



# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2021-22**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Our commitment to Equity Diversity and Inclusion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our Equality Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<hr/>	
Equality Objective 1: Continue to monitor, analyse, and publish gender and ethnicity pay gaps. This will be used to make positive recommendations for adjustments as required to close them.	3
Equality Objective 2: To ensure equality and diversity in all student outcomes and measures of student success.	6
Equality Objective 3: Benchmark our inclusive environment against internal and external recognition frameworks including Vitae, Advance HE, Stonewall, University of Sanctuary, Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Mental Health Charter.	20
Equality Objective 4: Increase diversity of representation at all levels of the organisation so that the University represents the community its serves and encourages these communities to reach their potential (People Supporting Strategy 2025)	24
Equality Objective 5: Promote our institutional commitment to an inclusive working environment to every member of our community so that we can create a workplace which enables its people to do their best. (People Supporting Strategy to 2025).	33
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>43</b>
<hr/>	
The University approach to external assurance and benchmarking diversity schemes	43

# Introduction

1. The University has a statutory obligation, under the general equality duty contained within the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equity of opportunity and foster good relations. This includes publishing information annually to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty, including information related to people who share a protected characteristic and people affected by the University's policies and practices.
2. An annual report is submitted to Council and subsequently published on the University of Essex website. This report:
  - Summarises equity, diversity and inclusion-related information and activities relating to the year of the report;
  - Identifies highlights and trends;
  - Reports progress made towards achieving the University's equality objectives, including any challenges, and
  - Sets out priorities for the following year.
3. This report outlines how we seek to meet, and in some cases, exceed our obligations under the General Equality Duty and the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the gender pay gap reporting regulations. It explains how we ensure members of our community are aware of their rights and responsibilities for equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), how we identify and address discriminatory practice or behaviour and promote inclusive practices.
4. This report updates on progress since the last annual report focussing on key achievements and challenges during the 2021-22 academic year (including updates to December 2022) and reflects on future plans for the next academic year.

# Our commitment to Equity Diversity and Inclusion

5. At Essex, we have a strong commitment to equity and inclusion, promoting a culture of belonging, fostering a community that is inclusive of a range of different views and ideas within the law, and where members of our community treat each other with dignity and respect.
6. Our recognition of intersectionality and how we are all different and face different barriers is evident as we continue to respond to the needs of our community. Our on-going commitment to tackle inequity which includes tackling racism, misogyny and violence against women, Islamophobia, antisemitism and our commitment to accessibility remains a priority. We recognise that positive steps have been taken but the work is on-going.
7. We are a university that values academic freedom, freedom of expression and inclusion. Academic freedom is an essential part of academic and university life, and flourishes where there is tolerance of, and respect for, a wide range of views and beliefs. In addition, everyone has the right to freedom of expression within the law. Academic freedom and freedom of expression should not be used as an excuse for subjecting an individual or group to bullying, unlawful harassment or discrimination. More information can be found in our statement on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech<sup>1</sup>.
8. Our EDI Policy 2019-25<sup>2</sup> sets out our approach, in the context of our institutional mission, values and objectives as stated in our University's People Supporting Strategy to 2025, our Education and Research Strategies and equalities legislation. Our EDI policy outlines our principles of inclusion and fairness to create a safe environment and applies to all employees, workers, contractors, students, and visitors and is a means to ensure that every member of our community is aware of their rights and responsibilities. It is included in all key University documents including student prospectuses and handbooks, student admissions policies, staff recruitment literature and employment policies.

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<sup>1</sup> [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech | University of Essex](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy | University of Essex](#)

# Our Equality Objectives

9. We seek to embed EDI across the range of the University's activities. This ambition is set out in the context of our University Strategy, Education Strategy and Research Strategy. Equality objectives and performance indicators have been agreed and included within the People Supporting Strategy to 2025. The following five objectives and related performance indicators are those that have significant potential to contribute towards sustainable, cultural change.

**Equality Objective 1: Continue to monitor, analyse, and publish gender and ethnicity pay gaps. This will be used to make positive recommendations for adjustments as required to close them.**

**Performance Indicator:** To reduce our institutional mean gender pay gap from 17.6% as at March 2018 to under 5% by 2025 and to have no significant pay gaps (<5%) in relation to other protected characteristics.

10. As an employer with 250 or more employees, we are subject to the gender pay gap reporting regulations. This means that we are required to publish annually the following information about our gender pay gap:

- Mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
- Median gender pay gap in hourly pay
- Mean bonus gender pay gap
- Median bonus gender pay gap
- Proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
- Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile.

**Table 1: Summary of pay gaps for last three academic years**

	31-Mar-20			31-Mar-21			31-Mar-22		
	Men	Women	Pay gap	Men	Women	Pay Gap	Men	Women	Pay gap
Mean Hourly Rate	£23.18	£19.44	16.10%	£23.59	£19.84	15.90%	£23.85	£20.24	15.10%

	31-Mar-20			31-Mar-21			31-Mar-22		
<b>Median Hourly Rate</b>	£22.08	£17.97	18.60%	£22.08	£17.97	18.60%	£22.41	£18.24	18.60%
<b>Mean Bonus</b>	£943.94	£643.81	31.80%	N/A	N/A	N/A	£752.69	£606.24	19.46%
<b>Median Bonus</b>	£500.00	£500.00	0.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A	£500.00	£500.00	0.00%

11. Table 1 highlights that our statutory mean gender pay gap has continued to reduce, from 15.9% in March 2021 to 15.1% in March 2022. Our median pay gap has remained the same over the last three years. The bonus gap in the academic year 2021-22 indicates a mean bonus gap of -19.46%.

**Table 2: Percentage of staff receiving a bonus in academic year 2021-22**

<b>Male</b>	11.92%
<b>Female</b>	17.53%

**Table 3: Staff in each hourly pay quartile in academic year 2021/22**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Q1	65.2%	34.8%
Q2	63.8%	36.2%
Q3	52.5%	47.5%
Q4	42.8%	57.2%

12. Tables 1-3 above provide more detail regarding the pay gaps identified including salary and bonuses.
13. The main reason for our statutory gender pay gap, defined as the difference between men's and women's average earnings across the organisation, is the under-representation of women in higher grades and the over-representation of women in lower grades. On-going work that includes positive action, will aim to further support the career development and

future opportunities through our Leadership programme for women, to aspire to senior positions.

**Table 4: Gender Pay Gaps by Grade**

Grade	Mean Gap	Median Gap
UEG01	-0.4%	0.0%
UEG02	0.2%	0.0%
UEG03	-2.0%	-3.2%
UEG04	2.0%	2.6%
UEG05	-0.8%	-1.0%
UEG06	0.7%	1.7%
UEG07	0.8%	3.0%
UEG08	0.2%	0.0%
UEG09	-0.9%	-1.0%
UEG10	-0.8%	-1.0%
UEG11	-4.1%	-2.4%

14. Table 4 details pay gaps within grade as a measure of “equal pay for work of equal value”. A negative figure signifies a pay gap in favour of male colleagues. Based on this data, there is no significant evidence that overall female staff are paid less than male colleagues for work of the same value; all gaps are below 5% and most below 1%. However, the most significant gap appears at UEG11 with -4.1%. It is worth noting that, as there are fewer colleagues within grade, the data can be skewed more easily.
15. Analysis of the pay gaps for ethnicity shows that there is an 8.34% difference in favour of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff compared with White staff as at 31 March 2022. This is compared to 8.0% in the previous year. It is important to note that, the fact that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff make up a relatively small proportion of the total staff demographics, means the mean pay gap is more easily skewed. It was noted in the previous year’s report that this is in part caused by a majority of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff being academic and therefore sitting on grades 7-11. It is also worth noting that the level of unknown responses makes these figures variable.



16. When looking at the pay gap for colleagues who disclose that they are disabled, the pay gap is 1.25% in favour of those with a disability against that of colleagues who disclose that they are not disabled. It is also worth noting that there were only 74 colleagues (1.57%) who disclosed that they were disabled so this figure is more easily skewed and, with a lower disclosure rate than ethnicity (43.58%), it is difficult for us to draw conclusions in this area.

