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| **Appendix** |
| Student Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13 |
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**Introduction**

**Background**

The Student Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13 has been prepared by the Student Equality and Diversity Office as part of Student Services and meets Brunel University’s legal obligation to report on the progress made against the University’s Student Equality Objectives identified within the University’s Equality Objectives 2012 – 2016.

Published on Friday 6th April 2012, the University’s Equality Objectives set out the University’s Equality Plan and provide the public with the information needed to hold the University to account as far as Brunel’s performance on equality and diversity is concerned.

Brunel University’s Equality Objectives focus on seven key areas namely;

1. **Objective 1 –**

Enhance data collection to support planning of resources and activities.

1. **Objective 2 –**

Ensure ‘due regard’ by continuing to embed equality and diversity into the University’s policies, practices and procedures.

1. **Objective 3 –**

To consider how we ensure the diversity of senior committees reflect the University’s community.

1. **Objective 4 –**

Increase appointment levels of staff from ethnic minority and disabled backgrounds.

1. **Objective 5 –**

To improve promotion success rates for female academics.

1. **Objective 6 –**

Address low degree attainment amongst UG ethnic minority students.

1. **Objective 7 –**

Investigate year on year UG student progression and retention.

Five out of the seven areas identified above relate to student matters and the student experience. A progress update focusing on student issues is provided within this report. The relevant Objectives are Equality Objective 1; Equality Objective 2; Equality Objective 3; Equality Objective 6 and Equality Objective 7.

Further, the University has an effective equality impact assessment process which allows for the University’s practices, processes and policies to be screened in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the University’s Equality Objectives.

Some of requirements set out in the University’s Equality Objectives are also delivered through activities identified within the University’s Access Agreement 2012/13 and the Interim Widening Participation Strategy Statement. The aforementioned documents recognise the University’s diverse student population and support the University’s under-represented groups such as mature students, disabled students, students from a low-income or socio-economic background and care-leavers.

Through the delivery of the Equality Objectives, Brunel University has continued to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. These are to:

(1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;

(2) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups and;

(3) foster good relations between people from different groups by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Please note that Equality Objectives relating to staff and employment issues are reported separately to the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee in the Staff Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

**Overview of Student Equality and Diversity Annual Report**

This Annual Report contains the progress made in 2012/13 against the University’s Student Equality Objectives (2012 – 2016).

Please note that this Report does not contain any student equality data. All student equality data relating to this Report will be presented to the Student Equality and Diversity Committee separately.

**Student Equality Objectives Progress Report 2012/2013**

**Student Equality Objectives Progress Report 2012/2013**

Five out of the seven Equality Objectives relate to student matters and the student experience and as such a progress update is provided below.

The relevant Objectives are Equality Objective 1; Equality Objective 2; Equality Objective 3; Equality Objective 6 and Equality Objective 7.

**Objective 1 –**

**Enhance data collection to support planning of resources and activities.**

1. **Enhance equality data collection to support planning of resources and activities by collecting equality data relating to religion and belief and sexual orientation.**
2. In line with the University’s Equality Objectives, the Equality Act 2010 and HESA requirements, the discussion to extend the equality questions on the student registration task began in 2012/13 for implementation in 2013/14. The extension incorporated the collection of equality data on religion and belief, gender reassignment as well as sexual orientation. For a breakdown of the ‘Student Registration: Equality Task’, please see Appendix 1.
3. **Review the way in which disabled students’ data is held and reported on SITS and Oracle.**
4. The Disability and Dyslexia Services and the Corporate Information Systems Department commenced the Oracle and SITS review project in 2013. The aim of the project is to design a new version of Oracle which would allow for better data integration between Oracle and SITS. Therefore, allow for a better data analysis.

The new Oracle System should be in place in September 2014.

**Additional data collection project**

1. **Undertake a Pilot Student Parent and Carers Questionnaire in the School of Health Sciences and Social care.**
2. A pilot Student Parents questionnaire was made available to students undertaking Social Work in the School of Health and Social Care. The result of this was collated and made available to a one off Student Parents Working Group for consultation and further comments.

The main conclusion of the initial questionnaire was the need to expand the questionnaire by making it available to all students within the University as well as extending the questionnaire to include questions relating to students with caring responsibilities.

This project has now moved to its second phase. A University wide Student Parents and Carers questionnaire was undertaken in conjunction with the Union of Brunel Student.

The questionnaire ran in the 2013/14 academic year and the actions from this, such as a review of the University’s Health and Safety Policy (with regards to bringing children onto Campus), Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy (with regards to bringing children onto Campus), and Car Parking Policy, are currently underway. Further, a series of guidelines for Student Parents and Carers, students who are pregnant, those going on maternity leave , paternity leave and maternity support leave as well as students who are undergoing the adoption process are currently being drafted for a 2014/15 implementation.

