Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of EDSC meeting held on 29 November 2013
Principal’s Meeting Room, Gilbert Scott Building at 10:00am

Present: Principal Anton Muscatelli (Convener), Mrs Christine Barr, Prof. Frank Coton, Miss Louise Graham, Ms Elizabeth Gray (vice Miss Rachel Sandison), Prof. Neal Juster, Mrs Christine Lowther, Miss Jess McGrellis, Mrs Margaret-Ann McParland, Mr David Newall, Mrs Helen Speirs, Dr Helen Stoddart

Apologies: Prof Anne Anderson, Prof. John Briggs, Prof. Steve Beaumont, Miss Rachel Sandison

Attending: Mrs Ruth Cole, Mrs Janell Kelly (clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed members to the meeting, noting the apologies received and acknowledged Ms Elizabeth Gray was in attendance for Miss Rachel Sandison. The Convener welcomed Mrs Christine Barr in her new role as Director of Human Resources (HR) and Dr Helen Stoddart as the new Learning and Teaching Representative to the meeting.

The Convener also welcomed Mrs Ruth Cole, Senior Academic Policy Manager from the Senate Office who would be presenting Paper 4, relating to Item 4 on the agenda.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – EDSC/20130521/Minutes1.1

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3 Matters arising from meeting held on 21 May 2013 – Paper 1

The Convener noted action points from the previous meeting were still ongoing, had been completed or were on this meeting’s agenda for a further update or discussion. He invited H Speirs to provide further context to some of the items shown as requiring an update at this meeting.

Action Point 1 – Statistics for BME applicants applying to the University but not gaining a place

E Gray reported statistics relating to BME students applying to the University but not gaining a place had been the subject of a recent Freedom of Information
request so the figures were available but no comparison had yet been made against the UCAS information and she was unclear why this would be required.

H Speirs referred E Gray to the minutes of the previous EDSC meeting where concerns had been raised by RIO about the accuracy of the figures as the percentage of students who declared their ethnicity was less than 1% of the total applicants. It had been agreed work would be undertaken to check the accuracy of the data held against the information migrated from UCAS.

F Coton stated there was also a need to view the statistics for individual subjects alongside the type of admissions process used:

- Entry Tariff only
- Admissions through UKCAT
- Entry Tariff and interview processes

M A McParland stated it would be also useful to look at the figures for students not gaining places in subjects with traditionally low female and ethnic minority participation levels.

The Convener asked E Gray to ensure this investigation was carried out and to report back to EDSC on this by circulating the findings prior to the next EDSC, in order to allow members to consider the findings.

**ACTION: RIO/E Gray**

**Action Point 5 & 6 – CARA and Refugees and Asylum Seekers Champion**

The Convener advised members the role of Refugee Champion had been discussed by the Senior Management Group (SMG). It was noted the work undertaken by the current Equality Champion roles are not spread equally due to the nature of the different areas and as issues relating to refugees would be raised on an infrequent basis and would normally affect students rather than staff, it was agreed the Clerk of Senate would take on this new role.

**3.1 - International Partnerships and Equality Issues – Paper 2**

H Speirs reminded members this action originated from a paper presented to EDSC by Mhairi Taylor in February 2013. The follow up action against EDU had been to investigate what type of information and databases were held and what checks are carried out to ensure the University are making staff and students fully aware of any equality issues that may arise and thus ensuring the University meets its duty of care.

H Speirs presented Paper 2 which detailed the responses from both Senate Office and RIO following her investigations.

She drew members’ attention to the Summary section of the paper which detailed work already carried out with the HR Internationalisation Working Group. Human Resources already provides some useful information for staff as part of their
Internationalisation pages and noted further links are to be added to compliment these existing resources.

She noted however there does not appear to be any systematic provision of equality and diversity-related information to staff or students who are going abroad.

In answering a question about what information is made available to students going abroad at the moment, H Speirs advised students are provided with links to overviews of countries and partner institutions but none of this information relates to what might be encountered from a cultural stand point on gender, religion or sexual orientation which are the main areas of concern.

H Speirs noted an opportunity does exist to work with the Study Abroad and Exchange teams within RIO to add additional information to their existing ‘Where can I go’ pages and she would be looking into this.