## **Equality Objective 2: To ensure equality and diversity in all student outcomes and measures of student success.**

**Performance Indicator:** By 2022, to have no significant (> 5%) equality awarding gaps for measures of student success at institutional level; and to maintain this through the period 2022-25 (University Strategy KPI 6)

### **Degree Outcomes**

17. As set out in our Education Strategy 2019-25, student success is at the heart of our mission. Our aim is to ensure that our curriculum and our approach to assessment supports every student from every background to achieve outstanding outcomes. We have set ourselves ambitious targets, one of which is to have no significant equality attainment gaps for measures of student success at institutional level. The measures of student success are progression, good degrees and graduate outcomes and these are assessed based on protected characteristics (including Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Sex) and socio-economic background (Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the level of participation in higher education of local areas (POLAR)).
18. The pandemic created a number of unprecedented challenges. Nonetheless, despite the difficulties, the last online exams in 2021-22 found that the equality gap for good degrees awarded between different protected groups narrowed, including a sharp reduction in the ethnicity award gap to ~5% (from ~15%). There is no definitive causal factor that can be fully identified at this stage as work is still on-going. However, it can be noted that an open book approach during the pandemic has contributed to improvements.
19. As we return fully to campus in 2022-23, we will continue to monitor through our normal annual processes how our new approach to assessment impacts equality gaps. Work across the University is being undertaken to support the diverse needs of students with the return to in-person examinations, and in preparing for open-book examinations.



**Table 5: Undergraduate Students Degree Outcomes over the past 5 years, for Age, Disability, Sex, POLAR4 and IMD, where students achieved a 1st or 2:1**

Characteristics		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University		2,160	77.0	2210	77.2	2566	82.2	3177	87.3	2931	81.4
Age	Mature	211	71.8	234	71.3	303	75.0	277	77.4	326	77.6
	Young	1,949	77.6	1976	78.0	2263	83.3	2900	88.4	2605	81.9
	% Gap	-5.8		-6.7		-8.3		-11.0		-4.3	
Disability	Declared Disability	226	84.0	213	78.0	282	82.9	375	88.7	355	80.7
	No Declared Disability	1,934	76.3	1997	77.2	2284	82.1	2802	87.2	2576	81.5
	% Gap	7.7		0.8		0.8		1.5		-0.8	
Sex	Female	1244	80.2	1246	80.1	1391	83.2	1660	88.3	1607	82.5
	Male	915	73.1	964	73.9	1173	81.0	1511	86.3	1321	80.2
	Not Declared	0	100.0			0	100.0	10	85.7	0	100.0
	% Gap	7.1		6.2		2.2		2.0		2.3	
Ethnicity	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities (All)	812	68.9	887	69.2	1142	79.5	1500	85.1	1392	78.2
	White (All)	1307	83.7	1271	84.1	1363	84.6	1604	89.5	1476	84.5
	% Gap	-14.8		-14.9		-5.1		-4.4		-6.3	

Characteristics		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
University		2,160	77.0	2210	77.2	2566	82.2	3177	87.3	2931	81.4
Ethnicity (continued)	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities (UK)	502	71.0	507	68.5	759	79.1	871	86.6	767	77.6
	White (UK)	991	84.7	922	85.2	964	85.3	1169	90.0	989	84.7
	% Gap	-13.7		-16.7		-6.2		-3.4		-7.1	
	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities (Non-UK)	310	65.7	380	70.2	383	80.1	629	83.2	625	79.0
	White (Non-UK)	316	80.6	349	81.4	399	83.0	435	88.1	487	84.3
	% Gap	-14.9		-11.2		-2.9		-4.9		-5.3	
POLAR 4	Quintile 1&2	448	80.3	449	79.2	514	80.4	601	86.8	566	79.5
	Quintile 4&5	761	78.7	728	78.1	902	83.3	1120	89.7	881	81.8
	% Gap	1.60		1.1		-2.9		-2.9		-2.3	
IMD	Quintile 1&2	596	75.4	526	71.9	697	78.9	833	84.7	715	74.9
	Quintile 4&5	612	85.0	619	83.0	721	86.8	825	91.9	709	86.6
	% Gap	-9.60		-11.1		-7.9		-7.2		-11.7	
Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.											

- The overall population that achieved a 1st or 2:1 (good degree) in 2021-22 is 6% less than 2020-21, reflecting the expected partial return to pre pandemic levels as the effects of our pandemic-related 'No Detriment' policies work out of the data. Despite this decline, it is clear that much of the gain in narrowing equality gaps has been retained.
- Awarding gaps are consistently monitored as part of our Access and Participation Plan. Despite the small increase in ethnicity awarding gaps in the last year, we have made significant progress since pre-pandemic levels and these are still on the target to reduce the attainment gap between White students and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students to 8.8% by 2024-25, set as part of our Access and Participation Plan. We have exceeded this target consistently from 2019-20.

**Table 6: Undergraduate Students Degree Outcomes over the past 5 years, for Ethnicity, UK and Non - UK, where students achieved a 1st or 2:1**

Dom icile	Ethnicity	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Domiciles	Asian & Arab	379	67.7	478	71.9	538	82.6	848	87.6	728	81.4
	White	1,307	83.7	1,271	84.1	1,363	84.6	1,604	89.5	1,476	84.5
	% Gap	-16.0		-12.2		-2.0		-1.9		-3.1	
	Black	300	67.4	271	62.7	423	74.7	456	81.0	445	71.5
	White	1,307	83.7	1,271	84.1	1,363	84.6	1,604	89.5	1,476	84.5
	% Gap	-16.3		-21.4		-9.9		-8.5		-13.0	
	Mixed	112	79.4	102	73.4	138	82.6	154	86.0	167	85.2
	White	1,307	83.7	1,271	84.1	1,363	84.6	1,604	89.5	1,476	84.5
	% Gap	-4.3		-10.7		-2.0		-3.5		0.7	
	Other	21	63.6	36	80.0	43	81.1	42	80.8	52	78.8
	White	1,307	83.7	1,271	84.1	1,363	84.6	1,604	89.5	1,476	84.5
	% Gap	-20.1		-4.1		-3.5		-8.7		-5.7	
UK Domicile	Asian & Arab	135	69.9	158	74.2	237	84.3	329	92.7	236	85.2
	White	991	84.7	922	85.2	964	85.3	1,169	90.0	989	84.7
	% Gap	-14.8		-11.0		-1.0		2.7		0.5	

Dom icile	Ethnicity	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Black	257	68.5	241	63.8	375	75.0	395	82.3	364	71.2
	White	991	84.7	922	85.2	964	85.3	1,169	90.0	989	84.7
	% Gap	-16.2		-21.4		-10.3		-7.7		-13.5	
	Mixed	92	81.4	80	70.8	116	82.9	120	86.3	133	85.3
	White	991	84.7	922	85.2	964	85.3	1,169	90.0	989	84.7
	% Gap	-3.3		-14.4		-2.4		-3.7		0.6	
	Other	18	69.2	28	77.8	31	81.6	27	84.4	34	79.1
	White	991	84.7	922	85.2	964	85.3	1,169	90.0	989	84.7
	% Gap	-15.5		-7.4		-3.7		-5.6		-5.6	
Non-UK Domicile	Asian & Arab	244	66.5	320	70.8	301	81.4	519	84.7	492	79.7
	White	316	80.6	349	81.4	399	83.0	435	88.1	487	84.3
	% Gap	-14.1		-10.6		-1.6		-3.4		-4.6	
	Black	43	61.4	30	55.6	48	72.7	61	73.5	81	73.0
	White	316	80.6	349	81.4	399	83.0	435	88.1	487	84.3
	% Gap	-19.2%		-25.8%		-10.3%		-14.6%		-11.3%	
	Mixed	20	71.4	22	84.6	22	81.5	34	85.0	34	85.0
	White	316	80.6	349	81.4	399	83.0	435	88.1	487	84.3
	% Gap	-9.2		3.2		-1.5		-3.1		0.7	
	Other	0	42.9	10	88.9	12	80.0	15	75.0	18	78.3
	White	316	80.6	349	81.4	399	83.0	435	88.1	487	84.3
	% Gap	-37.7		7.5		-3.0		-13.1		-6.0	
Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.											

- Across all domiciles, the largest percentage point gap increase is between Black and White students.
- This finding is mostly accounted for by UK domiciled students, where the gap widens by 5.8%.
- For UK domiciled students, a less than 1% degree outcome gap is seen for Asian and Arab students, and for Mixed students.
- In the next academic year, we will continue to monitor the trends via the standard reporting to Education Committee, in order to make further recommendations.

