



The Open
University

Equality and diversity ...making it happen

The Open University in Scotland: Public Sector Equality Duty Report

We are creating an inclusive university
community and a society

- where people are treated with dignity and respect,
- where inequalities are challenged, and
- where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances,

so that everyone can achieve their potential.

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The Open University in Scotland: Public Sector Equality Duty report

Section 1 of this report provides background as to what this report covers and explains what the Public Sector Equality Duty refers to in the context of the Open University in Scotland.

Section 2 highlights how the Open University, and the Open University in Scotland, meets both the general and the specific duties associated with the PSED at an institutional level. It demonstrates how this has been mainstreamed into day to day operations as well as providing information on how we assess the impact of our policies and procedures on a university-wide basis.

Section 3 provides an overview of the status of the protected characteristic groups, and explores what the OU is doing to meet the needs of these groups in addition to a number of other under-represented groups.

Section 4 provides details of the OU's Equality Outcomes, with baseline data and specific targets for the coming years.

Section 5 provides data relating to aspects of diversity at the OU, including employment data, data on the make-up of our governing body as well as pay gap data.

Section 6 provides information about our public procurement procedures.

Section 7 concludes the report.

Acknowledgements:

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Section 1: Introduction

This report evidences how The Open University (OU) and in particular The Open University in Scotland (OUiS) meets or exceeds its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and meets the general duty and the specific duties set out in the requirements for the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force in 2011 (2012 in Scotland).

The report covers all of the requirements of the PSED guidance issued by the Equalities Challenge Unit (ECU). When the information required as part of this PSED report is available through existing reporting structures or reports, links to the publicly available reports will be provided. Where this is not the case, or where we wish to showcase particular examples of our work, we will do so by including them in the body of this report.

At times, separating the OUiS from the rest of the institution is difficult, or even impossible, and on the basis of this complexity some of the evidence referenced within this report will necessarily relate to the OU as a whole. However, where possible and where there is available data or relevant examples, the report will refer specifically to The OU in Scotland; its student body or its staff in the Edinburgh.

Section 2: Equality and Diversity at The Open University

Social justice and equality of opportunity are at the heart of everything The Open University does and widening access to higher education is the ambition on which it was founded. This is clearly articulated in the University's mission, purpose and vision statements which were reaffirmed in 2017:

- **Mission:** The OU is open to people, places, methods and ideas
- **Purpose:** Our primary purpose is to create educational opportunities and social mobility for all who seek to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential
- **Vision:** to reach more students with life-changing learning that meets their needs and enriches society

Our commitment to equality, and equality of opportunity, is demonstrated at a strategic OU-wide level. Additionally there are a number of strategies and policies that clearly state our intentions and detail the work that has been undertaken to achieve our equality and diversity ambitions in the Scotland specific context. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- The OU Equality Scheme 2016-2020
- The Equality Action Plan 2016/17
- The OU In Scotland Outcome Agreement
- Outcome Agreement self-evaluation (monitoring report)
- Unit Plans which state equality and diversity targets both in the context of recruitment and also with respect to retention and progression of those students.

We take a holistic approach to Equality and Diversity and see this as a University-wide responsibility; we have endeavoured to ensure that both the general and the specific Equality Duties have been embedded at the highest level, as an integral part of what we do. This is demonstrated by the fact that members of our University Leadership Team (Vice Chancellor's Executive) have taken on 'Champion' roles for each of the protected characteristic groups, to raise the profile and importance of equality and diversity across the institution.

The OU's **Equality Scheme** articulates our approach to equality and diversity, stating our equality aims, the principles to which we work and our overall responsibilities. It should be noted that the scheme aims are fully aligned to the Public Sector Equality Duty, stated as:

1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. To promote and advance equality of opportunity
3. To promote and foster good relations between people

The Scheme also provides information about the context within which the OU operates, including internal and external drivers. It explains the arrangements in place for Leadership, Staff Learning and Development, Accessible Information and Services, Consultation and Engagement, Equality Analysis, Monitoring and Reporting and Publishing of Information related to our Equality and Diversity work.

In addition, it sets out the Equality Objectives, our Action Plan for achieving those objectives, Resources and Advice for Staff and crucially in relation to the PSED for Scotland, it states what the specific duties for Scotland are.

Full information about the OU's Equality scheme is available here:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-scheme-objectives>

Mainstreaming

The OU is proud to be the only university that operates across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The OU in Scotland benefits from being part of the UK's largest higher education institution.

The foundation on which the OU was built and the way it continues to operate means that our approach to equality is already mainstreamed as an integral part of what we do and how we work, as demonstrated through the following examples:

Entry policy

The University has always operated an **open entry policy**; our students can study most modules and qualifications at undergraduate level with no requirement for previous qualifications. The OU is committed to extending opportunities for educational success to those who would otherwise be excluded from higher education, promoting and advancing equality of opportunity. For many of our students, this provides a second chance at achieving a qualification which they may not have aspired to at an earlier age or in many cases, may not have had access to, for a number of reasons.

Flexibility of study

- The flexibility of **part-time study** allows students to work and learn at the same time with most of our students studying to improve their careers. Of our 15,000 students in Scotland, over 70% are in full or part-time employment.
- The OU reaches across the whole of Scotland but students are not required to attend a campus and can study with us wherever they might live, with access to our world-class **online library and support services**. This is of particular benefit to the 24% of our students who live

in remote and rural towns and areas of Scotland and who would otherwise have limited options to accessing higher education.

- By continuing to develop **strategic partnerships** with employers, trade unions, public sector bodies, institutes, private, third sector and community organisations, universities, colleges and schools across the whole of Scotland we are able to increase the number of students who study flexibly with us.

