

EDI NEWSLETTER

By Sobia Baig with contributions from EDI Committee Members



WELCOME!

A very big warm welcome to the fourth edition of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Newsletter. In this edition we'd like to highlight some key discussion points from recent meetings.

Information and email contacts:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government/equality-and-diversity.aspx>

EDI Calendar

University of Birmingham –
The Inclusion Calendar 2024:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/equality/documents/calendar/the-inclusion-calendar-2024-uob.pdf>

EDB Roadshow

Tuesday 30th January – Thursday 21st
March 2024

Writing Retreat for women –
Taking place on 20 February 2024

ED&I Centre:

https://bham.sharepoint.com/sites/EDIStaff/SitePages/EDICentre.aspx?utm_source=&utm_campaign=HRcommunications&utm_medium=email



EDI Committee Areas of Work

Here is a summary of Committee discussions and actions so far. Please let us know if you have any input on our priorities and areas to address by contacting a member of the committee with your ideas and suggestions.

Things we have achieved:

- Successfully introduced an Acting Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) during the interim period – Emily Scott stepped in for Mwita Chacha. Subsequently, Mwita has resumed his role as the Head of EDI.
- Enthusiastically welcomed new members from diverse departments within the school to enhance the composition of our committee.
- Strategically amended the Terms of Reference for the revamped EDI committee, incorporating agreed-upon terms of office. Additionally, we've increased the (WRM) points for academic staff.
- Successfully recruited two new undergraduate School EDI ambassadors and one PG School EDI ambassador, further strengthening our commitment to inclusivity at all levels.
- Boosted our Athena Swan initiative with the recruitment of two new Co-Leads, Nic Cheeseman and Emeka Njoku, to further drive our efforts towards gender equality.

Ambassador Updates:

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Student Ambassadors have actively engaged in creating a positive impact through various initiatives. Notably, they conducted a well-received induction presentation addressing micro-aggressions. In the upcoming months, they are committed to implementing the following initiatives:

- Collaborating with EDI student ambassadors across the College to create meaningful events and activities in celebration of Black History Month.
- Focusing on enhancing communication accessibility for students by developing a comprehensive guide. Working in conjunction with the School's Student Experience Officer, Kerrie Myers, the team is creating an anonymous form for students to raise complaints. This form, accessible through a QR code, will also provide links to valuable resources on topics such as wellbeing and addressing issues like sexual harassment.
- Planning, organising, and executing an inclusive and interactive event centred around makeup brands. The initiative involves inviting renowned retailers such as Boots and Superdrug to participate, showcasing products designed for diverse skin tones and promoting inclusivity.

POLSIS in Colour:

POLSIS in Colour is a dynamic student-led society dedicated to students from black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities enrolled in the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS). Throughout the year, PIC organises a diverse array of initiatives and events, creating a vibrant space for dialogue, collaboration, and celebration. Stay connected and engaged by following them on Instagram @polsisincolour. Join the conversation, amplify voices, and be part of the enriching experience that POLSIS in Colour offers.

Key Updates and Future Initiatives:

- A comprehensive 58-page report has been circulated within the school via email and seamlessly links with an action plan addressing several concerns.
- Moving forward, the report will be produced bi-annually, allowing sufficient time for the implementation of suggested actions and recommendations.
- Reporting mechanisms will be improved to address student concerns about overwhelming options for seeking advice and support.
- Staff/student forums will become regular events, fostering on-going dialogue and collaboration.

Upcoming Events:

- Report launch event.
- Alumni event with invited participants making presentations.
- Cultural Festival: A gathering where students share food and presentations focused on their culture. Open to staff and students.

Support for cultural events

Should any colleagues within the school be in the process of planning and organising cultural events, we encourage you to reach out to an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) member via edigov@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Whether you're seeking an EDI representative or practical/financial support, our committee is here to assist in ensuring the success and inclusivity of your cultural initiatives. Your collaboration with us contributes to fostering a diverse and vibrant community within the school.

