



Update for Council on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Outcome requested:	Council is asked to note and comment on the attached update.
Executive Summary:	This paper provides a summary of what the University is doing to tackle EDI issues and build “the most inclusive institution”
QMUL Strategy	Building “the most inclusive institution”
Internal/External regulatory/statutory reference points:	None.
Strategic Risks:	[2] Improving staff engagement [3] Increasing staff diversity and inclusion
Equality Impact Assessment:	
Subject to prior and onward consideration by:	By Council only.
Confidential paper under FOIA/DPA	No.
Timing:	N/A
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Date:	Summary of progress since 1 October 2019
Senior Management sponsor:	Sheila Gupta, Vice-Principal and Chair of the EDI Steering Group

Summary of progress on EDI issues since the last full update to Council in October 2019

Since Council last met in October 2019, work has continued across the institution on a range of EDI activities. We are encouraged by the significant progress that has been achieved over the course of a challenging year and are looking to build on our work through the People, Culture and Inclusion Enabling Plan, to embed EDI throughout all aspects of our University over the lifetime of Strategy 2030.

EDI has also been a vital consideration in relation to Covid-19 and its impacts. Through our approach as a University, and specifically through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG), we have taken particular care to progress our response to Covid with reference to its EDI implications for staff and students. We have introduced a range of initiatives to support staff over this period.

Our approach has been very much on progressing actions, which in turn have been based on feedback received from our staff and students who wish to see visible changes being introduced. It has been important to respond at pace, and in doing so we have been able to deliver a wide range of initiatives, both directly in response to Covid, and linked to Strategy 2030.

People, Culture and Inclusion Enabling Plan:

The five objectives of our new People, Culture and Inclusion Enabling Plan articulate how we intend to deliver on our ambition to be the most inclusive University of its kind anywhere. Specific actions have been identified and key performance indicators (KPIs) established to ensure our objectives become a reality. Progress will be monitored through our well-established Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (EDISG).

Governance structures:

Feedback received from staff and students in response to the Black Lives Matter movement has caused us to review the membership of EDISG to more adequately represent black staff and students. Early meetings of the newly constituted group have been very positive.

Within the governance structure of EDISG, there are now three sub-committees: the Race Equality Action Group (REAG); the Gender Equality Self-Assessment Team (GESAT); and the Professional Services EDI Steering Group (PSEDISG).

Under our new governance structures, REAG and GESAT will provide updates to EDISG following each meeting and likewise EDISG will provide an update to SET. This will ensure progress is monitored against our plans, and maintain momentum.

External accreditations and internal action groups:

We have established a **Race Equality Action Group**, which will oversee race equality issues at Queen Mary. The Group has established five working groups to target specific areas of activity:

- Understanding and celebrating race and ethnicity

- Addressing the ethnicity pay gap and supporting career progression for people from ethnic minority backgrounds
- Investigating and addressing issues around racial bullying and harassment
- Reducing the student ethnicity attainment gap
- Developing inclusive curricula

The Group is chaired by Sheila Gupta, Vice-Principal (People, Culture and Inclusion) and will focus on taking actions to promote race equality. The Group's composition includes staff from across the University from a wide range of backgrounds, grades and experiences, including representation from trade unions. All working groups also include representatives from the Students' Union and a number of individual students with expertise in relevant areas. REAG is working directly with relevant student societies as an early action to counter racial harassment, discrimination and hate crime.

The Group's activities will also encompass issues of relevance to the wider community, including the adoption of **definitions of Antisemitism and islamophobia**.

The Group is working on the development of a strategy and action plan and has reciprocal representation with the Gender Equality Self-Assessment Team (GESAT) to ensure an intersectional approach to gender and race issues. Membership also includes an external expert on race equality issues, to take advantage of the incorporation of previously successful initiatives at other institutions. The group's first meeting took place on the 12 August 2020 and the next meeting is due to take place on the 14 October 2020.

One of the first successes of the Race Equality Action Group has been a joint initiative with the Communications team to develop a comprehensive programme to support **Black History Month**, with a range of activities throughout October. In future, one of the working groups will take the lead on this programme of activity, to ensure that future events are embedded into the University's annual calendar in a structured way. We should also make reference to the exciting programme that has been developed by the Students' Union and we are jointly publishing these events on the University's web pages to ensure that there is comprehensive coverage and communication of the wide range of offerings available.

Work is continuing on our institutional **Athena Swan submission**. Following the national review of the Athena Swan Charter Mark, Queen Mary was offered the opportunity to apply to defer our next submission to November 2021. This deferral has been granted.

