Equality and Diversity

Annual Report

2014

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We have launched a new Equality and Diversity public website. In this section we introduce the aims and content of the site.

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Staff at The Open University have access to a variety of networks. This section introduces a couple of new staff diversity networks.

Equality through Innovation

A month of learning and research on inclusion and social justice. Here we tell you about the activities that took place over the month of July.

Equality Expert workshops

In this section we look at three new workshops that were offered as taster sessions during the OU's Equality through Innovation month.

Summary

Performance against equality objectives

In this section, we report progress against the specific and measurable, outcome-focused, equality objectives that were first published in April 2012. After the second year, we can demonstrate significant progress across the majority of these, with clear plans in place across all nine objectives.

Latest trend data published

In addition to this annual report, we have once again published a significant volume of information in our separate Equality & Diversity monitoring reports. They contain a comprehensive set of tables and charts for governance, staff and students, across a wide range of participation and progress indicators at an institutional level.

The monitoring reports are published on our Equality and Diversity public website at: www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity

Image: Patrisyu/Freedigitalphotos

Introduction

July 2014 saw a major focus on equality, inclusion and social justice through the University's inaugural *Equality through Innovation* month. Almost twenty events showcased the University's progress against its equality objectives; highlighted OU research and widening access work, and launched new staff development workshops and two new equality staff networks. The month-long programme was the culmination of a year of intensive development, focused on the theme of *innovation*, one of the University's core values. Vice-Chancellor, Martin Bean, in his opening remarks at the headline event said that this conference could easily be a conference for all the OU's work, not just its work on equality and inclusion. What he recognised was the synergy between our equality vision and the mission of the University, where social justice and equality of opportunity are central to everything that we do.

While the month long programme was a tremendous success, significant progress is never made in a period of time as short as this, and our annual report allows us to once again shine a light on the achievements of many individuals, teams and departments who bring equality and inclusion to the fore throughout the year.

Image: David Phillips

Our 2014 annual report

We are delighted to present our 2014 annual report which captures some of our key activities and achievements during 2013/14.

As in the previous two years, our **in-brief** section provides a flavour of a diverse portfolio of projects led by functions and teams from across the entire University.

This year, our two **in-depth** sections focus on disability and race, aspects of difference which are often thought of as being well embedded in institutions. These sections demonstrate that much has been achieved in recent years, but that there is room for further improvement.

For the second year since we published our 2012-2016 objectives, we report on our **performance** against key indicators and highlight some of the main changes to our priorities.

Our **features** this year look at some activities that are additional to the work under our equality objectives, including:

- Supporting and enabling our staff networks, with information about the launch of two new networks, women@OU and EnablingStaff@OU.
- Developing and launching a new public website, which contains more information focused on individual needs and circumstances.
- Piloting and launching our Equality Expert series – 3 new staff workshops on the topics of Valuing Student and Staff Difference, Deconstructing Stereotypes, and Conducting Equality Analysis.

Finally, we have shared a few examples from the previous year of how we continue to **mainstream equality** by embedding it into University processes.

Introduction

Beyond 2014

Our primary focus for the next two years will be to drive forward further progress against our equality objectives and we will take steps to improve the support available to the Senior Accountable Executives leading each of these. We will consider the structural arrangements for managing and reporting against these objectives to provide continued assurance that we can deliver what we have set out to do.

In 2015, work will commence on a new equality scheme for 2016 – 2020 and we will refresh our equality monitoring strategy as part of this development, with a view to considering the range of information reviewed and published annually.

We will continue our association with the National Diversity Awards, sponsoring awards that recognise individuals and community organisations who are living the values we share, and we are developing plans to increase our benchmarking and equality charter work with bodies such as Athena SWAN, the Equality Challenge Unit, Stonewall and the Business Disability Forum.

I hope you enjoy reading our 2014 annual report and please get in touch with the team if you have any feedback or thoughts you would like to share.

Tony O'Shea-Poon
Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights

In brief

OU sponsors National Diversity Awards

The OU is one of the founding sponsors of a movement that is creating and celebrating a new generation of positive role models for the UK. The National Diversity Awards were launched in 2012 by the Diversity Group[1], to recognise the achievements of individuals, charities and community organisations who are tackling some of the most challenging issues and inequalities in our society. The OU sponsored the *Positive Role Model Award for age* in 2012, the *Positive Role Model Award for Race, Religion and Faith in 2013*, and the *Positive Role Model Award for LGBT in 2014*.

Agile working for staff

From 30th June 2014 the University's new Agile Working Policy (previously the Flexible Working Policy) came into effect for all OU employees (excluding agency workers). Agile working is the mix of working arrangements involving the number of hours worked, the time and place of work and the processes, technology and environments in support of high performance.

[1] For further information go to:
http://www.diversitygroup.co.uk/
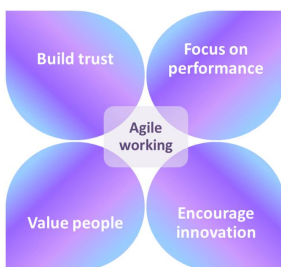
Supporting women in STEMM

Following our success in achieving the Institutional Athena SWAN bronze award in April 2013, The Open University has also been successful in achieving the Departmental Bronze awards for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and the Department of Physical Sciences. The Athena SWAN Awards recognise universities for their work to support women in science, technology, engineering, medicine and mathematics (STEMM) in higher education and research.

The OU received special praise for its robust workload models and dedicated time allocations for staff to work on activities relating to Athena SWAN and the Institute of Physics Project JUNO[2]. The Department of Physical Sciences was also awarded JUNO Practitioner status in January 2014.

[2] This award recognises actions that demonstrate commitment to addressing the under-representation of women, specifically in subjects allied to Physics. See http://www.iop.org/policy/diversity/initiatives/juno/index.html

OU oldest graduate

In September 2013, former engineer Clifford Dadson, aged 93 from Cumbria, became the OU's oldest graduate gaining a BA Open Degree in Arts. His accomplishment came 60 years on from his educational experience in the 1950s when he achieved a Higher National Certificate in Electrical Engineering from London Northampton Polytechnic (now the City of London University). After a high-flying career in control and communications, he decided to pursue further studies with the OU. Clifford has now signed up for another OU module.

