Kingston University Equality Objectives 2021-2025

Kingston University has a strong and sustained commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and to promoting a positive culture which celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and ensures fairness.

Why equality, diversity, and inclusion matter to us

It brings value to our university: our diversity is a strength that enhances the educational and learning experience for all through bringing different backgrounds, perspectives and ideas to the academic endeavour.

We are a diverse community: we live in a global and diverse world where our communities come from an increasingly diverse range of backgrounds. We appreciate the benefits of working inclusively in an environment where difference is celebrated and understood.

We value diversity in others: equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our approach to partnership, collaboration and outreach. As a university, we have a responsibility to challenge inequality, find solutions and enact change, leading by example.

To prioritise equality, diversity, and inclusion, we recognise important challenges for the University

As individuals

- in how we teach, assess and co-create learning
- in how we support students in their learning and university experience
- in how we conduct research and knowledge exchange
- in how we undertake outreach and external engagement activity
- in our learning and working relationships
- in the way we lead and manage

As an organisation

- in developing an inclusive culture where everyone understands their responsibilities and obligations, appreciates benefits, and actively shares good practice
- in mainstreaming the conversation about equality, diversity and inclusion, and ensuring visible role models and positive stories as well as active listening
- through informed and purposeful leadership and engagement to implement improvement and change
- through ensuring strong representation, active participation and inclusive agency in decision-making
- in providing appropriate training, development and support from an EDI perspective
- in ensuring key policies reflect and support the university's equality aims
- through sharing excellence learned from other organisations and sectors

Opportunities for Improvement Students

Kingston University has a strong access record and attracts higher proportions of students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups than the sector as a whole. Our diversity is a strength and therefore the complexity of backgrounds and lived experiences within our student population has important implications for our approach to learning and teaching, engagement and support.

The degree awarding gaps between Black/White and most/least deprived students at Kingston remain a focus of attention. We need to renew momentum in this area to ensure further progress against stretching

targets in the University's Access and Participation Plan to reduce degree awarding gaps by half over the next five years.

Staff

While we compare favourably in terms of sector benchmarks, we need to actively address imbalances in the diversity of staff representation at different levels.

We show good retention rates for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff at the University, however applicants are less successful during the recruitment process, which we have targeted for systematic review. There is a clear opportunity to increase Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff representation at senior levels in the organisation.

We must ensure that career development and progression for both academic and professional services staff.

We recognise we have more to do in ensuring that all our policies and practices are fair, inclusive and free from discrimination, and that our culture is welcoming, inclusive and open.

Kingston University PSED 2021-25: Objectives and Proposed Actions (Y1 – Y4)

1. Student and Staff Voice
 We recognise the importance of the student and staff voice and will actively seek feedback a University and local level. We understand that gathering and responding to feedback is essential in supporting improvements to the experience and outcomes of all students and staff. Strengthening employee engagement will support us in achieving a high-performance culture.

Goals (Students and Staff**)**

- KSS, NSS and MEQ response rates of at least 50%
- Representation of protected characteristic groups who participate in student surveys to reflect the demographic profile of the student population
- Staff survey response rate of at least 40%
- Overall staff engagement index score: increase of 5% points
- Address staff inclusion gap by protected characteristics

Students

We aim to:
- Gain a deeper understanding of the student experience through a combination of surveys, focus groups and other student voice mechanisms.
- Encourage students to participate in student voice exercises and close the feedback loop through communicating actions taken in response to feedback.

Actions for Years 1 - 4:
- Develop an annual calendar of planned student voice activities including listening events and focus groups.
- Analyse student surveys by protected and identity characteristics to identify any gaps in student participation for specific groups so mitigating actions can be taken.
- Ensure the outcomes of institutional student voice exercises are widely reported and inform institutional, faculty and departmental action plans.
- Further establish our understanding of the experiences of disabled students and consider their feedback when reviewing current service provision.
- Review and update the Student Pregnancy, Maternity and Becoming a Parent Policy in consultation with staff and students.
- Pilot a sensory room for students with an Autistic Spectrum Condition in consultation with the Autism Peer Network.

