



# **Excellence Through Inclusion**

## **The University of Sheffield's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plans**

### **2009-2012**

#### CONTENTS

Our Vision	Pg 2
Our Goals	Pg 3
Our Priorities 2009-2012	Pg 4
Our Progress so far	Pg 6

## Our Vision

At the University of Sheffield we recognise the potential for higher education to transform people's lives and welcome a diverse range of students and staff to the University community. We embrace the challenge to make a positive difference to the culture of the University and beyond, where opportunities to excel are available to all, and will therefore continue to strive to create a University that is inclusive at all levels and in every system and process. Our vision for diversity remains as clear and consistent as always: to become a motivated and diverse University community, where staff and students demand the highest standards from each other and work together to maximise the benefits of difference.

Our Excellence Through Inclusion equality strategy enables us to continue to take a long term strategic approach to diversity and inclusion, whilst retaining the ability to deliver focussed actions to improve the experience and perceptions of specific diverse groups.

## Our goals

- To develop a fully inclusive University community which recruits and retains talented staff and students from all sectors of society. We will nurture that talent, ensuring it can be developed within a positive and supportive culture, that encourages everyone to flourish and reach their potential
- To continue to build positive relationships between staff, students and external stakeholders (including contractors and visitors); enhance our external reputation and internal culture; and meet the needs and expectations of all of our stakeholders by demonstrating through our behaviour and actions a common vision where diversity is valued by all

## Measuring success

We will demonstrate our commitment by the positive actions we take across equality strands. We will measure our success in the following ways:

- The extent to which we succeed in involving people in the ongoing implementation of our strategy, via staff networks, working with and involving people in departments and faculties to develop and achieve actions, and holding successful and well-attended targeted events. Successful implementation will be measured by the extent that actions are achieved, and will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Board (EDB) and the University Council.
- The achievement of a positive and inclusive culture as evidenced by surveys, by an increase in our Equality Data disclosure rates, and by our staff and students actively getting involved with the Excellence Through Inclusion strategy and recommending the University as a great place to work and study.

## Our Duties

The University is committed to meeting the aims of anti-discrimination legislation, giving due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups, disabled persons and other persons, and men and women. Our strategy reflects our inclusive approach by going beyond this and including other equality characteristics, in line with the aims of the Equality Act.

In line with our duties we will continue to involve and consult with relevant stakeholders, and to monitor and act upon equality data. We will also continue to assess the impact, or likely impact, of key policies, practices and management decisions on equality for staff and students.

## Our Priorities 2009 - 2012

'Excellence Through Inclusion' focuses on a number of key themes to facilitate change, create a sense of belonging and further develop a culture where everyone feels valued and engaged.

- Integrating inclusion into University strategies

We need to reflect and interact with the richness of the global society around us and draw staff and students from the widest possible talent pool. Being a truly inclusive university is essential for future success in a highly competitive, changeable global market place. We also recognise that we have a key role to play as an agent for positive change in the wider social context. Creating an open and inclusive culture in which everyone feels valued and respects each other is key, as is taking decisive action to progress the e&d agenda.

Professional services across the University have developed equality action plans relevant to their own local context and that integrate with their own strategic priorities. Our faculties are working to develop action plans specific to their own circumstances and future vision. The EDB (Equality and Diversity Board) will regularly monitor and assess progress against these action plans over a 3 year scrutiny cycle, and report up to the University Council.

- Developing an inclusive culture

Seeking to make a positive difference demands continuous commitment and reinforcement from all levels and right across the University. It is essential that we work collaboratively with all students, staff and external stakeholders to ensure that they feel able to engage with and help shape our culture of inclusion.

We want all staff and students to understand what the vision of "Excellence through Inclusion" means to them personally and what their responsibilities are. To enable them to do this, we need to help prepare them for the challenges that difference brings, and help them appreciate the benefits of diversity.

We will therefore continue to create opportunities, via cross-university culture change events, and smaller focussed meetings and workshops, where all members of the University and external stakeholders are encouraged to talk to us and to each other about what we're doing well, and what we could all be doing better.

- Engaging and Involving people

We will ensure staff and students can share their stories and experiences of good practice and areas for improvement with us. And we will engage managers at all levels to forge a common culture and vision supportive of excellence through inclusion.

