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# STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

## 2014 -2016

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February 2015

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# STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2014 - 2016

## FOREWORD BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The University of Wales has a long history of commitment to acting to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to promoting equality. It is very proud of its commitment in this regard and going forward was very pleased in December 2013 to be associated with the founding of The Wales Centre for Equity in Education.

The University of Wales is an historic degree-awarding authority and whilst, with the important exception of students registered for programmes of research at its own research centres, it does not teach directly, it can and does take steps to ensure that its policies and responsibilities are both maintained and made available to students studying for its awards, most obviously through its own Student Charter.

This document contains a statement of policy and guidance which all those who are associated with the University should be aware of. It describes the general duty and responsibilities to be met under the Equality Act 2010 along with certain specific duties which are outlined in this plan, which apply to our activities as an employer and a provider of higher education as well as our interaction with the wider community.

Promoting equality and showing tolerance and a respect for difference and diversity are important issues for the whole University and requires action by those working at all levels – members, staff and students alike.

Professor Medwin Hughes DL  
Vice-Chancellor

January 2015

## A: BACKGROUND

As a higher education institution the University of Wales has a role and responsibility to play in taking action toward a fair and just society. It is the policy of the University Council and the Academic Board to ensure that no member of the University community should receive more or less favourable treatment on any grounds which are not relevant to good educational and employment practice, and to implement equality of opportunity and take appropriate measures to ensure that no individual (member of staff, student, or visitor) is subject to unfair or unlawful discrimination. Direct and indirect discrimination resulting in unequal opportunities is not acceptable and this includes discrimination by perception or by association with any protected characteristic.

The UK legislative framework for equality and diversity is set out in the Equality Act 2010, which superseded earlier laws and regulations governing discrimination on unlawful grounds. The Equality Act harmonised much of the law in this area and introduced other protected characteristics (see paragraph 4 below).

Our commitment is to ensure that all those associated with the University are aware of this policy and their obligation not to engage in behaviour that is or may be interpreted as discriminatory, harassment, bullying, victimising or showing lack of respect.

The University's approach to equality and diversity is underpinned by the principle of 'dignity at work' under which all individuals should expect to receive (and reciprocate) considerate and courteous treatment in all matters.

This document articulates the University's commitment to equality and diversity, and the objectives and priorities approved by Council and Academic Board.

The University's Strategic Equality Plan has been developed in accordance with current legislation and with the benefit of guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU).

The University has in place a REF (Research Excellence Framework) Equality and Diversity Code of Practice specifically for the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, as part of its continuing effort to ensure that the research activities of all its researchers, regardless of individual circumstances, are valued and properly considered for REF submissions.

## B. EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised discrimination law in a single piece of legislation, and sets out a single framework for preventing discrimination and promoting equality for nine protected characteristics:

- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Sexual orientation
- ✓ Religion and belief
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership

The Equality Act also introduced a new standard for public bodies - a 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (PSED), which applies to the University of Wales.

The PSED imposes a statutory duty upon the University to have due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act (Direct discrimination also includes discrimination by perception or by association, e.g. a carer may be protected from discrimination due to association);
- advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The University also recognises that for public bodies in Wales, the Welsh Government has set additional duties, primarily in respect of adopting plans and setting targets, reporting and making information available on equality and diversity strategy and performance.

## **C: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT**

The University is committed to promoting equality to avoid discrimination because of all protected characteristics, and to adopting proactive measures to address unlawful discrimination.

The University seeks to provide a working and learning environment that is free from any form of harassment, intimidation, victimisation or discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic, or by perception of, or by association with, a protected characteristic.

All individuals are to be treated with dignity and respect and valued for their contribution.

The University will seek to select, develop, appraise, promote and otherwise treat individuals on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential.

Equality is at the centre of University policy making, service delivery, regulations and enforcement and employment practice, and everyone associated with the University is responsible for ensuring that this policy is put into practice.