Powerful role models

Professor Rebecca Taylor, Dean of the OU Business School, was amongst a panel of inspirational business leaders at a Chartered Management Institute event '*The Power of Role Models'* to mark *International Women's Day*. The event examined how business cultures can be challenged to build greater diversity and inclusion. New research was launched on '*The Power of Role Models'*, which surveyed 1,700 UK workers and concluded that twice as many men are aiming to be in CEO posts within the next two years than women (7.1% compared to 4%).

In brief

Research examines importance of male role models

The role of gender in welfare work with boys and young men is the subject of a two-year research project, *'Beyond Male Role Models: gender identities and work with young men'* which has received £200,000 funding from the Economic and Social Research Council. Experts from the OU are teaming up with the charity Action for Children to look at the importance of male role models to boys and young men, particularly those in vulnerable situations. The project is set to give fresh insights into young men's lives and contribute to improving professional practice in welfare settings.

Updating student profiles

The facility for students to update their student profile in StudentHome has been enhanced to include items covering religion and belief, sexual orientation, English for academic study, caring responsibilities, marriage and civil partnership status, 'in-care' status and career motivation. Bulletin messages posted in StudentHome in August 2013 resulted in about 25% of students updating their profiles to include the new information. Follow-up emails were sent and by January 2014 replies were received from over 110,000 students who are currently active on a module.

Recruitment and retention of young academic staff

Good progress is being made towards achieving the 14% target of academic staff aged 35 and under. At the end of 2013, this stood at 12.8%. A project reviewing the impact of recruitment procedures has concluded with recommendations to revise job descriptions and person specifications, revised guidance on shortlisting criteria and strengthened policy and guidance on the composition of selection panels. An internal awareness campaign has been running for over a year to promote positive perceptions of the contribution of young academics at the OU and the partnerships between younger and older academics.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission website[2] now features work related to four of the OU's Equality Objectives as good practice examples; Objective 2 –our work around securing greater accessibility, Objective 3 – our Great Expectations Project, and Objectives 5 & 6 – Aspire~, our leadership mentoring programme for BME and disabled staff.

[2] http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/

OU's Meg Barker features in Pink List

Dr Meg Barker, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, was featured at number 36 in the Independent on Sunday's The Pink List of 101 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people that make a difference. More than 1,300 nominations were received. Meg has been researching bisexuality for the last decade and is a founding member of BiUK the bisexual research and activism organisation. In 2012 the organisation produced the influential Bisexuality Report 3 published through the OU, which highlights the problem of 'bisexual invisibility'. As a result of her work on this report Meg was invited to a Downing Street reception celebrating the passing into law of the marriage (same sex) couples act in July 2013.

[3] For further information see:
http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/news/the-bisexuality-report-is-now-available

In brief

YASS programme extended in Scotland

More Scottish schools with low progression rates to university will be involved in *The Open University in Scotland Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS)*. Partnership work with community organisations in Scotland was extended to reach those currently excluded from higher education. The OU in Scotland welcomed the support of the Scottish Funding Council to extend its YASS programme and, is working with regional Schools for Higher Education Programme partnerships, to increase the reach of the Scheme.

Roll-out of Welsh research into part-time student experience

The research project, *It's about time*, was piloted by the OU's Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships, the OU in Wales and National Union of Students Wales. They surveyed more than 1,300 Welsh students to find out why students choose part-time courses and what barriers they face. Preliminary results suggest that part-time and flexible provision in higher education is crucial to improving access to education, employability and skills. UK-wide research, commissioned by the Higher Education Academy, will allow essential analysis and comparisons to be made of part-time study across the four UK nations.

Bringing up Britain

This three-part Radio 4 series about parenting with families' experts and policy-makers was commissioned by the Open Media Unit to support the Faculty of Education and Languages priority area of Child Development - contemporary perspectives and parenting dilemmas.

Presented by Mariella Frostrup, the series ran in January 2014.

Scoping student policy - religion or belief

A scoping of the requirements for a policy on religion and belief for students is underway. The primary aim is to bring together existing policies, procedures and guidance for students relating to religion and belief and communicate this policy widely and effectively to students. The project will also define existing procedures more clearly and address any gaps identified.
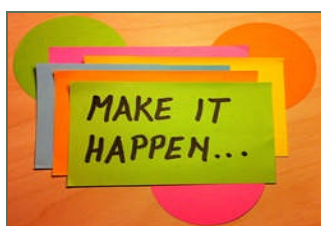
Implementing student transgender policy and guidance

Information and guidance for staff supporting transgender students is available through the Student Services Intranet and TutorHome. Resources are divided into student-facing and staff-facing resources. A group of Learner Support Services staff act as 'named contacts' for students undergoing gender transition. Training was provided for the 'named contacts' group with external facilitators from the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES). The policy and guidelines were updated to reflect feedback from the named contact group and from GIRES.

Women in Scientific Careers report

The House of Commons Select Committee's report *Women in Scientific Careers*[4] published in January 2014 recognised the dearth of women in professorial roles in higher educational institutions. The recommendations focussed on issues such as the length of research contracts, academic career structure and the cultural change needed in institutions. Clem Herman, Senior Lecturer in Computing and Communications, and the OU's academic lead for Athena SWAN, was one of three witnesses to appear before the Committee to give evidence and is quoted extensively in the report.

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[4] www.publications.parliament.uk

In brief

New UK Access scheme[5]

From 2014/15 the OU is launching a new scheme to provide an affordable pathway into OU study. In addition to extending its suite of 30-credit Access modules across the whole of the UK, the University is committing funds to support up to 5,000 free Access module places for eligible students. They offer an ideal starting point for students new to higher education study. They are designed to build new learners' confidence and equip them with all the necessary study skills to progress successfully towards a qualification. The three Access modules available across the UK from October 2014 are: Y031 Arts and languages, Y032 People, work and society, Y033 Science, technology and maths.

Support for carers

A special viewing of artwork by Scottish painter Jack Vettriano raised funds to offer carers across Scotland support to achieve their study goals. Jack, an Honorary Graduate of the OU, spoke to over 150 local students, alumni and OU supporters at a major retrospective of his work in Glasgow. The event raised funds for the OU's *Caring for Carers* initiative which is piloting in Dumfries & Galloway, and offers access courses, study advisors at local caring centres and study buddies.

