



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



# Equality Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2021–24









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# Foreword

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I am delighted to introduce the University of Birmingham's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Scheme for 2021–2024.



If we are to succeed in achieving the ambitions set out in our Strategic Framework, if we are to be the kind of university we aspire to be, it is vital that the University is a place where all members of our community can thrive and fulfil their potential.

The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Scheme sets out our ambitions for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the University. In particular it commits us all, as members of the University community, to understanding and promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

We all have a role to play in ensuring everyone in our community feels welcomed and valued, and we can each influence this through our work, our behaviour, and our interactions with others.

The EDI Scheme has been considered and approved by the University Executive Board. Along with all members of UEB, I am committed to ensuring that the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion continues to be a guiding principle for the University.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Eastwood', written in a cursive style.

**Professor Sir David Eastwood,  
Vice Chancellor and Principal**



The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2021–2024 and its objectives has been developed through consultation with our students and staff and analysis of our institutional data. This evidence-based approach, encompassing both lived experiences and quantitative measurements, has provided a clear framework for our planned activities over the next four years.

The themes that have emerged around creating an inclusive environment, dismantling barriers and addressing structural inequalities require a real commitment to change and improvement.

As DPVC Equalities, I have introduced the Equality Change Programme (ECP) as a vehicle for driving forwards and embedding this change across key areas of University activity.

The ECP work streams bring together subject specialists, operational leads, academic experts and staff with a passion for making the University fair and inclusive. Combined with the work of the central EDI Team and the engagement with EDI issues taking place in our academic Colleges, I believe this approach will result in substantive, measurable change that will have a real impact on outcomes and experiences.

I look forward to working with all members of the University on delivering our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Duberley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Professor Jo Duberley, Deputy Pro-Vice  
Chancellor for Equalities**

# Our commitment

The University of Birmingham is a global university with our main campus located in the thriving, multi-cultural city of Birmingham and our new campus in the international education hub of Dubai. Our 37,000 students and 8,000 staff are recruited internationally, nationally and locally, creating a community of over 160 nationalities.

The promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the mission and vision of the University of Birmingham. On our founding in 1900 as the UK's first civic university, our core commitment was to accept women and people of all religious backgrounds as equal members of the University community. Today, addressing inequalities and promoting greater understanding and inclusion continues to be one of the key challenges that we face as part of a global society.

As a higher education institution, our role in society is to increase understanding. This takes place through our research and teaching and by enabling all our students to develop the skills they need as citizens in a global society. A diversity of perspectives and lived experiences is essential to underpinning the exchange of ideas, innovation and debate that is at the heart of our academic mission.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning and working environment, where all members of the University can flourish and reach their full potential; where we engage with and learn from our community and where we affect positive change within the University, our city and wider society. We see this as integral to our mission and key to the achievement of our strategic objectives as a global university.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme for 2021–24 sets out how we will put these values into practice. It should be read in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, which sets out in greater detail our activities for the current year.

The Scheme and our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion applies across all of our geographical locations. Our Dubai campus also has its own action plan under the Scheme.









# Our aims and approach

Many intersecting factors shape the individual identities and experiences of our University community. This includes age, disability, gender identity, experiences of being a parent or carer, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We recognise, however, that diversity does not in itself guarantee equity or inclusion. As an institution, we need to be proactive in celebrating and harnessing our diversity. This means listening to our students and staff and taking action to address the structural barriers within the University that can prevent groups from fulfilling their potential; taking action to foster an organisational culture where equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded at all levels; and recognising that understanding equality, diversity and inclusion issues is a key competency for our staff and students and has a substantial impact on individual interactions and experiences.