Curriculum matters

- A great deal of effort goes into ensuring that the design and delivery of our services enable people from all backgrounds to successfully engage with studying at The OU. As part of our **curriculum design**, module teams ensure accessibility to different groups of students, e.g. students with disabilities, or students in secure environments.
- All curriculum design goes through what is known as a stage gate process, and modules are signed off at each stage of the design process to check compliance with **accessibility requirements**.
- We adapt our educational provision to meet the needs of our students rather than expecting them all to be able to meet a 'one size fits all' approach. For example, students in secure environments may not have open access to the web to undertake research that is necessary as part of their studies, so the OU ensures that the required materials are readily available in **alternative formats** to avoid the students being disadvantaged. Students with hearing difficulties may not be able to access oral recordings as part of their studies, and students with sight problems may not be able to work with dvd clips, so alternative arrangements are put in place to ensure that students are not discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way.
- We offer a **wide range of qualifications** including the uniquely flexible programme of Open qualifications: the Open CertHE, Open DipHE and BA/BSc Open, which allow students to tailor a qualification around their interests and career needs.
- The University's access programme provides three highly supported 30 credit modules at SCQF level 6 that facilitate the transition to HE level study and are designed to maximise student success, retention and progression. The number of students on these access modules rose from 110 FTE in 2014/15 to just under 160 FTE in 2015/16.
- Our curriculum is developed by multi-disciplinary teams including OU academic staff working in partnership with colleagues from other universities; educational technologists and media specialists contributing pedagogic and technical expertise; and external assessors to ensure academic standards are consistent with other universities. This model has helped to build the University's reputation for **academic rigour and quality**.
- The OU is a mass communicator of **free, informal learning** both nationally and globally through its OpenLearn website, iTunesU, the OU channel on YouTube, the OpenSTEM Labs and FutureLearn. All OpenLearn courses (over 1,000) are available on Google Play and Amazon for Kindle to reflect the diversity of the University's curriculum and the strength of the academic brand. This means that we routinely improve the **equality of access to high quality educational resources** for students who may otherwise struggle to access education.
- The OU in Scotland also uses open educational resources to support its widening access work. [Open Pathways to Higher Education](#) is a resource pack that offers various pathways from informal to formal accredited learning. The Open University has also developed a suite of skills-based Badged Open Courses (BOCs) which are available for free on the OpenLearn platform. These include: Taking Your First Steps into Higher Education; Succeed with Learning; Succeed with English; Succeed with Maths and Succeed in the Workplace. Over the next three years, we

will build on and extend our existing network of over 120 Open Learning Champions; our contacts within various bodies such as community education, libraries, trade unions, third sector organisations and support groups who are interested in exploring the opportunities available through free open learning resources.

- [OpenLearn Create](#) is an innovative open educational platform where individuals and organisations can publish their own open content, open courses and resources. This allows the OUIs to co-create open educational resources with partners, such as the Carers Trust and Parkinsons UK.
- Between 150 million and 300 million views and listens of OU produced BBC programmes take place each year in the UK, with viewers being encouraged to access videos, interactive games, podcasts as well as articles and booklets.

Staff

- The Open University in Scotland has around 130 academic, academic-related and support staff based in our offices in Edinburgh, servicing the needs of students in Scotland. These staff are responsible for ensuring that students in Scotland receive the most appropriate support and do so within the Scottish context.
- Students have an Associate Lecturer (AL) to guide, advise and offer comprehensive feedback on their coursework. Associate Lecturers can be contacted by phone or online, and lead group tutorials and seminars making use of online teaching technologies to link up student groups across the country, which encourages students to work with people from different backgrounds.
- ALs provide one to one support to students, regardless of their background, disability etc. They are also trained to refer students on to specialist staff within the OU where this is thought to be necessary.
- We have approximately 500 ALs living in all parts of Scotland; many of whom also work in business and industry or for other Scottish HEIs or colleges.
- Our staff development programme includes significant training relating to equality and diversity issues. Learning and development is targeted to different staff groups depending on what they need to know. The programme is delivered by a significant number of different offices, and through several mainstream business processes, demonstrating the extent to which equality and diversity learning is integrated across the University.
- The equality and diversity staff learning and development programme is evaluated by the Head of Learning and Organisational Management, reporting to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Group.

Equality Analysis – impact assessment

Our approach to considering equality during policy development and when managing change projects is facilitated through our Equality Analysis methodology. This ensures that we give active consideration to equality implications at an early stage and we have embedded this method in our annual unit planning process to assist with forward planning, especially to facilitate effective consultations.

Changes being proposed through policy, strategy, business plans, committee papers, project management or other methods are required to be analysed from an equality perspective and the results considered *before* decisions are made. Where negative impacts are identified, consideration

needs to be given to mitigating these. The findings of analysis are documented and reported to a relevant committee, steering group or management group and that body is responsible for taking the information into account before making decisions.

We have developed detailed guidance and a template to support staff in applying the method in their work. Each equality analysis will identify the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by the policy and the impact on good relations, stating whether these are major, minor or none for all the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. They will also identify opportunities for promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity and good relations for the same characteristics. A completed equality analysis template will state the aims of the policy to which the analysis relates and give details of any consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity, and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity, and the decisions that have been taken. In addition to the guidance and template, we provide training and coaching to develop staff knowledge and competencies.

We have also developed a range of additional resources to support staff in embedding equality in their work, including a resource to support assessment with partner institutions; and a resource to strengthen equality in contracting.

We have published a number of our Equality Impact Reports here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/equality-analysis-reports>

Some of the most recent assessments we have undertaken include a report on the impact of our Student Consultative Process where we engage with students to gain representative feedback about our strategies and policies, the Progression Contacts by Tutors initiative, which aims to provide one to one support from tutors to students to support progression through their studies, and the impact of the new suite of postgraduate MILLS (Model of Integrated Learning and Learner Support) interventions, which is a series of interventions at key points throughout the student journey designed to support retention, progression and achievement.

Section 3: Our work with protected groups

Although The Open University has a duty to ensure that people in the protected characteristic groups are not disadvantaged and to promote and advance equality of opportunity, our founding principle of widening access means that our work goes much wider than the formal list of protected characteristics.