Staff

We aim to:
- Provide staff the skills, confidence, and environment to share their views to inform our actions.
- Develop formal and informal mechanisms to enable ongoing conversations and feedback.

Actions: Years 1 – 4:
- Design and launch an all-staff survey using an external provider.
- Continue to support and develop staff networks and establish agreed ways of partnership working.
- Devise an approach for integrating on-going dialogue on EDI matters with staff using a variety of mediums.
- Further establish our understanding of the experiences of disabled staff and students to develop a joint disability action plan with our disability champions
- Hold an annual staff awards ceremony to acknowledge staff who actively showcase our values in action and share stories.
- Develop a systematic approach to staff surveys including the use of pulse surveys and introduce local engagement champions.
- Embed a 1:1 culture to support staff in the workplace, encompassing open communication, engagement and feedback.
- Strengthen and promote cross-University collaboration and devise recommendations to enhance our endeavour.

2. Diversity and Inclusion

We view the rich diversity of our student and staff population as a key strength and take steps to address the underrepresentation of specific groups within and across our institution. We take active steps to identify and address unexplained differences in outcomes linked to protected and identity characteristics, with due consideration of the intersections between them. Everyone in our university should feel like they belong, that they can be themselves and feel included.

Goals (Students and Staff**):**

- Reduce the degree awarding gap between White and Black students to 10%
- Reduce the degree awarding gap between young and mature students to 7%
- Reduce the graduate outcomes gap between White and BAME students by 3%
- Increase percentage of staff under 25s to 5%
- 25% of senior staff positions (above grade 10 and including HoDs) to be held by BAME staff
- Improve conversion rate for staff BAME applicants from application to hire to 35%
- Increase rates of staff declaration of disability (to over 90% known status)
- Reduce equality pay gaps (gender, ethnicity, and disability)
- Improve satisfaction with the support to staff with disabilities

Students

We aim to:

- Continue to value the diversity of our student body as a key strength.
- Take active steps to advance equality of opportunity, experience and outcomes for students from all backgrounds as detailed in our access and participation plan.

Actions for Years 1 - 4:

- Further embed the principles of the Inclusive Curriculum Framework into our curriculum design and delivery
- Develop a suite of interventions and resources that course teams can draw upon to make enhancements that improve the experience and outcomes of all students.
- Undertake a review of at least two frontline student services using the principles of the ICF, and take steps to make these more visible, culturally responsive and accessible to all students.
- Implementation of a new "Gender Identity and Expression Policy" to support trans+ students and staff.
- Develop an implementation plan for the newly approved access and participation plan for 2024/5 onwards, in order to monitor progress against new commitments and targets set within it.
- Submit a University of Sanctuary application and acknowledge 10 years of Kingston's Sanctuary Scholarship programme.
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Staff

We aim to:
- Have a diverse and vibrant staff community which reflects our student body and local population.
- Promote the importance of being a flexible and responsive employer.
- Identify the barriers to progression for staff to support equity of experience and opportunities.

Actions: Years 1 - 4
- Continuously review, evaluate, and enhance our recruitment processes to improve representation of underrepresented groups at application and offer stage.
- Review the process for academic promotions & senior pay.
- Pilot agile working arrangements within agreed Directorates and promote flexible working practices.
- Introduce a staff forum for staff with disabilities to hear what is needed.
- Implementation of a new "Gender Identity and Expression Policy" to support trans+ students and staff.
- Develop our Values further and embed within any newly developed HR policies and People Plan priorities.
- Publish a revised Inclusive Language Guide to be embedded in key communications and engagement activity
- Publish our values framework with defined expectations and identify key priority university policies to embed the framework within
- Review our approach to increase the representation of under-25s within professional services and develop an action plan.
- Enhance our attraction and selection of under-represented groups and embed inclusive recruitment best practice into recruitment and selection processes.

3. Accountability

Our students and staff understand the value of diversity and their accountability in supporting an inclusive environment while actively participating in discussion and debate.

