

## **Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2015-16**

### **Introduction**

This is the final Equality & Diversity report for University Campus Suffolk – the University of Suffolk being formally launched on 1 August 2016. The final year of trading as UCS saw continued development and maturing of the institution’s approach to Equality & Diversity matters and a deepening engagement across all parts of the institution with our role as independent stewards of community life and values. We recognise the importance of a diverse student and staff body in driving economic, cultural and educational transformation within the region and have continued to establish the institution as one which attracts diverse staff and student populations and supports them in achieving their aspirations and realising their potential. We do not tolerate discriminatory practice and work to deliver a positive environment for the conduct of all our activities, where members of our community treat one another with mutual respect and dignity.

Highlights in progressing the equalities agenda over the past year have included the training of a staff member as a Mental Health First Aider to support the roll out, in collaboration with the Students’ Union, of training for academic and student support staff; the launch of the Active Bystander initiative and the securing of Working Families accreditation. Importantly, we believe that communications throughout the year, whether in respect of the Paris 2015 bombings, the Ethnic Equality reports which were commissioned for the institution or Brexit, have helped raise the whole level of debate and consideration of matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion across the institution, generating greater confidence, from staff and students, that these matters are taken seriously. The staff survey, to be conducted in Spring 2017, will be a useful barometer to verify this.

As previously, our challenge – and our commitment - remains to ensure that the institution provides every student and every staff member with a positive and rewarding experience that is fair and free from discriminatory practice. This report outlines the work during 2015-16 to ensure that our policies and services meet this commitment.

Richard Lister (Vice-Chancellor) and Sara Corcoran (Director of Human Resources and Chair of the Equality & Diversity Committee)

### **Equality & Diversity Policy**

We are committed to ensuring that all members of our community are treated, and treat each other, with respect and dignity in all our activities. Whilst recognising all the relevant statutory duties in respect of legislation against discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, we acknowledge that people are also discriminated against on the basis of other factors in addition to those prohibited by the law. We aim to foster a secure and caring environment which is welcoming to all and free from prejudice and discrimination.

The institution therefore requires that discriminatory behaviour which is offensive or demeaning to anyone is treated as a matter of concern and dealt with appropriately. We believe that this principle is of fundamental importance in the context of a learning community - where the exploration, formulation, exchange and challenge of ideas and knowledge, and the acknowledgement of a wide diversity of opinion and belief, is central to its existence.

Accordingly, we will ensure that the principles of respect and dignity of the individual, and of equality of opportunity for all, are incorporated in the policies, and in the organisation and management of all activities of the institution's community. In particular, this approach is supported by our [Dignity and Respect at Work](#) and [Dignity at Study](#) policies.

We seek to make all members of our community, including visitors, aware of the behaviour we expect from everyone and will take steps to deal with any allegations of harassment or bullying - including by a visitor or of a visitor.

Our full Equality & Diversity policy is available [here](#)

### **Equality & Diversity Governance**

The institution's Board has overall responsibility for ensuring adherence to the duties set out in the relevant legislation and with institution's Equality and Diversity policy. The Executive, led by the Provost and Chief Executive<sup>1</sup>, is responsible for demonstrating commitment to, and providing leadership in, promoting equality and ensuring that the Equality policy and associated action plans are implemented effectively, including overseeing the allocation of adequate resource. Senior management responsibility for Equality and Diversity lies with the Director of HR, reporting to the Provost and the Board.

Academic Board<sup>2</sup> is responsible for ensuring that academic policies and procedures avoid discrimination in terms of student recruitment, progression and attainment.

The Equality & Diversity Committee, chaired by the Director of HR, has lead responsibility for assuring the institution's equality obligations and commitments. The Committee, whose membership and terms of reference were significantly reviewed in 2013-14, meets three times per year:

- to monitor the key areas of the institution's performance (including student recruitment, retention, achievement/outcomes and satisfaction; and staff recruitment, retention and progression) in relation to equality indicators;
- to keep relevant policies and procedures under review; and
- to set, monitor and report progress against equality objectives.

