



School of Government  
 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

Wednesday 8 March 2023 at 11:00 hours, via Zoom

Members Present:

Mwita Chacha	(MC)	School Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Chair)
Sobia Baig	(SB)	Professional Services
Adrienn Crawford-Dunn	(AC-D)	UG EDI Student Ambassador
Abena Dadze-Arthur	(AD-A)	Academic [from 11:50]
Julie Gilson	(JG)	Academic
Dee Pettifer	(DP)	Professional Services (ED&I Committee Administrator)
Kate Pruce	(KP)	Academic
Ash Stokoe	(AS)	Academic [from 12:05]
Stefan Wolff	(SW)	Academic

Summary of actions for ED&I Committee

Agenda item	Action	Owner	Timescale
5 – 24.01.2023	To decide on content for an away day (include plan of action to complete Athena Swan re-application); and to then find a suitable date for this to take place.	ALL	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023
2 – 24.01.2023	To request data from the School Head of PGR, Danielle Beswick, such as how many extended leave of absences were requested, and to use this to form focus groups to address why PGR numbers have reduced.	MC	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023
3	To lead a session to gather ideas and information re Athena Swan reapplication; to delegate and request volunteers to draft sections.	JG	Before JG’s study leave
3	To update the Athena Swan Action Tracker on Sharepoint, indicating where data ‘gaps’ may be.	MC	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023
3	For Athena Swan re-application: to decide on standalone cultural survey or to embed key questions in an existing survey.	ALL	For EDI meeting on 22 June 2023
4	To add Students’ Complaints procedure to EDI Sharepoint page and provide links to this for other information.	MC / DP	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023
5	To seek further information in order to contribute to the CoSS Equality Scheme aspirations.	MC	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023
7	To issue the next EDI newsletter.	KP / SB	April / May

## Summary of actions to take to SMT

Agenda item	Action	Owner	Timescale
7	Mandatory race equity training: can the School adopt a way forward as part of its commitment to equality change?	MC	Next EDI meeting – 10 May 2023

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies            Habibah Amin (HA) – Professional Services            Licia Cianetti (LC) – Academic            Robin Diver (RD) – Professional Services            George Kyris (GK) – Academic            Anabelen Rodriguez Ulloa (ARU) – UG EDI Student Ambassador            Paula Schwevers (PS) - Postgraduate</p> <p>Minutes of previous meeting  <u>Noted:</u> minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 were approved as an accurate record; omission of apologies for non-attendance from Kate Pruce noted, and to be amended.</p> <p>Action tracker review – those items not addressed elsewhere on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-specific PGR admissions and attainment data to address reduced numbers and arrange focus groups to ascertain why this may be.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are fewer female applicants across all departments; although the offers made are relatively balanced between male and female.</li> <li>○ Completion rates dropped for female applicants during the pandemic.</li> <li>○ Is the issue in admitting female applicants or retaining them?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC to request data from the School Head of PGR, Danielle Beswick, such as how many extended leave of absences were requested, and to use this to form focus groups to address why PGR number have reduced.</li> </ul>	MC
2.	<p>UG ED&amp;I Student Ambassadors update</p> <p>AC-D <u>noted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AC-D and ARU have been working closely with School Head of Education, Richard North, and Laura Jenkins, to relaunch POLSIS in Colour.</li> <li>• Three meetings have taken place since January.</li> <li>• A particularly difficult issue was raised and attracted much attention, and having a plan to resolve it proved to be successful.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p>Athena Swan Action Plan Tracker</p> <p><i>Powerpoint: 'Meeting presentation Mar 2023', up to slide 8 – available via the Teams channel</i></p>	