## Key terms used in this document:

**Equality** – the fair and lawful treatment of students and staff

**Equity** – the promotion of equality of opportunity between different groups

**Diversity** – the characteristics and experiences that make us who we are

**Inclusivity** – learning and working cultures that recognise and are welcoming of equality and diversity and reflect this in their structures and practices

**Intersectionality** – recognising that different characteristics can combine to create additional barriers to equality



**Our EDI themes and objectives have been developed following:**

- A University-wide consultation with our staff and students
- Focus groups with student and staff networks and other stakeholders
- Reviewing key data on staff and student outcomes
- Our existing commitments under the University's Access and Participation Plan, Athena Swan Charter, and Race Equality Charters and Stonewall Diversity Champions programme
- Reviewing the impact of activities under our 2016–20 Equality Scheme
- Our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality across the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation<sup>1</sup>

**We believe that implementing our EDI Scheme will bring the following benefits:**

- Our students will develop intercultural competence as part of a transformative learning experience, giving them the skills to navigate and succeed in a global economy
- We will attract and retain diverse, talented staff and support them to develop successful and fulfilling careers
- All members of our community will have the skills and confidence to challenge inequality and discrimination
- Our diversity will be reflected at all levels of our staff and student bodies
- Our research will be strengthened by diverse teams, an inclusive research culture and where appropriate, embedding diversity into research ideas, methods and dissemination
- We will collaborate with our local community identifying education, employment, research and innovation opportunities for all

<sup>1</sup> Equality Act 2010: the University must have due regard in carrying out its activities of the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not







# Our themes and objectives

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme for 2021–24 will focus on three interlocking themes:

- **Creating an inclusive environment:** developing a University community where everyone feels welcome, included and empowered to succeed
- **Dismantling barriers:** addressing the structural barriers faced by groups within the University in order to create more equitable outcomes
- **Integrating equality, diversity and inclusion:** issues and impacts are considered and addressed across our activities



## **Inclusive Environment: developing a University community where everyone feels welcome, included and empowered to succeed**

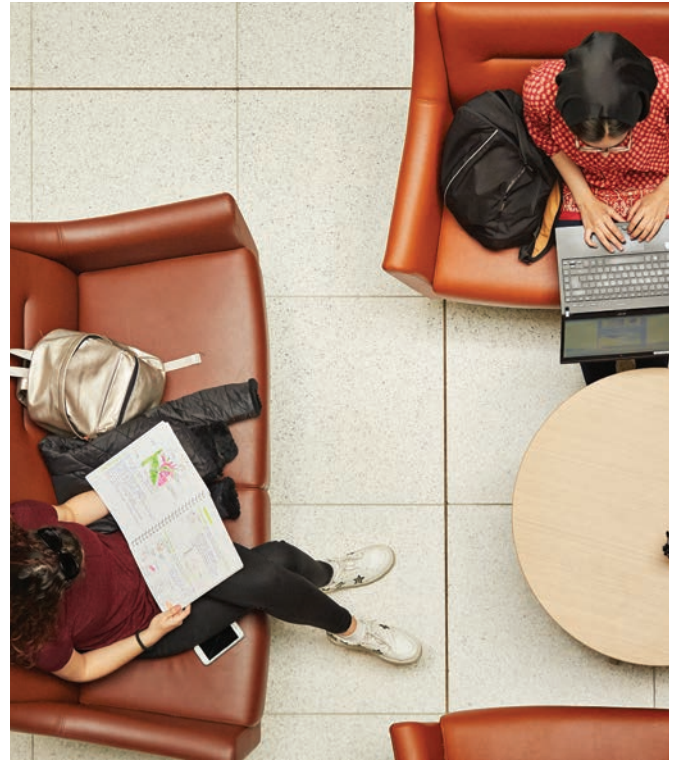
The University is a large, complex and diverse institution. We want to create an environment in which every member of our community, of all backgrounds, identities and circumstances, feels valued, accepted, supported and empowered to succeed. In order to do this, we need to take action at organisational and individual levels.

At an organisational level, we will ensure that we have in place fair policies and practices which facilitate the progression and participation of all staff and students. During our consultation with students and staff, it was evidenced that feelings of inclusion are informed by day-to-day experiences and interactions with colleagues, managers, lecturers, supervisors and fellow students. In this sense, everyone has a role to play in creating inclusion: by treating others with dignity and respect; by encouraging participation by all and by being empowered and feeling supported to challenge exclusionary and discriminatory behaviour.

