



## Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee

Minutes of Meeting held on 25 Nov 2025 at 9:00 – 11:00

- Present:** Prof Andy Schofield (Convener), Dr David Duncan, Dr Katie Farrell, Mrs Christine Barr, Mr Gregor Caldwell, Prof Sara Carter, Prof Moira Fischbacher-Smith, Ms Uzma Khan, Mrs Emma Gilmartin, Dr Neil Bowering, Mr Duncan Calvert, Mr Frank Chen, Prof Lubna Nasir, Prof Margaret Lucas
- Apologies:** Prof Iain McInnes, Ms Rachel Sandison, Prof Jo Gill
- Attending:** Mr Alex Kabaj (Clerk), Mrs Tracy Bryant-Shaw

### Welcome and Apologies

The Convener welcomed attendees and noted the apologies received.

#### 1. Minutes of the previous meeting – EDSC/20250611/Minutes 1.0

The minutes were approved with no changes.

#### 2. Matters arising – Paper 1

K Farrell provided relevant information and updates on the following items:

##### 24/25 – Action 16 – Inclusive Community – Online Reporting Update

K Farrell provided an update on reports relating to forms of bullying and harassment made to the Online Reporting Tools. EDSC noted that numbers of reports have steadily increased since the introduction of the reporting tool, assisted by campaigns such as 'Together Against Racism' and 'Together Against GBV'. Gender was, historically, the most frequently cited factor; however, in recent years, reports relating to Ethnicity and Religion and Belief have increased. K Farrell advised that reports are often referred to Respect Advisers, who support informal resolution or may be passed to People and Organisational Development (POD) Business Partners for either formal, or informal, resolution.

D Duncan enquired about the extent to which colleagues are aware of the reporting tool and the support available. In response, K Farrell noted that all campaign webpages clearly signpost the reporting tool and highlighted ongoing work to promote the Respect Adviser Network and clarify what happens to reports once submitted, including who has access to them in order to continually improve trust in the reporting process.

U Khan questioned whether Equality Champions are directly involved in responses to online reports, having had experience of colleagues and students directly reaching out about their experiences.

K Farrell explained that Champions act primarily as points of contact in the manner described and are encouraged to signpost individuals to EDU or POD for additional support.

#### 3. EDSC Terms of Reference and Membership Review – Paper 1

Members approved the Remit and Membership, outlined in the Terms of Reference, Paper 1.

#### 4. **Annual Staff Equality Monitoring Report 2024-2025 – Paper 2**

K Farrell provided an update on the Annual Staff Equality Monitoring Report ('the Report') for 2024–2025, reminding members that the majority of the data presented represents a snapshot as at 31 July 2025. She noted the Report provides benchmarks for Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), forms part of our Public Sector Equality Duties, and details progress on strategic KPIs. She further highlighted that while the Report presents data as percentages rather than raw numbers, the underlying figures are available to EDSC members, if required.

N Bowering queried whether 'Unknown' entries are common within the reported data. K Farrell confirmed that such entries do occur and impact HESA reporting patterns. She advised that reference is given to staff selecting 'Prefer Not to Say' rather than leaving fields blank and, thus, recorded as 'Unknown'.

D Duncan highlighted disability data, noting that if 9% of staff have disclosed a disability but only 2% of the staff population have disclosed a mental health condition, then based on approximately 11,000 staff the picture may not be representative.

C Barr noted that the data reflects only those who choose to disclose a disability in full; some staff may disclose a disability without specifying that it falls within the category of mental health condition. K Farrell agreed and confirmed that many individuals disclose having a disability but remain unwilling to provide specific details. C Barr further clarified that the data refers exclusively to University of Glasgow employees and not members of the public.

M Lucas queried how different types of cases such as investigations, disciplinary cases, and grievances are captured and distinguished.

K Farrell confirmed that additional clarification can be provided within the definitions section.

A Schofield (Convener) and members approved the report for publication, subject to minor amendments.

**ACTION: EDU**

#### 5. **Dignity at Work and Study Policy Review – Paper 3**

K Farrell explained that the Dignity at Work and Study Policy ('the Policy') is due for review. She outlined a proposed scope for that review which would ensure continued compliance with legislative developments, sector expectations, and best practice in higher education. As part of this item, EDSC members were asked, in particular, to consider a proposal to create a standalone policy, separate to the existing provision in the Dignity at Work and Study Policy covering sexual harassment and misconduct. K Farrell explained that this had been informed by consultation with the Gender Equality Group, including with members of the GEG with expertise in GBV and equality law. S Carter reiterated the discussion at GEG and high level of expertise amongst those who made this recommendation.

