



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Open Minutes

Of the meeting held on Monday, 11 December 2023 on MS Teams.

Present:

- Damien Page, (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Chair)
- Charlotte Stewart (Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Manager [Deputy Chair])
- Paul Morgan, (Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience)
- Paulette Morris (PSE Representative)
- Jess Bradbury (Students' Union Vice President: Achievement & Belonging)
- Simon Lee-Price (UCU Representative)
- Rachael Cornwall (Director of HR)
- Zahara Chowdhury (HR BP – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)
- Sarah Jackson (Students' Union HR & Development Manager)
- Louise Harvey (Director, Vice-Chancellor, Communications and Civic Engagement)
- Margaret Rioga (Head of Practice Learning for Health and Social Care)
- Yetunde Dairo (Deputy Head of School - Health & Social Care Professions)
- Imam Haseeb Jahangir (Inter-Faith Chaplain)
- Ciara Walsh, Committee Officer

Apologies:

- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)
- Emma Binnie (Dean of Students)

Welcome/Apologies for Absence

23.145 The Chair welcomed Committee Members to the meeting and noted the following apologies:

- Carlo Lusuardi (Senior Lecturer)
- Emma Binnie (Dean of Students)

Declaration of conflicts of interest

23.146 No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes of the previous meeting

23.147 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record subject to the following amendments:

- Paul Morgan, Senior Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience was corrected to Paul Morgan, Pro Vice Chancellor, Student Experience

Matters Arising/Status Actions

- 23.148 The Chair advised that there were actions outstanding from the previous meeting.
- 23.149 White Ribbon Accreditation – The HR BP EDI advised that it was not at a stage for submission and elsewhere within the University there was work being carried out on gender advocacy. The Students' Union Vice President: Achievement & Belonging advised that they had recently received approval on a campaign to stand against gender violence campaign which supports gender issues. The action was closed.
- 23.150 Aurora – The Director of HR advised that there was an ongoing action and there was a development programme where there could be internal investment. Furthermore, this was a part of an HR colleague's objectives. The action was closed.

Professional Service Employees (PSE) Promotions Round, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report

- 23.151 The Committee noted the contents of the report which provided an overview for the University of equality, diversity and inclusion data following the PSE Promotion Rounds 2023. This was the first year that the University had run promotion cycles for professional service employees (PSE). There had been a panel in July 2023 to bring the cycle in line with the academic process. The timing would be kept under review but it was anticipated that the cycle would run annually alongside the academic process.
- 23.152 There had been 42 applications in total this year, of which 34% were successful (81%). This compared to 9 out of 25 (36%) for the academic promotional cycle. 20 applicants identified as female, 8 applicants were of Global Majority heritage and 10 applicants said they had a disability or condition. Of the successful 34 applicants, 16 identified as female, 8 were of Global Majority heritage and 8 had a disability or condition.
- 23.153 The HR BP EDI advised the Committee there was a greater success for PSE going through the promotion process. Furthermore, academic colleagues progressed through established roles and it was a nuanced process for PSE.
- 23.154 The decision making panel was the same across both cycles with the exception of an HR Business Partner who joined the decision-making in the first cycle. The same panel also considered appeals. The Committee noted there was an over-representation of females and they comprised 83% of the panel. There was also an even spread across age bands but there was no representation under the age of 35. It was agreed that future panels should be more representative of the wider workforce to ensure a fair and transparent appeal process.

Promotions Panel Update

- 23.155 The Committee considered a presentation on the Promotions Panel Update which reflected on promotion panel outcomes for PSE and Academic Staff. It proposed actions to make the promotions panel processes accessible and equitable for all staff.
- 23.156 It was noted there were inequalities between the University's internal and external promotion processes. The internal process did not allow verbal contribution.

