

## Confirmed Minutes

<b>Meeting:</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
<b>Date:</b>	10 February 2021
<b>Time:</b>	3.30pm – 5.00pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Teams Meeting

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Maria Jackson – <b>Chair and Secretary</b>	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Company Secretary
Eleonora Affronte	Academic Administration Executive for Business and Foundation Year
Sarah Bailey	Director, Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Shola Fiberesima	Guild Manager
Lydia Hesketh	Head of Communications
Amanda Jeram	Head of Quality and Compliance
Shabnam Karim	Finance Director
Nasser Kazinda	Student President
Anna Krajewska	Head of Business and Accounting, and Director of CETL
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Advisor
Ramin Nassajpour	Finance Executive
Georgiana Ursachescu	Student Representative and Society Lead for the Equality Society
Veronica Wilson	Student Representative, LLB Year 2
Arif Zaman	Senior Lecturer, Business, EDI Academic Lead

<b>1.0</b>	Welcome and Apologies
1.1	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>M Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting and, in particular C Lewis-Thomas who was rejoining the committee.</p> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from A Jeram.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<p>Meeting of 11 November 2020</p> <p>2.1 <u>Unconfirmed Minutes of meeting of 11 November 2020 (for approval)</u></p> <p>M Jackson flagged (and apologised for) a typo in V Wilson's name in the table of attendees.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting of 11 November 2020 were approved subject to the correction to V Wilson's name.</p> <p>2.2 <u>Action Tracker/Matters Arising</u></p> <p><u>Action Tracker</u></p> <p>[To note: Action reference numbers are allocated consecutively on a rolling basis and not on an individual meeting basis.]</p> <p><b>Action 1</b></p>

Update: Meeting dates for 2020-21 have been scheduled with the intention of using the Annual Teaching and Learning Conference in July 2021 for a final meeting of the WP Forum. See Agenda Item 6 for further information.

**Action 12**

Update: M Jackson and N Michail will collaborate on the review of the accessibility related guideline documents upon approval of the Disability Policy for 2021-22. In the circumstances, the completion date has been amended to September 2021.

**Action 27: Completed.**

Given the number of amendments made to the Disability Policy, the document was re-submitted to the November EDIC for approval.

**Action 32**

Update: M Jackson to seek volunteers to take forward a suggestion from A Zaman that a guidance document be developed around adoption and surrogacy. M Jackson reported that there had been limited expressions of interest and so she would need to put this particular project on hold given other commitments. N Michail suggested that rather than create a standalone guidance document, we add a section within the Support for Pregnant Students document and change the title of the document to reflect the expanded focus. The Committee endorsed this approach and it was agreed that when reviewing the Support for Pregnant Students document, N Michail would share proposed text on adoption and surrogacy with A Zaman prior to the documents being considered for approval within EDIC.

**Action 33: Completed.**

**Action 34: Completed.**

Discussion of the "Sticker Scheme" is an agenda item. See Agenda Item 4.

**Actions 35 to 37 (inclusive): Completed.**

**Action 38**

Update: to be addressed in February 2021 EDIC meeting. See Agenda Item 5.

**Action 39: Completed.**

A report from L Hesketh on the number of students accessing our Covid-19 blogs and the medium used for accessing the same was circulated to EDIC members in advance of the meeting. The report also covered a separate data request from M Jackson on the number of students accessing our Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing, and our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

L Hesketh explained that it was not possible to report on access to the Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy as there are reporting limitations with google analytics. In the circumstances, L Hesketh looked instead at the source pages from which both documents can be accessed by way of a proxy. The source pages are our online Quality and Enhancement Manual, and our Disability and Wellbeing Support pages. L Hesketh reported that hits on these pages were relatively good. Less encouraging were the hits on our Coronavirus blog posts. However, L Hesketh has been working with the Academic Registrar to revamp the Coronavirus support pages based on student feedback to make the pages more accessible. She will be reviewing the impact of the changes made in due course.

R Nassajpour asked about the bounce rate recorded for the Coronavirus pages. Although she did not have figures to hand, L Hesketh said she expected the bounce rate to be quite low. However, she agreed to check and report back. R Nassajpour also flagged the need for more Quick Links as in some places students are required to click through multiple pages to get to the information they need. He cited the example of when students want to raise a ticket for an IT query. L Hesketh said she would look at this with the IT team.

