



# Equality and diversity ...making it happen



## Interim full version of The Open University Equality Scheme 2012 – 2016\*

We are creating an inclusive university community and a society-

- where people are treated with dignity and respect,
- where inequalities are challenged, and
- where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances,

so that everyone can achieve their potential.

This scheme is available in a range of formats including full and abbreviated version documents published on our website in Word and PDF formats and abbreviated version in print. The scheme, or sections of it, can also be requested in plain text, in large print, in Braille, comb-bound or audio format. If you would like to request the scheme in a particular format to meet your needs, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Information Rights Team.

This document is the full version of our UK Equality Scheme.

\*This scheme is published as an interim version as we are awaiting its approval by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Annex E of the full version of this scheme sets out the legal requirements and how this scheme will meet them. However, until such time as we have received approval, our current scheme for Northern Ireland is the 2003 version published on our equality and diversity website.

All of the content in this document, including the Foreword, constitutes our equality scheme.

It is intended that the scheme, including the Annexes will be reviewed and updated after 4 years. Information that will be reviewed and updated more frequently is published in separate Appendices. Appendix 1 and 2, the equality objectives and equality action plan, are particularly important to the effective implementation of this equality scheme.

The abbreviation 'the OU' is often used for 'The Open University' throughout this document.

Further information about equality and diversity at The Open University is available on our website at [www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity](http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity).

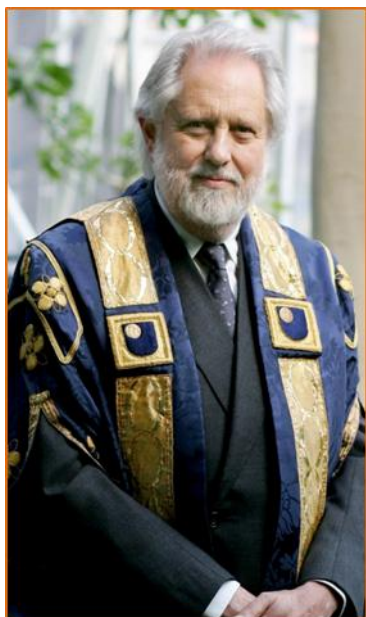
Comments or questions about this equality scheme should be sent for the attention of the Head of Equality and Diversity. For complaints, please see Section 4.3.

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# Foreword



Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE  
Chancellor of  
The Open University



Martin Bean  
Vice-Chancellor of  
The Open University

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

As an organisation with social justice at the heart of our mission, we are committed to developing an inclusive university community and contributing to an inclusive and just society. This commitment is expressed in the vision and principles set out in this scheme.

Discrimination arising from individual characteristics and circumstances is not only unlawful, but a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity. At The Open University we recognise the value of diversity and the strength that it brings and we challenge under-representation and differences in outcomes through positive action programmes.

As a public body, we also have a number of statutory duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires us to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between groups of people (see box 1).

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires us to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across a range of characteristics (see box 2).

In this equality scheme we set out our arrangements for how The Open University will meet these duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that we comply with our statutory duties and that our equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our compliance with the statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and governors are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it.

We, the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of The Open University, are fully committed to ensuring that the University fulfils its statutory equality duties effectively across all functions, including education and related services, employment, partnerships and procurement.

We realise the important role that our students and the public have to play to ensure our statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there is active engagement, so that people affected by our work can influence and shape our organisation.

On behalf of The Open University and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and guidelines provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in ensuring compliance with our statutory duties and working towards the achievement of our equality vision.

Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE  
Chancellor



Martin Bean  
Vice-Chancellor



#### Box 1: The Public Sector Equality Duty in Great Britain

The Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

People with caring responsibilities are also protected from discrimination by virtue of their association with people with protected characteristics.

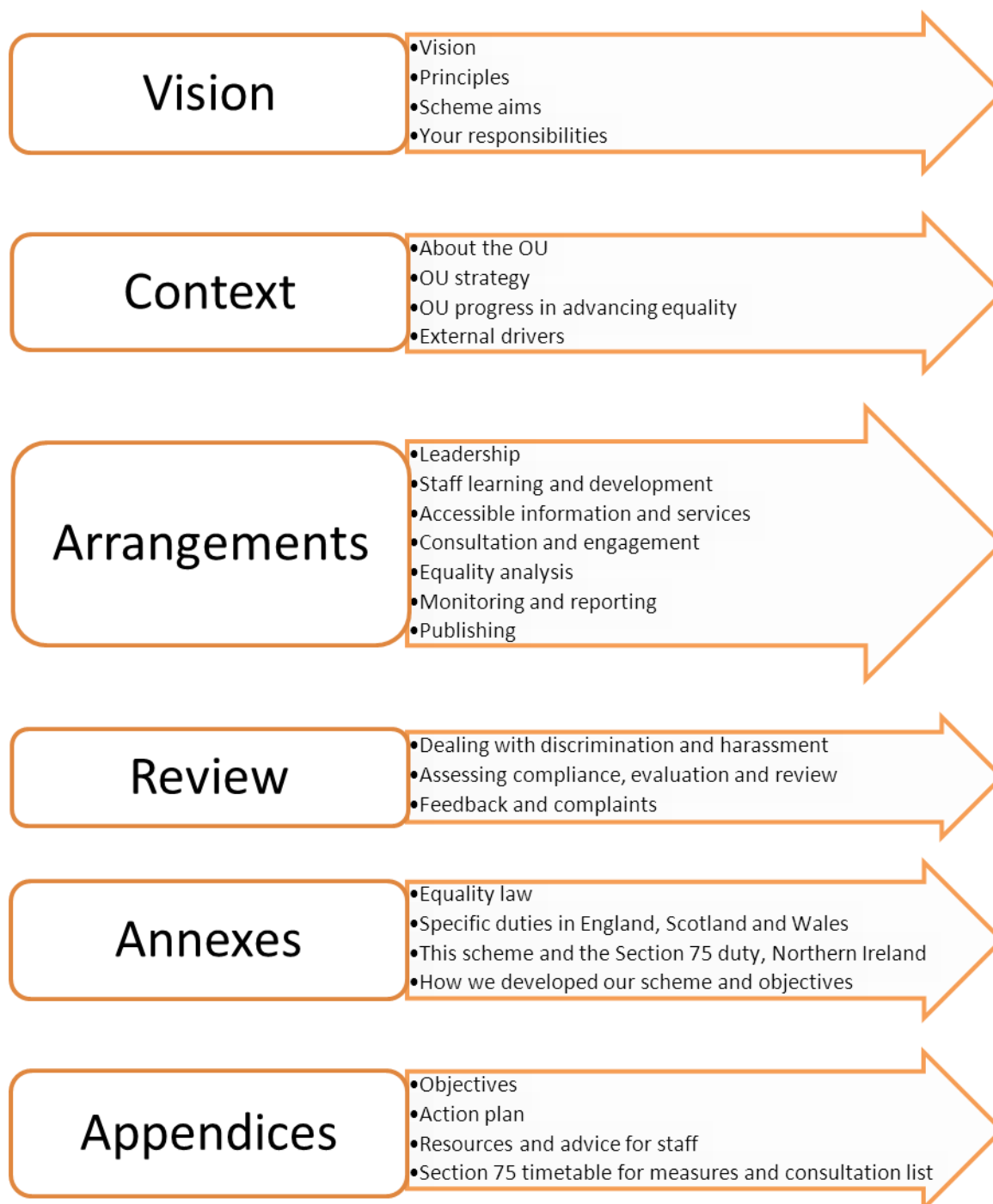
#### Box 2: Section 75 in Northern Ireland

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires The Open University, in carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to *promote equality of opportunity* between

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- Men and women generally
- Persons with a disability and persons without
- Persons with dependants and persons without

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland, we must have due regard to the desirability of *promoting good relations* between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

# Main elements of our Equality Scheme



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# 1. Our vision, principles, scheme aims and responsibilities

## 1.1. Our vision of a fair and just society

We are creating an inclusive university community and a society-

- where people are treated with dignity and respect,
- where inequalities are challenged, and
- where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances,

so that everyone can achieve their potential.

## 1.2. Our equality and diversity principles

1. We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.
2. We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.
3. We recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes at The Open University can be challenged through positive action programmes.
4. We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
5. We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.



## 1.3. Scheme aims

The aims of our equality scheme are aligned to the Public Sector Equality Duty in Great Britain and the Section 75 duty in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation involves:

- Ensuring there is no less favourable treatment for people
- Ensuring no factors give rise to discrimination

### 2. To promote and advance equality of opportunity

Promoting and advancing equality of opportunity involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantage suffered by people
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people that are different to the needs of other people
- Encouraging people to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

### 3. To promote and foster good relations between people

Promoting and fostering good relations involves:

- Tackling prejudice
- Promoting understanding between people

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<sup>1</sup> See the Foreword for a description of the duties as they apply to The Open University. Also see Section 2.4 (Equality law) for a summary of equality law, and Annexes A to E for further detail.

## 1.4. Your responsibilities

Everyone that is part of our University community has responsibilities under this equality scheme. Responsibilities for different groups of people are set out below. Section 3.2 of this scheme provides information about the equality and diversity learning and development programme that supports staff in meeting these responsibilities.

As a **student**, you should:

- Treat all members of our University community with dignity and respect for their rights and beliefs
- Challenge or report incidents of discrimination and bullying
- Respond positively and inclusively to individual differences

As an **employee, consultant or agent**, you should do all the above, and:

- Anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances of members of our University community
- Apply equality and diversity principles through everyday activities
- Keep knowledge of University equality and diversity policy up to date

As a **line manager or manager of consultants or agents**, you should do all the above, and:

- Ensure the University's equality vision and scheme are communicated to potential employees and new staff through the recruitment and induction processes
- Disseminate accessible information to ensure employees, consultants and agents are aware of their responsibilities
- Identify and respond to equality and diversity staff development needs
- Support individual needs and circumstances of staff so they can perform effectively

As a **Head of Unit**, you should do all the above, and:

- Where relevant, include equality and diversity development actions in the unit's business plan
- Ensure that *equality analysis*<sup>2</sup> is carried out for changes to strategy, policy and practice
- Assess and report progress against agreed equality action plans

As a member of the **Vice-Chancellor's Executive**, you should do all the above, and:

- Champion, sponsor and promote equality and diversity
- Ensure institutional compliance with equality legislation

As a member of **the governing body**, you should:

- Satisfy yourself that the University is fully compliant with its equality duties
- Request further information from University staff where you require assurance

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<sup>2</sup> See Section 3.5 for further information about equality analysis.