- 23.157 The Committee noted there would be a review of the internal process and there had been changes made as a result of feedback to address initial concerns. There were some disparities. There was not an option for internal PSE and academic staff to submit verbally applications and this could present difficulties for those in manual roles and/or with learning difficulties that may be disadvantaged by paper-based application.
- 23.158 External candidates had an increased chance for growth without demonstrating the level expected. The disparity between internal and external candidates was common across organizations in all sector.
- 23.159 Academic vs Professional Services: the Committee noted that there appeared to be an inequality with the appeal process for PSE staff and it does not exist for academic staff. It was agreed that more support should be given in advance. The Committee's particular attention was drawn to the proposed actions which included:
- Mentor/advocate available a minimum of 6 months before the promotion cycle begins.
 - Consideration of appeal processes for PSE and academic cycles to mirror the processes.
 - Review of the application process
 - Staff development webinars and sessions about overcoming unsuccessful outcomes
 - Introduce training for promotion panel members
 - Signpost training for line managers to have honest conversations about development needs and readiness for promotion.
- 23.160 These actions were proposed to ensure colleagues are supported with their application.

Equal Pay

- 23.161 The Committee noted the contents of the report. In line with equality and statutory requirements, the University reported on gender, ethnicity, disability and equal pay gaps. The University reported and published gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap reports annually.

Suicide Prevention Update

- 23.162 The Head of Disability and Inclusion presented the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Update to the Committee which detailed the current activities in relation to mental health support and suicide prevention following Cibyl's report on Student Mental Health Study. Cibyl had surveyed 12,796 students and graduates from more than 140 universities regarding various aspects of their life and mental health. Within the group of survey respondents, 11% were graduates and 89% were current students.
- 23.163 The Committee were advised that a module on 'Zero Suicide Alliance Awareness Training' was available on the e-Learning platform and there had been an 86% uptake. The Director of HR advised their team had approached colleagues who had been personally impacted in advance.

Resolution Update: Annual Summary 2022-23

- 23.164 The Resolutions Manager presented the report to the Committee which detailed relevant information about Student Casework in the areas of Complaints and Student Code of Conduct undertaken by the University in the year 2022-23 academic year. The paper drew from data and analysis from academic year 2023-24 to highlight to the Committee areas

where development and resource may be needed to foster a culture of genuine inclusion for staff and students.

- 23.165 The Committee noted that in June 2023, the Office for Students published an insight brief on tackling sexual misconduct in universities and colleges. The University participated in the study in an effort to help inform its work.

School Access: Student Adjustments

- 23.166 The Committee considered a proposal to formalise a routine procedure for academic school storage and access to learner disability and inclusion adjustment and inclusion plans amongst other information on a Microsoft Teams space. This would ensure that learners adjustment plans were accessible to Schools and relevant Placement teams to ensure that learners have the support they need.

- 23.167 The Committee endorsed the proposal.

Advance HE Funding

- 23.168 The Committee noted that an application had been submitted to Advance HE for funding on menopause and neurodivergence. The Committee would be updated in due course.

Safe Space Training

- 23.169 The Committee noted the contents of the report regarding Safe Spaces training at the University. Safe spaces purpose was to help individuals feel safe, be vulnerable, authentic and honest. Furthermore, it would be a space to have conversations and ask questions that would be difficult in other environments. Safe spaces in the context of equality, diversity and inclusion referred to environments where individuals can express themselves, share their experiences and engage in open dialogue without fear of discrimination, harassment or marginalization. These spaces were created to promote inclusivity, foster a sense of belonging and allow individuals to discuss sensitive topics related to diversity and social justice.

Any Other Business

- 23.170 The Committee noted an update from the Students' Union Vice President: Achievement & Belonging that:

- 45% of student staff applications were from BAME candidates – up from 11% in 21/22
- 15% of student staff applications were from students with disabilities – the same as 21/22
- 55% of students staff applications were from candidates identifying as female – up from 48%
- 50% of career staff applications were from BAME candidates – up from 27%
- 8% of career staff applications were from candidates with disabilities – down from 20%
- 66% of career staff applications were from candidates identifying as female – up from 33%

- 23.171 There had been 7 recruitment campaigns across Summer 2023 which resulted in the appointment of:

- 4 employees racialised as Black or Asian
- 4 female employees and 3 male employees

Date of next meeting

23.172 The date of the next meeting was 11th March 2024.