**Objective 2 –**

**Ensure ‘due regard’ by continuing to embed equality and diversity into the University’s policies, practices and procedures.**

1. **Continue to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded into University Life.**
2. **Equality Training**

Successfully delivered equality training / briefing to 136 members of Staff and Student Mentors. The Student Equality and Diversity Manager contributed to, designed and delivered different equality and diversity sessions namely;

* ‘Equality Act 2010 – Working with Students’;
* ‘Undersatnding Equality; Valuing Diversity’ (A training session for Student Mentors);
* ‘Understanding Dignity at Study’(A training session for staff members);
* ‘Equality Policy – Student Work Placement’ Briefing (A briefing for staff members);
* ‘Objective 6 - Addressing low degree attainment amongst UG ethnic minority students’ (A briefing for staff members).

In addition, the University’s Council Members attended an Equality and Diversity session delivered by David Ruebain, Chief Executive, Equality Challenge Unit. The session was titled ‘Equality Obligations of Brunel University’s Council and Senior Managers’.

1. **Events**

Although the Student Equality and Diversity Office are involved in a variety of equality related events throughout the academic year, the Equality and Diversity Office also hosted 3 main equality events. These events were well attended and received good feedback from attendees. These events are listed below:

* **31 October 2012**

Black History Month was celebrated with an interactive Fair in the Atrium. The event raised £143.57 for the Sickle Cell Society.

* **27th February 2013**

LGBT History Month takes place every February and celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. The Month was celebrated across campus. Diverse Brunel hosted a lecture by Peter Tatchell entitled **‘The Unfinished Battle for LGBT Human Rights’**, which was well attended by both staff and students.

In addition to this, the Equality Office hosted two joint inclusion events with Hillingdon Council, where students and staff were invited to take part in shaping the future of LGBT in Hillingdon.

* **12th March 2013**

An International Women’s Day event celebrated women’s achievements and Professor Geoff Rogers, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) delivered a **‘Message from the Vice-Chancellor’,** Professor Julia Buckingham.  He later spoke about the **'University’s Athena SWAN Initiative’**. Following on from this, Professor Lorraine DeSouza, the University’s Equality Champion delivered a speech on the International Women's Day 2013 theme titled, **‘The Gender Agenda: Gaining Momentum’**.

The final event for the year celebrated the remarkable and inspirational women at Brunel. Students and staff were invited to nominate a Brunel woman who had inspired them. A lunchtime event was held for the nominees who received a letter of recognition from the VC, together with a scroll. Brunel’s Equality Champion, Professor Lorraine DeSouza presented hosted the event. Following the success of this event, it is hoped that the event would take place bi-yearly.

1. **Equality Impact Assessments**

During the reporting period the Equality Impact Assessment Review Group reviewed 128 issues from Council and Senate. In addition, there were 6 issues added by the group which were felt to require an impact assessment. 76 Equality Impact Assessments (academic related only) were reviewed and a variety of Departments and Schools were supported with undertaking their Equality Impact Assessments.

1. **Maintainance of external relationships with international and local stakeholders as well as represent the University at community forums.**

The Student Equality Manager was an adjudicator for the Commonwealth ‘Women in Leadership’ essay competition. The competition is open to all youth in the Commonwealth between the ages of 15 and 29 years. The theme for the 10th Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (10WAMM) was **'Women’s Leadership for Enterprise'**. In addition to this, the Student Equality and Diversity Manager Chairs the Higher Education London Equality Network. This Group is supported by the Equality Challenge Unit. Locally, the Office represents the University at the Prevent Working Group and the Strong and Active Communities Group; both groups are part of the Local Strategic Partnership.

1. **Advice and Consultancy**

The Equality Office continued to provide general advice and supported staff and students on a range of specific student related equality matters. There was an increase in the number of staff and students who needed advice on supporting pregnant students and general maternity related equality issues in 2012/13.

1. **Student Placement Equality Policy**

**The ‘Equality Policy: Student Work Placement’** was implemented following its approval by the Learning and Teaching Committee and disseminated to all Schools and relevant departments such as the Placement and Careers Centre. Briefing sessions were delivered to all Schools and the Placement and Careers Service. In total, 51 members of staff who engage with students going on placement attended the briefing.

Where necessary, the Student Equality Office will continue to provide briefing sessions to staff members in the hope that they update students and work placement providers on Brunel’s equality obligations concerning student work placements.

1. **Student engagement and consultation.**
2. **LGBT Student Support network**

Actions to allow the University to better support LGBT students commenced fully in 2012/13. The development of these actions aimed at improving the student experience of LGBT students came as a result of a focus group held with the LGBT student community in 2012. In 2012/13 the University was able to put in place the ground work for the LGBT Student Peer Support Group and advertised for LGBT Student Peer Support Members. The group was formally established in 2013/14. Members of the group provide moral support and academic related information to members of the student LGBT community on Campus. The University also started to provide a free space for the local LGBT Forum in Hillingdon. The Group is coordinated by the local authority and allows a free space for both the Brunel LGBT Community and the local LGBT community to meet and network.

