UNIVERSITY OF FORWARD THINKING WESTMINSTER▦

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JULY 2024 AT 2PM IN MG 38, MBA BOARD ROOM, MARYLEBONE CAMPUS

PRESENT:	Professor D Anand (Co-Chair)	S Razzaq
	Dr D Husbands (Co-Chair)	Dr C Robertson
	C Benyon	R Shah
	D Caldron	J Smith
	C Lloyd	R Tully
	C Molloy	
IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Secretary)	H Jones (Attendee)
APOLOGIES:	D Airan	Dr K Juddoo
	S Bunbury	P Mashumba
	Professor P Catterall	T Mills
	Professor V Gillies	Dr C Smith
	D de Silva	Dr N Weingarten
	M Linfoot	

23.60. ANNOUNCEMENTS

23.60.1. **Welcome:** The Co-Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

23.60.2. Members welcomed Holly Jones, Head of Sustainability, for joining the meeting to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Impact Ranking Results 2024.

23.60.3. The Co-Chair thanked Rosa Tully for her dedicated support and contributions as she attended her last Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee meeting.

23.60.4. Members and attendees introduced themselves.

23.60.5. **Apologies:** Apologies and absences were noted as above.

23.60.6. **AOB and starred items:** Members did not request to add any items to the agenda or to discuss the starred items.

23.60.7. **Declaration of Interest:** The Co-Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

23.61. CO-CHAIRS' REPORT

23.61.1. Members heard the following updates from the Co-Chairs on the recent activities and progress made since the last meeting:

- The three-year Quintin Hogg Trust (QHT) funded EDI programme has ended. The Co-Chair thanked Zahrah Surooprajally, Events Manager and EDI Programme Coordinator, for her support. QHT will fund another new EDI-programme on a one-year basis in 2024/25.
- The EDI Open Forum in June 2024 was well attended; thanks to Rajat Shah, EDI Officer, for his support. The Network Co-Chairs to send the Networks' challenges and priorities to the EDI Committee secretary.
- The Co-Chair, as the Chair of the London Higher EDI Network, conducted a successful workshop on 26 June 2024 which was attended by representatives of 25 universities.

- The other Co-Chair led a successful student trip to Washington DC as part of Black History Year Create Programme.
- Appointment of a new University EDI Manager and a new EDI Accreditations Manager to start in autumn 2024.

23.62.   SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IMPACT RANKING RESULTS 2024

23.62.1.   Holly Jones, Head of Sustainability, briefed members on the SDG Impact Ranking Results 2024 (Document EDI 240724A).

23.62.2.   Members discussed the ranking results and noted the following general points:

- The ranking results are on a worldwide scale.
- Feedback from colleagues who attended the recent THE Global Sustainable Development Congress in Bangkok.
- Publicly available information tends to score higher than internal-only information in the SDG ranking calculation.
- A new SDG coordination group will be established, co-chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Employability) and the Head of Sustainability.
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) fall within the Committee's remit.

23.62.3.   In response to a query about the information sessions and the list of specific keywords assigned against to each SDG to enhance research scoring, the Head of Sustainability explained that a session including the discussion on keywords was held in March 2024, with another scheduled for September.

23.62.4.   **AGREED** To widely share the list of keywords assigned to each SDG with the University community.

23.62.5.   Another member pointed out that the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) could have a role in integrating the relevant keywords in research, such as adding the keywords in the profiles of academic colleagues.

23.62.5.1.   **ACTION The Director of Student and Academic Services (SAS)** to coordinate with the RKEO and the Head of Sustainability to facilitate the keywords integration.

23.62.6.   In relation to specific SDGs:

- *SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing):* members noted a suggestion of incorporating relevant keywords into our streamlined university-wide policies to improve scoring, as we previously lost points for not having subject-specific policies.
- *SDG 5 (Gender Equality):* members heard some possible improvements in scoring and a potential Westminster Café event on the topic of first-generation female in academic role.
- *SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy):* members discussed the energy consumption considerations for our buildings, especially for the new buildings like 29 Marylebone Road.
- *SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)*: members discussed student placements and expenditure per employees, including the living wage.