**Table 7: Registered Undergraduate Students**

Ethnicity Groups	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
White	6,320	53	6,529	51	6,883	50	7,180	50	6,770	50
Black	2,061	17	2,223	17	2,493	18	2,721	19	2,680	20
Asian	1,248	11	1,406	11	1,476	11	1,473	10	1,396	10
Chinese	948	8	1,184	9	1,239	9	1,155	8	995	7
Mixed	639	5	697	5	744	5	813	6	777	6
Other	337	3	390	3	459	3	479	3	491	4
Unknown	311	3	391	3	382	3	416	3	494	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11,864</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12,820</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,676</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,237</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,603</b>	<b>100</b>

- Our total registered undergraduate (UG) population has decreased by 4.4% compared to 2020-21 (from 14,237 in 2020-21 to 13,603 in 2021-22), with the largest decrease (5.7%, from 7,180 in 2020-21 to 6,770 in 2021-22) being represented by white students. Further work will need to take place in 2022-23 to monitor any further decrease and look at approaches following consultation to improve the numbers of white students.
- However, proportionately our ethnicity split populations have remained consistent across the groups and across the past five years.

## Recruitment and Progression of Students (Race Equality Charter)

20. As part of the University Anti-Racism Action Plan there is a commitment to reporting annually on additional data sets, including disaggregating data for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students. This disaggregation has used categories suggested by the Race Equality Charter (REC), and these data have also been considered as part of the process of developing the University's REC Action Plan in looking at how we can improve recruitment and progression rates. We will also consider feedback received from student surveys.
21. The data below taken from the Race Equality Dashboard provides an update on the disaggregated data by ethnicity.

**Table 8: Undergraduate Progression Status**

Ethnicity Groups	Progression Status	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian	Successful	1,026	85	1,169	86	1,251	89	1,217	84	1,066	79
	Repeat	95	8	100	7	84	6	137	9	164	12
	Unsuccessful	85	7	86	6	77	5	94	7	112	8
	Unknown									5	0
Black	Successful	1,623	79	1,732	78	2,105	85	2,130	79	1,974	74
	Repeat	264	13	287	13	233	9	395	15	454	17
	Unsuccessful	164	8	190	9	130	5	177	7	220	8
	Unknown	0	0							5	0
Chinese	Successful	726	82	818	91	948	96	978	92	779	89
	Repeat	41	5	54	6	22	2	58	5	57	7
	Unsuccessful	122	14	27	3	22	2	26	2	36	4
	Unknown									5	0
Mixed	Successful	506	82	545	81	633	87	652	81	606	79
	Repeat	53	9	72	11	53	7	87	11	103	13
	Unsuccessful	57	9	58	9	45	6	65	8	57	7

Ethnicity Groups	Progression Status	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Unknown									0	0
Other	Successful	255	81	276	79	360	87	360	80	347	79
	Repeat	27	9	42	12	28	7	42	9	64	14
	Unsuccessful	33	10	31	9	24	6	46	10	31	7
Unknown	Successful	214	76	229	73	259	85	232	65	218	53
	Repeat	22	8	31	10	19	6	39	11	48	12
	Unsuccessful	47	17	53	17	27	9	87	24	148	36
White	Successful	5,286	87	5,441	86	5,927	89	6,082	86	5,473	82
	Repeat	386	6	382	6	343	5	528	7	634	10
	Unsuccessful	377	6	480	8	406	6	486	7	512	8
	Unknown									19	0
Grand Total	Total	11,407	100	12,100	100	12,996	100	13,911	100	13,132	100
Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.											

- Successful progression rates decreased across all ethnicity groups in 2021-22, although this is largely accounted for by increases in those repeating the year. Our pandemic related policies gave additional opportunities for students to repeat the year where they felt that the pandemic had impacted on their success and so we expect a return to pre-pandemic levels as our No Detriment policies work out of the data. We will continue to monitor success rates through our standard processes.



**Table 9: Undergraduate Degree Outcomes**

Ethnicity Groups	Degree Outcomes	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Black	1st or 2:1	278	68	270	63	407	75	429	82	429	72
	2:2 or 3rd	129	32	162	38	138	25	92	18	171	29
Asian	1st or 2:1	102	70	121	73	167	87	236	90	172	83
	2:2 or 3rd	44	30	44	27	25	13	25	10	36	17
Chinese	1st or 2:1	170	67	209	69	221	81	403	86	384	81
	2:2 or 3rd	85	33	96	31	51	19	63	14	92	19
Mixed	1st or 2:1	78	79	74	76	91	83	91	84	119	85
	2:2 or 3rd	21	21	23	24	18	17	17	16	21	15
Other	1st or 2:1	166	69	230	73	254	80	314	88	308	79
	2:2 or 3rd	74	31	85	27	64	20	44	12	83	21
Unknown	1st or 2:1	41	65	105	63	95	74	130	84	163	84
	2:2 or 3rd	22	35	62	37	34	26	25	16	32	16
White	1st or 2:1	1,259	84	1,316	83	1,358	85	1,581	90	1,476	84
	2:2 or 3rd	236	16	263	17	242	15	168	10	283	16
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,705</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,060</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,165</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,618</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,769</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10: Registered Postgraduate Taught population**

Ethnicity Groups	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
White	1,121	48	1,126	46	1,060	44	1,255	40	1,198	28
Black	236	10	236	10	257	11	315	10	406	10
Asian	239	10	284	11	339	14	887	28	1,987	47
Chinese	462	20	539	22	410	17	286	9	250	6
Mixed	96	4	88	4	101	4	113	4	131	3
Other	99	4	100	4	139	6	150	5	176	4
Unknown	97	4	98	4	111	5	110	4	117	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,471</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,417</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>100</b>

- Our overall registered postgraduate taught (PGT) population has grown by 36.9% since 2020-21 (from 3,116 in 2020-21 to 4,265 in 2021-22).
- The largest growth appears to be in students identifying as Asian, which is represented by an increase of 1,100 students and a growth percentage of 124% (from 887 in 2020-21 to 1,987 in 2021-22). Much of this represents an increase in international student recruitment.



**Table 11: Postgraduate Taught Progression Status**

Ethnicity Groups	Progression Status	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Asian	Successful	183	77	201	71	246	73	638	72	939	47
	Repeat	11	5	16	6	54	16	105	12	53	3
	Unsuccessful	45	19	67	24	39	12	143	16	220	11
	Unknown							0	0	776	39
Black	Successful	183	78	170	72	182	71	199	63	167	41
	Repeat	17	7	31	13	44	17	73	23	32	8
	Unsuccessful	36	15	35	15	31	12	43	14	45	11
	Unknown									162	40
Chinese	Successful	284	61	355	66	309	75	206	72	65	26
	Repeat	16	3	34	6	31	8	29	10	10	4
	Unsuccessful	162	35	150	28	70	17	51	18	24	10
	Unknown									151	60
Mixed	Successful	83	86	60	68	76	75	81	72	50	38
	Repeat	0	2	10	11	17	17	22	19	10	5
	Unsuccessful	11	11	18	20	10	8	10	9	11	8
	Unknown									63	48
Other	Successful	77	78	72	72	92	66	109	73	50	28
	Repeat	10	10	10	8	19	14	22	15	5	3
	Unsuccessful	12	12	20	20	28	20	19	13	30	17
	Unknown									92	52
Unknown	Successful	75	77	61	62	62	56	78	71	40	34

Ethnicity Groups	Progression Status	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Repeat	11	11	13	13	19	17	13	12	10	7
	Unsuccessful	11	11	24	24	28	25	10	9	16	14
	Unknown					0	2	10	8	53	45
White	Successful	935	83	913	81	769	73	920	73	573	48
	Repeat	80	7	93	8	166	16	200	16	104	9
	Unsuccessful	107	10	119	11	127	12	132	11	151	13
	Unknown			0	0			5	0	371	31
Grand Total		2,350	100	2,471	100	2,417	100	3,116	100	4,265	100
Note: Where N is <10, figures have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 5.											

- The high amount of Unknown Progression status in 2021-22 is since PGT exam boards typically occur in November or December of a calendar year. As such, observations cannot be accurately drawn at this time.



**Table 12: Registered Postgraduate Research Population**

<b>Ethnicity Groups</b>	<b>2017-18</b>		<b>2018-19</b>		<b>2019-20</b>		<b>2020-21</b>		<b>2021-22</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
White	571	53	561	54	555	54	531	53	532	52
Black	68	6	68	6	69	7	62	6	78	8
Asian	104	10	102	10	102	10	99	10	121	12
Chinese	64	6	66	6	68	7	78	8	86	8
Mixed	43	4	46	4	50	5	47	5	46	4
Other	149	14	125	12	111	11	108	11	95	9
Unknown	72	7	80	8	80	8	76	8	69	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,048</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,027</b>	<b>100</b>

- Our registered postgraduate research (PGR) population has grown by 2.5% since 2021-22, and our Black and Asian populations have proportionally increased by 2% in the same period.
- With funding acquired from Research England – part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) - and the Office for Students for the Transitions and Transformations: The Black Researcher's Journey, we will be working on various activities over the course of four years which aim to improve access and participation for Black UK-domiciled postgraduate research students and pave the way for Black undergraduate and taught postgraduate students into postgraduate research. The Black Researchers' Hub<sup>3</sup> has already been created to include and advertise many activities and opportunities, which will give visibility to existing Black PhD students and present them as role models for aspiring and current Black PGR students. Among the many opportunities are a mentoring scheme for Black researchers, research assistantships and placements with Open Innovation and Brilliant Club, which will enrich current students' portfolios.
- Ultimately, the project will increase the number of Black PGR students and researchers and provide support as Black researchers go through their academic journey. Transitions and Transformations

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<sup>3</sup> [Black Researcher's Hub | University of Essex](#)



Project also awards PhD studentships for Black researchers. The first PhD studentship in widening participation has been awarded and the student has started in October.

