Equalities Mainstreaming Report

1. Introduction and the legal context

This report provides an overview of the University of Strathclyde’s approach on equality and diversity and how it is meeting the public sector general equality duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups, considering the need to:
  - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
  - meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
  - encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low
- Fostering good relations between people from different groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups

The Equality Act 2010 defines ‘protected characteristics’ as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, and pregnancy and maternity with regards to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.

The University is also expected to meet the Equality Act 2010 (Specific (Equality) Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012; which requires us to:

- report on progress on mainstreaming the general duty into all functions
- develop and publish a set of equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review policies and practices against the needs of the general duty
- gather and use information on employees
- publish statements on equal pay
- publish information on gender pay gap
- Consider the general equality duty in procurement practices
- publish information in a manner that is accessible
2. Mainstreaming equality

Mainstreaming the equality simply means integrating equality into the day-to-day working of the University.

This means taking equality into account in all our activities as provider of education, an employer and the range of services we provide.

Mainstreaming the equality duty has a number of benefits including:

- equality becomes part of our structures, behaviours and culture
- we can demonstrate how we promote equality
- continuous improvement and better performance

The University approach is not simply to meet our legal obligations but to extend our work much further than this by celebrating equality and diversity and ensuring that the Strathclyde community is based on fairness, equality, cultural diversity, dignity and respect.

We therefore do not tolerate prejudice, unlawful discrimination or harassment and we take every opportunity to celebrate and promote diversity, and to engage with our students and staff, as well as the wider community.

3. Where We Are Now

The University has actively supported and promoted equality of opportunity over many years and has continued to invest in terms of both budget and staff resource to ensure our sustained commitment to equality and diversity.

3.1 Our Commitment & Structure

- The University’s Strategic Plan (2011-2015) signifies our commitment to equality and diversity and identifies a clear set of corporate aims designed to ensure that equality of opportunity and the on-going development of a culturally diverse community underpin all aspects of our work.

  *The plan notes: ‘The values of equality and diversity are at the heart of the Strategic Plan and it is the responsibility of all our people – staff and students – to adopt these values and the behaviours contained within them. The Strategic Plan acts as a framework for implementation and it should assist individuals and teams to think carefully about their own areas of work and the likely impact on equality groups.’*

- The University’s Vice-Principal is the key institutional Equality Champion and acts as an advocate in terms of embedding equality and diversity into all aspects of our work, as well as ensuring that both Executive Team and University Court members remain up to date on equality and diversity matters.
- An Equality and Diversity Manager has been in place within the University since 2011 and this senior member of staff works on a full-time basis to develop relevant policy and procedure, support the implementation of good practice across the institution and take a lead role in coordinating strategy and action planning in support of our equality and diversity commitments. The Equality and Diversity Manager operates within a wide network of both internal and external colleagues and retains specialist knowledge across all the equality protected characteristics as well as in the area of cultural diversity.

- The Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) is our key institutional committee dedicated to equality and diversity work. A review of the Committee’s title, membership and remit was recently completed in order to ensure that it could operate most effectively. As indicated in its title, the Committee is a strategic forum and its membership comprises representatives from Faculties, Professional Services teams and the Students’ Association. The University’s Vice-Principal and Equality Champion is the convener and chair of the EDSC.

- The EDSC and the University Court were instrumental in endorsing and monitoring progress against the former Race Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Schemes.

- The Procurement processes at the University are committed to seeking best value and following transparent and fair practices.

- The University produces an annual Equality Monitoring Report, which covers both staff and students and uses the report to inform on-going planning and development.

- The Estates Services has a methodology in place to consult with students and staff with disabilities in designing access and improvements to buildings/infrastructure.

- The University has in place Equality Impact Assessment guidelines to assist staff in examining policies and practices as they affect people from protected characteristic groups. This assessment helps to address any potential inequality or discriminatory practice prior to implementation of the policy or practice.

3.2 Our Students

- We have a long history of effectively supporting students with disabilities to ensure access to the full range of facilities and opportunities associated with their learning and student experience. Our support services are committed to widening support to include students from all protected characteristics backgrounds.
• Our learning and teaching processes take account of student diverse needs. Where required students are provided additional support on study skills, English language and assessments for supporting specific accessible needs.