Widening participation in HE Conference

The OU's Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships organised a two-day conference at the OU in April/ May 2014 '*Widening Participation through Curriculum'*. The event brought together research addressing the role of the curriculum in widening access and participation in higher education globally.
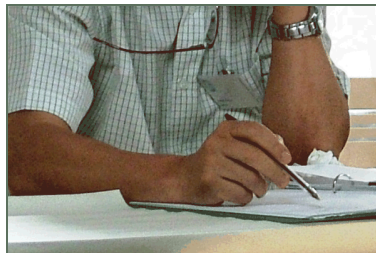

Image: Angela Schröer

One million visits to OU's new international website

The Open University's international website[6], run by The Global Direct Team in the Business Development Unit, was launched in February 2014. It has seen the number of unique visits exceed the one million milestone. Global Direct is running Academic Live Chats throughout the year in order to engage with the University's international audience

'Learn about fair'

More than 650 OU staff and visitors attended the seventh annual *Learn About Fair* at Walton Hall in February 2014. The fair focused on educational technologies used for learning and teaching and directly relevant research. It provided staff development and networking opportunities. Staff members of all categories learnt about how using technology in education can influence the production and presentation of modules and inspire new research projects. Accessibility, MOOCs, Eye tracking, Learning analytics and OU Anywhere were the top highlights for many who attended.

Each year visitors tell us what their highlights were and this year the accessibility stall was selected by more students than almost any other stall at the Fair.

Image: Andy Lane

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[5] For further information go to: http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/access

[6] For further information see: http://www.openuniversity.edu/

In brief

Associate Lecturer publishes handbook for 'student parents'

Associate Lecturer Dr Helen Owton, who tutors on *Social Psychology,* has written a guide to studying while being a parent. Based on her own experience as a 'student parent', *Studying as a parent: a handbook for success*[7] contains practical information and tips, from how to juggle commitments to support available and suggestions for future directions after study.
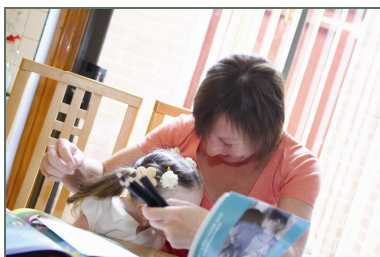

Image: FourNinety

Improved tutor resources

Feedback from extensive user testing has been used to support the re-design and rebuild of TutorHome so that the variety of online resources available to support students with particular needs are easier for tutors to locate and use. This includes: layered menu pages for displaying content; improved navigation tools and a quick find facility to enable users to find relevant information more easily.

Major review of HE in Wales

Rob Humphreys, Director of the OU in Wales, has been appointed a member of a major review of Higher Education (HE) funding and student support in Wales, which commenced in spring 2014. The Welsh Government has stated that its priorities for the review include widening access and ensuring that any future system has widening access as its core objective, is progressive and equitable.

Bespoke OU training

The workforce at Dawnfresh Seafoods plant in central Scotland received training through a bespoke OU course, 'Workplace Communications Skills for Diversity and Equality'. Their workforce of over 280 comprises of nine different nationalities and various cultural backgrounds. The OU training session was repeated 23 times over one week, to fit with shifts, from managers to hygiene operatives for staff to engage with each other in small groups.

FutureLearn[8] Celebrated its first anniversary

FutureLearn, the first UK-led provider of massive open online courses (MOOCs), is offering learners around the world access to free, high quality courses from its internationally renowned university partners. FutureLearn, which is wholly owned by The Open University, has also been designed to work on smart phones, tablets and desktop computers, so that learners can enjoy the same high-quality user experience, regardless of the screen size. So far learners from over 165 countries have registered their interest in taking a course on FutureLearn. For the first time FutureLearn will partner with Chinese universities – Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Fudan University – to create high quality educational experiences for learners in China, and all over the world, through free online courses.

Image: Andy Lane

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[7] For further information see:
http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/?sf1=id_product&st1=669355

[8] For further information go to:
www.futurelearn.com

Mainstreaming report

Mainstreaming across the OU

We are continuing to work to embed equality through our core University processes and functions. Below we have provided some examples of the activities led by different departments in the past year to mainstream equality further.

Marketing

In order to ensure that appropriate campaigns and promotional material support the positive experience of OU disabled students (working closely with Widening Access and Success Services), copy lines and case studies on OU disabled students have been developed and shared with all Marketing Communications teams for use in communications. Copy on OU disabled students is now included in all core prospectuses, including references to alternative formats.

Strategy Office

The Strategy Office has worked with the Equality, Diversity and Information Rights Team to integrate the University's equality and diversity planning and reporting process into the University's annual unit planning system. A joint workshop was delivered to 70 key members of staff in December 2013 covering risk, unit planning, equality and diversity, and widening access and success.

Communications

In March 2014 the Communications Unit published the next document in the University's suite of web standards. The Accessibility Guidelines document is defined as the practice of making websites usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. It summarises the key principles for authors of new content, for developers of new and existing web systems and ensuring the accessibility of third-party content. The guidelines are to be followed by all web development teams across the University. In addition, any organisations which are employed by the University to carry out work on its behalf will also be made aware of these guidelines, for example: freelancers, agencies, and contractors.

Learning and Teaching Solutions (LTS)

The LTS Editorial and Graphics Best Practice groups have produced an updated guidance document for use by LTS staff involved in learning and teaching materials production, to raise awareness of discriminatory or exclusive language, metaphors and imagery and to enable more inclusive, non-discriminatory design. The OU Style Guide, which LTS created and maintains, has been updated to include aspects of this guidance. LTS have also developed user participation tracking to inform Student Support Teams who can then provide intervention to provide additional support to students that need it. Participation tracking was piloted with modules across Faculties and rolled out at the March 2014 Virtual Learning Environment release.

In Development

Social Sciences

The Faculty of Social Sciences have placed greater focus on developing module materials and assessment strategies which are accessible to students with a wide range of individual circumstances and educational backgrounds. Widening Participation has been addressed in the new Level1 modules via the following features:

- increased Virtual Learning Environment focus
- changed assessment regime to provide graduated start and mix of assessment formats
- structured initial support

The Faculty will be undertaking an evaluation of student attainment and satisfaction levels on these modules.