The Committee reports to the Executive and has wide membership from across the institution's community, including two academic representatives from each faculty, a number of professional service managers, the recognised trades unions and the Students' Union. In addition the Committee co-opts up to three external members to support current priorities – currently external members come from Suffolk MIND and the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Race Equality.

The Executive, Heads of Department (both Academic and Professional Service) are responsible for leading the implementation of the Equality and Diversity policy and action planning in relation to employee and student matters within their own faculties/directorates and departments, and ensuring that all their staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying these out.

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<sup>1</sup> With effect from 1 August 2016 this post was retitled Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

<sup>2</sup> With effect from 1 August 2016 the Academic Board has been replaced by Senate

All members of the institution's community have a responsibility to support the aims and objectives of the Equality & Diversity policy, ensuring that their behaviour towards each other and to the wider external community is respectful, encouraging a positive and inclusive environment. All persons visiting or contracted to work with the institution are required to adhere to the Equality & Diversity policy.

### Current Profile

A table showing the profile of staff and students for the academic year 2015-16 is shown overleaf. Distributions have remained fairly stable over recent years.

The majority of staff and students are female, which reflects the academic and vocational provision of our programmes. There is low BME representation for students<sup>3</sup>. This is reflective of the fact that 95% of our students are recruited from within 50 miles of their place of study in a region which does not have a high population of BME residents<sup>4</sup>. Despite a wider recruitment reach, the proportion of BME staff is also low relative to the sector (11.8%)<sup>5</sup> and so ethnic equality continues to be an area of focus for the institution.

In the general population, the prevalence of disability rises with age: around 6% of children are disabled, compared to 16% of working age adults and 45% of adults over State Pension age<sup>6</sup>. The data shows our student population aligns with the general population, however our staff population has a lower representation (albeit we are in line with the sector)<sup>7</sup>. In both groups we are seeing an increase in those reporting mental health needs. This is an area of continuing attention to ensure these staff and students are represented and supported appropriately.

### Staff and Student Diversity Data Summary – 2015-16

Characteristic		Students (As at 1 December 2015)	Staff (As at 1 December 2015)
<b>Total Population</b>		4793	428
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	32.15%	36.41%
	<b>Female</b>	65%	62.21%
	<b>Not known</b>	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Transgender</b>		2.69%	0.00%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Black</b>	5.30%	2.76%
	<b>Asian</b>	2.77%	1.15%
	<b>Chinese</b>	0.25%	0.46%

<sup>3</sup> 28% of all those entering HE are from BME groups (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/HEinEngland/students>)

<sup>4</sup> 4.8% of Suffolk's population is from BME groups compared to 14.1% of England and Wales' population (Suffolk Demographic Profile, SCC 2013)

<sup>5</sup> DLA Piper, Higher Education Sector Staff Statistics, 2015

<sup>6</sup> Disability Facts and Figures, DWP, January 2014

<sup>7</sup> DLA Piper, Higher Education Sector Staff Statistics, 2015

	<b>Mixed race</b>	0.98%	1.38%
	<b>Other Ethnicity</b>	0.79%	0.69%
	<b>White Other</b>	2.86%	7.14%
	<b>White British</b>	86.73%	82.72%
	<b>Not known</b>	0.31%	1.84%
<b>Disability</b>	<b>Disabled</b>	16%	5.07%
	<b>Not disabled</b>	84%	92.63%
	<b>Not known</b>	0.29%	0.92%
<b>Age</b>	<b>18-24 years</b>	48.55%	2.07%
	<b>25-44 years</b>	40%	45.85%
	<b>45-54 years</b>	8.91%	29.03%
	<b>55+ years</b>	2.19%	21.66%
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Buddhist</b>	0.54%	0.46%
	<b>Christian</b>	25.98%	30.41%
	<b>Hindu</b>	0.27%	0.23%
	<b>Jewish</b>	0.04%	0.23%
	<b>Muslim</b>	1.56%	0.46%
	<b>Sikh</b>	0.06%	0.23%
	<b>Other</b>	3.53%	1.84%
	<b>No religion</b>	36.49%	22.35%
	<b>Not known/Provided</b>	31.53%	42.40%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Bisexual</b>	1.46%	0.92%
	<b>Gay/Lesbian</b>	1.73%	3.00%
	<b>Heterosexual/Straight</b>	90.19%	53.00%
	<b>Not known/Provided</b>	6.61%	41.71%