As an **academic staff member developing or acquiring teaching and assessment materials**, you should:

- Anticipate and respond to the needs of students with different impairments when developing learning outcomes and materials
- Develop materials with your audience in mind, recognising the full diversity of the student body

As an **academic or research staff member, engaged in research activity**, you should:

- Apply equality and diversity principles to all those associated with your research, and treat individuals with dignity and respect
- Ensure that your research activity adheres to equality and diversity principles and ethical research standards

As a **research leader**, you should:

- Ensure that *equality analysis* is carried out for all new research activity in accordance with the University's arrangements and the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers<sup>3</sup>

As a **staff member developing strategy and policy**, you should:

- Ensure that *equality analysis* is carried out for all new and revised strategies and policies, so that strategy and policy is inclusive, and does not unintentionally discriminate or lead to unintended outcomes

As a **Chair of a University Committee, management group or steering group**, you should:

- Ensure that *equality analysis* has been carried out for changes to University strategy, policy and practice, and that the findings are taken into account before decisions are made at the committee, management group or steering group that you Chair

As a **partner, or provider of goods and services**, you should:

- Comply with equality laws in the countries in which you operate
- Have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote and advance equality of opportunity, and promote and foster good relations
- Subscribe to the vision and principles of our equality scheme

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<sup>3</sup> The Concordat sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. Further information is available at <http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/>.

# 2. Context of our scheme

## 2.1. About the OU

### The OU in facts and figures<sup>4</sup>

Since the OU's launch in 1969 more than 1.6 million people worldwide have achieved their learning goals by studying with us.

The OU is the biggest university in the UK with:

- More than 260,000 students
- Around 7,000 Associate Lecturers (tutors)
- More than 1,200 full-time academic and research staff
- More than 3,500 support and administrative staff
- Around 1,100 full and part-time postgraduate research students

Most modules are available throughout Europe and some are available worldwide directly from the OU. Many more are available through our partners and accredited institutions. There are currently:

- Around 3,500 students in the Republic of Ireland
- Around 9,000 students in Continental Europe
- Around 7,500 outside the European Union
- Around 46,000 students on OU-validated programmes delivered through national and international partners

Our institution is diverse:

- We are the largest provider of higher education for disabled people with around 13,500 studying with us
- Around 1,800 OU students study each year in prison or a secure unit
- Around 4,000 armed forces personnel and their dependents study with us each year, some while on active duty
- Around 10% of our UK students are from ethnic minorities
- Around 70% are in work while studying
- 60% of our students are female
- We have students taking OU modules alongside A levels and we have students in their 90s – the average age is 31 and more than 29,000 students are aged under 25
- More than 40% of OU undergraduates have one A level or lower qualification at entry

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<sup>4</sup> Data from 'The Open University in facts and figures', April 2012 – the latest data is available at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/main/the-ou-explained/facts-and-figures/>.

## OU mission and core values

The Open University's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. The University was founded to open up higher education to all, regardless of circumstances or location. The OU has developed and embodies a set of core values that make it the most distinctive institution in higher education.

The Open University is:

### **Inclusive**

- We play a unique role in society, making higher education open to all.
- We promote social justice through the development of knowledge and skills.

### **Innovative**

- We lead the learning revolution, placing innovation at the heart of our teaching and research.
- We continuously seek new and better ways to inspire and enable learning.
- We create world-class research and teaching.

### **Responsive**

- We respond to the needs of individuals and employers and the communities in which they live and work.
- We are dedicated to supporting our students' learning success.

These values provide a moral and intellectual compass for the University in a changing world.

## Open entry

We have no minimum entry requirements for admission to most undergraduate qualifications. We teach primarily at a distance through a system of *supported open learning* which includes the provision of high-quality print and multimedia teaching materials, together with personalised tuition, learning feedback and support. Personalised tuition takes the form of online and face-to-face tutorials, online forums, telephone and email tuition, and residential and day schools, depending on the module and qualification being studied.

## Four nations and Europe

The Open University is the only UK-wide university with centres in all four nations. Through economies of scale, we are able to deliver a breadth of programmes and curriculum to each of the nations. Higher education is increasingly distinctive and devolved – what is required in one country may not be appropriate in another. Our curriculum, learning and teaching and research strategies and our student support services must be increasingly mindful of different needs, and we must continue to guard against Anglo-centric policy and decision-making. Particular attention is given to meeting the principle in our Welsh Language Scheme, to treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality in the conduct of all our public business in Wales.

As an institution that prides itself on inclusion, students, staff and partners in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and other European countries should feel included and respected and will do so when we differentiate our practices where appropriate and relevant.

## Widening Participation

Widening participation is at the heart of our mission, firmly embedded in our core values. Our widening participation strategy aims to improve access and success for identified priority groups. Our Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum provides our unique Open Degree Programme<sup>5</sup>, introductory Openings<sup>6</sup> modules, and supports the development of institutional research and scholarship in the areas of widening participation, social inclusion in higher education, and curriculum development.

Our Community Partnerships Programme is a highly targeted, proactive programme of work, focusing on recruiting and supporting the hardest to reach students. We build partnerships with community based organisations such as children’s centres, schools, voluntary and community sector organisations, which help us to take the university into local settings.

The importance of education in helping ex-offenders raise their aspirations, gain employment and preventing reoffending is demonstrated in a number of studies and the OU has been providing education to students in prisons and secure environments since the 1970s. In more recent years, we have created the Offender Learning Programme to allow for greater coordination of OU learning through partnerships with a number of different Government departments and other agencies, including the National Offender Management Service, the Skills Funding Agency, and the Prisoners Education Trust. The limited access to computers and the internet in prisons is a particular challenge that the OU has been addressing through engagement in the development of a Virtual Campus<sup>7</sup>.

## Research and scholarship

The OU has research strengths among the best in the UK with more than 50% of its research rated as ‘internationally excellent’ and 14% as world leading in the 2008 national Research Assessment Exercise. Around 1,100 research students study with the OU, including some 300 through our Affiliated Research Centres, which include the UK Architectural Association, the British Antarctic Survey, the UK Health Protection Agency and Medical Research Council laboratories in Africa.

The OU is committed to supporting its academic staff in a full range of scholarly activity, including underpinning innovation that maintains the University’s position as a global leader in distance learning, knowledge exchange and digital scholarship. Engagement features strongly in the OU’s research. Industry funds important areas of OU research and technology transfer, and OU academics often advise on current issues.

## Working with business and industry

Working with business and industry is part of The Open University’s strategy to support individual and economic growth. We have developed modules tailored to a wide variety of professions. By working in partnership with employers in the private, public and community sectors we are improving the skills and knowledge of the UK workforce while allowing individuals to continue to contribute to the economy and to society. We also have a number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships which create mutually beneficial relationships, helping business improve productivity and performance by providing access to academic skills and expertise.

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<sup>5</sup> Further information about the Open Degree Programme is available at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/study/explained/study-explained/our-range-qualifications/open-qualifications>.

<sup>6</sup> Further information about the Openings Programme is available at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/wideningparticipation/about-us/openings-programme>.

<sup>7</sup> For further information about developments in the Offender Learning Programme and information about the Virtual Campus project, please see the OU Offender Learning website at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/offender-learning/information-and-developments>.

## Open educational resources

As part of our mission we are making an increasing amount of our teaching and learning resources available free of charge to anyone with access to the internet, no matter where in the world they live. The OpenLearn website makes OU educational resources available to potential students who want to know what OU learning materials are like. We were the first UK university to join iTunes U (iTunes University) and we achieved more than 250,000 downloads each week in 2011. Extracts of our broadcasts and teaching materials can be viewed on YouTube, along with videos on OU research and student life. More than 15,000 research publications are now freely available to view and consult through our Open Research Online portal, one of the largest university research collections in the UK.

## International development

Our mission to extend learning to all does not stop at the borders of Europe. Through partnerships, around 46,000 students are studying with twenty partners in more than thirty countries, including China, India, Russia, Singapore and seven Arab countries.

We are expanding our use of new technologies to bring training and education within the reach of more and more of the developing world's workforce. Our Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) programme is Africa's largest teacher education research and development community, and extends across twelve countries, with around 300,000 teachers using TESSA materials in 2010. Our work in Ethiopia is helping the UK Government achieve its target of training 11,000 additional doctors, and 31,000 rural health workers. Our English in Action programme is a UK Department for International Development funded, £50 million, nine-year programme to help 25 million people in Bangladesh develop their English language skills via new mobile technologies.

We aim to promote social justice and our equality principles in all our work overseas however, we recognise that our equality strategy stems from a UK and European context, and our approach overseas requires both cultural sensitivity and negotiation.

## 2.2. The University Strategy

Our strategy is to *secure the mission* by:

- Delivering an outstanding student experience, and
- Enhancing the capabilities of the University

Implementing our equality scheme will support the achievement of our strategy in the ways outlined in Box 3 below.

Box 3: How the equality scheme contributes to the University Strategy

Deliver an outstanding student experience:

- **Support the delivery of a market-leading enquirer experience** by attracting and retaining increasing numbers of students from diverse backgrounds
- **Support a study experience that maximises students' chances of success in achieving their study goals** by responding positively to individual needs and circumstances and addressing barriers to success
- **Support journeys from informal to formal learning** by promoting diversity and inclusion through open media

Enhance the capabilities of the University:

- **Support research and scholarship that is externally recognised for excellence and impact** by leading research and scholarship in social justice and inclusion
- **Support people and culture that enable us to deliver high performance**, by attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, by promoting equality through all our people processes, and by drawing on the creativity, skills and experience of our diverse workforce
- **Support flexible, integrated and robust systems** by embedding accessibility in procurement and systems development
- **Support financial sustainability**, preventing unnecessary costs by considering different needs and circumstances from the outset



## 2.3. Progress in advancing equality and good relations

### Equality in action

We have made great strides in advancing equality of opportunity and good relations at The Open University in recent years and the following are some examples of the work we have done.

We continued to widen participation to higher education for people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, through a national programme of community partnerships and through our work in prisons and our work to provide effective study support to carers.

We invested significantly in developing new systems to automate the production of a wider range of alternative formats for disabled students and we completed a major project to implement DAISY – digital talking books. We continue to invest in our Access Centre and bought a new Access Bus to bring assessments closer to students in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. We developed new study skills booklets to provide effective advice for students across a number of the most common impairments and new resources for our Associate Lecturers (tutors) to ensure consistent study support for students with mental health impairments. We implemented an extensive Securing Greater Accessibility programme which aims to ensure that the learning accessibility needs of disabled students are anticipated at an earlier stage, and we reduce the additional time and costs associated with retrospective adjustments.

We developed our student monitoring information so that our Programme Committees can review the participation and outcomes for different student groups more easily as part of their annual quality review process. We supported curriculum development and research that advances equality and fosters good relations through promoting understanding, across a range of characteristics, including ageing, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic inequalities. We developed a Code of Practice Supporting the Management of Research to ensure that the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise submission and selection process were conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

We developed a new approach to considering equality during policy development and when managing change projects. Our Equality Analysis method ensures that we give active consideration to equality implications at an early stage and we have embedded this method in our annual unit planning process. We developed a range of additional resources to support staff in embedding equality in their work, including a resource to support assessment with partner institutions, and a resource to strengthen equality in contracting.

