**Equality outcomes and MAinstreaming Progress report 2023**

# **Introduction**

***“We are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all.”*** **Strategy 2030**

The University of Edinburgh has a strong and long-standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and to promoting a positive environment, which ensures fairness, challenges prejudice, and celebrates difference. We deliver on our commitment by mainstreaming EDI in all that we do, seeking to remove structural barriers and create an inclusive culture where all in our community can flourish.

The University publishes a set of Equality Outcomes every four years to further its equality duties under the Equality Act 2010. This report provides an update on progress made in mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion across the institution (Section 1), and on progressing the Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (Section 2). In line with the legislation, this report also provides information on the diversity profile of University Court (Section 3), and provides links to employee and student equality data reports (Section 4).

The University’s set of Equality Outcomes, covering the period 2021-2025, can be found at: [Strategy and Outcomes | The University of Edinburgh.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/outcomes)

**Section 1. Progress on Mainstreaming Equality**

This report considers mainstreaming progress under five themes:

1. Governance
2. Key Strategies
3. Services and Infrastructure
4. EDI Literacy and Awareness
5. Evidence Base Improvement

**1.1** **Mainstreaming: Governance**

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is embedded in the University’s strategic priorities and planning through the overarching University Strategy 2030, the Equality Outcomes, and successive Outcome Agreements with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The University Court and the University Executive oversee performance against key performance indicators which include equality-related measures.

The mainstreaming of EDI within the University is actively enabled by different levels of governance and accountability across the institution. The top level is the University Court, the University’s governing body, which considers the University's effectiveness in progressing EDI in all its work. Court receives and discusses all published bi-annual and cyclical EDI reports, supplemented by updates on specific EDI topics and themes. Additionally, University Court is committed to improving its representation of the communities it serves. Detailed information is provided in Section 3.

A University lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was appointed in 2019 and is a member of the University Executive. The University Executive is a key decision-making body with the remit to develop the University’s strategic objectives and oversee their implementation and delivery. It meets every month and every paper presented must consider its EDI dimensions and impacts. This supports mainstreaming by ensuring EDI is embedded in all business and that all areas are supported to deliver on objectives. The University lead convenes the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) which is an Executive Standing Committee, presenting policy papers and reports to the University Executive. EDIC provides strategic oversight of the University’s actions to progress EDI for staff and students. EDIC’s membership includes key budget holders and directors and representatives from across the University community including Colleges, Professional Services Groups, Student Union, Trade Unions and Staff Networks. The work of EDIC is supported by Thematic Equality Subcommittees which develop specific action plans, and by short life working groups and task and finish groups.

In late 2021, the new post of Provost was created as well as other changes to the University’s senior leadership team structure, as several post-holders reached the end of their terms of office. The Provost took up post in June 2022, and, as the Chief Academic Officer for the University, a key area of responsibility is to ensure the promotion of a positive, inclusive academic culture. This furthers mainstreaming progress by ensuring accountability for agreed actions towards achieving goals and outcomes.

Our three Colleges have active EDI Committees and action plans. The convenors of the College EDI Committees and representatives of our three Professional Services Groups (PSG), which also either have EDI Committees or other forms of EDI governance, are members of EDIC and regularly report on progress in their areas. There are EDI Leads in each of our Schools and Deaneries within our Colleges and across our professional services departments who progress EDI in their specific areas. The EDI work undertaken by staff is recognised in workload allocation models where appropriate, in the academic promotion process, in staff contribution awards and in a range of staff recognition awards.

The governance structure facilitates a joined-up approach to EDI initiatives, within and across different levels of the institution, enabling far-reaching consultation and contribution. This is an essential step in progressing mainstreaming but there is more to be done to ensure learning from good practice is disseminated, that the efforts of staff engaged in EDI work are rewarded and that responsibility for ensuring goals are achieved is shared equitably. The next steps are to develop more effective monitoring and evaluation of EDI activities, including through a robust evidence base and data use.

**1.2** **Mainstreaming: Key Strategies**

The University’s approach to planning and management of key strategies and programmes ensures that EDI is increasingly considered from conception to delivery. This has been achieved in a variety of ways including through dedicated EDI workstreams and/or expertise within projects, specific EDI consultation, and using a model framework for equality impact assessment (EqIA) of strategic, high-level or broad programmes of work.

**1.2.1** **Research and Innovation Strategy**

Research is at the core of the University’s mission, forming one of the four pillars in our Strategy 2030. The University’s Research & Innovation Strategy is currently in development, incorporating learning from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, the Research Cultures Working Group and sectoral best practice to ensure EDI is at the heart of all our research activity. The activities support progress in Equality Outcomes 3 and 4, as outlined under these sections later in this report.

The ability to deliver excellent research is crucially dependent on our research culture: the values, expectations and behaviours that shape how we support, deliver and communicate research. The University Research Strategy Group established a Research Cultures Working Group (RCWG) in June 2021 to develop an ambitious and actionable approach to fostering positive, supportive and inclusive research cultures. The experiences of researchers, including those from equality groups, have been captured via surveys and discussion groups, covering EDI-related topics such as bullying and harassment, support for disabled researchers, and research assessment metrics. The Research Cultures Action Plan has been approved by the University Executive and will be published later in 2023.

Our Research & Innovation Strategy is also informed by the submission made to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 (REF2021). A full Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed approach to REF2021 was conducted at the outset, with further detailed analysis of EDI impacts post-submission. This reflective EDI analysis of the approach taken to REF2021 submission shows that it was more inclusive of female and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) academics than the previous REF2014 submission. We recognise there are significant gaps in data for religion/belief, sexual orientation and disability, and further work is needed to improve disclosure as outlined in section1.5 Specific EDI initiatives are now underway to support inclusive research and research careers, including a detailed analysis of EDI in the REF context so we can identify actions to promote equity in research and an investigation into the longer-term EDI impacts of Covid-19 on research careers. We are actively recruiting Chancellor’s Fellows and nurturing early career researchers towards a sustainable academic career. This process is supported by new Diversifying Recruitment guidance; by EDI targets built into the Chancellor’s Fellow programme and through three new posts in the Institute for Academic Development including a research cultures lead.

