Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2011

Full report

The equality scheme and action plans to which this report relates are available from The Open University's Equality and Diversity website at www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/.

Comments or queries about this report are welcomed and should be sent to the postal or email address below, for the attention of the Head of Equality and Diversity.

If you would like to receive the information in this report in a different format to meet your needs, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team.

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1. Report from the Head of Equality and Diversity

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. At The Open University, we are creating an inclusive university community and helping to build 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. We are doing this so that everyone can achieve their potential. We are also doing it because it supports our social justice mission. Additionally we are doing it because it is helping us to create a culture that attracts and retains talented people who want to learn and work with us.

1.1.2. Our current equality scheme was published in December 2009 with an associated action plan launched early the following year. The scheme brought together previous policy and schemes for disability, gender and race, and our commitment to advancing equality in relation to the characteristics of age, care and dependency, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, political opinion, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In doing so, we anticipated forthcoming legal duties which would require us to demonstrate the ways that we are advancing equality across a much wider range of individual characteristics. Our action plan contained 141 specific activities which aimed to prevent unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or promote good relations and the actions were distributed across almost every function of the University.

1.1.3. This annual report provides an update on progress against the key equality challenges we set out in our scheme and an assessment against our key performance indicators. Additionally, it provides examples of how The Open University has advanced equality of opportunity in the past year. It is supplemented by several monitoring reports that aim to provide transparency on the participation, experiences and outcomes for different groups of students and staff.

1.2. Key achievements

1.2.1. This report provides a wealth of examples of the ways that The Open University continues to advance and embed equality of opportunity, through our core functions of teaching and research, in the development of our curriculum, in the ways we provide student support, the ways we manage and develop our workforce, and in our relationships with partners.

1.2.2. We have reviewed the annual reports submitted by all academic and administrative units and extracted significant achievements. These are described in section 2 of this report. The following 5 areas of achievement are especially noteworthy:

- We are utilising a wide range of technology to enhance the learning experience for our students and this provides opportunities to engage students and other audiences on equality matters, and to promote understanding and good relations. An example highlighted in this report is our celebrations to mark International Women's Day 2011. We developed free content for OpenLearn, including a review of 60 of the world's most influential and pioneering women over the past 100 years. Through iTunes U, we shared specially commissioned content on women in Science, women in the legal profession and mothers who run their own businesses.

- We are finding new ways to enhance our student experience, particularly where we have identified significant differences in outcomes. We continued to implement our ethnicity and attainment plan, and saw the attainment gap narrow. We are implementing a Securing Greater Accessibility plan which will enable more of our materials to be made available in more formats to disabled students and provide better up-front information about levels of accessibility and challenges that students may encounter. Our Disabled Students Services developed new resources, including the guide 'Studying with little or no sight', and guidelines for staff in responding to distressed and suicidal students.

- We are responding to the experiences of our staff. In the past year, we supported the re-launch of our Black and Minority Ethnic staff network, the launch of a new Disabled staff network and a Hong Kong Chinese staff network. We established a leadership mentoring programme for ethnic minority staff, and we achieved significant increases for staff declaring their disability through a range of awareness raising activities promoting the benefits of declaration.

- We are contributing to a better understanding of equality and human rights issues within our sector, across the UK and internationally. Our research on age, ageing and older people, led by our Faculty of Health and Social Care, is at the forefront of gerontology in the UK and internationally and includes a strand of research on age discrimination. Cross-national research in our Faculty of Social Sciences is contributing to our understanding of the factors that influence the entitlements of individuals to household resources, assessing the perceptions, contributions and interests of men and women. In 2011, we held a conference on higher education and caring responsibilities, and we worked with the Equality Challenge Unit and the University of Sussex to undertake research into the experience of ethnic minority staff in higher education in England.

- We are developing a range of partnerships that allow us to take educational opportunities well beyond the borders of the UK and Europe. Funding from the Scottish Government is allowing us to develop an 'access to teaching' programme for rural women in Malawi. We have won several awards for our innovative work on Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, working across 12 countries and providing training to over 400,000 teachers. The success of our English in Action programme in Bangladesh has been recognised, leading to explorations to expand the programme into India and Pakistan. The OU and the World Health Organisation are working together to address urgent health needs, in particular for child and maternal health in Sub-Saharan Africa.

1.3. Key performance indicators

1.3.1. Our current equality scheme contains seventeen key performance indicators at institutional level. Table 1 shows *student* performance indicators, with the fourth and fifth columns showing the movement of the indicator since our last annual report was published. We have colour coded the final column using traffic lights to show how we have rated our own performance.

