

## THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

### THE COUNCIL

#### **The Work of the University's Equality and Diversity Committee 2009-10**

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (consolidating previous legislation including the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Equality Duty 2005 and the Gender Equality Duty), the University is required to report annually on progress against the Action Plan developed. A draft of the full Single Equality Scheme Annual Report for the period December 2009 – December 2010 can be found on the web at: <http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/ed/policy/>.

The University's Equality and Diversity Committee meets three times during each session with a remit to monitor and advise on equality and diversity policy and practice across. This paper highlights the main issues considered by the Committee during 2009/10.

#### **Draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report (2008 – 2009)**

The Committee received the Draft Equality and Diversity Annual Report, a statutory document updating the progress of the University's Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. The report provided information on successes and achievements over the 2008-2009 period, which included:

- A suite of training delivered to various groups of staff
- HR activities to attract and retain staff
- Improving access for disabled students
- Initiatives from around the University which have been quoted as best practice in a number of national projects.

#### **Single Equality Scheme (2009-2012)**

The draft Single Equality Scheme was presented to the Committee, setting out the University's objectives to promote equality in the workplace and learning environment.

The Single Equality Scheme has replaced previous Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes. Any priorities contained within previous action plans had been incorporated into the new document.

#### **Update on the Single Equality Scheme**

The Committee were updated on the progress of the Single Equality Scheme. Two working groups had been established to take forward the action plan; one concentrating on actions relating to the theme of 'valuing and developing all our staff' and the other on actions concentrating on the theme of 'inspiring our students to develop their full potential'. Each group includes representation from all of the services with responsibility for actions within the plan. The groups would meet regularly and reports would be presented to future meetings of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

#### **Access Audit of the University Campus**

One of the actions in the University's Disability Equality Scheme was to commission an access audit of the University campus. The Committee received progress reports from Estates and the contractors who undertook the audit at each of its meetings. The programme of work for the first stage of implementation comprised five separate areas of activity:

- Lift improvements
- Hearing enhancement systems
- General improvement projects
- General maintenance
- Management procedures

### **Policy on Dignity and Mutual Respect**

A draft Policy on Dignity and Mutual Respect, prepared by HR, Wellbeing and the Equality Service, was received. Once approved, this would replace the existing Code of Practice on Harassment and Bullying.

A communications programme for the proposed policy was presented to the Committee, which included leaflets for all staff, promotional posters and banners produced alongside the distribution of the policy to staff with managerial or student support responsibility. The Committee was informed that the production of a final version of the document was scheduled for November 2009.

### **Six and nine month monitoring reports on new promotions system**

Papers were presented to the Committee highlighting monitoring data from the first six and nine months of operation of the new promotions procedures for grade 3 – 9 inclusive. A summary was presented on the applications and outcomes in terms of gender, full or part time status and staff group. Additionally, information was provided on the activity to date in the Readerships and Promotional Chairs exercises.

### **Black History Month and LGBT History Month**

Leeds University Union has a tradition of organising a series of events for Black History Month and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual History Month. The Committee noted that over the past 12 months the Equality Service worked with LUU to support and expand the programmes and to help publicise them across the University.

### **Update from the Disability Team manager**

An update of recent activities and initiatives developed by the Disability Team was provided to the Committee. Highlights included:

- Members of the team ran workshops on making teaching and learning accessible for disabled students.

- A new information leaflet titled 'How the Disability Team may use your information' had been produced.

- A new Student Mental Health Worker had been appointed. This post will provide support for academic departments and students in managing moderate to severe mental health difficulties.

### **The Staff Survey**

The Committee was informed that the next University Staff Survey was planned to run with an Equality and Diversity theme. It had become apparent that there was also a need to survey staff regularly to monitor progress on a number of measures in the University strategy. Therefore agreement had been reached to establish a 3tier survey to be run in Autumn 2010 which would include: A core set of questions to test progress on the strategy which would be repeated every year; a second section which would incorporate some of the already agreed equality and diversity questions set in 2010, but changing year on year according to current priorities. A third section to capture demographic data against which the results could be cross-referenced e.g. work location, staff group, equality strand etc.

### **Procedures for supporting Disabled Staff – Access to Work Funding**

The Government's Access to Work Scheme, which provides funding towards reasonable adjustments to disabled staff into and during employment, had been altered. The Committee noted that, for newly appointed staff, the first 6 weeks in post are crucial since the proportion of costs that would be met by Access to Work is greater within that period than from week 7 onwards.

Changes were being made to letters of appointment to bring this to the attention of new staff and induction guidelines would be strengthened to encourage discussion of such needs at an early stage. The Equality Service would be keeping this under review and would report any significant changes at the next meeting of EDC.

### **Progressing the E&D Agenda**

A paper was presented to the committee for discussion and comments were welcomed prior to presenting a revised draft to Faculty Management Group. It was recognised that different areas of the University would be likely to have different issues to address and that a “one size fits all” approach was not appropriate going forward. Recommendations included: The identification of an Equality Champion who would be a member of Faculty Executive Committees (FEC) and would champion equality issues in that forum; a review of existing structures, including Faculty Equality Committees, and making changes as appropriate; reviewing the role and remit of Faculty Diversity Officers, including consideration of consolidating multiple roles within faculties into one role with equivalent workload remission and agreeing a reporting structure through the Diversity Champion to FEC.

### **Operation of the Equality and Diversity Committee**

The Committee were provided with the opportunity to reflect on how well it was currently operating. It is important that it is a forum for making progress and the Annual Report presented in November each year regularly illustrates a surprising amount of progress. It was recognised, however, that such good work was not well publicised outside of EDC membership and that better publicity could help to raise the profile of the importance of equality and diversity across all aspects of the staff and student experience.

It was recognised that it would not be helpful if the Committee were to become too big as this would inhibit useful discussion. One notable gap was, however, a lack of representation from a senior person to represent learning and teaching. This would potentially help to embed concepts of equality and diversity into the ongoing work on the curriculum to help to develop generic skills in students in the spirit of the Leeds for Life initiative.

There was also discussion on the relationship between Faculty/Service Equality Committees and the University EDC. In the recent past there had been no issues raised by Faculty Committees, although the agenda and minutes of the University Committee were communicated to Chairs of local Committees and to Diversity Officers. A request was made for such information to also be circulated to Faculty Deans where that person was not the Chair of the Faculty Equality Committee. There might also be a case for minutes of Faculty Committees to be included in EDC, although this could become unwieldy.

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