

University of South Wales

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report

1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

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A Welsh version of this report will be made available upon request.

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1. Introduction and background

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 the University, as a public authority, is required to develop a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and publish an Annual Report by the 31st March each year. The report must cover the period of 1st April to 31st March of the previous year.

The SEP Annual Report must detail:

- the steps we have taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- how we have used this information to meet the three aims of the public sector duty;
- the reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- a statement on the effectiveness of the arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- progress towards fulfilling each of our equality objectives;
- a statement on the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to fulfil each of our equality objectives;
- specified employment information.

The University of South Wales (USW) Group has a new [Strategic Equality Plan](#) for 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2020. This is the first Annual Report for the new SEP. It is for the University of South Wales and covers the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. There are separate annual reports for the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and The College Merthyr Tydfil.

The 2016 to 2020 SEP outlines eight Strategic Equality Objectives for the USW Group. Details of these objectives and progress towards meeting them is outlined within section 4 of this report. Appendix 1 contains a detailed table of progress and Appendix 2 contains the specified employment information.

2. Equality at University of South Wales

The equality and diversity agenda at USW is championed by the University Secretary. The University Secretary chairs the Equality & Diversity Steering Group (EDSG), which meets termly and has representation from all departments, faculties, Trade Unions, the Student Union, The College Merthyr Tydfil and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. The group's role is to consider all equality issues and protected characteristics, oversee compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and provide strategic direction for the USW Group's equality agenda. The EDSG has overarching responsibility for the implementation and review of the SEP.

In addition to EDSG, the University has three sub groups that are tasked with progressing the equalities agenda for specific protected characteristics, these are:

- Disability & Dyslexia Equality Sub Group –this group works to progress the University's equality agenda in relation to disability and dyslexia for staff and students.
- Gender & Sexual Orientation Equality Sub Group - this group progresses the University's equality agenda in relation to gender, gender identity and sexual orientation for staff and students. It plays a key role in monitoring the University's Athena Swan Action Plan, which outlines actions to advance gender and trans equality. For 2016/17, this group became the Athena Swan project team to oversee a new Athena Swan application.
- Race Religion & Belief Equality Sub Group – this group works to progress the University's equality agenda in relation to religion, belief and non-belief for staff and students.

All equality sub groups meet termly. They are chaired by senior members of staff and have representation from all faculties, relevant corporate departments and the Students' Union. The sub groups feed directly into EDSG. The EDSG and Sub Groups are supported by the Equality & Diversity Partner who has responsibility for equality and diversity for both staff and students.

3. Identifying, Collecting & Using Relevant Information

3.1 The Steps Taken to Identify and Collect Relevant Information

Under the Equality Act statutory duties for Wales, equality monitoring data of staff and students is classed as 'relevant information' to support the Strategic Equality Plan.

USW monitors all protected characteristics of staff through both an online recruitment system and a HR system. Applicants are able to input their equalities data confidentially as part of the application process. This enables HR to produce yearly reports on the success rate of candidates through all stages of the recruitment process anonymously by protected characteristics. This data is presented within section 10 of the Employment Information report contained within Appendix 2. The HR system contains a 'self-service' option for existing staff to provide their own equality data, if they have not done so through recruitment. The Strategic Equality Plan for 2016-2020 contains an action to increase disclosure rates of protected characteristics by 10% each year. Although there has been a marginal increase in disclosures during this year, further focus on this will be needed during 2017/18.

Student enrolment takes place at the start of each academic year through an online system, which includes equality monitoring for all protected characteristics. This data is stored securely and used anonymously to report on student populations of equality groups, as contained within the Student Equality Data Report in Appendix 3. Both this and the Employment Information reports are presented to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group, the relevant Equality Sub Group and the USW HR Committee each year for analysis and scrutiny. They are used to assess trends and imbalances and inform development of the equalities agenda.

Since 2014/15, student equalities data has been used to assess the representation, withdrawal and suspension rates, continuation levels and achievement of undergraduate and postgraduate students for all protected characteristics. In

2016/17, this was mainstreamed into the faculty Annual Monitoring Plans as a pilot project to enable faculties to incorporate analysis of equality data and appropriate actions into their plans. Following the successful pilot, this became a mandatory requirement for faculty annual monitoring plans from 2017/18.

