

Equality and Diversity Strategy

2015-2020



Diversity reflects us all, equality protects us all, responsibility sustains us all



Foreword



Professor Julia Buckingham

Vice-Chancellor and President

Brunel University London has the privilege of being one of the most diverse universities in the UK. I am immensely proud that equality and diversity are integral to our ethos because it is critically important to me that all our staff and students are able study, work, relax and socialise in a welcoming and inclusive environment which fosters a culture of mutual regard and respect.

Our new strategy reaffirms our deep commitment to equality and diversity and sets out our core principles and priorities for development in the coming years. Our overarching goal is to embed and sustain the very best practice in all aspects of the University's business and activities through engagement and partnership with all members of our community, staff and students. It is an ambitious agenda but with your support I am confident that we can attain our goal.

I would like to thank Professor Lorraine De Souza, our Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equality, Diversity and Staff Development), and to the many members of the University who contributed to the development of the strategy. I look forward to working with you all as we take the strategy forward.

Ali Milani

President of the Union of Brunel Students

Equality is one of the five core values of the Union and is central to our belief that every student should be free to develop within and enjoy every aspect of university life.

Both the Union and the University have been working in partnership for many years to develop frameworks and practices that truly support and encourage students to fully immerse themselves in University life regardless of their background, age, religion or belief, sexuality, disability, marital or civil partnership status, gender, race or disability.

I am delighted that this Equality and Diversity Strategy can be published and will formalise and galvanise our message of inclusiveness across all aspects of being part of our Brunel family.



Introduction

Professor Lorraine de Souza

Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equality, Diversity and Staff Development)

Brunel University London's strategic vision is to be a world-class creative community that is inspired to work, think and learn together to meet the challenges of the future.

This Equality and Diversity Strategy supports the University's vision and is guided by its values. The Strategy sets out our proposals for not only fulfilling our legal and ethical duties but also to promote a culture where the diversity of our staff and students is positively valued. It contributes to the fulfilment of the University's core business by embedding equality and inclusiveness into all our functions and activities. This is a single strategy aimed to ensure that equality and diversity are guiding principles in the pursuit of Brunel University London's vision. Our aspirations are underpinned by a principle of practice where we seek to consistently demonstrate excellence in equality, inclusion and fairness in all we do.

By working together with a philosophy of openness and respectfulness we can ensure that the University's core values become the lived experiences of each and every one of Brunel's community.





Our public duty

The Equality Act 2010 requires public institutions to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition to Public Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the University has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) not to act incompatibly with rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the Convention).

In line with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance, Brunel University London is fully aware of our duty to

promote equality and diversity in all aspects of our community life and work. We therefore commit to the achievement of equality of opportunity and diversity throughout the institution.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy applies to all individuals who study, work for us or visit us and to those who are more broadly associated with Brunel University London. It includes staff, students, alumni, visitors, contractors, suppliers and partners, regardless of race or ethnicity, sex, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity status, marriage and civil partnership status, socioeconomic background and any other inappropriate distinction.

In keeping with our duties we will continue to engage and confer with our community and to monitor and act upon equality data. We will continue to assess the impact, or potential impact, of key policies, processes and practices on equality for staff and students.

Our equality and diversity vision

At Brunel University London we believe that higher education can transform people's lives. By valuing and respecting the perspectives and contributions of all our colleagues and students we shall foster a culture of mutual respect and create an enriched environment that enables people to thrive and to realise their full potential. We recognise that the

