



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) Meeting

Tuesday, 29 October 2024, 11.00 – 12.30

William Gates Building, Room FW11

Minutes

Attendance:

Professor Alastair Beresford, Head of Department (Chair)
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator (Secretary)
Rachel Gardner, Communications Manager
Dr Prakash Murali, Associate Professor
Aga Niewiadomska, Outreach Administrator
Komal Rathi, Chair of Women@CL and undergraduate student
James Sharkey, Senior Research Software Engineer
Caroline Stewart, Departmental Secretary
Konrad Witaszczyk, Research Associate and member of the Postgraduate Students Forum

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

3. Committee Membership and Representation

Committee members welcomed new members, Kamal Rathi and Dr Prakash Murali, and then shared brief introductions. Alastair noted that he is taking over as Chair while Professor Robert Watson is on sabbatical leave.

Committee members discussed membership of the EDIC, including whether representation from other committees should be a requirement. It was agreed that a membership including both ex-officio roles and representation covering various groups and criteria (e.g., staff/student categories, gender, nationality, background, age, committees, etc) would be ideal. Alastair agreed to propose and share a membership list for review by the committee.

Action: Alastair

4. Athena Swan

i) Result of the Application for Renewal of the Bronze Award

Alastair noted the very good news that our application for renewal of the Bronze Award had been successful. Alastair expressed his thanks to Professor Watson, Caroline Stewart, and all the other contributors for the huge amount of work they had done on the

application. The award is valid until 31 July 2029 and the application (with personal information and photos redacted) has been posted on the [CST Athena Swan website](#).

ii) Feedback on the Bronze Award Renewal Application

Alastair highlighted some of the suggestions in the [feedback from AdvanceHE](#):

- for the Head of Department's letter to provide detail on their personal involvement or experience in progressing gender equality. Alastair could have included this detail for the 2024 application and can do so as part of the next application
- for the Department to consider ways to extend the membership to more fully represent the breadth of roles within it. This was discussed above (see item 3)
- to refine the ownership of actions by specifying a specific role responsible for an action, rather than a broad team. The Committee would bear this in mind for the next item, Action Plan
- for more specific timeframes to increase the likelihood of implementation. The Committee would bear this in mind for the next item, Action Plan
- to improve the action plan with actions that focus on more direct impacts on gender equality.

There was a brief discussion about the different Athena Swan awards. A question was raised about whether achieving the Bronze Award renewal application actions would be to maintain the Bronze award only or whether it would be enough to apply for a Silver award. It was agreed that Celia would contact Gina Warren, ED&I Consultant, to ask her for advice on this issue. It was also noted that Physics have a Silver Award and so we could ask them for advice too.

Action: Celia

iii) Action Plan

Committee members discussed the various actions noted in the Action Plan Google document, the main points of which were as follows.

1. Bullying and harassment: improve student and staff understanding of bullying and harassment reporting and handling.

It was agreed that communicating steps for reporting bullying and harassment and an understanding of how they are handled was essential. Suggestions included a 5-minute talk about this for students at registration, and offering several options for who to contact, along with multiple ways in which to do that. Konrad offered to draft a Google document for review by the rest of the Committee. It was also noted that this issue would need to be reviewed in the next annual survey (see action 4 below on surveys).

Action: Konrad

2. Committee consideration of EDI: all departmental committees to consider EDI as part of their work.

Alastair acknowledged that although a lot of committees submit their minutes to the Faculty Board, EDI is not a standing item for many of them. It was agreed that Caroline would ask all department committees to include a standing item on EDI. If no issues are raised, the EDI Committee could discuss how to encourage

more engagement. It was noted that it would be very useful to make it clear what is meant by EDI, along with examples.

Action: Alastair/Caroline

3. **Gender and other diversity in departmental events, such as seminars:**
 - a. **Regular monitoring of gender and other diversity in departmental events**
 - b. **Improve the diversity of speakers at departmental events**

The Committee noted that we would need to get the reporting part of this action in place first. We don't have self-declared gender data available for past events but could ask seminar organisers to make an informed guess, and in future ask speakers to self-identify their gender.

The Committee also discussed the issue of the impact of departmental events (e.g. large Wednesday seminars having a greater impact than smaller events).

