

Confirmed Minutes

Meeting:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
Date:	8 December 2021
Time:	1 pm to 3 pm
Venue:	373 Euston Road, Room 201

M Jackson - Chair	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Shabnam Karim	Finance Director
Sarah Bailey	Director, Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Anna Krajewska	Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Head of the School of Business and Accounting
Nandini Canoo*	Senior Lecturer, EDI Academic Lead
Dr Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Alina Da Franca	Academic Administrator
Shola Fiberesima	Guild Manager
Veronica Wilson	Student Guild Equality Society Lead
Kerry McKeivitt	HR Consultant
Lydia Hesketh*	Head of Communications
Ramin Nassajpour	Finance and Internal Audit Manager
Arif Zaman	Senior Lecturer, Business

In attendance

Joan O'Mahony	Director of Academic Development
Trisa Triandesa	Communications Officer

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

M Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced V Wilson, the Student Guild's Equality Society Lead, who would be representing students on the committee. She also informed the committee that A Da Franca has now replaced Eleonora Affronte on the committee.

M Jackson conveyed apologies from N Canoo and L Hesketh. It was noted that T Triandesa would represent the Head of Communications in L Hesketh's absence.

2.0 Meeting of 27 October 2021

2.1 Unconfirmed Minutes

The minutes of the 27 October 2021 EDIC were agreed as a true record and **approved** by the committee.

2.2 Action Tracker/Matters Arising

2.2.1 Minutes of 10 February 2021

2.2.1.1 Item 2.1c refers

Completed.

2.2.1.2 Item 5c refers

Update: email sent to London Higher and awaiting advice on membership. An update is anticipated in February 2022.

2.2.2 Minutes of 23 June 2021

2.2.2.1 Item 6a refers

Completed: The Academic Registrar has confirmed that students who are adopting a child would benefit from the same rules and dispensations that a pregnant student would under the University of Northampton's regulations. Consequently, the entries within the draft Support for Pregnant Students document are correct and so the document has now been approved by Chair's Action and is being submitted to the December 2021 EDIC to evidence changes made.

2.2.2.2 Item 6 b refers

Completed.

2.2.3 Minutes of 27 October 2021

2.2.3.1 Item 3 refers

Update: Email request sent to Chair and Secretary of SALT 29 October 2021. A Krajewska queried whether SALT would be the right forum to discuss the diversity of our student body and M Jackson clarified that the purpose of this discussion was to determine whether the lived experience of other academics (from ethnic minority backgrounds) teaching at Bloomsbury Institute was similar to that reported by A Zaman in the October 2021 EDIC. It was agreed that A Krajewska, A Zaman and J O'Mahony would discuss outside the meeting whether the Widening Participation Forum would be a better platform to consider this matter.

2.2.3.2 Item 10.7 refers

Completed: Amended policy document now approved by the Board of Directors. An agenda item for the December 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.3 Item 11 refers

Completed.

For approval

3.0 There were no items due for approval

For discussion

4.0 Access and Participation Plan

4.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan – Summary Report

4.2 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan

4.3 KPIs 2021-22

M Jackson outlined the principles behind the Access and Participation Plan (APP) for the benefit of new members and explained how the OfS Condition A1 Action Plan links to the Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25.

She informed the members that although some of the individual actions designed to aid the achievement of our targets in the APP were not yet completed, compliance with the overall targets is assumed in the absence of any intelligence to the contrary.

M Jackson explained that our commitment to this agenda is further evidenced through the inclusion of the academic actions relating to the APP in our KPIs.

5.0 Family-friendly Policies

K McKevitt explained that she has reviewed our family-oriented policies and has identified some areas for enhancement in order to enrich our provision beyond statutory compliance levels. She said that although our offer would have to be scaled to the resources available, there are possible enhancements that can be made with relatively small resource implications.

K McKevitt invited the committee to share their experiences or views on becoming a parent from a work perspective as well as their views on flexible working and shared parental leave. She invited comments from the committee and the following points were made:

- It was noted that the experiences of parents from within the School of Business were positive and that there was sensitivity to their responsibilities in emergency situations. However, it was always on a discretionary basis, and it was suggested that formalisation of entitlements in this area would give staff greater clarity on family-related matters.
- It was noted that the rules around paternity leave are less clear and not immediately available. K McKevitt noted this point and said that this area would be looked at in terms of pay and leave entitlement.
- The approach to flexible working was discussed and various views were shared. There were arguments for flexible working to be based on a specific role requirement rather than a one-fits-all rigid solution as a corporate approach to regulating working hours was argued to be demotivating for staff. It was suggested that the expectations around on-site presence should be clearly communicated by the Line Manager as clarity on what is expected would help staff with their parental duties. It was suggested that formal rules should be agreed upon for all staff with a further role-specific allowance to be agreed by the Line Manager.
- It was recommended for training to be developed and delivered by People, Talent, Culture for Line Managers to support staff in clearly communicating expectations and dealing with any issues arising.
- It was also suggested that an information pack for expecting parents could be looked at to provide useful information concerning workplace provision and entitlements for new parents.
- The committee suggested that consideration should also be given to those who look after dependants other than children (e.g. elderly parents).
- From a social perspective, the committee suggested organising some institutional family-friendly events (e.g. Regents Park summer picnic) and creating a staff social committee.