Our student population tends to be more mature and more part time than the typical HEI profile. We have been working with the Students' Union to understand better how this impacts on the institution's culture, what this means in terms of the support and facilities sought and the ways in which students interact with the institution. As a result the Students' Union has sought to introduce a number of Liberation Officer roles to support, for example, Mature, Disabled and BME students. Due to lack of interest they were unable in this first year to appoint to the Disabled and BME Liberation Officer roles. However they were successful in appointing a Women's Officer and a Mature Students' Officer and these are contributing to the Union's review of its activities, for example the introduction of more family

inclusive events during Freshers' Week and the introduction of new Most Active Student sessions at different times of the day to make them more accessible.

The institution has been very successful in attracting and supporting students from disadvantaged groups and our commitment to widening participation is unwavering. However, research has demonstrated that students from a number of these groups are a greater risk of attrition. The Retention Working Group has continued to support improvements in attrition rates and although work to date has not been targeted at any particular protected groups it is expected that more focused initiatives will be brought forward in the coming year.

We have recognised that faith is important to many students and that recognising and supporting this is essential to many students' experience. The multi-faith chaplaincy is well established and integrated into the life and structure of the institution. A number of chaplaincy-led events are now well established in the annual calendar e.g. Remembrance Service, Carol Service and, in conjunction with the Students' Union, the chaplaincy are looking to develop the number and range of events to include a broader audience. During the autumn term they were invited to deliver a session to Mental Health Nursing students on potential conflicts between faith and professional practice. This was very well received and is planned to run again next year.

#### **Board Level Key Performance Indicator (KPI)**

One of the KPIs agreed and monitored by the Board relates to gender balance: specifically seeking a 50:50 balance in staff groups at Grade 9 and above and also in Board membership by 2020. The table below shows the position as at 31 May 2016.

<b>Staff Group</b>	<b>No. Males</b>	<b>No. Females</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
All Grade 9 and 10	38	52	42:58
All Grade 11	8	6	57:43
Professors	6	2	75:25
Executive	4	2	67:33
Board	10	5	67:33

#### **Equality Objectives**

The institution's Equality objectives for 2015-16 and progress against these are reported below, together with a report of other activity supporting the equality and diversity agenda.

##### **i. General**

- a. Introduce a programme for staff and students to promote greater cultural awareness and raise awareness of unconscious bias*

Sessions for staff were introduced in June, with 16 attending a workshop specifically for those involved in recruitment (whether of staff or students) and 17 attending a more general session. A workshop was also organised for members of the University Management Group (the Executive and Heads of Department (Academic and Professional Service)). In the next academic year it is planned to include something on unconscious bias in the students' induction programme. We are also planning to run the general sessions for a mixed audience of staff and students.

- b. Conduct Equal Pay Audit*

An Equal Pay Audit was undertaken for data as at 31 May 2016. Preliminary results of the Equal Pay Audit were shared with the Joint Consultative Committee

in August 2016 and fuller results and any actions arising following further discussions with the unions will be shared with the Equality & Diversity Committee at their meeting in autumn 2016.

- c. *Increase confidence in disclosure of protected characteristics for staff survey*  
A couple of meetings have been held with staff, sharing with them both the details of the staff survey equality reports and the importance of reviewing results from this perspective. Those attending (total = 10) have reported feeling more confident in disclosing their details and subsequent to those meetings they have been helping with developing revised survey process communications to make it clearer as to why we ask for this information to encourage increased disclosure in the next staff survey. In addition to this, information has also been shared in the staff survey update newsletters and will be reinforced in communications preparing for the launch of the next survey which will be undertaken in Spring 2017.
- d. *Through the Retention working group explore targeted initiatives to support those students within protected groups which are at higher risk of withdrawal*  
This matter has yet to be progressed and so will be carried forward to 2016-17.