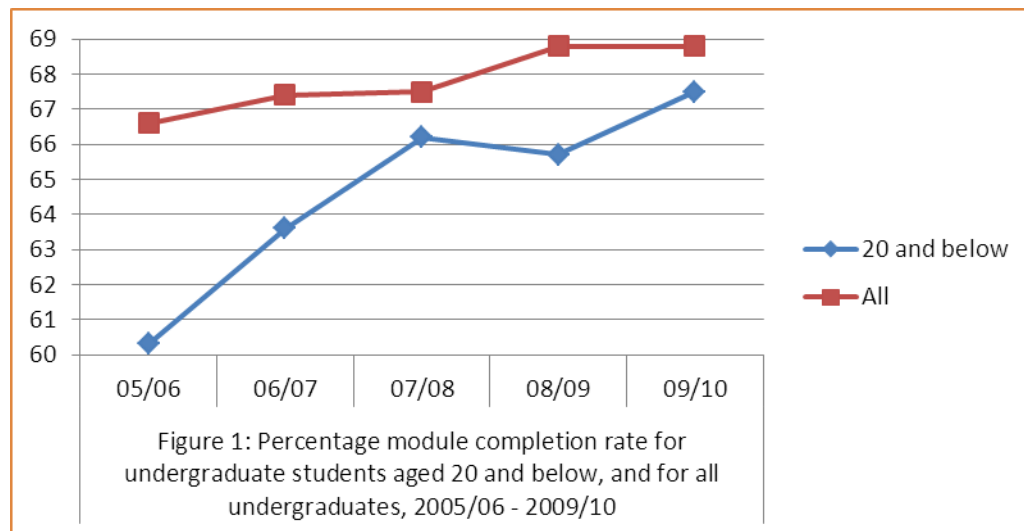
For staff, we developed a framework to enable staff networks and gave practical support to help a number of these to get started, including networks for ethnic minority staff, for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff, and for disabled staff. We introduced religion or belief and sexual orientation questions in our staff survey and we analysed survey results by a wide range of characteristics. We responded to issues identified in the surveys, for example we developed Aspire, a leadership mentoring programme for minority staff. We developed a new Disability and Employment website to enable managers to respond effectively to the needs of disabled staff.

We undertook a number of equality benchmarking exercises and were shortlisted for two equality-related awards, one for our module to enable women returning to science, engineering or technology, and one for our Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa programme. We shared our practice across the sector through networks, equality organisations and making our equality resources freely available to other organisations.

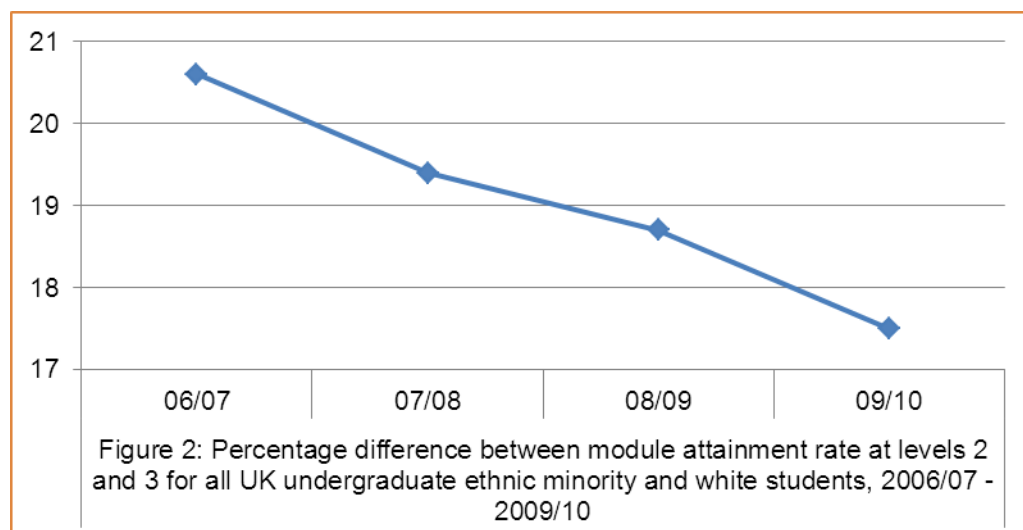
## Equality in numbers

We have made an impact in reducing inequalities and the following are some examples. The data presented here are indicative of positive trends and are not intended to present a complete picture. A wide range of additional monitoring data is published as part of the University's equality and diversity annual report and can be obtained at [www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity](http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity).

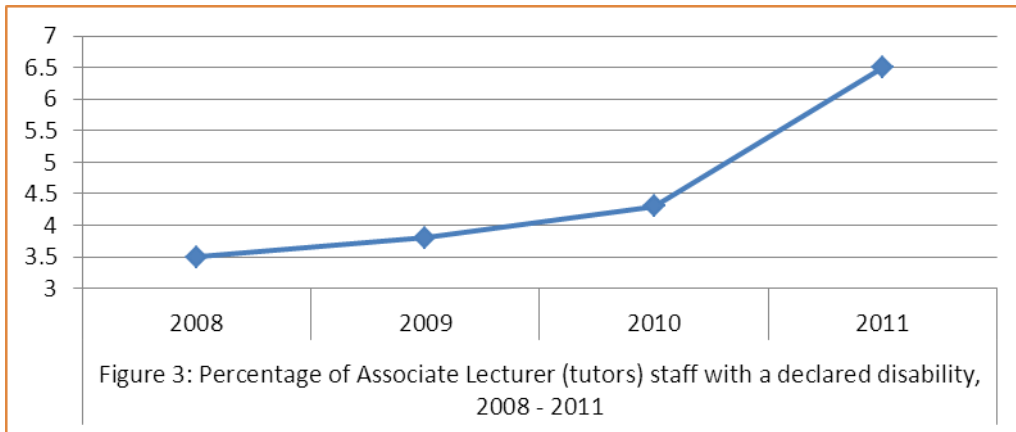
We have got better at supporting younger students. The module completion rate for younger undergraduates has increased over the past few years so that it is now much closer to the level for all students.



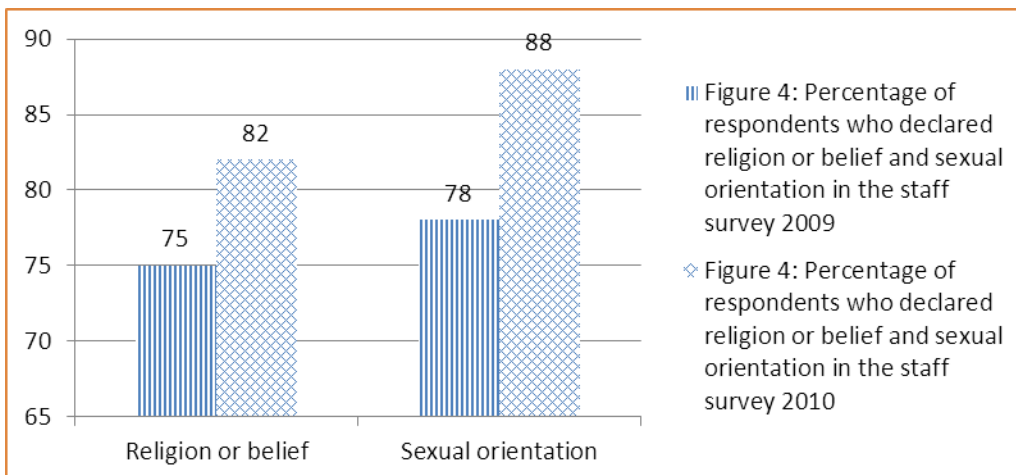
The ethnicity attainment gap is still very wide, and there is considerable variation when individual ethnic groups are considered. However, we are taking action to promote student success and the overall difference in the proportion of ethnic minority students and white students that achieve a good module pass (first or upper second) has reduced.



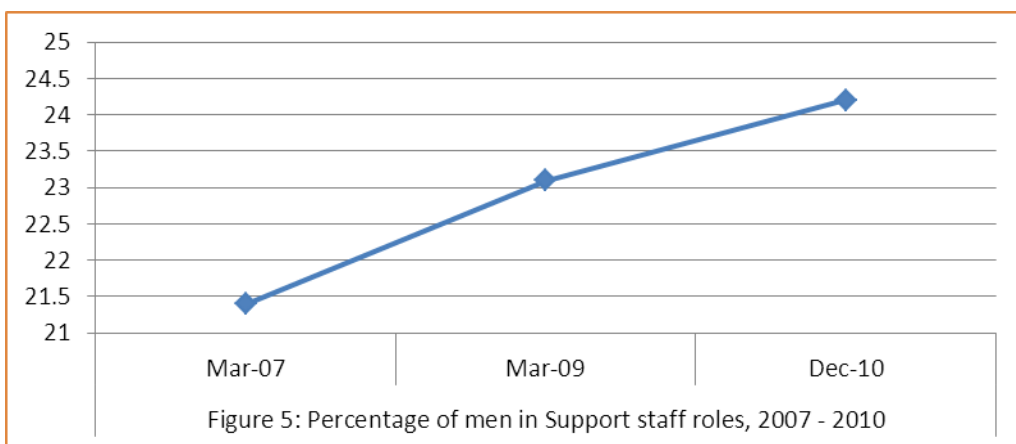
Staff are increasingly open and comfortable in declaring equality information. The proportion of staff declaring a disability has increased substantially, especially for our Associate Lecturer staff.



Staff are confident to declare sensitive personal information. The proportion of staff declaring religion or belief and sexual orientation in the staff survey is increasing.



We are challenging occupational gender segregation. The proportion of men in Support Staff roles is increasing.



## 2.4. External drivers

### Inequalities in education and employment in the UK

A wealth of evidence shows that education is a key determinant of life chances. As well as being a right in itself, education is an enabling right, allowing individuals to develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure other rights and economic, social and cultural opportunities. Participation in higher education has dramatically diversified, with 1 in 5 students today from an ethnic minority, a continuing increase in the number of disabled students and women now ahead of men in many aspects of educational success. However, in some ethnic and religious groups there are large numbers of people without any qualifications at all. Educational attainment continues to be strongly associated with socio-economic background, but ethnicity, gender and disability are also key determinants and there continues to be strong subject segregation. Adults with more prior education are much more likely to access learning opportunities in later life. In Wales, more adults are disadvantaged by low skills and qualifications than in most other parts of Britain<sup>8</sup>.

In Northern Ireland, the proportion of disabled people entering higher education has increased substantially in the last decade. There are differences in educational destinations and attainment between Protestants and Catholics, with Protestants being less likely to enrol in third level education, however, other differences are more marked. Male students are less likely to continue on to third level education and more likely to leave with no qualifications<sup>9</sup>.

Many barriers within employment are breaking down, for example, a growing proportion of managerial and professional positions are taken by women and there has been steady growth in the proportion of ethnic minority people in employment. However only 1 in 4 Muslim women work, while Black people and disabled people in their early 20s are twice as likely not to be in employment, education or training as White people and non-disabled people. Occupational segregation and the large proportion of women in part-time jobs continue to feed pay differences. Lesbian, gay and bisexual adults are around twice as likely as other employees to report experiencing unfair treatment or discrimination at work<sup>10</sup> and evidence suggests that the workplace remains a stressful and difficult place for some groups, specifically transgender people and irregular migrant workers.