The University will maintain an Equality Action Plan that should be reviewed annually to keep abreast of legislative standards and the evolving circumstances of the University of Wales as it prepares for its future transformation through constitutional merger with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The Equality Action Plan is set out in Appendix A of this Strategic Equality Plan.

This Equality and Diversity Policy Statement will be formally reviewed at least every three years, having regard to what has been achieved and the equality priorities agreed by the University Council for the next three-year period.

## **D: SCOPE OF STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

The University will ensure that positive steps are taken to identify and combat all forms of discrimination so that no one associated with the University is discriminated against either directly or indirectly, or due to perception or association.

Arrangements to promote equality and diversity shall cover the entire University community: members, actual and potential, full-time and part-time employees and students, visitors, contractors and customers.

The University will seek to ensure that all individuals, contractors and organisations that provide services for or on behalf of the University of Wales are made aware of the University's policy on equality and diversity, and will be required to act in accordance with it.

The University will investigate any alleged breach of this policy by staff, students, contractors or service providers. If the allegation is upheld, action will be taken which could result in disciplinary proceedings. Breach of University policy or standards could result in external contractors and/or service providers being removed from the University's panel of approved providers.

## **E: AIMS OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN**

The Plan has been drawn up to try and achieve a holistic approach to equality and diversity at the University of Wales.

The aims of the plan are to:

- 1) fulfil the University's statutory and regulatory obligations;
- 2) promote awareness of the University's policy on equality and diversity among staff, students, third parties and contractors;
- 3) assess the impact of University policies on staff, and students as appropriate,
  - from different racial groups
  - with disabilities (or those who have had disabilities in the past)
  - of both gender categories (including those within the gender reassignment category)
  - of all ages
  - of any religious or belief affiliations
  - of any sexual orientation
  - that are pregnant or on maternity leave
  - marriage or civil partnerships
- 4) monitor arrangements for staff recruitment, career progress/development, and training opportunities, and student admission and progress as appropriate, taking action, where appropriate, to address any matters arising from monitoring;
- 5) share the results of monitoring and assessment with the University Council, and Academic Board as appropriate;
- 6) keep under review policy and equality objectives for the University, with 2016 as the timescale for the review of the Strategic Equality Plan
- 7) consider links with outside agencies and community groups and, where appropriate, consult with them on the effective implementation of the policy.

The aims of the Strategic Equality Plan will be met by specific objectives and actions set out in the Equality Action Plan at Appendix A.

## **F: PROMOTING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY**

Information to be made accessible to staff and students of the University will be published on the University intranet (or equivalent), and print copy will be made available for those who do not have regular IT access, or make a request for print copy in different formats or print size as needed.

The University will:

- a) ensure that the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Action Plan are made available bilingually (Welsh/English), and in such format (or formats) so as to be accessible to all interested parties, including staff and students;
- b) ensure that all new members of staff are provided with the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement (Section C of this document), and are made aware of the equality and diversity related documents available on the intranet; again, different formats or print size can be supplied as needed;
- c) maintain the University's Dignity at Work Statement on the University intranet, and display it on notice boards in University premises;
- d) report as appropriate the results of equality impact assessments, consultation and monitoring to the appropriate committee of the University Council, and through an annual report to the Council, which will be made available on the University's intranet;
- e) ensure that students are made aware of its commitment through its Student Charter.

## **G: FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Successful implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan requires clear understanding and commitment throughout the University.

As the employing body, the University Council has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with legislative obligations. However, in practical terms responsibility for ensuring the consistent application of the policy sits with the Vice-Chancellor, and the Senior Directorate and Senior and Middle Management Group are responsible for managing the implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Action Plan.

Under delegated arrangements from the Vice Chancellor, all designated senior and middle managers have responsibility for ensuring compliance with the policy in their respective departments, units or areas of functional activity.

All staff with supervisory accountabilities have a role in ensuring that their staff are aware of and comply with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement (Section C of this document), and in promoting equality and diversity in all of their dealings with staff, students, third parties and members of the public.