23.62.7.   **AGREED** To start conversation earlier this year regarding the sharing of living wage information for the next data reporting cycle for SDG 8.

23.62.8.   The Co-Chair thanked members for their thoughtful discussion and emphasised that participating in ranking exercise aims to drive positive changes within the University.

23.63.   EDI AND SENIOR PROMOTIONS

23.63.1.   The Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW) briefed members on the EDI senior colleague promotions report (Document EDI 240724B).

23.63.2.   The Director (PCW) noted a slight improvement in diversity for promotions and appointments, attributing this to various recent initiatives for external recruitments and internal promotions.

23.63.3.   In relation to a query about why only ethnicity is highlighted in the diversity profile of internal and external appointments, the Director (PCW) explained that it may be for data comparison purposes. A member noted that ethnicity has long been a representation issue in the senior management that concerns the Committee.

23.63.4.   **AGREED** To include other characteristics in the report for a more comprehensive and transparent view of the diversity profile.

23.63.4.1.   **ACTION The Director (PCW)** to bring this suggestion to the team for enhancing future reports.

23.63.5.   Responding to another query on the recent positive change in the diversity of senior colleagues, the Director (PCW) confirmed that this resulted from the University's targeted approach, such as engaging recruitment partners with an inclusive culture and refining the language of the job descriptions.

23.64.   COLLEAGUE WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

23.64.1.   The Director (PCW) updated members on the progress of the Colleague Wellbeing and Engagement Survey data analysis, assuring members that the overall direction is on the right track.

- A significant increase in the response rate compared to last year, with higher participation from academic colleagues.
- More positive responses on wellbeing, particularly from academic colleagues.
- This year marks the first time the survey included a comprehensive set of questions around demographics and identity characteristics. Numerous comments and suggestions on the questions were received.

23.64.2.   The Director (PCW) also highlighted the following concerns:

- A notable percentage of colleagues preferred not to share the characteristic data, indicating a need to build more trust for sharing sensitive information.
- Currently data analysis is done manually, requiring substantial labour and time.

23.64.3.   Consequently, the Director (PCW) mentioned that her team is exploring a new survey system to better support the survey operations and data analysis. Members welcomed the plan to improve data sharing and insights on different EDI categories with colleagues in the future.

23.64.4.   Members made some suggestions to enhance the survey questions, such as capturing views on the Colleague Networks and enhancing EDI awareness for managers. The Director (PCW) and the relevant members will further explore ways to enhance the survey offline.

23.64.5.   The Director (PCW) noted that three separate reports for different groups of colleagues will be produced: a high-level report for the senior management, a report for school and department colleagues, and an EDI-related analysis. The EDI-related report will be presented to the University Executive Board (UEB) this August, followed by the EDI Committee.

23.64.5.1.   **ACTION Secretary** to add the Colleague Wellbeing and Engagement Survey EDI-analysis report to the schedule of business 2024/25.

23.65.   KEY ISSUES IN EDI: EXPERIENCES AND KEY ISSUES FOR SCHOOL EDI LEADS and PS EDI LEADS

23.65.1.   The Co-Chair informed members that the discussion would focus on the key issues of the Professional Services (PS) EDI Leads, as the School EDI Lead representative sent in apology for her absence.

23.65.2.   The PS EDI Lead representative reported a positive start since taking on the role in January 2024. However, they also faced challenges primarily related to defining their role's scope and improving communication with PS colleagues to enhance visibility and engagement.

23.65.3.   Despite these challenges, the PS EDI Lead representative highlighted several plans going forward: reviewing the EDI Policy, assisting in the development of the physical accessibility webpage, involving the University in the Sunflower scheme for non-visible disabilities, upcoming training programmes (sponsored by PCW department) for the PS EDI Leads, and the extension of the role's duration from one year to two years until August 2025.

23.65.4.   A member expressed concern about whether the PS EDI Leads are given adequate time to assume their roles. The PS EDI Lead representative explained that much time has been spent exploring the scope of work, given that they are the first University appointments for the role.

