

Confirmed Minutes

Meeting:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
Date:	27 October 2021
Time:	1 pm to 3 pm
Venue:	373 Euston Road, Room EUS403

M Jackson - Chair	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Sarah Bailey	Director, Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success
Nandini Canoo	Senior Lecturer, EDI Academic Lead
Dr Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Georgiana Ursachescu	Student Guild Officer
Kerry McKeivitt	HR Consultant
Lydia Hesketh	Head of Communications
Ramin Nassajpour	Finance and 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 explained that some new members have joined the committee in a guest capacity pending the internal review of Bloomsbury Institute's governance arrangements. She further explained that the new members would not have voting rights until confirmed as members in the Corporate and Academic Governance Framework.

M Jackson informed the committee that apologies were received from the following members:

Alina Da Franca, Anna Krajewska, Shabnam Karim, Nasser Kazinda and Amanda Jeram.

2.0 Meeting of 23 June 2021

2.1 Unconfirmed Minutes (for approval)

M Jackson reminded the committee that the minutes would be published on the Institute's website going forward. She acknowledged that some members might wish to remain anonymous and invited committee members to send her a request to anonymise their comments should they prefer this.

The minutes of the 23 June 2021 meeting were agreed to be a true record subject to amending R Nassajpour's designation to Finance and Audit Manager.

2.2 Action Tracker/Matters Arising

2.2.1 Minutes of 11 November 2020

2.2.1.1 Item 6 refers

Completed: Update provided in the June 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.2 Minutes of 10 February 2021

2.2.2.1 Item 2.1a refers

Completed: Update provided in the June 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.2.2 Item 2.1b refers

Completed: Update provided in the June 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.2.3 Item 2.1 c refers

Completed.

2.2.2.4 Item 3 refers

Completed: Update provided in the June 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.2.5 Item 4 refers

Completed: See agenda item 9.

2.2.2.6 Item 5a refers

Completed.

2.2.2.7 Item 5c refers

Update: M Jackson contacted London Higher and is awaiting advice on membership.

2.2.2.8 Item 5d

Completed.

2.2.2.8 Item 6 refers

Completed.

2.2.2.9 Item 7 refers

Completed.

2.2.2.10 Item 8 refers

Completed.

2.2.3 Minutes of 23 June 2021

2.2.3.1 Item 3a refers

Completed: See Agenda Item 9 for the October 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.2 Item 3b refers

Completed: M Jackson reported that there are currently 18 users of TalkCampus.

2.2.3.3 Item 4 refers

Completed: See Agenda Item 9 for the October 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.4 Item 5.1 refers

Completed: See Agenda Item 9 for the October 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.5 Item 5.2 refers

Completed: See Agenda Item 9 for the October 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.6 Item 5.3a refers

Completed.

2.2.3.7 Item 5.3b refers

Completed: See Agenda Item 9 for the October 2021 EDIC meeting.

2.2.3.8 Item 6a refers

Completed: N Michail informed the committee that 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 regulations. Consequently, the entries within the draft Support for Pregnant Students are correct and the document can now be approved by Chair's Action and submitted to the December 2021 EDIC meeting to evidence changes made.

2.2.3.9 Item 6b refers

Completed: K McKeivitt informed the committee that there were a number of gaps identified in our policies under the family friendly umbrella, and those would be addressed in 2022. The development of a policy document on adoption for staff would be considered at the same time.

2.2.3.10 Item 8 refers

Completed: An agenda item for the October 2021 EDIC.

For approval

3.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-21 including a proposed EDI Action Plan 2021-22

[For approval by the EDIC]

M Jackson explained that the EDI Annual Report 2020-21 was designed to serve as an assurance to the Board of Directors of our commitment to the EDI agenda and to evidence how equality, diversity and inclusion considerations underpin activities within all divisions/departments within Bloomsbury Institute.

