

# Edge Hill University Equality & Diversity Policy

## Foreword

Equality & Diversity has been a central tenet of this University since its founding days. It underpins our continued commitment to root equality and inclusion firmly in all we do. As such our vision is that ...

***Edge Hill University will provide an environment where everyone feels able to participate, contribute, enjoy and influence their experience; and where inclusive practices underpin everything we do. Respect for and celebration of individual diversity will shape institutional strategy, direction and behaviour.'***

Our Equality & Diversity Policy acknowledges the importance of recognising and treating people as individuals, as complex human beings with multiple and diverse identities. We take as our starting point that equality is a core human rights principle and that it is wrong, on the basis of someone's status or identity, to deny them their human rights. We are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity for all those within the University's community, whether staff, students, visitors, contractors or suppliers.

Our Policy applies to all, irrespective of:

- Disability
- Age
- Race
- Sex
- Gender Reassignment
- Religion, Belief or non-Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity

We acknowledge the importance of leadership and commitment at all levels within the University, irrespective of role and responsibilities. Achieving fair treatment for all requires positive and proactive engagement by everyone, for everyone. We welcome your feedback.

**John Cater**  
**Vice Chancellor**

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## Introduction

Our aim is to ameliorate disadvantage and proactively promote equality. A key feature of our particular scheme is its immediate focus on the actions we intend to take to further our work in becoming a fully inclusive University, proactively promoting equality and targeting any form of discrimination. The structure and focus is deliberate and is a direct response to some of the feedback received from stakeholders when we were reviewing progress against our previous schemes. What matters to people most, is what we are going to do about any areas of concern and what we are going to do to progress our plans to achieve equality. For this reason, full contextual details about the public sector duties and about the University are detailed in various hyperlinks for scrutiny and publication.

Our aims and objectives apply to each of the protected characteristics, demonstrating that equality and diversity is central to all that we do.

Our **specific aims for promoting equality** are:

- (i) to assess the University's strengths, weaknesses and areas for development in providing and promoting inclusive practices for all students and staff
- (ii) to identify and seek to remove perceived and actual barriers to full participation in Edge Hill for all, i.e. prospective and current staff and students, visitors, suppliers etc.
- (iii) to enhance our ability to successfully recruit, retain and support staff and students
- (iv) to ensure all strategies, policies and procedures are underpinned by the need to ensure equality is central to University planning and operational practices
- (v) to ensure all staff and students are fully aware of and accept their responsibilities to perform their roles in a way that genuinely promotes equality of opportunity and eliminates discrimination and harassment
- (vi) to promote positive attitudes and encourage participation and inclusion in University and public life
- (vii) to proactively anticipate the needs of individuals in all our endeavours
- (viii) to monitor the effectiveness of the actions taken to promote equality and publicise the results
- (ix) to proactively monitor the impact on equality of all University policies, procedures and processes

*It is our considered view that these aims fully embrace our Public Duty as described at*

- Visit the [Equality & Human Rights Commission](#)
- Visit the [Equality Act 2010](#)

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Prior to the Equalities Act 2010 our focus was primarily on race, disability and gender equality. We welcome the inclusion of the additional protected characteristics, whilst at the same time recognising the challenges inherent in this approach.


A review of the Action Plans for the previous Schemes has highlighted the following progress, achievements and challenges we face:

### Progress and Achievements

#### Race Equality.

- Embedded a range of targeted promotional and aspirational-raising activities and taster sessions resulting in an improvement in the number of students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds entering full-time programmes from 6.7% to 10.2%
- Provided cultural-awareness training to Admissions Tutors, academic and support staff
- Organised the Citizens of Faith conference
- Contributed to the Black & Minority recruitment and retention conference as part of our work with the Merseyside Black & Ethnic Minority steering group
- Presented the Transnational Experiences seminar series
- Presented the Holocaust Studies conference
- Presented the Ethnicity Race & Racism seminar series
- Increased the number of international staff appointed to the Centre for International Education
- Increased the number of international staff employed in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences

#### Disability Equality

- Delivered a range of targeted interventions aimed at increasing the number of students from under-represented groups within our community
- Embedded a three-day residential transition programme to help disabled students prepare for higher education
- Sporting Edge maintained and enhanced their Inclusive Fitness accreditation and provision
- Improved the provision of specialist support for students with Autistic Spectrum conditions
- Increased involvement of Access to Work in identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments for staff
- Gained recognition as a Disability  employer for staff recruitment

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### Gender Equality

- Recruitment of male trainees in Initial Teacher Training programmes remained an ongoing focus with improvements across many areas, most notably the standard PGCE programme where 32% of males enrolled
- Larger male representation within Masters programmes within the Faculty of Arts & Sciences
- Presented the GenSex Research seminar series
- A review of gender imbalance addressed in two University departments; additionally, a slight improvement in the appointment of females with/to professorial title
- Ensured the maintenance of gender-based equality of pay
- Recognition by Tommys for providing Breastfeeding facilities for staff

### Challenges Going Forward

- Increasing the number of Black and Ethnic Minority students and staff remains a challenge
- Enabling the disclosure of disability within the student and staff communities
- Enhancing our equality impact assessment processes including publication
- Supporting the faith needs of international and home-based students

### Key Objectives

Following our review of progress and challenges going forward, we have identified the following objectives and priorities for action:

- Improve equality and diversity in the student and staff populations
- Promote the value and importance of students and staff disclosing disability and accessing support and funding
- Improve our equality impact assessment processes and publication
- Promote and develop the volunteer Chaplaincy services to support the faith needs of international and home-based students and staff and raise awareness of multi-faith religions within the University community

In identifying these key objectives we recognise that to some extent they mirror some of our previous objectives. We make no apologies for this. In our view it is unavoidable, given the intractable nature of some of the challenges we face.