ACTION: EDU

D Newall advised this matter has arisen following a question raised at the Sexual Orientation Equality Group. He stated there was a need to ensure staff and students are signposted to the information effectively.

The Convener endorsed this, stating people needed to be directed to relevant resources rather than relying on them finding them themselves.

J McGrellis emphasised the need to ensure information about the existing resources was filtered down to the local levels in Schools.

E Gray suggested Student Mobility Officers within each School would be the most effective way of doing this.

The Convener thanked H Speirs for the paper.

3.2 - Equality and Diversity Training Statistics – Paper 3

The Convener noted this item related to Action Point 7 and advised members SMG had recently discussed this issue and had agreed more work needed to be done in order to meet the agreed 90+% completion rate.

He noted the Equality and Diversity training was, in effect, compulsory for new staff as it formed part of the induction checklist. Existing staff are required to have completed the training if they are involved with appointing and promotion panels, and some staff development programmes have the courses as prerequisites for attending them.

He referred members to Paper 3 which detailed the numbers of staff who have completed both the Essentials and Managing Diversity courses and asked members if they were happy with these and if not, to suggest further ways to improve these.
H Speirs drew members’ attention to the footnote on Paper 3’s coversheet which highlights the statistics shown are based on the total numbers of people who have completed the training. The limitation of Moodle means these figures may include staff that no longer work at the University and as a result may not accurately reflect the percentages of current staff. A true reflection will not be gained until CoreHR is fully implemented, with training records linked to staff HR records. Once CoreHR is fully implemented the overall completion rate for current staff may drop.

D Newall stated he wished to see a real improvement in completion rates and whilst he had previously asked Heads of Services within University Services to ensure their staff were completing it, there was a need have another sustained push. He also suggested every manager should be encouraged to raise this with their staff through the P&DR process.

C Lowther agreed it was the right time to revisit this with staff but noted the figures showed specific areas where there was a lack of engagement. She stated any push to encourage completion had to be made across the University community.

E Gray suggested with the REF 2014 process nearly completed, it was a good opportunity for particular encouragement in areas with low completion rates.

C Barr suggested staff were involved in any committee work, should also be completing the training.

H Speirs highlighted where the encouragement for the training had been led by a Head of Service/School/RI at a local level, completion rates were the highest. She stated these areas had used existing projects, such as Athena SWAN, to highlight the need for the training and had been actively following up with staff who had not completed it.

She advised she had also recently attended a meeting of the Chief Advisers of Studies Sub-committee where she had highlighted the need for the training and asked them to cascade this to all their Advisers of Studies.

M A McParland suggested completion of the training become one of the essential criteria for anyone seeking promotion.

The Convener welcomed all the comments and suggestions.

He stated if completion rates had not seen a significant improvement by the next EDSC meeting, EDSC would need to look at making the training compulsory for all staff and agreed having the completion as part of the P&DR process could prove to be the way forward.

The Convener asked all members to take this forward with their own Services/Schools/RI and asked EDU to provide an updated report at the next meeting,

**ACTION: All/EDU**
4 Update to Dignity at Work and Study Policy – Paper 4

R Cole introduced Paper 4, which outlined the draft amendments to the Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

She clarified the term ‘complaint’ in the University’s new Complaints Procedure is different from meaning in this and other related policies across the University. She also noted the new Complaints Procedure is more focused on the services provided by the University than on the conduct of its staff and students.

As such, the Dignity at Work and Study Policy now requires amendment in order to ensure consistency across policies and to meet our regulatory requirements.

R Cole highlighted the need to maintain the current informal procedures and drew members’ attention to Section 4 where the wording had been altered from ‘complaint’ to ‘issue’ to remove confusion with the new Complaints Procedure.

R Cole further highlighted Section 5.2, which had substantial amendments to the formal procedures for students. She noted allegations against students would now normally be dealt with firstly through the student’s Chief Adviser, followed by the Code of Unacceptable Behaviour and then where appropriate, under the Code of Student Conduct.

R Cole stated the amended policy will be taken forward for full approval via the Trade Unions, HR Committee, Student Support and Development Committee and then to Senate.