EDSC members endorsed the proposed scope of the review and supported the creation of a standalone policy on sexual harassment and misconduct.

M Fischbacher-Smith suggested that the Learning and Teaching Committee could be added to the list of stakeholders to be consulted, noting that input from this Committee, alongside the PGR community, could help elucidate student–staff dynamics relevant to the proposed policy. Additionally, she highlighted a group of colleagues working on the teaching of difficult subjects who would have useful insights into aspects of the policy review.

**ACTION: EDU**

## 6. Staff Related Items

### 6.1 Supreme Court Ruling in FWS Ltd. v The Scottish Ministers: Update – Presentation

K Farrell provided an update on developments relating to the Supreme Court ruling following submission of the University's institutional response to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Consultation on the amended Code of Practice relating to service provision. Significant concern has been expressed by staff and students regarding the implications of the ruling, and the University has sought to retain focus on human impact while recognising the diverse range of perspectives involved.

K Farrell advised that the EHRC has not yet updated the Employment Code of Practice, although revisions may be issued in due course. K Farrell explained that the EHRC has submitted a revised Code of Practice to the UK Government, which is required to be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

The LGBT+ Equality Group has been updated on developments, and guidance reflecting best practice will be prepared as this remains an evolving matter.

T Bryant-Shaw observed that discussions at College-level (CoSS) have highlighted the profound impact of the case on the social and mental wellbeing of staff. A query was raised regarding whether adequate support mechanisms are in place for staff affected by the ruling and its implications.

K Farrell emphasised that, although public discourse has often focused on toilet provision, the implications of the ruling extend beyond this issue, and the University is working to develop appropriate solutions.

## 7. Student Related Items – SRC – D Calvert; F Chen

D Calvert highlighted SRC activities for commemoration of the UN 16 Days of Action Against GBV, noting that the Fight for the Night march against GBV will take place on 27 November 2025, with a Vigil for victim-survivors of GBV to be held at the University Chapel on 10 December 2025. D Calvert expressed support for the University joining the Emily Test Network and noted the SRC's interest in the next steps associated with Network membership. In recognition of Disability History Month, the SRC hosted a successful launch event, with additional events planned to mark the Month, including a screening of the film I Swear, and an exhibition to be held in the James McCune Smith Building.

## 8. Equality Champions Updates

### 8.1 Age

G Caldow acknowledged that he is new to this Champion role and has held initial conversations with the SRC and the Mature Students Association. Several of the issues that they highlighted are being progressed and a fuller update on these emerging areas of activity will be shared at the next meeting.

### 8.2 Disability

C Barr reported ongoing work within the Disability Equality Group and highlighted the value of the Estates Accessibility Working Subgroup. Credit was given to P Haggarty and the team for maintaining support provision for a significant number of students with additional accessibility needs and associated arrangements. D Harty, the Safety and Resilience Team,

and other colleagues have been reviewing the Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedure (PEEP) process. Developments have been incorporated into the Ivanti system. Although it is too early to evaluate overall success, assurance has been provided through collaboration with Disability Coordinators and through enhancements to Admissions systems and the wider student journey that student-focused improvements remain a priority. The access and inclusive learning policy continues to offer a clear and consistent pathway for students from enrolment to graduation.

At the most recent Disability Equality Group meeting, K Farrell delivered a detailed update on the Disability Action Plan. It was also noted that the University is currently marking Disability History Month with a programme of activities, film screenings, and events, including sessions on women's health, GramNET seminars, and additional related events.

### 8.3 Gender

S Carter noted the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, as per D Calvert's earlier update. She advised that an event celebrating 20 years of Athena SWAN was held, reflecting on the Charter's impact at the University, to date. It was also noted that two areas within MVLS are preparing submissions for Athena SWAN Charter renewals and the School of Critical Studies recently received its Athena SWAN Bronze Award renewal.