In Scotland, to make education more accessible for all, we target people with no previous experience of study at SCQF level 7 or above, those on low incomes and those for whom attending a campus would present significant challenges. Our strategy includes outreach activity that is enhanced by working with partners across the country and the provision of supported pathways into degree level study that are appropriate to the individual learner. Our partners include community-based organisations, colleges, trade unions and employers. Much of this work is facilitated by the Scottish Funding Council's Widening Access & Retention Fund which enables us to support students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

With regard to the protected groups, we can point to the following examples of what we do to promote equality of opportunity:

Age

The OU has no upper age limit for students and encourages prospective students of all ages to consider studying with the OU. Traditionally, students came to the OU later in life than for many other universities, where the majority of students progress straight from school or college. However, the median age of OU students has fallen over the years. With over 15,000 students in Scotland, the median age of our new undergraduates is 27.

The OU in Scotland's successful Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) provides an opportunity for students in the final year of secondary school to experience higher education level study in school alongside their other subjects and enhance their career prospects. Students can choose from a range of high quality modules at SCQF Level 7 and the scheme may provide access to a subject that may not be available in their school. YASS is included on Insight (the Scottish Government benchmarking tool for the senior phase).

Experience of independent study at degree level and access to all OU student facilities helps to prepare pupils for the transition to university or college. Pupils can also use the credit they gain towards a qualification with The Open University.

YASS has grown considerably year on year; over 100 schools throughout Scotland and over 1,000 pupils participated in 2015/16. YASS has proved to be a very attractive addition to many schools, particularly smaller ones, those in remote areas and with limited numbers staying on to S6, that encounter difficulties in providing breadth of choice for their pupils. To date 31 SHEP schools (those identified as having low participation in HE) have participated in YASS.

Over the next three years The OU in Scotland aims to increase the numbers of YASS pupils from the 40% most deprived areas and we will also explore further opportunities to build on our presence in schools to promote learning in the wider community via the parents and carers of pupils; stimulating learning cultures and supporting wider access.

Working with Colleges

We also work in close collaboration with colleges, providing progression routes from college into higher education.

The Open University in Scotland offers all students with Higher National Certificates and then Higher National Diplomas the opportunity to build on their college credit and to enhance their skills and qualifications.

The OUIS has active partnerships with all of the Scottish Colleges (other than those within the UHI network), whereby students with an HNC or HND get the appropriate credit transfer into our BA or BSc (Open) with or without honours. We have also developed pathways and credit transfer arrangements for students with relevant HNQs to progress to specified OU named degrees. These partnership agreements are reviewed on an annual basis.

Our students can choose to:

- take time out from study after completing their HN and articulate to the OU when they want professional development or to expand their career opportunities
- register for a wide range of degree options using their HN
- begin their studies with one or more modules
- study on the Open Degree using all their credit from an HN

- study on a named programme where the amount of transferred credit varies depending on the content match between the HN and the degree
- not to use their HN qualification as credit because they want to refresh and update their skills
- study on a degree in a different field from their HN (a significant proportion choose to do this)

Most OU Honours Degrees consist of 360 credits compared to the Scottish norm of 480 credit points. As a result, even where students with an HN are in receipt of a partial credit for their HN or have chosen not to transfer credit, they may still complete an OU Honours degree within the standard Scottish four-year timeframe. Our experience is that part-time students combine work and study in a variety of different ways. Articulating students can complete their degree in as little as two years but most will take a longer and often interrupted learning journey.

Our campus-based model of partnership is another strand of our articulation activity. We have been working with six colleges in 2016-17. This unique partnership provides students who have completed their HN qualification the opportunity to continue to use the college as the study base for their OU degree. For many students, being based at their college is the only option available to them to continue studying due to geographical constraints, caring responsibilities, their employment or disability. The college base also represents a 'known' and supportive environment for learning, therefore providing new learning opportunities in familiar spaces and supporting the transition from FE to HE study. Evaluation of the Fife College pilot showed very positive academic results and completion rates. We were delighted to see fourteen students graduate with degrees through this partnership model in 2016. We aim to continue to develop and expand the college campus-based model over the next three years.

Disability

The OUIS offers a wide range of support services and facilities to enable learners with additional needs to succeed in their studies including course materials in alternative formats, special arrangements for tutorials and examinations including home examinations and where appropriate advice about funding.

In 2015-16, 16% of new undergraduates in Scotland identified themselves as having a disability, including physical and mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. A significant proportion of our disabled students have problems with mobility. Numbers have almost doubled over the last five years, and we now have over 2,700 students with a declared disability.

At an institutional level we have invested significantly in developing new systems to automate the production of a wider range of alternative formats for disabled students and we completed a major project to implement DAISY – digital talking books. We continue to invest in our Access Centre and recently bought a new Access Bus to bring assessments closer to students. We have developed new study skills booklets to provide effective advice for students across a number of the most common impairments and new resources for our Associate Lecturers to ensure consistent study support for students with mental health impairments. Our extensive Securing Greater Accessibility programme is now well established and aims to ensure that the learning accessibility needs of disabled students are anticipated at an earlier stage. This allows us to reduce the additional time and costs associated with retrospective adjustments.

Staff development programmes delivered within the University ensure that the support services we offer our students can be tailored to meet the specific needs of students and that our staff have a good understanding of how disability related issues may impact on students in different ways. Our frontline student support staff have undertaken disability training but we also have specialist staff available to deal with complex queries that require specialist knowledge.

There is an OU-wide staff disability network, rebranded from the Disability Network to EnablingStaff@OU in 2014. This is a network that brings together disabled staff from across the University and is open to all staff regardless of disability.

The University achieved the Bronze Standard on its first submission to the Business Disability Forum in April 2016. This award made the OU one of only two universities in the UK that had achieved a Bronze, Silver or Gold Standard.

