

Lancaster University

Equality Objectives 2022 - 2026

Background

The University is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Part of this duty is the review and publication of institutional equality objectives every four years. This provides the opportunity to link the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) actions that are underway at different levels at the University and establish priorities to guide a whole-system approach that resonates with the institutional values of building strong communities by working effectively together in a supportive way, respecting each other by being open and fair and promoting diversity and create positive change by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) explains that the objectives we set must be specific, measurable and explicit about:

- The policy, function or practice they relate to;
- The people that are affected;
- The outcome they seek to achieve;
- Why they have been selected; and
- How success will be measured.

The purpose of these objectives is to provide a strategic focus for EDI, and as such, the Equality Objectives below are neither intended to be an exhaustive list of the planned projects for the coming years, nor independent of any other plan at Lancaster University. Rather, the Equality Objectives build upon the Institutional values, and the aims of the People and Culture Plan. We will review our progress against these objectives and report on this in our Annual EDI Report.

Strategic Context

The objectives below require the University to continue to improve our performance on equality issues in key areas and improve the experience of people from under-represented groups. Priorities reflect the needs of staff and students and support the strategic plans of the University. The objectives are rendered measurable over time, to mitigate risk, map changes, and support action.

These objectives have been developed according to evidence drawn from ongoing EDI work within the university and analysis of Lancaster University specific inequalities and contextual factors. They relate to specific areas of inequality, and a broader commitment to embedding equality, developing a culture of respect and strengthening our values.

Equality Objectives 2022-2026



Deliver high quality, inclusive education with support services that are more accessible, inclusive and responsive to students' needs.

We will make progress in mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion throughout all aspects of the student journey through the delivery of our Access and Participation Plan, the design and delivery of an increasingly inclusive curriculum and inclusive assessment. We will also ensure that our support services are accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities of students.

The University will take action on areas including the following:

- Build on existing evidence-based approaches to widening participation and improving access to higher education by attracting and recruiting students from underrepresented groups.
- Work to improve student retention and progression rates for all groups of students, addressing the gaps where they exist.
- Work to improve degree attainment outcomes and reduce the differentials in awarding gaps between groups of students.
- Strive for an inclusive curriculum by advancing our engagement with the 'Universal Design for Learning' principles and advancing our efforts on inclusive assessment and curriculum transformation project.
- Take measures to prevent and address harassment or sexual misconduct ensuring a safe campus environment for our students.



Strive for workforce diversity and inclusion.

In line with the University's People and Culture Plan our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion will seek to address inequalities, and promote inclusion amongst our community of staff. We will proactively seek feedback and listen to staff voice, ensuring that our employees feel supported, and feel able to support one another. To achieve this, the University will take action on areas including the following:

- Drive improvements in the recruitment (application and appointment) rates for under-represented groups at all levels of the workforce with the objective of supporting a University workforce which is more representative of its wider community.
- Continue to develop initiatives to address under-representation at all levels of the Academic and Professional Services workforce through fair and equitable processes and systems including positive action, if appropriate.
- Take measures to prevent and address harassment or sexual misconduct, ensuring our staff feel safe.
- Work to embed equality, diversity and inclusion considerations in our policies and processes, empowering individuals to progress equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that they do.



Promote and celebrate diversity.

Drawing on the University's values, we will strive to create a culture whereby we build strong communities, and all groups of people are able to be themselves. We will actively promote a culture of belonging and celebrate and value diversity. To that end, the University will take action on areas including the following:

- We will strengthen our existing links with our wider community to promote work and study opportunities offered by the University.
- Celebrate and enhance equality, diversity and inclusion as key strengths within the University's Faculties, Departments, Colleges and Professional Services.
- Deliver an annual calendar of recognised dates and events in order to celebrate the importance of diversity across our staff and students.



Demonstrate more inclusive leadership, accountability and fairness at all levels of management.

Recognising that progress against Equality Objectives requires all areas of the University to be actively engaged in equality, diversity and inclusion, the University will take action on areas including the following:

- Our leaders will continue to demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.
- A regular review of our membership of equality chartermark groups, to ensure that the University's strategic approach to EDI is advised by, but not directed by, external chartermark groups. Where commitments to chartermark groups are made, priorities are developed based on our local evidence base and embedded into our culture and decision-making.
- Clarify and support EDI governance in University decision making forums.