The University established an £8m social investment fund in 2017 to deliver positive social and environmental impact from its investments. In 2022 this included investment in the Big Issue Growth Impact Fund and in ADA Ventures. Between them, these funds proactively work with minority ethnic, LGBT+ and disabled peoples and communities to increase levels of participation in training, advice, board representation, business start up and capital funding.

**1.2.2** **Curriculum Transformation Project**

The Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP) is a major programme to reimagine and deliver an outstanding educational experience for students in a changed and changing world, providing a foundation for future learning, global citizenship and enhanced employability. A commitment to EDI is a key element of the programme and is embedded within the Student Vision and the prototype Curriculum Design Principles and the resources, training and guidance being developed. EDI is also firmly embedded in the programme processes, governance and decision-making structures. The programme is engaging with staff and students across all protected characteristics and gathering quantitative and qualitative evidence of EDI issues and impact across the programme; Equality Impact Assessments are also undertaken. A specific commissioned project has worked with the CTP to create an EDI ‘toolkit’ to support promoting EDI in the implementation phase. Two secondments to the CTP are currently being set up to support decolonisation across Colleges and Schools and to investigate awarding gaps and how best to overcome them. Initiatives within this strategic programme will contribute to the progress of Equality Outcomes 2 and 4. [University of Edinburgh Curriculum Transformation Programme Webpages](https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters/curriculum-transformation-programme)

Curriculum development is supported by several interventions around Learning and Teaching. The annual University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference brings together staff and students to share good practice and innovation in learning and teaching. EDI is a key theme within the conference programme. [University of Edinburgh Learning & Teaching Conference | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/workshops/learning-teaching-conference)

The Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) provides funding to support learning and teaching enhancement projects. All applicants for the scheme are required to complete an Equality Impact statement setting out how EDI principles will be embedded in project design, delivery and dissemination. [Principal's Teaching Award Scheme | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/funding/funding)

We have over 100 EDI-themed Teaching Matters blogs and podcasts, covering topics such as inclusive cultures, assessment that discriminates, decolonising the curriculum, consent in the classroom, feminist teaching.  [Diversity and inclusion – Teaching Matters blog (ed.ac.uk)](https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/category/theme/diversity-and-inclusion/)

All Schools are engaged in work to decolonise the curriculum, examining and reconceptualising learning content to reflect wider global and historical perspectives and canons of knowledge which have been marginalised. An online hub has been created to support critical and thoughtful engagement, and to inform action by sharing case studies and resources from across the University. [Decolonising the Curriculum Hub - Home (sharepoint.com)](https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/DecolonisingtheCurriculumHub)

**1.2.3** **Digital Strategy**

Digital innovation will be a key component in delivering the University’s Strategy 2030. Following a two-year University-wide consultation, the Digital Strategy will be published in 2023. A key aim of the Digital Strategy is to identify and address inequalities that exist within our digital environments and progress a more accessible and inclusive campus. This will include action to develop and provide digital and data services that are accessible and useable by the widest possible range of users. Within what is a large programme of work, a dedicated EDI and Ethics workstream was established to allow for focused conversations, consultation and output, including the embedding of EDI and ethical considerations across all workstreams.

Key to the Strategy’s creation and success is ensuring that every member of our community can contribute to the strategy, input their views, thoughts and ideas and thereby help to shape the digital future of the University. Great attention has been paid to ensuring the accessibility of all related materials and consultation methods, and to including those who do not use our digital estate as part of their roles and could be described as digitally disenfranchised. Ongoing development of the University Digital Strategy will be an iterative process, responding to the requirements of our community as we adapt and embrace the opportunities and challenges of the changing digital landscape. The strategy will contribute to progressing Equality Outcomes 2 and 4. [The University of Edinburgh Digital Strategy Webpages](https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030/strategy-in-action/digital-strategy)

**1.2.4**  **Student Experience**

EDI principles are at the heart of our developments to enhance student experience. It is critical that all our students are given equality of opportunity, that student voices are heard, and that we actively encourage all students to appreciate and celebrate communities, groups and individuals different to their own or themselves. Our approach to supporting our students is through the development of their independence, identity and sense of belonging through the provision of inclusive and inspiring opportunities for academic, social and cultural connection.

Key components of the approach ensure inclusivity in the entire student journey, from application to graduate outcomes. This means embedding EDI values throughout our communications, processes and support. Examples include the implementation of a new model of student support; improving student mental health support, and support to students who have been victims of harassment, hate crime and gender-based violence; review of the student partnership agreement, and of the student complaints process. These components support progress of Equality Outcomes 1 and 2, and further information can be found under these sections later in this report.

Successful implementation of our strategy would mean that:

* students of all backgrounds feel a sense of safety, cohesion and belonging to the University and to the city;
* our spaces support and improve our sense of community and wellbeing;
* we provide a strong sense of welcome and support for the development of friendships and personal networks.