• We work proactively with our Students’ Association to develop an on-going programme of events and activities to celebrate diversity, create opportunities for dialogue, networking and mutual respect.

• On an annual basis, we produce a Student Equality Monitoring Report and use the Report as a tool to inform future development and practice. In the foreseeable future we are committed to collecting information on students from all protected characteristic backgrounds.

• We gather feedback from our students on their experience at Strathclyde in terms of learning, support and equality of opportunity, and use this feedback to inform our work moving forward.

• We apply best practice and set some challenging targets such as our commitment to widening participation in our Outcomes Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council.

3.2 Our Staff

• As part of our on-going commitment to equality of opportunity among staff, the University produces a Staff Equality Monitoring Report on an annual basis and uses the Report as a tool to inform future development and practice. In the foreseeable future we are committed to collecting information on staff from all protected characteristic backgrounds.

• All staff are required to complete an online Equality and Diversity Awareness training module, the aims of which are to: develop a broader understanding of equality and diversity concepts and issues; introduce key aspects and provisions of Equality Act 2010; heighten awareness of the responsibilities and rights of every member of the University’s staff.

• Our front line staff receive facilitator led training to ensure that our service delivery is inclusive and supports the needs of people from all protected characteristic backgrounds.

• We provide training to recruitment and selection panels to ensure we apply fair and transparent practice in selecting and appointing new staff. The University operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for people with disabilities meeting the essential criteria for the job.

• All new academic staff receive 3 days induction which includes a session on equality and diversity.

• Staff participating in the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Academic Studies are offered a module on developing an inclusive curriculum.
• We also support our staff by applying sector benchmarking best practice such as Athena Swan, HR Excellence in Research, Investors in People and Positive about Disabled People standard.

4. Some recent Successes

In April 2011 the University of Strathclyde was successful in achieving an institutional Athena Swan Bronze award. Athena SWAN awards recognise and celebrate good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in Science, Engineering and Technology departments in Higher Education. We were the only University in the UK to receive the award in that year.

The University played a key role in proposing and supporting a national research project on 'Attracting international students: equitable services and support, campus cohesion and community engagement'. The project report was launched in May 2012.

The University has commissioned DisabledGo to undertake an access review of all university buildings. DisabledGo was launched in December 2012.

The University has recently upgraded and relocated the library’s Assistive Technologies Room.

The development of Reflection room on campus to support students and staff for quiet reflection, meditation or prayer.

Contributing to best equality practice outside of the UK. The University was partner institution in the Tempus project “Eduquality: Education for Equal Opportunities at Croatian Universities”

5. Our External Equality Stakeholders

The University over the years has established pro-active links with a wide range of organisations and individuals. Our Equality and Diversity Manager represents the University and contributes to the Equality Challenge Unit Scotland Liaison Group, West of Scotland Equality Practitioners Network, Glasgow Diversity Employers Forum and the Scottish Parliament Cross-party Race Equality Group. The shared learning from these groups informs the ongoing practices at the University and within the higher education sector.

The Equality Outcomes provide a framework to enable the University to continue to make progress on equality and diversity and demonstrate proactively our commitment in:

- remaining an employer of choice and a desirable place to study
- attracting high quality staff locally and globally
- enabling students to deliver to their full potential
- maximising the benefits of a diverse workforce and student body
- improving the student learning and staff working experience
- identifying appropriate resources to meet diverse needs of the University community.

Our first set of Equality Outcomes, as required by the Equality Act 2010, have been produced in consultation with students, staff and representative external organisations.

The Equality Outcomes will be regularly reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee. The responsible person(s) identified in the Equality Outcomes plan will be expected to take the lead responsibility for developing and implementing appropriate actions.

In accordance with Public Sector Equality Duty requirement the University’s Equality Outcomes will be formally reviewed after two years. The information will be made publically available.

Further Information

To find out more about range of information and resources on equality and diversity please visit the University website at http://www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/

Alternatively, contact the Equality and Diversity Manager:

Naseem Anwar
University of Strathclyde
Room 439A, Graham Hills Building, 50 George Street, Glasgow, G1 1QE
Telephone: 0141 548 2811 Email: equalopportunities@strath.ac.uk