Swansea University Strategic Equality Plan

2024-2028

INTRODUCTION

Swansea University has been producing world class research since 1920. We have a long history of working with business and industry but today our research has a much wider impact, reaching across the health, wealth, culture, and well-being of a global society.

We have achieved an extraordinary level of success in recent years with our research activity exceeding that of many larger universities. This, though, has not compromised the friendly and relaxed atmosphere that has always characterised the "Swansea experience".

As we continue our journey as a 21st century University, we look forward to becoming a truly global institution, focusing on the big issues, and improving lives, while continuing to provide inspirational teaching. Our people are our most important asset, and they define our university. We are a principled organisation. We understand that our daily behaviours matter; we believe in each other, we support one another, we celebrate each other's achievements, and we hold each other to account. We respect our colleagues, treating others as we expect to be treated, and we work as one university, recognising that every colleague and each student contributes to our success. Equally, we celebrate our global outlook. The students and staff from more than 140 countries who have made Swansea their home enrich and shape our city, region and nation, following in the footsteps of our 140,000 alumni from all over the world.

Our vision will be achieved through our recently developed People and University Culture Strategy of which there are 5 key pillars:

1. University Culture

2. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

3. Wellbeing

4. Workforce Planning and Development

5. Performance and Reward

We work together in a professional and caring environment that enables us to exceed expectations for the benefit of all. We are committed to providing an environment where our colleagues can fulfil their potential and we will give underrepresented groups a platform to voice their experiences with the University community and support conversations regarding all protected characteristics.

We understand that people's identities and social positions are shaped by multiple factors, creating unique experiences and perspectives. Intersectionality is therefore an important consideration for the University. This Strategic Equality Plan will contribute toward a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background, considering not only the protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010 but also socio-economic status and caring status.

We strive to be an institution where inclusion is everybody's responsibility and have featured in Stonewall's annual list of the UK's Top 100 Employers for workplace inclusivity since 2016. We hold a Silver institutional Athena Swan award (renewed in 2023) and are members of the Race Equality Charter, Victim Support Hate Crime Charter, and we are an Accredited Real Living Wage Employer. We will continue to work proactively with all partners to ensure that equality and diversity is a top priority for all, to create inclusive environments, where everyone feels they belong.

Welsh Language Standards

As a University we are committed to the [Welsh Language Standards](#) and our strategy '[Stepping Forward: Swansea University's Welsh Language and Culture Strategy 2022-27](#)' outlines our aspirations and ambitions to secure a prominent place for the Welsh language in our institution and in our community.

1: THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

General Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010, and it places an equality duty on public sector bodies such as Swansea University. In carrying out functions, we must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

The General Duty covers the following protected characteristics:

Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil partnership (in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination).
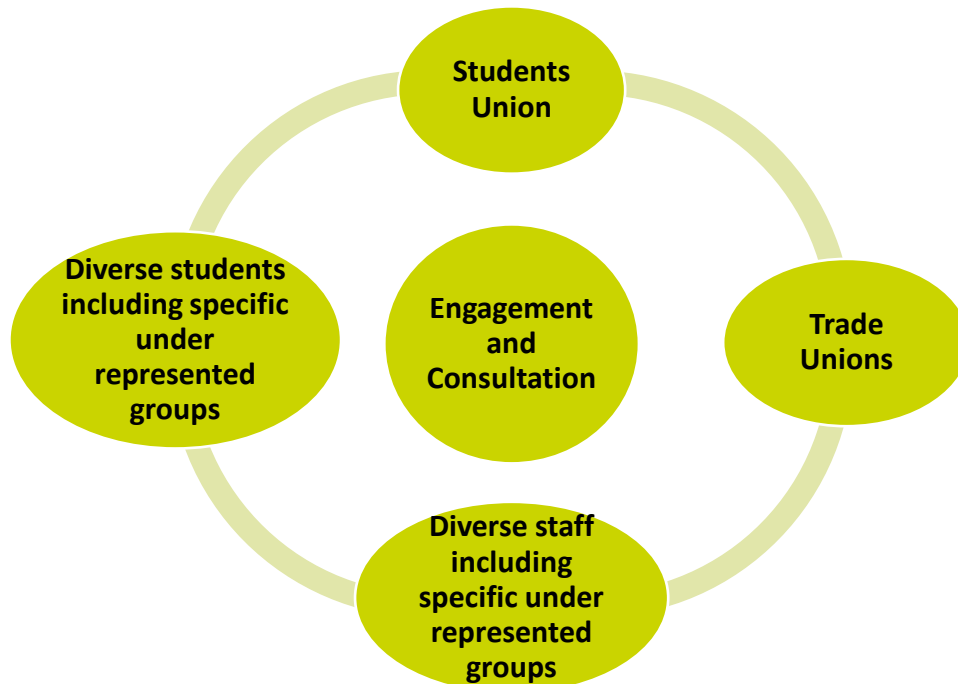
2: ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Engagement and consultation are crucial steps in forming this Strategic Equality Plan. These processes ensure that our plan reflects the diverse perspectives and needs of the community we serve.

