

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX



**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2020/21**

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Annual Report 2020/21

November 2021

INTRODUCTION FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Last autumn when we published our annual report for 2019/20 many people had hoped that 2020/21 would see us moving on from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic rather than spending most of the year in lockdown. In spite of this we have made good progress this year in making Sussex a more inclusive place to work and study.

We have made changes to our governance to appoint a full time Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Equality and Inclusion), Professor David Ruebain, and four part-time academic EDI leads for disability, gender, LGBT+ and race. In addition to the existing self-assessment teams for Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter we have set up an LGBT+ Equality and Inclusion SAT and a Disability Equality and Inclusion Steering Group to ensure focus on our work towards four charter marks.

I am delighted that Sussex renewed its institutional Athena SWAN bronze award this year, recognizing our ongoing commitment and focus of gender equality. Next year Sussex will be applying for an award under the Race Equality Charter as the culmination of the work started three years ago to identify and reflect on the institutional and cultural barriers that minority and ethnic staff and students experience at Sussex and how we will address them.

A big issue for many at our university has been the debate around Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom. Some, incorrectly in my view, have seen some of the things said in the name of academic freedom as a challenge to the rights of transgender people. I take the view that freedom of speech and academic freedom do more to support than hinder trans people. As a University it is important that we stand up for freedom of speech and support all within our community, especially those that might feel vulnerable and need extra help.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to Professor Adam Tickell who did much to champion EDI during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor.



Professor David Maguire

INCLUSIVE SUSSEX

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025

In July 2018 we launched *Inclusive Sussex*, our Equality, Diversity and inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the next seven years. *Inclusive Sussex* is a key enabling strategy within the University's strategic framework *Sussex 2025 - A Better University for a Better World*.

Our vision is to become *Inclusive Sussex*, where all members of our community have equal access to opportunities, experience the University as one that enables them to fully meet their potential, and supports them to make a full contribution to the University. Reducing inequalities and celebrating diversity allows us all to thrive. We can achieve more together than we can apart and making Sussex truly inclusive is everyone's business.

Equality and Diversity Goals

Inclusive Sussex sets out four key goals - equality, diversity, accessibility and flexibility. The strategy pledges to "provide equal access to excellent learning, research and employment opportunities regardless of physical or unseen disabilities". It also commits the University to become "a place that celebrates diversity and tolerance" and is "flexible by default".

Equal Sussex

To reduce the gap in representation, experience, progression and reward between those with and without protected characteristics.

Diverse Sussex

To be a place that celebrates diversity and tolerance and fosters good relations in our own and the wider community.

Accessible Sussex

To provide equal access to excellent learning, research and employment opportunities regardless of physical or unseen disabilities.

Flexible Sussex

Becoming an organisation that is flexible by default to ensure we are inclusive in everything we do.

INCLUSIVE SUSSEX

Where all members of our community have equal access to opportunities at a university that enables them to fully meet their potential, and supports them to make a full contribution.

Pulse Staff Surveys

We ran our first pulse staff survey in early 2021 to seek views of what it is like to work at Sussex and allow staff to share what they think could be done differently or better. We have made a commitment to achieve a year on year improvement in the percentage of staff who believe that the University is committed to EDI. The pulse survey showed a 6% increase since 2018 from 60% to 66% responding positively. 63% feel Sussex is an inclusive environment, up 10% from the last survey.

The results show a wide range of improvements in comparison with the previous staff survey in 2018, but they also provide invaluable information about areas where improvements need to be made. For the first time we have been able to provide more detailed breakdowns by protected characteristics and we are aware that how staff experience working at Sussex can vary significantly for different groups of staff. We are working closely with the EDI leads and the Staff Networks to explore the reasons for this and what we need to do to address it.

Report and Support

In the pulse survey 13% of people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I have felt bullied or harassed in the past year'. Although down 4% from 2018, this figure is still unacceptable and only a third of those who felt bullied or harassed reported it.