### Demographic and social change

It is a time of enormous and accelerating demographic and social change:

- people are living longer and are remaining economically and intellectually active for longer; the removal of the default retirement age will require better management of succession planning and clearer performance management frameworks
- economic migration is changing the structure of the education and labour market
- there is massive change in ethnic and religious diversity
- economic, social and health inequalities are widening
- there is more openness in society and a growing awareness that it is socially unacceptable to be intolerant toward aspects of individual difference.

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<sup>8</sup> Source of this paragraph – Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) *How fair is Britain? The first triennial review*.

<sup>9</sup> Source of this paragraph – Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2010) *Inequalities in Education: Facts and Trends 1998-2008*.

<sup>10</sup> In contrast, at the OU, staff survey results show that the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees is broadly similar to that of straight staff.

## Impact of funding and fees changes

This equality scheme is written at a time following a period of worldwide recession, and a time when higher education has been affected by changes in government public funding policy in England, requiring efficiencies to be made and new areas of work to be developed that will accelerate income from non-government sources. As a result, we are undergoing a period of rapid and unprecedented change, introducing student fee increases and a greater emphasis on qualifications.

Within such a period of change, there is a risk that issues of equality, diversity and inclusion may be overlooked, while individuals and teams come under increasing pressure to deliver more with less resource. However, a focus on equality will clearly help us to stay true to our mission and to achieve our business strategy, as emphasised in Section 2.2.

## Immigration rules

In recent years, changes to immigration rules have resulted in new challenges to universities, as educators and employers, in recruiting talented learners and staff from overseas. The changes have included the introduction of a new minimum pay requirement for skilled workers, tightening of existing work placement restrictions, the introduction of Highly Trusted Sponsor Licences for institutions, and the introduction of limits on the time that can be spent studying at degree level<sup>11</sup>.

## Equality law

The introduction of the Equality Act 2010 has transformed equality law in Great Britain. The first phase became law in October 2010 and in broad terms it harmonises, updates and amends previous anti-discrimination legislation, providing greater protection from discrimination and harassment for all individuals across a wide range of protected characteristics. The second phase became law in April 2011 and enacts a new *Public Sector Equality Duty*, which amends and expands the previous duty to cover a wider range of characteristics. The duty requires us to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, in the exercise of all our functions<sup>12</sup>.

The manner in which public authorities meet the Public Sector Equality Duty is specified by secondary equality legislation called the *specific duties* and legislation in England, Scotland and Wales has resulted in somewhat different requirements. The Open University must meet the legal requirements in England only. We recognise the importance of supporting the different Governments of the UK to address equality priorities determined through the democratic process in each country and we therefore aim to comply with the requirements in Scotland and Wales<sup>13</sup>.

The Act does not apply in Northern Ireland, where Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 already places a duty on the University to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without. These are commonly referred to as the nine equality categories. We are also required by the same Act to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Further information about UK Immigration Rules are available on the UK Border Agency website at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/>.

<sup>12</sup> See Annex A for a quick start guide to the Equality Act.

<sup>13</sup> See Annex D for further information about the specific duties in England, Scotland and Wales.

<sup>14</sup> See Annex E for a list of the requirements under Section 75.

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force in 2000 and incorporates the European Convention of Human Rights into domestic law. Several articles are relevant to and have implications for staff and student policy and practice. Individual rights and responsibilities have been incorporated into the Principles in Section 1.2 and under Your Responsibilities in Section 1.4 of this scheme. Additionally, the UK has ratified a significant number of United Nations Conventions that aim to eliminate discrimination and protect rights.

Working in different countries presents both opportunity and challenge. Staff must develop their knowledge of the specific legal, cultural and political contexts in which they operate, and must comply with specific equality laws in different countries. Where we teach overseas students directly, those students have the same protections under equality law as students based in the UK.

Equality legislation continues to provide context and direction for our equality scheme, but we will continue to develop our scheme beyond the requirements of legislation.

Further information about equality law is outlined in Annexes A to E.

# 3. Arrangements for managing and embedding equality

## 3.1. Leadership

Strong, visible leadership is an essential component of this equality scheme. Members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) have sponsored individual objectives and will continue to promote equality and diversity through strategic decision making, management responsibility and influence through committees and steering groups.

The University Secretary and the Director, Students, both members of the VCE, will continue to hold the portfolio responsibility for ensuring compliance with equality legislation and promoting best practice across the institution. Supporting these individuals is the Equality and Diversity Management Group, chaired by the Head of Equality and Diversity, providing the focus for the University's robust, accountable and institution-wide response to equality challenges.

## 3.2. Staff learning and development

As an educational institution, the OU has a strong commitment to providing learning and development opportunities for staff to enable them to be effective in their roles and to fulfil their potential.

Everyone working at the OU needs to know something about equality and diversity. Staff working directly with students need to be able to respond to a wide range of needs and circumstances. Staff that develop learning materials need to know how to create inclusive and accessible resources. Managers need to know how to manage a diverse workforce effectively. Some staff need more specialist equality knowledge, such as those involved in advising others.

All staff need to know about their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Great Britain) and the Section 75 duty (Northern Ireland) and our core training for all staff, the Diversity online module, provides full details of institutional and individual responsibility.

### Equality and diversity staff learning and development programme

The table below documents our continuous equality and diversity staff learning and development programme. Learning and development is targeted to different staff groups depending on what they need to know. The programme is delivered by a significant number of different offices, and through several mainstream business processes, demonstrating the extent to which equality and diversity learning is integrated across the University.

Equality and Diversity Staff Learning and Development Programme			
Who needs to know?	What?	For what purpose?	How will they learn?
<b>All staff</b>	Rights and responsibilities under equality law, and responsibilities under our equality scheme	To achieve dignity and respect for all; to promote staff satisfaction; to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and other prohibited conduct	Diversity online module Promotion of Valued Ways of Working framework through staff appraisal process Written briefings from the E&D Team E&D intranet resources
<b>Associate Lecturer staff</b>	Where to find information and University policy and practical strategies in responding to different needs and circumstances	To respond effectively to needs of students, promote engagement, student satisfaction and success	Resources on Tutor Home website Support from Staff Tutors, Module teams and faculty Accessibility Specialists Regional and national staff development days
<b>Contractors and consultants</b>	Rights and responsibilities under equality law, and responsibilities under our equality scheme	To achieve dignity and respect for all; to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and other prohibited conduct	Standard equality-related clause in all contracts Equality built in as a core requirement in contracts where relevant Consultants provided with copy of summary equality scheme
<b>Line managers</b>	How to recruit and manage a diverse workforce	To utilise staff diversity; to respond positively to individual needs and circumstances; to promote staff satisfaction and success; to prevent unlawful discrimination	Disability and employment website Effective recruitment and selection course Employment law for managers course Cultural diversity at work course Briefings from HR Managers and Advisers
<b>Staff providing advice and guidance to students</b>	University policy and precedent in responding to particular equality-related circumstances	To meet needs of students, promote engagement, student satisfaction and success	Training for Student Registration and Enquiry Service staff Training for Curriculum Support Teams Regional briefings for advice staff Staff operating procedures
<b>Disability advisers</b>	Understanding of a wide range of different needs and University policy and precedent in responding	To meet needs of disabled students, and promote student satisfaction and success	Induction for new advisers Disability and Additional Requirements regional meetings Online resources Annual conference Advice from specialist advisers



Equality and Diversity Staff Learning and Development Programme			
Who needs to know?	What?	For what purpose?	How will they learn?
<b>Research student supervisors</b>	University policy and precedent in responding to particular equality-related circumstances	To meet needs of students, promote engagement, student satisfaction and success	Advice from specialists in the Research Career Development and Research Degrees teams; Supervisor training events; Supervisor handbook
<b>Principal Investigators and Directors of Research</b>	How to recruit and manage a diverse research team	To utilise staff diversity; to respond positively to individual needs and circumstances; to promote staff satisfaction and success; to prevent unlawful discrimination	Effective recruitment and selection course Cultural diversity at work course Briefings from HR and Research School Managers
<b>Staff developing curriculum, and teaching methodologies and tools</b>	Good practice in developing an inclusive and accessible curriculum and learning experience	To create inclusive curriculum that increases student engagement, retention and satisfaction; to anticipate barriers and address these proactively; to reduce bespoke costs	Research seminars provided by the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum Sharing good practice through the Accessibility Practitioners Group Online resources linked to the Curriculum approval process Advice from faculty Accessibility Specialists Resources and advice from central specialists
<b>Staff creating materials and assets</b>	Good practice in developing accessible materials and assets	To anticipate barriers and address these proactively; to reduce bespoke costs	Accessibility training provided to media teams Advice from faculty Accessibility Specialists Resources and advice from central specialists
<b>Staff developing strategy and policy</b>	How to assess the impact of strategy and policy on people	To develop inclusive strategy and policy; to meet the public sector equality duty and Section 75 duty	Equality analysis training; sharing exemplars; coaching
<b>Staff developing, commissioning or procuring websites and systems</b>	Good practice in developing accessible websites and systems	To anticipate barriers and address these proactively; to ensure systems are accessible to staff and students; to reduce bespoke costs	Briefings on accessibility standards and processes by Communications and IT.
<b>Staff developing partnerships, in the UK and internationally</b>	Understand the importance and value of cultural sensitivity	To build and maintain successful partnerships and relationships	Business cultural awareness course Widening Participation Network

Equality and Diversity Staff Learning and Development Programme			
Who needs to know?	What?	For what purpose?	How will they learn?
<b>Staff leading on equality planning and reporting for their unit</b>	University equality priorities and approaches to tackling inequalities	To develop effective interventions to address inequalities	Oral briefings and meetings with the E&D Team
<b>Members of the Equality and Diversity Management Group</b>	Equality law and sector good practice	To develop informed equality strategy and policy	Oral briefings from the E&D Team; email subscriptions to the Equality Challenge Unit and the Government Equalities Office
<b>Staff with specialist equality-related roles</b>	Interpretation of equality law and case law, good practice within and beyond the sector	To support the development of informed equality strategy and policy; to advise other staff	Sector conferences; briefings and mailings from equality organisations; research reports; internal networks, external specialist networks

## OU study

Staff can study a range of OU modules and the following modules and qualifications (available at time of writing) address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion directly<sup>15</sup>. This list is not exhaustive and many other modules address issues of equality and diversity within the module content.

### Continuing Professional Development

- Managing diversity (GB031)
- Respecting religious diversity at work (GA063)
- Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning<sup>16</sup>

### Undergraduate

- Equality, participation and inclusion: learning from each other (E214)
- Introducing religions (A217)
- Religion today: tradition, modernity and change (AD317)

### Postgraduate

- Accessible online learning: supporting disabled students (H810)
- Business, human rights law and corporate social responsibility (W822)
- Certificate in Human Rights and Development Management (C96)

<sup>15</sup> Further information about the modules listed here is available in the online prospectus at <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/>.