Every member of staff has a duty to ensure that his/her conduct, working practices and relationships meet the standards set by the Equality and Diversity Policy. Failure to comply with this policy is likely to result in disciplinary proceedings and, in extreme cases where discrimination or harassment is involved, could lead to dismissal or even an individual facing legal action themselves.

The Registrar will have delegated responsibility for ensuring compliance in regard to students, and for

acting to promulgate awareness, amongst its student body, of the University's commitment as the degree-awarding authority.

Day to day monitoring of equality and diversity issues, performance and compliance is overseen jointly by the Finance and Resources Manager and Head of Human Resources, with governance reporting to the University Council (as appropriate) through the appropriate sub –committees of the Council, or Academic Board.

## **H: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

The University of Wales recognises its responsibilities and obligations to undertake equality impact assessments of policies, practices and functions, to consider how they affect people with protected characteristics and promote equality, and to ensure that they do not discriminate.

The Equality Challenge Unit describes the aim of equality impact assessments as 'to ensure all policies, practices and provisions are fair to all groups of people and do not impact adversely in any way'.

The University will:

- a) consider whether University policies help to achieve equality for staff and students from all protected groups and whether they have, or could have, an adverse impact on such groups;
- b) use information gathered from such consideration to review equality aims and objectives, and to inform University planning and decision making;
- c) make the results of equality impact assessments available to staff as appropriate.

## **I: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

The University recognises that staff development and training enhances the knowledge, understanding and skills of staff so that they can more readily discharge their responsibilities to develop and sustain a culture of equality in the working and learning environment. This is a key consideration when senior and middle managers undertake performance appraisal and assessment of training needs, or when University wide awareness programmes are planned.

## **J: MONITORING THE ADMISSION AND RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS**

The University is a non-teaching University, and arrangements to oversee the monitoring of admission and recruitment of students by affiliated centres authorised to deliver programmes leading to a University of Wales award are the responsibility of the institutions or centres delivering studies. Nonetheless, the University does have robust arrangements in place to protect the academic quality and probity of its awards.

## **K: CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Consultation and engagement are essential to both the development and effectiveness of this Strategic Equality Plan.

To inform the development of the Strategic Equality Plan, three key stakeholder groups are identified;

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staff, students and community groups, both of and for people with protected characteristics.

The University discusses its equality aims and objectives with all interested parties, but primarily through dialogue with staff and Trade Union representatives, recognising that the University is a non-teaching institution; and with students through the Student Affairs Board (which is chaired by the Registrar).

It has consulted on this Plan with its recognised Trade Unions, and engaged with staff on the Plan through the Communications Focus Group, and will undertake consultation and engagement when the Plan is reviewed.

Advice and assistance on equality matters is also provided through the University's merger partner, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, which is represented on the Equality Challenge Unit's Welsh liaison group which provides support on equality issues to share good practice with Higher Education Institutions across Wales.

## **L: EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

In support of its Strategic Equality Plan the University of Wales has adopted and will implement equality objectives. These are set out in Appendix A.

## **M: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORTING**

An annual report will be presented to the Council of the University to report on progress and summarise the steps taken to meet the agreed aims and objectives. Appended to the report will be a table of appropriate data on equality issues.

## **N: CONCLUSION**

This Strategic Equality Plan is designed to support the positive focus and lead offered by the University towards equality of opportunity, whilst meeting legislative requirements.

The University will continue in its endeavour to ensure that staff and students are aware of the requirements of this Strategic Equality Plan and their obligation to respect the dignity and diversity of colleagues and students, and not to engage in behaviour that may be interpreted as discriminatory, harassment, bullying, victimising or showing lack of respect. These principles are also reflected in the University's Student Charter which governs its dealings with students.



APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF WALES EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2014 -2016

This plan sets out the objectives and actions for the period to 2016.