Gender reassignment

In November 2016 The Open University created a transgender support steering group to review its transgender support policy and also the guidance and procedures for staff and students and this review is expected to be concluded in 2017. The University's current policy can be accessed via this link: '[Transgender Students: Policy and Guidance](#)'. Initial training was completed by 'Named Contacts' in March 2017 and that further briefing and training will be put in place for all front line staff in relation to this area in due course.

The OU does not intend to introduce monitoring for gender identity. We have a legal duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. The University's approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on qualitative information derived from engagement and research. During 2017 we expect to be introducing an "Mx" category alongside Mr, Miss, Mrs and Ms in our monitoring to assist those who identify as non-binary for gender purposes.¹ To better capture gender fluidity, the OU's *Transgender Students: Policy and Guidance* will during the course of 2017, be re-framed as the Gender Identity policy.

Pregnancy and maternity

The University is committed to ensuring that enquirers and students are not discriminated against unlawfully or treated unfavourably for any reason related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, fostering or IVF treatment. The University aims to adopt a flexible approach which is proportionate and reasonable in supporting students as far as practicable, so that they can complete their studies and achieve their study goals providing academic standards are upheld.

Link to Student Pregnancy and Maternity: Policy and Guidance is available here:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/sites/www.open.ac.uk.students.charter/files/files/ecms/w eb-content/student-pregnancy-maternity-policy-and-guidance.pdf>

¹ The label may be used by individuals wishing to identify as falling outside of the gender binary without being any more specific about the nature of their gender.

Staff are entitled to 52 weeks' maternity/adoption leave regardless of their service. Statutory maternity/adoption pay will be paid for a maximum period of the first 39 weeks, made up to full pay for the first 18 weeks, subject to minimum service conditions. Male and female staff, whether in same or opposite sex relationships, are eligible for adoption leave including intended parents in surrogacy and 'foster to adopt' arrangements. Staff have the right to return to work at any time within 52 weeks of the maternity/adoption leave start date, subject to certain conditions.

A female employee who meets the eligibility criteria can elect to take Shared Parental leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (SPP) if she so chooses. SPL is an alternative to the mother remaining on statutory maternity/adoption leave. This enables her to opt to share up to 50 weeks of her leave and 37 weeks of her 39 weeks of statutory maternity pay with her partner (concurrently or consecutively.) This applies to parents in same or opposite sex relationships.

Staff are entitled to a maximum of 10 days' paid paternity leave in connection with their wife's/partner's confinement in any one leave year in addition to normal leave entitlement, subject to certain conditions. This applies to parents in same or opposite-sex relationships.

The University has a salary sacrifice scheme which enables staff to take advantage of tax and national insurance exemption on up to £243 of childcare vouchers per month (subject to eligibility).

The University's Agile Working scheme can encompass arrangement of hours across the week or the year, the number of hours worked, the location of work, and systems, processes and technology that enable high performance. Requests for agile working can be made and granted either on a temporary basis or as a permanent change.

Race

In October 2014 the University re-launched the BME network, BMEMatters@OU, encouraging BME staff who would like to meet other BME staff to come together. The network provides consultation and expertise on issues affecting BME staff and students and also supports events for Black History Month.

Race features in 9 of the OU's 10 Institutional Equality Objectives and this is reflected in the table at the end of this document.

The University intends to participate in the Equality Challenge Unit's (ECU) Race Equality Charter and has begun preparations for its first submission.

Religion or belief (including lack of belief)

The OU publishes religious festivals calendar, which provides information about the most significant festivals relating to the major religions represented in the UK and an assessment of each festival's impact on staff and student activities. A flag indicator identifies dates that should be avoided when planning OU activities such as exam setting.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/religion-or-belief>

The OU annual leave policy also encourages line managers to give priority to requests for annual leave based on staff needs for religious observances and are encouraged to authorise such leave wherever this is feasible and does not unduly affect business imperatives.

Sex

In 2015/16 59% of our new undergraduates were female; over 40% of new undergraduates taking STEM courses are female.

The OU's Department of Engineering and Innovation ran a 'Celebrating Women in Engineering' event in June 2016 to celebrate National Women in Engineering Day. Students heard inspiring stories from an OU graduate who had set up her own engineering business, a young structural engineer, and representatives from professional engineering institutions. Women represent approximately 10% of our students across the UK on engineering qualifications and the event gave them the opportunity to meet each other and start a network which we hope will strengthen and grow in the future. The Department is planning to run a similar event in June 2017 to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day with the theme 'Creating Supportive Environments'.

The Open University's Institutional Athena SWAN bronze award was renewed in November 2016. The Open University has also been successful in achieving the Departmental Bronze awards for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, the School of Computing and Communications, the School of Engineering and Innovation and the Department of Life, Health and Chemical Sciences. The School of Physical Sciences has recently been awarded the Silver Award and the highly coveted Institute of Physics 'Champion' status under Project Juno:

http://www.iop.org/policy/diversity/initiatives/juno/supporters/page_42627.html

As The Open University develops its gender plan by July 2017 in Scotland, we will analyse the recruitment by sex within individual subjects and monitor trends at a subject level. Where we identify subjects with an imbalance of more than 75:25, we will work with colleagues in faculties and our Equality & Diversity team to outline what actions can be undertaken to achieve a greater balance. We will also work to improve gender balance at a sectoral level with organisations such as the Equality Challenge Unit and the Higher Education Academy in Scotland.

The OU has a network for women, Women@OU, which organises events targeting women and provides female staff an opportunity to come together to discuss issues of importance. We also run a series of events to mark and celebrate International Women's Day. As with the other staff networks, Women@OU is also open to Men and complements the Universities Commitment to the United Nations 'HeforShe' campaign.

Sexual orientation

The OU has an LGBT network, LGBT@OU where staff who identify as LGBT can come together in a safe and accepting network, physically and virtually. This network championed events as part of the LGBT History Month.