3.2 How the institution has used this relevant information to meet the three aims of the public sector duty

All actions within the Strategic Equality Action Plan have been developed based upon relevant information gathered through consultation and engagement and detailed analysis of staff and student data, in addition to other relevant equalities information. A summary of the relevant information used to develop the SEP can be found in section 5.3.4 [here](#).

USW's eight Strategic Equality Objectives, along with the detailed Strategic Equality Action Plan that underpins these objectives, all focus upon meeting the three aims of the public sector duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

Relevant equality information is used to monitor implementation of the duties and, where relevant, features in the action plan table of progress (Appendix 1).

Extensive monitoring of relevant information is undertaken as part of USW's Athena Swan work. Athena Swan recognises the commitment to advancing gender and trans equality within higher education institutions. USW have created an Athena Swan Team for 2016/17, which is undertaking detailed analysis of staff data, including statistics, focus groups, interviews and surveys in relation to gender and trans equality. This work will culminate in submission of an application for a renewed Bronze Institutional Award in April 2018. This will include a detailed action plan outlining steps that will be taken to address any imbalances evident through the data and address any equality issues identified through the engagement process.

During 2016/17, USW conducted an Equal Pay Review, involving extensive analysis of staff pay data relating to age, disability, sex and race. Detailed pay gap reports

relating to these characteristics was produced, resulting in a comprehensive analysis and a set of recommendations to address any pay gaps or areas for further exploration. The recommendations, overseen by the Equal Pay Working Group, will continue to be implemented during 2017/18.

The Race, Religion & Belief Equality Sub Group developed a reporting schedule during 2016/17 to assess relevant information relating to race equality at each meeting, this includes staff and student data, survey analysis disaggregated by race and qualitative information about employee and students' experience.

The Women in Academia Network and the LGBT+ Staff Network liaise regularly to support staff and progress the agendas in relation to their respective protected characteristics. Engagement with these networks has resulted in the creation of a Women's Development Programme and work is underway to develop Trans Equality Guidance. These networks also play a vital role in providing feedback on areas for institutional improvement and development in equality and inclusion.

All aforementioned work demonstrates examples of how relevant information is used to meet the three aims of the general equality duty.

3.3 Reasons for Not Collecting Relevant Information

The University collects all protected characteristics for staff and students, with the exception of the following:

Pregnancy and Maternity

Information on pregnancy/maternity for students is not collected during enrolment. However, instead of undertaking quantitative analysis, USW uses other ways of supporting students who are pregnant or have recently given birth. Following an objective contained within the 2013 to 2016 SEP, guidance for students on pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption has been produced and support is provided through the student Advice Zones. Human Resources holds information on staff on pregnancy/maternity for the purposes of administering maternity leave.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Data on marital and civil partnership status is currently collected for staff, but not for students. As marriage and civil partnership is not a protected characteristic for the higher education provisions, there are no plans at present to introduce monitoring of this characteristic for students. For both staff and students, the title 'Mx' (title that does not indicate gender and is often used by non-binary people) has been introduced to both systems.

3.4 Statement on the Effectiveness of Arrangements for Identifying and Collecting Relevant Information

Significant efforts are made to identify, collect, analyse and use relevant information. The arrangements in place for this are very effective, with new ways of using relevant information being developed regularly.

Each year, there are 12 meetings of the four equalities committees in total. Each meeting focuses upon exploring the evidence base for equalities work and impact of any actions undertaken. All committees address equalities research and good practice guidance and how this can be implemented at USW.

The new SEP provides a renewed focus upon the USW Group's equality priorities. Monitoring of this will continue to be informed by the collection and analysis of relevant information, with key statistics and data published in the Annual Reports.

4. Strategic Equality Objectives – Progress Report

In line with our statutory duties, section 4 of this report contains a summary of progress we have made towards fulfilling each of our equality objectives, along with some key priorities for 2017/18. Further detail about the actions undertaken in relation to each objective is available within the Strategic Equality Action Plan Table of Progress in Appendix 1.

1. CULTURE & GOVERNANCE

To promote dignity, respect, inclusion and fairness within the university community to embed equality into the decision making of the USW Group.

There are 15 actions outlined within the Strategic Equality Action Plan to develop an inclusive culture, enhance the equalities governance arrangements and embed equality and inclusion into the decision making of USW. Significant work has been undertaken in relation to these actions, with some further priorities identified for 2017/18.

