

## University of Sussex: Our commitment to staff networks

The University is committed to collaboration and consultation to make Sussex inclusive. We value the contribution of our staff networks in sharing the voices of their members to help shape policy and procedures that support all staff and ensure we meet our goals on equality, diversity, and inclusion.

### Staff networks play a vital role by:

- Providing support and information for their members
- Running events to raise awareness and improve inclusion for all staff
- Feeding back issues raised by members as part of continuous improvement exercises with University teams
- Supporting University-led consultation by seeking input, collating responses, and organising and facilitating meetings
- Promoting inclusion and diversity, acting as ambassadors for diversity, collaborating with external bodies, and amplifying underrepresented voices
- Growing networks and organising meetings and events

For more detail on the expectations, responsibilities and structure of staff networks, please refer to the **Staff Network Terms of Reference**.

We understand that for staff networks to be most effective, institutional support is needed, for those leading them and for network members to participate. The University will support this by:

### For all staff:

1. **Time to participate in network activity as part of paid employment:** Staff are encouraged to attend staff network meetings and events. Line managers are expected to allow time for this, except where there are overriding operational reasons.
2. **Accessible scheduling of meetings:** Network meetings will usually take place between 12.00 and 2.00 to support attendance across a range of working patterns and roles. Time allocated for participation does not include purely social events organised by the network.
3. **Compliance with University procedures:** Network events must follow University guidelines for event management and adhere to relevant finance and procurement regulations.

### For network chairs:

1. **Time to undertake this role as part of paid employment Network:** Chairs are expected to facilitate termly feedback sessions/network meetings to review their network's alignment with University goals.
2. **Time Allocation:** The University will allocate the Network Chair up to 0.1 FTE (equivalent to two days per month). Those taking on this role should discuss this commitment with their line manager to integrate it into their workload.
3. **Access to support and funding for events** The EDI Unit endeavours to allocate part of its annual budget to supporting staff networks. This budget, reviewed annually, is available for activities that support the EDI Strategy, including:
  - Awareness events (e.g., national history months, commemorative days)
  - Celebrations fostering a culture of inclusion
  - Events recognising network contributions and encouraging membership

4. **University governance support for staff networks** University governance engages with staff networks to support the delivery of EDI goals. Feedback from networks should be constructive and align with University priorities. Network Chairs and members participate in key committees, Self-Assessment Teams (SATs), and other strategic groups as standing or guest members to provide valuable insights into policy development and institutional initiatives.

These groups are chaired by the relevant academic lead and currently include:

- Gender Equality Steering Group
  - Disability Equality and Inclusion Steering Group
  - LGBTQ+ Equality and Inclusion SAT
  - Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team
  - Black at Sussex Steering Group
  - Religion and Belief Forum
  - Guest at EDI Board
5. **Recognising this work as part of performance management review:** The commitment of active network members, including Chairs, can be recognised through ADR processes, promotion considerations, and discretionary pay award arrangements.