In January 2017, it was announced that The Open University had earned a place in the prestigious Stonewall Top 100 Employers for the first time. The OU is now ranked as the 93rd best place to work for in the UK - a rise of 37 places on the 2016 Index, and testament to its innovative efforts to create an inclusive workplace.

Working with other under-represented groups

In addition to ensuring students with protected characteristics are facilitated to study with the OU we are also concerned with promoting and advancing equality of opportunity and social mobility for a number of other groups.

- **Students from areas of social deprivation**

As a result of targeted marketing and outreach activity, our proportion of new undergraduate students resident in the most deprived quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) rose to 17% in 2015/16. 38% of our new undergraduate students were resident in the two most deprived quintiles (SIMD40) in 2015/16.

We continue to promote access to higher education to learners from the most deprived backgrounds however it is important to recognise that there are people experiencing significant hardship in geographical areas that are deemed to be less deprived than SIMD20 and equally that not everyone in a deprived area is individually deprived. The majority of our students are on low incomes. The Scottish Government's Part-time Fee Grant has increased the number of people on low incomes coming to study with The OU; in 2015/16, **60%** of our new undergraduate students had an individual income below £25,000 and were in receipt of the Part-time Fee Grant.

- **Students from care experienced backgrounds**

Since 2013/14, when The OU first started to ask students to self-declare whether they had a care experience background, 195 students in Scotland have identified themselves as care leavers. Although small numbers, this is higher than the sector average. The majority of our students make no declaration as to whether they have had care experience or not.

The OUIS received Corporate Parent training from Who Cares? Scotland in December 2016 and has now convened a working group on Care Experienced Students to make recommendations on OU-wide policy and actions to widen access for these students and to comply with relevant legislation. We intend for this group to represent a range of teams across the OU, with input from OU students with care experience, and from external organisations. Its remit will include:

- establishing a baseline of current activity across the university,
- identifying potential barriers for care experienced students,
- reviewing existing policy and processes relating to registration and student support,
- exploring ideas for engaging, identifying and supporting this group of learners,
- making recommendations for the development of an OU-wide policy on care leavers,
- working with Who Cares? Scotland to draft a Corporate Parenting Plan.

- **Students in secure environments**

The OU has provided modules to students in prison since 1972. Through our partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, we are able to facilitate access to higher education for those prisoners who have not previously had the opportunity to study at this level and who have demonstrated their potential and motivation. The OUIS is the only Scottish HEI represented on the Higher Education Access Board (HEAB) which coordinates access by offenders to higher education provision. In 2015-16 we had 58 students in prisons across Scotland (covering all security categories) and in 2 secure hospital units.

The OUIS is maintaining a dialogue with the Scottish Prison Service and the Scottish Government with the aim of enhancing and increasing the scale of our work with offender learners.

- **Students and staff who are carers**

We have put particular emphasis on working with carers in Scotland over the past couple of years as part of our widening access activity; it augments our work in SIMD40, articulation, partnerships and work-based learning. The Open University's model of supported open learning is particularly suitable for carers who can study from home and fit their learning around their caring commitments. We also can make special exam arrangements for those students who would find difficulty in attending an exam centre.

In 2015/16 3% of our new undergraduates in Scotland declared themselves to be carers. However most new students do not provide any information about their carer status so the number of new students who act as carers may be far greater than the data suggests. The University aims to improve student declaration of caring and dependency status across the UK to 15% by 2018 and to 20% by 2020.

Through our work with carers we continue to develop significant partnerships with organisations such as the Scottish Young Carers Services Alliance (SYCSA), Carers Trust Scotland and local Carers Centres. These collaborations have resulted in the development of the two free online resources: Caring Counts: a self-reflection and planning course for carers and Caring Counts in the Workplace: a version for managers of employees with caring roles. The content of Caring Counts was co-created with carers and practitioners from the Carers Centre in Dumfries, Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. Both courses provide learners with the opportunity of gaining a digital badge to recognise their learning.

In 2015, The Open University was awarded the Carer Positive (Engaged) status; an award operated by Carers Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. We are now working towards gaining the Carer Positive (Established) status by June 2017.

In 2016, The University also established an institutional Care and Caring Network which is led by a senior lecturer who chairs a panel of sub group leaders. For further information please click [here](#).

Section 4: Equality Outcomes

Our University-wide Equality Scheme 2016-2020 commits that we will:

- a) Continue our drive to increase self-declarations of religion or belief, and sexual orientation for our staff and students.
- b) Maintain paper-based monitoring of community background for our staff in Northern Ireland
- c) Encourage students with caring responsibilities to self-declare and to update information as and when circumstances change.
- d) Develop a robust method for collating data related to maternity/parental leave and returners
- e) Continue to implement and develop our LGBT action plan

We do not intend to introduce monitoring for gender identity. We have a legal duty to protect the privacy of individuals who have fully transitioned and we will not retain any records relating to gender change. Our approach to understanding and addressing transgender equality is to rely on qualitative information derived from engagement and research. We will, however be introducing an “Mx” category alongside Mr, Miss, Mrs and Ms in our monitoring to assist those who identify as non-binary for gender purposes.

In addition to this, from a Scotland perspective as part of our Outcome Agreement we have committed to achieving a number of equality outcomes, ensuring that students from protected characteristic groups in Scotland, as well as those in other under-represented groups, are encouraged to and able to benefit from the opportunities we offer.

The OU in Scotland’s Outcome Agreement is constructed around the Scottish Funding Council’s 5 key priorities. Priorities 1 and 2 are arguably the most relevant ones in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty, but it is important to note the breadth of these priorities and how they shape the way we operate at a more holistic level:

1. Widening access – learning that is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds
2. High quality learning and teaching – an outstanding system of learning that is accessible and diverse where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference
3. World-leading research – world-leading universities, nationally and internationally connected with a global reputation for their research
4. Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy
5. High-performing institutions – a coherent system of high-performing, sustainable institutions with modern, transparent and accountable governance arrangements

Consultation processes

The University tries to consult extensively with students and staff when developing policy and when establishing University-wide targets. At an institutional level this is clearly articulated in the Equality Scheme 2016-20:

It is our intention to consult as widely as possible when we are reviewing our equality scheme or when the matter to be consulted on is likely to have a very significant impact on a large number of people. For matters that are relevant to specific groups or smaller numbers of people, we will take a

more targeted approach to consultation, while ensuring we include organisations on our consultation list for functions relevant to Northern Ireland.