K McKevitt noted the suggestions made by the committee, but explained that the initial focus would be to enhance our existing maternity, paternity and adoption packages.

6.0 EDIC Membership and Terms of Reference

M Jackson explained that the Head of Governance and Legal Services was currently working on the governance review. She therefore invited the committee to share any suggestions and recommendations pertinent to the membership or the terms of reference of EDIC that could be forwarded to L Bunbury for consideration.

The committee discussed and the following points were noted:

- The powers and accountability of EDIC were discussed and it was agreed that they are appropriate. However, it was suggested by some that for the EDI agenda to permeate every activity at Bloomsbury Institute, representatives from all departments/divisions should be included within the committee's membership. One key area currently not represented is recruitment. It was suggested that in addition to core membership, the meetings should be open to casual attendance to enhance further agenda-driven

discussions. However, it was noted that this might also be problematic – particularly from a logistics perspective.

- It was suggested that some of the meetings could be dedicated to different themes (outside of policy reviews) that are relevant to the AY cycle.
- Greater involvement of members in setting up the meeting agenda was discussed; however, M Jackson reminded the committee that there is a call for agenda items sent out before each meeting and members should take advantage of this existing opportunity.

M Jackson thanked the committee for the discussion and the suggestions made, and invited any further ideas to be shared with her outside the meeting. She stressed, however, that the above were for consideration by the Head of Governance and Legal Services only.

For information

7.0 Update from Head of EDI

M Jackson reported that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-21 had been well received at the Joint Meeting of the Academic Committee and Board of Directors in November 2021 with the Chair of the Board commending the evidence of institutional commitment to EDI.

8.0 Update from EDI Academic Lead

In the absence of N Canoo, M Jackson shared with the committee the new EDI Academic Lead's main areas of responsibility, namely:

- In-Bloom EDI unit delivery.
- Internationalisation of the curriculum (LLB).
- EDI Terminology.
- Supporting the Accessibility Project co-led by M Jackson and A Krajewska.

9.0 Update from Director of Academic Development on the Widening Participation Forum

J O'Mahony informed the committee that the first of four planned Widening Participation Forum meetings has been convened and that attendance from staff had been good. She explained that the forum had been designed to consider the obstacles occurring in the student life cycle at Bloomsbury Institute. The initial meeting had focused on the theme of student engagement.

J O'Mahony also informed the committee that a blog related to WP was currently being finalised for publication on the Bloomsbury Institute website.

10.0 Update from Disability and Wellbeing Manager

Although the Pregnancy and Adoption Student Guide had now been approved by Chair's Action, N Michail asked that the title of the document (agreed at the last meeting) be reconsidered to include within its scope the concept of parenting. The committee discussed and agreed to rename it the Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide.

N Michail informed the committee that Bloomsbury Institute had become a member of the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE). M Jackson recommended that N Michail share this information with L Hesketh in order for the latter to update our Membership webpage. N Michail also informed the committee that she has created a mental health and wellbeing focused module on Canvas.

N Michail reported that the promotion of the TalkCampus app is ongoing and currently, there are around 18 students using it. It was recommended for teaching staff to promote the app to students around the pressure points in the AY when the students might find it most useful.

S Bailey recommended that the workshops and seminars offered by the Disability and Wellbeing Office be recorded for students who are unable to attend in person so that they can access them online. M Jackson agreed that this would allow more students to take advantage of what is on offer and would be in line with OfS advice to have multiple channels for offering support to students.

For information to evidence changes made

11.0 11.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

M Jackson presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to the committee as approved by the Board of Directors.

11.2 Pregnancy and Adoption Student Guide

For discussion see item 10.0 above. The document was agreed to be renamed as Pregnancy, Maternity and Parenting Guide.

Any Other Business

12.0 Any Other Business

- A Zaman informed the committee that Bloomsbury Institute has joined the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education – UNPRME.
- A Krajewska informed the committee about a QAA collaborative project with which she is going to be involved. The project aims to improve student learning by linking two key areas: inclusion/accessibility and academic integrity. It is anticipated that the QAA would announce the successful proposals in January 2022.

Date and venue of next meeting

13.0 23 February 2022, 1 pm to 3 pm, 373 Euston Road, Room number to be confirmed