### **Breaking barriers for students with disabilities**

22. Support for our disabled students starts from the point of offer, where we aim to have a Care Plan in place for all students who declare a disability before they start. Breaking Barriers is a new initiative and was introduced 2 November 2022 and involved working with the Student Union for and students with a disability. It has been established to identify and take action to address accessibility issues and to ensure inclusion for community members with disabilities.
23. This includes working with statutory services where appropriate and, for many disabled undergraduates, this supports the move from child to adult statutory services, which can be a difficult transition. Adjustments are communicated to the student's academic department, their Personal Tutor and anyone who will be teaching them so these can be in place from day one.
24. The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) has created a Student Accessibility Enhancements Manager whose role is primarily to work closely with the Departmental Disability Liaison Officers (DDLLOs) and departmental inclusivity leads to promote good practice and deliver high quality guidance to university staff regarding accessibility and inclusive practice for our students.
25. In order to support students to engage with counselling more effectively, they are now asked whether they have any special requests related to their gender, disability or ethnicity by the person providing the counselling. This is to allow for better access to support and to allow for adjustments to be put in place.
26. A "hidden disabilities" campaign took place throughout December 2022 to raise awareness of neurodiversity and disabilities in our community, and we are signing up to the [Hidden Disabilities organisation](#).
27. Welfare support continues. All disabled students have an allocated Caseworker from SWIS, who remains a consistent point of contact and arranges regular check-ins and meetings as needed. We provide support for applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and practical support, for example, providing spaces for students to meet with providers on campus. Where students are not eligible for DSA, we have alternative funds available to support reasonable adjustments.

### **Equality Objective 3: Benchmark our inclusive environment against internal and external recognition frameworks including Vitae, Advance HE, Stonewall, University of Sanctuary, Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and Mental Health Charter.**

**Performance Indicator:** To achieve an Institutional Bronze Race Equality Charter award by the end of 2022.

**Performance Indicator:** Sustain our position as a Top 100 Stonewall Employer.

28. To promote EDI, we continue to engage with a number of Equality Charter frameworks which will assist us to benchmark and measure where we are within our inclusive journey and help inform our further actions to address inequity, supporting the shift from one that just counts people, to one which makes people count.
29. External charters are only one part of the wider inclusion agenda at the University, but provide an external framework, constructive challenge and access to best practice in other organisations facing similar challenges. Which charters to submit to, and any resulting action plans, are agreed through the University's governance or management structures, where there is a clear understanding and commitment to upholding the statutory duties of the University in relation to both freedom of speech and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Through this approach, we consider and analyse the risks and benefits of participating in various Charters. Details of this approach can be found in Appendix 1.

#### **Athena Swan**

30. We have re-established our Institutional Athena Swan self-assessment team (SAT) and they have had their first full meeting in November 2022. Work is progressing in accordance with the project plan, and the SAT has set a goal to complete the application in time for our bronze renewal in 2023 and through this process to generate strong momentum to tackle gender inequity at the University.
31. Since the previous EDI report, one department has successfully renewed their Bronze award and two more are due to submit renewal applications in January 2023 (one at gold level). A total of 14 departments out of 18 currently hold an award (3 at silver), and work is ongoing for the remaining 4 departments to apply for Bronze accreditation.
32. There is a focus on a number of areas to comply with the Athena Swan criteria, which include;
  - Individual departments and People and Culture have established formal mentoring schemes.
  - A Professors' Network highlighted different pathways to Professorship to encourage promotion applications from female staff and other under-represented groups.



- We have invested in career development and training programs such as Aurora, Chrysalis and developing your career workshops.
- Increased access to Future/Strategic Leaders to ensure participation in our internal leadership programmes is inclusive.
- The Career Development Fund for Carers which provides support to access development alongside unpaid caring responsibilities.
- Body at Work policy approach developed with initial focus on menopause, miscarriage, stillbirth and infertility, and family leave.
- Continuing our drive to promote flexible working, which is an important driver for prospective staff with caring responsibilities, which are more likely to be women.
- During 2021-22 we have increased the proportion of women in the higher grades (grades 9, 10 and 11). We also remain focussed on reducing the statutory gender pay gap as a medium-term commitment that will involve growing our female staff through positive action in the higher grades and creating a gender balance between women and men in lower grades.
- Continuing to support departments to consider gender pay as part of their recruitment processes, including changing recruitment processes to focus more on job design and to use positive action statements in recruitment adverts where appropriate.
- Reviewing and updating our detailed modelling of gender distribution within grades to identify further areas for action.
- The creation of our Equality Pay Gap Working Group which will look at pay gaps from an intersectional perspective focussing on gender, ethnicity and disability.

## **Women in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**

33. The University continues to draw on its experience in supporting and promoting EDI in the Sciences and supporting women's career progression in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics related areas within the University but also collaborating with international partners. The University has been successful in obtaining funding from the British Council for a second project to work with an extended network of partners in Brazil to support them in their EDI journey and the development of institutional policies and practices that promote gender equity in the areas of STEM. The project is led by the Executive Dean, Faculty for Science and Health and supported by the Director of Inclusion.

## **Race Equality Charter (REC)**

34. Following some initial challenges regarding data, appropriate resources were allocated to address this as well as workload allocation to workstream leads and co-chairs. This enabled key work to take place in the summer term which enabled us to overcome these challenges and bring things on track for revised July 2023 submission date.
35. A critical part of the REC submission is the 4-year action plan to begin addressing the gaps and challenges that have been identified. We held two action planning sessions and invited staff members from various teams and parts of the University, including Student Life, Student Development, Planning and Data Insights, and Admissions and Outreach to ensure that the actions were feasible, realistic, and institutionally embedded. Combined with the previous Anti-racism action plan, we have successfully developed a first draft of the action plan and when finalised and approved we will consult with staff and students.

## **Workplace Equality Index**

36. Following a University-wide consultation with students and staff and our Women's Network to develop our understanding of the benefits and concerns about working with Stonewall, the decision was taken that it was beneficial to continue our relationship with Stonewall and we submitted to the Workplace Equality Index in September 2022. Following feedback from our last application, we developed a prioritised action plan which sets out clear steps we can take to further LGBTQ+ Inclusion at Essex. The Action Plan includes quick wins such as reviewing how gender identity is captured at the University and continuing senior commitment to LGBTQ+ equality. Next steps include the provision of guidance and training for all employees with recruitment responsibilities on how to carry out inclusive recruitment.
37. We will publish our WEI submission and action plan to ensure there is transparency in relation to our actions to improve LGBTQ+ inclusion and our engagement with the WEI. Council has approved that future submissions to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the next review taking place in 2023.

## **University of Sanctuary**

38. The University's accredited Sanctuary status, awarded in 2021, recognises our commitment to promoting a culture of welcome, safety and inclusion across our campuses and wider communities for refugees and asylum seekers and we have been delivering on our three-year action plan. During this period, we were able to offer scholarships and support to six scholars. Five have graduated and the sixth scholar received permission to defer their award for completion in academic year 2022-23.
39. In response to the current crises in Afghanistan, the University agreed to create up to six new scholarships for Afghan refugees, for students studying any UG and PGT programme in academic year 2021-22 or 2022-23 to receive a full waiver on a one-year PGT Masters programme or a full waiver on a three-year UG programme as well as University accommodation and £5,000 bursary to support living and studying costs. The University's status as University of Sanctuary is due for renewal in December 2023 and as part of this renewal consideration will be given to further development of the sanctuary offer.

## **Armed Forces Covenant**

40. We are proud to be revalidated with our Silver Award for the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. We are pledged to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community by recognising the value of Serving Personnel, both regular and Reservists, veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country. The Silver Award revalidation acknowledges our demonstration of support to tackle Service Personnel Issues and to actively communicate our status as an Armed Forces friendly organisation.