We will use consultation methods that are appropriate to the circumstances, ensuring that everyone who has an interest in participating is able to do so. We will ensure information is accessible and will offer alternative formats to meet individual needs. We will not make assumptions about individual needs but will ask individuals to tell us about needs they have to enable them to participate.

In Scotland, we consult with students about our Outcome Agreement as part of our formal student consultative process. This is an opportunity for a diverse group of students to come together to review and provide feedback on our proposals in relation to under-represented and protected groups before it is submitted to the Scottish Funding Council.

Equality Objectives, Senior Accountable Executives and Champions at Glance

	Age	C&D	Dis-ability	GR	MCP	P&M	Race	PO	R&B	Sex	So
Champion	Keith Zimmerman	Steve Hill	Mary Kellet	Hazel Rymer	Ian Fribance	Steve Hill	Kevin Hetherington	Josie Fraser	Josie Fraser	Hazel Rymer	Ian Fribance
SAE											
1a Ella Hall (Acting)							Y				
1b David Knight			Y				Y				
1c Nick Macarte		Y							Y		Y
2a Jenny Stewart			Y				Y			Y	
2b Jenny Stewart (Acting)			Y				Y			Y	
2c Tony O'Shea-Poon	Y		Y		Y		Y		Y	Y	
3a Stephen Conway	Y						Y				
3b Satvinder Reyatt			Y				Y				
3c Nigel Holt (Fiona Roberts)			Y				Y				
3d Steph Broadribb			Y				Y			Y	Y
N /Ireland - John Addy	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scotland - Kate Signorini	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wales - Rob Humphreys	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

University-wide Equality Outcome targets

Age		
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2
Increase the diversity of the University's Council and governance committees	Increase the proportion of Council members aged 55 and under from 26% in 2014 to at least 32% by 2020.	
Develop a more diverse academic, teaching and research workforce with a more diverse age profile	Increase the proportion of academic and research staff under 36 from 13% to 17% by 2022	Increase proportion of Associate Lecturers aged under 40 from 13.1% to 16% by 2020
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning

Disability						
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5	KPI 6
Reduce the attainment gap experienced by disabled and ethnic minority students as compared to non-disabled and white students respectively	Close the gap between the proportion of black students and white students obtaining a 'good pass' (i.e. a 1st or 2.1) on undergraduate modules at levels 2 and 3 from 30.6% to 25.0% by 2022/23	Close the gap between the proportion of disabled students obtaining a 'good pass' on undergraduate modules at levels 2 and 3 from 4.8% to 3% by 2022/23				

Increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff in senior roles	Increase the proportion of disabled individuals from 2.6% to 5% of senior roles by 2020					
Increase the leadership potential of women, ethnic minority and disabled staff	At least 25% of attendees from Aspire to have achieved career related moves within 2 years of completing the respective programme	Introduction of a Leadership Scorecard featuring equality and diversity metrics for all managers at Grade 8 and above by August 2018				
Increase the diversity of the University's Council and governance committees	There will be at least one disabled and/or ethnic minority member on all Committees of 10 or more members by 2020.					
Improve the selection prospects of staff across protected characteristics	At least 35% of disabled shortlisted applicants are selected (based on ability/potential to do the job) by 2020					
Improve the satisfaction of staff across the protected characteristics	Close the satisfaction gap between disabled and non-disabled staff from 4% to 2% by 2020	Close the satisfaction gap with unit management between disabled and non-disabled internal staff from 10% to 5% by 2020				

<p>Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location</p>	<p>50% of executive and senior managers have taken at least two of the Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IATs) by 2018</p>	<p>95% of executive and senior managers to have taken at least two of the IATs by 2020</p>	<p>80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020</p>	<p>Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning</p>	<p>Line managers improve their skills in developing all staff, especially those with protected characteristics as follows: a. 50% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2018 b. 100% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2020</p>	<p>Reduce the difference in satisfaction rates of disabled Associate Lecturers and Internal staff with line managers to within 2% of other staff by 2020</p>
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Gender reassignment		
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning

Pregnancy and maternity		
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning

Race						
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5	KPI 6
Improve awareness of the OU among ethnic minority potential students	Close the gap between the proportion of ethnic minority and white potential students spontaneously aware of the OU from 16 percentage points to 12 percentage points by 2020	Increase the proportion of new UK undergraduate minority ethnic students from 10.6% to 11% by 2020				

Reduce the attainment gap experienced by disabled and ethnic minority students as compared to non-disabled and white students respectively	Close the gap between the proportion of black students and white students obtaining a 'good pass' on undergraduate modules at levels 2 and 3 from 30.6% to 25.0% by 2022/23	Close the gap between the proportion of disabled students obtaining a 'good pass' on undergraduate modules at levels 2 and 3 from 4.8% to 3 % by 2022/23				
Increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff in senior roles	Increase the proportion of ethnic minorities from 7.1% to at least 10% of senior roles by 2020					
Increase the leadership potential of women, ethnic minority and disabled staff	At least 25% of attendees from Aspire to have achieved career related moves within 2 years of completing the respective programme	Introduction of a Leadership Scorecard featuring equality and diversity metrics for all managers at Grade 8 and above by August 2018				
Increase the diversity of the University's Council and governance committees	There will be at least one disabled and/or ethnic minority member on all Committees of 10 or more members by 2020.					
Develop a more diverse academic, teaching and research workforce with a more diverse age profile	At least 33% of eligible black academic staff to submit in the next Research Excellence Framework submission					
Improve the selection prospects of staff across protected characteristics	At least 25% of ethnic minority applicants are shortlisted for all roles by 2018	At least 35% of ethnic minority shortlisted applicants are selected (based on ability/potential to do the job) by 2020				