Decolonisation Project:

In line with student recommendations included in the PIC report, the EDI Committee has been thinking about how to build on the “Decolonising the Curriculum Guide” published by the School of Government in 2020 (you can download it from [here](#)). The work-in-progress plan is to launch a multi-year project that will involve colleagues and students in open conversations about what we teach, how and why, as well as provide dedicated support and resources for staff that want to engage in this process. This is inspired by our colleagues in the Birmingham Business School, who have launched a similar multi-year project in 2022 (you can read more about Decolonising the Business School [here](#)). This is only the very beginning of what we want to develop as an inclusive process, so we would be very happy for colleagues to reach out to share ideas, comments, concerns, and best practices via edigov@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

CoSS Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB)

CoSS Equity, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) Committee is excited to announce the EDB Roadshow. College staff and students are encouraged to attend the Roadshow to explore the terms 'equity', 'diversity' and 'belonging' through a LEGO Serious Play-inspired activity and to weigh in on what language most appropriately fits the College's direction.

This will also be your opportunity to meet and share your views with EDB reps and to discover the support available within the College and wider University.

The Roadshow will be making the following stops:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 30 January	12:00-14:00	Muirhead Tower Atrium
Thursday, 15 February	12:00-14:00	University House Atrium
Tuesday, 27 February	12:00-14:00	Alan Walters Atrium
Thursday, 14 March	12:00-14:00	Education Foyer
Thursday, 21 Mar	10:00-11:00 GMT	Online- Register Here

❖ **Suggestions discussed include –**

Promotions and pay – The EDI committee will work to gain a deeper understanding of where the blockages are in the UoB's current process to then assess how to improve and develop.

Sources of information and Support

There are a range of sources of information and support in equality-related matters in the School, College, and University. In addition to reaching out to the School Head of EDI (Dr Mwita Chacha) or an EDI committee member detailed below or via edigov@contacts.bham.ac.uk, you can find further details on the School EDI website: [Equality and Diversity - School of Government - University of Birmingham](#)

Useful University EDI Links

[UoB Central Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team -equality@contacts.bham.ac.uk](#)

[UoB Parents Carers Network](#)

[University of Birmingham LGBTQ Student Support Groups](#)

[Student Wellbeing](#)

[UoB Race Equality Network](#)

[Guild of Students LGBTQ Society](#)

[Student Disability Service](#)

[UoB Women's Network](#)

[UoB Damsa \(Disability and Mental Health Students' Association\), Guild of Students](#)

[UoB Enabling Staff Network](#)

[UoB Rainbow Network](#)

[School of Government Operations Team SharePoint pages](#)

Who to contact if ...?

I want to report EDI-related harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Violence:

UoB [Harassment Support Advisors](#)

University of Birmingham [Sexual Misconduct and Violence](#) information, support, and anonymous reporting tool

I would like wellbeing support:

School of Government Student Wellbeing - gov.wellbeing@contacts.bham.ac.uk

I would like LGBTQ support:

School LGBTQ Network:

Charlotte Galpin c.a.galpin@bham.ac.uk

George Kyris g.kyris@bham.ac.uk

Membership 2023 – 2024 and Points of Contact

Name	Role	Point of contact for:
Dr Mwita Chacha	School Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	All / general EDI issues, Academic - POLSIS
Dr Ash Stokoe (they/them)	EDI Committee Member	Academic - POLSIS, Early Career Researchers, LGBTQ+ network, Disabled students, and staff
Dr Bizuneh Yimenu	EDI Committee Member	Academic - IDD
Dr Licia Cianetti	EDI Committee Member	Academic - POLSIS
Dr George Kyris	EDI Committee Member	Academic - POLSIS, LGBTQ+ network
Sobia Baig	EDI Committee Member	Professional Services
Dr Abena Dadze-Arthur	EDI Committee Member	Academic - DPAP
Dr Niheer Dasandi	EDI Committee Member	Academic - IDD
Dee Pettifer (she/her)	EDI Committee Member	Professional Services
Prof Stefan Wolff	EDI Committee Member, Head of POLSIS	Academic, POLSIS
Fatima Madani	UG School EDI ambassador	Undergraduate Student
Tatheenah Mukulu	UG School EDI ambassador	Undergraduate Student
Yuxiang Lin	PG School EDI ambassador	Postgraduate Student