**1.3** **Mainstreaming: Services and Infrastructure**

The University continues to assess and improve its services and supporting infrastructure to meet the needs of the communities we serve and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery phase provided an opportunity to rethink the way that we work and deliver our services. A Hybrid Working organisational change programme began in October 2020 to develop a flexible approach to working that supports our dynamic community of learners, educators, researchers, and professional services staff and better meets their individual needs alongside those of the wider community. The Programme Group and its workstreams had EDI representation and/or ready access to EDI expertise. There was significant engagement with staff equality groups including via focus groups and surveys, which informed a Strategic Equality Impact Assessment and the development of content of the Hybrid Working Framework, first published in July 2021. [Hybrid Working | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030/strategy-in-action/hybrid-working)

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was piloted from October 2021, to ease pressure on the University’s Staff Counselling Service. The EAP supports employees with personal and/or work-related problems, providing counselling and access to legal and financial help. The EAP had a positive impact on waiting times for staff counselling, and 88% of staff who used the EAP would recommend the service to others. The service has been extended until October 2023, allowing a full review of the benefits of the service to be understood. [Counselling through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/counselling-services/staff/counselling-through-the-employee-assistance); [Staff Counselling | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/counselling-services/staff)

Our Editorial Style Guide was expanded in June 2022 to include guidance on inclusive language, furthering our commitment to accessible and inclusive communications. [Inclusive language | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/editorial-style/language-tone/inclusive-language). Developed with our staff and students, this guide aims to ensure that when we talk to or about our diverse communities in our corporate internal and external communications we do so with respect, sensitivity, consistency and care. This guidance represents a snapshot in a continuing conversation and will be revised as related language evolves.

The Digital Strategy aims to make our digital estate fully accessible to all by default. Related to this, we support digital and data skills for all through learning opportunities and resources, including the annual Digital Skills Festival. In 2022, the Festival included accessibility-focused sessions such as: subtitling for media creators; increasing accessibility of teaching using Learning Technology; making Word documents more accessible; and how to make digital events and resources more accessible and inclusive for BSL users. [Home | Digital Skills Festival - The University of Edinburgh](https://digitalskillsfestival.ed.ac.uk/)

The Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) began operating under this new name in summer 2022, having previously been the Student Disability Service, better reflecting the breadth of the service and the study-focused support that it provides. Following an independent review of the service, several improvements were made including changes to the contracts of Specialist Mentor (Autism/Mental Health) staff. This increased both the overall availability of this vital resource, and the capacity to develop and deliver additional activities such as training and group work. Additionally, the service procured a dedicated system to support the matching of students with the 1:1 non- medical specialist support that they need. This has streamlined the processes for students, and increased efficiency in interactions with the funding bodies who administer the Disabled Students’ Allowance. The number of students feeling confident to disclose a disability has increased significantly, with 6,036 disabled students (13% of the student population) in 2020/21 increasing to 8,473 disabled students (18% of the student population) in 2022/23. [Disability and Learning Support Service | The University of Edinburgh.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service)

The Student Wellbeing Service was implemented in September 2022 as part of the University’s new Student Support model which is reshaping and professionalising the way the University supports its students. At its core the new model aims to address any potential inequality of support for students by introducing Student Advisors who will work in a consistent way across the School, College and University in providing pastoral care. The Student Advisors will be the key point of contact for students throughout their time on course. We have also introduced Wellbeing Advisors to support the work of the Student Advisors by providing enhanced support to students where there are increased concerns around their wellbeing and a specialist response is needed. The Wellbeing Advisors will proactively work with students, Student Advisors, other University and external support services to identify and enable access to appropriate help, such as our Student Counselling and external services. While still very new, the model is demonstrating a more streamlined and consistent approach to supporting student’s pastoral care with a clearly defined and managed escalation route where wellbeing concerns are identified. [Student Wellbeing Service | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-wellbeing-service)

Since 2021 Student Counselling has recruited additional counsellors of colour, deepening its commitment to EDI and service improvement. It also engages with the Black, African and Asian Therapy Network to enhance provision. [Student Counselling | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling)

The new Staff Disability Advice Service was soft-launched in January 2023, with a full launch planned for May 2023. [Staff Disability Advice Service | The University of Edinburgh.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/staff-disability-advice-service) As well as providing tailored advice to disabled staff and their managers and playing a key role in developing the health and wellbeing agenda, this service has begun initial work to improve the implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. We have also extended the resources available to support all services and functions to ensure accessibility for individuals who use British Sign Language, in line with the University’s BSL Plan 2018-2024.

[British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2018-2024 at the University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/british-sign-language-plan/bsl-plan)

[Resources and Guidance for Working with BSL Users at The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/british-sign-language-plan/resources)

**1.4** **Mainstreaming: EDI Literacy and Awareness**

We have a broad range of resources and initiatives to mainstream EDI literacy and awareness across our institution.

We have a longstanding core offering of online EDI-related learning. Our new HR and Finance system, launched in November 2021, includes a Learning Management System which has significantly improved our ability to set and monitor completion of expected learning. All new staff are automatically assigned EDI learning to be completed as a priority when they join us, and current staff are prompted by the system to refresh their learning every 3 years. Line Manager Dashboards provide a ready overview of staff learning to inform probationary and annual review conversations.

We continue to add to our core offering of EDI-related learning. To further racial literacy, we have partnered with Santander Universities to make the online learning ‘Union Black: Britain’s Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-Racism' available to all our staff and students. The learning is offered both as a one-hour introductory module and as a 3-week programme of deeper learning. This course has been particularly well-received by participants. [EDI Training Modules available for staff at The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/training/modules)

To further understanding of EDI amongst our leaders and future leaders and support greater diversity in decision-making, we piloted workshops on ‘Understanding Race and Racism’, and ‘Identity, Privilege and Intersectionality’ with our Leader and Manager communities. Feedback from attendees of these sessions was very positive and showed that all respondents felt motivated to act but would welcome further support for behaviour change. We have set up Peer Mentoring and facilitated Discussion Groups which create a community to enable the conversation to continue, with a focus on taking action. This successful approach will be rolled out further in 2023. [Peer Mentoring & Discussion Groups | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/other-development-options/peer-mentoring-discussion-groups)

Between December 2022 and March 2023, we delivered a series of ‘Are you ready to Talk/Listen?’ sessions to increase the preparedness of staff at all levels for informed conversations around EDI. Participants were given opportunities to share their own experiences of inclusion/exclusion and learn from the experiences of others, to recognise their agency in change, and identify actions that they could take at an individual, departmental, and institutional level as appropriate to their role.