G Ursachescu said she found the Covid support pages to be really helpful, but agreed with R Nassajpour on the IT ticketing issue he had raised. Other than that, she felt that key information

	<p>was easy to locate. V Wilson and N Kazinda reported that they found it easy to navigate the website for information.</p> <p>R Nassajpour asked whether students tend to navigate through the website or whether they rely heavily on the Search function. G Ursachescu said that students tended to navigate through the website. L Hesketh added that she has recently been working on the Search function and that it has been vastly improved.</p> <p><b>Actions 40 to 43 (inclusive): Completed.</b></p> <p><b>Actions arising from discussion of the Action Tracker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>N Michail to capture adoption and surrogacy within our current Support for Pregnant Students document and share draft text with A Zaman prior to the document's consideration for approval by the EDIC.</b></li> <li>• <b>L Hesketh to report back on the bounce rate for the Coronavirus support pages.</b></li> <li>• <b>L Hesketh to liaise with IT to simplify the process for raising an IT ticket.</b></li> </ul>
<b>For approval</b>	
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Dignity and Respect Policy</b></p> <p>M Jackson presented the Dignity and Respect Policy for approval, explaining that although the committee had reviewed the document relatively recently, our HR Consultant has just reviewed a raft of HR policies and wanted to ensure that the terminology used in the Dignity and Respect Policy is consistent with the amended terminology used in the HR documents.</p> <p>M Jackson highlighted the minor amendments made (Sections 5.4 and 8.1) as set out in the accompanying Summary of Changes document and sought comments from the committee. A couple of textual changes were highlighted (replacement of Institution with Institute; addition of the Performance Improvement Procedure to Section 9; correction to the title of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure; and confirmation of the HR Manager's current title).</p> <p>The Committee approved the Dignity and Respect Policy subject to the above amendments and confirmation of the HR Manager's current title.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>M Jackson to liaise with the HR Consultant to amend the Dignity and Respect Policy as recommended.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>The future of the "Sticker Scheme"</b></p> <p>4.1 <u>Extract from the current Disability Policy</u></p> <p>M Jackson explained that last year the committee had taken the decision that for 2021-22, we would withdraw the "Sticker Scheme" for new students, but continue it for current students. However, at the last EDIC meeting, G Ursachescu had asked if the committee could re-consider this decision given the committee's new membership. It was therefore agreed that the committee would revisit the scheme at the February EDIC meeting in time for N Michail to review our Disability Policy and related documents for presentation at the May 2021 EDIC for approval.</p> <p>N Michail reminded the committee that the "Sticker Scheme" for students had been introduced for exam purposes, on a voluntary basis, to advise markers (internal and external) that the exam script has been produced by a student with a SpLD or autism and, should therefore, be marked in accordance with our relevant guidelines. N Michail also summarised (for the benefit of the new committee members) how the scheme works, and explained that to date only one student has opted to use the scheme.</p>

	<p>A Krajewska explained that other than for Level 0 modules (where there is a strong focus on effective communication), there are no modules for which there is a specific Learning Outcome relating to the correct use of English. The general rule in marking is that if the meaning is not obscured or impeded by grammar or language errors, then the student should not be penalised for such errors, and although language is more important in some disciplines (e.g English, Law and Philosophy), the HE sector is moving increasingly towards the EAP principle of marking according to meaning. Given that this is the approach taken at an Institute level and given that we are already planning some additional training for tutors in this area, A Krajewska did not feel there was a need for the Sticker Scheme.</p> <p>M Jackson invited comments from other committee members and from the students and A Zaman (in his role as EDI Academic) in particular. G Ursachescu said that based on the comments made by A Krajewska and the fact that the scheme only applies to exams, she was happy to support the scheme's withdrawal. Both N Kazinda, V Wilson and A Zaman agreed with G Ursachescu on this point, noting that no student would be disadvantaged as a result.</p> <p>In the circumstances, the committee agreed that given our current practices and commitment to inclusivity (evident in our Strategic Framework, our Access and Participation Plan, our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework etc), the scheme should be withdrawn for new students. We would continue to honour it for current students although, in practice, there would be no need given the Institution approach outlined above on marking.</p> <p>Given the above decision, the committee noted that there was no need to review the current associated guidelines on marking. However, M Jackson agreed to consider whether there was any scope in using any of the information to supplement our Staff Accessibility Module on Canvas.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>M Jackson to review the marking guideline documents supporting the “Sticker Scheme” with a view to possibly using them (either in part or in full) to supplement the existing documents available from the Staff Accessibility Module on Canvas.</b></li> </ul>
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**For Discussion**