## **Mental Health Charter**

41. The emotional well-being of all students and staff is of paramount importance to the University and we are committed to supporting an enabling environment, (a focus on creating a positive and effective social environment). In 2021, the University joined the Mental Health Charter scheme and are proud to be one of the Universities to do so. Having expressed our commitment to the Charter, a timeline with actions is in the process to apply for Charter Status with the objective of seeking Charter status in 2023-24 academic year.

## Equality Objective 4: Increase diversity of representation at all levels of the organisation so that the University represents the community it serves and encourages these communities to reach their potential (People Supporting Strategy 2025)

**Performance Indicator:** An increase in disclosure rates (target 90%) for all protected characteristics by 2022 and for this to be maintained throughout the period 2022-2025.

### Current staffing position

42. Tables 13-18 below show information about the University's staffing profile by gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability. Tables 16 and 18 provide a further level of information about joiners and leavers with disaggregated data about Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.

**Table 13: Staff protected characteristics**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	57.80%	57.64%	55.89%	56.66%	56.29%
Male	42.20%	42.36%	44.11%	43.34%	43.71%
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White	76.80%	74.98%	74.05%	71.12%	70.06%
BAME	11.06%	11.82%	13.27%	13.49%	14.39%
I prefer not to say	1.00%	1.14%	1.12%	1.15%	0.96%
Unknown	11.14%	12.06%	11.56%	14.24%	14.59%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>					
Heterosexual	40.96%	40.43%	39.45%	38.26%	39.41%
Bi	1.04%	1.26%	1.42%	1.57%	1.88%
Gay man	1.37%	1.14%	1.38%	1.29%	1.16%
Gay woman/lesbian	0.79%	0.75%	0.67%	0.82%	1.03%

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Other identity not listed	0.58%	0.51%	0.48%	0.54%	0.75%
I prefer not to say	3.33%	3.03%	2.98%	2.93%	2.73%
Unknown	51.93%	52.88%	53.62%	54.58%	53.04%
<b>Disabled</b>					
Yes	3.37%	3.07%	2.76%	2.61%	2.32%
No	75.34%	71.63%	68.08%	62.81%	55.02%
Unknown	21.29%	25.30%	29.16%	34.57%	42.65%

**Table 14: Protected characteristics grade 9-11**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	34.50%	32.64%	34.45%	37.56%	45.70%
Male	65.50%	67.36%	65.55%	62.44%	54.30%
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Unknown	5.50%	4.15%	7.18%	7.69%	8.59%
BAME	17.50%	16.06%	15.79%	17.65%	21.65%
I prefer not to say	1.50%	1.55%	0.96%	0.90%	1.46%
White	75.50%	78.24%	76.08%	73.76%	68.30%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>					
Unknown	49.50%	46.11%	47.37%	47.96%	50.43%
Bi	1.00%	1.04%	0.96%	0.90%	1.29%
Gay man	1.00%	1.55%	1.44%	1.36%	1.46%

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Gay woman/lesbian	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.20%
Heterosexual	42.00%	45.08%	43.06%	42.99%	41.49%
I prefer not to say	5.50%	6.22%	7.18%	6.79%	3.52%
Other identity not listed	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%
<b>Disabled</b>					
Yes	3.50%	4.15%	4.78%	5.43%	1.98%
No	83.00%	81.35%	76.56%	75.57%	64.60%
Unknown	13.50%	14.51%	18.66%	19.00%	33.42%

43. Tables 13 and 14 show that, in 2021-22, women still comprise more than 50% of the workforce and the proportion has remained reasonable stable since 2017-18. Although this is lower for those in senior grades, at 45.70%, this percentage has increased each year since 2018-19.  
In 2021-22, the percentage of women in senior grades increased by 8.15%.
44. The percentage of staff that are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups has increased each year since 2017-18 reaching 14.39% in 2021-22. Within senior grades, percentages of staff from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups have increased in the last two years reaching 21.65%, higher than that of the whole workforce. Also of note is the increase in Unknown Ethnicity to 14.59%; a key action will be to minimise Unknown data throughout this report to ensure we have the fullest picture available to report on. This is particularly an issue regarding Disability data.  
The current level of Unknown for Disability status is 42.65%, this has increased year on year since 2017-18 where it was 21.29%.

**Table 15: New joiners by gender and ethnicity<sup>4</sup>**

\*2021-22 figures do not include 'I prefer not to say' to match previous years. This was 0.42%.

Academic Years	New Starters (Gender)	%
2018-19	Female	55.54
	Male	44.46
2019-20	Female	59.58
	Male	40.42
2020-21	Female	61.05
	Male	38.95
2021-22	Female	56.64
	Male	43.36
Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
2018-19	BAME	17.38
	Unknown	11.69
	White	70.92
2019-20	BAME	17.32
	Unknown	10.50
	White	72.18
2020-21	BAME	19.80
	Unknown	10.80
	White	69.39

<sup>4</sup> For the 2022-23 EDI Annual Report, we will be able to provide 5 years of data on new joiners.



Academic Years	New Starters (Gender)	%
2021-22	BAME	18.60
	Unknown	32.45
	White	48.53

**Table 16: New joiners by disaggregated ethnicity<sup>5</sup>**

Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
2018-19	Unknown	11.69
	Asian or Asian British	5.28
	Black or Black British	1.54
	Mixed	2.22
	Not Stated	1.04
	Other Ethnic Groups	7.30
	White	70.92
2019-20	Unknown	10.50
	Asian or Asian British	7.03
	Black or Black British	1.54
	Mixed	2.08
	Not Stated	1.27
	Other Ethnic Groups	5.40
	White	72.18

<sup>5</sup> For the 2022-23 EDI Annual Report, we will be able to provide 5 years of data on new joiners.

Academic Years	New Starters (Ethnicity)	%
2020-21	Unknown	10.80
	Asian or Asian British	7.04
	Black or Black British	3.36
	Mixed	3.70
	Not Stated	0.80
	Other Ethnic Groups	4.90
	White	69.39
2021-22	Unknown	32.45
	Asian or Asian British	6.43
	Black or Black British	3.22
	Mixed	3.64
	Not Stated	0.42
	Other Ethnic Groups	5.31
	White	48.53

45. Tables 15 and 16 shows that a higher proportion of new starters continue to be female, however this figure has reduced for the first time since 2018-19 reaching 56.64%. The proportion of new starters from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups has fluctuated but remained relatively steady since 2018-19. In 2021-22, 18.60% of new starters were from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic groups which is a decrease from 2020-21 by 1.20%.

**Table 17: Leavers by gender and ethnicity**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	8.86%	8.29%	5.72%	6.51%	11.21%
Male	4.51%	7.90%	4.40%	5.86%	8.55%
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
White	6.76%	7.81%	4.93%	6.17%	9.80%
BAME	6.88%	9.60%	5.54%	5.84%	3.54%
I prefer not to say	16.67%	0.00%	7.41%	3.85%	0.21%
Unknown	8.70%	10.00%	6.09%	7.65%	6.20%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>					
I prefer not to say	9.09%	2.82%	4.35%	2.94%	0.34%
Unknown	7.90%	8.39%	5.56%	6.58%	13.35%
Bi	0.00%	7.14%	6.67%	5.88%	0.21%
Gay man	8.00%	8.33%	2.94%	13.33%	0.31%
Gay woman/lesbian	5.88%	5.56%	6.25%	0.00%	0.09%
Heterosexual	6.07%	8.27%	4.73%	6.02%	5.35%
Other identity not listed	0.00%	11.11%	0.00%	0.00%	0.12%
<b>Disabled</b>					
Yes	8.33%	9.72%	4.23%	4.62%	0.21%
No	6.95%	7.56%	5.27%	6.04%	7.42%
Unknown	7.08%	9.95%	4.86%	6.90%	12.13%

**Table 18: Leavers by disaggregated ethnicity**

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Arab	14.29%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	0.24%
Asian or Asian British	13.11%	10.96%	5.05%	8.91%	1.53%
Black or Black British	9.52%	9.09%	8.00%	8.00%	0.43%
Chinese	2.78%	13.64%	5.17%	5.26%	0.37%
Mixed	4.26%	9.62%	7.14%	5.08%	0.55%
White	6.77%	7.82%	4.93%	6.16%	9.80%
Other ethnic background	2.13%	5.66%	3.23%	1.67%	0.37%
I prefer not to say	15.79%	0.00%	7.14%	3.70%	0.21%
Unknown	8.81%	10.17%	6.25%	7.98%	6.26%

