

## Confirmed Minutes

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>29 May 2024</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>10.30 am to 12 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>GPS Meeting Room</b>

<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Maria Jackson <b>[Chair]</b>	Head of Governance and Company Secretary
Antony Charles	People, Talent and Culture Manager
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Andreea Turculeet	Academic Administration and Assessment Executive
Arif Zaman	Enterprise Outreach Manager and Senior Lecturer Business
Dominic Bailey <b>[Secretary]</b>	Quality Executive

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>
	M Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting.  There were no apologies.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Minutes for approval and Action Tracker/Matters Arising</b>
2.1	<u>Minutes from the meeting of 21 February 2024</u>  The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2024 were approved.
2.2	<u>Matters Arising/Action Tracker</u>  M Jackson reported that there were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

### Part 1: For approval and recommending approval

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</b> [For recommended approval by the Board of Directors]
	3.1 <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – Summary of Changes</u>
	3.2 <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</u>
	M Jackson presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy explaining that the changes made were either textual or minor not for discussion.
	M Jackson reported that A Charles had flagged during the online policy review stage that he had been omitted from the membership list for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). M Jackson said she had checked the Corporate and Academic Governance Framework (CAGF) and confirmed that the membership included in the policy matches the one set out in the CAGF.

	<p>However, she agreed (as did the Committee) that A Charles should appear as a designated member of the committee in his own right as People, Talent and Culture Manager. At present he is a member of the committee in his capacity as a member of Professional Services. In the circumstances, M Jackson agreed to propose the above amendment to the EDIC's membership when undertaking the next internal review of our corporate and academic governance arrangements (due 2025) so that we have both the PTC Manager and a member of Professional Services.</p> <p>The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy was recommended for approval by the Board of Directors.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>M Jackson to propose within the internal review of our governance arrangements that the PTC Manager be made a designated member of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Part 2: For consideration or consideration and action</b>	
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report</b> [For consideration and action]</p> <p>M Jackson presented the March 2024 and May 2024 EDI Update Reports that had been submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT), explaining that the need for possible action from individual SMT members and other colleagues has been flagged within each report. Some of the key points from the reports are detailed below.</p> <p><b>4.1 <u>March 2024 Update Report for SMT</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DfE have published an Interim Report on the HE Mental Health Implementation Taskforce. It covers mental health analytics; sensitive policies and communications; expectations for small and specialist providers to commit to following the principles of the University Mental Health Charter by September 2024; guidance due out soon on submissions to the National Suicide Review.</li> <li>• The ICO have published advice/clarification on data protection and protecting the lives of students including anticipatory action to be taken.</li> <li>• Bristol University has lost its appeal in the High Court over the death of Natasha Abrahart. Resulting from this are some recommendations for HE providers around competence standards. In response to criticism of another university over the death by suicide of one of its students, WonkHE has posted reflections on the policy implications for HE providers and is recommending that providers adopt Advance HE's Education for Mental Health Toolkit.</li> <li>• Information has been provided on the prevalence of gender-based violence; publication of a resources pack for University and College Union branches on staff to student relationships; the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme; complaints upheld at the University of Kent over a professor's inappropriate behaviour and accusations that the university failed to protect its students.</li> <li>• JISC have updated an earlier report of theirs on the digital experience and expectations of international students in UK higher education whilst Universities UK has published an "Internationalisation at Home Handbook". The Handbook includes examples of how "Internationalisation at Home" may be integrated into the formal curriculum. Some of these examples have previously been promoted by M Jackson and A Zaman.</li> <li>• HEPI have published a blog on how period poverty is affecting students in the UK and the fact that it has a disproportionate impact on marginalised groups. The blog focuses also on the emotional impact of period poverty in terms of incidences of anxiety, stress and depression.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the context of the menopause, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued guidance that clarifies an employer's legal obligations to women under the Equality Act 2010. This includes the need to make reasonable adjustments when they are warranted.</li> </ul> <p><u>4.2 May 2024 Update Report for SMT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DSA reforms are reported to be having a negative impact on students and university support teams.</li> <li>There is a focus on neurodivergent students in terms of the barriers they face in HE and in particular in relation to employability.</li> <li>AdvanceHE have published "Wellbeing in the Curriculum: a Global Compendium of Good Practice". In addition, the University of Warwick has published a report on student and staff wellbeing that includes a set of recommendations for a holistic, institution-wide approach.</li> <li>The Deputy Director of Enabling Regulation at the OfS has confirmed that he expects that the new condition of registration on harassment and misconduct to be essentially in the form of the one put forward in last spring's consultation. He also stated that the consultation response will be published in the second half of May. In the meantime, guidance and recommendations have been published by (a) Universities UK (UUK), in collaboration with Coventry University and Pinsent Masons and (b) Anna Bull from The 1752 Group.</li> <li>Providers are asked to weave belonging within the curriculum. In addition, representatives from Teesside University, Edinburgh Napier University and Nottingham Trent University have published a new practical guide to advancing student belonging.</li> </ul> <p>N Michail asked M Jackson to send her the link to the Advance HE compendium. M Jackson agreed to do so. M Jackson recommended that consideration be given to the examples and Case Studies within the Compendium even though the Deputy Principal has reported in SMT that wellbeing is already embedded within the curriculum at Bloomsbury Institute in order to see if there is scope for enhancements.</p> <p>A Zaman said the found the EDI Update Reports to be extremely helpful as they covered a number of issues that are very relevant to his work with the Principal and CEO and the Head of International.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>M Jackson to send N Michail the link to Advance HE's Wellbeing in the Curriculum: a Global Compendium of Good Practice.</b></li> </ul>
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b>Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25</b></p> <p><u>5.1 APP Key Performance Indicators</u></p> <p><u>5.2 APP Update Report on Implementation of APP Strategic Measures</u></p> <p>M Jackson explained that the Deputy Principal leads on our Access and Participation Plan in terms of the development of new plans, the implementation of plans and the evaluation of strategic measures introduced under the plans.</p> <p>M Jackson explained that in the absence of the above reports, she had circulated that morning two reports that had been submitted to the Board of Directors in March 2024. However, given that members would not have had sufficient time to read and reflect on the documents, it was agreed that consideration of the documents be deferred to the next meeting of the EDIC especially as updates might be available in the meantime. The Committee agreed.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>HEPI Report on Trans and Non-binary Student Experiences in UK HE</b></p>