Goals (Students and Staff**):**

- Improve the overall confidence in reporting of students across the protected characteristics
- Improve effectiveness of staff harassment reporting through formal and informal routes
- Improve the overall confidence in reporting and feeling safe to "speak up" among staff across protected characteristics
- All staff will have EDI objectives within their appraisal

Students

We aim to:
- Continue to work in partnership with the Union of Kingston Students to actively foster an inclusive learning community where the diversity of our student body is celebrated and valued as an asset.
- Establish and embed a culture where discrimination and harassment are not tolerated and where students feel enabled to speak up.

Actions for Years 1 - 4:
- Define and communicate our values and behaviours building on our existing aims for EDI.
- Develop supportive mechanisms for students to raise concerns of harassment and ensure supporting procedures and processes are fit for purpose.
- Identify any gaps relating to the protected characteristics when reviewing student policies, for example, gender identity in year 1.
- Develop and implement relevant policies, training and awareness to prevent and address sexual misconduct and harassment, including the implementation of Report and Support.
- Pilot an online Consent module for students to help them develop respectful relationships.
- Deliver an active bystander campaign linked to Report and Support.
- Establish a task and finish group to review our approach to prevent and address harassment and sexual misconduct in our community, ensuring compliance with the new OfS condition of registration.

Staff

We aim to:
- Continue to reiterate clear expectations for our people to treat each other with respect and dignity.
- Establish and embed a "speak up" culture which calls out potentially discriminatory behaviour.

Actions: Years 1 - 4
- Define and communicate our values and behaviours building on our existing aims for EDI.
- Through the Harassment task and finish groups established by the EDI Committee Develop supportive mechanisms for staff to raise concerns of harassment and ensure supporting procedures and processes are fit for purpose.
- Embed equality, diversity and inclusion within appraisal objectives and recruitment and selection frameworks for all senior staff.
- Develop and implement relevant policies, training and awareness to prevent and address sexual misconduct and harassment, including the implementation of Report and Support.
- Further enhance our training provision for manages to include unconscious bias training as part of our mandatory compliance suite including monitoring.
- Strengthen communication approach to raise awareness of Report & Support embedded with other initiatives.
- Analyse data available from Report & Support to benchmark results with other HEIs.

4. Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making

We will have robust quantitative and qualitative data which enables us to measure how diverse and inclusive Kingston University is throughout the student and employee life cycle. We analyse this data to support evidence-based decision making and prioritise action.

Goals (Students and Staff**):**
- Increase overall graduate outcomes survey responses to at least 50%
- Improve our diversity disclosure rates to 90% across all protected characteristics

Students

We aim to:
- Provide staff with access to data sets and information that enhances their knowledge and understanding of student demographics and differential outcomes.
- Set access, participation and EDI targets that are evidence-based and focussed on delivering continuous improvement.

Actions for Years 1 - 4
- Implement a graduate engagement strategy to improve Graduate Outcomes responses and performance.
- Deliver additional training to support all staff to interpret and utilise data in the Planning Dashboards to address course and module specific differential student outcomes through our existing course quality assurance and enhancement processes.
- Develop equality data dashboards that can be published externally to show changes over time in the participation and outcomes for students with different protected characteristics.
- Continue developing Student and HR equality data dashboards to inform University, and local, decision making and ensure annual publication is in an accessible format.
- Introduce additional questions at enrolment and by pulse surveys within Navigate, to gain insights into different student personas and skill profiles.

Staff

We aim to:
- Develop our approach to creating data sets, sharing information and effective data analysis.
- Actively set and monitor diversity and representation targets for underrepresented groups.

Actions: Years 1 - 4
- Scope requirements for mandatory data fields and create a systematic approach for data capture, validation, analysis and reporting.
- Develop equality data dashboards (aligned to the employee life cycle, i.e., recruitment, promotion, turnover) to inform University-level and local decision making.
- Continue monitoring pay gap data (gender, ethnicity and disability) and progress the actions in place to reduce gaps.
- Continue developing Student and HR equality data dashboards to inform University, and local, decision making and ensure annual publication is in an accessible format.