46. Tables 17 and 18 show that turnover has increased overall including both female and male colleagues, rising from 12.37% in 2020-21 to 19.76% in 2021-22. Turnover remains higher for female members of staff, compared to men, with the gap in 2021-22 increasing compared to the preceding year.
47. Turnover by ethnicity shows that there is a decrease in turnover of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff whilst the overall numbers have increased. The disaggregated data shows that there is relatively even split across Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups which make up the 2021-22 figure of 3.54% turnover. This is a decrease of 2.30% from the preceding year

## Disclosure rates

48. There is evidence to suggest that low disclosure rates are a national challenge. A report published by the CIPD in 2021 quoted research by the EHRC, which found that 51% of employers surveyed report barriers to collecting data on the ethnicity of employees, and 52% reported barriers to collecting data on disability<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> [CIPD Race Inclusion Report](#)

49. Non-disclosure continues to be a challenge and disclosure rates for ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability decreased in 2021-22. We recognise this as an issue and will be doing work to help increase disclosure rates by relaunching our “Your Profile Counts” campaign. We also recognise that additional approaches are needed, including identifying why people are reluctant to disclose, reviewing the questions we ask and options we provide for staff to disclose their protected characteristics and more targeted presentations and discussions in departments and sections with particularly low rates. This work is also important for our REC submission and broader EDI work so that we can carry out robust analysis of outcomes by protected characteristics, and so remains a priority for us.
50. In the past year we have also provided additional options to allow staff who are trans, non-binary or gender non-conforming to update their gender for internal University purposes. This reflects our revisions to the “Our Approach to Supporting Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Non-Conforming Staff Guidance” which was also reviewed this year. The number of staff who have disclosed their gender in this way is currently too small to report on. However, work continues to reassure staff of the importance of disclosing their personal data if they so wish.





**Equality Objective 5: Promote our institutional commitment to an inclusive working environment to every member of our community so that we can create a workplace which enables its people to do their best. (People Supporting Strategy to 2025).**

**Performance Indicator:** Evidence 100% completion of new equality, diversity and inclusion training (How We Work at Essex) delivered through induction and annual refresher training for all staff and role holders. This will help colleagues to understand our values, shared responsibilities and to meet legislation requirements.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training**

51. Our essential training for all staff, 'How We Work at Essex' incorporates a range of EDI-related topics including understanding direct and indirect discrimination, bystander intervention and how different biases can influence our judgements. This year we have reviewed and updated the content including the way we define what we mean by diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have also added content on what constitutes misogyny, how it can look in a workplace, and the impact that it can have on women's experiences at work.
52. In addition to the 'How We Work at Essex' module, there is also an annual booster that all existing staff must complete. The booster is intended to refresh key areas of training and also incorporates any new content that is added to the main course. The content on misogyny was added to the booster as well as the original module to ensure that it reaches all existing and new members of staff. For AY 2022-23, the deadline for staff to complete the booster is September 2023.
53. The completion rate for the 'How We Work at Essex' course across the whole university is 98%. Efforts to achieve a completion rate of 100% are underway and have been successful in increasing completion rates so far.
54. An additional training module 'How We Manage at Essex' is under development and expected to be launched by the summer term. This module covers essential EDI topics such as gender bias in recruitment, roles and responsibilities of managers towards their team, and inclusive leadership.
55. During 2021-22 we have extended our inclusion-related training with the development of an Inclusive Leadership Programme for members of the University Steering Group. The Programme consisted of five sessions and covered topics such as privilege and microaggressions. We have incorporated content focused on values-led leadership and academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law as part of our Strategic Leaders and Future Leaders programmes.

56. With the awarding of a grant for Transitions and Transformation: Black Researchers' Journey, we are working with training partners such as Vitae, to design appropriate anti-racism training for staff who will then roll it out to other members of staff.
57. To support members of our communities to behave in ways that comply with the law and aligns with our own expectations, we have organised and offered EDI-related training sessions to staff on a variety of topics. In the academic year, we undertook 14 training sessions including a pilot session on Race Equity and Allyship and a Train the Trainer session on Microaggressions and Privilege. We hope to roll out training on these topics to wider staff in the upcoming academic year. Furthermore, we have promoted the *Union Black: Britain's Black cultures and steps to anti-racism* training, which is a self-led, in-depth race equity training programme that is offered free of charge through Santander Scholarships and can be accessed via [the Santander Scholarship Platform](#) by both staff and students. As well as modules within the 'How We Work at Essex' essential training, staff LGBTQ+ training has been delivered by local charity Outhouse East.

### **Inclusion Champions**

58. Members of the University Steering Group are Inclusion Champions for the following characteristics: age; disability; faith and belief; Jewish staff and students; LGBTQ+; Race, Sex, Gender, Maternity, Marriage and Civil Partnership, and Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Non-Conforming people.
59. There is evidence of good engagement activities across the roles. Examples include attending events and meetings that support the relevant networks, forums and working groups, being able to influence outcomes once issues are presented such as enabling more urgent progression of work to address structures which affect students and staff with disabilities (including work on accessible maps around campus), influencing the bringing forward of work to support student data inclusivity which will enable students to identify themselves by gender, sexual orientation and trans/non-binary status.
60. Inclusion Champion Action Plans were reviewed in April and October 2022, and the Inclusion Champions meet with the Director of Inclusion at least once a term to provide an update and inform future action planning and consider what impact they are having.



## Staff Forums

61. Our staff forums and networks continue to provide support and feedback on our policies and equality programmes. The forums work collaboratively with the Inclusion team and Inclusion Champions.
62. Forum activities have included the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Forum launch, re-launch of the Essex Women's Network, LGBTQ+ History Month, LGBTQ+ Pride Month, Holocaust Remembrance Week, and Trans Remembrance Day. These and other events have been supported by the EDI calendar to ensure visibility and promotion of events and their meaning. The Chairs of the forums also meet regularly as part of the 'One Essex Inclusivity Group' to share good practice and provide feedback. Further development of the EDI calendar will take place with appropriate stakeholders to ensure we capture and link events taking place on campus to the calendar.
63. During Black History Month, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff held their launch event. The event showcased the work of the Forum and included hearing from internal and external speakers. The external speaker shared her experiences as a Black educator and was joined by university staff for talks and panel discussions. The internal speakers included hearing from the Inclusion Champion for Race and other speakers provided key updates about the Transitions and Transformations: Black Researchers Journey project. The event was well received by those who attended.
64. The Essex Access Forum has an active membership of both staff and students, and works closely with the SU for student accessibility, including the Breaking Barriers for Students with Disabilities project. The Essex Access Forum has worked on several significant projects, including access signage and awareness for hidden disabilities, and continues to work on projects via an executive working group that focuses on projects, allowing the main forum to continue its work in supporting staff and students.
65. The Essex Women's Network appointed new Co-Chairs, and the group engaged with consultation on policies and charters, including Stonewall, Athena Swan, and the University's new 'Tackling Misogyny, Sexism, Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Women' and 'Domestic Abuse' policies.
66. The LGBTQ+ Staff Forum has played an active role in both planning and supporting various events and awareness campaigns across the campuses including LGBTQ+ History Month, LGBTQ+ Pride Month and Trans Day of Remembrance. The forum was also consulted for the Stonewall WEI application and action planning processes.
67. The LGBTQ+ Allies group recently appointed a new Chair, which has already seen a positive and proactive boost within the University community. This is reflected by the support the group provided to both the LGBTQ+ Staff Forum, and the Trans and Non-Binary Working Group.

## **Trans non-binary and gender non-confirming working group**

68. The Working Group (which included representatives from the Student Union) has been in place since Autumn 2021. A key purpose of the group was to enable the University to hear directly from our trans and non-binary community to help identify any areas or issues of concern on which we should consider taking action.
69. The Working Group has been instrumental in helping us understand the experiences of trans and non-binary members of our community and in putting in place initiatives to improve these experiences. One key project they worked on was in the sourcing of funding to support trans and non-binary students by launching the Gender Affirmation Fund in June 2022 which is a University of Essex community-led initiative offering transgender, non-binary and gender-non-confirming students funding for gender affirming items.
70. Since the formation of the Working Group some positive activities have taken place including publicising the location of gender-neutral toilets, organising regular training sessions delivered by Outhouse East, 'Introduction to LGBTQ+' and 'Breaking Down Barriers,' and planning an event to launch the new Communities Common Room. The Working Group is also exploring the feasibility of introducing a scholarship for trans students. Following an extension to complete key activities, the Working Group will come to an end in January 2023 having achieved its objectives and will evolve into a staff and student forum.