<sup>16</sup> This online module is provided by the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum and can be accessed at <http://cic.oucpld.com/>.

### 3.3. Accessible information and services

The OU's unique open-entry policy and style of distance learning enables students to learn in their own time, at home or wherever they choose – reading, watching or listening to material, with regular support provided by their tutor. The OU is ideal for people who may have difficulty attending a campus-based university for a wide variety of reasons. We are mindful of the fact that our students and prospective students cover the broadest spectrum of ages and we provide communications using formats and language appropriate to our audiences.

For disabled students or students with health conditions that affect their ability to study, to attend residential school or to take examinations, we provide a wide range of alternative formats, services and reasonable adjustments and have our own access centre to assess student needs<sup>17</sup>. We also assess and provide reasonable adjustments for our disabled staff to enable individuals to perform effectively in their roles.

Our open access policy means that individuals with English as an additional language or with limited academic English can register with us without needing to take an English proficiency test. However, we teach and provide our advice and guidance primarily in English, and poor English language skills will make study more difficult and time consuming. We provide online activities and diagnostics for enquirers to help individuals assess whether they meet the required competency standard. We also provide a study module *English for academic purposes online (L185)* which can help individuals to develop the specific language skills needed for academic English study.<sup>18</sup>

Using computers and the internet to enhance study is an essential part of learning at higher education level. Students need regular and reliable access to a computer and the internet to take full advantage of our online services, including module learning materials, forums, and the library<sup>19</sup>.

We use websites extensively to communicate with our students, staff, alumni and members of the public. The Open University websites aim to achieve World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative Priority 2 level<sup>20</sup>. We include a variety of accessibility features from the outset, and provide guidance to our website users to enable individuals to utilise web technologies. Some of our websites require further development to bring them in line with W3C accessibility standards and we are working to enhance accessibility with each new software release<sup>21</sup>.

In addition to the wide range of information we publish on our websites, any member of the public can request information from the University through a freedom of information enquiry. So far as is possible, The Open University aims to provide members of the public with any information it holds, on request, providing this is not sensitive data as defined by the Data Protection Act<sup>22</sup>.

We are committed to ensuring that our services are fully accessible to everyone who is eligible or has a legitimate interest in accessing these services. We monitor all our functions to ensure that everyone has equal and fair access to information and services.

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<sup>17</sup> For further information, see the Services for Disabled Students website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/>.

<sup>18</sup> Further information is available on the Study at the OU website at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/study/explained/is-ou-study-right-for-me/is-my-english-good-enough>.

<sup>19</sup> Further information is available at the Study at the OU website at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/study/explained/what-is-distance-learning/what-are-the-course-materials-like>.

<sup>20</sup> Further information about W3C and AIP2 is available at <http://www.w3.org/>.

<sup>21</sup> Further information is available at <http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/main/admin-and-governance/policies-and-statements>.

<sup>22</sup> Further information is available on our Freedom of Information website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/foi/>.

## 3.4. Consultation and engagement

### Consultation in relation to our statutory equality duties

We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties and we will consult on our equality scheme, equality objectives, action plans, and other matters relevant to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Section 75 duty. We will specifically consult on the impact of our policies where relevant to any of our functions in Northern Ireland.

We will seek views from a wide range of people who have a legitimate interest in the matter for consultation, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

It is our intention to consult as widely as possible when we are reviewing our equality scheme or when the matter to be consulted on is likely to have a very significant impact on a large number of people. For matters that are relevant to specific groups or smaller numbers of people, we will take a more targeted approach to consultation.

We will use consultation methods that are appropriate to the circumstances, ensuring that everyone who has an interest in participating is able to do so. We will ensure information is accessible and will offer alternative formats to meet individual needs. We will not make assumptions about individual needs but will ask individuals to tell us about needs they have to enable them to participate.

For each consultation, we will establish a consultation period that is appropriate to the scale, impact and complexity of the matter we are consulting on. Consultations may be for a period of between 3 weeks and 3 months to reflect this. Where we are required to implement a change immediately, and it is beyond our control, we may consult after implementation, in order to ensure that any negative impacts of our policy are considered and acted upon.

We will consider and respond to feedback from any person with a legitimate interest in the affairs and policies of the University, regardless of whether a consultation has been held or whether a consultation has closed.

We will provide feedback to individuals in a timely manner, which may be through a consultation report or more directly to groups or individuals, depending on what is appropriate for the method of consultation that was used.

It is a requirement of the Section 75 equality duty that a list of persons to be consulted on matters relevant to Section 75 is included in the equality scheme. Appendix 5 contains our current consultation list as relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland. This list is not exhaustive. We welcome enquiries from any person or organisation wishing to be added to the list.

### Engagement principles for governance, policy and service development

We recognise that engagement with students, alumni, staff, partners, and the wider University community, in governance and institutional development, will greatly enhance the quality of our decision-making. Engagement will support our vision of creating an inclusive university community. Engagement with our students and potential students, in particular, will help us to remain student-centred and position students as active participants in their learning and study experience.

We have a well-established, participatory model of engagement, which includes for example: representation of students on governing bodies; student surveys and research; market research groups; external academic engagement through appointment of external examiners, critical readers and contributors to the curriculum; staff surveys, and wide consultation on strategy development. Engagement takes a variety of forms, increasingly utilising online communication channels such as YouTube, Twitter and our community website – Platform, and dedicated online forums, podcasts and wikis. These online methods are not suitable for every purpose and will not reach every audience, but they do offer the potential to build engagement that is practical, affordable and capable of engaging a much greater number of individuals than other channels allow.

The pyramid of engagement (see Figure 6) represents four different levels of engagement, from information giving at the bottom representing the lowest quality of engagement, to partnership at the top, where decision making is shared, representing the highest quality of engagement.

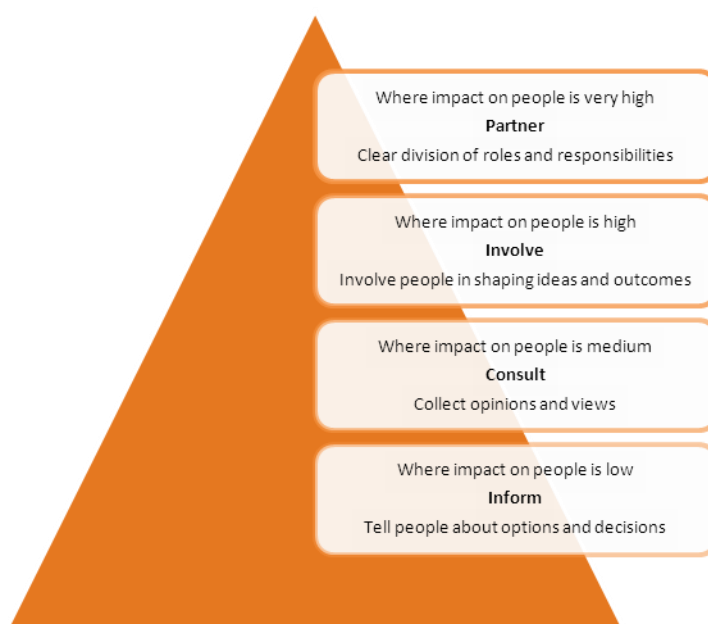


Figure 6: Pyramid of engagement

Engagement should take place at the bottom of the pyramid as a minimum for the majority of our activities. In other words, where changes are relatively minor or where we must implement a change such as one required by Government, individuals should be told about changes that are likely to affect them. Where activities have a medium impact, effort should be made not only to provide information, but also to consult with individuals. Where activities have a high impact, meaningful involvement should also be undertaken. Where activities have a very high impact, a partnership approach should be undertaken along with the other types of activities. Importantly, we recognise that engagement at the lowest level represents the lowest quality of engagement and we aim to achieve above this level wherever possible. In summary, engagement should always involve the lowest level of the pyramid, and the impact of the activity should influence the extent that other types of engagement are necessary and beneficial.

The key challenge from an equality perspective is ensuring that engagement is representative of a wide variety of individual characteristics.

## 3.5. Equality analysis

We all want to experience dignity and fairness, so we can easily understand that everyone else has the same expectation. However, we are all limited by our own experiences, so it is all too easy to make decisions that do not take account of different needs and circumstances and may result in unintended consequences.

Equality analysis, formerly known as equality impact assessment, is the method used by the OU to give due regard to equality when developing and revising policy. Policy is broadly defined and means any proposed, amended or existing strategy, policy statement, project plan, procedure or practice, which is often, but not necessarily, a written document.

The need for equality analysis is identified through the annual business planning process or when unplanned change to policy is required. The aims of equality analysis are: to identify potential discrimination and remove or reduce this as far as possible, to consider how policy might support the promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity, and to consider how policy might help to promote and foster good relations. Equality analysis makes good business sense. It helps us to make better quality decisions and helps us reduce cost by not having to revisit policy that is not fit for purpose.

The OU method relies on robust evidence-based decision making. It includes all of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. Changes being proposed through policy, strategy, business plans, committee papers, project management or other methods are required to be analysed from an equality perspective and the results considered *before* decisions are made. Where negative impacts are identified, consideration needs to be given to mitigating these. The findings of analysis are documented and reported to a relevant committee, steering group or management group and that body is responsible for taking the information into account before making decisions.

In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we will take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

We have developed detailed guidance and a template to support staff in applying the method in their work, and these are available on the equality and diversity intranet. A completed equality analysis template will state the aims of the policy to which the analysis relates and give details of any consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity; and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity<sup>23</sup>. In addition to the guidance and template, we provide training and coaching to develop staff knowledge and competencies.

Where policy relates to any of our functions in Northern Ireland, additional requirements need to be met. We are required *to consult* on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted, *to publish* the results of our equality analysis, and *to monitor* the impact of policies. Where policy affects our functions in Northern Ireland, the consultation arrangements in relation to our statutory equality duties set out under Section 3.4 apply. We will publish our equality analysis templates, as specified in Section 3.7, and we will ensure that appropriate monitoring is in place as part of each equality analysis. Our monitoring and reporting arrangements set out in Section 3.6 will also enable us to monitor any adverse impacts of our policies.

Figure 7 shows an outline of our equality analysis steps.

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<sup>23</sup> For the purpose of approval of our equality scheme by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the guidance and template do not form part of our formal arrangements, and aim to provide practical tools for staff to use.