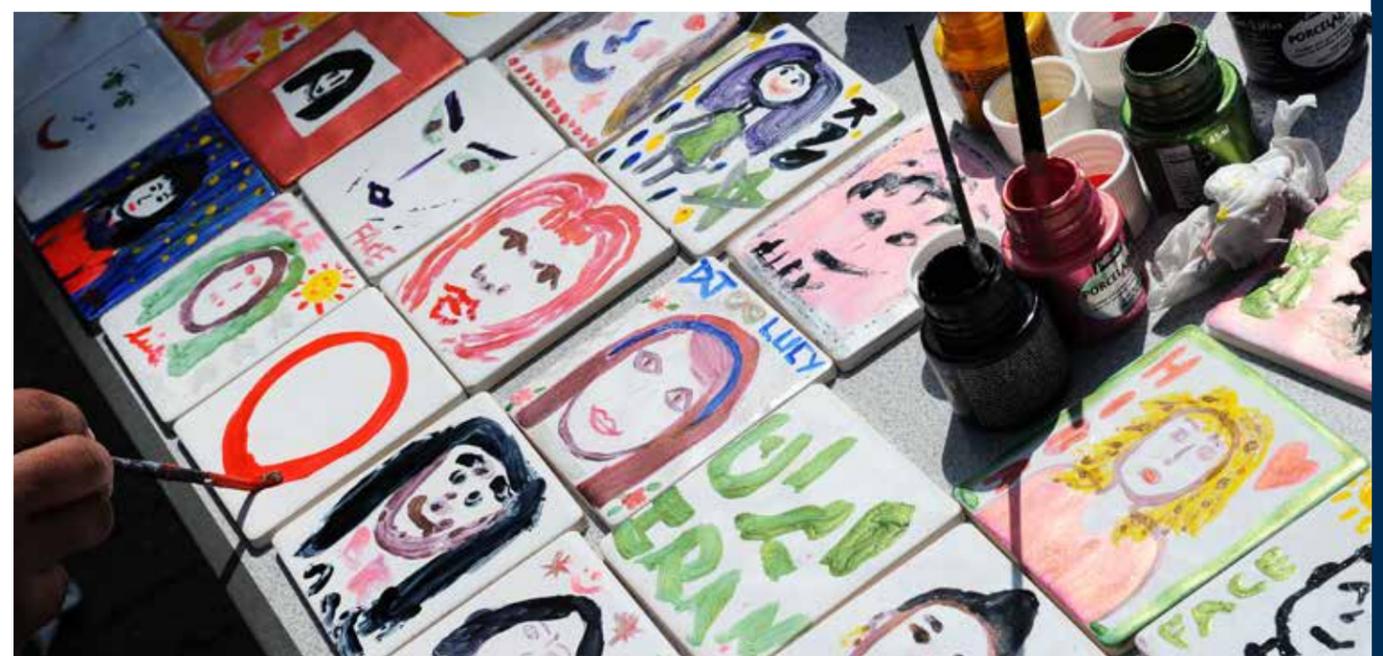
rich cultural diversity of our community underpins our distinctive brand as an international, research-intensive university. Our vision places equality and diversity at the heart of all we do and inspires us to excel by working together to maximise the benefits of our diversity.

The institutional values of the University

The University has set out the core values that underpin our work and which provide us with the guiding principles that are not only fundamental to us meeting our legal, moral and ethical responsibilities but also crucial to the development of the world-class creative community we aim to achieve.

As a large, multifaceted and culturally diverse Higher Education Institution we have set ourselves a specific strategic objective of providing an enabling culture in which all students and staff feel that they can excel.

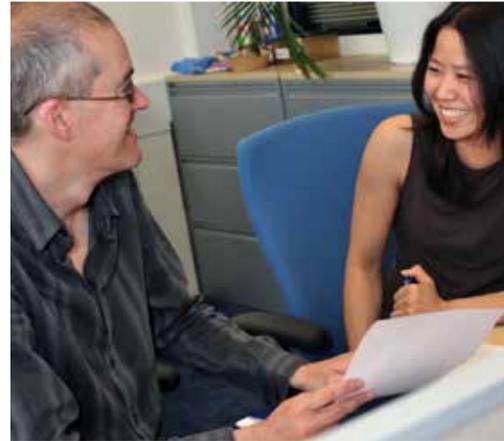
Our enabling culture enhances our reputation for collegiality, openness and fairness. We share responsibility for developing our University and all members of our community are supported to achieve individual and collective goals. We treat each other with dignity and respect and have positive regard for each other's contributions towards the attainment of excellence.



Our commitment to equality and diversity:
Building on strengths



The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of the community are respected and valued. The University community, as a whole and as individuals, shares responsibility to ensure that due consideration is given to equality and diversity within their spheres of influence. The Equality and Diversity Strategy builds on our existing good practice and our key achievements.