**GENERAL OBJECTIVES;**

- Enhance awareness and understanding of staff in relation to equality and diversity and provide appropriate training
- Ensure that staff and third parties comply with the University’s Strategic Equality Plan and are aware of their individual responsibilities and required standards of behaviour

	Action	Reason for action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1.	Ensure that staff are made aware of University policies and procedures in relation to equality as part of staff induction	Meet legislative requirements  Ensure staff awareness and understanding	Human Resources	Ongoing through staff induction
2.	Advise contractors during initial negotiation processes and include the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement (Section C of the Strategic Equality Plan) with tender documents.	Meet legislative requirements  Ensure improved awareness and understanding by third parties	Head of Finance and Resources	Following policy approval
3.	Provide guidance to ensure that contracts for goods and services provided to the University are evaluated and awarded in compliance with equality and procurement legislation	Ensure improved awareness and understanding by staff and third parties	Head of Finance and Resources	Ongoing
4.	Update the Dignity at Work Statement to encompass all stakeholders, aligning	Ensure improved awareness and	Head of Human Resources	30 November 2014

	with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David statement as appropriate	understanding by all stakeholders		
5.	Issue copy of Strategic Equality Plan to UW's collaborative partners.  Promulgate awareness of Student Charter.	Ensure improved awareness and understanding by UW's collaborative partners and student body	Registrar	Circulated to all students registered for Wales awards along with December 2014 Student Newsletter.  Student Charter available on website, reviewed by Committee and distributed to centres.
6.	Ensure that external participants on recruitment and selection panels are advised of UW's Strategic Equality Plan and standards in respect of equality	Meet legislative requirements, prevent discrimination and ensure that equality matters are given full consideration in the recruitment and selection process	Human Resources	Ongoing
7.	Ensure that marketing and publicity materials which include the name or visible identity of the University reflect the Strategic Equality Plan	Promote UW as an inclusive environment for work and study	Head of Communications /Registrar	Ongoing
8.	Ensure that UW's REF Equality and Diversity Code of Practice is developed and implemented in line with the Equality Act and that the Code is appropriately communicated and disseminated to relevant staff	Ensure that staff with protected characteristics are not discriminated against during the REF exercise	Director of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, supported by Human Resources	Ongoing
9.	Ensure that staff are trained as appropriate on equality related matters	Meet legislative requirements Ensure improved	Human Resources	2015

		awareness and understanding of staff		
10.	Make accessible on the intranet policies and procedures on equality	Ensure accessibility of policies and procedures on equality	Head of Human Resources	Following policy approval

**CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS;  
Ensure effective consultation on equality matters with internal and external stakeholders**

11.	Undertake appropriate consultation and engagement on equality matters with staff via the Joint Consultative Committee and Communications Focus Group	Meet legislative requirements and support staff and trade union consultation and engagement	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing
12.	Undertake appropriate consultation and engagement with students via the Student Affairs Board, and Academic Board.	Meet student consultation and engagement requirements	Registrar	Done. SAB met on 13 February 2015, welcomed the draft SEP as timely and noted that the Student Charter might be reviewed to see whether it required reflective amendment.  SEP received by Academic Board on 22 January 2015, on which occasion the student member welcomed it and suggested that it was appropriate that it be introduced.
13.	Inform UW's external stakeholders on the University's Strategic Equality Plan, engaging as appropriate on the Plan	Meet requirements for consultation and engagement with external	Deputy Vice-Chancellor/ Registrar	2015

		stakeholders		
14.	Develop and maintain effective working relationships with a range of equality organisations and networks	Enhance communications, consultations and good practices on equality matters	Members of Council/ Senior Managers, Head of Human Resources and other senior staff as appropriate	Ongoing

#### MONITOR AND REPORT ON THE DIVERSITY PROFILE OF STAFF ANNUALLY

15.	Collect and review relevant equality data from staff and prospective staff	Monitoring compliance and identifying issues	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing
16.	Provide an inclusive and supportive environment to encourage disclosure in regard to all protected characteristics	To support an inclusive and supportive working environment	Senior managers and line managers/ Human Resources	Ongoing
17.	Undertake appropriate equality data reporting	To meet legislative requirements and inform decision making as appropriate	Head of Human Resources	2015
18.	Respond to outcomes of equality data monitoring	To meet legislative requirements and inform decision making as appropriate	Head of Human Resources/ Senior managers and line managers	2015

