School of Humanities EDI Committee <u>draft</u> Terms of Reference

The Committee exists to advance equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as core principles of the School. It will do this by identifying deficiencies and proposing remedies, promoting good practice, advising the School Management Team (SMT) on actions to be taken, collaborating with the College of Arts & Humanities EDI Forum, and liaising closely with relevant staff, students and other stakeholders. The Committee will seek to address EDI matters affecting all students and the academic and non-academic staff.

Membership

- Chair: School EDI Convenor
- Deputy Chair: to be appointed from committee membership
- Data Officer: to be appointed from committee membership
- School Disability Officer
- School Widening Participation Officer
- Six Subject Area EDI Officers
- A representative of the School Professional Services Staff
- Three student representatives: UG, PGT and PGR
- Clerk: Executive Assistant to Head of School
- Fixed-term academic staff representative

Purpose

Equality, diversity and inclusivity are not stable concepts, and so while the work of the Committee will have regard for current legal definitions, it will not be bound by them. The 2010 Equality Act defines certain 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (further information available here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents). The Scottish government's Commission on Widening Access in 2016 articulates goals in relation to students and socio-economic inequalities (further details available here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/).

The Committee will endeavour to conduct its work in a manner that inspires confidence, embodying the values it seeks to promote. The Committee will strive to establish mutual respect among its members and with the staff, students and other stakeholders whom it represents. There shall be an expectation that unhappiness with the direction or conduct of the Committee or any EDI initiatives within the School be listened to without judgement and respected.

So its members are not overburdened, the Committee may identify particular priorities from time to time. Essential activities will include:

- Oversight of Athena Swan action plan, recording progress, changes, challenges; future Athena Swan award applications
- Identifying and sharing with colleagues the latest research on best EDI practices in academia
- Collation and dissemination of existing University information and resources on EDI matters
- Identification of good practices in other Schools
- Identification of EDI deficits
- Raising awareness among students and staff of existing support structures and procedures around the University
- Discussion of solutions and preparation of recommendations to SMT

Further activities may include:

- Identification of opportunities to promote EDI concerns, e.g. coordinating and publicizing events for Black History Month, International Women's Day etc.
- Convening student and staff focus groups to learn about particular issues, e.g. the Athena Swan action plan includes provision for consultation with LGBTQ+ students.
- Establishing working groups to prepare recommendations or carry out actions in a specific area; these will be small and time-limited.

Underlying principles

- Our work starts with acknowledging structural and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequality in the University, reflecting such inequalities in society at large
- Our discussions and initiatives are informed by research and expertise, and by the lived experiences of those affected by inequality;
- Our work is framed by legal and institutional EDI requirements, but aims to go beyond these; it is aimed more broadly at transforming workplace cultures, research methodologies and agenda, and teaching curricula and methods;
- We acknowledge the workload implications of EDI work, whether informal or formal; building on a feminist ethics of care, we acknowledge that work aimed at fighting inequalities often remains unacknowledged and that it is often carried by those who are most negatively affected by cultures of inequality; the committee will seek to render visible these inequalities and strive towards a fair distribution among staff of time investment;
- Targets and strategic plans should be realistic, achievable, and specific.

Meetings

The Committee will meet twice each semester. If meetings are held in person an accessible room must be used. The time of the meetings should be set with regard to the other work, study and personal commitments of Committee members, bearing in mind – for example – caring responsibilities, or the work commitments of students. Minutes of the meetings will be circulated to Committee members in an accessible format. Meetings may welcome guest speakers (e.g. University-wide officers in relevant areas)

Reporting and accountability

The Committee will report to the SMT and to the College EDI Forum. Recommendations for actions that depart from a University, College or School plan (e.g. Athena Swan action plan) or which have budgetary implications will be brought by the EDI Convenor to a SMT meeting for information and decisions where necessary. The Chair/Convenor will meet monthly one-to-one the Head of School. The Committee will prepare a short statement of its activities on an annual basis, to be published on the School website and shared with colleagues. It will disseminate information on EDI-related activities to academic and support staff in the School on a regular basis.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and re-approved by the Committee at its December 2024 meeting. Thereafter, Terms of Reference, working methods and scope of the Committee's work are to be reviewed by the Committee every year.

MAB 24/05/2024 (amended)

ADDENDUM 1

Student Representatives: job description

UG and PGT reps:

1. At least once per term, consult with the student reps of the groups you represent (the relevant members of SSLC for all Subjects in the School) to identify emerging issues regarding EDI (issues with procedures; gaps in communication and awareness; any relevant student initiatives and campaigns…)
2. In advance of each Ctee meeting, contact the chair of the SoH Student Experience Committee to gather information about emerging EDI issues there
3. Feed this back to the SoH EDI convenor in advance of EDI Ctee meeting; report at EDI Ctee meeting
4. Report to EDI Ctee on relevant initiatives by the SRC (e.g. 'let's talk about sexual violence' workshops; Black History Month, …); promote EDI-relevant campaigns among the students that you represent
5. Contribute to designing initiatives by the EDI Ctee convenor for staff and students in the SoH; publicise these initiatives among the students you represent and after such events, seek feedback from students
6. If and when the opportunity arises, propose a student-focused EDI campaign or event within the SoH
7. Contribute to the Ctee newsletter.

PGR rep:

1. At least once per term, consult with the student reps of the groups you represent (the relevant members of SSLC for all Subjects in the School) to identify emerging issues regarding EDI (issues with procedures; gaps in communication and awareness; any relevant student initiatives and campaigns…)
2. Feed this back to the SoH EDI convenor in advance of EDI Ctee meeting; report at EDI Ctee meeting
3. Contribute to designing initiatives by the EDI Ctee convenor for staff and students in the SoH; publicise these initiatives among the students you represent and after such events, seek feedback from students
4. If and when the opportunity arises, propose a student-focused EDI campaign or event within the SoH
5. Contribute to the Ctee newsletter
6. …