<p><b>5.0</b></p>	<p><b>Black Lives Matter</b></p> <p>5.1 <u>UK Universities' Response to Black Lives Matter Report November 2020</u></p> <p>A Zaman began his presentation on the above report by playing a recording of Amanda Gorman's poem reading at Joe Biden's inauguration given how well he felt it frames responses to the BLM movement and UK Universities' Response to Black Lives Matter Report.</p> <p>A Zaman highlighted the following key takeaways from the report which had been triggered by the murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not enough to be non-racist. Everyone has a part to play to help society become actively anti-racist.</li> <li>• As in other sectors, the HE sector is being held to account with heightened levels of scrutiny from students, staff, and their wider stakeholders.</li> <li>• The HE sector needs to acknowledge the part it has played in systemic racism up until now, and whilst many providers issued a statement in response to George Floyd's murder, that is not enough. Black people are likely to boycott traditional universities if providers do not make sufficient progress in this area.</li> <li>• Around 44% of respondents said they were aware of concrete actions/commitments that their universities would be taking forward. However, only a few universities have published subsequent updates since then.</li> <li>• The report highlights the importance of finding the right words and actions, and the importance of intersectionality, partnership working, allies, authenticity and credibility, and of setting priorities and taking prompt action.</li> </ul>
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- Only 25.6% felt that their university's response to BLM was appropriate or sufficient. 38.5% said that their university had responded to racial inequality before. 82.1% said that they would benefit from more education about racism.
- Only 24.4% think that EDI is embedded in all aspects of their university.

A Zaman explained that the report includes a comprehensive set of recommendations and highlighted the following upon which he recommended discussion either in EDIC or within a small BLM Working Group that he offered to lead:

- R6: Communicate your anti-racism activity clearly to students, staff and the wider public.
- R7: Recognise that anti-racism work needs to underpin your institutional COVID response.
- R9: Use the power of stories and lived experiences alongside statistics.
- R13: Don't leave racial inequality work to specific individuals, EDI committees, or HR departments – it is everyone's responsibility.
- R15: Build anti-Black racism work into all strategies and plans – long and short-term. Have clear targets at all levels.
- R24: Allow for regular reflection and feedback from staff and students.
- R30: Ensure the mental health provisions are culturally competent.

M Jackson thanked A Zaman for his presentation and explained that although she knew A Zaman would be presenting on the subject of BLM in the meeting, she did not know what he was going to cover. She said that in preparing for the meeting, she had therefore drawn up a summary of the work already undertaken or being done at Bloomsbury Institute in this area. Given the lack of time to go through these within the meeting M Jackson said she would share with the committee by email after the meeting as this would help inform exactly where any gaps might exist. However, in the meantime, she took the opportunity to stress the extent to which Bloomsbury Institute is a widening participation institution, as evidenced by the rather lengthy list of activities/achievements she has drawn up. A Zaman said he would then incorporate details within his slide presentation.

S Bailey asked whether there was a cross sector HE working group looking at initiatives around BLM. A Zaman reported that he was involved in a London Higher entrepreneurship group along with S Bailey, and knew that London Higher also had a BAME group. It was agreed that M Jackson would contact London Higher about the possibility of Bloomsbury Institute joining that group.

A Zaman added that the Knowledge Quarter were also very active in BLM initiatives, and agreed to see if we could join any appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion forums that they might have. He asked whether NEON were also active in this area. M Jackson reported that she would be attending a NEON event in February, but that it had the specific focus of Black attainment gaps.

M Jackson reported that a lot of the HE initiatives around BLM are being driven by Student Unions. G Ursachescu agreed and reported that she has been working with N Kazinda and V Wilson on a Student Guild documentary on BLM. Although Covid-19 has impacted on the project's development, she is hopeful that it will be finalised for March 2021 when the Guild will be marks its anniversary. M Jackson said she would be really interested in watching the documentary and suggested that the EDIC and the Guild work collaboratively in this area.