The Convener thanked R Cole for her report and asked members to comment on the proposed amendments.

M A McParland stated Section 5.2 appears to read that an allegation made by a student of bullying and harassment against an employee would be dealt with through the Staff Disciplinary Procedures in the first instance.

R Cole advised the policy states informal procedures should be followed in the first instance, then formal procedures which would allow for an allegation to be raised via the new Complaints Procedures initially and then only if the complaint was upheld, would it be referred on through Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

C Barr noted M A McParland could discuss this further as part of the consultation with the other Trade Unions.

As no other comments were raised, the Convener asked R Cole to proceed with the process for gaining full approval for the amendments and thanked her for her attendance.

**ACTION: R Cole**
5 Annual EDSC Remit and Membership Review – Paper 5

The Convener noted Paper 5 detailed the current Terms of Reference for the EDSC. He noted the membership section had already been updated to take into account recent changes to EDU staffing, Equality Champions, SRC Sabbatical Officers and Heads of Service and other representative roles.

The Convener noted EDU had highlighted one item for discussion within the Remit section and within the Membership section the role of Internationalisation Representative was currently vacant.

He asked members to review the Terms of Reference to ensure suitability.

Members agreed the following amendment to the Remit:
- Bullet point 6 to be reworded – to now read ‘To monitor the admissions and progress of students and career progress of staff in relation to protected characteristics.’

N Juster asked members to consider if there was a need for a separate Internationalisation Representative role when the Head of Recruitment and International Office already held a seat on the committee.

The Convener acknowledged the Internationalisation Representative had previously been undertaken by Prof Andrea Nolan in her role as Vice Principal for Internationalisation and Recruitment and International Office (RIO) had previously reported to her. However this reporting line had recently been amended. RIO now report direct to the Secretary of Court. He noted the Vice Principal Internationalisation position was currently vacant but the University was in the process of filling this.

Members agreed the role of Internationalisation Representative should be removed and asked for the Vice Principal for Internationalisation to be added to the list of Corresponding Members once the new post holder had been agreed.

The Convener also asked members to consider the structure of the EDSC.

D Newall stated the committee does have an important role within the University and felt the current structure was right. Members agreed.

The Convener asked for the Terms of Reference to be updated accordingly.

ACTION: EDU

6 Degree Attainment and Ethnicity - Statistical Report 2010-11 to 2012-12 - Paper 6

H Speirs reminded members the Equality and Diversity Strategy Action Plan and the University’s Equality Outcomes have agreed actions to review statistical
evidence and to identify if there is an attainment gap between students of different ethnicities. She advised members Paper 6 represented the first part of this investigative work.

She highlighted the term ‘Degree Attainment Gap’ relates to UK domiciled students but noted statistics had been provided for both UK domiciled and EU/International students for comparison purposes.

H Speirs stated from the information provided by Business Planning and Intelligence for the last three academic years (2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13) there does appear to be an attainment gap between students from different ethnicities.

She noted the initial findings had already been discussed with the Clerk of Senate, Prof Briggs and the Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching, Prof Coton. From these discussions the two options for consideration by EDSC are:

• To commission further specific research, or
• To convene a working group to look at this issue

H Speirs asked members, with these two options in mind to consider:

• the breadth of work which has already been carried out and is still currently ongoing within the HE sector
• the complexity and expertise required for the further investigative work suggested

F Coton advised he had attended a recent meeting with Glasgow International College (GIC) where degree attainment levels were discussed. He reported whilst the overall pass rate is better for students who had progressed into Undergraduate courses through GIC, there remained a high level of lower classification degrees being attained. Work is already being done within GIC to try to address this.

Members agreed the current recommended holistic approach to possible ‘interventions’ across induction, teaching, and student support practices was the correct way forward and agreed the need for all student support services to monitor ethnicity in order to understand the range of students accessing them.

The Convener noted the report did not provide information on those degree programmes where Unclassified Degrees, e.g. Clinical Medicine, are awarded.

F Coton suggested a working group would not be a suitable way forward for the further investigative work, as detailed in the paper, due to the level of work involved.