Improve the satisfaction of staff across the protected characteristics	Close the satisfaction gap between ethnic minority and white staff from 5% to 2% by 2020					
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	50% of executive and senior managers have taken at least two of the Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IATs) by 2018	95% of executive and senior managers to have taken at least two of the IATs by 2020	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning	Line managers improve their skills in developing all staff, especially those with protected characteristics as follows: a. 50% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2018 b. 100% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2020	Reduce the difference in satisfaction rates of ethnic minority staff with line managers to within 2% of other staff by 2020

Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2
Improve equality declaration data for students	Improve student declaration of religion and belief status from 28% to 50% by 2018 and to 65% 2020	

Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning
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Sex					
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5
Increase the representation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled staff in senior roles	Increase the proportion of women in senior professorial roles from 27.6% to 40% by 2020				
Increase the leadership potential of women, ethnic minority and disabled staff	At least 25% of attendees from Aurora to have achieved career related moves within 2 years of completing the respective programme	Introduction of a Leadership Scorecard featuring equality and diversity metrics for all managers at Grade 8 and above by August 2018			
Increase the diversity of the University's Council and governance committees	There will be a minimum of 30/70 sex (gender) balance on Council and Committees				
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent	50% of executive and senior managers have taken at least two of the Harvard Implicit	95% of executive and senior managers to have taken at least two of the IATs by 2020	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any	Line managers improve their skills in developing all staff, especially those with protected characteristics as follows: a. 50% of line

development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	Association Tests (IATs) by 2018			action taken as a result of learning	managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2018 b. 100% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2020
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Sexual Orientation					
Objective	KPI 1	KPI 2	KPI 3	KPI 4	KPI 5
Improve equality declaration data for students	Improve student declaration of sexual orientation status from 28% to 50% by 2018 and to 65% by 2020				
Improve the ability of line managers to support the needs and talent development of all staff, especially those who are in minorities in their particular field of work or location	50% of executive and senior managers have taken at least two of the Harvard Implicit Association Tests (IATs) by 2018	95% of executive and senior managers to have taken at least two of the IATs by 2020	80% of line managers to have undertaken unconscious bias training by 2020	Line managers engaged post-training to capture impact of any action taken as a result of learning	Line managers improve their skills in developing all staff, especially those with protected characteristics as follows: a. 50% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in developing staff who are under-represented by 2018 b. 100% of line managers will have an objective to demonstrate how they will improve their skills in

					developing staff who are under-represented by 2020
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Carers	
Objectives	KPI 1
Improve equality declaration data for students	Improve student declaration of caring and dependency status from 7.2% to 15% by 2018 and to 20% by 2020

Scotland specific outcome targets

Measure of progress	2015-16 Baseline		Milestone	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Target
	Baseline %	Baseline FTE where applicable				
Priority 1: Widening access – learning that is accessible and diverse, attracting and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds						
The proportion of new undergraduates resident in Scotland articulating from college to degree level study with advanced standing	3.4%	76 FTE		3.8%	3.9%	4%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from the 20% most deprived backgrounds (SIMD 2016)	16.4%	366 FTE		16.6	17	18%
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from the 40% most deprived backgrounds (SIMD 2016)	36%	805 FTE		36.3	36.8	38%
The number of Schools to Higher Education Programme (SHEP) involved in YASS	20			20	22	25
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from different protected characteristic groups:			Institutional gender action plan July 2017.			
Male	41%					
21 and over	85.4%					
Under 21	14.6%					
Disability declared	16%					
BME	5%					
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland from care experience backgrounds	0.7%	15 FTE	Institutional Corporate Parenting Plan 2018	0.7%	0.8%	1%

Priority 2: High quality learning and teaching – an outstanding system of learning that is accessible and diverse where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to make a difference

The proportion of new undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity	59.5% (2014/15)				60%	
The proportion of new undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity by SIMD20 (SIMD 2016)	55.4% (2014/15)				TBA	
The proportion of continuing undergraduates who complete a module presentation at the first opportunity	67.5% (2014/15)				68%	
The headcount proportion of new undergraduate degree students resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year.	58.9% (2014/15)				62%	
The headcount proportion of new undergraduate degree students resident in Scotland starting a module in academic year 1 who return to start a module in the following academic year by SIMD20	57.5% (2014/15)				TBC	
The proportion of OU students resident in Scotland satisfied with overall quality of their study experience in the National Student Survey	91%	Annual National Student Survey result			≥ 90%	
The proportion of undergraduate entrants resident in Scotland to STEM modules	37.2%	839 FTE		37%	38%	40%
The proportion of qualified students who report positive career development outcomes through their study with the OU (UK)	79%				85%	

Section 5: Diversity Data

The OU produces comprehensive reports detail Equality & Diversity where data is captured and reviewed annually.

The most recent reports include:

- Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2017: Internal Staff
- Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2016: Monitoring data - Governance

The Internal Staff report provides information on the following categories, and where applicable, data is provided relating to each of the protected characteristics:

- Workforce Composition
- Recruitment
- Promotion
- Training and Development
- Staff taking parental leave
- Grievances, Bullying & Harassment

This report is available here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/monitoring-reports>

The Governance report provides a comprehensive overview of the Governance structure, providing data about the composition of the governing bodies based on the relevant protected characteristics. Although the governance structures operate at an institutional level, the governance recognises and works within the increasingly diverse policy contexts of each nation. The Director of The OU in Scotland acts as the Vice-Chancellor's Delegate in Scotland and is responsible for the provision of services to students based in Scotland.