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	<p><b>Application and process</b>  MC presented a slide deck (available via the Teams channel), highlighting the format expectations (word counts etc) within the form to be completed for re-application to Athena Swan.  <u>Noted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC confirmed that before the School can apply for Silver it has to demonstrate significant achievements in maintaining Bronze status.</li> <li>• KP noted that the College of Medical and Dental Sciences has been awarded Silver, so advice could be sought from their EDI Committee or lead: <a href="https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/mds/athena-swan/index.aspx">https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/mds/athena-swan/index.aspx</a></li> <li>• MC also confirmed that the EDI Committee is responsible for the completion of the application, and that it does not need to be ratified at College level.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JG to lead a session before her study leave to gather ideas and information; delegating or requesting volunteers where necessary to draft sections of the re-application.</li> <li>• MC to update the Athena Swan Action Tracker on Sharepoint, indicating where data 'gaps' may be.</li> </ul> <p><b>CoSS EDI Survey</b>  <u>Noted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CoSS EDI survey has now been rolled out, and it will include questions around work / life balance.</li> </ul> <p><i>Athena Swan Cultural Survey</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the Athena Swan re-application there will be a need for the School to carry out a cultural survey, and the options are to either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embed key questions in an already existing survey</li> <li>○ Create and roll-out a standalone School cultural survey</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Key considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Timing, to maximise response levels. MC <u>noted</u>: a minimum number of responses has not been indicated, but the School should aim to have representative cross-School responses (students, staff, researchers, early careers).</li> <li>○ Roll-out early next semester (September) when timetable commitments are coming to an end; and messaging can focus on EDI and encourage participation in the survey.</li> <li>○ Survey fatigue: better to have own standalone Athena Swan survey rolled out at an appropriate time.</li> <li>○ As there are suitable surveys within which to embed the necessary cultural survey questions?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI committee members to look at the guidelines and form within the Teams channel here: <a href="#">FINAL_Nov22_AdvHE_AS_Department_info_pack.pdf</a> and <a href="#">Athena Swan renewal application form for departments.docx</a>, as well as the considerations noted above, and decide on whether the School is to have its own cultural survey or will embed key questions within another survey.</li> </ul>	<p>JG</p> <p>MC</p> <p>ALL</p>

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	<p><b>Focus Groups</b>  MC <u>noted</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting was held between MC, JG and Laura Jenkins to discuss conducting focus groups, and if previous survey questions will be included.</li> <li>• Focus groups to take place after the POLSIS in Colour survey is complete, as key questions will be asked within this survey.</li> <li>• UG students to be targeted, and following advice from the School Experience and Engagement Officer, Kerrie Myers, running one or two groups rather than the original five planned will be more achievable.</li> <li>• Second year students to be targeted, as final year students may have less time or inclination to participate due to upcoming deadlines.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p>Students' Complaints procedure</p> <p><u>JG noted</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JG has included feedback from this committee in the updated guidance for staff.</li> <li>• HR processes and EDI concerns (codes of practice and policies) to be looked at in the near future by this committee, some of which will be addressed within the Athena Swan Action Tracker. This should include looking at advertising more proactively the flexible working strategy that is in place, and how this can support short-term contracted members of staff such as PTVLs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action</u>:</p> <p>Guidance to be added on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EDI Sharepoint page.</li> <li>• The Personal Tutor Canvas pages (via a link to the EDI Sharepoint page)</li> <li>• The Staff Hub information being created by Andy Howell in the Education Support Office (via a link to the EDI Sharepoint page).</li> </ul>	MC / DP
5.	<p>CoSS Equality Scheme Aspirations</p> <p><i>Powerpoint: 'Meeting presentation Mar 2023', slide 9 – available via the Teams channel</i></p> <p><u>MC noted</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School EDI Committee has been asked to submit its aspirations for the CoSS Equality Scheme.</li> <li>• Foundation data on which to base aspirations is not readily available.</li> </ul> <p><u>Agreed / action</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC to seek further advice from the College EDI lead: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current data?</li> <li>○ What is the commitment from College to support staff recruitment aspirations?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	MC
6.	<p>Budget</p> <p>Budget overview – document available via the Teams channel</p> <p><u>MC noted</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race equity sessions for academics will now be charged to another School fund, allowing for additional EDI activities to be budgeted for.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away Day costs will be added to the budget.</li> <li>• Costs for the focus groups is imminent - £10 per student could be offered, School Student Experience and Engagement Officer, Kerrie Myers, has vouchers available to give; POLSIS has funds that can be used towards this activity.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Noted:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race equity training – ideas embedding this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Making this mandatory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attending a three-hour in-person course may not always be possible, an alternative provision online may be more attractive. MC reported that it is not feasible as an option within the School alone.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Zoom race equity sessions may be possible.</li> <li>○ The School has committed to at least one race equity session per semester.</li> <li>○ Attaining a ‘signature’ logo on completion; although not vouchers, as this could be seen as being transactional.</li> <li>○ Gain ‘salary’ points, with regards to promotion.</li> <li>○ Compulsory training is a way of demonstrating a commitment to ‘change’.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Agreed / action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC to take this to SMT: can the School adopt a way forward as part of its commitment to equality change?</li> <li>• The next EDI newsletter to be issued April / May; and potentially in line with a global event eg. International Women’s Day.</li> </ul>	<p>MC</p> <p>KP / SB</p>
8.	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 10 May, 14:00-16:00, via Zoom</p>	