In August 2021 we launched a Report and Support tool. We are one of many higher education institutions who are adopting a Report and Support tool to report unacceptable behaviours either anonymously or by giving details of the incident. We will continue to develop our responses to reports made through the tool and analyse anonymised quantitative and qualitative data to identify institutional and local issues to address.

Throughout 2021 we have been working with staff and students to ensure that the approach to implementing and using Report and Support meets our needs. We have also consulted with staff networks about ensuring confidentiality and building trust to ensure that staff feel safe and confident in using the tool.

The tool for staff and students enables individuals to report unacceptable behaviours either anonymously or by giving their contact details. If contact details are provided, an individual will be contacted by a trained responder who will help them think through their options and next steps.

We will continue to develop our responses to reports made through the tool and analyse anonymised quantitative and qualitative data to identify institutional and local issues to address.

Report + Support

The University of Sussex is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for every member of its community.

If you or someone else has experienced behaviours such as bullying, harassment, a hate incident, sexual violence, domestic abuse or discrimination, you can let us know using this Report and Support tool.

All staff, students and visitors to our campus can use this site to:

- Find information about and access [University and specialist support services](#)
- Make a report to the University so that an advisor can talk you through options for support or further action.
- Make an anonymous report to make the University aware of your experience, (please note that we will be unable to respond to or take specific action on an anonymous report)

EQUAL SUSSEX

To reduce the gap in representation, experience, progression and reward between those with and without protected characteristics.

Pay Gap Reporting

In March we published our pay gap data for disability, ethnicity and gender pay gaps. This year for the first time we have been able to include 380 doctoral, language and school tutors who were previously excluded as they were on zero-hours rather than fractional contracts. The addition of these staff has had a significant impact on all of our pay gap data sets.

Our mean gender pay gap is 18.4% (a reduction of 4.1%) and our median gender pay gap is 12.7% (a reduction of 5.9%). While we are delighted by the significant step towards meeting our target to reduce the gender pay gap by half, we recognise that the additional 380 employees were the direct cause of this change. We know that 93% of the additional 380 staff included in the calculation were in the bottom and lower-mid pay quartiles and had a male to female ratio of 49:51.

The key driver for the gender pay gap at Sussex is the gender demographic of the University's employees. Overall, the workforce has more female than male staff and more academic staff than professional services staff. However, 68% of male employees are academics, compared to 49% of women. The additional staff lowered the imbalance of male to female staff in the lower pay quartiles, with the percentage of male staff in the bottom quartile increasing from 25% to 32%. This reduced the gender pay gap.

We also know that the percentage of disabled staff and BAME staff in the lower pay quartiles has increased compared to last year due to the additional staff. As a result the median disability and ethnicity pay gaps have been reduced but the mean disability and ethnicity pay gaps have increased.

PAY GAP	Mean	Increase/Decrease	Median	Increase/Decrease
Disability	18.3%	2.4%	11.3%	-2.4%
Gender	18.4%	-4.1%	12.7%	-5.9%
Ethnicity -Academic	5.6%	0.6%	4.5%	-1.2%
Ethnicity -Professional Services	2.8%	0.3%	0%	-2.9%

Tackling Pay Gaps

Our gender equality action plan contains a range of actions and measures to reduce our gender pay gap and we are hopeful that the pay gap will continue to reduce as a result of these actions. We have committed to review the grade 10 pay structures as we know that equal pay gaps are most likely to be within this grade as it does not have the fixed scale points of other grades. We have completed this for professional services staff and will be looking to do the same for academic staff. These changes are likely to reduce both gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

The Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team (REC SAT) has been reviewing pay gap data and equal pay data. It is exploring how staff in our medical school contribute to the calculation of our overall academic staff ethnicity pay gap as the medical school staff, who are on a different payscale, have a greater than average representation of BAME staff in higher grades. This will help identify the actions we need to take across all our staff groupings to reduce the ethnicity pay gaps.

