

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2022-2027

Our vision

We seek to provide an environment and culture that is truly inclusive, where staff and students have a sense of belonging, feel valued for who they are and are supported to be the best they can be.

Context

The University has a longstanding commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) which has flowed through successive Strategic Plans. This is reiterated in the most recent plan which states “our approach...is built on the principle of inclusion”. The purpose of this new Framework is to restate and extend our commitment to EDI.

We fundamentally believe that striving for an equal, diverse and inclusive community, where everyone is treated with dignity and mutual respect, is not only the fair and right thing to do but is also the pathway to excellence in everything we do. We know that enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion is advantageous on an individual and organisational level. It supports the wellbeing of our students and staff and improves the sense of belonging for everyone learning, studying or working at our University. This in turn encourages commitment, performance, creativity and innovation, strengthened by a wider range of perspectives and experiences contributing to key decision making. By fully embracing and valuing equality, diversity and inclusion, our University will ensure its long-term relevance in a fast-changing world and our reputation and impact will be further enhanced.

Our actions and commitments will need to be developed against the recognition that bias and discrimination have existed and still exist both in society and throughout higher education. We acknowledge our own responsibilities in this regard. We will address these issues locally and also seek to provide leadership and best practice more widely across the sector. We acknowledge that there are disadvantages and inequalities in accessing education, opportunities, experiences and outcomes for both students and staff. We know that we have further work to do to ensure we achieve a genuinely equal and inclusive environment and this Framework commits us to this. We also know that delivering a genuine environment of this nature is the responsibility of everyone at our University.

Definitions

Equality

Equality means making sure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It means challenging discrimination and removing barriers, so that everyone has opportunities to achieve their desired outcomes.

Diversity

Diversity is about recognising the benefits of different values, abilities, and perspectives, and celebrating people’s differences. This means promoting an environment that welcomes and values diverse backgrounds, thinking, skills and experience.

Inclusion

Inclusion is providing a space where everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources, and where everyone feels valued and accepted. Everyone should be able to contribute and have a voice. This may mean making reasonable adjustments to facilitate participation.

EDI Commitments

In addition to complying with all our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, the University has identified six high-level commitments which will enable us to achieve our vision:

1. We commit to embedding EDI in the design and delivery of all our core activities: in our educational offer, both in terms of our learning and teaching practice and our curriculum; in our research, both in how we support research but also in carrying out our research; in our public and community engagement and our wider Knowledge Exchange.
2. We commit to assuring that our strategies, policies and practices are inclusive to students and staff from all backgrounds.
3. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community and visitors to the University are treated with respect and dignity and receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of their engagement with the University.
4. We commit to ensuring that all members of our community are aware of their individual and collective responsibilities and legal duties in relation to equality and diversity through providing up-to-date training, development and guidance.
5. We commit to providing a clear framework which enables any unwanted conduct, behaviour or practice to be reported and which assures our students and staff of a robust process of investigation and appropriate action.
6. We commit to demonstrating visibility and accountability for EDI among our senior leadership.

EDI Themes

We have further identified six themes around which we will focus our work:

1. **Shaping the culture:** promoting an inclusive University-wide culture in which students, staff and other members of the University from all backgrounds have a strong sense of belonging and can work creatively and innovatively to achieve their own and the organisation's ambitions.
2. **Student success:** attracting, supporting, developing and retaining students from across all communities, providing an inclusive curriculum and enabling all our students to achieve their future study and career aspirations.
3. **Supporting our staff:** attracting, developing and retaining a talented workforce with increased diversity at all levels of the organisation.
4. **Influencing the wider community:** recognising the University is an integral part of the City of Worcester and the region and seeking to influence policy, practice and behaviours across this wider area.
5. **Developing an inclusive approach to Research and Knowledge Exchange:** ensuring EDI is embedded in the design and delivery of our Research and Knowledge Exchange and in the systems we develop to support our researchers.
6. **Enhancing our infrastructure:** developing further the physical and digital accessibility of our campus to increase opportunities and improve experiences for all.

