

Equality and Diversity Policy

Approved by	The Executive		
Date approved		Status	Approved
Policy owner	Chair of EDAG	Impact assessed	Yes
Version	2	Date of next review	As required
Issued to	All staff	Date of issue	2012

Introduction

It is the policy of the university to actively promote equality and diversity across its functions, and to eradicate discrimination on unlawful or unfair grounds.

Robert Gordon University is committed to ensuring that no-one is disadvantaged as a consequence of their age, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender identity, family responsibilities, marital status, pregnancy, religion or political belief, sex and sexual orientation or offending background.

As part of this commitment the university will address issues of discriminatory practice towards staff, students and external stakeholders. This commitment is reflected in the university's values which include the promotion of equality and diversity.

Policy Statement

Robert Gordon University (RGU) strives towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive and harmonious.

The university will achieve this by:

1. embracing a positive attitude towards the promotion of equality on the basis of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation to ensure all reach their full potential;
2. being prepared to understand that fairness and equality is not always about treating people similarly, but can sometimes mean treating people differently;
3. acknowledging and celebrating the breadth of experiences and perspectives that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the university; and
4. eliminating discrimination and prejudice by empowering people to treat each other with respect.

The University's Approach

The university believes that the most effective way to promote equality and to eradicate discrimination is to mainstream the consideration of equality across its functions. In this respect, all employees, students and visitors to the university have an individual duty to ensure that equality and diversity is actively promoted.

Ultimate responsibility for overseeing this approach rests with the Board of Governors which delegates responsibility to the Principal and Vice Chancellor who, in turn, is assisted by the Executive.

To ensure there is effective leadership within the university, one of the Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellors assumes the role of having overall strategic responsibility for the promotion of equality and for the mainstreaming equality and diversity and is supported by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG).

Implementation

Mainstreaming equality and diversity is the responsibility of the EDAG, comprised of membership from key areas across the university, including:

- Dean of Students
- Disability and Dyslexia Service
- Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment
- Human Resources
- Dean of Department for the Enhancement, Learning and Assessment
- One academic from each of the three faculties
- Student representatives
- Equality Champions – Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion and Belief, Age

Responsibilities

Principal and Vice Chancellor

It is the responsibility of the Principal and Vice Chancellor to:

- ensure the university has an effective equality and diversity policy;
- ensure that the university's equality and diversity policies and action plans are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, to ensure compliance with all statutory obligations;
- make available the necessary resources for the effective operation of all university activities;
- ensure that responsibility for equality and diversity is properly assigned and promote *active acceptance* of this responsibility throughout the university; and,
- work to secure a culture of active engagement with equality and diversity issues.

The Principal and Vice Chancellor will exercise his/her responsibilities through the Executive, who have collective and individual responsibility for effective adoption and implementation of RGU Policies and Procedures.

Details of the university policies and action plans can be found at <http://www4.rgu.ac.uk/diversity/info/page.cfm>.

The Executive

It is the responsibility of the Executive collectively to:

- ensure effective governance of equality and diversity matters through the provision of approved and appropriate organisational arrangements and policies that are effectively implemented to mainstream equality and diversity into practice;
- provide equality and diversity leadership throughout the university;
- approve equality policies as recommended by EDAG, and take the lead on furthering the equality outcomes in the annual plan;
- review, regularly and after major changes, the effectiveness and relevance of the equality and diversity policy;
- ensure that all the Executive's decisions reflect the intentions as stated in the equality and diversity policy, and ensure the policy reflects current strategic thinking;
- ensure that adequate resources are available to provide relevant equality and diversity training and development activities at all levels within the university;
- engage the active participation of staff in improving equality and diversity;
- regularly (at least annually) receive reports and review equality and diversity performance throughout the university;
- consider recommendations, from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG), professional advisers and others, for how equality and diversity management arrangements are effectively mainstreamed and made operational; and finally
- report to the Board of Governors (at least annually).

Individually:

- “Champion” the university’s equality and diversity ethos and decisions throughout the university.
- Provide equality and diversity leadership for the organisation by ensuring that all actions and decisions made by the Executive, on EDAG recommendations, are mainstreamed in their areas of responsibility.