The key strategic objectives for enhancing
equality and diversity 2015-2020

To ensure that we meet our strategic objective of providing an enabling culture in which all students and staff feel that they can excel, we have identified through consultation with key stakeholders, seven major themes for action during the timespan of this Equality and Diversity Strategy 2015-2020.

Full details of the activities and actions we intend to take are described in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Themes of the equality and diversity strategy 2015-2020.

Leadership

We aim to ensure decisive, proactive, leadership and commitment from the University's executive and senior management staff on all equality and diversity matters. This includes the leaders of the Union of Brunel Students. Equality and diversity leadership will be expected to be visible and evident in the strategic plans of all areas of the University. Senior managers in leadership roles will be informed and updated about all diversity issues. They will be supported to instigate good practice, fair treatment and appropriate change in order to nurture a culture of inclusion and respect within their spheres of influence.

The strategic goal of this theme is to exemplify the promotion of equality and diversity through leadership and leadership development thus enhancing our corporate reputation for diversity and inclusion on a national and international level.

Learning, Teaching and student experience

We shall continue to build a culture based on respect and dignity that supports all students in their life at University and facilitates each to achieve academic success and fulfilling employment. Our robust, fair and transparent admissions policy will continue to ensure that we attract talented students from under-represented groups. Our teaching and learning strategy will embed policies and processes that ensure no group with protected characteristics is systematically disadvantaged at any stage from admission to graduation and into employment.

The strategic goal of this theme is to stimulate students and staff to achieve an exemplary and comprehensive student experience with equality of opportunity at the heart of our education provision and at the core of our student support activities.



The University Athena SWAN Bronze award was achieved in 2012 and the Department of Mathematics was awarded the Athena SWAN Bronze in 2014. We hold an annual Athena SWAN Lecture given by a high profile academic woman each year and provide Athena SWAN Research Awards to women returning from maternity leave.



The University recognises and values its research staff and holds a European Commission HR Excellence in Research award for its commitment to supporting its researchers.



The university provides an award-winning, sector-leading disability and dyslexia support service to students with disabilities. We were awarded the University Disability Standards Award for our work on training and support for staff relating to disability equality in 2015.



We continue to meet our "Positive about Disabled" people commitments as an employer and were, yet again, awarded the Two Ticks Symbol in 2015.

We support a range of staff and student equality networks that contribute effectively to the University equality and diversity agenda on issues relating to gender, LGBT, ethnic minorities, disability and religion/beliefs. In addition, we have developed effective mentoring programmes for women and BME staff.



The key strategic objectives for enhancing equality and diversity 2015-2020 *continued*



Research

We will continue to ensure that all researchers of the appropriate academic standard have equality of opportunity to participate in research and that the University promotes and implements the equality implications of the Concordat, Athena SWAN and the Gender Equality Charter. Ethics Committees will ensure that, in the case of research involving human participants, there is equality of opportunity for all to participate and that no group with protected characteristics is excluded unless there is a sound research (or scientific) reason to exclude them.

Our strategic goal is to maximise the diverse talents of all our researchers and enable them to produce innovative research of significant importance to society and the world at large.

Staff experience

To ensure that all staff, including student staff, interns and those contracted to work on behalf of the University, understand their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity we shall continue to provide appropriate and regular staff development and to update and publicise all relevant University policies. Through leadership development, staff will be supported to develop as role models and advocates for equality and diversity. All staff will be provided with training opportunities to maximise their potential and enhance their careers. We aim to mainstream equality and diversity in all staff related practices including recruitment, promotion, career development, retention, reward/pay, procurement and all human resources policies and processes.

The strategic goal of this theme is to embed an exemplary equality and diversity culture that enables staff to appreciate and celebrate the benefits of difference.

Environment

As we renew and update our estate, we will build an inclusive and accessible environment where all staff, students and visitors feel safe and welcome. The University shall ensure that those with disabilities are facilitated to achieve and maintain their independence (including in residences) and those with other protected characteristics who need adjustments to live, work and study at the University, or who visit us, have their needs accommodated. We will ensure that the virtual environments fundamental to staff and student achievement embed inclusive use and accessibility for all.