## ii. Ethnicity

- a. *Develop and implement action plan(s) in response to the 2014-15 Ethnic Equality reports, including a review of the curriculum for potential ethnocentricity, the introduction of more effective methods to reach potential staff and students and the introduction of staff and student BME network(s)*

The Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee have been tasked with taking forward the review of the curriculum for potential ethnocentricity. The Committee have circulated relevant resources to departmental representatives for consideration by course teams in their annual review processes. A progress report has been requested for the autumn 2016 meeting of the Equality & Diversity Committee.

The Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Science tasked two of its academic staff with conducting a cultural audit of the Faculty. This work was undertaken during the Spring and Summer. Outcomes will be followed up in the coming year.

In support of reaching out more effectively to potential staff and students from BME groups, the Suffolk Business School developed what will become an annual awards event for local BME businesses. The inaugural event was held in October 2016 and will be more fully outlined in the next report.

A new approach to staff recruitment utilising social media campaigning was piloted, which enabled better targeting of potential BME applicants. Whilst this produced a good number of BME applicants, cost prevents this from being adopted as a general approach. However, the pilot suggests that this will be helpful where the institution identifies particular posts for positive action. Positive action initiatives for student recruitment have yet to be identified and so will be carried forward to 2016-17.

We undertook a poll to gauge level of interest in an informal network for both staff and students of Black and Minority Ethnic origin. Whilst the response was low, there was sufficient interest to form a small group, which hopefully will grow. We are currently liaising with the Students' Union to how best to implement this network, noting 28% of respondents were students.

### iii. Mental Health

- a. *Participation in the Mindful Employer initiative and extension, as appropriate, of the commitments therein to the student body*

Following successful completion of the application for Working Families accreditation (see below, Gender iv.b), work has now begun to achieve Mindful Employer accreditation. We are currently waiting to receive their induction information pack to get us started and plan to provide an update at the Equality and Diversity Committee meeting in the Spring term.

- b. *Explore business case for additional training and online CBT provision*

A member of staff has been trained as a Mental Health First Aider, with a view to rolling out in-house training for academic and student support staff from the coming academic year and developing a mental health strategy. Both of these are now being taken forward in partnership with the Students' Union. Budget restrictions have prevented further exploration of additional CBT provision at this time. However, we are currently working closely with Suffolk Libraries to develop a 'self-help' resource area on our intranet to provide staff and students with the opportunities to improve their mental health.

### iv. Gender

- a. *Utilisation of the AthenaSWAN methodology to assess gender equality provision in the organisation in support of the Board gender KPI and in readiness for a potential AthenaSWAN (or other equality chartermark) submission in due course.*

Although some important work which will feed into this has been undertaken (e.g. Equal Pay Audit) and initial discussions about taking a project forward have been held, resource constraints have prevented this matter from progressing more fully. It will be carried forward to 2016-17.

- b. *To seek Working Families accreditation in support of the Board gender KPI and as a stepping stone towards a potential AthenaSWAN submission in due course.*

The institution's application for Working Families accreditation was accepted in March 2016, leading to a submission to their Top Employer Initiative during the summer. The outcome will be reported in next year's report.

- c. *The introduction of a number of staff support networks (Working Parents/Carers, LGBT).*

Following consultation with staff about the kinds of networks groups they would find helpful, a Family Network group was launched and now meets monthly. In addition to informal networking and mutual support, the group's purpose includes considering issues impacting on those with family commitments and the ways in which the organisation might support these.

### Other Activity in 2015-16

The single biggest area of activity across the institution in the past year concerned preparations for the launch of the University of Suffolk. The development of a new visual identity for the institution, which demonstrated an inclusive organisation, open to all, was a key part of this work.

