



MAINSTREAMING REPORT

April 2019

1. Overview

This report describes how the university mainstreams its consideration of its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Information is provided on:

1. How the university's statutory obligations are reflected and integrated within the university's strategy;
2. How senior leadership around equalities is provided ;
3. Details of the university's equality and diversity policy and inclusivity statement;
4. How the university collects, monitors and uses equality and diversity data to assist meeting its statutory obligations;
5. What support the university provides its staff in relation to equality and diversity;
6. What support the university provides its students in relation to equality and diversity;
7. How the university reports its activities in relation to equality and diversity; and
8. What enhancements the university has made to its approach to mainstreaming since it last published a mainstreaming report in 2017.

2. Integration with the university's strategy

The university developed a recast strategy map in 2018 which embeds the principles of equality and diversity. The stated purpose of the university is 'to be an innovative, *inclusive*, impactful, professionally-focused university' with a culture which values and celebrates 'authenticity, approachability, collaboration, innovation, ambition and *respectfulness*.'

The university maintains a strong commitment to the active promotion of equality and diversity across all of its activities and in doing so ensures a robust approach to issues of discriminatory practice towards staff, students and external stakeholders.

As part of its equality and diversity reporting in 2017, the university published the following equality outcomes:

- Our university: actively embrace diversity and equality through the student and staff experience;
- Breaking down barriers: increase access for learners traditionally facing greater barriers to higher education;
- Achieving graduate employability: shape creative, professional and engaged individuals;
- Supporting student success: support learners through each step of their educational pathways; and
- Enriching the student experience: unleashing individual potential through a complete RGU experience.

3. Leadership around equality and diversity

The strategic leadership of the university is the function of the Board of Governors, who receive an annual report on equality and diversity.

The most senior management group at the university is the Executive, who are advised on equality and diversity matters by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG). The Advisory Group is chaired by the Director of Planning and Policy who reports directly to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

The Advisory Group usually meets five to six times a year and consists of a range of staff and students. The core members includes staff and students who have agreed to take on the role of student or staff equality champion. The membership is supplemented with other individuals drawn from amongst the Heads of School and Support Departments. Full details of the Advisory Group's remit and membership can be found at: <https://www3.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-advisory-group/equality-and-diversity-advisory-group-edag>.

To provide focus to the university's consideration of the protected characteristics, the university has appointed six staff Equality Champions (for age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation – covering the protected characteristics) from its senior staff within the university.

The role of the equality champion is to:

- Contribute and provide challenge to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in the equality strand being championed;
- Seek the engagement of employees and, where appropriate, students in the work and activities of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group;
- Provide leadership in the University in the area championed;
- Keep up to date on developments in the area championed; and
- Actively contribute to the development and implementation of the university's Equality Outcomes.

In addition to the staff equality champions, the students' association annually appoints a number of student equality champions. The student champions undertake a similar role to staff equality champions amongst the student body liaising closely with the staff champions. The student equality champions are full members of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. The students' association choose the designation for these champions. At the current time student equality champions exist for the following characteristics: trans, women, sexual orientation, disability & inclusion, mental health and mature students.

Contact details for the staff and student equality champions are available on the university website at: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>.

4. Equality and diversity policy and inclusivity statement

All employees and students of the university have an individual duty to ensure that equality and diversity are promoted in our community. The policy, approved by the university's Board of Governors, outlines the university's expectations of the roles and responsibilities that various individuals have by virtue of their position in promoting and embedding the principles of equality and diversity. The full equality and diversity policy

is available on the university's website at: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>.

The policy statement of the Equality & Diversity policy also serves as the university's inclusivity statement and as such, the two documents should be read in conjunction. The inclusivity statement amplifies the aspiration contained within the university's strategy to promote an inclusive working and studying environment. The full statement is as follows:

Robert Gordon University strives towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive, harmonious and respectful of diversity. The university will achieve this by:

- embracing a positive attitude towards the promotion of equality on the basis of age; culture; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation to ensure all reach their full potential;
- being prepared to understand that fairness and equality of opportunity is not always about treating people similarly, but can sometimes mean treating people differently;
- acknowledging and celebrating the breadth of experiences and perspectives that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the university; and seeking to eliminate discrimination and prejudice by ensuring people treat each other with respect.

The inclusivity statement is displayed prominently across the university campus.

5. Collection, monitoring and use of equalities data

Equalities data on staff

The university collects a range of data on staff in relation to equalities and diversity. Currently employees are asked to provide details on each of the protected characteristics listed above with the addition of marital/civil partnership status.

As part of the university's public sector equality duties, the university has published a range of data on its employees and this is available at: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>. This report includes information on the following:

- Split of full time and part time staff;
- Composition of employees by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief alongside grade, contract status, working hours and by role; and
- Composition of applicants to the university by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief alongside applications, interviews and appointments.

Equalities data on students

The university currently collects a variety of equalities data from students on the following protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Identity;
- Race;
- Religion and belief;
- Sex; and
- Sexual Orientation.