Events to honour and educate on the diversity of our community are an integral part of the University calendar. Each year the University celebrates LGBT+, Black and Disability History months, International Women’s Day, cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, hosts student-led celebrations such as Latin America week and Africa Week and raises relevant celebratory flags at Old College. In November 2021, the University marked Islamophobia Awareness Month for the first time, and this has been incorporated into the regular calendar of events.

We have several vibrant EDI-related Staff Networks, Student Societies, and research and knowledge exchange hubs, which contribute significantly to the promotion of EDI literacy and awareness. The cross-disciplinary networks RACE.ED and genderED produce regular blogs, podcasts, and seminars such as the annual genderED blogathon to mark the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and the popular RACE.ED podcast ‘Undersong – Race and Conversations Other-wise'. Our Staff Pride Network (SPN) organises a range of events to raise awareness of LGBT+ issues and other regular activities to support staff and allies. SPN recently produced a new Pride Progress lanyard for staff and student cards which are available to collect at our libraries and are in high demand. The Edinburgh Race Equality Network (EREN) offers a range of activities, including the popular Lunchtime Biography series to raise the profile of staff from diverse cultural backgrounds, and in January 2023 partnered with the Institute for Academic Development to deliver an event on pass/fail assessment or ‘Ungrading’ and raise awareness of its wider EDI importance. The BAME staff network provides a mentoring programme alongside other activities to support anti-racism and race equality. The Disabled Staff Network (DSN) holds regular meetings and has produced an excellent short video ‘Disability is not a barrier’. [RACE.ED website;](https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/) [GENDER.ED website;](https://www.gender.ed.ac.uk/) [EDI Networks and Groups | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/edi-groups)

The University’s Review of Race and History group oversees a comprehensive and inclusive, academically led and engaged examination of the University’s relationship with coloniality and enslavement and its legacy today. This work and associate policy review will deepen our responsibility to understand and tackle contemporary and historical issues around race and racism at our University, as support our commitment to anti-racism. [Review of Race and History | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/inclusion/race/review-of-race-and-history)

In August 2022, the University adopted the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) definition of Islamophobia, supported by the guidelines from the Coalition Against Islamophobia. This is an important first step in raising awareness of Islamophobia as a form of racism, in improving understanding of how Islamophobia can operate within the University community, and in devising meaningful strategies to tackle it. The process of preparing the case for the adoption is an example of how our governance and engagement processes work inclusively, where proposals for specific policies or other actions are proposed from minoritised groups and then developed and adopted across the institution.

**1.5** **Mainstreaming Evidence Based Improvement**

The University is committed to building and using its evidence base to better identify and address barriers to equality, to evaluate progress, and to enable a robust mainstreaming approach to EDI. We highlight here a few examples from across the University community which show improvements in our evidence base, via improved data capture and improved analytical tools. We recognise that we have more work to do generate and use robust quantitative and qualitative data and support their effective use.

A new institution-wide HR and Finance system, People and Money (P&M), was launched in November 2021. This new system enables staff to update their own equality data at any time, via self-service. We have published guidance to encourage and support staff to provide their personal equality information ([Staff Equality Data Collection & Monitoring | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/updating-your-equality-information-in-people-money)) and we are beginning to see improvements in disclosures. We will continue to identify ways to foster confidence and encourage individuals to disclose their equality data, working with our staff networks, as this is essential to effective monitoring of progress with respect to diversity.

The University conducts all-staff surveys, with the most recent in February 2023, to build a picture of staff experiences relative to our values and to inform forward actions. The surveys include specific questions on staff experiences of equality and inclusion, and respondents are asked to provide their diversity demographic data to capture any differences in experience across equality groups. Survey results are made available to Schools and departments where anonymity can be maintained, and guidance is provided to assist managers in interpreting data in context, communicating results to teams, and aligning targeted action with existing strategy to generate sustainable change across the University. Additional surveys are conducted such as the Hybrid Working Survey in 2022 which informed development of the Hybrid Working Framework and its strategic equality impact assessment, working culture surveys are routinely run in those Schools that are engaged in the Athena Swan Charter. A discrimination survey was conducted in 2022 and results are currently being disseminated and discussed.

We have published annual EDI statistical reports of our staff and student communities since 2008, and a link to the latest reports can be found in Section 4. Work has begun to make more detailed EDI data readily available across our institution to support a robust approach to mainstreaming and evaluation of progress. Internal data dashboards are being developed, with the first phase expected in May 2023. Our key focus for this first phase is to ensure the integrity, accuracy and confidentiality of the data, as well as to ensure that data definitions used are suitable for the range of purposes.

The University is a member of the Una Europa University Alliance of European research universities, and we are very active within its Diversity Council and associated programme of work. The Diversity Council established the Action Group on Diversity Data Collection in 2021, and the University of Edinburgh was one of the seven participating institutions in the work of this group and a co-author of the final report. The goal of the Action Group was to investigate and identify good practice in diversity data collection and make recommendations that could strengthen the evidence base within the Una Europa universities, and in the wider higher education sector to better support the achievement of EDI ambitions. [Diversity Data Collection: Exploratory Mapping & Reflection Report](https://una-europa.imgix.net/resources/Diversity-Data-Collection-Exploratory-Mapping-Reflection.pdf) The University has representation on the Diversity Council and was also a member of its Research Action Group. We contributed to the final report of the Diversity Council now available at: [Engaging with Diversity in European Universities | Una Europa (una-europa.eu)](https://www.una-europa.eu/knowledge-hub/engaging-with-diversity-in-european-universities)

**Section 2: Progress of Equality Outcomes 2021-2025**

In 2021 we set out four equality outcomes, and this section of the report details and reflects on mid-point progress made against these.