M Jackson presented a summary of the key points and recommendations made by HEPI in their report on Trans and Non-Binary Student Experiences in UK HE.

#### Key points

- At the point of applying to higher education, trans and non-binary people may face additional challenges. For example:
  - nearly a quarter (24%) of trans applicants have experience of care against just 4% of applicants who are not trans.
  - trans, and particularly non-binary people, report higher rates of disability than the wider population
  - 29% of trans men, 29% of trans women men, and 55% of non-binary people indicate that they have a disability compared with 20% of the UK population who indicated they had a disability.
  - on average, trans students have lower A-level and BTEC grades than those who are not trans.
- Trans and non-binary students report higher levels of loneliness than their fellow students, and value in-person interactions through their higher education journey.
- Students who are transitioning may find attendance challenging because of their need to access healthcare and surgery.
- Some trans students are less likely to complete their course in higher education, or may take longer to do so, than students who are not trans.
- Only 58% of trans and non-binary graduates are in paid work as their self-described 'main activity' 15 months after graduation, compared with 70% of graduates who are not trans or non-binary.

#### Recommendations

Below are just some of the recommendations made.

- Higher education staff, particularly those in pastoral care roles, should undergo training to understand trans and non-binary identities and challenges. Having a named contact for trans and non-binary students at institutions may be helpful.
- Institutions should provide training to staff in financial assistance roles, so they are clear on the challenges faced by trans and non-binary students.
- Academic staff should be vigilant in relation to students who are struggling, particularly those with low attendance rates, or who are asking for multiple assignment extensions.
- Consideration should be given to supporting students in their transition to the world of work.

M Jackson invited comments from the Committee on the report's findings and recommendations. N Michail said that she felt we had appropriate levels of support in place for trans and non-binary students and so she did not feel that any further action was required in this area. However, both N Michail and A Charles advised that any training for academic and professional services staff should be targeted when required. A Charles reported that staff might already have access to appropriate