In support of the Equality & Diversity Committee's revised terms of reference, the two Faculties and the Professional Services were asked to provide a report to the Committee of their equality and diversity agendas and activities this year. Whilst this highlighted the many ways in which equality matters are embedded into all areas of provision, it also served to raise awareness of the need to consider more explicitly a range of activity at

local/departmental level through an equalities lens. Discussions are now being held with relevant managers to determine the most appropriate fora, timing and data needs to facilitate this.

In addition to the work outlined above in relation to Ethnicity, the Executive have asked that service departments review how they ensure B&ME (Black and Minority Ethnic) perspectives are adequately addressed. This is particularly pertinent where there is little BME representation in the relevant staff group. The Executive are also keen to explore liaison with other major local employers with a view to sharing approaches to common issues and the potential for shared initiatives.

Research and Enterprise Services piloted a workshop entitled 'Every Researcher Counts' with the Department of Health in June 2016. This session used the VITAE support materials which are aimed at incorporating equality and diversity into training programmes or sessions for researchers. The Research and Enterprise Development Programme more broadly, was revised logistically so that sessions are arranged to, as far as possible to avoid teaching times, religious holidays, and with late start and earlier finish times to support researchers with childcare and other commitments.

A gap analysis of institutional practice in light of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers was undertaken towards the latter part of the year which has resulted in an action plan to ensure full engagement with the seven principals of the Concordat, the sixth of which directly addresses Equality and Diversity in requiring that diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

As part of the transition to University status, the Research and Enterprise Services team reviewed the terms and conditions of the Research Council grants to ensure our compliance. These provide an expectation that recipients of funds can demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010 (including any subsequent amendments) and the RCUK equality and diversity statement of expectations.

The outcome of the EU referendum prompted some communications to try and ensure international staff and students feel valued and safe here. Firstly some joint communications from HR and the Students' Union were circulated to all acknowledging the important contribution that these staff and students make to our work and our community and emphasising our intolerance of inappropriate behaviour towards them. Secondly, a number of international staff began to develop an international staff society, with a very successful inaugural event in June. Further events are planned for the coming year. On the student side, the Students' Union supported the creation of a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Society and are now looking to help get this established. The Chaplaincy are also looking at ways in which they can contribute to developing a sense of community amongst international students, for example through an afternoon tea during the Freshers'/Induction period.

Following some informal concerns being raised about inappropriate language, the Committee agreed to develop some guidance for staff and students. Guidance notes have now been agreed and are being loaded onto the intranet.

In collaboration with the Students' Union, the institution launched an Active Bystander programme, which encourages those who observe inappropriate behaviour to actively, but safely, intervene. Similar programmes are being rolled out across many other HEIs. The programme is being offered to staff and students and will be incorporated as a mandatory element of the Students' Union's Executive, Course Rep and Student Society leads' training. Take-up has been low. However, feedback has been very positive and more work is planned to drive up attendance in 16/17.

A team of staff representing Events, Staff Development, the Students' Union and the Chaplaincy worked together to introduce a calendar highlighting a range of religious and multi-cultural key dates and events. It is planned to use this to help develop the number and range of events to mark key dates within the institution.

Our obligations under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, include specific activity to prevent radicalisation. The Head of Student Services has led work in this area during the year, including the introduction of workshops to raise awareness of vulnerability in this regard. The University has two trainers who have been approved by Suffolk County Council to deliver the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP3). Initially, staff with a pastoral and welfare function were a priority group identified to attend this training. However, the workshop is now offered to staff at all levels, students and partners e.g. Students' Union, Chaplaincy, Fresh Student Living (student accommodation partner), and Dardan security staff<sup>8</sup>.