Key Areas of progress:

- The Equality & Diversity Steering Group, Race Religion & Belief Equality sub Group, Disability & Dyslexia Equality Sub Group and Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team met regularly during 2016/17. Terms of reference and membership of each were reviewed and work programmes for each committee developed and implemented.
- Equality monitoring has been introduced for the Board of Governors, with 100% completion rate.
- Equality Impact Assessment resource has been developed on the staff intranet.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to implement the PREVENT Duty within USW, with the development of training, policies, protocols and a risk assessment.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Ensure departmental and faculty representation across all areas in all committees and further develop approaches for the dissemination of information from these committees.
- Further departments to put in place equality action plans and all faculties to incorporate equalities into their Annual Monitoring Plans.
- Review Equality Impact Assessments forms and guidance.
- Equality Impact Assessments to become a mandatory requirement for all Executive papers.
- Further implementation of the procurement actions.

2. COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that engagement takes place with staff, students and local voluntary sector groups from protected characteristics through collaboration, communication and consultation.

Work has begun during 2016/17 to implement this strategic objective and put the foundations in place to further develop work on collaboration, communication and engagement.

Key areas of Progress:

- Student representation was obtained on the equality committees through the President and Vice President of the Students Union.
- A new 'equality & diversity' section of the staff intranet was developed and published, containing information across all policies, projects and initiatives.
- Equality related days, months and celebrations were communicated widely through various communication methods.
- Considerable work was undertaken to further develop the LGBT+ Staff Network 'Spectrum', including development of Terms of Reference, a work programme and an intranet site on LGBT+ equality.
- Two events were held to mark LGBT+ History Month in February 2017.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Further work on embedding visible representation of diversity in all forms of communication.
- Further promotion of key equality days and months throughout the year.
- Further engagement with BME employees and disabled employees about establishing of staff networks.

3. DIVERSITY OF STUDENT BODY & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To attract, select and retain a diverse range of students to study at USW Group and create an environment that encourages and supports all students to actively engage with the University and Colleges to realise their full potential.

There are nine actions within the Strategic Equality Action Plan to address this objective. They focus upon the student experience at USW, with particular attention to attracting and retaining BME students to study at USW and reducing the attainment gap between BME students and White students.

Key areas of Progress:

- Equality & Diversity Steering Group for Marketing & Student Recruitment established, with an equalities action plan developed.
- Analysis of two years of UCAS data on admissions disaggregated by race undertaken, with a commitment to undertake analysis of this data annually.
- Focus group undertaken to explore recruitment of BME students at USW.
- The continuation gap between UK White students and UK BME students has remained static at 8.2%.
- The attainment gap between UK White students and UK BME students has reduced from 10.1% in 2014, to 7.2% in 2016.
- 47 care leavers were enrolled and supported at USW during 2016/17.
- Plans have been developed to provide reasonable adjustments for fasting students during 2018, 2019 and 2020 when Ramadan coincides with the main examination period.

- The LGBT+ Staff Network have begun to develop guidance for trans staff and students, with support from the Student Union Gender Identity Officer.
- A series of disability awareness sessions have been held across USW, focusing upon different impairments.
- The USW Group joined the Stonewall Diversity Champions scheme.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Increasing the proportion of BME students at USW, reducing the continuation gap between BME and White students and continuing to reduce the attainment gap to ensure USW is an inclusive, accessible institution for diverse communities.
- Increasing the number of care leavers studying at USW.
- Continuing development of the trans equality guidance for staff and students, with a view to launching it in 2018/19.
- Completing review of the Dignity at Study Policy, with a view to launching it in 2018/19.

4. ATTRACTING, RETAINING & DEVELOPING STAFF

To attract, retain and develop a diverse range of people to work for the USW Group and to enable those that work for the Group to have access to open and transparent career development and progression.

This strategic equality objective focuses upon promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity amongst staff. There has been much work towards this objective during 2016/17, with some areas requiring further focus during 2017/18.

Key areas of Progress:

- Unconscious bias training provided to Board of Governors and members of the Vice Chancellor's Executive Board facilitated by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
- All USW jobs now feature on Twitter, as requested during voluntary sector engagement for the Strategic Equality Plan.

- USW joined the Department of Works & Pensions 'Disability Confident' scheme as a level 2 'confident' employer. A detailed self-assessment and action plan was developed.
- USW participated in the Workplace Equality Index, achieving 301st place, providing a benchmark and priorities to focus upon in our LGBT+ inclusivity work.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Complete development of an 'inclusive leadership' workshop and begin rolling it out to managers across USW.
- Improving our ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- Publishing guidance for dyslexic staff.
- Reapply for membership to the Disability Confident scheme.