The Convener welcomed the report and asked EDU to undertake further work with Planning and Business Intelligence to firstly request information relating to Unclassified Degree Programmes, then to work with F Coton to look at the subject specific issues and to report back at a future meeting.

ACTION: EDU/P&BI/F Coton
Draft Single Equality and Diversity Policy – Paper 7

H Speirs advised members, as a result of the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 the University’s current range of equality based policies required revising and updating. This presented the opportunity to incorporate all the existing equality policies and to provide new published policy for other protected characteristics (most notably Gender Reassignment and Sex) in one single, overarching policy. This work was agreed as part of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2011-2015 Action Plan. Paper 7 details the current draft policy.

H Speirs noted this current draft had been laid out in accordance with guidance from and informed by comments from Mhairi Taylor (Equality and Diversity Officer, currently on maternity leave), as well as comments and feedback from Christine Barr, Director of HR and by Prof Briggs, Clerk of Senate.

She asked members to:
- approve the replacement of the existing policies with a new single Equality and Diversity Policy, and
- consider the new structure and format of the draft policy, and
- comment on sections 1 – 10 of the draft policy.

Members welcomed and approved the introduction of a single policy to cover all the protected characteristics.

J McGrellis expressed her view that the new policy was well structured and noted the following comments on behalf of the Students Representative Council (SRC).

- Mention of the Student Carers Policy should be incorporated within the policy or appendices.
- Information should be made available within the policy or appendices on procedures for reporting Hate Crimes.

ACTION: EDU

M A McParland expressed surprise Appendix G covering ‘Race’ was so short and noted previous discussions had taken place as EDSC regarding the use of the term ‘Race’.

H Speirs advised the Equality Act 2010 legislation used the term ‘Race’ and the policy had been written in accordance with this. She agreed to add a footnote to highlight the University understands the term ‘Race’ is a social construct.

ACTION: EDU

She also acknowledged Appendix G was short but noted, unlike some other protected characteristics, there is no current Equality Group or Staff Network in operation to allow for inclusion within the appendix. She welcomed members’ thoughts on what other information could be included.
The Convener noted H Speirs had requested each Equality Champion review the relevant appendix/ces and asked all Equality Champions to do so, seeking views from their respective equality groups, where applicable, and to provide feedback direct to H Speirs.

**ACTION: Equality Champions**

The Convener also asked all other members to provide feedback direct to H Speirs.

**ACTION: All**

H Speirs noted the draft policy had already been circulated to Human Resources Managers and Trade Union Representatives for comment and would be reviewed by the Student Support and Development Committee before being taken for final approval via Court and Senate Committees.

C Barr noted the draft policy would also be reviewed at an upcoming Policy Review Group meeting.

The Convener asked H Speirs to update the current draft in accordance with any feedback received and to circulate an updated version to EDSC for further comment, prior to the draft policy going forward for approval at HR Committee.

**ACTION: EDU**

8 Equality and Diversity Champions – Current Developments

8.1 – Disability Equality Group (DEG)

F Coton updated members on a number of issues recently discussed by DEG.

These included:
- Support for disabled students attending Freshers’ Week which the SRC are leading on. Guidance is to be agreed with the Disability Service and taken to the Cross Campus Freshers’ Week Committee.
- An updated guide for academic staff supporting disabled students is being finalised with the support of the Learning and Teaching Centre.
- The need to update the campus accessibility maps. Discussions are ongoing on the possibility of arranging for a student internship for this work but it was recognised any work undertaken would need to done in a way which was able to evolve and reflect any future campus developments.
- The use of Arial as the standard font for examination scripts which will assist the large number of dyslexic students. Amended guidance has recently been provided to Registry following initial feedback from subject areas where Arial is not suitable, such as those who use formulas in examination questions.
8.2 – Race Equality Update

H Speirs provided members with an update, on behalf of J Briggs, on the Stellar Leadership Development. She reminded members the Stellar programme had been designed to develop Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) academic and professional staff for leadership roles. The original programme had been developed to run over an academic year and the University had been willing to provide significant financial support to run and host the programme with candidates from Glasgow and across the other Scottish HEIs. Due to lack of interest from other the institutions, the year long programme was not progressed.