### **We will undertake targeted activity to address the following issues:**

- Helping individuals to develop self-awareness and to address bias
- Increasing knowledge and awareness of practical actions that can be taken to create inclusive working and learning environments
- Creating opportunities to share knowledge, experience and learning
- Empowering everyone to speak up and challenge behaviour and situations that are exclusionary
- Increasing visibility of and communication about EDI across the institution
- Increasing transparency on progress against our objectives

**As a higher education institution, our role in society is to increase understanding. This takes place through our research and teaching and by enabling all our students to develop the skills they need as citizens in a global society.**





## **Dismantling barriers: addressing the structural barriers faced by groups within the University in order to create more equitable outcomes**

We aim to be a diverse institution that is representative of the wider society in which we operate. We recognise that some groups are under-represented at the University and that our staff population becomes less diverse as seniority increases. We want to be an aspirational institution where students and staff see themselves reflected at all levels of the University.

We recognise this as a structural problem and will actively avoid a ‘deficit model’ approach to under-representation. Where there is group-based disadvantage – for example, as evidenced by key markers such as recruitment, progression, retention, reward and attainment – we will take action to address those barriers in a targeted and systematic way. This will be by rethinking and redesigning processes, target setting and monitoring progress against those targets and addressing organisational development needs, in addition to providing targeted support for specific groups.

### **We will undertake targeted activity to address the following issues:**

- The recruitment, progression and retention of staff from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups across the University
- The degree awarding gap for students from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups
- The recruitment, progression and retention of female academic staff at senior levels
- The gender and ethnicity pay gaps, which reflect the uneven distribution of female and male staff and white and Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff across the University
- Accessibility and the lived experience of staff and students with a disability
- The visibility of LGBTQ staff across the University
- Staff disclosure rates in relation to disability status, gender identity, sexual orientation and religion or belief to better inform our evidence base
- The impact of socio-economic background on our students

**We aim to be a diverse institution that is representative of the wider society in which we operate. We recognise that some groups are under-represented at the University and that our staff population becomes less diverse as seniority increases.**





## **Integrating equality, diversity and inclusion: issues and impacts are considered and addressed across our activities**

Effectively integrating equality, diversity and inclusion across the University – and ensuring it is not just a centrally owned activity – has been identified as a key issue in our consultations. Feedback emphasised that this integration needs to take place across our activities and functions and at all levels of the organisation in order to be effective.

### **We will undertake the following targeted activity:**

- Develop local responses to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme themes, building on the current Equality Leads network and the considerable work already taking place within Colleges
- Develop our processes and systems so that consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion informs the development and assessment of decision-making





**Effectively integrating equality, diversity and inclusion across the University – and ensuring it is not just a centrally owned activity – has been identified as a key issue in our consultations.**





# How we will deliver our objectives

We will deliver on our priorities through the following strands of activity:

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Action Plan

The annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan details the specific actions we will undertake each year in support of our objectives. Having an action plan that can be reviewed on an annual basis means we can remain responsive to new issues and challenges as they arise, whilst still remaining focused on the objectives of our four-year Scheme.

## Equality Change Programme

In response to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme and action plans already in place in relation to the Advance HE Athena Swan and Race Equality Charters, and the University's Pay Gap Action Plan and Access and Participation Plan, we have developed the Equality Change Programme work-streams. The aim of the six work-streams aim to deliver on equality, diversity and inclusion actions in a holistic, thematic way. The work streams will run for four years, with membership and actions reviewed on an annual basis.