	<p>online training through our existing training supplier. M Jackson said that the training was not around cultural awareness but about helping staff to understand the specific challenges trans and non-binary students might face in HE. By way of example, M Jackson cited a student going through transitioning who might have problems with attendance (as a result of having to go for regular HRT injections) and payment of their fees (because of the cost of financing treatment).</p> <p>N Michail and A Charles said that it would be for Heads of Schools to flag any potential support needs for trans and non-binary students.</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<p><b>Issues Committee members would like to raise</b></p> <p>Individual members of the Committee had no issues to raise.</p>
<b>Part 3: For information</b>	
<b>8.0</b>	<p><b>Inclusive Learning Environment Framework</b></p> <p>8.1 <u>Proposal paper approved by SMT</u></p> <p>M Jackson reminded the Committee that our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework document sets out all our inclusive practices across the student journey from marketing through to graduation and alumni. She then explained that she had recently submitted a proposal paper to the Senior Management Team to review and enhance existing practices on the basis of the current literature and best practice. The proposal was approved and the first stage of the proposal (review of existing practices to establish a new baseline) is close to completion. Once we have this, M Jackson will draw up a Checklist of additional inclusive practices to which individual Heads of Division/Department might feel it appropriate to commit along with their proposed deadlines for implementation.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the ongoing commitment to inclusion.</p>
<b>9.0</b>	<p><b>Harassment and Sexual Misconduct</b></p> <p>9.1 <u>OfS Condition E6</u></p> <p>M Jackson provided an update on the planned introduction of a new Condition of Registration (E6) around Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. She explained that the new condition would require HE providers to take all reasonable measures to prevent harassment and sexual misconduct and to have in place the necessary policies and procedures in the event of any incidents of harassment or sexual misconduct. M Jackson also explained that publication of OfS Guidance in this area had been due in the second half of May 2024 but the announcement of the general election on 5 July has meant that this will now be delayed.</p> <p>M Jackson reminded the Committee of the work we have already undertaken in this space in terms of the development of our Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and our Staff Relationships Policy and said that as a result a certain amount of preparatory work for the new condition has already been done. However, she said that it was highly likely that providers would be required to produce a single document that addresses all aspects of harassment and sexual misconduct including reporting and support mechanisms, complaints, and disciplinary processes as the OfS feel that students will find it beneficial to have all relevant information within the one document.</p> <p>Both M Jackson and A Charles expressed reservations about the above single document approach, flagging the need to have in addition to this single document, standalone complaints and disciplinary policies and procedure documents as not every complaint or disciplinary matter will be in relation to harassment and sexual misconduct.</p>

M Jackson reported that the two new areas of work we have begun to focus upon are online reporting and training. The OfS have said they expect providers to offer students a variety of channels for incident reporting. The OfS have therefore given the example of providers introducing online reporting tools.

N Michail reported that a number of providers have an online reporting page on their website for anonymous reports and suggested the possibility of siting such a reporting mechanism on the Student Services web pages. She added that this was an initiative she had looked into a few years ago.

M Jackson reported that the Deputy Chief Operating Officer was aware of the possible need for anonymous reporting and the implications that would have for our current policies and procedures as at present we do not allow anonymous reporting given the challenges involved in addressing and resolving a complaint when it has been made anonymously.

M Jackson explained a group of SMT members with a direct interest in preventing and responding to harassment and sexual misconduct have already met with an external company to find out about their online reporting tool – one that is being used by a lot of higher education providers. N Michail asked about the possibility of us developing our own online tool. M Jackson said she had discussed this with the Head of ITS and he had advised that it would be more cost effective to buy an off the shelf reporting tool. Following the demonstration the SMT members received, M Jackson supported this view on the basis of the inbuilt triage system and the sophisticated nature of the data reports it is possible to run from the external reporting tool.

In terms of training, M Jackson explained that the OfS have said that they would expect providers to introduce compulsory annual training for both staff and students. She said that whilst it was relatively easy to enforce and monitor completion of compulsory training for staff, the same was not true for students. N Michail agreed but reported that most providers try to cover harassment and sexual misconduct through completion of an online training course at Induction. A Charles said that another approach might be to link completion of the training with enrolment.

M Jackson flagged comments made by the OfS about the limitations of online training in this space given the need for participants to have an opportunity to engage in discussion around the areas covered in the training.

N Michail flagged the need to provide training that is accessible to all students regardless of their background. She highlighted possible linguistic and cultural issues in the case of international students.

## 9.2 Worker Protection Act 2023

M Jackson presented a summary report on the Worker Protection Act 2023 that is due to come into effect in the UK with effect from October 2024. The Act (an amendment of the Equality Act 2010) aims to better protect employees from sexual harassment by prioritising prevention as employers in the UK will now have a legal duty to work preventatively to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

The Act states that employers “must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment.” This extends to when employees are working outside of their office, and when they are attending social events that are considered an extension of work. However, the Act does not extend to employees who work with third parties e.g. customers or clients. This means that employers will not be held legally responsible for not preventing harassment from third parties towards their employees.

Employers who fail to prevent sexual harassment towards an employee, can also face financial repercussions. If a claim of sexual harassment is upheld, an employee may be awarded up to 25% compensation uplift from the employer.