Our strategic goal is to promote an inclusive and safe environment for all at the University, including physical accessibility, dignity at work and study and a user-friendly learning environment.

Governance

Through monitoring and analysis of information we will provide evidence that the University meets its obligations in terms of preventing unlawful discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity. We will continue to ensure that the University responds quickly to any trends or issues that are identified in a timely and positive manner and ensure that all relevant committees of the University are engaged in and implement the Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan and reflect the ethos in practice. Best practice will be identified and shared for the benefit of all.

Our strategic goal is to create a fully inclusive organisational culture that is proactive in initiating change and driving forwards best practice in equality and diversity matters.

Delivery

We will develop an implementation and action plan that includes milestones, targets and timelines. We will self-assess and evaluate our effectiveness and progress in advancing equality and diversity in all the above strategic areas. Equality Impact Assessments of University policies and procedures will continue and will inform actions we may need to take. We will influence staff development activities and the student learning experience to ensure that best practice is disseminated and that poor practice is remediated. We shall review the Equality and Diversity Strategy and develop it further in the light of evidence. We will report our progress to the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee.

The strategic goal of this theme is to establish an enabling culture fully aware of equality and diversity issues, where we are confident and able to assess ourselves, reflect on the outcomes and initiate change for the better.

Brunel University London welcomes the challenges ahead and we are fully committed to advancing the goals detailed in this Equality and Diversity Strategy. We have set targets at University Strategic level and the accompanying Action Plan will signpost us to making a positive difference to the culture of the University and beyond.

Ownership, responsibility and monitoring

All members of the University community are expected to own and act upon the principles of this Equality and Diversity Strategy. This includes staff, students, alumni, visitors, contractors and anyone associated with Brunel University London.

The Executive Board and Council have overall responsibility for legal compliance and for championing the Equality and Diversity Strategy across their areas of influence. The Equal

Opportunities and Human Resources Committee has overall responsibility for the ongoing development and monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The University Equality and Diversity Strategy 2015-2020 will be monitored and reported on annually to the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee and reviewed for progress against the key objectives and refreshed in 2017.



Key objectives to be achieved by 2020

Leadership:

Members of the University Council and the University Executive Team are committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity at all levels at the University. They will ensure that equality and diversity practice is developed, implemented and promoted within their spheres of influence. Leading by example, they will challenge and eliminate discrimination or bias and operate in a way which enables equality of opportunity and supports diversity.

Learning, Teaching and Student Experience:

Equality and diversity principles and practice are established in the University's education plans and all learning, teaching and assessment activities leading to an excellent student experience, from application to graduation, where all students have equality of opportunity to succeed and gain graduate employment.

Research:

The University continues to be a fair and equitable place where research thrives. The research community is proactive in implementing and promoting the equality implications in the Concordat and Research Excellence Framework. All academics of the appropriate standard and potential are able to participate in the University's research culture and the University will seek external recognition as celebration of inclusiveness.

Staff Experience:

The University continues to recruit and retain staff through fair and transparent processes. Policies and procedures will ensure dignity and respect for all colleagues and a fair and equitable performance, promotion and reward process for all. The University will identify areas of underrepresentation or inequalities and apply positive action measures, in line with strategic plans and equality and diversity best practice.

Environment:

The University provides a safe and accessible environment (including the cultural and virtual environments) that meets the needs of all staff and students. Policies and practices will continue to respond positively to the needs of those with protected characteristics and equality and diversity principles will be embedded into all new estate and other support services development.

Governance:

The University will establish effective review and monitoring mechanisms that are proactive in managing a comprehensive knowledge base of the diversity of the University community. It will be used to ensure that the University fulfils its equality and diversity objectives and its legal and public responsibilities.

Delivery:

A range of methods will be used to shape an increasing awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues at the University and point to actions that need to be addressed in the Action Plan. Achievements, progress and challenges will be identified and reported annually to the University's stakeholders.





Brunel
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Contact details tbc