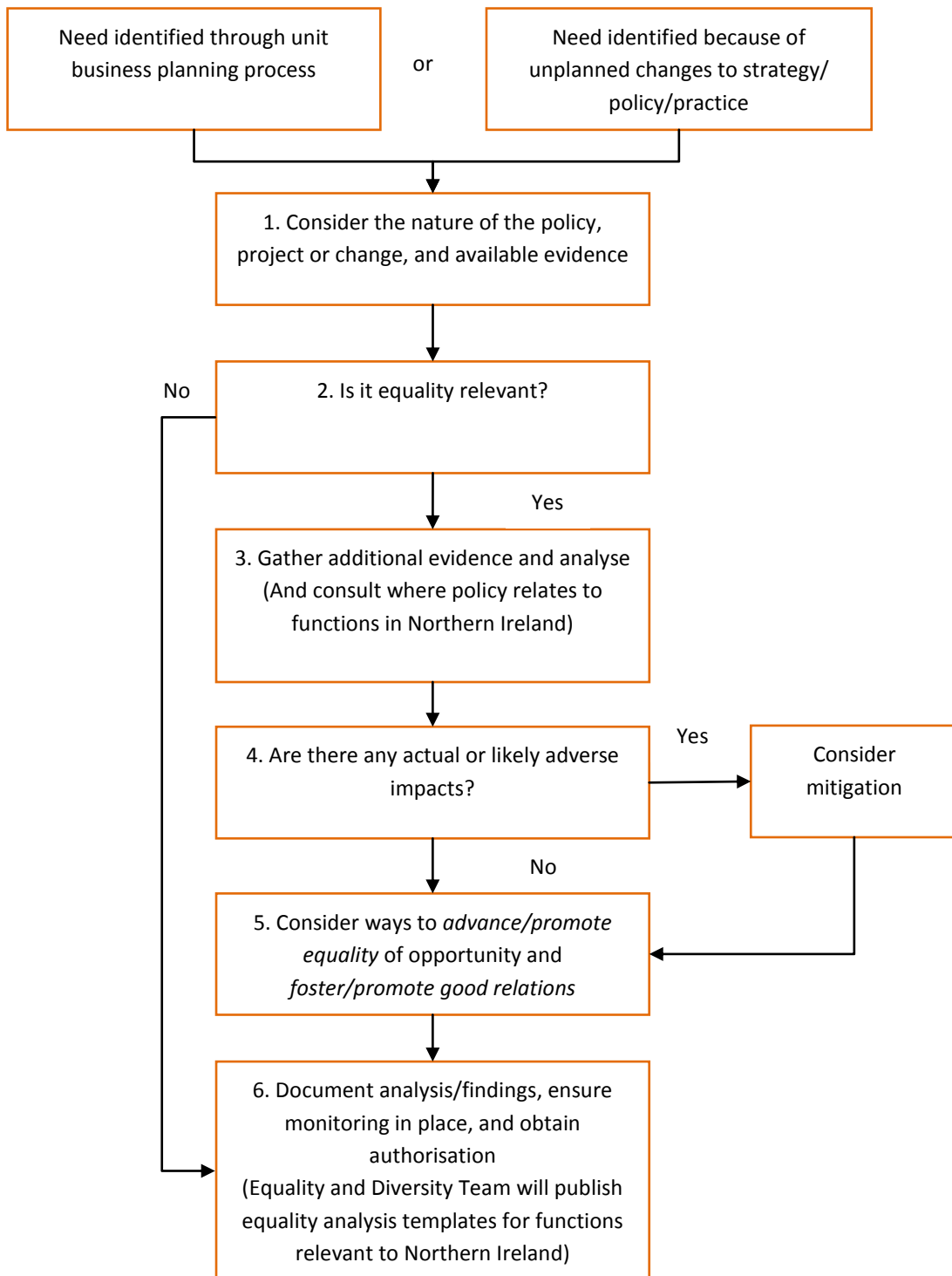


Figure 7: Equality analysis steps

## 3.6. Monitoring and reporting

We will monitor closely the progress against the key performance indicators agreed for the objectives in this equality scheme. In addition, we will analyse a wide range of equality monitoring data and act on it, including revising our objectives where appropriate. Our annual monitoring and reporting arrangements consist of a cycle whereby we analyse different information in different years. We have staggered our monitoring in this way so that the information we produce is always put to good use.

All of the characteristics protected by the Public Sector Equality Duty in Great Britain and the Section 75 duty in Northern Ireland are included in the scope of our monitoring strategy.

We have identified the following data gaps or deficiencies:

- a) Apart from staff surveys, we have no monitoring of religion or belief, or sexual orientation for our staff and students, although we are committed to introducing this
- b) We have paper-based monitoring of community background for our staff in Northern Ireland
- c) We have no way at present to identify and target support at students with care responsibilities
- d) Our data for staff returning from maternity leave are not robust

These data gaps are being tackled through objective 8, published in Appendix 1.

It is not our intention to introduce monitoring for gender identity. We have a legal duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. Our approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on qualitative information derived from engagement and research. We are improving our policy and guidance for transgender students and staff through objective 9, published in Appendix 1.

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

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

Equality Monitoring Schedule					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Undergraduate and postgraduate UK students</b>	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment	Participation, completion and academic attainment
<b>Postgraduate research students</b>	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal	Participation and withdrawal
<b>Non-UK/ Overseas students<sup>24</sup></b>	Participation	Participation	Participation	Participation	Participation
<b>All students</b>	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data	Complaints and appeals Student survey data

<sup>24</sup> Domicile and geographic area is used instead of ethnicity, as ethnic classifications used in the UK are meaningless for non-UK students.



Equality Monitoring Schedule					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Senate and Council governing bodies</b>	Composition		Composition		Composition
<b>Associate lecturer staff</b>	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location and faculty Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Development Pay gap Staff survey data <sup>25</sup>	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location and faculty Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Development Pay gap Maternity leave return Staff survey data	Workforce composition by location and faculty Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers
<b>Internal staff</b>	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Promotions Development Pay gap Staff survey data	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Grievances, bullying and harassment, disciplinary Promotions Development Pay gap Maternity leave return Staff survey data	Workforce composition by location, unit, job category, grade band and mode Reasonable adjustments Recruitment Leavers
<b>Agency temporary staff</b>	Workforce composition		Workforce composition		Workforce composition
<b>Consultants</b>		Workforce composition		Workforce composition	
<b>Residential schools staff</b>	Recruitment		Recruitment		Recruitment

<sup>25</sup> Our ability to publish staff survey data in any given year is dependent on when the previous survey took place. A comprehensive survey is not undertaken every year.

## 3.7. Publishing

As a public authority, the OU is required to publish information about its employees and other persons affected by its policies.

We have published our equality scheme, action plans, annual report and a significant range of data on our employees, students, and governance bodies annually for many years.

It is our intention to publish the following:

- This equality scheme
- Our outcome-focused equality objectives (Appendix 1)
- Our equality action plan (Appendix 2)
- Our Welsh Language scheme
- Completed equality analysis templates (for functions relevant to Northern Ireland)
- An annual report showing progress against our equality objectives, a summary of our equality analysis work, and a summary of work we have done to mainstream equality
- Annual monitoring reports based on the table in Section 3.6 of this scheme
- Our annual report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Any report produced following a full review of this scheme

All of the above information will be published on our website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity>.

Our equality scheme is published and available in a variety of formats as described on the inside front cover of this document. We will provide information in other formats to meet individual needs.

We will publicise the availability of our equality scheme through a wide range of media to ensure it reaches our students and alumni, staff, partners, providers of goods and services, individuals and organisations that responded to our consultation, and other individuals and organisations with a legitimate interest in the University.

# 4. Discrimination, compliance, review and complaints

## 4.1. Dealing with discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation

We will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. Examples include unwanted physical contact, personal insults or name-calling, sexual innuendo, coercion, constant unfounded criticism, unwanted intrusion, persistent patronising or exclusion, and derogatory comments. This is not an exhaustive list and further examples are included in the two bullying and harassment codes of practice, one for students and the other for staff. These provide guidance on dealing with bullying and harassment, and information on the informal and formal options available to staff and students to tackle occurrences. Staff and students are encouraged to address issues immediately so that these can be resolved informally wherever possible and are not allowed to escalate.

Discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on any of the individual characteristics or circumstances covered by this equality scheme are included within the scope of the bullying and harassment codes. All staff and students have a right to raise a concern in relation to decisions that they believe have been made based on their individual characteristics and which result in negative consequences or differential treatment. We will give added weight to the seriousness of such cases. Malicious allegations made under the bullying and harassment codes will be treated as serious disciplinary offences.

For staff, the Employee Assistance Programme<sup>26</sup> is a support and counselling service provided by PPC Worldwide and covers a wide range of issues, including responding effectively to bullying and harassment. Serious cases can be raised through the grievance or disciplinary procedures and, where proven, may be treated as acts of gross misconduct, which could lead to dismissal. Serious student cases are dealt with under the Code of Practice for Student Discipline and, where proven, could result in temporary or permanent exclusion from the University.

## 4.2. Assessing compliance, evaluation and review

We are committed to the fulfilment of our Public Sector Equality Duty and our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

Responsibility for the effective coordination and implementation of this equality scheme lies with the Head of Equality and Diversity, who is accountable to the University Secretary and the Director, Students as the members of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive responsible for ensuring compliance and best practice.

The Equality and Diversity Management Group is responsible for the evaluation and review of this equality scheme. The group meets regularly and is responsible for the continuous review and assessment of compliance and best practice.

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<sup>26</sup> Further information about the Employee Assistance Programme, including the Freephone telephone number and website resources, are available in the Policies section on the HR intranet.

In addition to this scheme, the University produces a set of objectives (Appendix 1) and a detailed action plan (Appendix 2). These documents provide much greater detail on the specific approaches and actions that departments across the University are taking to implement this equality scheme.

An annual review of progress and delivery against objectives and the action plan is coordinated by the Equality and Diversity Team on behalf of the management group. The review is aligned with the University's normal business planning cycle. Issues arising from the annual review and progress against the objectives and key performance indicators are reported to the management group at its annual development meeting.

We plan to publish a range of information regularly which demonstrates our progress and performance, as outlined in Section 3.7.

The appropriateness of the objectives and key performance indicators in Appendix 1 will be reviewed after two years and the scheme will be reviewed in full within a period of four years. We will implement an appropriate consultation and engagement strategy during these reviews.

Our four year review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the achievement of our equality objectives, the implementation of our Public Sector Equality Duty and the implementation of our Section 75 duty. In undertaking any review in relation to our functions in Northern Ireland, we will follow guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. Our review report will be sent to the Commission and published on our equality and diversity website.

The table below summarises our review arrangements.

Frequency of review	Scope of review	Responsibility for review
Quarterly meetings	Ensure compliance and promotion of good practice; address non-compliance	Equality and Diversity Management Group
Annual	Progress review and updating of action plans	All University departments
	Production of equality monitoring information	Various internal data providers
	Production of annual report	Head of Equality and Diversity
	Production of annual report to Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	Assistant Director, the Open University in Ireland
Every 2 years	Full review of objectives and key performance indicators	Equality and Diversity Management Group in consultation with the University Secretary and Director, Students
Every 4 years	Full review of equality scheme	Equality and Diversity Management Group in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor's Executive

## 4.3. Feedback and complaints

We welcome any questions, comments or feedback you may have regarding our equality scheme. These should be addressed to the Head of Equality and Diversity. Contact details are provided on the inside front cover of this document.