- Reduce staff 'unknowns' and 'prefer not to say' in recording religion, disability and sexual orientation by building confidence amongst staff through engagement and communication.
- Introduce faculty and directorate intersectional pay gap reports to develop local action plans.
- Provide Faculty and Directorate equalities pay gap reports via Tableau to enable local analysis and the development of local action plans.
- Continue to reduce data gaps and develop an awareness campaign to demonstrate how EDI data is used within the University.

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5. Education, Communication and Training
We will raise awareness and offer development opportunities to all students and staff in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion themes and issues.

Goals (Students and Staff**):**

- Cultural competency training and development for students to be embedded in the course portfolio
- All academic staff to engage in development around the ICF (to include anti-racist/accessible/inclusive learning and teaching)
- We will expect all staff to attend EDI related training as part of building an inclusive learning environment by January 2022

Students

We aim to:
- Ensure induction and development programmes for students and staff include a specific focus on EDI and anti-racism.
- Work in partnership with students from diverse backgrounds to make improvements to our curriculum and student-facing services.

Actions for Years 1 - 4:
- Develop staff understanding of inclusive learning and teaching practice through training in the Inclusive Curriculum Framework.
- Deliver anti-racist training and development that will improve the racial literacy of academic and professional services staff to move towards developing anti-racist practices.
- Design and implement a development programme that will support students to develop the skills required to acquire cohort identity, cultural competency and a global outlook.
- Support academics to develop and enact anti-racist and culturally responsive pedagogies through the rollout of our EDI learning and teaching toolkits.
- Pilot religious inclusion training for Professional Services teams.
- Review of Student Inclusion online training module with a focus on helping students to become culturally competent and develop a greater understanding of neurodiversity
- Provide targeted 360 degree support in departments identified through the APP data analysis as having significant degree awarding gaps based on APP priorities.

Staff

We aim to:
- Ensure staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of diversity and inclusion so that our behaviours promote dignity and respect.
- Provide training and development opportunities to support career progression.

Actions: Years 1 - 4
- Design and deliver Inclusive Leadership training for the Board of Governors and Senior Leadership Team and develop a plan to roll out to other managers.
- Review and refresh a training framework (including mentoring) provision to ensure it delivers EDI requirements and staff expectations. Develop an EDI knowledge hub for all staff.
- Develop a leadership and management framework for SLG that incorporates EDI and our Values Framework.
- Revise our recruitment and selection guidance and training to include inclusive best practice standards and explore requirements to achieve Disability Confident Level 2 status.
- Disability Task Force to provide guidance for line managers on support measures for neurodiverse staff and design and deliver Neurodiversity and Disability awareness events.
- Develop and roll out coaching skills workshops for leaders and managers.
- Increase awareness of Conflict Resolution, Performance & Conduct and Wellbeing at Work policies through the HR Managers Essentials suite.

To support our equality objectives we will:

- Introduce an annual programme of EDI campaigns and events centred around the university's inclusion calendar
- Continue to fund at least 5 KU community projects each year through the Network of Equality Champions
- Develop an institution-wide EIA process and embed this as part of all strategic decision-making at the University
- In dialogue with EDI Stakeholders, undertake an audit of information related to EDI on the University website, StaffSpace and My Kingston, ensuring this is current, accessible and effective in promoting exchange and engagement
- Continue to develop and embed good governance to ensure effective delivery of our equality objectives
- Undertake a review and implement actions to ensure our committees are representative of the diversity at Kingston University
- Maintain our commitment to attaining charter mark recognition, notably in REC and Athena Swan, and continue to develop action plans to that end
- Complete analysis of our REF 2021 submission, including from an EDI perspective, and work to ensure that during the next cycle Kingston's planned submission properly reflects the diversity of our staff base
- As a signatory of DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment), ensure we meet our commitment to fair and equitable research assessment throughout the University
- Make sure appropriate training is in place for all areas of research decision-making,
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments in regard to the various forms of research support within the University, including the distribution of internal funding and allocations of sabbatical or research leave
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments of all KU knowledge exchange activity
- Collect and evaluate EDI data across business engagement activity
- Procurement will follow the principles of equality and diversity in the drafting of specifications for impacted tenders and contracts including educational franchise partners
- Improve inclusivity and accessibility in relation to the physical estate and our digital offering