Monitoring of staff and student data

Annually the university considers the whole range of its equality monitoring data through two main processes:

- A central review of the data is undertaken by the university's Equality and Diversity Advisory Group which draws out the main themes from the previous year's data set and, where appropriate, recommends to the university's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee the areas where actions may be needed to address concerns.
- The university's Staff Governance Committee receives regular reports on employee data.

Equalities data on the Board of Governors

The university's Board of Governors undertook its first comprehensive equalities and diversity monitoring on an anonymous basis over the summer of 2016, using the same protected characteristics as are monitored for students. The Board composition includes both appointed and elected membership and will also include trade union nominated members, in due course.

Equal pay audit

The most recent equal pay audit was undertaken in February 2019 and covers gender. The pay audit is conducted in accordance with the guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and covers all employees in the university. The full report along with targeted actions to reduce the gap is published at:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity>.

The next equal pay audit undertaken by the university will encompass the characteristics of age, disability, ethnicity and gender.

Equality Impact Assessment

The university assesses the impact of its proposed and existing policies and practices on the nine protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, using an equality impact assessment tool.

6. Support for staff

In order to support staff discharge their duties, as outlined in the university's equality and diversity policy, all new staff are required to undertake a mandatory on line equality and diversity training module. The training is available on the university's virtual learning environment for existing staff. It provides information on the university's legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and also discusses individual responsibility. The training module explains how certain behaviours impact on other people and may contravene the university's obligations around equality and diversity. It also provides information on how to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours.

The university goes further than its statutory obligations, enhancing staff benefits and therefore supporting employees on maternity, adoption, parental and paternity leave. In 2018 the university enhanced its family friendly provision further with the aim of supporting working parents and cultivating an environment where parents and women in particular do not feel they have to make a choice between their career and caring for their family. New provisions included a foster care leave policy and a fertility treatment leave policy.

Employees who are on long term sick leave also benefit from the university topping up statutory sick pay to full pay for up to 6 months (depending on length of service) and half pay for the same length of time. All staff who are absent due to a mental health illness are referred to Occupational Health so that work related issues can quickly be resolved. The university offers staff an independent confidential employee assistance programme which offers support, information, expert advice and specialist counselling. There are also Fair Treatment Advisers within the HR Department who offer advice and support to staff who are involved in a workplace dispute or are unhappy with the treatment they are receiving.

Many of the professional & support departments operate a flexi-time scheme which allows staff to start and finish at different times as long as they are working their contractual hours. Academic staff also have significant flexibility when not timetabled to teach. The flexi-time scheme offers staff a better work-life balance, aiding mental wellbeing and allowing staff to continue to meet commitments out-with the workplace.

The university's staff equality champions can act as another source of support and advice to staff members in addressing equality issues specific to a particular equality strand. Further support for individuals can be accessed through the staff networks that currently exist for LGBT+ and women staff. To provide a wider range of support, the university is in the process of developing a race equality network open to all staff, with the purpose of providing a confidential and supportive forum to share knowledge and good practice relating to race equality issues through networking, and to increase the positive profile of all staff through events and initiatives.

7. Support for students

The university provides a range of support to our student population through the work of our Student Life department, primarily the Inclusion Team supported by others in Student Life. Over the next year will review how we welcome students to the university, as well as focus on the policies and guidelines which help everyone understand how they can contribute to make our community an equal place. A full account of activities undertaken to support students in the past two years can be found in the equality outcome progress report.

8. Annual reporting of the university's approach to mainstreaming

The Executive reports annually, to the Board of Governors, on the university's approach to mainstreaming equality and diversity. The next annual report in the 2019/20 academic session will consist of an annual report on the progress towards achievement of the university's equality outcomes.

9. Enhancements to the university's approach to mainstreaming equality

Since the university last published a progress report on progress against its equality outcomes, the university has made the following enhancements to its approach to mainstreaming equality:

- Realignment of the student inclusion centre: the university has reframed the disability and dyslexia centre as the disability and inclusion centre, providing a single place for a wider range of support services to students. This has enabled the centre to provide more of a focus for activity around mental health provision and gender based violence. Further details can be found in the university's Equality Outcomes Progress Report.
- More effective use of student equalities data: in 2018 the university embedded equality and diversity in to the course appraisal process, through the rollout of a dashboard as part of the new business intelligence system. This resulted in course leaders more readily identifying equality and diversity issues in their course, reported through School Academic Boards.
- Development of staff networks: there has been a conscious attempt to broaden the numbers of individuals engaged in promoting equalities, diversity and inclusion by the development of staff networks. The activities of the university's three existing networks can be found within the Equality Outcomes Progress Report.
- A greater emphasis on awareness raising: the university has increased the range of awareness raising activity aimed at staff and students on campus. Much of the capacity for this activity has been enabled through the development of staff networks but also reflects a conscious shift by the university to develop its internal communications. Details of the awareness raising activity can be found in the university's Equality Outcomes Progress Report.
- Augmented membership of the Equalities and Diversity Advisory Group: the membership of the group has continued to develop and grow. The membership of the group has developed to include staff and students with a wide range of backgrounds and expertise to ensure that the membership is diverse and representative of our university community. In last two years the group has also

established a number of smaller sub-groups to provide a greater level of focus on one protected characteristic.