Chair of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

Taking cognisance of the relevant legislation the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) has the following responsibilities additional to the Executive:

- overall responsibility for developing and mainstreaming the equality and diversity policy, equality outcomes and activities in annual planning;
- to ensure that the Executive reviews, at least annually, the university’s equality and diversity performance;
- to ensure that the equality and diversity policy and action plan reflect current Executive’s responsibilities.
- to inform the Executive about any significant changes in legislation or emerging issues or trends identified through the collection of student data and employment information, results of surveys and reports, or complaints or feedback ;
- to ensure that the equality and diversity implications of all the Executive agenda items and decisions are fully considered and addressed at that forum;
- to report to the Executive on the effectiveness of the equality and diversity policy and annual plan and the consistency of application across the university and its performance;
- to ensure that the Executive regularly receives and reviews relevant reports on current equality and diversity progress and performance;
- to present an annual report on progress made with respect to the annual plan providing a breakdown of any employment information and student data detailing progress made to the Executive and the Board of Governors; and
- ensure the university meets external requirements to review annual plans, and meet publishing and reporting requirements in relation to all protected characteristics.

Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

It is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) collectively:

- to review, approve, and monitor the Equality and Diversity Action Plan to ensure appropriate progress and consistency of application across the university in support of its commitment to the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination;
- to receive employment information and student monitoring data, results of surveys and questionnaires, complaints; and to consider the evidence in the development of equality outcomes and plan activities for inclusion in annual plan to be recommend to the Executive;
- to review equality and diversity policies, processes and initiatives and to make any recommendations to the Executive;
- to ensure the collection and effective monitoring of data and other relevant information including identification of emerging issues and trends to raise with the Executive, and to inform the development of future activities;
- to oversee the proactive involvement of stakeholders;
- to oversee the implementation of the university’s Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process;
- to maintain an understanding of local and national initiatives;
- to identify appropriate training and development activities in line with legislation and best practice to participate in appropriate external networks;

- to produce an annual report summarising levels of performance and progress made in mainstreaming equality and diversity as set out in the annual plan to be submitted by the Chair of EDAG to the Executive; and
- the Quality and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) will, on behalf of EDAG, undertake monitoring of student achievement data annually and make appropriate recommendations.

Equality and Diversity Champions

The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) has appointed champions in the areas of Age, Disability, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion and Belief. The role of the Champion is to:

- contribute and provide challenge to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in the equality strand 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 of implementation of the Equality and Diversity Annual Plan.

Senior Managers

Deans of Faculty, Associate Deans, Heads of School/ Department, Directors of Research Institutes are responsible for the following:

- providing equality and diversity leadership within their areas of responsibility; personal responsibility for implementation of approved equality and diversity policies within their areas of responsibility;
- engaging the active participation of staff in improving equality and diversity;
- providing equality and diversity leadership throughout their area of responsibility; ensuring that all activities under their control are carried out in accordance with the university equality and diversity policy;
- developing local equality and diversity objectives and targets derived from the university's annual plan;
- ensuring that all direct reports are aware of, and comply with, the university's equality and diversity policy;
- ensuring that all direct reports within their area of responsibility understand their individual responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity;
- ensuring all staff complete mandatory training in equality and diversity;
- ensuring all contractors and non-employees entering or working on our premises are aware of, and comply with, the university's equality and diversity policy; and
- Heads of School and Associate Deans have specific responsibility for monitoring data at Course/Team level and to ensure equality and diversity matters are raised at School Academic Boards.

Employees with Line Management Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all employees in a supervisory role to:

- provide equality and diversity leadership throughout their area of responsibility; ensure that all staff are aware of, and comply with the university equality and diversity policy;
- ensure that all staff within their area of responsibility understand their individual responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity;
- ensure that all staff complete mandatory training in equality and diversity; and develop appropriate actions within the Employee Performance Review (EPR) process, as appropriate.

Individuals

It is the duty of every individual to:

- be aware of, and comply with, the university's equality and diversity policy;
- complete mandatory training in equality and diversity;
- treat everyone with respect;
- eliminate discrimination; advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics
- actively promote equality and diversity; and
- co-operate with the university in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation, and in implementing the equality and diversity policy, plans and activities.

In addition, it is the policy of the university that individuals shall:

- be able to freely report any concern regarding equality and diversity to their manager, supervisor, equality champions or EDAG;
- not indulge in behaviour which contravenes the university policies on equality and diversity or any other related policy; and
- support equality champions and members of EDAG in carrying out their roles.