A shortened programme was then devised and suitable several candidates had been identified and contacted with the University. Again, however, other Scottish HEIs had not put forward any candidates. As a result, the decision has been taken not to progress with running any BAME specific leadership programme.

The Convener expressed his disappointment with this outcome.

H Speirs reported Staff Development Service had now been asked to look at alternative in-house development opportunities for the University staff who had been put forward for Stellar.

8.3 – Sexual Orientation Equality Group (SOEG)

D Newall updated members on the items SOEG had discussed. These included:

- Staff representatives on SOEG had welcomed the use of an external supplier for the next Staff Attitude Survey as this addressed their concerns over of anonymity of previous surveys.
- EDU had arranged for Scottish Transgender Alliance to deliver a training session on Transgender Awareness on 5th December. This will be attended by over 20 delegates and had representation from a number of student services, academic staff and SRC representatives. If the course is well received, there is an option to have further sessions.
- A number of student led initiatives have been planned to support World Aids Day on 1 December 2013. L Graham provided an overview on these:
  - Photo art exhibition by Edo Zollo with his portraits of people living with HIV, being held in the atrium of the Wolfson Medical Building.
  - The South Front of the main building being part of the Light Up Scotland campaign which will see the Tower being flood lit in red on Sunday, 1 December 2013.

D Newall noted discussions had also been held about flying the Rainbow flag again as part of LGBT History Month in February but advised members the main flag pole at the south front had been the subject of vandalism and is still non-operational.
He noted when the flag pole was in use it always captured people’s attention and with the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games being held this year, the use of the main flag pole would have been a great benefit.

The Convener thanked D Newall for his report.

8.4 – Religion and Belief Equality Group (R&BEG)

N Juster advised members the R&BEG had met in mid November 2013 for the first time since Oct 2012. He reported on the issues discussed at this meeting.

- Following recent media coverage of the issue, R&BEG members discussed if there was a need to strengthen the wording and/or add guidance, particularly in relation to identification purposes for security and examinations around the wearing of face veils. N Juster reported as a result of these discussions, he would be discussing identification procedures for examinations with Registry.

M A McParland stated most women who wear face veils would be happy to confirm their identity in the presence of another female and are aware this may be requested of them.

N Juster acknowledged this and confirmed this should easily be accommodated but the guidance being given to invigilators around such requests needed to be clarified.

C Lowther also noted there are issues relating to the fact students are now given the facility to upload their own photos for their student identification cards. There may also be a need for better checks to be put in place when students collect their cards.

N Juster also reported
- Discussions had taken place around the Principal’s end of year Christmas message and whether the Principal should be sending greetings for other major religious festivals.
- Members had discussed the possibility of the University purchasing or producing a Diversity Calendar which would capture the main religious and non religious events throughout the year and this may also help to address the issue of the Principal’s message.

The Convener stated it was his recollection previous Principal’s end of year messages had been worded around the use of ‘season’s greetings’ rather than being a specifically Christmas message.

E Gray advised RIO had issued a Thanksgiving message via their Facebook page and noted many other types of communications could be used to convey such goodwill messages.
N Juster confirmed he would report to EDSC on his discussions with Registry on the examination procedures and guidance for invigilators and on any further developments for a Diversity Calendar at the next meeting.

**ACTION: N Juster**

**8.5 – Athena SWAN/Gender Equality Charter mark Update and the University’s updated Athena SWAN Action Plan – Paper 8**

H Speirs presented Paper 8, the updated University level Athena SWAN Action Plan for information and comment.

No comments were received in relation to the updated plan.

H Speirs informed members, following the successful Athena SWAN university level Bronze award; the School of Geography and Earth Sciences, the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences and the Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine had today submitted their own Bronze departmental¹ applications.

She reported Susan McKeown, Athena SWAN Co-ordinator, had received expressions of interest from another six STEMM based Schools/RI to submit applications for Athena SWAN awards over the next two submissions in April 2014 and November 2014.