This governance report is available here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/monitoring-reports>

On the basis that these reports are publicly available, not all of the data has been duplicated within the body of this report. It is not possible to break all of these data sets down in order to separate out data for Scotland only but where this is possible some of the data has been included within this report for reference.

Employment data

Workforce composition, by age and location area, 2015												
	25 and under		26-35		36-45		46-55		56 and over		Total	
	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	Total	% of total	total	% of total
The OU in Scotland	6	6.3%	32	3.5%	33	2.4%	44	2.8%	31	2.6%	146	2.8%
Total	96	100%	916	100%	1375	100%	1557	100%	1182	100%	5126	100%

Workforce composition, by disability and location area, 2015								
	Disabled		Non-disabled		Unknown		Total	
	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total
The OU in Scotland	11	3.9%	134	2.8%	1	2.9%	146	2.8%
Total	284	100%	4808	100%	34	100%	5126	100%

Workforce composition, by ethnicity and location area, 2015														
	Asian		Black		Mixed		Other		Unknown		White		Total	
	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	Total	% of total	total	% of total
The OUIS	3	1.2%	0	0.0%	3	3.3%	0	0.0%	4	3.0%	136	3.0%	146	2.8%
Total	244	100%	94	100%	91	100%	41	100%	132	100%	4524	100%	5126	100%

Workforce composition, by gender and location area, 2015						
	Female		Male		Total	
	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total
The OU in Scotland	117	3.5%	29	1.6%	146	2.8%
Total	3308	100%	1818	100%	5126	100%

Workforce composition, by religion and location area, 2015 (part one)										
	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Jewish		Muslim	
	Total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	Total	% of total
The OUIS	1	5.6%	31	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Total	18	100%	1172	100%	49	100%	13	100%	38	100%

Workforce composition, by religion and location area, 2015 (continued)												
	No religion		Not known		Other religion or belief		Sikh		Spiritual		Total	
	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	Total	% of total
The OUIS	58	3.5%	47	2.3%	4	5.1%	0	0.0%	4	7.5%	146	2.8%
Total	1652	100%	2040	100%	79	100%	12	100%	53	100%	5126	100%

Workforce composition, by sexual orientation and location area, 2015												
	Bisexual		Gay or lesbian		Heterosexual		Not known		Other		Total	
	Total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total	total	% of total
The Open University in Scotland	1	3.8%	3	4.1%	86	3.3%	56	2.3%	0	0.0%	146	2.8%
Total	26	100%	73	100%	2619	100%	2389	100%	19	100%	5126	100%

Governing body diversity information

The Council Diversity Policy approved by the Council at its meeting in July 2015 sets out the approach to diversity on the Council of the OU, and seeks to ensure that equality and diversity in its broadest sense is a significant feature of the Council.

Part of the remit of the Membership Committee of the Council is to conduct an annual review of the Council's Diversity Policy which will assess its effectiveness and the continuing relevance of the objectives, and recommend any revisions that may be required.

The University's Equality Scheme 2016-2020 includes a new equality objective which seeks to build greater diversity on governance bodies over the next four years. The key performance indicators (KPIs) agreed for the objective are:

1. a minimum 30/70 sex (gender) balance on the Council and governance committees by 2020
2. at least one disabled and/or ethnic minority member on all committees of 10 or more members by 2020
3. an increase in the proportion of Council members aged 55 and under from 26% in 2014 to at least 32% by 2020

The Scheme was approved by the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) and recommended to the Council by the Staff Strategy Committee which was approved on 8 March 2016.

Data relating to the staff composition based on a number of protected characteristics is available in full here: <http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/content/monitoring-reports> (as with other links)

Pay gap and occupational segregation information

Equal Pay Information can be located on page 28 of the following report:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/sites/www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/files/files/ecms/web-content/mon-reports-2015/EandD-AnnualReport2015-InternalStaff-final.pdf>

Statutory Gender Pay Gap information is currently being produced by a consultant working with the HR team at the OU. The data relating to this is anticipated to be available by March 2018. At the point that this becomes available it will be made available on the OU website and a revised version of this report will be submitted.

Section 6: Public procurement

As part of our procurement strategy, all of the University's central procurement team's Liaison Officers have been trained in Equality Impact Assessment. They act as a single point of contact for departments seeking to put our invitations to tender and can advise on equality impact assessment. Additionally, the Procurement Liaison Officers will refer impact assessments to the University's Equality, Diversity and Information Rights team for further information, advice and guidance, as required.

Furthermore, and to aid in removing disadvantage, particularly from protected groups, the OU has laid out its commitments to address modern slavery. The commitments can be found [here](#).

Section 7: Conclusion to the report

The Open University is fully committed to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advancing equality of opportunity between people from different protected characteristic groups
- fostering good relations between people from different protected characteristic groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups

At an institutional level we have developed comprehensive policies and strategies that ensure that we not only fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties across the four nations in which we operate, but more integrally that we fulfil what we were created to do, which is:

- to be open to people, places, methods and ideas
- to create educational opportunities and social mobility for all who seek to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential
- to reach more students with life-changing learning that meets their needs and enriches society

We are proud of what we have achieved so far, but we continue to strive towards achieving social justice and continue to try to make higher education accessible to all.

In the context of Scotland, we continue to work across the whole country to engage with potential students from all backgrounds and from all protected characteristic groups, ensuring that anyone who wishes to benefit from higher education is supported to do so. The partnerships we have developed over the years enhance our work in Scotland and enable us to put the needs of Scottish students at the forefront of our minds when developing strategies and policies in line with institutional objectives but also Scottish government objectives linked to education and employment.

We have made significant progress in recent years, achieving a number of targets linked to the protected characteristic groups and other hitherto under-represented groups, but our commitment to making further improvements is clearly articulated in our Outcome Agreement as well as within this Public Sector Equality Duty report.



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Our Facebook page is at www.facebook.com/OpenUniversityinScotland



We are on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-open-university-in-scotland>

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