Performance

Continuing from last year, here, we present our report on progress made with objectives under our current our Equality Scheme. The objectives establish clear accountability for delivery and, two years into our Scheme, we are again pleased to report further progress. The information that follows provides an overview of performance for our nine objectives.

Each objective is given a status rating of:

Red: Measures to assist the achievement of the identified KPI(s) are still under development;

Amber: Measures to assist achievement of the identified KPI(s) have been developed and are being implemented, and;

Green: Measures to assist achievement of the identified KPI(s) are expected to deliver by the target date

Grey: This is a new objective

Obj. 1:	Improve the perception of ethnic minorities towards the OU
SAE[9]:	Director, Students
KPI[10]:	Close the gap between ethnic minority and white consideration preference (first choice or only choice) towards the OU from 6% to 4% by December 2016
2014:	The baseline gap at December 2013 was 6%
Status:	Grey

Obj. 2:	Increase the satisfaction of disabled students
SAE:	Director, Institute of Educational Technology
KPI:	Reduce the difference in overall satisfaction rates between non-disabled and disabled students from 3% to 2% by the end of 2016[11]
2014:	In January 2014 the satisfaction gap was 3%
Status:	Green

Obj. 3:	Reduce the ethnicity attainment gap
SAE:	Director of Associate Lecturer Services
KPI:	Reduce the difference between the proportion of black students and white students obtaining a 'good pass' on undergraduate modules at levels 2 and 3 from 28.8% in 2009/10 to 25.8% in 2015/16
2014:	For the academic year 2012-13 the gap remained at 28.8%
Status:	Amber

Obj. 4:	Increase the proportion of younger academic staff
SAE:	Director, Academic Planning and Resources
KPI:	Increase the proportion of academic staff aged 35 and under from 12% at December 2010 to 14% by December 2015
2014:	As at December 2013, the proportion of staff aged 35 and under was 12.8%
Status:	Amber

Obj. 5:	Increase the satisfaction of ethnic minority staff
SAE:	Director of Human Resources
KPI:	Reduce difference in intention to leave between white and ethnic minority staff from 14% in 2010 to 10% in the next staff survey following December 2014. Increase the representation of ethnic minority staff in senior job roles from 6.2% in December 2013 to 7.2% in December 2018[12]
2014:	In 2014 the difference in intention to leave reduced to 10%. At December 2013 the proportion of staff in senior roles was 6.2%
Status:	Green

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[9] SAE = Senior Accountable Executive, the role responsible for delivery of the objective
[10] KPI = Key Performance Indicator
[11]The previous KPI to increase the satisfaction of disabled students from 82% in 2010/11 to 84% in 2014/15 was achieved two years earlier than anticipated. The KPI has been refocused to measure the difference in satisfaction between disabled and non-disabled students.

[12] The second KPI originally stated a reduction in job satisfaction between white and ethnic minority staff from 9% in 2010 to 6% in the staff survey following December 2014. By 2013, the staff survey results showed that the difference had already reduced to 4%. Therefore, a more stretching KPI that addresses representation in senior job roles has been created. Senior job roles include Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Professors, Deans, Directors and Heads of Units.

Obj. 6:	Increase the satisfaction of disabled staff
SAE:	Director of Human Resources
KPI:	Reduce the difference in overall job satisfaction between disabled and non-disabled internal staff from 6% in 2010 to 4% in the next staff survey following December 2014
	Reduce the difference in perceived "respect, recognition and status" between disabled and non-disabled Associate Lecturer staff from 7% in 2010 to 5% in the next staff survey following December 2014
2014:	In 2014 the satisfaction gap for internal staff reduced to 2%. The 2013 Associate Lecturer differential was 8%.
Status:	Amber

Obj. 7:	Increase the proportion of female professors[13]
SAE:	Director, Research, Scholarship and Quality
KPI:	Increase the proportion of female professors from 34% 2013 to 37% in 2018
2014:	In March 2014, 36% of OU professors were women.
Status:	Green

Obj. 8:	Improve equality monitoring information for staff and students
SAE:	Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights
KPI:	Ability to identify and count students with caring responsibilities in advance of the 2014.15 academic year.
	Accurate data on staff returning from maternity leave by the reporting period ending December 2014.
	Achieve at least 65% for religion or belief and sexual orientation staff declaration by the end of 2015 and 50% for religion or belief and sexual orientation new student declaration by 2014.15.

Obj. 8 Continued in next column…

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[13] This objective was originally framed as reducing the gender pay gap. Examination of the data has shown that the pay gap is predominantly caused by the lower proportion of women in senior professorial roles. This revised objective focuses on the proportion of women in professorial roles.

Obj. 8 Continued from previous column…

2014:	Systems are now in place for students to be able to self-register their religion or belief, sexual orientation and caring responsibilities.
	In November 2014 staff declarations for Religion and Belief were 55% for internal staff, and 46% for Associate Staff. For sexual orientation, stood at 50% and 49% respectively
	In September 2014 Student declarations for Religion and Belief were 28% and for sexual orientation stood at 28%
	Staff returning from maternity leave data: May to Dec 2014 saw 96 maternity returners, a 19.4% improvement on the comparative period in 2013.
Status:	Amber

Obj. 9:	Improve equality policy and guidance for staff and students
SAE:	Head of Equality, Diversity and Information Rights
KPI:	By April 2016, we will have implemented new or improved policy, guidance and information for the following groups and characteristics:
	• Transgender staff and students
	• Student pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, IVF treatment, and children in the learning environment
	• Student religion or belief
	We will have developed an institutional action plan for sexual orientation equality
2014:	Staff and student policies on gender reassignment completed and implemented; New public equality and diversity website implemented; Student policy on pregnancy and maternity completed and to be implemented by February 2015; Expected implementation of student policy on Religion and Belief by April 2015; Action plan on sexual orientation will be developed as part of external benchmarking work scheduled to commence in September 2015.
Status:	Green

Equality and Diversity public website

www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity

New public website

A new version of the OU's Equality and Diversity public website was published in July 2014, with an updated structure and broader content than before with a view to enhance transparency.