	<p>Some of the steps employers are being encouraged to consider in advance of October 2024 are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring there is a reporting register for complaints about all forms of harassment and that this register and its maintenance is compliant with data protection regulations. This will allow ongoing monitoring to spot themes or particularly high-risk practices and take action to address these.</li> <li>• Proactively identifying the risk of harassment in each set of roles and circumstances and thinking through specific measures to protect employees in each.</li> <li>• Updating and re-circulating anti-harassment tailored training to help staff members avoid the threat of harassment, and to give those who witness harassment the means to safely intervene.</li> <li>• Considering third-party facing steps like installing visible signs in areas where customers interact with staff members explaining that threats, violence and harassment will not be tolerated and providing a means for bystanders to report instances of staff harassment.</li> </ul> <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission already provides guidance on sexual harassment and harassment at work<sup>1</sup> and is intending to publish a statutory Code of Practice on workplace harassment.</p> <p>A Charles reported that he would be addressing the requirements of the new Act once the OfS have published their guidance on Condition E6.</p>
<b>10.0</b>	<p><b>Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention</b></p> <p>M Jackson reminded the Committee of the action it had been tasked with by the Senior Management Team (SMT) in 2023 in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of our students. The Committee had been asked to complete a Mental Health Checklist to help inform discussions within the SMT on a letter from Lord Halfon dated 5 June 2023 in which he asked all HE providers for “the strongest possible commitment” to the mental health of their students. The EDIC concluded that whilst SEWS and the Disability and Wellbeing Office already provide a considerable amount of support in relation to mental health and wellbeing, there was a clear need for work to be done around suicide in terms of prevention, intervention and postvention.</p> <p>Independent of the above advice from the EDIC, the Director of SEWS had already been working on a Suicide Response Plan. When this Plan was presented to the SMT, the SMT recommended that the document be expanded in order to cover prevention, intervention and postvention. In response to this request, the Deputy CEO and Director of SEWS developed a Suicide Prevention and Response Plan which was approved (subject to amendments) at the May 2024 meeting of the SMT.</p> <p>M Jackson took the opportunity to thank the Committee for their work on the above project and flagged the very positive impact that this work had had in terms of triggering the development of our Suicide Prevention and Response Plan.</p> <p>N Michail recommended that staff be advised of the various training options available - be it suicide awareness training or suicide prevention training. A Charles reported that he had arranged for Rethink Mental Health to deliver an online Suicide Awareness training course for a group of staff the following week. M Jackson asked whether all members of our newly-formed Suicide Response Team would be attending. A Charles reported that most but not all members had registered for the training.</p> <p>A Zaman asked if the Institution’s approach to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention took account of the context and needs of our international students. M Jackson said that the document produced by the Deputy CEO and Director of SEWS was very much a high-level document that</p>

	<p>focuses on principles rather than procedures and practices and so she very much doubted that individual groups of students were considered within the document.</p>
<b>11.0</b>	<p><b>Internationalisation and inclusion in HE - a Commonwealth initiative led by Bloomsbury Institute</b></p> <p>A Zaman explained that he has a dual role – he is both Senior Lecturer in the Business School and also Bloomsbury Institute's Enterprise and Outreach Manager. As Enterprise and Outreach Manager, he explained that he works very closely with the Principal and CEO and the Head of International and that his work with them has highlighted even more the importance of bringing together the two strands of inclusion (an area in which M Jackson has done a lot of work in recent years) and internationalisation.</p> <p>A Zaman stressed the importance of us as an institution considering how the learning environment, curriculum and learning experience we offer make international students feel welcomed and included. A Zaman suggested a number of ways in which this sense of inclusion could be achieved including formal teaching practices and co-curricular activities.</p> <p>A Zaman said that one key way in which to facilitate inclusion for international students would be to internationalise the curriculum as at present our core texts tend to be very Eurocentric and, in some cases, relatively old. He said he would flag this with the Deputy Principal and the Heads of Schools along with a suggestion that audits be completed to flag any texts that are more than 3 years old.</p> <p>M Jackson reported that in the context of the work approved in relation to our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework (see Agenda Item 8 above), the Deputy Principal has said that she will be developing a checklist for academics that will cover their teaching materials and assessment briefs. M Jackson added that the checklist might cover how international reading lists are.</p> <p>N Michail agreed on the need to internationalise the curriculum, but stressed the importance of not just focusing on the nationalities of the students within the classroom.</p> <p>M Jackson commented on the fact that when considering the needs of particular groups of students, you are often helping or improving the experience of other groups of students. For example, by recording lectures, you are helping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students whose first language is not English.</li> <li>• students with a disability who might not be able to attend a particular lecture because of a flare-up of a condition.</li> <li>• students with children who might need to miss a lecture because their child is sick.</li> </ul> <p>A Zaman reported that he had recently attended (as an observer) a meeting in London of Commonwealth Education Ministers from across 56 Commonwealth countries. He also explained that as part of the event, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (of which Bloomsbury Institute is a member) held a session in which the Principal and CEO and the Deputy CEO had been involved.</p> <p>A Zaman also reported that he is Co-Chair of a working group (with someone from the Commonwealth Businessmen's Network) that was set up a couple of years ago by Commonwealth Education Ministers to focus on employability, entrepreneurship and global citizenship. He flagged the link here with Bloomsbury Institute's commitment to creating global citizens through its approach to employability and entrepreneurship. A Zaman explained that the working group provides us with a vehicle through which to gather ideas and share experiences.</p> <p>M Jackson thanked A Zaman for his report and fully supported the need to consider the experiences and needs of our international students when considering how we support their arrival and transition.</p>