Table 1: Student performance indicators

	2008/09	Desired trend	2009/10	Actual trend
Percentage of new UK undergraduates with declared disability	3.4	Increase	3.3	Decrease (Amber)
Percentage of new UK undergraduates from ethnic minority backgrounds	11.2	Increase	11.0	Decrease (Amber)
Percentage of new UK male undergraduates	37.9	Increase	38.1	Increase (Green)
Percentage difference between course completion rate for all UK disabled and non-disabled students	7.8	Decrease	8.3	Increase (Red)
Percentage difference between course completion rate for all UK undergraduate ethnic minority and white students	8.4	Decrease	7.8	Decrease (Green)

	2008/09	Desired trend	2009/10	Actual trend
Percentage difference between course attainment rate at levels 2 and 3 for all UK undergraduate ethnic minority and white students	18.7	Decrease	17.5	Decrease (Green)

1.3.2. Three of the six student indicators show a movement in the desired direction. The percentage of new UK disabled students and ethnic minority students have decreased rather than increased, though movement is marginal. The completion gap between disabled and non-disabled students has widened in the last year and has remained at between 7.5 and 8.4 percentage points for the past 5 years.

1.3.3. Table 2 shows *staff* performance indicators, with the fourth and fifth columns showing the movement of indicators since our last annual report. Again, we have used a traffic light system to show how we have rated our performance.

Table 2: Staff performance indicators

	March 2009	Desired trend	Dec. 2010	Actual trend
Percentage of academic staff aged 35 and under	10.9	Increase	12.0	Increase (Green)
Percentage of associate lecturer staff aged 35 and under	8.3	Increase	9.3	Increase (Green)
Percentage of internal staff with declared disability	2.1	Increase	3.2	Increase (Green)
Percentage of associate lecturer staff with declared disability	3.8	Increase	6.5	Increase (Green)
Percentage of internal staff from ethnic minority backgrounds	6.8	Increase	7.3	Increase (Green)
Percentage of associate lecturer staff from ethnic minority backgrounds	5.6	Increase	5.8	Increase (Green)
Percentage of ethnic minority staff in senior posts (pro-vice-chancellors, deans, professors and heads of units)	5.5	Increase	4.8	Decrease (Amber)
Percentage of men in support staff posts	23.1	Increase	24.2	Increase (Green)
Percentage of women in senior posts (pro-vice-chancellors, deans, professors and heads of units)	37.0	Increase	34.6	Decrease (Amber)
Percentage of respondents who declared religion or belief in the last staff survey	75	Increase	82	Increase (Green)

	March 2009	Desired trend	Dec. 2010	Actual trend
Percentage of respondents who declared sexual orientation in the last staff survey	78	Increase	88	Increase (Green)

1.3.4. Most of the staff indicators have moved in the desired direction. The percentage of ethnic minority staff and women in senior posts has decreased for the first time in several years, although this represents a reduction of just 2 ethnic minority staff and 7 women since the previous year. We will need to monitor future years so we can respond if proportions reduce further. There is a significant increase in confidence in declaring religion or belief and sexual orientation in the staff survey.

1.4. Key equality challenges

Our equality scheme prioritises eleven equality challenges. Below is a brief commentary on progress against each of these. The traffic lights are an indication of both the amount of effort made and the actual effect on reducing the inequality.

Student challenges

1.4.1. *A decline in the proportion of new undergraduates with a declared disability (Amber)*

The proportion of new undergraduates with a declared disability has declined further, while the proportion across the sector continues to increase. The overall numbers however continue to increase because there is a high retention rate. Efforts by Disabled Students Services and Marketing in the past couple of years may have helped to slow down the decline. 6.5% of all OU undergraduates have a declared disability.

1.4.2. *A higher level of dissatisfaction among some disabled students (Red)*

Disabled students are three times more likely to raise a complaint or appeal, in comparison to non-disabled students. These are not all complaints relating directly to disability, however, of the thirteen equality-related complaints that reached stage 3 in 2009/10, ten of these were disability-related. The University is implementing a Securing Greater Accessibility plan which aims to improve the experience of disabled students.

1.4.3. *A large attainment gap between different ethnic groups (Amber)*

The overall ethnicity attainment gap has narrowed for the past two years but is still significant. As a result of OU research findings, our focus is on language development in the curriculum and production of student and tutor language resources, work primarily led by our Faculty of Education and Language Studies and Student Services. The current gap is equivalent to the part-time sector average.

1.4.4. *A decline in the proportion of new male students (Amber)*

The decline has reversed in the past two years. 38.8% of all OU UK undergraduates are male, compared to 40.6% for the undergraduate part-time sector. No new action has been taken by the University to increase the representation of male students, however, faculties continue to address gender segregation through prospectuses and publicity materials.

Staff challenges

1.4.5. *A low proportion of academic staff aged under 35 in comparison to the sector average (Red)*

There continues to be a low proportion of academic staff aged under 35 in comparison to the sector average; 12% in comparison to 28%, although the proportion has increased in the past year, possibly as a result of the retirement of older academics. Analysis has shown that a high proportion of OU applicants fall within this age band, but there is a low shortlist rate, particularly in the faculties of Education and Language Studies, Health and Social Care, and Business and Law. Opportunities to affect the age profile of academic staff have been limited due to a significant reduction in external recruitment.