Image: suphakit73/Freedigitalphots

Aims

The new site aims to:

- serve as a shop window for prospective students and for individual and corporate customers by reflecting the extent of equality and diversity practice, research and innovation at the OU

- create a platform through which we can share OU equality resources

- publish documents that increase transparency and show how we meet our equality duties

Feedback

If you have not already visited the site, please have a look and let us know what your impressions are; we will be updating it regularly and welcome your feedback via email to Strategy-Equality@open.ac.uk

Content

The University's vision of being inclusive, innovative and responsive is the common thread that runs throughout the site. We recognise that everyone has different needs and circumstances so in the *Your Needs* section of the site we have aimed to give clear information about what the OU can provide for students and staff, with special reference to the protected characteristics of:

- Age
- Caring or dependency responsibilities *
- Disability
- Gender (sex)
- Marriage and civil partnership status
- Political opinion *
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background *
- Trade Union membership status *
- Transgender (gender identity)

Each characteristic above is looked at from the perspective of equality law, policy and guidance and there are links to OU and external resources related to each characteristic.

Our work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations is outlined in the Policy, Plans & Reports section, with links to our equality scheme, equality objectives, equality action plans and reports.

* These characteristics are not currently included in the list of protected characteristics captured under the UK Equality Act 2010.

In depth…
Race and Ethnicity

Image: Karen Parker

"We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion."

Max de Pree

Race and Ethnicity

Advancing equality

Great Expectations – reducing the ethnicity attainment gap

The attainment gap is highest between black students and white students obtaining a 'good pass'[14] on modules at levels 2 and 3. Actions are being taken to reduce this gap. 'Great Expectations: creating a positive environment to achieve positive outcomes' is one of 8 projects funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The aim is to increase self-awareness of the effect of staff expectations on behaviour towards students and the effect of this on students' performance. A series of workshops and web resources has been piloted with over 100 Associate Lecturers (AL). Further workshops were delivered at the autumn 2013 and spring 2014 staff development events. The roll-out of the Virtual Learning Environment site to the wider AL community took place in April 2014 and a significant evaluation framework was agreed with the HEA.

TESSA project Malawi[15]

The aim of the TESSA project in Malawi is to increase access into teaching for rural women who are currently underrepresented in the profession. Implementation of the project has continued as planned, with funding from Department for International Development Malawi, and in partnership with a Malawian Non-governmental organisation, Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA). Five hundred women are now enrolled on the access into Teaching in Malawi, all of them from rural areas. Plans are in place to recruit more women, up to a total of 2000 over 3 years.

Equality Policy

Policy related to race and ethnicity is embedded in our Equality Scheme with specific, measurable objectives for 2012 – 2016 relating to race and ethnicity. The equality objectives contain four Knowledge Performance Indicators (KPIs), as follows:

- Close the gap between ethnic minority and white consideration preference (first choice or only choice) towards the OU from 6% to 4% by December 2016.

- Reduce the difference between the proportion of White students and Black students obtaining a "good pass" on modules at levels 2 and 3 from 28.8% in 2009/10 to 25.8% by 2014/15.

- Reduce the difference in intention to leave between White and ethnic minority staff from 14% in 2010 to 10% in the next staff survey following December 2014.

- Reduce the difference in overall job satisfaction between White and ethnic minority staff from 9% in 2010 to 6% in the next staff survey following December 2014.

Image: John Birdsall

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[14] A 'good pass' is defined as achievement of a first or upper second at module level

[15] For further information go to
http://www.tessafrica.net/Malawi-Scholarships

Race and Ethnicity

Supporting expansion of higher education in Ghana

The number of students seeking a higher education in Ghana has increased substantially and the number of places available may need to increase by up to 300%. The Government of Ghana is investigating how open distance learning can improve access to learning on a vast scale. The OU is supporting the Government of Ghana and key stakeholders in designing a roadmap for 2014 and beyond, to develop a sustainable response to current challenges. The Open University's International Development Office met with around 60 senior delegates from Ghana's key public and private institutions in March 2014, for a workshop examining how to strengthen Ghana's higher education systems.
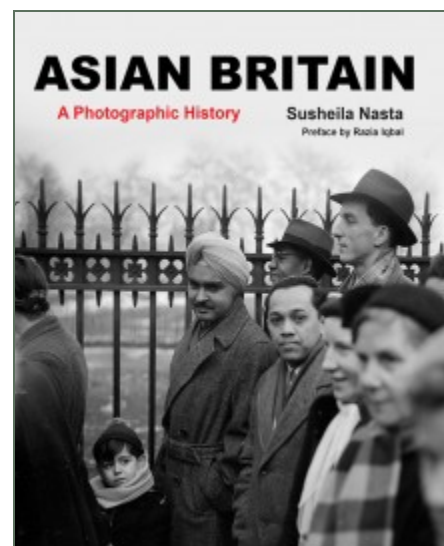
Aspire~ progress

The highly successful Aspire programme is open to staff at all grades self-identifying as ethnic minority or disabled. Its aim is to improve staff experience and support career development and progression through a combination of mentoring, facilitated workshops and on-going networking activities. There were 13 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) participants on the Aspire programme and 7 BME participants on the Aspire~Plus programme in 2013. An overall total of around 50 and 30 BME staff have participated in the Aspire and Aspire~Plus programmes respectively at April 2014. The Aspire programme now has a section on 'Opportunities for progression' which specifically includes information about participating in University governance.

Promoting understanding and good relations

20th Century Asian Britain in photographs

Fascinating and rare stories of Asians' contribution to British society are brought to life in a series of rarely seen photographs. Asians have been living in Britain for more than 400 years, yet this is rarely reflected in mainstream accounts of British history. The Open University's Professor Susheila Nasta, Professor of Modern Literature, Faculty of Arts has brought together images and stories of the Asian contribution to British society in a captivating photographic history of Asian Britain. Her painstaking research in the British Library and other archives has unearthed many photographs and stories which are being published for the first time in *Asian Britain*[16].

ASIAN BRITAIN
A Photographic History
Susheila Nasta
Preface by Razia Iqbal

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[16] For further information go to:
http://www.saqibooks.co.uk/book/asian-britain/

Race and Ethnicity

Free online learning resources

The LearningSpace on the OU's OpenLearn[17] website is home to free units of OU study available worldwide.

Nationalism, self-determination and secession
Intermediate level, 8 hours

What makes a 'nation' and what makes people strive for nationhood? This unit provides an introduction to studying political ideas by looking at how people who see themselves as nations challenge the existing order to assert their right to a state of their own. This unit is based on a chapter from the book *Living Political Ideas*, which is part of the DD203 *Power, Equality and Dissent* module.

