action: Ensure that all OU recruitment adverts in NI are reaching all religious communities in Northern Ireland

3.8 Sexual Orientation
- Commendable high level of declaration and diversity recorded for this category.
- Action: Need to continue to ensure that diversity continues to be responded to positively so that new staff are comfortable being ‘open’ in this regard.

3.9 Political Group
- This is the first time this equality category has been surveyed in the OU.
- Over 52% of OUNI staff recorded as unaffiliated to any political group.
- Followed by Unionists at 24% and Nationalists at 14%.
- Action: Continue to recognise that political affiliation is not pertinent to everyone in Northern Ireland.

4. Conclusion
4.1 The OUNI’s Senior Management Team have taken on board the actions identified and since these figures were produced recruitment over the last 12 months has become more balanced in the ‘Age’ and ‘Religion’ equality categories.
4.2 Steps are being taken to share an update and presentation on equality and diversity, with a view to raising awareness about the 9 equality categories with all OUNI staff in the near future.

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