## Development of College Action Plans

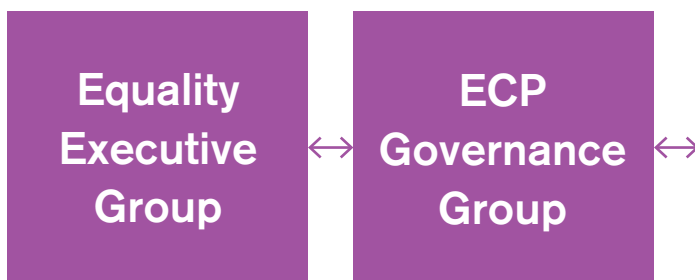
Each College and major budget centre will develop an Equality and Diversity action plan to support the achievement of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme objectives and to address issues specific to their areas.

## Alignment with strategic initiatives

The EDI action plan will align with the Student Access and Progress Committee and Student Attainment working groups.



## Equality Change Programme



## ECP Work Streams

- Inclusive environment
- Academic Services and Campus Services
- Individual development
- Family friendly
- Recruitment, selection, induction, retention
- Career structures





# Monitoring, reporting and publishing

Our staff and students have told us that they want the University's actions to address equality, diversity and inclusion to have much greater visibility and transparency. They also feel strongly that the institution and individuals be accountable for progress.

## Monitoring and measuring our progress

The University's Equality Executive Group will review the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme and action plan on an annual basis to measure progress against objectives and to identify new actions, as appropriate, for the coming year.

As part of this review, the Equality Executive Group will use **key data benchmarks** to measure our progress. These will include:

- Percentage of female Professors
- Percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff at each grade in Professional Services and Academic roles
- Percentage of staff disclosing information on their disability status, gender identity, sexual orientation and religion or belief
- Access and Participation Plan targets

The current benchmarks can be viewed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

We will also assess annual surveys, such as the Staff Satisfaction Survey and National Student Survey by protected characteristics and engage in an ongoing dialogue with our staff and student networks.

## Reporting and publishing

The Equality Scheme and the annual equality information report will be published on the University internet in line with our commitments under the Equality Act.

We will also publish details of the groups and committees responsible for the Equality Scheme implementation on the intranet, together with annual reports of progress against objectives.

# Responsibilities

## University Council

Council is the University's supreme governing body, responsible for setting the strategic direction and policies governing all aspects of the University's activity. In addition to Council members' individual responsibilities as members of the University, Council has overall legal responsibility for the University's compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

## University Executive Board

Day-to-day leadership for equality and diversity is delegated by Council to the University Executive Board, which makes an annual assurance report to Council activity and progress. Members of the University Executive Board also provide senior leadership for each discrete area of equality.

The University Executive Board has established an Equality Executive Group with responsibility for reviewing and making recommendations to the Board on the development of equality and diversity policy within the University, including the development of the University's Equality Scheme.

## Equality Executive Group

The Equality Executive Group (EEG) is responsible for the development, implementation and review of the Equality Scheme and for recommending the Equality Scheme to the University Executive Board. EEG is chaired by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) (DPVC (EDI)). Each College has an Equality Lead, who sits on College Board and is a member of EEG, alongside the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Student Affairs, Central EDI officers and representatives from the Guild of Students.

## The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team

The EDI team works under the leadership of the DPVC for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and supports the University in delivering the equality strategy through:

- Providing specialist knowledge and expertise on EDI matters
- Engaging with stakeholders to develop a co-ordinated approach
- Identifying emerging issues and developing solutions
- Increasing awareness of and engagement in EDI issues
- Managing University-level external accreditations and networks
- Monitoring and reporting on progress against action plans



### Managers

Managers are responsible for delivering the equality scheme objectives in their areas of responsibility.

### Students, staff and other members of the University community

All members of the University community have a responsibility to uphold the University's commitment to equality and diversity by:

- Treating students, staff and visitors to the University with dignity and respect
- Not engaging in, colluding in or encouraging behaviour that constitutes unlawful discrimination under the Equality Act

- Supporting activities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations as required under the Equality Act
- Actively working to support an inclusive environment in their day-to-day activities









UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

Edgbaston, Birmingham,  
B15 2TT, United Kingdom  
[www.birmingham.ac.uk](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk)

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BIRMINGHAM | **creativemedia**