Engagement and consultation are ongoing processes, and we know it is important to maintain open channels of communication with partners even after the plan is

implemented. This will ensure that the plan remains responsive to the evolving needs of our community.

In order to inform this Strategic Equality Plan we have engaged and consulted with:

Students Union

Diverse students including specific under represented groups

Engagement and Consultation

Trade Unions

Diverse staff including specific under represented groups

We have done this via:

- Student Surveys
- Staff Surveys
- Staff Network Representatives
- Benchmarking data (such as census and Advance HE)
- University Equality Committee

- Reviewing staff data
- Reviewing student data
- External engagement and consultation via networks

Other relevant information that we have used to inform the Strategic Equality Plan includes *(but is not limited to)*:

- Equality and Human Rights Strategic Plan 2022-25
- Anti Racist Welsh Government plan
- Advance HE Strategic Equality Plan
- EHRC Is Wales fairer report.
- A More Equal Wales - Mapping the Duties (gov.wales)
- Wales LGBTQ+ action plan
- University Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
- Legislative drivers such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Socio-Economic Duty where it intersects with inequality of outcomes.

3: STRATEGIC EQUALITY OUTCOMES

This Strategic Equality Plan adopts an outcome focused approach, systematically embedding equality into each of the processes underpinning our plan. We have ensured that our outcomes are aligned to the strategic direction of the University and are informed by the consultation and involvement outlined above. This approach will enable us to continue to meet our current commitments whilst at the same time allow us to respond to emerging priorities.

Through consultation and external research, we have defined Strategic Equality Outcomes, and their associated objectives and success measures. The steps that we will take to achieve the outcomes below can be found in the Action Plan document.

The outcomes and objectives below are based on key University priorities. Progress has already been made in several areas, as evidenced in our Equality Annual Reports. The outcomes and objectives below focus on areas where continued and sustained progress is further required.

People and Culture Strategic Pillar: Performance and Reward

Outcome 1: Ensure fairness in pay with regards to gender, race and disability, by reporting on and developing actions to address the identified pay gaps.

Objectives:

- Gender: reduce the current mean gender pay gap by 2 percentage points by 2028.
- Race: identify the current mean and median pay gaps, commence reporting in 2024.
- Disability: identify the current mean and median pay gaps, commence reporting in 2024.

People and Culture Strategic Pillar: Workforce Planning and Development

Outcome 2: Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity is embedded into all areas of workforce planning and development.

Objectives:

- Understand our current work force and determine how that needs to develop to meet strategic university requirements, through the lens of equality.

- Create a climate where we improve the diversity of our recruitment and enable our staff to progress and develop in a supportive environment.

- Review our Academic Career Pathways including academic promotion, ensuring that EDI is a consideration throughout.

- Engage, agree and implement academic workload allocation principles.

- Develop our leadership capacity and capability by:

  ➢ increasing the number of leaders from underrepresented groups;

  ➢ placing EDI considerations in all leadership training, ensuring culture is incorporated throughout;

  ➢ strengthening senior leadership commitment to Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging.

People and Culture Strategic Pillar: University Culture

Outcome 3: Promote and improve a culture of dignity and respect for all, including increasing a sense of belonging.

Objectives:

- Develop, implement, and embed one set of university values that drive the behaviours important to a positive inclusive culture.

- Celebrate our diverse colleagues and the many positive contributions they make and valuable impacts they have.

- Increase awareness of and improve institutional reporting systems - staff report increased confidence in reporting and in the management of bullying/harassment incidents.

- Increase understanding of neurodivergent conditions and promote effective support –implement the requirements of the newly developed neurodiversity policy.

People and Culture Strategic Pillar: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Outcome 4: EDI is embedded at the heart of our organisation and in our University Strategies, through representation and engagement.

Objectives:

- Embed EDI in our University Strategies, Strategic Plans and Programmes, working with communities to build a culture of belonging and one that values equity, openness, fairness, and transparency.

- Enhance governance structures, embedding and placing equality and inclusion at the centre of the decisions that are made.

  ➢ Monitor, maintain and seek opportunities to enhance representation of disabled and LGBT+ colleagues on University Council

> ➢ Monitor, maintain and seek opportunities to enhance representation of female, ethnic minority, disabled and LGBT+ colleagues on University related committees

- Use appropriate Management Information to confirm progress made and to inform our direction of travel.