23.65.5.   The PS EDI Lead representative pointed out that many of the PS colleagues are disconnected with EDI. Members discussed the communication issue and suggested ways to enhance communication, referencing the work of the Colleague Networks and other University groups.

23.65.6.   The Director of Global Recruitment, Admissions, Marketing and Communications (GRAMC) suggested the PS EDI Leads reach out to the Marketing team for support.

23.65.6.1.   **ACTION The Director (GRAMC)** to coordinate with the PS EDI Leads to enhance engagement with the PS community through the Marketing team.

23.65.7.   A member noted the need for representation of technicians, as they are not covered in the PS EDI Leads advertisement. The Director (PCW) will discuss the issue with the member offline.

23.66.   END OF YEAR REVIEW OF THE EDI ACTION PLAN 2023/24

23.66.1.   The EDI Officer reported that the end-of-year review of the EDI Action Plan 2023/24 (Document EDI 240724C) was compiled despite the challenges of a change in colleague responsible for the Action Plan and a lack of responses from some action owners.

23.66.2.   Members acknowledged the difficulties senior colleagues face in managing overflowing emails. Members also suggested some possible ways to gather responses to the action items.

23.66.3.   The Co-Chair invited members to share the Action Plan with their colleagues and provide feedback to the EDI Officer on the action items. The Co-Chair also suggested marking action items without response with a question mark in the end-of-year review report.

23.66.4.   Considering the challenges and given that EDI are the core values of the University, a member suggested (i) reviewing the Action Plan template and (ii) incorporating the EDI Action Plan into the school operational plan to streamline process and ensure accountability.

23.66.4.1.   **ACTION The new EDI Manager** to review the EDI Action Plan template after assuming the post in October this year.

23.66.4.2.   **ACTION The Co-Chair, the Director (SAS) and the EDI Officer** to contact the Strategic Planning Manager to explore integrating the EDI Action Plan into school operational plan.

23.66.5.   Members noted that the EDI Officer will circulate the EDI Action Plan 2024//25 in the week following this meeting.

23.67.   UPDATES ON MEMBERS' EDI ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE COMMITTEE

23.67.1.   At the Co-Chair's request, members shared their feelings about the meeting, and their relationship with EDI and the University. Overall, members expressed happiness and excitement about the Committee's work and noted mutual support among members. Members also shared their current EDI-related work and future plans.

23.68.   MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

23.68.1.   **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 29 May 2024 (Document EDI 240724D) as an accurate record, with the following addition (underlined) to an action item:

23.52.7.1 ACTION Network Co-Chairs to email their priorities and challenges to the Secretary of the EDI Committee after the EDI Open Forum <u>and to develop action plans based on these priorities.</u>

23.68.2.   Members noted a summary of progress in actions from previous meetings (Document EDI 240724E) and confirmed the completed actions.

23.69.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23.69.1.   The Co-Chairs expressed their appreciation to members for their dedication and valuable contributions to the Committee over the academic year.

23.69.2.   The Co-Chairs also thanked the secretary for her professional and efficient support.

23.70.   TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

23.70.1.   **AGREED** The updated terms of reference and membership for 2024/25 (Document EDI 240724Fi) for the approval of the UEB.

23.71.   ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

23.71.1.   Members noted the timeline for the EDI Committee annual effectiveness review for 2023/24 (Document EDI 240724Fii).

23.72.   SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2024/25

23.72.1.   Members noted that the Committee will reduce its number of meetings from six to four in 2024/25 with each meeting lasting around three hours. This change reflects the Committee's maturity and aims to streamline discussion items for enhanced efficiency. Additional meetings will be convened as needed in cases of urgency.

23.72.2.   **APPROVED** The schedule of business for 2024/25 (Document EDI 240724Fiii), with the addition of the Colleague Wellbeing and Engagement Survey EDI-analysis report (see Minute 23.64.5.1), for implementation in the academic year of 2024/25.

23.73.   SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS 2023/24

23.73.1.   Members noted the updated schedule of business 2023/24 (Document EDI 240724G).

23.74.   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

9 October 2024
5 February 2025
9 April 2025
23 July 2025

All meetings take place between 2.00pm and 5.00pm and are held in person.