Since the last Council meeting the **Gender Equality Self-Assessment Team (GESAT)** has met twice. In the lead up to the November 2021 submission, GESAT has been scheduled to meet every other month. Our EDI Manager (Gender) joined in June 2020 and is taking the lead in the operational delivery of our institutional submission. With the arrival of the EDI Manager (Gender) the membership and terms of reference has been reviewed to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the group and to more closely align with best practice with the sector.

Within the Faculties there has been recognition of our work to advance gender equality through school applications for Athena Swan awards. As of 1st October 2020, we hold 10 School awards, four silver and six bronze and a number of schools are working towards their first successful bronze award. Going forward, GESAT will take an overview of how schools are progressing with their Athena Swan work.

The **Stonewall** Working Group was established in October 2019 with senior sponsorship from Jonathan Morgan in preparation for submission to the 2021 Workplace Equality Index (the deadline had originally been summer 2020). Due to the onset of Covid-19, Stonewall

took the decision to postpone applications to the 2021 Workplace Equality Index. Stonewall has also updated their application process to align with other charter marks in the sector, establishing a Bronze, Silver, Gold award system in addition to the publication of the Top 100 LGBTQ+ Inclusive employers. This is a welcome development as it gives Queen Mary the opportunity to map its progress of LGBTQ+ inclusion within a structured framework and acts as recognition of the progress we have made in this area.

The working group will progress the action plan developed to deliver the 2021 submission in preparation for the 2022 submission.

Some notable developments and successes that will feed into our Stonewall application are:

- The development of LGBTQ+ role model profiles and an updated allyship webpage
- The launch of the University's first Trans Inclusion Policy Statement, as well as information leaflets on 'How to be a trans ally' and '#Pronouns Matter'. Two additional guidance documents on 'transitioning' and trans inclusion at Queen Mary are also in development
- The launch of the Pride 2020 video featuring Shelia Gupta, VP People, Culture and Inclusion as well as colleagues across Queen Mary.
- The launch of two new bi+ role models profiles and a blog post to mark Bi Visibility Day.
- The publication of a Trans Inclusion Statement, co-signed by Sheila Gupta and Tom Barringer, the Chair of QMOut, the Staff LGBTQ+ Network.

In November 2020, we will be submitting a paper to EDISG outlining our proposal for Queen Mary becoming a **Disability Confident Committed** employer, Level 1 of the government's Disability Confident Scheme. Signing up to Level 1 involves making several commitments, including offering an interview to any applicant who declares a disability and meets the essential criteria.

Statutory and governance reports:

Work has concluded on our **EDI Annual report** and **Gender and Ethnicity pay gap reports**.

Reward:

Our pay gap data reflect an under-representation of BAME staff in higher-graded and senior managerial roles and the over-representation of BAME staff in lower graded roles. Similarly, we can see an underrepresentation of female staff in our senior academic grades. Our desire to improve representation of BAME and female staff at higher grades, is embodied in our institutional level KPI.

As highlighted in our last update to Council, progress towards increased diversity at senior grades and senior role models will be an important focus as we move forward. Following approval of the institutional level KPI, Schools and Professional Services departments will be provided with a series of possible actions they could adopt to support local progress towards the institutional KPI and a regular reporting mechanism will be established through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group for Schools and Professional Services departments to report progress on local action plans.

During the 2019/20 academic year we have made improvements to the bonus arrangements to ensure greater equality in payments. In the Staff Bonus Scheme, which covers more than 80% of bonuses awarded by Queen Mary, we introduced more objective criteria to inform the decisions made by the panels when awarding bonuses and we brought in specific fixed

bonus awards that were linked to set criteria. These initiatives have created an important shift in our gender and ethnicity pay gap, with our median gender and ethnicity bonus pay gaps reducing to 0% (from 15.9% and 32.7% respectively). This data will be published in our pay gap reports in 2021. The introduction of more robust and rigorous processes based on objective criteria demonstrates how positive change can be achieved. There is still much to do, but these improvements mark an important step in the right direction.

Academic Promotions and Career Pathways Review:

Since the last meeting of Council an Academic Promotions and Career Pathways Task and Finish Group has been set up to review Queen Mary's current academic pathways, promotions criteria, processes and guidelines to see how to embed the principles of **citizenship and the introduction of thresholds** into academic promotions. The Group is chaired by a senior academic who conducted the previous review in 2018 and which resulted in significant improvements in our processes, thereby providing a strong basis from which to further enhance our processes.