## Outcome 1: Our staff and students feel confident and are supported to report harassment, hate crime and gender-based violence

We have made progress to improve awareness and understanding of the University's commitment and approach to fostering a culture of dignity and respect, and to the support available to staff and students.

We have a Respect at Edinburgh website which brings together information and guidance on the University’s Dignity & Respect policy, the processes for raising and addressing concerns, and the support and training available.

[Respect at Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/respect)

Our use of online spaces for work and study increased dramatically during the pandemic, and will continue to feature significantly in our new ways of working. The resources available on our Digital Safety and Citizenship web hub have been expanded to include guidance such as ‘Staying Safe While Learning and Teaching Online’ and ‘Digital Wellbeing While Hybrid Working’, as well as new learning offerings to suit different learning styles and needs. [Digital Citizenship](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/students/digital-citizenship)

We introduced a Report + Support platform in April 2021 with a specific focus on encouraging the reporting of instances of gender-based violence (GBV) amongst the student community, and facilitating access to safety and wellbeing support. The platform enables data insights into the prevalence, demographics, nature and location of abuse to inform preventative interventions and service provision improvements. [Report and Support](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing/report-and-support)

A Sexual Violence & Harassment Manager was appointed in August 2020, with the further appointment of two Sexual Violence Case Workers in February 2022 to create the Equally Safe Team (EST) and improve the identification of, and response to, those affected by GBV. The Team Manager was awarded the EUSA Teaching Award for Support Staff of the Year in 2022 in recognition of the positive impact identified by student survivors. The EST works in close partnership with internal and external services to ensure survivors of GBV can access specialist as well as academic support, and that any necessary safety measures can be put in place. The EST has also delivered training to the Student Conduct and Student Disciplinary Panels which has improved outcomes for students involved in often lengthy, stressful reporting and response processes. We have an ongoing programme of research and service improvement with respect to Gender-Based Violence, drawing on external and internal expertise. We participate in White Ribbon aimed at engaging men to end violence against women. [Equally Safe - Our Work on GBV](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/work-on-gender-based-violence)

Students can disclose GBV to any member of staff, and training is provided to support those in receipt of disclosures, raise awareness of indicators of abuse and of proactive interventions and actions that can be taken. Training has been delivered both by the EST and external providers including Rape Crisis, Shakti Women’s Aid, and the new Sexual Assault Referral Co-ordination Service (SARCS). All staff and students can access learning videos and guidance via the [Consent Collective at The University of Edinburgh](https://www.consentcollective.com/edinburgh) portal, and our Consent Matters and Tackling Harassment e-modules launched in 2021 [Consent Matters and Tackling Harassment | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/students/consent-matters-and-tackling-harassment).

Going forward, it will be critically important to maintain partnership links with key external and internal services to ensure staff and students are supported in both their identification and response to abuse and ensure a clear Referral Pathway & Risk Assessment process is in place to manage risks and improve the safety and wellbeing of all those affected directly and indirectly by GBV disclosures.

Given the effectiveness for those reporting via the Report + Support platform, and the clear need to deepen our commitment to anti-racism, the University has committed to expanding the platform to include reporting of racial harassment and hate crime, supported by a new role to receive disclosures, provide support to those reporting and implement a programme of training for staff. This role is being recruited at the time of writing. As noted earlier, a Discrimination Survey has been conducted to further our understanding of everyday racism and to inform actions.

## Outcome 2: Improve access to education, and reduce retention, progression, and attainment gaps for different groups of learners

Strategy 2030 sets out the vision of the University to “be a place of transformation and of self-improvement” and to “widen participation so that students from any background can come to study with us”.

The University has taken a leading approach to widening participation and has pioneered many different types of access programmes now common across the higher education sector. Our Widening Participation Strategy strengthens our efforts to widen access to our institution even further, but also ensures that those students are supported in their transition, their academic journey, and their progression into a career or further study. [University of Edinburgh Widening Participation Webpages](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-recruitment/widening-participation)

We offer the best financial aid package for UG students in the UK, and provide numerous scholarships [Scholarships and Student Funding | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding). We continue to develop our scholarship offering for specific equality groups, enabling students from underrepresented and disadvantaged groups to study at the University:

* The Mastercard Foundation (MCF) Scholars Program provides scholarships to talented young people from the African continent. Over the next 7 years, the MCF Program will support 850 postgraduate students, prioritising its scholarships to women, those living with a disability, and those from a refugee/displaced background. We have also extended the number of our Asylum Seeker Scholarships, now providing two undergraduate and two postgraduate scholarships in 2022-23 and 2023-24. [Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program](https://www.ed.ac.uk/global/mastercard-foundation)
* In 2020 the University launched the new Access Edinburgh Scholarships to support low income, care experienced and estranged students with up to £5000 per year during their studies. The University has again partnered with the Unite Foundation to offer undergraduate care experienced or estranged students 3 years of funding towards accommodation costs.
* In 2021 the first undergraduate students at the University of Edinburgh were recipients of our new Scholarships for disadvantaged Black students with the Cowrie Scholarship Foundation and the Andrea Levy Scholarship.
* The University also has a number of programme-specific postgraduate scholarships covering full tuition fee costs. The offering continues to increase, with The Moray House Access Scholarship offered from 2022.

The University’s British Sign Language (BSL) Development Officer delivered the first summer school for deaf and hard of hearing students in August 2021, providing young people with the opportunity to understand more about university life. Due to its success, a second summer school took place in 2022 as an in-person experience over three days and was very well-received by attendees.