GENDER EQUALITY



Athena SWAN Departmental Awards

We made a commitment in Inclusive Sussex that all our Schools would hold Athena SWAN awards, extending the success of the work done in our STEMM Schools to achieve awards.

This year has seen our first significant step in achieving this with bronze departmental awards for the School of Media, Film and Music and the School of History, Art History and Philosophy.

Both Schools are now part of the School of Media, Arts and Humanities and the work towards their bronze awards and the action plans created will form a key part of an application for the new School.

Institutional Athena SWAN award

In April 2021 we were awarded our third institutional Athena SWAN bronze award, recognising advancement of gender equality. Our flexible working framework launched in 2018 that encourages a range of flexible working options from day one, including for senior grades was highlighted as a best practice example.

The panel also commended our progress made since the last award and highlighted:

- our carers' parking scheme;
- the requirement for 30% of long-and shortlisted candidates for senior roles to be female; and
- the changes to the promotions process to give parity of esteem to research and teaching pathways

We published our revised gender equality action plan in March 2021. Key focus areas in the plan relate to:

- promotion and career progression – for example, through evaluation of the impact on women's career progression of the new academic career pathways introduced in 2019
- Developing a menopause policy and guidance for managers;
- The modification of the promotions process to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 on candidates is taken into account;
- Publishing intersectional pay gap data

Supporting Carers

The Sussex Parent and Carer Network was set up in Summer 2020 by Hannah Mason-Bish and Tamsin Hinton-Smith in response to the pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The network has been recognised as an official Sussex Staff Network since April 2021. The network supports staff in balancing their caring responsibilities and professional roles, welcoming any staff, in any role who have some form of caring responsibility. The network is represented on the Inclusive Sussex Programme Board alongside other staff networks.

The network will also have a key role in an Athena SWAN Institutional Self-Assessment Team Sub-Group that is developing a toolkit of measures for managers to support and develop the careers of academic staff who take and return from a period of carers leave of 12 weeks or more. This action forms part of our institutional gender equality action plan.

RACE EQUALITY

Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team



Throughout 2020/21 the REC SAT and its sub-groups have met to discuss and analyse data sets and feedback from staff and students.

The self-assessment approach is designed to be challenging and, as a result, is an intense and difficult process that asks a lot of everybody involved. So we are extremely grateful to the self-assessment team and members of the sub-groups for their commitment to this work despite the additional pressures created by COVID-19 and unavoidable changes in leadership of this work.

Some of the areas the three sub-groups of the REC SAT have focused on are:

1. Student Experience

- Admissions - reviewing differences in application, offer and acceptance rates by ethnicity
- Awarding gaps – reviewing the student awarding gaps by different ethnicities and identifying actions to address this including improved support for international students and more School specific analysis

2. Staff Experience

- Recruitment – analysing the causes of low levels of recruitment of BAME staff into professional services roles
- Retention – reviewing staff turnover data showed a higher increase in turnover of UK BAME academic staff in the last 2 years and more analysis is needed to identify the cause
- Appraisal – REC staff survey showed BAME staff were slightly less satisfied with our appraisal process than white staff and we need to undertake more in-depth analysis to understand this

3. Institutional Culture

- Tackling racist behaviour – consultation and input into the new report and support tool launched in August 2021 and handling of incidents reported
- Grievances— analysing grievances and complaints by staff and students by ethnicity
- Recognising the impact of racism in the wider community – recommendations include compassionate leave for staff and new guidance on mitigating circumstances for students and better signposting to support for staff/students experiencing trauma

Race Equality Charter Staff and Student Surveys

In November 2020 we ran surveys to understand the experiences of ethnic minority staff and students at Sussex. We had a high response rate (574 staff and 604 students) and the qualitative and quantitative information from these surveys will shape the recommendations of the sub-groups that will form part of our final application for an award and our action plan to address issues raised.