5. ACCESSIBILITY

To ensure USW Group buildings and infrastructure reflect the diverse needs of the University and College communities and provide accessible and inclusive working and learning environments.

This strategic objective focuses upon three main areas of accessibility; the environment, IT and inclusive learning and teaching. Initial accessibility audits have been undertaken so that future years can focus upon delivery of the recommendations contained within them.

Key areas of Progress:

- Full Access Audit of all university premises undertaken.
- Evaluation of inclusive curriculum practices in Faculty of Computing, Engineering & Science carried out.
- Accessibility Audits of all main USW web based services conducted.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Consultation and engagement with disabled staff and students to support prioritisation of recommendations in the Access Audit.
- Increased focus upon inclusive curriculum activities across all faculties.

- Implementation of measures to increase accessibility of web based services, as determined by the Accessibility Audit.

6. INCLUSIVITY IN RESEARCH

To develop an inclusive approach to research conducted by USW Group staff, whereby the involvement of people from protected characteristic groups is promoted and barriers to the participation of people from diverse groups are removed.

This strategic equality objective focuses upon promoting greater participation in research by protected groups, using inclusive principles within research and addressing inequalities in research careers and outcomes, paying particular attention to gender. Progress has been made towards achieving these aims during 2016/17.

Key areas of Progress:

- Athena Swan Action Plan for 2013 to 2016 fully implemented.
- Detailed analysis of gender balance of Research Institutes undertaken.
- Women in Academia Network continues to run and successfully engage female employees throughout USW.
- A year long Women in Academia Development Programme launched with 20 delegates; exceptionally positive feedback received from all.
- Recommendations from 'Talented Women for a Successful Wales' implemented.
- Two successful applications for Ser Cymru II funding for female employees returning to research careers after a break.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Submit application for renewed Athena Swan Bronze Institutional Award and Bronze Departmental Award for School of Computing & Maths, each containing detailed action plans to further gender and trans equality within USW.

7. EQUAL PAY

To undertake Equal Pay Reviews of the USW Group every three years and implement the actions arising from the resulting Equal Pay Action Plans.

In line with the statutory duty, this strategic equality objective focuses upon pay equality for staff from protected characteristic groups; good progress has been made during this first year of the SEP.

Key Areas of Progress:

- Equal Pay Working Group established, including expertise on various protected characteristics.
- Equal Pay Review completed in November 2016, including detailed analysis of pay gaps relating to age, disability, race and gender. Pay gaps within grades and pay gaps for each of these characteristics were analysed.
- Series of recommendations developed from the Equal Pay Review.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Continuing implementation of the Equal Pay Review recommendations through the Equal Pay Working Group.
- Undertaking a small scale Equal Pay Review during 2018 in order to assess the impact of actions arising from the recommendations.

8. DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING

To enhance the collection, analysis and monitoring of equalities data and relevant equalities information.

This strategic equality objective aims to strengthen USW's approach to the collection and analysis of equalities data, in response to the employment information duty. Some good progress was made during 2016/17, with plans in place to further develop our practice in this area.

Key Areas of Progress:

- Student equalities data relating to all protected characteristics on representation, withdrawal/suspension, continuation and achievement is now routinely produced on a yearly basis each autumn.
- Following a successful pilot, this data is now embedded into the Faculty Annual Monitoring Plans each year.

Priorities for 2017/18:

- Increase disclosures of protected characteristics for staff, particularly for disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief.
- Undertake analysis of the Staff Engagement Survey by all protected characteristics.
- Evaluate use of student equalities data by faculties in creating annual monitoring plans.

5. Conclusion

This report reflects upon progress during the first year of USW's Strategic Equality Plan for 2016 to 2020. Considerable work has been done towards setting the foundations for fulfilling the University's eight strategic equality objectives over the forthcoming three years; positive progress has been made towards greater equality and inclusion for protected characteristic groups.

This report has highlighted achievements during this period, along with areas that require additional focus during the forthcoming years. Whilst it is recognised that there is still much further work to be done towards our strategic equality objectives, the work undertaken during the first year of the Strategic Equality Plan provides a sound basis on which to move forwards.