[A Sign of Change: Breaking Down Barriers That Deaf Staff and Students Often Face in Higher Education](https://www.ed.ac.uk/impact/our-shared-world/a-sign-of-change)

The University is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment and some of our work in this area has been noted in section 1.2. Additionally, our Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice includes a course on Accessible and Inclusive Learning covering topics such as Universal Design for Learning Resources, creating an inclusive classroom and supporting a sense of belonging. Our CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching is accredited against the UK Professional Standards Framework. All participants are required to demonstrate good practice against core professional values including to: Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities and Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners. [CPD framework: learning and teaching | The University of Edinburgh.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd) Our Institute for Academic Development runs a ‘Practical Strategies’ series which has delivered sessions on EDI-related themes such as Inclusive Curriculum, Recognising and Counteracting Microaggressions, and Decolonising the Curriculum.

The University continues to work to advance equality of experience as a student at Edinburgh, and to foster a strong sense of belonging amongst all our students.

The University has a Student Partnership Agreement with the Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA) setting out priorities for the year ahead to enhance student experience. One of the three priorities for 2022-2023 is EDI, making intentional efforts to meet the needs of our diverse community of students and staff, recognising intersectionality, and that we may need to change the way we practise to ensure that some individuals and groups, who have traditionally been systemically excluded, feel welcome and wish to engage. In order to support the Student Partnership Agreement, the University provides modest funding for student-staff collaborative projects each year. [Student Partnership Agreement | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement/student-partnership-agreement)

As noted earlier, the University introduced a new model of student support from September 2022, comprising joined-up teams of academics, professional services staff and fellow students working together to give students support and guidance with practical matters, their wellbeing and their studies. The Student Support Model brings a number of new roles to our portfolio such as Student Advisers, Wellbeing Advisers and Cohort leads to build strong support and peer support networks to deliver equality of experience and foster a strong sense of belonging among our students.

The Staff BAME Network Mentoring Programme includes the opportunity for PhD students to be mentored by members of staff, to provide visible role models, build community, and help progression for these learners. [Staff BAME Network Mentoring Programme](https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/other-development-options/staff-bame-network-mentoring-programme)

## Outcome 3: Increase the diversity of staff, including at senior grades, in leadership roles and on key decision-making bodies

The University has implemented initiatives to increase the diversity of the staff population at all levels. We recognise that this is a long-term commitment, and that many of these initiatives are early steps in increasing diversity especially at a senior level. An improved evidence base will be of benefit in this area, to enable valid, evidenced decision-making and the use of positive actions to increase the diversity of our staff.

We launched guidance on Diversifying Recruitment in November 2022, developed in consultation with equality groups and representatives across the University, and have been pleased by how well this has been received, both internally and externally. The guidance is intended to support leaders and managers to create a recruitment strategy that attracts and fairly considers a talented, diverse pool of candidates, and to identify longer-term opportunities, setting the onward path to increase the diversity of staff. At the time of writing, more than 1.5k people have accessed the guidance, and several areas have established working groups to further develop their recruitment strategy to improve diversity. [Diversifying Recruitment Guidance](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/inclusion/diversifying-recruitment)

To enable diversity of staff, our Staff Immigration Service provides specialist advice and support on UK immigration matters for prospective and current staff, visitors and their families. We also offer financial support to international staff to offset the cost of visa and associated fees. Given the University’s global reach, in 2021 we introduced dedicated support for managers seeking to recruit specialist knowledge and skills where relocation is not achievable, and where staff are working abroad for shorter periods of time. [Working Abroad | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/working-abroad)

The University aims to increase leadership capability, as a mechanism for improving diversity in leadership roles and on key decision-making bodies within the University. Positive action in this area includes our engagement with various Advance HE leadership development programmes, including Aurora (for women) & Diversifying Leadership (for BAME staff) as well as our internal programmes. The cohorts in these programmes consistently report back positively on their value. Feedback from the cohorts in these programmes is used to improve our internal offerings.

In 2021, 19 of the University’s most promising female academics of colour came together on the new Senior Leadership for Women of Colour Programme to identify new collaborations, broaden their ambitions and develop their leadership skills. The programme ran for 6 months and culminated in a celebratory event to raise the profile of academics from diverse ethnic backgrounds with potential collaborators, colleagues, funders, students and networks.

The University has a long-standing commitment to Youth Employment and offers a range of Apprenticeships & Student Employment opportunities. In 2020, our Information Services Group established an in-house branch of Unitemps to facilitate work experience opportunities including part-time jobs throughout the year, full-time jobs during vacation periods, short term casual work, and internships such as the popular Employ.Ed summer internship programme. Our Modern Apprentice (MA) Programme is regarded as best practice across the University sector in Scotland. It sets itself apart with a cohort approach for the MAs and a comprehensive support model for the MA managers. Modern Apprentices are an integral part of our Youth Employment agenda, supporting our commitments under the Young Person’s Guarantee. We will be reviewing the model and framework for Modern Apprentices over the next 6 months.

In recognition of the importance of mentoring for staff development, and particularly for those from underrepresented equality groups, we have several mentoring initiatives in place for mentees to choose from. In October 2022, we partnered with KPMG on a Cross-Company Allyship Programme, a year-long programme to establish reciprocal mentoring relationships between Black Heritage Colleagues and Allies. Our initial partnership has 10 cross-company mentoring relationships in place with all University of Edinburgh mentors holding senior leadership positions. We will evaluate the impact of this programme to assess next steps, potentially extending the number of staff involved in future years. As noted above, the Staff BAME Network has established a Mentoring Programme that pairs staff and PhD students that identify as BAME to support their experiences with racism, discrimination, loneliness, and other related challenges. [University of Edinburgh Mentoring Webpage](https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/other-development-options);

[Staff BAME Network Mentoring Programme](https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/other-development-options/staff-bame-network-mentoring-programme)

To follow in 2023, we will be piloting Sponsorship for Inclusion workshops to engage leaders in actively addressing the often invisible, systemic barriers that certain groups face in their career progression, and to actively enable greater diversity in leadership and decision-making.

