

Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 The Annual Report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

- provides a broad overview of progress.
- details the achievement of our equality objectives during the calendar year 2023.
- sets out the external and institutional context for equality and diversity,
- reflects on student and staff diversity data
- reports against key equality objectives; and
- helps to ensure the University's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.2 In line with the Equality Act (2010) the University has the responsibility to ensure that it is complying with statutory duties. In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the University is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

1.3 Data is provided on the [website](#).

2. Key achievements during 2022/23

2.1 Various training activities were conducted to enhance Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

2.2 EDI and anti-racism training were provided to the Executive Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

2.3 Ongoing support has been given for participation in the Aurora and Diversifying Leadership programmes offered by Advance HE, and the U-Connect EDI mentoring programme has been reinforced through several cross-institutional partnerships.

2.4 A series of trans awareness training sessions were conducted with over 80 attendees. Follow-up sessions tailored specifically for key student-facing services have been taking place during the academic year 2023/24.

2.5 The University updated and introduced new policies to support women and families: breastfeeding, menopause and enhanced leave for parents, grandparents and carers.

2.6 EDI leads were appointed in the School of the Arts, London Campus and School of Science, Technology and Health.

2.7 The staff networks provided valuable assistance by reviewing and offering constructive comment on policies and procedures, including the parking and menopause policies. They also supported Executive Board recruitment and promotions, and organised a range of activities. For instance, the LGBTQ+ staff network coordinated our

participation in York Pride (where YSJ is a major sponsor), with support from the Marketing and Communications teams. The Neurodiversity, LGBTQ, and Disabled Staff Networks collaborated to organise Quiet Pride activities.

- 2.8 On the equality objective to remove gaps in access, continuation, completion, attainment and progression outcomes in line with our Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025
- the increase in the ethnicity degree awarding gap for UK domiciled students to 23.3pp for 2022 graduates is a significant concern. Action is being undertaken through our Race Equality Charter action plan (confirmed in 2022) and our Access and Participation Plan. The awarding gap is reported in OfS dashboards based on HESA data. Overall, across age, disability, race, and gender, there was a decline in students obtaining 2:1/1st class degrees. These areas continue to be key focuses for the University's access and participation efforts. Our new APP will be submitted in July 2024.
 - we continue to meet key targets outlined in the Learning, Teaching, and Student Excellence (LTSE) Strategy Action Plan. Specifically, relevant actions from the Race Equality Charter have been addressed and integrated into our initiatives
 - Over 70% of our undergraduate (UG) students have one or more demographic indicators that are significantly underrepresented in higher education in England.
- 2.9 On the equality objective to eliminate the gender pay gap (GPG) and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pay gap (2026 staging targets: 5% mean and median GPG, retain zero gap for ethnicity)
- As of 31 March 2023, our mean gender pay gap remained unchanged at 11.4% compared to the previous year, while our median gender pay gap decreased from 16.3% to 15.1%.
 - Our Athena SWAN Action Plan outlines the steps we are taking to address the gender pay gap. Priority areas include developing women-friendly policies and supporting career progression through research pathways.
- 2.10 The Inclusive Education Framework has been launched and has been adopted into the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2026 as a guiding framework. The Framework has a three-year plan (2023/24: Advocacy, 2024/25: Embedding, and 2025/26: Evaluating).
- 2.11 In collaboration with Advance HE, a programme was delivered in 2023 aimed at enabling the Executive Board and the Strategic Leadership Team to lead equality, diversity, and inclusion across the University, with a specific focus on diverse gender inclusion.
- 2.12 The Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team has been busy with implementing the Athena Swan Action Plan. The Athena Swan [webpage](#) summarises the activities we have achieved so far.
- 2.13 The University has built on activity since being awarded the [Race Equality Charter](#) Bronze Award in November 2022. The five-year action plan continues to progress.

3. Board of Governors' responsibilities for equality, diversity and inclusion

- 3.1 The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance sets out the expectations of governing bodies "to promote and develop a positive culture which supports ethical behaviour and equal, diverse and inclusive practices across the institution, including in the Board of Governors' own operation and composition".
- 3.2 In 2023, the diversity of the Board of Governors experienced a slight decline across various protected characteristics. The Board recognises the need for continuous effort to ensure that the composition of the Board reflects the diversity of the University community. To address this, several new measures, including wider promotion of vacancies, reducing the level of previous experience and specific skills required, and using a more diverse selection committee, have been implemented to encourage a more diverse pool of candidates to apply in future rounds.
- 3.3 Governing bodies are responsible for reviewing and reporting on the institution's approach to equality, inclusivity, and diversity. In 2023, the Board of Governors discharged this function in several ways.

4. Academic governance

- 4.1 Academic Board (and its committees) continues to implement its equality objectives. Achievements have included:
- Academic Board reviews equality impact assessments across many areas including outcomes of the staff promotions process and degree awarding gaps.
 - Academic Board approves new or amended policies, such as Student Complaints Policy and Student Financial Regulations, flagging any issues that may pertain to certain groups of students.
 - University Research Committee added Researcher Community Race Equality events to the staff CPD offer.
 - University Research Committee reviews attendance of Postgraduate Research students at development events to ensure equality of attendance/access across all groups, including under-represented groups.
 - Education Committee scrutinises learning and teaching priorities including decolonising the curriculum and assessment redesign to reduce negative effects of unseen examinations on BAME students.
 - Education Committee champions the Student Partnership Plus Policy.
 - Quality and Standards Committee oversees work to enhance YSJ's portfolio performance process, particularly the ability to break down data by specific protected characteristics to consider any targeted actions required.
 - Quality and Standards Committee oversees the student regulations and procedures, any changes made carefully consider the impact on students with different characteristics.
- 4.2 Academic Board and its committees appointed additional co-opted members from groups under-represented on University committees in 2022. In 2023, these co-opted members have added considerable value to discussions and decision-making.

5. Legislative and policy developments

- 5.1 The Office for Students (OfS) launched its Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) in March 2023; this outlines sector-level risks to equality of opportunity in higher education. Universities are mandated to consider the equality of opportunity risk register when establishing objectives in their Access and Participation Plans.
- 5.2 The OfS consulted on a new approach to regulating harassment and sexual misconduct. The outcome of the consultation is still awaited and is expected in May 2024.
- 5.3 The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act came into force; this puts more responsibilities on universities to promote and protect free speech. Work is ongoing to review and revise the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and to seek to clarify how the new Act intersects with institutional policies around Dignity and Respect.

6. Diversity monitoring

- 6.1 In line with the specific equality duties, details of student and staff diversity profiles are published on the [website](#).

7. Outlook on 2024

- 7.1 As we have started to establish EDI Leads across different Schools, for 2023/24 we will establish EDI champions within professional services.
- 7.2 An assessment of how the University engages equality impact assessments will be undertaken to ensure a consistent application across all institutional processes.
- 7.3 We will implement race equality e-learning for all staff and provide active bystander training.
- 7.4 The Academic Board committees will review their equality objectives at the start of the new academic year.
- 7.5 To work towards institutionalising EDI within the University structures and implement initiatives such as the mental health charter.
- 7.6 A series of interventions to address differentials (gaps) in access, continuation, completion, award and progression will be confirmed in the new Access and Participation Plan. This will be approved by Academic Board in June and reported to Board of Governors in July 2024 prior to submission to the OfS.