DISABILITY EQUALITY

Disability Equality and Inclusion Steering Group

In March 2021 we established the Disability Equality and Inclusion Steering Group chaired by John Walker, the EDI lead for disability, with membership from across the University. Its role is to develop and oversee the delivery of a Disability Equality and Inclusion Action Plan to be approved by the Inclusive Sussex Programme Board and to report back regularly to the Board on progress in delivering the action plan.

The Steering Group works collaboratively with the Staff Disability Network to review how policies, procedures and University cultures are working in practice for disabled staff. This feedback will be vital in understanding whether changes are required or additional measures to ensure that the action plan delivers the outcomes expected.

As members of the Business Disability Forum we are adopting the Disability SMART framework that supports self-assessment across our employee lifecycle and our institutional culture to identify where further action is needed to make Sussex inclusive for all of our disabled staff. The actions taken forward from this will support us in our aim to become a Disability Confident leader by 2025.

The Steering Group has focused initial work in listening to the experience of disabled staff through analysis of the pulse staff survey results and following up with more detailed sessions on emerging themes. The priority identified for action in 2021/22 is around policies, procedures and guidance with particular emphasis on making workplace adjustments easy for staff to arrange and change.

Disability Confident

The University joined the Disability Confident scheme in May 2019 with the aim of using the Disability Confident scheme as a framework to shape our approach to accessibility for our employees. We hope to become a Disability Confident Employer in 2022. Our ultimate goal is to become a Disability Confident Leader by 2025. The Disability Equality and Inclusion Steering Group's work focusing on our policies and procedures is vital in ensuring there are no barriers for disabled staff.

A key element of being disability confident is valuing and listening to feedback from disabled staff. Our Staff Disability Network has a key role in the Steering Group. They ensure that the voice of disabled staff is always heard not just in raising issues but also in the design and implementation of solutions to address them. This is vital in understanding the wide range of views and issues facing disabled staff and the need to develop solutions that work for everybody.

We have recognised the vital role of the Staff Disability Network, and all of our staff networks, through a formal set of terms of reference and allocation of time and resources for those who run them.



LGBT+ EQUALITY

LGBT+ Equality and Inclusion Self-Assessment Team

In April 2021, we established the LGBT+ Equality and Inclusion Self-Assessment Team (SAT) chaired by Dr Emile Devereaux, the EDI lead for LGBT+ ,with membership from across the University. Its role is to develop and oversee the delivery of an LGBT+ Equality and Inclusion Action Plan to be approved by the Inclusive Sussex Programme Board and to report back regularly to the Board on progress in delivering the action plan.

The SAT works collaboratively with the LGBT+ and Trans Non-Binary Staff Networks and with the University of Sussex Students' Union, to review how policies, procedures and University cultures are working in practice for LGBT+ staff and students. This feedback will be vital in understanding whether changes are required or additional measures to ensure that the action plan delivers the outcomes expected.

The SAT will use the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index as a framework for identifying different areas of the employee lifecycle and our institutional culture to identify where further action is needed to make Sussex inclusive for all of our LGBT+ staff and students.

The SAT has focused initial work in listening to the experience of LGBT+ staff through analysis of the pulse staff survey results. Confidential listening sessions were arranged to explore some of the issues raised by staff and to enable those who did not feel comfortable providing more information details through the pulse survey. The SAT has identified development of resources to support trans inclusion at Sussex as a priority.

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

This year we are submitting our second application to Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index as part of our ambition to be ranked in the Top 100 Employers by 2025. Stonewall decided not to open the Workplace Equality Index for submission in 2020 due to the pandemic. The results of the submission will be available early in 2021.

The suspension of the Workplace Equality Index has not resulted in any change to our plans. We have been working to deliver some of the changes we committed to in our action plan to promote LGBT+ equality published in June 2020.

In November we published our Transitioning at Work Policy that sets out the commitments and support we provide to any staff transitioning at work. The policy is supported by guidance for staff and managers. Support includes the introduction of single points of contact roles within HR to support staff transitioning.