Analysis of our staff equality data shows modest increases in the proportion of women and BAME staff at senior grades, with the biggest increases occurring at grade 9. A link to our latest staff and student equality reports is provided in Section 4. We have made significant progress towards gender equality in key leadership roles. The Principal’s Senior Leadership Team is gender balanced, and 43% of University Executive members are women. Across the Heads of Professional Services Groups and their Heads of Directorates there are equal numbers of men and women (17/34). On the academic side, across the roles of Provost, Heads of College and Heads of School, the proportion of women is 41% (12/29). However, progress towards greater race/ethnic diversity across these leadership roles is slower and requires more dedicated positive action. Our data are limited in enabling us to assess the proportion of disabled staff or LGBT+ staff in leadership roles.

## Outcome 4: Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is actively promoted throughout pandemic recovery and negative impacts are mitigated

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic across our community were not equal, and we have taken particular care to address these inequalities in our approach to pandemic recovery. Throughout the pandemic, the Adaptation and Renewal Team embedded EDI in its discussions and ways of working, including through named EDI leads on its subgroups, and the use of strategic and operational EqIAs in its workstreams. Two Hybrid Working surveys provided evidence around the impacts, both positive and negative, of home/hybrid working for different staff groups.

All staff received an exceptional payment in June 2022, in recognition of the tremendous efforts made to deliver the breadth of the University’s work over the previous challenging two years. Additionally, the University doubled its investment in the annual staff contribution reward scheme to recognise the contribution and efforts of a greater number of staff than is usually possible. Budget holders were encouraged and supported to focus sustained excellence salary increments in ways that reduce pay gaps linked to protected characteristics, where such gaps exist.

Supporting researchers to navigate and recover from the difficulties of the pandemic has been a key focus. The Chancellor’s Fellowship Scheme in 2020/21 provided 40 tenure-track posts to internal candidates who were on fixed-term contracts, supporting job security for our talented researchers. Recognising the unequal impacts of the pandemic, the University set ambitious gender and ethnicity targets for recruitment (50 per cent women and 20 per cent Black and Minority Ethnic fellows). Recruitment panels were supported by comprehensive equality guidance, and our targets were fully met. Unsuccessful candidates have been supported by our Institute for Academic Development through a newly developed programme tailored to support research staff on fixed-term contracts.

The academic promotions process has taken cognisance of Covid-19 impacts on productivity, workload and personal circumstances, with applicants invited to provide details of how the pandemic has impacted their work.

The Hybrid Working Framework (noted in Section 1.3) and the development of a Hybrid Working Policy will ensure that future working practices support inclusion and accessibility, and meet the needs of all staff across all protected characteristics. Development of the Framework and the forthcoming policy has been informed by the staff voice, through University-wide consultation.

**Section 3. Report on the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018**

This section of the report is for the purposes of compliance with the reporting requirements of The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018, as set out in The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (Commencement No. 2) Regulations 2020. It covers the period 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2023.

The Act applies to those non-executive members of the University’s governing body, the University Court, who are appointed by the University Court itself but who have not been ‘appointed only by virtue of being the winning candidate in an election for membership or by virtue of being nominated for membership by another person’.[[1]](#footnote-1) The following categories of University Court members are in scope:

* Co-opted Members;
* Senior Lay Member (as the appointment involved a two-stage process of interview followed by election for those who passed the interview stage rather than a single stage process of an election only); and,
* General Council Assessors.

The Act sets a ‘gender representation objective’ that 50% of the membership of Scottish higher education institutions’ governing bodies within the certain membership categories explained above are women[[2]](#footnote-2). Subsequent Regulations added that Scottish higher education institutions must publish by 30 April 2021 and subsequently, at intervals of not more than every two years, a report which includes:

(a) a statement of whether at the date of publication the gender representation objective has been achieved,

(b) a statement confirming the number of vacancies for non-executive members which arose during the period covered by the report,

(c) a statement confirming for each vacancy referred to in sub-paragraph (b) how many recruitment competitions were held with a view to fill the vacancy and, for each competition—

(i) the number of applications received and, where applications were received, the percentage which were from women, and

(ii) confirmation of whether an appointment was made and, where an appointment was made, whether a woman was appointed,

(d) details of any steps taken by the appointing person under section 5(1) of the Act to encourage applications from women to become non-executive members of the public board, and

(e) details of any other steps taken by the appointing person under section 6(2) of the Act with a view to achieving the gender representation objective[[3]](#footnote-3)

The first biennial report was published within section 2 of the [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2017-2021](https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/equality_outcomes_and_mainstreaming_progress_report_2017-2021.pdf) and this is the second biennial report. To answer the reporting requirements in turn:

*(a) a statement of whether at the date of publication the gender representation objective has been achieved*

The gender representation objective was achieved by the publication of the first report, in April 2021. At the publication of this report, the gender representation objective is not currently being met as 40% of the present University Court members within the scope of the Act are female and 60% are male.

The current position for the membership of the University Court as a whole is as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **April 2023 University Court Membership** | **No.**  | **%** |
| Female reportable categories | 4 | 40% |
| Male reportable categories | 6 | 60% |
| **Sub-total** | **10** | **100%** |
| Female other categories | 6 | 50% |
| Female/in another way other categories | 1 | 8% |
| Male other categories | 5 | 42% |
| **Sub-total** | **12** | **100%** |
| All Female | 10 | 45% |
| All Female/in another way | 1 | 5% |
| All Male | 12 | 50% |
| **Total** | **22** | **100%** |

*(b) a statement confirming the number of vacancies for non-executive members which arose during the period covered by the report*

Four vacancies for positions on the University Court within the scope of the Act arose during the period covered by this report.