FutureLearn[18] also offers a diverse selection of free, high quality online courses from the OU and our internationally renowned partners such as:

Muslims in Britain: changes and challenges
4 weeks, 4 hours per week (10 March 2014)

This Cardiff University Course looked at developing students' understanding of Muslims and their faith through an exploration of communities in Britain.

Exploring English: Language and Culture
6 weeks, 2 hours per week (2 February 2015)

This British Council course for learners of English considers British culture and examines English in use to help students improve language skills.

Study at the OU

Some of our current modules[19] on race related topics include:

| Module name	Credits (A full-time year is normally 120 credits)	OU level
Why is religion controversial? (A332)	60	3
International development: making sense of a changing world (TD223)	60	2
Understanding global heritage (AD281)	60	2
English for Academic purposes on line (L185)	30	1
Exploring languages and culture (L161)	30	1

Research at the OU

Exploring the role of support in the lived experiences of Black British African Caribbean nurses as students and staff in the British NHS [20]

This conference paper by Naomi A. Watson provided insights into Black British African Caribbean nurses' perceptions of support while studying and working in the British NHS. It drew on current original research which explored factors influencing the participation of UK born African Caribbean children and young people in careers in nursing. Current participation by the children of immigrants in nursing education is very low. There are implications for culturally sensitive care delivery services for senior black users of NHS services, whose numbers are increasing as those who arrived via HMS Windrush immediately after World War 2, now begin to retire.

African Agency in International Politics [21]
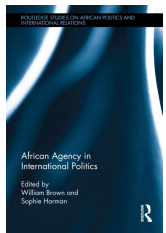
This book, co-edited by William Brown and Sophie Harman, analyses the burgeoning role of African states, leaders and other political actors in international politics in the 21st Century. In contrast to the conventional approach to studying Africa's international relations, which focused on how external actors impacted on Africa, it seeks to open up a new approach, focusing on the impact of African political actors on international politics. Contributions to the book present a variety of takes on this issue, analysing both the opportunities and constraints that face African states and leaders.

The role of OER localisation in building a knowledge partnership for development: The TESSA and TESS-India teacher education projects [22]

The Open University-led TESS-India[23] project is developing Open Educational Resources (OER), co-produced by UK and Indian academics, for use within India's teacher education system. The project aims to enhance the access of teacher educators, head teachers and teachers to free, high-quality educational materials that they can use in their colleges and classrooms. This conference paper by Alison Buckler, Leigh-Anne Perryman, Timothy Seal and Shankar Musafir is intended to extend the global conversation about how best to localise OER through adaptation and repurposing. It maps the landscape of OER for teacher education in low-income countries and presents a continuum between cultural imperialism to cultural knowledge sharing. The paper presents an emerging toolkit for developers of OERs to move initiatives along the continuum to ensure more equitable and sustainable OER development and use.

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[20] Naomi A. Watson is Lecturer in Nursing in Health and Social Care. For further information see Open Research online: http://oro.open.ac.uk/38450/

[21] William Brown is Senior Lecturer in Government and Politics in the Faculty of Social Science and Sophie Harman is Senior Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary University of London. For further information see Open Research online: http://oro.open.ac.uk/34469/

[22] Alison Buckler is Research Associate TESS-India in the Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS), Leigh-Anne Perryman is Academic Staff Tutor in the Institute of Educational Technology, Timothy Seal is Technical Manager Development Office, and Shankar Musafir is from TESS-India. This report is available for free download at: http://oro.open.ac.uk/40348/

[23] For further information go to: http://www.tess-india.net/

Staff Networks

Importance of staff networks

The University recognises that some staff, particularly if they are part of minority groups, may experience marginalisation and isolation. Peer support networks are a good way of reducing the isolation that is experienced by some people. They also provide a forum for individuals to share collective understanding, positive and negative experiences and to evolve strategies in response to their experiences at work.

Individuals who are part of groups or networks may improve self-confidence and become empowered to participate and influence in all kinds of ways.

OU staff networks

The OU has several self-organised staff networks each linked to a particular minority group.

- Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff network: BME-Matters@OU
- EnablingStaff@OU staff network
- Hong Kong Chinese network
- LGBT staff network
- Women@OU staff network

Image: Angela Schröer

Framework for networks

The OU has an established framework which provides information for setting up staff networks about:

- the benefits of staff networks,
- how to set up a network,
- support provided by the OU,
- how the OU expects networks to operate.

The framework is published for staff on the Equality and Diversity intranet.

New networks

EnablingStaff@OU

The disabled staff network has undergone a makeover and was re-launched on 30 July 2014 as EnablingStaff@OU with David Matthewman, Chief Information Officer, as senior champion. The launch event, which was part of 'Equality through Innovation' month, included an introduction by the two co-chairs, a keynote address from the senior champion as well as contributions from EnablingStaff@OU members and a comedy act from a staff tutor/stand-up comedian. A replay of the event is available to staff on the Webcast@OU website.

The purpose of EnablingStaff@OU is to facilitate integration of disabled staff within the workforce. Membership is open to anyone employed by the OU, in whatever capacity, wherever they are based, and regardless of whether or not they consider themselves to have a disability.

All staff can access the EnablingStaff@OU SharePoint site and can subscribe to the dedicated network list.

Women@OU

Women@OU is a new network established to promote the advancement of women within the organisation. The network is inclusive of all members of the University regardless of gender or current job role. The network's inaugural conference was attended by more than eighty people on 2 July and was launched by network Chair, Professor Belinda Tynan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning.

The event provided an opportunity to:

- share career development experiences and strategies for women in the organisation,
- provide knowledge of the organisational structures which may support and encourage the development of women,
- expose members to female role models, both internal and external to the OU

Staff are able to join the network email list and a website is being developed.

Disability

Image: John Birdsall

Let your courage and determination be the vehicle that drives you, and takes you anywhere in this life you wanna go."

Robert M. Hensel

Disability

Advancing equality

Alternative format materials

OU Anywhere has been launched, making available over 1,000 module core texts in accessible e-Book format. The automation of the Virtual Learning Environment production route for alternative format means all online materials can be output in a range of accessible alternative formats instantly. A joint Learning and Teaching Solutions - Disability Resources Team production workflow for audiobooks has been introduced and a full suite of alternative formats has been introduced for all Access modules.