The Head of Student Services led a project to evaluate the effectiveness of current arrangements for supporting students with disabilities in the context of the reforms to the Disabled Student Allowances and practice in Higher Education. Five broad areas emerged for further consideration and actions: raising staff awareness; inclusive practice; individual reasonable adjustments; availability and accessibility of learning materials and assistive technologies; and accommodation. A number of actions were recommended; many of which have been implemented or are in train for 16/17. For example:

1. a multi-disciplinary group are actively researching and developing an inclusivity framework which will feed into the Teaching and Learning Framework review scheduled for January 2017
2. Further funding was identified which enabled the University to purchase additional loan equipment, for example Digital Voice Recorders

NSS data prompted the establishment of focus groups to gain further feedback regarding the prevalence of lower satisfaction levels amongst students with dyslexia compared to students with other disabilities. This resulted in a range of actions to improve the experience of dyslexic students which are being implemented via changes to the University's framework for learning, teaching and assessment and a review of the virtual learning environment. Reflecting our commitment to an inclusive approach, we are pleased to note that BME students are satisfied with the quality of teaching in line with benchmark expectations.

The introduction of the Disabled Students' Allowances Quality Assurance Framework (DSA-QAF) and mandatory criteria was introduced in April 2016 to enhance the quality of Non-Medical Help (NMH). The institution conducted a full audit of NMH staff skills, experience and qualifications, leading to a number of actions which are now being implemented.

During the year a small number of concerns were raised relating to access to buildings for disabled students. As a result the Estates Department were asked to review the time settings for the swipe system to ensure that there was sufficient time for wheelchair users to manoeuvre a wheelchair from the swipe into position to open the door before the system tripped out. The Estates Department reported that this was completed over the summer.

The outline objectives for 2016-17 are provided at Appendix 1.

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<sup>8</sup> Figures for the numbers of staff trained as at 31 July 2016 are not available. However as at November 2016 the figures are 189 and 185 staff and students respectively who have attended WRAP or Prevent related training.

## **Training & Development**

Academic & Student Services and Human Resources together work to ensure that equality and diversity are embedded in existing learning and development programmes, to develop new ways of increasing understanding and awareness of equality and diversity issues and to support equality and diversity initiatives. We also explore alternative modes of delivery in order to maximise coverage.

The annual All Staff Development event held at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year, for which a fuller account will be included in next year's annual report, was centred on the theme of diversity and inclusion.

## **Equality responsibilities of service and facility providers**

Staff from external businesses or organisations, and contractors, who operate on campus, are made aware of our Equality & Diversity policy and our guidelines for dealing with harassment and bullying, and are encouraged to act in accordance with them and with equality legislation. If any breach of equality legislation, our policy or the harassment and bullying guidelines by a member of staff of an external business or organisation which operates on campus is brought to our attention we will take reasonable steps to prevent any further breach occurring.

We ensure that equality considerations are taken into account in tendering processes and seek to ensure that potential contractors have an effective equality policy. Contracts with business or organisations hosted by the institution must be drawn up with reference to our Equality & Diversity policy.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing policy in relation to equality and diversity issues lies with the Equality & Diversity Committee, which is an advisory group to the Executive. The Head of HR Projects assists the Director of HR in providing an annual report on equality and diversity related activity to the Equality & Diversity Committee, Academic Board, the Executive and the Board.

Sara Corcoran  
Director of HR  
November 2016

**Equality & Diversity Priorities 2016-17**

Whilst the institution recognises the need to continue to develop and assure equality in all areas, data suggests a continuing focus on the areas of gender, ethnicity and mental health for the coming year. The following outline objectives have been agreed for the year and are currently under review to establish timeframes and resources for delivery.

**General**

1. Establishment of arrangements at Faculty/Directorate level to ensure effective consideration of equality and diversity matters at this level
2. Introduction of some positive action initiatives, to support those students within protected groups which are at higher risk of withdrawal
3. The introduction, in collaboration with the multi-faith Chaplaincy and the Students' Union, of more annual events celebrating key dates across a number of faiths

**Ethnicity**

4. The completion, by LTAG, of a review of the curriculum for potential ethnocentricity
5. The introduction of more effective methods to reach potential BME staff and students

**Disability**

6. Participation in the Mindful Employer initiative and extension, as appropriate, of the commitments therein to the student body.

**Gender**

7. Utilisation of the AthenaSWAN methodology to assess gender equality provision in the organisation in support of the Board gender KPI and in readiness for a potential AthenaSWAN (or other equality chartermark) submission in due course