*(c) a statement confirming for each vacancy referred to in sub-paragraph (b) how many recruitment competitions were held with a view to fill the vacancy and, for each competition—*

*(i) the number of applications received and, where applications were received, the percentage which were from women, and*

*(ii) confirmation of whether an appointment was made and, where an appointment was made, whether a woman was appointed,*

Three recruitment competitions have been held to fill the four vacancies:

1. One General Council Assessor vacancy, filled from 1 August 2021
2. Two Co-opted Member vacancies, filled from 1 August 2021
3. One Co-opted Member vacancy, filled from 1 August 2022

Details of these are set out in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recruitment competition**  | **Applications received**  | **% Applications from females\***  | **Appointments made**  | **Female appointments**  |
| 1  | 8 | 13% | 1 | 0 |
| 2  | 15 | 31% | 2 | 1 |
| 3  | 22 | 33% | 1 | 0 |
| **Total**  | **45** | **24%** | **4** | **1** |

\* Calculated from those who opted to declare this information when applying, which was: 8 of 8 applicants for competition 1, 13 of 15 applicants for competition 2, and 16 of 22 applicants for competition 3.

*(d) details of any steps taken by the appointing person under section 5(1)[[4]](#footnote-4) of the Act to encourage applications from women to become non-executive members of the public board, and*

*(e) details of any other steps taken by the appointing person under section 6(2)[[5]](#footnote-5) of the Act with a view to achieving the gender representation objective by 31 December 2022 [note: this no longer applies and the University of Edinburgh had met the gender representation objective by the publication of the first report in April 2021.]*

The following steps have been taken:

* Advertisements for all four vacancies were placed on the board recruitment platforms established by [Changing the Chemistry](https://changingthechemistry.org/) and [Women on Boards](https://www.womenonboards.net/en-gb/home), which are focused on improving board diversity and gender representation on boards in particular;
* All advertisements included text encouraging applicants from diverse backgrounds and the advertisement for the third recruitment competition drew upon newly published guidance from sector body AdvanceHE, the [Higher Education Board Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/higher-education-board-diversity-and-inclusion-toolkit);
* Search agencies were used for the second and third recruitment competition with a mandate to assist in the encouragement of suitable applicants from diverse backgrounds, including gender;
* Became a launch partner in the [Governance Apprenticeship Programme](https://www.diversitygap.co.uk/), with a governance apprentice now shadowing the University Court over the course of each academic year; and,
* Information on progress in meeting the gender representation objective has been included in papers to the Nominations Committee, the committee responsible for oversight of the recruitment process for new members within the scope of the Act.

**Diversity of the University Court**

While the reporting requirements relate solely to gender representation within certain categories of University Court membership, the benefits that a diverse University Court more generally can bring is strongly recognised. Search agencies have been utilised in recent years and in an ongoing recruitment campaign with a particular focus on improving the ethnic diversity of the University Court membership alongside bolstering key skills and experience. Equality monitoring information is collated and submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency annually and has been summarised in anonymised form within recent AdvanceHE reports on the diversity of governors in Scottish higher education institutions and in UK higher education institutions.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Section 4. Monitoring and Data Reports**

This section provides links to related reports required under the Scottish Specific Duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty. We are working to enhance our generation and use of data, as outlined in the data reports. This includes developing data dash boards for use across the institution to provide granular data to support action planning and to monitor progress and also developing our benchmarking work. We are reactivating our Equality Data and Research Monitoring Committee (EDMARC) to provide oversight of these developments, identify areas for further research and to improve use of data across the University. As we continue to develop our EDI strategy, action plans and outcomes, we need to ensure we have appropriate evaluations in place and are able to monitor progress in key areas, both qualitatively and quantitatively and use evidence effectively to guide our future work.

The **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data** **Reports** provide analyses of student and staff on available equality protected characteristics data. The reports support the monitoring of progress on equality, diversity and inclusion at the University of Edinburgh. [EDMARC | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/edmarc)

**Equal Pay Audit 2023:** Details of the University’s Equal Pay Audit & Equal Pay Statement 2023. [Equal Pay Audits | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/equal-pay)

1. [The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018, Schedule 1](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/4/schedule/1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The [Act](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2018/4/section/2) had included a definition of “woman” but the Court of Session later found that this definition is outwith the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. Updated [statutory guidance](https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2022/04/gender-representation-public-boards-scotland-act-2018-statutory-guidance-2/documents/gender-representation-public-boards-scotland-act-2018-statutory-guidance/gender-representation-public-boards-scotland-act-2018-statutory-guidance/govscot%3Adocument/gender-representation-public-boards-scotland-act-2018-statutory-guidance.pdf) now states that: ““woman” in the Act has the meaning under section 11 and section 212(1) [“a female of any age”] of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, in terms of section 9(1) of the Gender Recognition Act 2004, where a full gender recognition certificate has been issued to a person that their acquired gender is female, the person's sex is that of a woman, and where a full gender recognition certificate has been issued to a person that their acquired gender is male, the person's sex becomes that of a man”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Scottish Statutory Instrument 2020/120](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/120/contents/made) (Equality Public Bodies, The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (Reports) Regulations 2020), Regulation 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “An appointing person for a public board must take such steps as it considers appropriate to encourage women to apply to become non-executive members of the public board.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “An appointing person for the public board must, in addition to anything done under sections 3 to 5, take such other steps as it considers appropriate with a view to achieving the gender representation objective by 31 December 2022” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Scottish institutions: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/diversity-he-governors-scotland>; UK institutions: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/diversity-governors-higher-education-2022> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)