You can make a complaint if you believe that you have been directly affected by our alleged failure to comply with our equality scheme or if you believe we have discriminated unlawfully against you.

Complaints in relation to the provision of a programme of study or related to academic or administrative services, or appeals in relation to a decision taken by an individual or academic body charged with making decisions on students' progression, assessment and awards should not be sent to the Equality and Diversity Team<sup>27</sup>.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) operates an independent student complaints scheme under the Higher Education Act 2004. The service is free to all OU students, based anywhere in the UK or overseas. Please bear in mind that the OIA will insist that you exhaust the University's internal complaints procedure before they will agree to investigate your complaint<sup>28</sup>.

Complaints in relation to this scheme should be made, preferably in writing, to the Head of Equality and Diversity, to the address or email on the inside front cover of this scheme.

If you are unable to send your complaint in writing, we will be pleased to accept your complaint in a format that meets your needs. If you require any kind of support to make your complaint, please contact us to discuss your needs. We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and respond to it within ten working days of our acknowledgment. Where we need to pass your complaint to another office, we will tell you and inform you of any delay in responding that may occur as a result.

If your complaint concerns alleged discrimination or other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010, you can use the *Questions and Answers Forms* devised by the Government Equalities Office to obtain information from the University, as is your right under Section 138 of the Equality Act 2010. Requesting information may help to resolve matters without the need for formal or legal proceedings. Use of the form is voluntary for both parties, however the questions and any answers are admissible as evidence in proceedings under the Act and a court or employment tribunal may draw an inference from a failure to reply or from evasive or misleading answers<sup>29</sup>.

If you live in Northern Ireland, and we do not resolve your complaint to your satisfaction or within a reasonable timeframe, you can take your complaint to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland<sup>30</sup>. The Open University will cooperate fully with any investigation carried out by the Equality Commission and make all efforts to implement recommendations arising from any such investigation.

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<sup>27</sup> Details of the complaints and appeals procedures in relation to these issues are detailed on the Concerns, Complaints and Appeals website at: <http://www.open.ac.uk/studentservices/complaints/>.

<sup>28</sup> Further information is available from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

<sup>29</sup> The forms and guidance notes are available from the Home Office website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/complaints-Equality-Act/>.

<sup>30</sup> Commission staff are available to offer free confidential advice and assistance. You can speak to a Discrimination Advice Officer by telephone, textphone or face-to-face by appointment. Further details are available at <http://www.equalityni.org/sections/default.asp?secid=2>.

# Annexes

# Annex A: A quick start guide to the Equality Act (Great Britain)

## What is the Equality Act?

The Equality Act is applicable in England, Scotland and Wales. The main provisions of the Act were implemented in two phases:

The first phase became law on 1 October 2010 and in broad terms it harmonises, updates and amends previous anti-discrimination legislation, providing greater protection for *all individuals* across a wide range of 'protected characteristics'.

The second phase became law on 5 April 2011 and enacts a new 'public sector equality duty', which amends and expands the existing duty to cover a wider range of characteristics.

## What University functions are covered by the Act?

The Act covers all of our functions including education, employment, services and other public functions (eg. broadcasting), associations, contracting and partnerships.

## What are the 'protected characteristics'?

There are nine characteristics explicitly protected, as follows: age, disability, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation. Care/dependency is also indirectly covered – see below.

## What is 'prohibited conduct' under the Act?

*Direct* discrimination and *indirect* discrimination, continue to be prohibited, but are now extended across all of the characteristics, with the exception of pregnancy and maternity.

Pregnancy and maternity now has specific protection for the duration of pregnancy and up to 26 weeks after birth. Students are explicitly protected from less favourable treatment if breastfeeding.

Protection from *harassment* is extended to all characteristics with the exceptions of pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

Individuals are protected from *victimisation*, where a person makes an allegation or brings proceedings under the Act, and suffers a detriment as a result.

Discrimination by *association* is extended to cover all the characteristics, with the exception of pregnancy and maternity. For example, carers are protected because of their association with someone with a protected characteristic, such as a disabled person or an older person.

Similarly discrimination because of *perception* is extended to the same characteristics. This means that individuals who are treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a characteristic are protected, even though they don't have that characteristic.

It continues to be unlawful not to make a *reasonable adjustment* for a disabled person and a disabled person no longer has to show that their impairment affects a capacity, such as mobility or manual dexterity. It continues to be lawful to treat a disabled person *more favourably* than other people.

It is now unlawful to ask disability or health-related questions during a selection process, with some exceptions, and HR has already provided detailed guidance to managers on this provision.

A new protection, *discrimination arising from disability*, has been introduced. It means that unfavourable treatment because of something connected with a person's disability is unlawful, for example, refusing to allow a student to use a recording device in a tutorial. In practice, providing that reasonable adjustments are made, discrimination should not arise from disability.

## What are the positive action provisions?

The positive action provisions in the Equality Act replicate those in previous equality legislation. Where we reasonably think that people who share a protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage, have different needs, or have disproportionately low rates of participation in an activity, we may take action to overcome or minimise this, providing any action taken is proportionate. This provision applies to all functions, including employment and education, and we have and will continue to use these provisions where appropriate. However, the provisions are complex and you should seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Team if you are considering using them.

## What is the 'public sector equality duty'?

The University, in the exercise of its functions, is required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity, which involves removing or minimising disadvantage, taking steps to meet needs and encouraging participation.
- Foster good relations, which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

## How does the duty apply to me?

In carrying out your work, in making decisions, in developing, approving or implementing policy and procedures, you must give due regard to the three aims of the equality duty, outlined above. Due regard means that the weight you give to equality needs to be proportionate to its relevance and some roles and functions have greater equality relevance than others. This means being vigilant to anything that you may do that may lead to unlawful discrimination, or anything you could do that would help to prevent the 'prohibited conducts' described earlier. It also means being proactive in identifying ways of advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations through the work that you normally do.

## Are some provisions of the Act not being implemented?

Plans to introduce a public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities were shelved prior to the first phase implementation. However, The Open University aims to reduce socio-economic inequalities and it is an included characteristic in this equality scheme and in our Widening Participation strategy.

Plans to introduce protection from combined discrimination (dual characteristics) were shelved in the budget announcement in March 2011.

Additionally, we have taken the decision not to implement the voluntary positive action provision in recruitment and promotions, which allows employers to consider underrepresentation or disadvantage when faced with making a choice between two or more candidates who are of equal merit. HR has issued specific guidance to managers on this subject. In practice, we have decided that this provision can easily be misunderstood and any small gains to be made are far outweighed by the risks.

## Can I be held personally liable?

Yes, an employee or agent is personally responsible for their own acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation carried out during their employment.

The University will not be liable where it can show that it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent employees from discriminating, harassing or victimising someone.



## Annex B: Definition of protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Definition
<b>Age</b>	This includes a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or a range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
<b>Caring and dependency</b>	This includes people with responsibilities for caring for children, dependent adults and disabled people.
<b>Disability</b>	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	The process of transitioning from one gender to another. The Equality Act 2010 uses the term "transsexual" to refer to people undergoing gender reassignment.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Marriage is defined as a union between a man and a woman. Same-sex couples can have their relationships recognised as 'civil partnerships'. The Equality Act 2010 protects married and civil partnered couples equally. People not in a legal relationship, and people not in a relationship, are not protected. In Northern Ireland, marital status is protected, and therefore individuals who are single, separated, divorced or widowed are protected.
<b>Political opinion</b>	Members/supporters of any political party, and supporters of no political party.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this explicitly includes not treating a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding.
<b>Race</b>	This includes a person or group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origin.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Religion means any religion; belief means any religious or philosophical belief including lack of belief e.g. Atheism. Generally, a belief should affect life choices or the way someone lives for it to be included in the definition.
<b>Sex</b>	A man or a woman.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex, both sexes, or neither sex (asexual, which is not the same as celibacy).

### Who is protected?

- People who have any protected characteristic.
- People who are **perceived to have** any protected characteristic.
- People who are **associated with** someone who has any protected characteristic.

## Annex C: Definition of prohibited conducts

People are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics.

- **Direct discrimination** means treating one person worse than another because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination is always unlawful, with the exception of age, which can be objectively justified in rare circumstances<sup>31</sup>.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect or violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone with a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action to claim their entitlements or legal rights or supporting somebody who is doing so.

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<sup>31</sup> For example, universities are not required to admit students under a certain age to a particular course of study, where there is a justifiable age requirement for a particular profession.

## Annex D: Public sector specific duties in England, Scotland and Wales

The English, Scottish and Welsh Governments have introduced separate, though broadly similar, specific duties which are intended to help public authorities to meet the general public sector equality duty (see Foreword). The Open University is required to meet the legal duties in England only however, as a UK-wide public authority, we have agreed the following principles:

- A) Recognising our role in supporting the different Governments of the UK to address equality priorities determined through the democratic process in each country, *we will comply with all of the duties in each country*, regardless of whether or not we are legally bound by them. We will deviate from this position only where such an approach would be disproportionate.
- B) Recognising the need to develop procedural arrangements that can be easily understood and implemented by the majority of OU staff, *we will adopt a universal approach wherever possible*. We will deviate from this position only where there is a significant difference between the duties in different nations, or where applying a universal principle would be disproportionate.

The table below summarises the full set of duties for each country.

Public Sector Specific Duties in England, Scotland and Wales			
Duty	England	Scotland	Wales
<b>Equality objectives, outcomes and plans</b>	Prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable objectives	Publish equality outcomes, informed by evidence base  Include all protected characteristics or state reason for any gaps  Publish an equal pay statement	Publish strategic equality plan, which includes objectives, timeframe and how progress will be monitored, informed by evidence base  Specifically consider need for pay objective(s)  Include all protected characteristics or state reason for any gaps
<b>Review</b>	Review objectives every 4 years	Review outcomes every 4 years	Review strategic plan every 4 years
<b>Monitoring</b>	Gather information about employees and other persons affected by policies and practices	Gather and use information about composition, recruitment, development and retention of employees	Gather information on employees and other persons affected
<b>Consultation/ involvement</b>		Take reasonable steps to involve people when developing outcomes	Engage people when developing strategic plan, objectives, assessing equality information and impact of policies

**Public Sector Specific Duties in England, Scotland and Wales**

<b>Duty</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Wales</b>
<b>Publishing</b>	Publish annual monitoring information on employees and other persons affected by policies and practices	<p>Publish progress report and report on mainstreaming equality every 2 years, to include employment monitoring data and pay gap information</p> <p>Publish the results of impact assessments</p>	Publish annual report, including monitoring information
<b>Equality impact assessment / equality analysis</b>	[There is no specific duty, but public authorities must consider the three aims of the general duty when developing and reviewing policies.]	Assess the impact of new or revised policy or practice	Use evidence base to assess impact of policies and practices
<b>Procurement</b>	[There is no specific duty, but public authorities must consider the three aims of the general duty when procuring goods and services.]	Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to procurement	
<b>Staff training</b>			Staff must be made aware and understand the general and specific duties
<b>Accessibility of published information</b>	Must be accessible to the public	Must be accessible to the public	Must be accessible to the public

## Annex E: How our scheme meets the Section 75 duty in Northern Ireland

Preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in Northern Ireland is not the sole responsibility of staff in the OU in Ireland. Many strategies, policies and services are developed centrally but cover functions in Northern Ireland, including curriculum, teaching and research strategies, student services, employment, partnerships and procurement. Staff, wherever they are based, need to consider the impact of their work on equality in Northern Ireland. That is why we have fully embedded the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act into this equality scheme and no longer maintain a separate scheme for Northern Ireland.