#### 8.3.1 Emily Test Network

S Carter provided an overview of proposed developments concerning potential engagement with the Emily Test Charter. Focus has been placed on the recommendations of the Ross KC report, with financial investment committed to addressing its 16 recommendations. There remains a lack of consensus on whether joining the Charter is the preferred course of action, as the Charter continues to evolve and remains partially under development, with potentially substantial financial and resource implications. Many staff attend the annual Emily Test Conference, and its influence is recognised as significant for both students and staff. An alternative option under consideration is joining the Emily Test Network, which could provide access to resources, best practice guidance, specialist webinars, and discounted conference attendance. This may serve as an interim step prior to full Charter membership once greater clarity is available regarding the commitments required.

A Schofield (Convener) noted the University's independence as an institution and emphasised that the purpose of engaging with the Emily Test is to access expert advice in tackling gender-based violence (GBV). Preference was reiterated for joining the Network now, with the potential to pursue Charter membership in future.

D Calvert confirmed that the SRC fully supports joining both the Network and, ultimately, the Charter, noting strong student interest and the perceived importance of accountability commitments.

C Barr emphasised the importance of understanding the commitments and expectations associated with the Network and ensuring that the University can demonstrate and sustain best practice.

K Farrell explained that the Network functions primarily as a best practice and knowledge-sharing model, including specialist webinars.

A Schofield (Convener) noted the importance of progressing this work promptly, observing that engagement with the Network may support ongoing activity. A plan and a proposed budget for Network membership were requested.

**ACTION: EDU**

#### 8.4 Mental Health

D Duncan advised that the Mental Health Group has been meeting once every four months, with the most recent meeting held on 8 October 2025. Differences exist between out-of-hours support available to students and staff. Approximately 600 mental health first aiders operate across the institution, with 250 registered for referrals. These first aiders provide initial support for staff or students experiencing low mood or requiring referral to more formal medical or therapeutic treatment. Work on compassionate communication and mental health awareness is ongoing, including initiatives under Project Compass and support provided by central teams, which is available to students daily.

N Bowering noted a marked increase in student mental health disclosures this term, with approximately 100 cases per week.

D Duncan queried whether a similar increase has been observed in disclosures directed to the SRC, noting that some students may prefer to contact the SRC due to mistrust of the University.

N Bowering confirmed that while the University is managing the increased disclosures effectively, some students continue to approach the SRC for support rather than the University, highlighting the importance of multiple accessible reporting and support channels.

#### 8.5 LGBT+

M Fischbacher-Smith provided an update on work ongoing within the LGBT+ Equality Group. It was noted that there is currently no representation from the Technician and Specialist job family.

Training covering equality legislation and allyship awareness is available. The Group is collating additional resources in multiple formats, including reading lists and podcasts, with contributions invited from staff and student representatives.

Regarding EHRC Guidance, the Group intends to consult with relevant communities on the implications of the ruling and has begun mapping existing provision, although guidance remains unclear. Stonewall membership is due for renewal; the Group is evaluating next steps, considering alternative options, and consulting with the Staff LGBT Network. A call for new co-chairs of the Staff Network has been issued.

The Rainbow Office Hours initiative, led by colleagues across Colleges of MVLS and Social Sciences has been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award.

#### 8.6 Race

U Khan reported ongoing work arising from the URTUC report, with excellent activities that have been led by the Global Majority Network. L Nasir, Co-Chair of the Global Majority Network, noted that the Network has experienced significant growth, with broad staff contributions. There is no hierarchy of cultural experiences within the Network. While recent far-right riots caused concern, these events have also created opportunities for staff to come together and provide mutual support.

F Chen added that students from diverse backgrounds have joined ongoing campaigns on Race Equality, increasing visibility and enhancing the support available through the SRC. A Schofield (Convener) queried whether incident reports are received when racial incidents occur and what support is provided.

U Khan advised that racial incidents are often reported via social media. Support has been provided in some instances; however, the majority of incidents have occurred off-campus, for example in Glasgow City Centre, affecting students outside University premises.

8.7 Religion and Belief – Appendix A

I McInnes was unable to attend EDSC and submitted a written update.

8.8 Sanctuary – Appendix B

R Sandison was unable to attend EDSC and submitted a written update.