1. **Student Equality Network Group**

The Student Equality Network Group was launched on 29th November 2012 and meets twice yearly. It’s held in a confidential setting where students interested in equality issues can network with their peers as well as give equality related feedback and suggestions to the University. The second meeting of the Group was held on 5th March 2013.

1. **Dignity at Study - Harassment and Bullying and similar reports.**

The Dignity at Study Policy was introduced in 2008 and provides a route for students to complain about issues of bullying and harassment. The Student Equality and Diversity Manager dealt with six allegations of Bullying and Harassment and one allegation of Discrimination in 2012/13. Other cases relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination that arose were dealt with either at local level by Schools or Halls of Residences, sometimes with the support of the Student Equality and Diversity Manager.

No complaints were referred to the Student Complaints and Investigating Officer by the Student Equality and Diversity Manager under the Dignity at Study Policy 2012/13.

**Objective 3 –**

**To consider how we ensure the diversity of senior committees reflect the University’s community.**

1. **To continually monitor the diverse representation of Council and Senate members and to work towards reflecting the representation of the University’s community within these committees.**

The diversity of members for both Senate and Council were reviewed in 2012/2013. It was identified that the diversity of members was improving when compared to previous years.

In the reporting year, the University’s Council had a female Chair as well as a female Chair of Audit Committee, a female Chair of Finance Committee, a female Chair of Nominations Committee and a female Chair of Remunerations Committee.

Where possible, the University will continue to work towards increasing the diversity of its senior committee to reflect the community it serves. The University is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and regardless of their background all members are required to undertake appropriate training in equality and diversity issues.

**Objective 6 –**

**Address low degree attainment amongst UG ethnic minority students.**

1. **Investigate and address relatively lower degree attainment amongst UG ethnic minority students.**
2. **Continue to encourage inclusive teaching and learning practice.**

In effect, the aim of Objective 6 is to investigate how best to identify and increase the attainment of at risk BME students at Brunel. The goal is to narrow the gap between the attainment of White and BME UG students. While more in-depth data analysis which is planned over the life of this Equality Objectives will help to map and identify the reasons for low degree attainment amongst UG ethnic minority students, the efforts to achieve this objective have to be combined with those allocated to achieving the aims of Objective 7.

In order to meet the aims of Objective 6, Brunel has taken fair and flexible approach, as well as recognising the diversity of needs represented within the student body, the University increased work in the areas of attainment, transition and retention to ensure Brunel’s under-represented groups achieve outcomes comparable to the student population as a whole.

In practical terms, the University paid ‘due regard’ under the Access Agreement and WP Strategy by

* provision of Access Scholarships to 380 new entrants every year from under-represented groups and mature students;
* Continuing the University’s Regional Partnership Scholarships (worth £6,000) provided to 20 undergraduate students in 2012. The scholarship is based on academic excellence and eligible students must have attended a maintained school or college (not an independent or private school) in one of the six London boroughs with whom the University operates Widening Participation partnerships. Students must also meet one or more of the University’s under-represented groups;

These Schemes have ensured that the WP students who are BME at Brunel are able to engage and have successful careers at Brunel.

**Objective 7 –**

**Investigate year on year UG student progression and retention.**

1. **Investigate and seek to increase, where necessary, year on year UG progression amongst students of different protected characteristics.**
2. **Continue to encourage inclusive teaching and learning practice.**

A mapping exercise which looked at the actions Academic Schools were taking on retention was conducted by the Student Equality and Diversity Office in November 2012. The aim of the exercise was to explore how best the Student Equality and Diversity Office could support Academic Schools academically and non-academically to increase their retention rates.

Five out of eight Schools engaged with the mapping exercise. Their responses rightly showed that Schools were taking both academic and non-academic approaches to ensuring progression and retaining students. For example -

1. The Department of Information Systems and Computing, within the School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics, re-structured their UG course with an emphasis on small group teaching and proactively check on students who fail to attend lectures regularly.
2. The Department of Mathematics, introduced in 2012/13 a Peer Mentoring Scheme for level 2 and 3 students with the aim of reaching 25% of students who might otherwise not progress. The Department also ran ‘Essential Skills’ sessions where students get help with their mathematical skills.
3. Most of the Schools had applied for, and were awarded, the 2012-13 OFFA funding aimed at Retention Projects within the different Schools.

Following the Mapping Exercise, the Student Equality and Diversity Office were given an opportunity to run a Workshop in the Brunel Business School as part of the School’s annual Equality Staff Development session. The Workshop explored options which may help address the issues identified under Objectives 6 and 7.

**Appendix A**

**Breakdown of the Student Registration: Equality Task**