The policy and guidance was produced in close consultation with the Trans Non-Binary Staff Network.



DIVERSE SUSSEX

To be a place that celebrates diversity and tolerance and fosters good relations in our own and the wider community.

Improving Equality and Diversity Data

A new self-service portal was introduced in March 2021 allowing staff to update their equality data. Previously we only collected equality data as part of the recruitment data and this collection did not include all protected characteristics. In addition to expanding the information we collect, the portal allows staff to update their information confidentially at any time.

Understanding the diversity of our workforce is essential in helping us identify whether there are any differences in the experiences of staff with different characteristics and supporting our work on our Equality Charters and benchmark initiatives (Athena SWAN, the Race Equality Charter, Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index, and Disability Confident) to address them.

Having accurate equality data is a vital part of our equality analysis process followed while developing a new policy, introducing major changes and informing decision making. The new information will make it much easier for staff to identify and address any potential for disadvantage to particular under-represented groups.

We have worked closely with our staff networks to agree the data we are collecting and to re-assure staff about the confidentiality of the process and the protection in place on how the data will be used.

Celebrating Diversity

Although lockdown has restricted events on campus we have continued to promote and celebrate diversity. Angela Saini talked about her work on gender and race equality on International Women's Day in a joint event with Brighton University, followed by a student lead question and answer session. During Black History Month a range of speakers presented on the impact of climate change in the global south.

For the second year running, Dr Samuel Solomon, Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Sexual Dissidence at the University of Sussex, co-sponsored Brighton & Hove's LGBTQ+ literature festival.

'The Coast Is Queer', held during LGBT History Month brought together writers, academics and activists for a weekend of in-conversation events, workshops and discussions that celebrated queer lives and writing.



ACCESSIBLE & FLEXIBLE SUSSEX

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Becoming an organisation that is flexible by default to ensure we are inclusive in everything we do.

Remote Working Framework

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, a greater proportion of roles at the University have been successfully performed remotely. We had a lot of feedback in the staff survey about the positive elements of remote working and we have developed a remote working framework that incorporates learnings from these ways of working and also builds on Flexible Sussex, to allow a better work life balance.

The framework promotes and encourages the practice of remote working as allowed by an individual's role, team/departmental requirements, personal circumstances and preferences, while also ensuring the efficient and effective running of the University and the research and education we provide.

The framework identifies three categories of role:

- ◆ **Campus workers** - who spend 80 - 100% of their working hours on campus – for roles which can only be, or are optimal when, delivered on campus
- ◆ **Hybrid workers** - who perform their role up to 50% remotely and 50% or more on campus – for roles where duties can successfully be performed through a blend of on and off campus working, driven by the environment best suited to the nature of a task and, where possible, personal working style and preference
- ◆ **Permanent remote workers** - who spend 80 - 100% of their working hours in a remote location.

Although the framework came into effect in September, 2021 we recognise we are still learning and our plans won't be fully realised without further investment in IT and Estates. We are piloting new IT provision for hybrid workers to support them to work seamlessly both on and off campus.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Statistics and Publications

The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, [Inclusive Sussex](#), is available on our website.

Each year the University publishes [equalities information](#) relating to the protected characteristics of its staff and students, which it currently holds and which does not risk individuals being identified. The latest information was published on the University's website in 2021 and is based on information as at 1 December 2020.

We also publish annual data relating to [pay gaps](#) for disability, ethnicity and gender.

You can find more information about the work on each of our equality charters on the [EDI webpages](#).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit is responsible for promoting, co-ordinating and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across the whole university community. The EDI Unit supports the PVC (Culture Equality and Inclusion) and the EDI leads. It works closely with schools, divisions, staff networks and the University of Sussex Students' Union to deliver the University's EDI strategy.

The Unit is part of Human Resources Division and is managed by Jackie Rymell and reports to Sharon Neal the Assistant Director Human Resources: Organisational Development, Culture and Inclusion.

Contact Us

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