H Speirs advised members the College of Social Sciences and the School of Law are participating in the trial of the Equality Challenge Unit’s Gender Equality Charter Mark (GEM). She noted whilst GEM utilises the experience and methodology of Athena SWAN it is focused in the arts, humanities and social sciences and covers not just academic staff but also professional and support staff and men, women and gender identity.

The College of Social Sciences and the School of Law are working towards submitting to the trial award by 30 April 2014. The formal launch of the charter mark is expected to be around October 2014.

N Juster expressed his concern such charter marks may become more of a ‘tick box’ exercise rather than a way to drive and embed gender equality good practices. Also Athena SWAN awards were being used by funding bodies as a way to direct funding, particularly in England and Wales. This means third parties, such as the charter mark awarding bodies ECU and Athena SWAN, would have considerable powers over HEIs possible future research funding.

H Speirs also highlighted membership was free when the University became a member in August 2011, since then there has been a steady increase in associated costs. Athena SWAN recently announced a 100% increase in their annual fee to £2000 per institution and introduced fees of £250 for each departmental submission. These costs are due to come into force in April 2014.

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¹ Athena SWAN terminology
and with the projected six departmental submissions in 2014, the University faced costs for membership and applications of £3500, although this will be split over two financial years (2013-14 and 2014-15).

F Coton noted this was similar to the Buttle UK Quality Mark relating to Care Leavers where since joining, membership fees had increased by 1000%. He stated the Buttle UK Quality Mark had now become the de facto standard and as with all charter marks, once membership is gained, withdrawal from them would be a reputational risk.

The Convener agreed there was a need to pay attention to developments in this area and thanked H Speirs for the update.

9 Items for Information Only

9.1 – New HESA Student Equality Categories

H Speirs advised members, following the introduction by HESA of new equality related student record categories on Sexual Orientation, Religion and belief and Gender Identity, MyCampus had been amended to capture this information at registration for the first time in August 2013.

H Speirs informed members the initial data received from Business Planning and Intelligence show better than expected levels of disclosure.

She noted there was concern over the Gender Identity figures which may result from a lack of understanding of the question used. She confirmed the University is using the ECU recommended wording.

She confirmed this data will be reviewed and reported on as part of the next annual Student Equality Monitoring Report but noted it would require a number of year’s worth of data to be able to draw any conclusions.

10 Any Other Business

10.1 – Publication of EDSC minutes

H Speirs stated other main University committees publish approved minutes of meetings online and asked members if approved EDSC minutes should also be published; and if agreement was given for this, should these be published on both the EDU’s own website and via the Electronic Document and Record Management system (EDRMS).

The Convener and members agreed EDSC minutes should be published and confirmed the latest approved minutes for the meeting dated 21 May 2013 would be the first published. They also agreed the approved minutes should be published on both EDU’s website and via EDRMS.

**ACTION: EDU**
10.2 – REF 2014 University Equality and Diversity Committee (UEDC) statistics

F Coton provided members with statistical information relating to the number of cases reviewed by the REF 2014 University Equality and Diversity Committee (UEDC).

He reminded members UEDC were required to consider requests from staff members for a reduction in the standard number of outputs for inclusion in the University’s submission to REF 2014 based on their individual circumstances. This involved investigation of the cases, including discussions with the individuals and / or other relevant staff members, confirmation of the available evidence and, where deemed necessary, seeking medical evidence. He highlighted the UEDC considered all cases in an anonymised format.

UEDC reviewed 80 individual cases involving complex circumstances. 51 of these cases were granted a reduction, if required, to the standard four outputs. 26 cases were not granted a reduction; and three staff members withdrew their request for a reduction before any decision was finalised. One decision was appealed and following a review, UEDC confirmed their original decision.

F Coton noted of the 80 cases reviewed 36 were selected for submission to REF 2014, with 26 of those having been granted at least one reduction, if they required it.

The Convener asked how the University’s process for handling these cases compared to those of other institutions.

F Coton understood the University’s process had been more robust than many others.

The Convener noted a huge amount of work was involved with the REF 2014 submission, in particular the consideration of these complex circumstance cases. He thanked all of those involved in with this difficult and sensitive task.

As there was no further business, the Convener closed the meeting.

11 Date of Next Meeting

11 February 2014, 10am – Melville Room