Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2018

21 March 2019

1. Introduction

The Higher Education Code of Governance requires governing bodies to "promote equality and diversity throughout the institution, including in relation to its own operation."[1], this should support compliance with the public sector Equality Duty. This fourth Annual Report on Equality and Diversity provides a broad overview of progress on equality and diversity and specifically on the achievement of our equality objectives during the calendar year 2018.

In summary, in 2018, we:

- achieved University of Sanctuary status,
- delivered a successful All About Respect project on tackling sexual violence in partnership with students, York College and local support organisations, and
- were runners-up in The Guardian Student Experience Award for our trans inclusive framework.

The Staff Survey demonstrated a high level of awareness of our standards and expectations and a widely shared sense that York St John is an inclusive place to work.

The report sets out the external and institutional context for equality and diversity and reports against the three key equality objectives. At the end, it provides an outlook on 2019. The report sits alongside the consideration of staff survey and student and staff equality data by People Committee. Details of 2017/18 student and staff equality data are available on the website: www.yorksj.ac.uk/equality.

2. Governing Body's responsibilities for equality and diversity

Each year, Governing Body and its committees receive relevant reports; following the Annual Equality and Diversity Report at the Governing Body's March meeting, in May People Committee reviewed the student and staff equality data and reflected on the key challenges, ethnic diversity and unconscious bias formed a key area of focus; in October Foundation Committee reviewed the students' religion and belief profile.

Advance HE and the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) launched a new board vacancy portal and a Diversity Framework to increase the representation of women on boards and attract more diverse candidates.[2] The current Governing Body chair will be retiring in 2020; the appointment process for the new Chair will be informed by the new framework.

Governors were included in the HESA return for the first time last year. Governing Body has 4 female and 11 male governors, and is currently carrying 2 vacancies. Governance and Nominations Committee which is responsible for nominating co-opted governors is mindful of the current gender imbalance, and in particular that of the chairs of Governing Body committees, four out of five are men. They have requested a report on diversity for the next meeting in June.

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[1] https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Code-Final.pdf
[2] https://www.lfhe.ac.uk/en/governance-new/board-diversification.cfm

One of the governors, Mohammed Ali, has supported the University's work on race equality, hosting visits from the senior leadership team at the QED Foundation, and meeting our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff community.

3. Legislative and policy developments in 2018

    a. The duty to publish the Gender Pay Gap entered into force. York St John reported one of the highest median pay gaps in the sector and whilst this was primarily due to the employment of Student Ambassadors at our Open Days, there still remains an issue associated with occupational segregation. The Executive Board has endorsed a robust action plan so that by 2026 we will have reduced the median gender pay gap to below 10%.

    b. The Office for Students (OfS) announced that they expect universities to eliminate gaps in access, student success and progression in the next 20 years – through the regulatory framework, Access and Participation Plan, and funding.

    c. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) launched an inquiry into racial harassment in higher education. The University and the Students' Union promoted the call for evidence to students and staff, and the University responded to the institutional survey.

    d. The EHRC published a guide on freedom of expression. The University is satisfied that our Code of Practice on freedom of speech is robust.

    e. In light of Brexit, in November 2018 staff from other EU countries and international staff with a partner from another EU country were able to apply for Settled Status. The University supported the applications by providing information and technology and reimbursing the cost of the application.

    f. A working group has been set up to ensure the University is prepared for the scheduled exit from the European Union on 29 March 2019 with or without a deal.

4. Delivering the objectives

The University operates under a collaborative structure to deliver against equality objectives and meet the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) and public sector Equality Duty. Details of the structure are referenced in previous annual reports to Governing Body.

Of particular note during 2018, the Executive Board:

- approved the new Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy; issued joint University/Students' Union policy statement on sexual misconduct and domestic abuse; agreed a Gender Pay Gap action plan and supported a range of events including the launch of York Pride, All About Respect Conference and Beyond the vote weekend.
- set promoting ethnic diversity as a strategic priority and set up a task force to raise the profile of racial and cultural diversity at York St John (see 4.1).
- initiated an application to Athena SWAN bronze award.