#### REVIEW, DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

19.	Establish and implement an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process as a clear and transparent system to evidence	Meet legislative requirements	Human Resources supporting Human Resources Committee,	2015
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	that policies and procedures and decisions have been checked for impact		Senior managers Group and Senior and Middle Managers Group	
20.	Provide guidance and training to relevant staff on undertaking Equality Impact Assessments	Improve awareness and understanding of the EIA process	Human Resources	2015
21.	Communicate revised policies and procedures on equality matters	Support awareness of the revised policies and procedures on equality matters	Head of Human Resources/ Head of Communications	Following policy approval

DISABILITY;

Provide a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for disabled staff and users of University premises

22.	Be cognisant of the Equality Act particularly in relation to disability, when reviewing and planning infrastructure and estates strategy	Meet legislative requirements and improve awareness	Head of Finance and Resources/ Senior Financial Accountant	Ongoing
23.	Regularly review and improve as appropriate access to University facilities	Provide an accessible environment	Head of Finance and Resources/ Senior Financial Accountant	Ongoing
24.	Review emergency evacuation procedures for disabled users and provide relevant training as appropriate	Compliance with health and safety requirements	Head of Finance and Resources/ Senior Financial Accountant	Ongoing
25.	Develop mechanisms to increase levels of disability disclosure amongst staff	Promotion of an inclusive working environment	Senior Managers Group/Head of Human Resources	2015
26.	Provide support to relevant managers in	Improve awareness	Human Resources	Ongoing

	identifying and responding to mental health issues	and understanding		
27.	Ensure that recruitment procedures take into consideration the reasonable needs of disabled applicants and staff	Meet legislative requirements and ensuring disabled candidates have an appropriate recruitment environment	Human Resources	Ongoing

RACE;

Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff

28.	Consider approach to recruitment media and dissemination of job vacancy opportunities	Promotion of an inclusive working environment	Human Resources	Ongoing
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GENDER;

Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff

29.	Monitor statistics by gender in the uptake of flexible working opportunities	Promotion of an inclusive working environment	Human Resources	2014/15 Academic year
30.	Consider any appropriate initiatives via professional bodies, HE networks, mentoring schemes etc.		Human Resources/Senior Managers Group	Ongoing

GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT;

Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment for transgender staff

31.	Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for transgender staff, and provide advice and guidance to relevant managers as needed	Meeting legislative requirements and promotion of an inclusive working environment	Senior managers/line managers/ Human Resources	Ongoing
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#### SEXUAL ORIENTATION;

Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive working environment for staff in relation to sexual orientation

32.	Provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for staff in relation to sexual orientation	Meeting legislation requirements and promotion of an inclusive working environment	Senior managers/line managers/ Human Resources	Ongoing
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#### AGE;

Provide a safe inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff irrespective of age

33.	Monitor impact of abolition of Default Retirement Age on staff age profile	To gain a better understanding of the impact of the abolition of the DRA	Human Resources	2014/15 Academic year
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#### RELIGION AND BELIEF;

Provide a safe inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff

34.	Cover issues of religion and belief in any staff training on equality issues	Promote good relations and improve awareness and understanding of religion and belief	Human Resources	2015
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#### MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

Ensure that staff who are married or in a civil partnership do not suffer discrimination

35.	Monitor appropriate data on marriage and civil partnership as appropriate	Meet legislative requirements	Human Resources	2014/15 Academic year
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PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY;

Provide a supportive environment for staff in relation to pregnancy

36.	Provide advice, guidance and support to staff who are pregnant	Meet legislative requirements and ensure staff are properly supported	Human Resources	Ongoing
37.	Undertake annual reviews of University policies in relation to pregnancy and maternity	Meet legislative requirements	Human Resources	In accordance with UK employment legislation timetable

GENDER PAY;

Ensure that pay issues relating to equality are monitored and addressed where appropriate

38.	Undertake gender pay audit every three years	For monitoring and to inform decision making	Human Resources	2014/15 Academic year
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