M Jackson presented the report and invited comments from the committee. The following points were noted:

- A Zaman remarked that there is very little diversity in his Level 6 Business Management class, and pointed out the negative impact this may have. He asked where we were in terms of achieving the target set for the recruitment of BAME students in our APP. M Jackson explained that there were no significant gaps related to ethnicity identified in our APP and therefore there were no targets set for recruiting BAME students. However, she reported that our current recruitment strategy is targeted at specific ethnic groups and L Hesketh confirmed that this was the case for home students through the campaign run in London.
- A Zaman asked also about BAME representation in the latest intake of new students, and M Jackson explained that although the number of new students who enrolled was very low, the split was approximately 60%:40% in favour of BAME students.
- J O'Mahony agreed that the data available is not sufficiently robust to draw conclusions, but suggested that in anticipation of future recruitment rounds, more specific targeting could be discussed with the Interim Head of Marketing.
- A Zaman said that it would be beneficial for academics to be informed of their particular student profile at a module level from an ethnicity perspective so as to enable the academics to prepare their teaching materials accordingly. A Zaman provided an example of a Level

6 assessment that focuses on Africa and with a class where there is nobody from Africa, he said this assessment would require additional explanation.

- J O'Mahony recognised that the lived experience of an academic is a salient debate point in the sector and agreed that a lack of diversity in the classroom has an adverse impact on both students and academics alike. The committee agreed upon the importance of diversity, noting that A Zaman's experience might be an isolated case given the diverse nature of Bloomsbury Institute's student body. It was recommended, therefore, that a further discussion on this take place in SALT, where representation from across different disciplines could benefit the debate.

Following a discussion, the committee **approved** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-21 together with the proposed actions for 2021-22.

Action: M Jackson to recommend that SALT (a) discuss the diversity of our student body across disciplines and, depending on the findings, its impact on academics and students, and (b) share its findings with the EDIC for consideration of any actions necessary.

For discussion

4.0 Access and Participation Plan

4.1 OfS Condition A1 Action Plan

M Jackson explained that the Committee would receive both the complete OfS Condition A1 Action Plan with updates and the same Summary Report that is being submitted to the Board of Directors given the EDIC's responsibility for monitoring actions within the Plan.

It was noted that we remain compliant with the commitments made in the Plan although we are behind schedule with the completion of some of the individual actions that have been agreed upon in order to deliver on those commitments.

4.2 KPIs 2021-22

M Jackson informed the Committee that we committed within our APP to include some of the targets related to identified gaps in our Key Performance Indicators. The latest iteration of the KPIs includes a section devoted to Academic KPIs related to the APP.

M Jackson explained that updates would be provided as per the reporting schedule in the KPIs document and would be shared with the Committee throughout the AY.

5.0 Antisemitism

5.1 Universities UK Recommendations on Actions for Tackling Antisemitism

M Jackson reminded the committee of the discussion had in June 2021 around the Secretary of State's recommendation that providers adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. The SLMT and Board of Directors had approved the EDIC's recommendation to adopt the definition as well as its recommendation that an explicit public statement on the matter was not necessary given that Bloomsbury Institute already takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment or hate crime of any kind.

M Jackson explained that the report she had shared with the EDIC on the Universities UK recommendations for tackling antisemitism was drafted to revisit the recommendations and reflections arising from the June 2021 meeting, and to inform a discussion on whether any further actions need to be taken.

It was noted that the initial responses to the Universities UK recommendations were largely that the Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy that we were in the process of developing was likely to address the points raised. There was, however, one exception and that was the recommendation that providers should consider whether it is appropriate to accept and investigate historical complaints given that students may prefer to report incidents after they have graduated for fear of reprisals during their

studies. M Jackson said that she would raise this with the Academic Registrar in advance of the next review of the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures. Other than this, M Jackson concluded that there were no additional actions required. However, she invited the Committee to share their comments. The Committee discussed the timescale for reporting incidents and agreed that a longer period for submitting complaints after graduation should be considered when the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures are next reviewed.

Following consideration of M Jackson's response to recommendations made in the Universities UK report, the Committee agreed that the responses outlined in the report adequately address the issues raised and that no additional actions would be required.

6.0 Events to mark/celebrate

M Jackson explained that to date, a rather ad hoc approach has been taken to celebrating or marking events. She added that she would like to move to a new model where the focus would be on 2-3 events per year to allow for a more substantial form of delivery.