It was agreed that Celia would work with Ben Karniely, Senior Research Strategy Coordinator, to collect data about gender of speakers (either self-identified or by making an informed estimate) for the following department events, from the 2023-24 academic year, with the data to be available for the Lent 2025 EDIC meeting:

- Wednesday group meetings
- Wheeler Lecture
- Tech Talks
- Research Showcases.

Action: Celia (with Ben, Senior Research Strategy Coordinator)

4. **Surveys: continuation of regular student and staff surveys annually.**

The Committee discussed the best time for circulating the surveys and agreed on approximately mid-November to mid-December, to cover the end of term and some of the holidays. There was a discussion about doing the surveys in- or out-of-house (last year Gina Warren, ED&I Consultant carried out the surveys for us to provide an extra layer of confidentiality) and whether the subtlety of carrying out the survey out-of-house was important or even noticed. (In connection with this, a suggestion was made to include a survey question on how much the respondent trusts the survey/confidentiality process.) It was agreed that Caroline would find someone to create and circulate the surveys to be open from approximately mid-November to mid-December 2024.

Action: Caroline

5. **Career trajectories: exit interviews and career trajectory monitoring.**

The committee discussed this issue, noting the high rate of turnover and suggesting that an exit survey (with an option for an exit interview) might be more achievable than an exit interview. It was also noted that monitoring this kind of data is also important for the REF in highlighting our contributions to a good research environment. It was agreed that Alastair, Alicja and Caroline would look into this. James agreed to prepare some survey questions.

Also mentioned was the possibility of sending a survey to Ring members and postdoc students to collect historical data.

Action: Alastair, Alicja, Caroline and James

6. Review of the gender awards gap

[very draft (I didn't follow this discussion):] Alastair noted that we now have a few years of TEMUR data on performance. It was agreed that Caroline would find someone who likes analysing data to look into this.

ARB	Don't think we've looked at what the entry [] look like. Now have a few years of TEMUR data on performance. Could look at a comparative point in that sense. Caroline – find someone who likes looking at data. Connect with [] as well.
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Action: Caroline

7. Nomination of female senior research staff and faculty for awards

Alastair noted that the Awards Committee had created a long list of potential awards for UTOs and SRAs (postdocs and graduate students have 'best paper' awards) but had received very few nominations and there had been no big win. Alastair noted that when he meets with UTOs this year, he will encourage them to self-nominate. He also noted that he was open to ideas about how we could get the Awards Committee working better.

8. Improvement of career progression support: Alastair noted that items 5 and 7 would need to be done before actioning this one.

9. Regular production and review of charts: this item was not addressed.

5. Disability Access Audit/Survey of the Building

James noted that Professor Robert Watson had raised the suggestions for a disability access audit of the building to be carried out. It was agreed that Celia would contact the Accessibility & Disability Resource Centre to enquire whether this is something they could carry out for us.

Action: Celia

6. Invitation to Frank Dobbin

Alastair had noted that Frank Dobbin, one of the authors of 'Getting to Diversity' (<https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674276611>), had been given an honorary appointment at the Judge and would be coming to Cambridge reasonably regularly. The Committee discussed whether there might be an opportunity to engage with Frank on one of his visits and it was agreed that Alastair would contact him in this regard.

Action: Alastair

7. Tracking Gender Balance in Part II and Part III Examinations

At its recent meeting, the Faculty Board considered the External Examiner's report on the 2024 Part III exams. One of their suggestions was for the department to consider gender

balance and compare how female students ranked in Part II versus Part III to make sure that implicit bias against female students is not happening in this last stage. The Faculty Board has referred this issue to the EDI Committee for consideration.

8. Any Other Business

Inclusion and Diversity Lecture

James noted that he had recently attended an Open University open lecture entitled "Including whom? Practices and consequences of inclusion and diversity"

(<https://research.open.ac.uk/events/including-whom-practices-and-consequences-inclusion-and-diversity>) presented by Professor Cinzia Priola. James noted that one of the key points from the talk was the importance of embedding EDI across all policies, rather than having 'an EDI policy' that was separate. James said that he would be happy to share his notes from the lecture offline.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Lent term, once the surveys have been completed and the results have been considered.