We will do this through networks, to support staff and students from different equality groups, and to act as consultation groups for the University; through equality training available for all staff; and through regular conversations with senior managers regarding inclusion. We will continue to work collaboratively across departments and faculties, with the Student's Union Officers and with student committees on events and initiatives to achieve this aim and increase opportunities for involvement. And we will continue to collaborate with and take part in city wide, regional and national equality and diversity networks and focus groups, to

share good practice and involve our stakeholders in reviewing progress and helping to set objectives.

- Ownership of Equality Data

Measuring and analysing data is a catalyst for action. Metrics will guide managers' action by identifying areas of strength and vulnerability in their own areas.

We will extend our staff monitoring to include all equality characteristics covered by the Equality Act, and encourage staff to share this information with the University; and we will consider ways of gathering wider student equality information. This will help us to develop future actions and further focussed initiatives.

We will also work to develop a suite of EO reports to help us consider trends at University, faculty and departmental level, and encourage their use in planning and strategy development. We will review the data annually to assess our progress and help set new objectives in our action plans.

- Making it Happen

We need to ensure that embedding equality and diversity in our processes leads to positive change. To facilitate this, and to confirm that real action with long term impact is being made across the University, high profile support and clear and consistent independent review of performance is essential.

We also recognise that sometimes things may go wrong. We will strive to ensure staff and students are aware of their individual responsibilities not to discriminate against others, not to harass or victimise others, and to challenge or report unacceptable behaviour. We will ensure that systems and support frameworks are in place to address discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, including clear processes for responding to these instances for both staff and students. And we will endeavour to take swift and decisive action where necessary.

We will work hard to ensure equality and diversity is considered across the University by rolling-out our Equality Impact Assessment processes and training staff to undertake them; by working with our governance colleagues to encourage all committees to consider e&d; and by monitoring progress at University, faculty and professional service level via the Equality and Diversity Board, which ultimately reports to the University Council.

## Our Progress so far

To achieve our key aim of Excellence Through Inclusion it is vital that we both embed equality into our existing frameworks and policies, and continue to focus on creating a fully inclusive culture by engaging our staff and students, and developing a range of positive actions. Our headline achievements so far:

- **Engagement and motivation**

Our series of **high profile events** aims to bring people together to explore the benefits of inclusion, challenge thinking, and feed into future actions. Events include Excellence Through Inclusion Week – 2007, Positive Mental Health – 2008, 'Building Bridges' (jointly with Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council) – 2009, Out@Work (focussing on LGBT equality) – 2009 and Women@TUOS (focussing on academic female progression) – 2009. These events included staff, students and external stakeholders and have informed our actions going forward.

**Networks:** we have an LGBT staff network, a female professors network, and a harassment advisors network. We are working with disabled staff to establish a disabled staff network. To promote visibility of groups, we have online exhibitions of successful female academic staff and of LGBT staff at the University. Our student representative groups include the Black Students Committee, Disabled and Dyslexic Students Forum, International Students Committee, LGBT Committee and Women's Committee. We will continue to support and work with these networks, and encourage people to develop further networks.

The University's Corporate Social Responsibility to promote positive change is reflected in our **external activities**, which include working with the City via a number of networking and consultative groups, and sharing good practice as members of the Russell Group e&d network and the North Eastern Regional Universities EO group. We regularly place adverts in targeted magazines and are proud sponsors of Sheffield Pride. We will continue to work to facilitate and build on these relationships and activities.

- **Measuring our success**

Benchmarking against the sector and beyond is a vital tool for us in mapping progress, and external recognition and awards are a key measure of our successes.

**Opportunity Now:** assessed as silver standard in the UK's most extensive survey on gender equality and diversity. Score of 100% in three categories: staff engagement, integration of e&d into systems, and workplace performance.

**Two Ticks:** The University has to meet five criteria in order to be a Two Ticks employer. We achieved this in December 2008 and were re-awarded the symbol in February 2010.

**Athena Swan Bronze award** in August 2009. The faculty of Engineering championed the submission and have included female progression actions in their faculty strategy.

**Stonewall Diversity Champions:** the University joined in September 2009 and Out@Work has been recognised in Stonewall's good practice guide for employers. We will participate in the employers benchmarking exercise in December 2010.

**Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards (Thelmas):** Human Resources and Student Services won the 'Outstanding HR Team' and 'Outstanding Student

Services Team' awards 2010. Amongst the initiatives that the judges were impressed with were the 'Female Academic's Progression Action Plan,' and Out@Work Day.

**Audits of E&D** were carried out in 2008 and 2010: both resulted in very positive reports with few recommendations, and service to demonstrate that, when subjected to external scrutiny, the University has robust measures in place to progress the e&d agenda.

- Addressing accumulative disadvantage to female academics

The **Women Academic Returners' programme** (WARP) provides a grant of £10,000 to women academics and researchers who return to work after maternity leave, to cover teaching duties or support research activities. The University has committed over £1.5m to this programme and it will continue to run until at least 2012. Prior to introducing the programme, although nearly 100% of female academics and researchers returned to work following maternity leave, nearly 1 in 4 (25%) of these would subsequently leave the University. Since introducing the programme, this proportion is now 1 in 7 (14%), an increase in the retention rate of 11%, producing an estimated £6.2m in research income for the University.

**The Female Academic's Progression Action Plan** acts as a framework to drive actions relating to female progression. The plan was launched by the Vice-Chancellor in April 2009 following consultation with female professors and academics, who identified a number of issues to be considered. A steering group of female academics from across all faculties meet regularly with HR to discuss the ongoing implementation and review of the plan.

**Annual Female Professors Lunch** has been held since July 2008, bringing female professors together with members of the University Executive Board (UEB) to network and discuss ideas and issues about female career progression and support. The key points feed into updating the above action plan.

The **Impact Mentoring Programme** for all grade 8 female academics was established following a successful pilot from September 2008 to March 2009. We have also established a PVC mentoring programme which involves all eight University PVCs mentoring one or more female professors.

We recognise that working with **female students** to encourage them to consider a career in academia will increase the female pool of potential staff. This is particularly significant for SETM subjects. The Faculty of Engineering is considering actions to address this in its e&d action plan. One of the objectives of the Students Union Women's Officer for 2009-2010 was to increase the employability of female graduates when they leave Sheffield and a careers day for women students in science engineering and technology was organised, hosted by the UK resource centre, to consider the issues facing women in SETM.

- Developing people

We focus on targeted and generic training to ensure people are aware of their responsibilities, and have the skills and ability to meet them.

**Recruitment and Selection Panel Chairs:** mandatory 2 phase training comprising online package and workshop sessions aimed at Chairs of recruitment and selection panels, and recruitment and selection network members. 487 attendees have been trained with further sessions planned.

**Two Ticks and E-Recruitment:** training sessions for recruiters on the e-recruitment system includes Two Ticks training – 210 recruiters have attended so far, who cascade information to other panel members (802 panel members have used E-recruitment).

**Female only:** two training courses open to female staff only, which aim to help female staff understand, increase and maintain their personal impact – 'Impact for Women' and 'Dealing with Difficult Situations'.

**Headstart:** as part of the Headstart programme aimed at Heads of Departments, a seminar in July 2009 focussed on flexible working and work-life balance. We are working on a project to provide a supportive framework for managers to help them deal with requests for flexible and part time working, and to promote a culture of flexibility.

**Equality Impact Assessments:** guidance documents developed and available to all staff, and training sessions held for HR, the University Library and Academic Services. 27 EIAs have been carried out, with an agreement that all policies will be subject to an EIA going forward.

**Equality Act Briefing sessions** held during 2009 for the Equality and Diversity Board, the University Council, the Human Resources Management Committee, Campus Unions and HR Advisors. More briefings are planned for 2010 on the impact of the Act on our University.

Heads of Department **EO briefings for RAE2008** included the use of case studies to help them consider a range of EO scenarios when assessing inputs. The RAE2008 Appeals Panel were also briefed on relevant legislation and issues to consider from an EO perspective.

**Staff Development programme:** includes a number of E-Learning packages specific to e&d: Challenging Behaviour, Equal Opportunities and Diversity Essentials, and Managing Diversity. All new staff are encouraged to complete our E-Learning E&D package as part of their induction.

**Seminars** on Hate Crimes held April 2010 for staff and students, followed by seminar on levels of support offered to staff and students by the University Counselling Service. Unison also ran a session with students on sexism, racism and transphobia in the workplace.