The Committee discussed and various events were suggested. M Jackson requested for any further recommendations to be shared with her via email.

For information

7.0 Disability Office Annual Report 2020-21

M Jackson informed the Committee that the Disability Office Annual Report 2020-21 was previously submitted to the QAEC and AC where it had been well-received. She invited N Michail, the Disability and Wellbeing Manager, to present her report and the following was noted:

- 12% of our student body have a declared disability.
- A concerted effort was made during the Lockdown period to maintain contact with students. Phone calls made regularly by the Disability Office allowed students to express their worries and seek support where applicable.
- There is a commitment from the Disability Office to continue to enhance their services and a feedback form was introduced to inform the process. The feedback received was overall very positive and students appreciated the service they receive and the rapport the Disability and Wellbeing Manager has with them.
- N Michail provided a great deal of support and advice to students requesting extensions, and some of these students went on to graduate with a First.
- From the start of the new semester, wellbeing sessions were delivered both online and in person.

The Disability Office Annual Report 2020-21 was received and noted by the Committee.

8.0 Widening Participation Forum

J O'Mahony informed the Committee that the dates for the Widening Participation Forum meetings had been set for the AY and that an email had been sent to all staff informing them about Bloomsbury Institute's Widening Participation Grant 2021-22.

J O'Mahony explained that the aim of the Forum is to raise the profile of Bloomsbury Institute externally, but also to introduce some prominent speakers to the Institute's staff. She encouraged everyone to attend the Forum and consider applying for the grant and carrying out research.

M Jackson remarked that when the WP Forum was first set up, it was aimed at staff and students and asked whether this was still the intention. J O'Mahony responded that the Forum would still be open to

all staff and the student body of Bloomsbury Institute but subject to the availability of space in the case of students.

9.0 Inclusive Learning Environment Framework

M Jackson explained that the Inclusive Learning Environment Framework is a document that brings together all the initiatives at Bloomsbury Institute aimed at creating an inclusive learning environment. The initiatives were designed to cover the whole of the student journey with us.

M Jackson informed the Committee that the subsequent development and implementation of an Inclusive Learning Environment Action Plan (resulting from a collaborative analysis of our practices by all Heads of Divisions) is in the advanced stage of completion with 32 actions out of 50 confirmed as completed to date.

M Jackson further informed the Committee that an Inclusive Learning Position Paper is currently being worked on where our current status, a roadmap for future work, and mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of our initiatives would be outlined

For information to evidence changes made

10.0 10.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.2 Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.3 Disability Policy

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.4 Consent to Share Information

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.5 Disability Office – what we do with your data

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.6 Student Learning Support Agreement

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations.

10.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

(incorporating approval from the Board of Directors of the recommendation to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism)

The changes made were noted and agreed to reflect the committee's recommendations. However, M Jackson reported that a further amendment was likely to prove necessary given recent discussions within the SMLT on our approach to the disclosure of criminal convictions by job applicants. These discussions were had within the context of the review of our Staff Recruitment and Development Policy being led by K McKevitt. The EDIC agreed that the Chair of EDIC should make any necessary amendment to the text on criminal convictions based on SMLT decisions, and present the amended document to the Board for approval in November 2021. The amended document should then be presented to the December 2021 EDIC meeting to evidence the changes made.

Action: M Jackson to amend the section on criminal convictions within the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy based on decisions taken by the SMLT on the matter.

Any Other Business

11.0 Any Other Business

- A Zaman highlighted an ongoing IT issue experienced by our students and staff in Cambridge House, 373 Euston Road related to Eduroam connectivity. He continued to say that a situation where students are forced to use data at their cost conflicts with our values and on a broader scale constitutes an access issue. M Jackson responded that there was a whole suite of IT-related issues raised in the October SMLT meeting where the team members were delegated to explore and resolve them, however, she expressed her concern noting the impact on our student body and agreed to raise this with A Krajewska who was collecting details from academics of all the issues.

Action: M Jackson to raise with A Krajewska the issue raised by A Zaman regarding wifi access at 373 Euston Road.

Date and venue of next meeting

12.0 8 December 2021, 1 pm to 3 pm, 373 Euston Road, Room no to be confirmed