	<p>She praised the work that Pooja Gupta had done around cultural awareness and, more recently, the paper Marcus Astley has had published on “Cross-cultural challenges faced by international students: a case study of Indian postgraduate students at a London-based business school”. She recommended maintaining the momentum in this area.</p>
<b>12.0</b>	<p><b>Staff equality, diversity and inclusion issues offsite</b></p> <p>A Zaman explained that he had experienced discrimination and other unacceptable behaviour a few years ago at an external event that was hosted by a major UK institution. He said he had been so concerned by the incident that he raised it immediately with the institution’s Vice Chancellor’s Office. He also raised it with his Head of School and M Jackson in her (then) role of Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Although he received a formal apology and the matter was closed, A Zaman said it highlighted an important issue in terms of staff knowing what could be done to them in such a situation. A Charles said that this would depend on the specifics of the case but added that in all cases staff could contact him for support. A Zaman and N Michail asked if this message could be conveyed to staff and M Jackson suggested adding something to the Staff Handbook. A Charles said that he did not feel there was a need to add anything to the Staff Handbook as it is clear to staff that if they need any advice that is HR-related, they can contact him for support.</p>
<b>13.0</b>	<p><b>Update from Disability and Wellbeing Manager</b></p> <p>The Disability and Wellbeing Manager said she had no updates to share.</p>
<b>14.0</b>	<p><b>Update from People, Talent and Culture Manager</b></p> <p>The People, Talent and Culture Manager reminded the Committee that the next staff meeting was scheduled for Friday that week and that he would be briefing staff on the upcoming online staff survey. He flagged the fact that the survey included a number of questions around wellbeing.</p> <p>M Jackson asked whether there were any updates on how we were going to manage our Mental Health First Aider scheme and what was a likely launch date. A Charles explained that this was a project he and N Michail would be working on shortly. M Jackson asked whether the Deputy Principal was also involved in the project. A Charles said that she was not.</p>
<b>15.0</b>	<p><b>Student Disability Policy</b> [To evidence changes made]</p> <p>M Jackson thanked N Michail for making the amendments agreed at the February 2024 EDIC meeting. However, she flagged the need for one additional amendment following the recent decision to merge our Data Protection Policy with our Confidentiality Policy. As a result, the references within the Student Disability Policy and other related documents to our “Data Protection Policy” will need to be changed to read “Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.” M Jackson added that there were also a couple of formatting issues with the document. N Michail agreed to make the necessary changes and share a copy with M Jackson for submission to the Quality team for them to arrange publication of the policy on our online Quality Enhancement Manual.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>N Michail to make the above amendments to the Student Disability Policy and submit the finalised version to M Jackson for her to share with Quality.</b></li> </ul>
<b>16.0</b>	<p><b>Disability Office – What we do with your data</b> [To evidence changes made]</p> <p>See Item 15 above with regard to possible amendments required.</p>

Part 4: Any Other Business and Date/Time of Next Meeting	
17.0	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>A Zaman flagged an email invitation he had recently circulated to the opening on 13 June 2024 of the Impact Hub London Euston. He said the Hub is a state-of-the-art innovation work and events space sponsored by the Impact Hub London and The Knowledge Quarter that is designed to provide a dynamic environment that fosters collaboration, innovation, and positive impact within our community.</p>
18.0	<p><b>Date and venue of next meeting: TBC</b></p>