

Lancaster University Gender Equality Plan

At Lancaster University we are committed to creating a fairer and more inclusive institution for all staff, students, visitors and our wider university community, where equality, diversity and inclusion is an integral part of our University's strategy, values and activities. Staff and students recognise that we all have a key role to play in making this a reality.

The University's plans for gender equality are embedded within a range of initiatives, reports and action plans, in line with our over-arching approach to [equality, diversity and inclusion](#). Alignment of Lancaster University's activities to the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirements are as follows:

Mandatory requirements

Be a public document

This Plan is available on Lancaster University's website. It is aligned to Lancaster University's published [Strategy, 2021-2026 and values](#), focused on respecting one another, working together supportively and creating positive change. This document has been approved by Lancaster's University Executive Board chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Andy Schofield.

Lancaster's GEP aligns strongly with our institutional and departmental Athena Swan action plans and broader EDI commitments. The Athena Swan Charter is a higher education programme for the advancement of gender equality. Lancaster University has been a member of the Athena Swan Charter since 2008, achieving awards at university, faculty and departmental level. [Our Athena Swan action plans are available online](#) and are disseminated to all staff.

The institutional Athena Swan action plan is organised into six work packages, each championed by a senior university leader, with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor championing two areas. Department or Faculty level plans are signed by Head of Department or the Faculty Dean, as appropriate.

Have dedicated resources

Lancaster's EDI work is led from the top, as part of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's portfolio. A Dean for EDI was appointed in 2019. In 2020, Lancaster University considerably increased its [strategic and operational resources](#) in gender equality work, with the appointment of an Athena Swan team who project management activities and data, policy development and rewards support. These roles provide strategic oversight and bring priority and focus to our EDI activity. This investment, along with the university EDI team and Race Equality Programme (REC) support staff, demonstrate our commitment to gender equality and EDI more broadly.

All our four University Faculties have an EDI committee, and each department holding an Athena Swan Award has an Athena Swan/EDI lead who oversee departmental action plans.

Include data collection and monitoring activities

In 2019, an Athena Swan student dashboard was developed which provides diversity information on students, and is available to all staff. In 2021, we established five staff Athena Swan dashboards on workforce, starters, leavers, recruitment and promotions, which disaggregate data by gender and other characteristics. We are working on a family leave dashboard to help monitor those staff members taking career breaks. These dashboards are available to our departmental Athena Swan leads, Heads of Department, and Faculty EDI leads. As a result, our academic promotions report now has a greater focus on protected characteristics, and includes analysis of part-time academic staff.

One of three EDI priorities this year, ahead of the agreement of a new EDI Action Plan, is to improve our data collection and analysis.

Our annual [EDI report](#) is published in March each year. This year's draft, subject to internal sign off, has been improved and expanded to include staff and student data on six protected characteristics. Our data specifically includes gender and sexual orientation breakdowns of staff and students, and includes recommendations for action to address under-reporting of data, for example, on sexual orientation, and on the under-representation of staff in certain grades.

Include training and awareness raising

All staff are required to complete a mandatory EDI training module within three months of starting at Lancaster University, and this training needs to be refreshed every three years. In addition, all recruiting panels are required to complete 'Recruiting the Best' training. These modules look at aspects of bias, including unconscious bias, confirmation bias and the halo effect.

All Lancaster University staff and students have access to an [online development platform](#) hosting a range of e-learning modules, videos and articles. Thirty-three of these resources have a specific focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, including unconscious bias, sex discrimination, pregnancy and maternity and the importance of fostering inclusion. Further, we promote awareness of unconscious bias on our public [EDI web pages](#).

There are five active Staff Networks at Lancaster, focused on protected characteristics or lived experience: Disability Employee Network, LGBT+ Staff Network, Parents and Carers Network, Women's Forum and Young People's Network. Staff Networks play a key role within the University to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion issues and potential solutions. The Student's Union at Lancaster promotes positive gender relations through its elected officers, public programmes and policies. It also has a Code of Conduct for student members, along with a procedure that is followed when there is an allegation of an alleged breach of the Code.

Recommended focus areas

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Actions addressing our EDI culture and work-life balance are the first thematic area of our [Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan](#), championed by the Vice-Chancellor. In addition, [Departmental/Faculty Athena Swan action plans](#) also cover this area.

Work life balance and a flexible, responsive approach to work is encouraged through key University policies and guidance such as the [Shared Parental Leave](#) policy, Menopause guidance and [Flexible Working](#) Policy, for example.

Gender balance in leadership and decision making

Actions addressing gender balance in leadership and decision making are covered in the EDI Culture theme within our [Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan](#), and also within our third theme: Academic career pipeline and transition points. This theme is championed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. [Departmental/Faculty Athena Swan action plans](#) also cover this area.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Several actions addressing gender equality in recruitment and career progression are covered in the Academic career pipeline and transition points theme within our [Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan](#). This theme is championed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. [Departmental/Faculty Athena Swan action plans](#) also cover this area.

Consideration of gender in teaching and research

All academic staff at Lancaster are expected to consider the integration of the gender dimension into their teaching and research activities. Colleagues are supported to reflect on how to ensure that everyone can equally benefit from the outputs of research and teaching, and to design research methodologies that take full account of gender and sex considerations. Staff members have the opportunity to attend training/development programmes relating to ensuring inclusive content, unconscious bias awareness training and incorporating inclusive methods of teaching and research delivery. Further information can be found in our Faculty and Departmental [Athena Swan applications and plans](#), and Lancaster's [Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan](#).

Researchers at Lancaster are actively exploring gender equality issues in teaching and research, for example the flagship EU project [TARGETED-MPI](#), which focuses on institutional change through the development and implementation of Gender Equality Plans in Business and Management schools to drive more inclusive, sustainable and transparent academic cultures, and the work conducted through Lancaster's [Academy for Gender, Work and Leadership](#) and [Centre for Gender and Women's Studies](#). Relevant findings from this research will be utilised and incorporated into ongoing Athena Swan plans and activities across the institution.

Measures against gender-based violence

Lancaster University works to be an inclusive institution that promotes a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence and harassment. There are three key policies which are available via the [Inclusive Lancaster webpage](#): Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (for staff); Dignity in Student life Policy (for students); Student Sexual Misconduct Policy (for students). All policies include relevant definitions and clear channels for reporting. Reports may also be made anonymously by staff or students via the Lancaster University UniSafe App in [iLancaster](#).

The University also engages with local and national agencies. For example, we welcomed representatives from the local NHS SAFE-Sexual Assault Referral Centre during the 'North West Sexual Violence Awareness Week' in November 2021. Colleagues were available to speak to and take questions from all staff and students on sexual violence and the important work the Team carry out. University Representatives from the Wellbeing Team were also available to answer questions from the University perspective.

Some of our [Departmental/Faculty Athena Swan action plans](#) also have specific targeted actions which consider measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.