V Wilson said she was very pleased to hear that staff at Bloomsbury Institute take a very proactive approach to BLM and asked how students could get involved in the Working Group that A Zaman has proposed setting up. A Zaman said that his initial thinking was that it would be a small group comprising some members of EDIC and other interested parties from within the Institute (both students and staff). However, he said he would report back at the next EDIC meeting. In the meantime, he encouraged the committee to read the Case Studies included within the UK Universities' report.

V Wilson asked how we could encourage the student voice in this area as she said she was aware of a number of students who have a strong interest and views on this subject, but who are quiet and may not feel comfortable engaging with the Working Group. M Jackson stressed how keen we are to hear the student voice and said that she would hope students would feel that any working group or forum would provide them with a safe space for the exchange of ideas. However, if students still feel reticent in sharing their ideas, she said that they could do so in a number of other ways. For

	<p>example, they could be encouraged to share their ideas on an anonymous basis through the student members of the EDIC, through their student representatives or through the Student Guild and the Guild Manager. V Wilson agreed that this would be a good approach, but suggested also having a comments box in the Student Guild.</p> <p>A Zaman agreed to liaise with G Ursachescu, as the Equality Society Lead, to agree upon actions going forwards. He would then submit these to EDIC for approval and share more widely within the Widening Participation Forum. He also recommended that initiatives around BLM be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A Zaman to establish a BLM Working Group and present recommended actions for approval by the EDIC.</b></li> <li>• <b>M Jackson to share with the committee details of the achievements and actions being undertaken at Bloomsbury Institute in support of its black students as well as its Asian students and students from other ethnic minorities.</b></li> <li>• <b>M Jackson to contact London Higher regarding membership of their BAME working group.</b></li> <li>• <b>A Zaman to contact the Knowledge Quarter to see if we could join any appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion forums that they might have.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>6.0</b></p>	<p><b>Widening Participation Forum</b></p> <p>A Zaman confirmed that the Widening Participation Forum would be meeting on 7 April and 2 June 2021 and reminded the committee that the Forum has been designed to encourage staff and students to explore the lived experiences of our students, and also to be a catalyst for research. He added that whilst some areas for research will be directly linked to our Access and Participation Plan and some have already been listed within the Forum's Terms of Reference, staff have also begun to identify some broader research areas following a presentation given by M Jackson at the January 2021 Teaching and Learning Forum. A Zaman invited the committee to share any ideas for research that they might either want to engage in personally, or might want others to consider engaging in. It was agreed that members would share their ideas with A Zaman outside the meeting.</p> <p>Finally, A Zaman reported that this year's Annual Teaching and Learning Conference (taking place on 9 July 2021) will be exploring the theme of identity, and encouraged members of EDIC to consider getting involved either in terms of giving a presentation or leading a workshop. He added that a presentation or workshop around BLM would lend itself particularly well to the theme of the conference.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All to share with A Zaman any suggestions they might have for research.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>7.0</b></p>	<p><b>EDI Actions 2020-21: EDI 1, EDI2 and EDI4</b></p> <p>7.1 <u>EDI Actions 2020-21</u></p> <p>7.2 <u>Calendar of Events</u></p> <p>7.3 <u>Website/SharePoint Shell</u></p> <p>Given time constraints, it was agreed that committee members would email M Jackson with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressions of interest in the actions set out in the EDI Actions 2020-21 action plan (see 7.1).</li> <li>• Suggestions for which two key events we should celebrate/mark (see 7.2).</li> <li>• Ideas for the structure/content of an EDI website/SharePoint site (see 7.3).</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All to email M Jackson with expressions of interest, suggestions and ideas as per the above.</li> </ul>
8.0	<p><b>Decolonising/Internationalising the Curriculum</b></p> <p>Discussion of this agenda item was deferred to the next EDIC meeting.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M Jackson to add to ensure this item is discussed at the next EDIC meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>For information</b>	
9.0	<p><b>To evidence changes made following the last EDIC meeting</b></p> <p>9.1 <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2019-20</u></p> <p>The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2019-20 was received by the committee to evidence the changes made.</p>
10.0	<p><b>Access and Participation Plan</b></p> <p>10.1 <u>OfS Condition A1 Action Plan Template</u></p> <p>The OfS Condition A1 Action Plan Templated was received and noted.</p>
11.0	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None.</p>
12.0	<p><b>Date and venue of next meeting: To be arranged.</b></p>