## **Tackling Harassment and Violence Against Women Action Plan**

71. The University has stated its commitment to taking a proactive stand against harassment and sexual violence and has made clear the harmful role misogyny places in fostering cultures in which harassment and sexual violence against women are enabled and accepted. Two policies were developed, one on Tackling Misogyny, Sexism, Harassment, and Sexual Violence Against Women and one on Domestic Abuse. We carried out a University-wide consultation over the Summer Term with students and staff including internal and external experts, to share their thoughts on the policies overall but specifically on how we should define and communicate the complex and intersecting nature of misogyny within the policy. We also consulted with the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse in Essex to add external expertise and to ensure the safety and security of all women. Following this extensive consultation and feedback, both policies were finalised and sanctioned by Council on 28 November 2022. Implementing both of these policies is a priority for us during 2022-23 academic year. We are pleased to be breaking new ground and being sector leaders by having a policy on Misogyny and hope it will have the desired impact of addressing structural inequities that are entrenched in culture and society.
72. Our Guidance on Personal Relationships brings key messages to the forefront including the potential for abuse of power and conflict of interest. Our expectations, approach and how incidents will be dealt with is made clear within the University's revised statement. It also emphasises our strong discouragement of personal relationships between staff and students,

particularly those of a sexual nature, and how and when a disclosure of a personal relationship is required. This approach aims to avoid behaviours that may constitute or be construed as harassment, bias or an abuse of power. Furthermore, it aims to make individuals aware of the risk of perceptions of, or accusations of, bias, preferential or unfair treatment where such a relationship exists, has existed or may develop.

73. Following feedback from our Report and Support staff and student surveys, we conducted focus groups to receive qualitative information on their experiences of using the reporting platform as a member of the University. Responding to the feedback, questions have been expanded to include new categories and the type of incidents, location of incident, and demographic questions. Some of the most noticeable changes are regarding the type of incidents, with 'microaggressions' and 'spiking' added as options. The reporting form on Report and Support has also been altered to create a more streamlined reporting system with drop-down options.
74. The Report and Support package has been upgraded to the Gold package, which will allow better data analysis of reporting and help us take better and more effective preventative action, give us access to campaign assets and strategies for awareness raising and bystander intervention campaigns, as well as access to events organised by Culture Shift (the platform that the Report and Support system is hosted on) that are designed to help support partner organisations' goals and objectives in addressing inappropriate behaviour.
75. One key bit of feedback from the surveys and focus groups was that awareness of the Report and Support system remains low amongst staff, therefore, increasing awareness and communications has commenced and will be on-going.
76. Following a recruitment drive, we recruited two new Harassment Support Workers who are completing their training. Training undertaken so far includes Disability in the Workplace, Cultural Awareness, Allyship, and Sexual Violence in the Workplace. We now have a total of six Harassment and Support Workers but feel that a further recruitment campaign is necessary to increase capacity further and will do so in the Spring term.
77. Whilst we are pleased with the progress made on the Action Plan, we are mindful that we need to keep the Action Plan under review to ensure it is having the desired impact.

## Supporting and Celebrating Neuro-inclusion

78. The University Strategy 2019-25 illustrates our commitment to creating and maintaining environments that foster a sense of belonging, inclusion, well-being, resilience, and empowerment. The People Supporting Strategy 2025 also identifies the need “to build a more inclusive, agile and flexible workforce” and work is underway to expand the portfolio of work on policies to develop a framework of guidance to assist the University with supporting neurodiversity.
79. So that we could learn from the lived experience of our neurodivergent colleagues, we undertook a call out for volunteers to share their personal experiences of being neurodivergent and working at the University. Individuals talked freely about their experiences at Essex and discussed positive and negative situations that they encountered. We also spoke to several of our academics/ professional specialists who are working in this area, to learn from their research findings.
80. The positive impact of working in partnership with our neurodivergent community has been invaluable and helped to clarify in our minds that we need to understand more about inclusion in this area before we can confirm our way forward. We will continue to build our knowledge and understanding together with neurodivergent individuals, academic specialists, and line managers so that those with direct experience can help to shape the direction of future work and policy development.
81. The pandemic has acted as a catalyst for greater inclusion; the array of personal circumstances/ways of working and blurring of home and work life meant colleagues seeing each other through a different, more human, lens. With this acceptance of bringing your authentic ‘whole self’ to work, there has never been a better time for us to focus on supporting neuro-inclusion in the workplace.
82. Work within this academic year has identified some gaps that have inhibited providing a comprehensive programme of work, due to low disclosure rates, lack of role models, and limited manager support. A neuro-inclusive culture cannot be built overnight and getting things right will require the commitment of several stakeholders. We are currently establishing a working group, whose role will be to oversee focus groups over the next year to identify gaps in our current provision for neurodiversity and aging at work in order to formulate a policies and recommendations to address these gaps.

## Academic Freedom of speech

83. Academic freedom of speech and freedom of expression is part of our inclusive approach of embracing a diverse range of views, recognising that “as a community ... we may encounter ideas or arguments which may be experienced as objectionable or offensive; with a line drawn at conduct which is unlawful or contrary to the University’s policies.”<sup>7</sup> ... Our policies are clear in stating that we are committed to enabling people to speak freely within the law by providing a supportive and inclusive environment in which people can learn, grow and develop through challenge.<sup>8</sup>
84. The government has introduced the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill with the intention of strengthening freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education in England. The Bill is intended to protect staff and students at UK universities from any “chilling effect” which can result from pervasive cultural norms, which can make staff and students feel unable to express their views.
85. Academic freedom of speech and freedom of speech within the law is integral to our approach on inclusion and to help underpin this we plan to deliver training as part of our Strategic Leaders and Future Leader programmes to ensure that leaders are equipped to promote academic freedom and freedom of expression within the law and to protect staff and students from any negative effects which can result in them feeling unable to express their views. Our Institutional Statement on Academic Freedom and freedom of speech within the law outlines our commitment to enabling people to speak freely within the law, and essential training for all staff covers this as well.

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<sup>7</sup> [Review of two events involving external speakers](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Academic Freedom and freedom of speech within the law | University of Essex](#)

## **Inclusion of Jewish students and staff**

86. Tackling antisemitism and ensuring the inclusion of Jewish students and staff in our University community continues to be a priority. Recommendations from the review of the experiences of Jewish students and staff approved by Senate and Council in 2019 continue to be implemented, with many having been incorporated into the University's business-as-usual activities.
87. The University remains vigilant and ready to act whenever antisemitism is alleged. The University has and will investigate where this happens, following up with agreed action. An example of such an investigation under the University's Harassment and Bullying: Zero Tolerance Approach guidelines took place following an event on campus in October 2021, at which a student-organised protest was held. Changes have since been made to the Speaker Code and the process for communicating decisions made under the Code. The University also set up a joint working group with the Students' Union to review and improve the guidance for SU societies, to increase understanding of freedom of speech within the law, equality and inclusion. The University continues to work with our Students' Union to identify ways to expand understanding of these matters within the student body.
88. In January 2022, Holocaust Memorial Week included a range of events to remember the millions of Jewish people killed in the Holocaust, and other victims of the Nazi persecution. A panel on "The Durban Diaries – 20 years on" included discussion of student experiences of contemporary antisemitism in UK campuses and on global advocacy efforts to combat antisemitism.
89. In May 2022, Council approved minor amendments to the Zero Tolerance Policy and the Code of Student Conduct to align the description of antisemitism across the two documents. The University continues to adhere to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition and working examples.
90. In October 2022, Lord Mann (HM Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism) and Amanda Sefton (Union of Jewish Students) visited the University under the auspices of the Antisemitism in Higher Education Taskforce and the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism. They met University staff, representatives of the Students' Union, and students and identified several points of good practice for their forthcoming report.

## **Tackling Islamophobia**

91. Our work on tackling Islamophobia started with a consultation on adopting an institutional definition of Islamophobia. Two key things happened as part of this work: one, we realised the need to develop an approach and process for adopting institutional definitions, and two, initial consultation with our community has suggested a need to explore some different options for the definition and wider consultation with the community.
92. In February 2022, USG approved an approach to adopting institutional definitions to further our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. In advancing our approach to tackling islamophobia, we have developed a project plan (to be approved by PCIAG) that incorporates this approach as well as wider consultation with our staff and students to understand the lived experiences of Muslim staff and students at the University of Essex. This will include consulting with our staff, students and other appropriate stakeholders to receive feedback on experiences on campus as well as looking at advice provided by UUK to shape our work to address Islamophobia.
93. Following this consultation, we will develop an implementation plan to address the challenges that are identified, to be implemented from AY 2023-24.