It is proposed that amendments will be made for the next academic promotions round to be launched in November/December 2020.

Networks:

As a swift response to feedback from staff and students, since lockdown, we are pleased to have established two new staff networks: a Parents and Carers Network and a Staff Disability Network.

Two successful events have been held specifically for the **Parents and Carers Network**. The Work-Home-Parent and Work-Home-Carer webinars were facilitated by the EDI Team and hosted colleagues from across the University to discuss their experiences of parenting and caring. The Parents and Carers Network is hosted using Microsoft Teams, where members can communicate and share resources/support. The network currently has 116 members and feedback indicates that participants have found the Network to be very valuable in promoting both practical and social benefits through connecting people who would not otherwise have met.

The **Staff Disability Network** was launched in August 2020 and currently has 39 members. The group has already met once and will meet again in October. It is recognised that it is difficult for networks to establish and sustain themselves in the early stages and, as such, to help the network develop and grow, the EDI team will provide support in helping formalise the Network and establishing agreed aims and objectives.

Our existing **LGBTQ+ Network**, QMOut, also now has an online Microsoft Teams presence, akin to our Parents and Carers and Staff Disability Networks.

Dignity and respect:

We are developing a range of initiatives to tackle negative behaviours, as referenced in our staff, survey, and improve staff engagement (one of our KPIs), as well as in recognition of the issues highlighted in the EHRC report on Tackling Racial Harassment. In relation to the last, by developing statements on Antisemitism and Islamophobia.

A **Values in Action Framework**, currently in development, sets clear expectations around inclusion and will be embedded across the employee lifecycle. The framework describes our expectations of staff behaviour at all levels of Queen Mary, aligning to each of our Values.

We undertook University-wide consultation to develop the framework and are now consulting on the emerging model to ensure positive engagement in its formulation and execution. The Framework was very well received by EDISG, who advised that the tone and content were appropriate and reflected the culture that we aspire to achieve. We plan to launch the Framework in Autumn, once we have concluded our consultations.

The Framework is intended to inform, guide and provide clarity and consistency for all staff in applying our values. In parallel, we are developing expectations of our leaders, through a **Leadership Framework**. This will include a focus on inclusive leadership.

We have invested in nationally recognised **Active Bystander** training to give colleagues the skills to challenge inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment. Face-to-face workshops were trialled earlier this year and have since been redeveloped into an online offering. To ensure maximum impact, workshops will be rolled out by Faculty with senior champions roles modelling and communicating their support. All sessions include tried and tested decision-making and personal effectiveness techniques to overcome the initial fear of tackling challenging situations. This award-winning training is in use at organisations and HE institutions across the UK and Europe, including Imperial College London, the University of Manchester, and Oxford University among many others.

The University has trained a cohort of fifteen internal **mediators** to support alternative dispute resolution. We are promoting mediation through a variety of communication channels including “Mythbusting Mediation” Webinars. We are pleased to be collaborating with the wider HEI Mediation Network which includes partners from LSE, City University, SOAS, Goldsmiths, Greenwich and the University of East London to provide a wider network of options outside Queen Mary.

In recognition of our need to more effectively respond to complaints of bullying and harassment, work has continued to establish our **Dignity Disclosure Officer** network. Volunteer Dignity Disclosure Officers have been trained extensively in a range of skills, including EDI awareness and an understanding of the Report and Support system. There has been, and continues to be, action to ensure diversity in the dignity disclosure officers, to support staff and students to feel confident in making a disclosure.

Training:

In our last update, we identified our need for a bold programme of training which challenges ways of thinking, cultural norms and unconscious bias and helps deliver behaviour and cultural change.

We have developed a **core online programme of EDI training**, which is now beginning to be rolled out to all new starters and decision makers, and in the autumn, more widely across existing staff. The programme was piloted with SET, EDISG and relevant stakeholder groups and has generated excellent feedback from stakeholders at all levels of the University.

We have developed a **recruitment and selection e-learning programme** and assessment that is bespoke to Queen Mary. The e-learning complements our Recruitment Policy and highlights actions to support our inclusion agenda. The e-learning programme is mandatory for colleagues who have attended recruitment training elsewhere or need a refresher, having last attended QM training over two years ago. The e-learning allows us to offer “just in time” training so that colleagues involved in recruitment and selection processes have greater knowledge retention. We also offer additional targeted provision on recruitment and selection to compliment the on-line offering.