EDI Areas of Focus

The University is committed in its EDI work to addressing each of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and further recognises the many barriers to inclusion

that may arise from socio-economic and other factors. However, it will particularly focus on the four areas set out below during the lifetime of this Framework:

1. Race
2. Gender
3. Disability
4. LGBTQ+

These areas of focus have emerged from analysis of our data on, for example, student progression and staff recruitment, from priorities identified by our staff and students and from wider national debates and initiatives. However, we will keep these under review over the lifetime of the Framework and add to or adjust the areas as appropriate.

Governance of EDI

The overarching governance of EDI falls to the University’s [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee \(EDIC\)](#).

Its relationship with other committees and the wider University is set out in Table 1 below. EDIC reports directly to the University Executive Board and to the Board of Governors (via its People and Culture sub-Committee).

EDIC will oversee the EDI Delivery Plan with specific members taking responsibility for the themes. It will work closely with existing sub-Committees of our Academic Board in this delivery, in particular, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC), Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), and with University Working Groups, whose area of focus closely aligns with one or more of our EDI themes. It will also work with existing staff/student networks and communities to ensure that the wider University is fully engaged in the delivery of this Framework.

EDIC will further establish working groups with appropriate cross-University membership to deliver specific objectives.

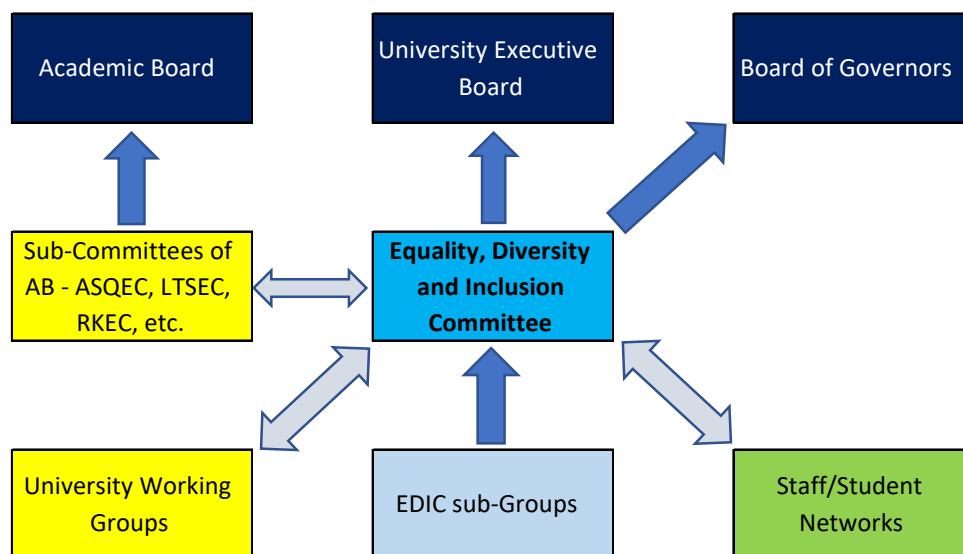


Table 1: Relationships between Committees and Groups

Associated Policies

Alongside this Framework, there are number of associated policies and procedures that underpin our EDI work. These include:

- [EDI Policy Statement](#)
- [Staff Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Leave](#)
- [Student Maternity](#)
- [Flexible Employment Arrangements](#)
- [Staff Resolution Procedure](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Whistleblowing Procedure](#)

External Frameworks

Outside the University, there are a number of external accreditations for advancing EDI. Whilst we ensure our EDI commitments are the most appropriate for our University and deliver these with the confidence that these will stand external scrutiny, we aim to engage with appropriate external accreditations where we believe they support our efforts to deliver our own EDI Framework.

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Owner	University Secretary, Chair of EDI Committee
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