Outcome 5: Ensure fairness in degree awarding with regards to sex, race, and disability by identifying, reporting on, and reducing identified differentials in degree awarding.

Objectives:

- Identify the current degree awarding differential with regard to sex, race and disability.

- Set and agree appropriate targets regarding degree awarding differential.

- Develop and implement an action plan to address the targets set.

Outcome 6: Promote and improve a culture of inclusiveness, sense of belonging and anti-racism across the student body.

Objectives:

- Celebrate students from all backgrounds and with varied experiences, highlighting the many positive contributions and valuable impacts they make.

- Increase students' confidence in the reporting and management process of bullying/harassment incidents.

- Raise awareness of anti-racism amongst the student community.

Outcome 7: Deliver a reformed curriculum framework that is inclusive, representative, culturally competent, and anti-racist.

Objectives:

- Review current curricula in relation to EDI considerations.

- Develop an action plan to address the reformed curriculum framework.

- Implement the relevant actions to embed EDI considerations.

Outcome 8: Raise awareness of sexual misconduct and identify appropriate actions that can be implemented to reduce and address instances of sexual misconduct.

Objectives:

- Create a positive culture change through a whole university approach to tackling sexual misconduct.

- Increase students' awareness regarding how they can report instances of sexual misconduct.

- Provide training to staff to ensure that those supporting students through cases of sexual misconduct are appropriately prepared and skilled.

- Collaboration with the relevant Student Union Officers to increase understanding and awareness of consent.

4: PROMOTING THE GENERAL EQUALITY DUTY

Promoting the General Equality Duty in Wales involves ensuring that we actively work to eliminate discrimination and promote equality for all individuals. The following information details the ways in which Swansea University works as an organisation to promote the general duties of the legislation:

Raise Awareness: To promote knowledge and understanding amongst our colleagues we will continue to actively train staff regarding EDI, Unconscious Bias and awareness of anti-racism. We deliver a range of equality events throughout the year, marking specific days and months that cover a range of protected characteristics. All staff have the opportunity to access training and development relevant to their roles and responsibilities, which is facilitated through their Professional Development Review or self-service.

Data Collection: We collect data related to protected characteristics of students and staff to identify any disparities or discrimination issues. This data can help in making informed decisions and taking appropriate actions. This data is routinely captured and reported in the University Equality Annual Report.

Impact Assessments: We will assess the likely impact the work we do will have on people who share different protected characteristics. This involves assessing the potential impact on different groups and taking steps to mitigate any negative effects. We develop and implement policies and ensure that EDI is embedded throughout these policies, aiming to create inclusive work and study environments. Utilising standard documentation, assessments are undertaken by policy holders, decision makers and/or those with responsibility for practice/procedure. A list of conducted Equality Impact Assessments is published in the University Equality Annual Report.

Public Engagement: We engage with the public, especially underrepresented groups, to gather their input and feedback on policies and services, ensuring that their needs

and concerns are considered. This is achieved by attending local events that create the opportunity for discussion and engagement.

Monitoring and Reporting: We have established mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on progress in promoting equality. Progress made against the objectives in this Strategic Equality Plan and the effectiveness of the related actions are monitored and reviewed by the University Equality Committee which meets 3 times per year. Using internal and external data sources to measure impact, progress is shared with the University senior governance, and is documented and published in the University's Equality Annual Report which is available on the University web pages by April of each year.

Leadership Commitment: Our leaders are committed to promoting equality and diversity. A Pro-Vice Chancellor has specific accountability for Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging (EDIB), supported by a DPVC with specific accountability for EDIB.

5: IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES

The implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan occurs through a series of actions, which are detailed at a high level in the accompanying action plan. Underpinning the Strategic Equality Action Plan are a series of other action plans, including the Athena Swan action plan and the Race Equality Action Plan.

Our achievement of the outcomes detailed above will be measured through a variety of different means. Examples of success that we are seeking associated with each outcome include:

- Outcome 1: The percentage of female professors (currently 25.9%) is increased to the sector benchmark.
- Outcome 2: An increase in the number of disabled academic leaders and professional services Directors (currently 5.6%).
- Outcome 3: Institution-wide values agreed and implemented.
- Outcome 4: Increase in reporting rates of protected characteristics by colleagues, demonstrating trust and confidence in the institution.
- Outcome 5: Disparities in grade awarding are reviewed annually and addressed as required.
- Outcome 6: More diverse catering options readily available on campus.
- Outcome 7: Training pertaining to anti-racist pedagogy, the inclusive curriculum framework, and the hidden curriculum created and available to all academic staff.
- Outcome 8: Sexual misconduct task force group established.

The detailed measures of success associated with each outcome are provided within the relevant action plans.

For further information or feedback on this Strategic Equality Plan please contact
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