**ACTION: EDU**

9. **Any Other Business**

N/A

**Dates of Next Meetings: 4 June 2026 – 10:00 – 12:00**

DRAFT

## Appendix A

### Religion and Belief Champion Update: November 2025

It is pleasing to report of the energy and enthusiasm whereby our chaplain, Rev Scott Blyth and his excellent team deliver their roles across the campus for the benefit of so many elements of our community. Societal events are currently challenging for many of our students and staff. Moreover, on the global scale, this has been a challenging time for a variety of our faith communities given events, especially in the Middle East. The work of our chaplaincy has never been more important. I am grateful to Scott for providing a summary of current activities below for your perusal. In short format:

- The Chaplaincy continues to seek ways to build effective working relationships with sister student support agencies of the University as well as seeking to assist the Student Faith Societies in their work.
- The Chaplaincy Service continues to see students and staff for pastoral support on a regular basis throughout the year. Roz and Scott deal with requests via email and through other staff/student interactions in the course of our work.
- The Chaplaincy Service through working with Prof. Duncan's Office, were able to assist in providing a more regular space for the Jewish Society to meet for their regular Bagel Lunches and assisted in guiding them to approach the Principal's Lodging to host a Memorial Event on October 7, 2025.
- In the late third term/early summer period the Chaplaincy was involved in a number of student deaths and staff deaths that occurred within the University. The Chaplaincy has offered ongoing pastoral care to the schools involved and has prepared several Memorial Services as well as taking part in some Academic Posthumous Awards Ceremonies. This included the events around the death of the former Chancellor, Prof Sir Ken Calman.
- The Chaplaincy Service again took part and co-ordinated the Chaplains for the Graduation Ceremonies within the Summer.
- In particular, Chaplaincy has been working with UNESCO/REILA Team in preparing for the Dedication of the Peace Bench and Peace Pole that took place on Monday 22 September 2025. This event involved many Academic Staff, both Principals, Security Staff and other groups of staff as well as the University Nursery Community. The bench was dedicated by a joint Interfaith Action of Blessing involving several of the Honorary Chaplains of the University.
- The Assistant Chaplain, Rev Roz Lawson, on meeting with some women from different faith communities in the close of last Academic Year, has formed a working relationship with some of the International Student Support Team to create a new place of community for women called 'Sisters Together'.
- A Welcome Event was hosted by the Chaplaincy on the Monday afternoon of Fresher's Week, and the Chaplain again spoke with the Principal at the SRC Welcome Event early in Fresher's Week.
- The Chaplaincy Team reached out to Elected Officers within the SRC/GUU/GUSA/QM Union to welcome them to their roles and to encourage help and assistance in the year should it be needed.
- During the late summer and early new term, The Chaplaincy Team has been involved in events within the New Memorial Garden of the University. These have included dedicating a rosebush in memory of a former

staff member, scattering the ashes of two former graduates of the University and the dedication of a plaque for a former staff member in the CBRE Team.

- Recently, the Chaplaincy joined in assisting the Repatriation of Remains Team within the Hunterian Museum to return the remains of eight people to their tribal community from Northern South Africa. This ceremony involved the Secretary of the University as well as including the Minister of Culture from South Africa and The South African Ambassador to the United Kingdom.
- The Chaplaincy Service created a new Exploring Prayer as a Spiritual Practice workshop and continues to offer ecumenical worship on Tuesday evenings at 6:10 pm within the Memorial Chapel. Equally, after a small review Morning Prayers continue with the traditional service happening Tues/Wed Mornings at 8:45 and a more open Service Happening on Thurs mornings.
- The Chaplaincy Team have welcomed a new Honorary Chaplain from the Religious Society of Friends and Quaker Meetings are beginning to occur between the Peace Bench and the Memorial Chapel.
- The Assistant Chaplain and Chaplain have attended The Jewish Society Interfaith Dinner, the Interfaith Glasgow Reception in the City Chambers and the recent Jewish Welcoming Event in the Hunterian Museum. They also are seeking to attend the UK Interfaith University Chaplaincy Conference in early January 2026.

## Appendix B

### Sanctuary Champion Update: November 2025

The following is an update to the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee (EDSC) from the University's Sanctuary Champion on key activities and progress made since the last update was delivered in June 2025.

#### 1. University of Sanctuary Award – Reappraisal

In October 2025, the paperwork required for the renewal of the University of Sanctuary Award was submitted by the University of Glasgow, under the oversight of the University's Sanctuary Working Group. This accreditation, which is reviewed every three years, was originally awarded in November 2022. It has been informally confirmed that the reappraisal has been successful and that the University has maintained its status as a University of Sanctuary.