## **Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE)**

94. As the institution within YUFE with responsibility for EDI, Essex is responsible for leading the YUFE EDI Taskforce in developing, coordinating, and implementing activities designed to deliver YUFE's EDI vision.
95. During the academic year 2021-22, having previously laid the foundations for change through the preparation, approval, and adoption of the YUFE EDI Strategy and the YUFE Code of Conduct, the development and ongoing delivery of EDI induction workshops for students and the establishment of the YUFE EDI Lecture Series and Blog, the focus moved to building knowledge and capacity of EDI across all YUFE institutions and beyond.
96. Activities during this period include the provision of YUFE EDI grants of £1000 each for innovative and collaborative staff and student projects to take forward ideas on how to promote EDI; development and training for staff working on EDI in YUFE, topics including Bystander Intervention and Critical Diversity and Privilege and Inclusive Recruitment and Selection and other valuable initiatives.
97. As YUFE moves from the pilot phase to YUFE 2.0, Essex moves from full partner to Associate Partner but remains the lead for EDI building on our experiences in the pilot phase, the aim is to embed EDI systematically and structurally within all areas of YUFE and to expand our work with external stakeholders.



98. A final evaluation of the YUFE ED&I Strategy, which seeks to evaluate the impact of adopting the Strategy at the end of the pilot period, both at the YUFE level and within individual institutions, is available on the YUFE website.

## Conclusion

99. We continue to make good progress on our equality objectives but recognise this is a journey, and the work is on-going. We are proud to be leading the way in being the first to have a policy on tackling Misogyny and recognise the importance of how this is implemented. The excellent, completion rates of our “How we Work At Essex” training modules and other key EDI related training should be noted. Our target to reduce our gender pay gap is making steady progress with another reduction this year of 0.8% demonstrating that are efforts are having an impact.
100. Our work to submit to the REC is on track as well as the work with other key equality charters which enables us to benchmark and assess ourselves to set targets to address inequity.
101. We are excited about our plans for next academic year focussing on our crucial on-going work that supports our equality objectives and commitment to inclusion and continuing to create an environment where all can benefit, have equity of opportunity and fulfil their potential.



# Appendix 1

## The University approach to external assurance and benchmarking diversity schemes

### Background

1. The Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, Michelle Donelan, wrote to the University on 27 June 2022 following the third reading of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill in the House of Commons. The letter highlighted a “growing concern that a ‘chilling effect’ on university campuses leaves students, staff and academics unable to freely express their lawful views without fear of repercussion”. As part of the University’s statutory duty to take steps that are reasonably practicable to ensure freedom of speech within the law, the letter asked universities to carefully consider their participation in external assurance and benchmarking diversity schemes.
2. The University currently participates in a range of charters and benchmarks related to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as utilising other external standards to ensure we deliver excellence in research and education. Current examples are: the HR Excellence in Research framework; the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, which recognises the need to improve the ways in which researchers and the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated); the Athena SWAN award; and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Diversity Programme.
3. This paper addresses the issues raised by the letter from the Department of Education and sets out the University of Essex approach to managing these risks.
4. The concerns raised in the Minister’s letter were as follows:
  - Whether membership of a scheme is potentially in tension with the creation of an environment that promotes and protects free speech?
  - How membership of a scheme is genuinely the best way of achieving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than addressing the issues independently?
  - Universities should not feel they are being pressured to take part in such initiatives to demonstrate their support for the cause the scheme addresses and demonstrate how this is the case.
  - Universities should “be thinking carefully and independently about their free speech duty when signing up to these sort of schemes” and demonstrate how this is the case.

- Membership of these schemes, the initiatives that flow from them, and the creation of new, highly paid, management roles should represent good value for money for taxpayers or students and a value for money case should be made.

### **Whether membership of a scheme is potentially in tension with the creation of an environment that promotes and protects free speech?**

5. All our inclusion work takes place within the wider institutional context for staff and students, where we have statutory duties both to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The actions taken in response to the Reindorf Review have been undertaken in the context of and used to reflect and to reinforce the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law. These actions include the revisions to the Speaker Code of Practice and External Speaker form, training and risk review process.
6. The University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law provides the context for the exploration of the benefits and disbenefits of the University's relationship with the use of charters and benchmarks as a whole, within which the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is situated. How membership of a scheme is genuinely the best way of achieving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than addressing the issues independently.

### **How membership of a scheme is genuinely the best way of achieving our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, rather than addressing the issues independently?**

7. External charters and benchmarks are tools that can be used to shape inclusion work, particularly when organisations are at an early stage of maturity in relation to an area of equality and diversity, as is the case at the University. External charters are only one part of the wider inclusion agenda at the University, but provide an external framework, constructive challenge and access to best practice in other organisations facing similar challenges. Risks emerge when charters are implemented uncritically and seen as a "tick box" exercise, rather than a structured and time-limited approach to promoting cultural change. There is ample evidence that engagement with external charters has led to an improved understanding of the barriers facing groups with particular shared protected characteristics and promoted inclusive practices.
8. An appropriate use of charters and benchmarks as a component of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion through which a plurality of voices can be heard on our campuses, is therefore the best current means of securing expert evaluation of the University's practices to support its commitments and obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

**Universities should not feel they are being pressured to take part in such initiatives to demonstrate their support for the cause the scheme addresses and demonstrate how this is the case, and should “be thinking carefully and independently about their free speech duty when signing up to these sort of schemes” and demonstrate how this is the case.**

9. External benchmarking supports a process of self-evaluation, on the basis of which the University makes conscious choices about which areas of further work are relevant to and contribute to our strategic aims. This is part of the University’s portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion which supports and works alongside mechanisms to support academic freedom and freedom of expression within the law, including our arrangements for external speakers. Which charters to submit to, and any resulting action plans, are agreed through the University’s governance or management structures, where there is a clear understanding and commitment to upholding the statutory duties of the University in relation to both freedom of speech and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
10. These checks and balances ensure that the use of charters and benchmarks is judicious and appropriate, and that safeguards are in place to promote academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law and that these safeguards are understood and effective. The approvals processes required prior to the use of a particular charter or benchmark being agreed enable explicit and independent consideration to be given to the risks and benefits of use of the charter. Proposals for actions as a result of the charter self-evaluation process are also carefully considered, to ensure that they contribute to, and do not create any unnecessary tensions with, the University’s duty to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.

**Membership of these schemes, the initiatives that flow from them, and the creation of new, highly paid, management roles should represent good value for money for taxpayers or students and a value for money case should be made.**

11. The portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion requires that the components of that portfolio are open to scrutiny and challenge. The portfolio itself and the way that it is delivered are expected to change over time, as new voices emerge, and the University’s practices and culture develop.
12. The Minister also raised specific concerns about value for money, including where delivery of charters and benchmarks led to the creation of “new, highly paid management roles”. No new management roles have been created at the University to deliver charters or benchmarks, and where additional resources have been needed these have been supported through bids to the rigorous annual planning round, as for all other new posts. Where new initiatives are identified as part of a charter, in addition to those identified through the standard annual planning processes, action plans are drawn up and given appropriate scrutiny, including

whether they represent good value for money, through the University's management or governance structures.

13. While regular review is built into the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, it is recommended that regular reviews are established as an explicit requirement for all charters, benchmarks and the posts that support them to ensure they continue to be relevant to the University's needs, remain the best means of evaluating our practices and provide value for money for the University in pursuing its mission and charitable objects.

## **Conclusions**

14. At its meeting on 14 July 2022, Council noted the specific consideration to the risks and opportunities arising from the use of charters and benchmarks as a feature of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and, in particular:
  - a. Noted the context provided by the University's commitment to promoting academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, within which the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is situated, as outlined in the paper.
  - b. Endorsed the appropriate use of charters and benchmarks as a component of the University's portfolio approach to equality, diversity and inclusion through which a plurality of voices can be heard on our campuses, as the best current means of securing expert evaluation of the University's practices to support its commitments and obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.
  - c. Noted the checks and balances in place to ensure that the use of charters and benchmarks is judicious and appropriate, and that safeguards are in place to protect and promote academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, and that these safeguards are understood and effective.
  - d. Noted the approvals processes required prior to the use of a particular charter or benchmark being agreed, enabling explicit and independent consideration to be given to the risks and benefits of use of the charter. Proposals for actions as a result of the charter self-evaluation process are also carefully considered, to ensure that they contribute to and do not create any unnecessary tensions with the University's duty to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law.
  - e. Endorsed the need for periodic reviews of the utility and value for money of the use of individual charters, benchmarks and the posts that support them, to ensure that they continue to be relevant to the University's needs, remain the best means of evaluating our practices and provide value for money for the University in pursuing its mission and charitable objects.