For colleagues who have not attended recruitment training before or want to develop their skills, the e-learning acts as a pre-requisite for a Recruitment and Interview workshop. The e-learning allows us to focus on skills development and responding to specific needs. We have had excellent feedback on this new approach:

“I liked the balance of taking an online course then following it up with today's practical session. Having done the first part online meant we had time to practice, reflect and discuss in our [workshop] session.”

“This was one of the best training sessions I've ever attended at any of the British universities I've worked at! Thank you for running it as a small group interactive activity.”

Data:

We have made significant progress in improving data quality, designing and utilising new dashboards to ensure data anomalies are identified and corrected more quickly within our HR teams. Further initiatives to apply greater rigour to HR data capture, maintenance, reporting and archiving are in the design stage and form part of the People Culture and Inclusion Enabling Plan.

Recruitment:

A process review of our as-is and to-be recruitment processes was undertaken during summer 2019, supported by external consultants. An evaluation of the capability of our existing e-recruitment system to match Queen Mary's requirements identified a significant gap and a business case has been developed and approved for the procurement of a **new e-recruitment system**. The progression of this project will be reviewed by the IT Strategy Board this academic year.

Key EDI deliverables of the project are:

- Comprehensive and essential reporting capability. A more rigorous approach to monitoring recruitment data, capturing and analysing the diversity of applicants at all stages of the process.
- Improved ability to measure EDI objectives, including selection panel composition
- Provide a modern, engaging and inclusive candidate experience
- Ability to offer blind recruitment
- Ability to offer priority interviews to disabled candidates
- A quality and engaging experience for visually impaired candidates.

Positive Action

We have developed an innovative approach to applying the **equal merit** provisions of the Equality Act 2010 at Queen Mary. While this approach may be open to challenge, we believe that we will not be able to meaningfully shift our gender and ethnicity pay gaps within a short time frame without employing some radical and potentially controversial approaches. While bold in the sense that this methodology has not been attempted elsewhere, we believe that the approach is nonetheless proportionate and in line with the spirit of the Act. A successful challenge to our approach would only serve to outline our strong desire and commitment to progress our inclusion agenda.

Other HEIs are starting to introduce radical approaches to shift their pay gaps and issues with representation of minority groups. It is suggested that we need to be similarly minded if we are to keep pace with and exceed the change that others are delivering. To this end, we

believe that the approach we are suggesting is unique in the sector. Our approach has been accepted in principle by SET and work is now in progress to establish a process for its practical application.

Response to Covid-19:

In common with the wider institution, resource in recent months has been significantly diverted towards adequately supporting Queen Mary's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our response has included the following initiatives:

- A dedicated temporary remote working site, which includes FAQs, effective home working tips and guidance for staff and managers: <http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/temporary-remote-working/>
- Detailed guidance and support for staff on balancing work and caring responsibilities
- An individual health assessment process for staff to complete prior to their return to campus which includes risk stratification related to underlying health conditions and BAME background in order that support can be tailored to addressing the inequalities highlighted by COVID 19 in relation to disability and race
- Dedicated staff health e-mail box for queries and reporting symptoms of Covid-19
- *Your community, your wellbeing* – themed weeks including a highly commended series of weekly webinars on topics such as corona anxiety, work-home parent, work life balance, and positive consequences of lockdown
- Supporting our work towards becoming a disability confident employer, the introduction of lanyards for staff and students which help to discretely identify hidden disabilities
- Virtual coaching and building resilience workshops
- Wellbeing workshop for managers, enabling managers to more effectively support their staff while working remotely
- Regular, dedicated communications for staff to support them to manage their mental health during lockdown
- Establishment of a new virtual Parents and Carers network
- A review of the EDI impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and recommendations for action
- Supporting the return to campus including detailed guidance for managers on return to work conversations and risk assessments for vulnerable groups.

The impact of the pandemic has been profound in terms of seeking to continually respond to evolving government and public health policy and develop new policies, processes and guidance for staff and managers to cope with the impact of the changes to our lives. These demands are necessarily on-going. In developing these initiatives, we have had to work at pace, often having very little notice of major changes in national policy. The initiatives above demonstrate the scale of the issues that the University has had to manage and the likelihood that further changes are inevitable. The importance of EDI considerations has been accentuated by the pandemic and it is hoped that this paper demonstrates the commitment of the University to continue to address both Covid related issues and implement our wider EDI objectives in support of Strategy 2030.

Outcome Requested

Council is asked to **note** and **comment** on the attached update.