As part of this process, a new three-year action plan has been submitted. The initial action plan concentrated on widening access and reviewing the processes that enable forced migrants to enter higher education. The new plan places greater emphasis on supporting forced migrant students during their time at the University and enhancing their overall student experience, ensuring that they are welcomed, included, and able to thrive academically and socially. A fuller update on the action plan will be delivered at a future meeting of EDSC.

#### 2. Gaza Evacuations and Support for Displaced and Conflict-Affected Applicants

In line with its commitment as a University of Sanctuary, the University of Glasgow significantly expanded support for students affected by conflict and displacement for September 2025 entry. Key actions included:

- Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF):

A £1 million fund was established in August 2025 to provide comprehensive support packages for displaced and conflict-affected applicants, particularly those impacted by the Gaza crisis. This included:

- Full tuition fee waivers
- Accommodation and monthly stipends
- Visa, health surcharge, and travel costs

The HRF supported 27 students (with three withdrawals), primarily from Gaza and Palestine, and additional fee waivers were provided for students unable to cover tuition costs.

- Admissions Adjustments:

The University implemented flexible admissions processes, including:

- Acceptance of alternative school qualifications
- Waivers for deposits
- Continued flexibility on English language requirements, with funded test vouchers offered

- Evacuation and Arrival Support:

Working with UK and Scottish Governments, the University facilitated the evacuation of 18 scholars from Gaza,

with one more expected. Comprehensive arrival support included:

- Airport accompaniment
- Accommodation setup and welcome packs
- GP registration and SAS appointments
- Provision of laptops

The University now hosts the largest number of students from Gaza among UK institutions.

These measures reflect the University's values of inclusivity and ensuring that displaced students could access higher education despite unprecedented challenges.

### **3. Funding & Scholarship Provision**

#### **3.1. Sanctuary and DACA Scholarships**

Following the support introduced for DACA applicants for the 2025–26 academic year noted under point 2 and following an update to SMG, the Scholarships Team is currently reviewing proposals for Sanctuary and DACA applicants for 2026–27 entry. This review aims to ensure that funding opportunities remain inclusive and responsive to the needs of these student groups. It is anticipated that the full scholarship offering for the upcoming cycle will be finalised and published in December 2025, providing clarity and assurance for prospective applicants.

#### **3.2. Council for at Risk Academics (Cara)**

Confirmed extension of financial support for Cara. The University will continue to support six Cara scholars annually.

### **4. Mobility and Collaboration**

#### **4.1. #TwinforHope Student Mobility**

The University is proud to continue its Student Mobility Programme with the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, delivered through the #TwinForHope initiative. The University recently welcomed the fourth cohort of students for the 2025-26 academic year with 33 students undertaking the mobility in Term 1 and 40 students expected in Term 2.

## 5. Events

### 5.1. Sanctuary Scholarship Recipient Welcome Lunch

A dedicated lunch and drop-in session was held for recipients of the Sanctuary Scholarship, providing an opportunity to connect with other scholars. The event took place in the Clarice Pears Building and welcomed both new Sanctuary Scholars and one returning Scholar, who shared valuable insights and experiences. Each attendee received a welcome pack designed to support their transition and engagement. This session reinforced the University's commitment to fostering a culture of welcome as part of its status as a University of Sanctuary, creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all scholars. The aim will be to host this event annually.

### 5.2. Refugee Week 2026

As a University of Sanctuary, the University of Glasgow will continue its commitment to celebrating Refugee Week annually through a diverse programme of events open to staff, students, alumni, partners, and the wider community.

Refugee Week 2026 will begin on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, and will provide a meaningful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the contributions, creativity, and resilience of individuals seeking sanctuary. Guided by this year's official theme, *Courage*, the University is curating a comprehensive week-long programme that highlights the extraordinary strength shown by those who undertake unknown journeys, learn new languages, navigate unfamiliar systems, and face uncertainty with determination.

This year, the Sanctuary Team will work closely with the Student Representative Council to ensure that the student community has a genuine opportunity to shape and influence the programme, fostering student-led engagement and collaboration.

The programme will include talks, cultural activities, and community engagement events designed to promote understanding and solidarity. Refugee Week 2026 will also be integrated into the University's wider 575th anniversary celebrations. An update on the programme will be provided at a future EDSC meeting.