Improved Code of Good Practice for staff

The University's Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People gives staff and managers guidance to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against during recruitment or employment. The Code has been reviewed and updated, and now includes a Reasonable Adjustment Support Plan that documents the discussions between employees and their managers. The Code was redeveloped with support from members of the EnablingStaff@OU network.

Inspirational OU student

Former teacher, Dawn Faizey Webster, developed 'Locked-in' syndrome after suffering a stroke at the age of 30. She discovered she could still communicate through her eyes and tiny head movements. Dawn has overcome her disability to complete an OU degree by blinking. She has achieved a 2:2 degree in Ancient History and written an autobiography - thanks to a specialised laptop that translates her eye movements into text.

Record numbers of disabled students

More than 21,000 disabled students are now registered, representing just over 12% of the OU student body. This is double the proportion of three years ago and far in excess of the performance indicator in the University's equality objectives. The increase is in part due to efforts to encourage students to tell us about their disability and related needs, in part because more disabled people are eligible for Government loans, and in part a result of the significant shift in our age profile, with greater numbers of younger students who are more likely to tell us about their needs.
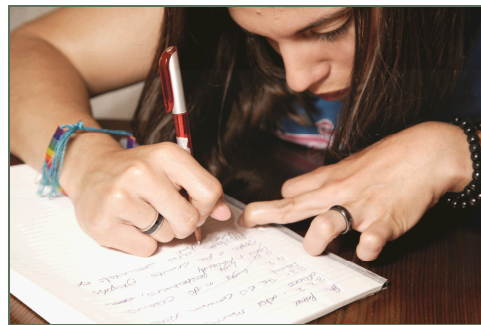

Image: John Birdsall

Rosa Hoekstra: Autism research award

Rosa Hoekstra, Lecturer in Psychology, received the Slifka/Ritvo Innovation in Autism Research Award in the Clinical category at the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) Awards Ceremony in May 2014. Rosa specialises in research into autism in Africa and has been awarded funding to continue her research in sub-Saharan Africa. The award means that Rosa and her team can develop a more effective autism screening tool for sub-Saharan African countries where autism is underdiagnosed.

Promoting understanding and good relations

SeGA progress

The University has invested significantly in accessibility in recent years, particularly with the implementation of the Securing Greater Accessibility (SeGA) programme. Accessibility Specialists are now established in all faculties, providing advice and guidance on incorporating accessibility into all stages of the curriculum development process. Staff are supported through the SeGA Co-ordination Group and the Accessibility Practitioners Group. The Accessibility Referrals Panel brings OU experts together to make decisions on complex issues in curriculum, learning platforms and individual student cases. A single University website on behalf of SeGA has been created that contains guidance and information about accessibility.

Image: John Birdsall

New archive of learning disability history

The OU's Faculty of Health and Social Care in collaboration with the University of East London (Rix Centre) and University of Leeds (School of Fine Arts, Art History and Cultural Studies), has been awarded a grant of just under £1m from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to develop a co-produced digital and living archive of learning disability history. The project is the culmination of 20 years of pioneering work into the history of learning disability, led by the OU's Social History of Learning Disability Research Group (SHLD).
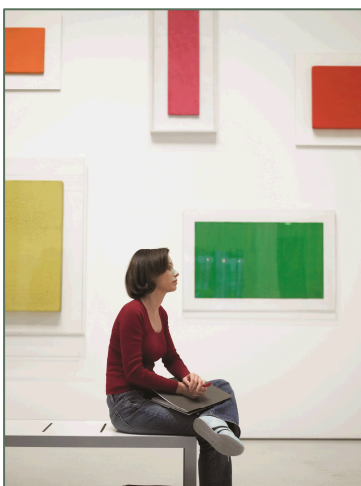

Image: Richard Learoyd

Supporting students with mental health issues

One hundred associate lecturers took advantage of the offer to join an OU live (online) session for advice, guidance and peer discussion about supporting students with mental health issues. This was a new initiative aimed at giving timely guidance to tutors who are new to supporting such students. The online session was recorded to make this resource available to other tutors and the sessions were repeated at the beginning of modules starting in October 2014.

Disability

Promoting understanding and good relations

Free online learning resources

The LearningSpace on the OU's OpenLearn[24] website is home to free units of OU study available worldwide.

Challenging ideas in mental health
Intermediate level, 18 hours

This unit invites challenges to ideas in relation to mental health. It is made up of a series of three extracts. 'Boundaries of explanation' sets out the theme of boundaries: boundaries within and between groups; within and between explanatory frameworks; and within and between experiences of mental health and distress. 'Whose risk is it anyway?' considers a critical account of the increasing focus on risk (particularly risk to others) in policies and professional practice since the 1980s. 'The business of madness', looks at two controversial areas of mental health: the growth of mental health as a business and the profit motive.

Living with diabetes
Introductory level, 5 hours

This unit introduces parts of the body and processes involved in the development of diabetes. It is from our archive and is an adapted extract from *Diabetes care (SK120)* which is no longer taught by The Open University. The study unit is relevant to the following non-accredited course *KG003 Improving diabetes management*.

Understanding Dyslexia
Intermediate, 20 hours

Dyslexia is a condition affecting literacy skills. This unit analyses how images of normality affect the way we as a society define such conditions, and how important it is to integrate the different psychological accounts of dyslexia in order to provide a full explanation of potential causes and strategies for remediation.

Study at the OU

We offer a range of Religious Studies and philosophy modules[25] including:

Module name	Credits (A full-time year is normally 120 credits)	OU level
The science of the mind: investigating mental health (SDK228)	30	2
Challenging ideas in mental health (K272)	30	2
Diverse perspectives on mental health (K225)	30	2
Understanding the autism spectrum (SK124)	15	1
Improving diabetes management (KG003)	Non-credit bearing	55 hours (short course)

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[24] http://www.open.edu/openlearn/
[25] For further information on OU modules and qualifications visit http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/

Research at the OU

Guide for those offering services to disabled children[26]

Silvana Mengoni[27], John Oates of the OU Childhood Studies Research Group and Janet Bardsley in the Faculty of Health and Social Care have carried out research which has led to the production of resources for organisations supporting families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The *Developing Key Working Guide*, launched by the Council for Disabled Children, offers advice and support to those involved in supporting families, and signposts a wide range of further resources. The primary audience is commissioners and managers in local areas and people working in the private, voluntary and independent sector who are interested in developing their key working provision.

