
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Committee Meeting

12.30 – 14.00, Wednesday, 1 November 2023
William Gates Building, Room FN05

Minutes

Present:

Prof Robert Watson (Chair, RNW)
Professor Alastair Beresford, Head of Department (ARB)
Ms Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator (Secretary, CB)
Rachel Gardner, Communications Manager (RG)
Professor Alice Hutchings (AH)
Jessica Man (PSJM)
Aga Niewiadomska, Outreach Administrator (AN)
Peter Ochieng (PO)
James Sharkey (JPS)
Mrs Caroline Stewart, Departmental Secretary (CS)
Gina Warren, Equality and Diversity Consultant (GW)
Konrad Witaszczyk (KW)

1. Apologies for Absence

None.

2. Terms of Reference

Following introductions, Committee members considered the draft terms of reference, making several comments and suggestions, and agreeing to edit the shared document offline.

The Chair noted that the terms of reference are for the Committee to state what it believes the Department should do in terms of equality, diversity, and inclusion; and once agreed by the Committee, they would be sent to Faculty Board for approval. Once approved by Faculty Board, the terms of reference would be published on the Committee website.

The Committee discussed the circumstances when, and means by which, students could communicate with the Committee rather than their College. The Committee was reminded that previously the Research Staff Forum had a standing agenda item where they could raise EDI issues, but nothing had been raised. This led to a discussion about how this Committee could interact with other Department committees to ensure engagement, and the need to provide a direct means for members of the Department to contact this Committee. The Committee also briefly discussed its remit—noting that the Committee would address policy issues rather than individual problems. The Committee heard how

an ED&I issue had been addressed and resolved outside of the Committee, and this led to a discussion about how to identify *patterns* of problems or issues, perhaps by introducing or reestablishing (as applicable) an ED&I standing agenda item for each committee, and/or having a representative from other Department committees to attend the ED&I Committee meetings – perhaps simply on occasion – and report back to their own committee (or vice versa). The Research Staff Forum had such a representative in the past.

Since feedback about the academic mentoring programme offered by the University has been poor, a question was raised about whether the women@CL mentoring programme was open to staff. PJSM reported that she had been advised that the women@CL mentoring programme is for students but there is no reason why the networking events cannot be open to staff. The draft Terms of Reference indicate that women@CL is one way in which support would be available, but it needs to be clear that this is not the only way, and that further action might be required by the department to ensure a more complete offering for staff members. RW noted that we could perhaps include this issue in the application and/or survey.

Actions: CB, RW, Committee members

3. Athena Swan Process

GW informed the Committee about the Athena Swan application process. She suggested that, unless we can already identify issues or wish to address something quite broad, the survey should be done first so that it can inform what focus groups would be useful.

In response to a question about why we are not applying for a Silver award this time, the Chair noted that for a Silver award, we would need to have been carrying out various actions/activities continuously since we received the Bronze award and, as this has not been the case, it is more realistic to apply for a Bronze award this time with the ambition to apply for a Silver award later. The feedback from the unsuccessful application for a Silver award is available for Committee members in the shared ED&I drive.

In response to a question about how much of the last application we need to carry over to this application, GW responded that at least one third of this application should be about what we said we were going to do last time. GW advised that we can be open about not having had an ED&I Committee during that time. GW also advised not having a long action plan this time, and that it is important to convey passion, enthusiasm, and honest reflection in the application.

4. Survey questions

The Committee considered the 28 main Athena Swan survey questions and the 7 core questions. GW noted that the only questions that we have to include are the 7 core questions. We can add other questions as desired, but GW advised using similar questions to the ones suggested by Athena Swan for purposes of benchmarking with other departments and institutions. Open-ended questions can be included to get background to the responses to closed questions.

The University is running a survey in January 2024 (too late for us to use the data), adding 12 race equality questions to the 7 core questions (combining its Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter surveys into one survey) and including demographic data

(e.g., sex, gender, grade, staff type, caring responsibility). GW said she would share the demographic questions.

AH asked about cases where the number of respondents is small and therefore affects anonymity. GW noted that, in order to give respondents more confidence about anonymity, HR can hold the data outside of the Department, do the analysis, and then provide us with a report. If less than five responses are received, the data could be left out. In the past, responses have contained names of staff members, or college staff members, and those would generally be shared only with the Head of Department, not the full committee.

RW noted that the Athena Swan questions are very staff-facing. GW noted that the Judge Business School is creating a student survey and that she would ask if they could share it with us.

The Committee discussed next steps for the surveys (students and staff), both of which need to be run in November. It was agreed that a sub-committee would correspond to finalise the questions to provide to GW who would prepare the surveys on Qualtrix. GW noted that there is no need to do a full survey (the Clinical School had used the 7 core questions and a few additional ones, and their response rate had been between 70 and 80%). AH, JM, and KW volunteered to be on the survey sub-committee to finalise the questions for submission to GW next week. A new sub-committee would likely also be formed to review data once received. We will allow the staff survey to proceed before the student survey if it is ready first, but there was a strong imperative to get the student survey sorted out before the end of term to maximise responses.

5. Actions and Responsibilities

As noted above, Committee members would be granted access to the CST ED&I Google drive (RW), and to the Terms of Reference document (CB) where they could edit the terms of reference to provide a version (required by 15 November) that could be taken to Faculty Board for approval.

GW would send the demographic survey questions and ask the Judge Business School if they would be content to share their student survey with us.

RW, AH, JM and KW would meet via email to finalise the survey questions.

6. Any Other Business

It was noted that future agendas should include a Conflict-of-Interest item.

7. Date of next meeting

The Committee would like to meet twice per term, with smaller panels to meet more frequently to look at data sets.