4.1   Objective 1: Promoting ethnic diversity at York St John University

Given the disappointing lack of growth in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) student and staff numbers, a taskforce has been set up to raise the profile of racial and cultural diversity at York St John and capture the experiences of BME staff and students.

Furthermore:

- The University has created a post for a Student Widening Participation Officer who is supporting BME, mature and commuting students.
- Human Resources conducted an ethnicity audit of recruitment and has taken steps to address findings such as providing more guidance with application forms.

4.2   Objective 2: Implementing the inclusive learning, teaching and assessment framework

The Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework has evolved, along with the sector, into Universal Design for Learning and is gradually being embedded through the Schools. The new Head of Learning & Teaching will be taking this forward. The universal approach to curriculum development and delivery creates a level playing field for all, reducing the need for particular individual learning plans and/or adjustments. This hits the goals set out in our EDHR Strategy and the Learning & Teaching Strategy.

4.3   Objective 3: Determining effective ways to operationalise equality and diversity in the University structure

Through consultation about the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights (EDHR) Strategy, training was identified as an area of improvement. The University has responded by setting a key measure of success that by 2026, all staff are engaged in Equality & Diversity training and development appropriate to their role.

- During 2018, approximately 675 participants have accessed equality and diversity learning provision, this includes 'unconscious bias for recruiters' workshops which is essential for all recruitment panel chairs.
- The Equality and Diversity Adviser provided support with equality impact assessments to Registry, Research team, Police Studies and the procurement manager. The equality analysis toolkit is being reframed to align with the planning cycle.

5. Outlook on 2019

a. The new Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy provides a structure to the equality objectives and will steer the University in the years to come. The strategy is shown in appendix A.

b. The University is integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into the Research Excellence Framework 2021 Code of Practice and submission.

c. The University will publish the second Gender Pay Gap report in March 2019 and promote positive women role models across the University.

d. The YSJ Women's Network will be launched, celebrating women's achievements and challenging gender inequalities.

e. In Summer, the University will review if the Athena SWAN application is ready for submission in November 2019.

f. The Race Equality taskforce will report to the Executive Board in Autumn 2019.

g. New regulations are coming into force for accessibility on websites including Moodle. A working group is supporting the implementation, through audits, guidance and training as well as a pilot of Blackboard Ally to help make digital course content more accessible.

h. A new Research Centre for Language and Social Justice is to be launched this will underpin and reinforce our commitment to social justice.

i. Proposed changes to the bye-laws regarding the posts of BAME, Disability, International, LGBTQ+ and Postgraduate & Mature Officers would enable the integration of these into the Students' Union's governance structure.

Appendix: Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Strategy

Goal:	**Create an environment where our people can participate and flourish, where equality, humanity and social justice are valued and promoted within and beyond York St John University.**
Strategic Themes:	a. Close gaps in opportunities and outcomes because of a particular, or combination of, socio-economic status, disability, gender and/or any other status where disparities are not justified. b. Engage a diverse representation of students with the implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. c. Make our working environment more accessible, inclusive and fair, by understanding and addressing barriers. d. Address existing race inequalities, achieve a culturally diverse and inclusive environment, and pull individuals from all ethnic backgrounds. e. Create and deliver a collaborative programme to promote freedom of speech, while fostering respectful interaction, free from discrimination, violence and abuse. f. Embed a culture of respect and promotion of healthy relationships, geared towards addressing and preventing hate crime, harassment, sexual misconduct and domestic abuse. g. Create an accountability framework for University, Schools and Services for the delivery of the EDHR strategy, supported by capacity building of all staff to learn, educate and challenge.
Strategic Results:	The following of our 26 Key Measures of Success: 10. Positive TEF metrics in satisfaction, retention and outcomes for underrepresented groups. 12. 10% BME student and staff population. 13. All staff are engaged in Equality & Diversity training and development appropriate to their role. 25. Median gender pay gap below 10%. 26. 95% of staff think the University is a good place to work.