John Oates

Silvana Mengoni

Approved Mental Health Practice: Essential Themes for Students and Practitioners [28]

The publication of this book, which is co-edited by Sarah Matthews, Phil O'Hare and Jill Hemmington, arose from a collaborative project between the OU and the University of Central Lancashire. It presents a unique and timely perspective on approved mental health practice and the various professional workers that undertake it. It also provides a critical assessment of approved mental health practice as it is carried out in all countries of the UK and criticality explores what is required of those individuals who undertake it.

Psychological care in a national health service: challenges for people with diabetes [29]

Recently there has been a growing interest in psychological problems in people with diabetes and a concomitant increasing concern that these often go unreported and thus unidentified and treated. This has serious implications for both the self-management of diabetes and the individual's quality of life. This Journal article by Cathy Lloyd, Paramjit Gill, and Margaret Stone highlights the barriers and challenges to optimising care for patients with co-morbid diabetes and depression. It outlines the therapies currently available in the UK which might be disseminated in other countries.

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[26] Download a copy of the Developing Key Working Guide at: http://www.open.ac.uk/research/main/news/new-guide-for-young-people-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/

[27] Silvana Mengoni is now Research Fellow, at the Centre for Lifespan and Chronic Illness Research (CLiCIR), Department of Psychology, School of Life and Medical Sciences, University of Hertfordshire.

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[28] Sarah Matthews is OU Staff Tutor in Health and Social Care and Phil O'Hare and Jill Hemmington are Senior Lecturers at the University of Central Lancashire. See Open Research online: http://oro.open.ac.uk/37538/

[29] Cathy Lloyd is OU Senior Lecturer in Health Care, Paramjit Gill is Reader in Primary Care Research, University of Birmingham and Margaret Stone is Principal Lecturer, Health and Life Sciences, De Montfort University. See Open Research online: http://oro.open.ac.uk/39153/

Equality through Innovation

A month of learning and research on inclusion and social justice

During the month of July the Equality, Diversity and Information Rights (EDIR) team coordinated a suite of events, workshops and seminars hosted by a range of Faculties, Units, and staff diversity Networks to highlight the innovation taking place across the OU to advance equality and promote social justice. This included seven bite-size research seminars, four learning tasters' workshops, and support to four staff network events.

The research seminars highlighted some of the equality related work that is being carried out by OU academics. These included topics such as How the OU Changed Women's Lives; Getting older as an LGBT person; Theorising, researching and working with "different" childhoods; Enhancing the lives of carers and older people; Tools to support children with educational needs; and Mobile apps for social inclusion of migrants. The Learning Taster workshops covered Equality Analysis; Valuing Student & Staff Difference; and Deconstructing Stereotypes.

Image: David Philips

The headline event, "Equality through Innovation: Driving social justice through learning and research" was held on 16 July. This showcase event was introduced by the Vice Chancellor, Martin Bean who spoke about how equality and openness is the foundation of all that we do. Martin's keynote was followed by a diverse range of presentations and Q&A sessions. Firstly the Aspire~ Leadership Mentoring programme was showcased, demonstrating the power of positive action not only in developing staff from minority communities, but on the wider University by harnessing the leadership potential of all our staff to deliver the OU's strategic priorities.

This was followed by a presentation on work being undertaken to address the attainment gap of students from a minority ethnic background compared to their majority ethnic counterparts. A further presentation described the work being undertaken to improve the proportion of Younger Academics at the OU, seeking to challenge the notion that expertise and capability are not merely about length of service or age, concluded this series.

Keynote speaker Baroness Onora O'Neill, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission stressed the importance of interrogating and anticipating the potential impact of our strategies and policies in the critical stages of planning and decision making; this was not simply a box-ticking afterthought but an essential preliminary step to implementation.

Professor Binna Kandola, a leading authority on unconscious bias, spoke with great humour on the sensitive topic of implicit bias and the need to, not only introspect, but to seek feedback that allows us to reflect on and accept responsibility for our own actions which are based on unconscious biases. Professor Kandola posited that once we become aware of and accept our unconscious biases we are better able not to act into them.

To watch the replay visit: http://Stadium.open.ac.uk

Equality Expert Workshops

Having been through essential mandatory on-line training, which provides staff with an understanding of equality legislation, rights and responsibilities, our Equality Expert suite of workshops provide a unique opportunity to gain competence and confidence in, not only understanding, but learning how staff can actively integrate good diversity practice into their work at the University.

Over three half day sessions, learners are taken through the principles underpinning excellence in equality diversity and inclusion, using facilitator led discussions, activities, experiential learning and case studies to gently remove the foggy haze that can often surround people's perceptions of this arena. The workshops encourage a spirit of enquiry allowing the learner to develop, from the core understanding gained through the on-line training, into experts better able to relate to and maximise the potential of a diverse range of students, staff and other stakeholders.

The Equality Exert Series is flexible; there is no particular order in which participants should attend these half day sessions. Being just half a day each, the sessions can be fitted into working patterns more easily. Another major advantage of this modular approach is that staff do not get information overload and have the opportunity to digest and integrate learning from each module over time.

The three workshops in the series are *Conducting Equality Analysis*, *Deconstructing Stereotypes* and *Valuing Student and Staff Difference*. A series of taster sessions were run during our Equality through Innovation month in July 2014 and the feedback from staff who attended was excellent. Staff felt more confident about being able to integrate equality, diversity and inclusion into their work.

The sessions empowered learners to apply common sense, creativity and practical understanding in applying equality, diversity and inclusion principles. Here are some comments from learners:

Conducting Equality Analysis
- Really useful session; set the scene very well and was interesting – delivered clearly and at the right pace.
- Very glad I attended.

Deconstructing Stereotypes
- Made me think about the male/female ratio in senior roles within the unit – i.e. we have our own issues to address, not just those in other parts of OU
- Interesting and thought provoking

Valuing Student and Staff Difference
- Enjoyable and informative session which highlighted some very important points, in particular, the responsibilities of those in positions of power.
- Brilliant workshop! Many thanks.

Image: Angela Schröer

OU staff can register on future Equality Expert workshops by visiting the Leaning Management System (LMS) to booking a place.