Schedule 9 of the Act specifies requirements in relation to the content of equality schemes. An equality scheme must contain these elements in order to be approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. The table below sets out the different paragraphs of Schedule 9 that relate to scheme content and maps these requirements to the relevant sections of this scheme.

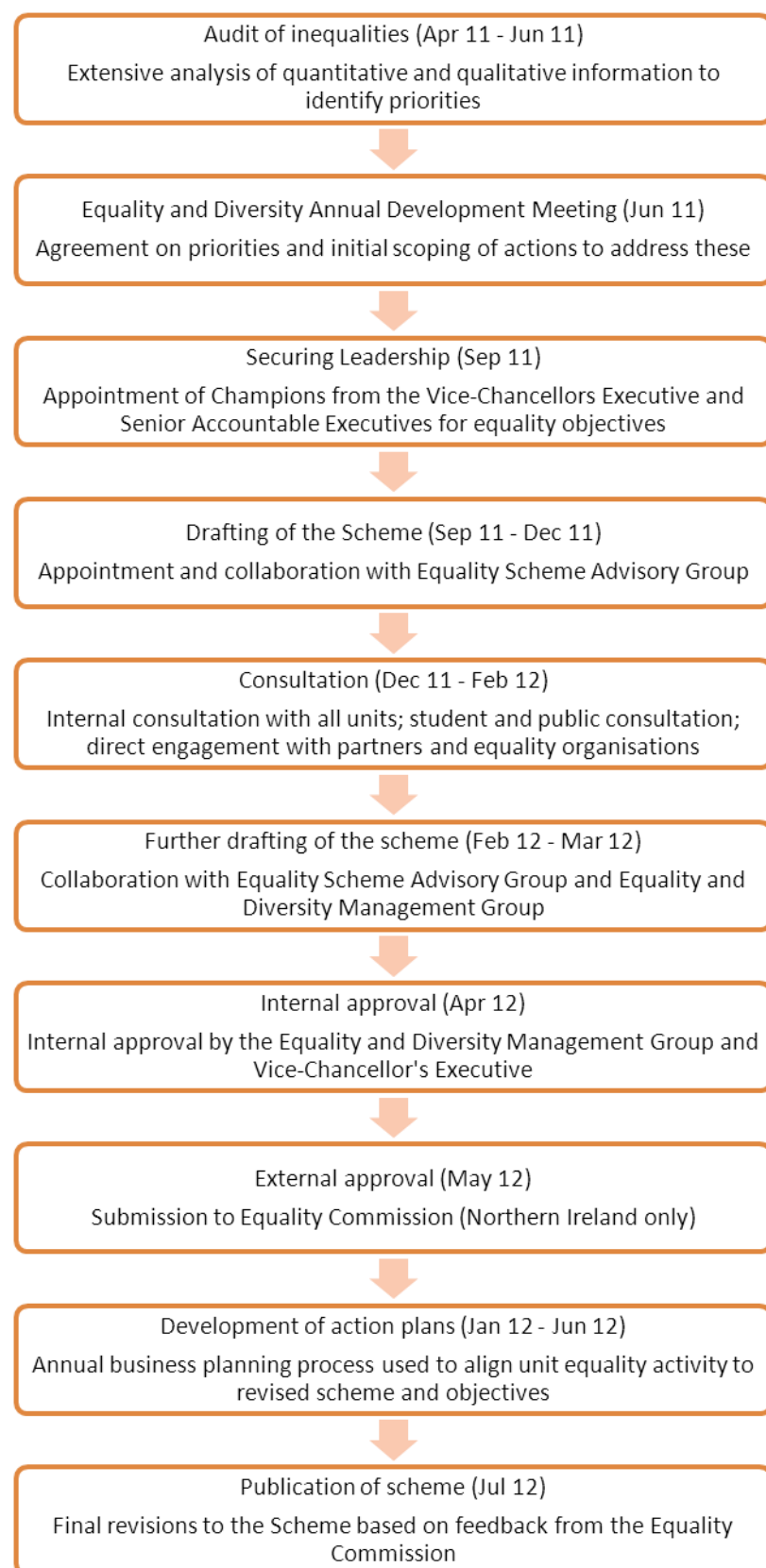
How our scheme meets the Section 75 duty in Northern Ireland		
Schedule 9 paragraph	Content requirement	Section of this scheme
<b>4(1)</b>	An equality scheme shall show how the public authority proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to the relevant functions.	This Annex and the Foreword
<b>4(2)(a)</b>	An equality scheme shall state the authority's arrangement for assessing its compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).	Consultation and engagement (s.3.4) Assessing compliance, evaluation and review (s.4.2) Appendix 5
<b>4(2)(b)</b>	An equality scheme shall state 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.	Equality analysis (s.3.5) Consultation and engagement (s.3.4)
<b>4(2)(c)</b>	An equality scheme shall state the authority's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.	Equality analysis (s.3.5) Monitoring and reporting (s.3.6)
<b>4(2)(d)</b>	An equality scheme shall state the authority's arrangements for publishing the results of such assessments as are mentioned in paragraph (b) and such monitoring as is mentioned in paragraph (c).	Equality analysis (s.3.5) Publishing (s.3.7)
<b>4(2)(e)</b>	An equality scheme shall state the authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to Section 75 statutory duties.	Staff learning and development (s.3.2)
<b>4(2)(f)</b>	An equality scheme shall state the authority's arrangements for ensuring, and assessing, public access to information and to services provided by the authority.	Accessible information and services (s.3.3)

## How our scheme meets the Section 75 duty in Northern Ireland

Schedule 9 paragraph	Content requirement	Section of this scheme
<b>4(3)(a)</b>	A scheme shall conform to any Guidelines as to form or content which are issued by the Commission with approval of the Secretary of State.	Scheme developed based on the Guide for Public Authorities (Apr 2010) and the Model Equality Scheme (Nov 2010)
<b>4(3)(b)</b>	A scheme shall specify a timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.	Appendix 5
<b>4(3)(c)</b>	A scheme shall include details of how the scheme will be published.	Inside front cover Publishing (s.3.7)
<b>5</b>	Before submitting a scheme, a public authority shall consult with representatives of persons likely to be affected by the scheme and such other persons as may be specified in directions given by the Commission.	How our scheme and our equality objectives were developed (Annex F)
<b>8(3)</b>	A scheme must include a commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Commission or the scheme's last review, and to forwarding a report of this review to the Commission.	Assessing compliance, evaluation and review (s.4.2)
<b>9(1)</b>	In publishing the results of such an assessment as is mentioned in paragraph 4(2)(b), a public authority shall state the aims of the policy to which the assessment relates and give details of any consideration given by the authority to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity; and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.	Equality analysis (s.3.5) Publishing (s.3.7)
<b>9(2)</b>	In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, a public authority shall take into account any such assessment and consultation as is mentioned in paragraph 4(2)(b) carried out in relation to the policy.	Equality analysis (s.3.5)
<b>10</b>	A scheme must include the authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.	Feedback and complaints (s.4.3)

# Annex F: How our scheme and our equality objectives were developed

## Developing our scheme



# Developing our objectives

## Audit of inequalities

We have an annual equality monitoring and reporting cycle that includes data and survey analysis and internal reporting. This annual process ensures our approach is evidence-based, and ensures we assess progress and performance regularly and are able to identify and respond to key inequalities.

In preparing the current scheme, an extensive review of a wide range of information was carried out to identify continuing and new priorities. Information was analysed from the following sources:

- Data reports on student participation, completion and attainment rates
- Reports on student experience and satisfaction, from end of module surveys, withdrawal surveys and national student surveys
- Reports on student complaints and appeals
- Data reports on workforce composition and a wide range of other workforce indicators, including recruitment, promotion rates, leaving rates, access to learning and development, grievance and disciplinary cases
- Data reports on the composition of the main governance bodies, Senate and Council
- Reports from all units of the University on the progress made against agreed equality action plans
- Benchmarking data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, with secondary analysis conducted by the Equality Challenge Unit
- Findings from benchmarking exercises with Opportunity Now (gender), Race for Opportunity and Stonewall (sexual orientation)
- Inequalities in education and employment, identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in its first triennial review, *How Fair is Britain? (2010)*, and by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in its *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland (2007)* and in *Inequalities in Education (2010)*.

Much of the information used in our audit is included in monitoring reports, published alongside our Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2011. These monitoring reports can be viewed on our equality and diversity website at <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/>.

Based on the findings of this audit, the Equality and Diversity Management Group agreed nine new priority objectives for this equality scheme at its annual development meeting in 2011. The first seven objectives represent significant inequalities to be addressed, the eighth will address gaps in monitoring information, and the ninth will address gaps in policy and guidance for staff and students.

Importantly, the absence of an equality issue within the nine objectives does not mean that the issue is not important, nor that we will ignore that issue, rather that we intend to focus our effort and resource in addressing the most significant inequalities identified by our current evidence base.

The detailed objectives are published at Appendix 1.

Individual Faculties, departments and geographical locations will have specific issues that they want to address in addition to the agreed institutional objectives. Actions to address these issues are included in the action plan published at Appendix 2.



# Information about the appendices

Documents in the appendices are updated regularly and are therefore published as separate documents. Appendix 3 and 4 are resources provided for staff and are published on the staff intranet only.

## Appendix 1: Equality objectives

This appendix sets out our specific and measurable outcome-focused equality objectives. It includes details of the objectives, key performance indicators, accountabilities and our approach to furthering each objective.

## Appendix 2: Equality action plan

This appendix sets out our equality action plan, by University department. It includes the specific and measurable actions we are taking in order to achieve our equality objectives. In addition, many University departments have included additional actions that address identified priorities that are specific to that department.

## Appendix 3: Equality resources for staff

This appendix is for staff use and is published on the intranet only. It provides a list of equality-related resources, with links directly to those resources.

## Appendix 4: People and teams that can advise staff

This appendix is for staff use and is published on the intranet only. It provides the names of individuals and teams that can provide advice to staff on a range of equality-related matters.

## Appendix 5: Timetable for measures and consultation list for functions in Northern Ireland

This appendix contains a timetable for measures proposed by this equality scheme and a list of consultees for functions relevant to Northern Ireland. These are requirements for Equality Schemes in Northern Ireland.