1.4.6. *Negative impacts of the mandatory retirement age (Green)*

This challenge has all but disappeared as a result of the announcement to remove the mandatory retirement age in 2011. The University's policy was to implement a mandatory retirement age until such time as more effective performance management systems could be put in place.

1.4.7. *A low proportion of staff that declare a disability (Green)*

The proportion of staff declaring a disability has increased substantially. This is primarily as a result of efforts made to promote higher declaration rates. A single question disability survey and wider staff surveys show that the actual proportion of disabled staff is higher than the declaration rate, as might be expected. A web resource is being developed to help answers frequently asked questions and promote further declaration.

1.4.8. *A low short-listing rate for ethnic minority job applicants (Green)*

Monitoring data shows that the difference between the short-listing rate for white and ethnic minority job applicants reduced substantially from 12.7 percentage points in 2008, to 7.9 percentage points in 2010. A heightened awareness of the potential for indirect discrimination during recruitment and selection may have contributed to this change in outcomes.

1.4.9. *Lower levels of job satisfaction and higher leaving rates for some ethnic groups (Amber)*

The staff survey for the past three years has shown lower levels of satisfaction and higher intention to leave for ethnic minority staff generally. A leadership mentoring programme (Aspire) and the re-launch of the BME staff network aim to increase confidence, participation and satisfaction amongst BME staff, and to alert all staff to the possibility of indirect discrimination. The pilot Aspire programme will be evaluated at the end of 2011.

1.4.10. *A low proportion of men in support roles (Green)*

The proportion of men in support roles has increased from 21.4% in 2007 to 24.2% by December 2010. A considerable number of units, particularly faculties, took action to increase the proportion of men appointed to support roles, including reviewing job titles and job descriptions.

Challenges in relation to both students and staff

1.4.11. *A lack of monitoring information about the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and staff, and students and staff with different religious beliefs, and in relation to pregnancy and maternity, caring and dependency responsibilities (Amber)*

Under the 'Disclosure' project, three new monitoring questions have been agreed for staff: sexual orientation, religion/belief and community background, the latter for Northern Ireland staff only. IT are currently assessing the requirement and expect to implement the new questions on the staff database soon. The same sexual orientation and religion/belief question will be introduced for students but no work has started on this yet. Preliminary discussions at our Widening Participation Management Group and our Carers' conference in May 2011 suggest that we will need to create a definition of 'carer' so that we can measure participation and progress as part of our new Widening Participation Strategy. Further work is needed to measure more systematically staff that return to work following maternity leave.

1.4.12. This review of performance and progress shows that there have been a number of shifts towards greater equality. Twelve of the seventeen key performance indicators are assessed as moving in the desired direction, and one indicator has been assessed as critical. Engagement from units across the University is, for the most part, meeting the contribution expected. There continue to be considerable pockets of good practice and innovation. Progress has been made against most of the University's equality challenges, with evidence of considerable resource being allocated for some.

1.5. Future strategic intent

1.5.1. At the time of writing, the University is undertaking a significant revision to its equality scheme for the period 2012 to 2016, informed by this annual review and by a substantial audit of inequalities. We are developing specific and measurable outcome-focused objectives, with revised performance indicators, to tackle the most significant inequalities at the OU and we will be developing action measures to ensure we can achieve these. We are widening the scope of our scheme to include socio-economic background, recognising that this is a key determinant of success and future life chances, and we plan to integrate our scheme for Northern Ireland more completely. We are developing a new equality staff development framework, highlighting the importance of providing our staff with learning and development that gives them the knowledge they need to help deliver our objectives and respond effectively to the different needs and circumstances of students and staff.

1.5.2. Our Equality and Diversity Management Group continues to provide the focus for our institution-wide response to equality and diversity internal and external drivers. We plan to review the terms of reference and membership to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose and can support the delivery of our revised objectives.

1.5.3. In Annex B, there is detail about the information we have published this year to meet our information publishing duties. We have also indicated where we have data gaps and what we plan to do about these. The University undertakes extensive annual monitoring, and we believe it is important to analyse this effectively rather than produce lots of information that is not put to any use. With that in mind, we are revising our monitoring arrangements to create a system whereby we review different information at different times, so that there is meaningful and continuous analysis across the widest possible range of indicators.

1.5.4. Our focus on equality and diversity at the OU will continue to be driven by our social justice mission, continue to support our business objectives, and allow us to demonstrate institutional compliance.

Tony O'Shea-Poon
Head of Equality and Diversity
October 2011

2. Achievements across the University

2.1. Multiple-characteristics

Staff

2.1.1. **The new public sector equality duty** for Great Britain, effective from April 2011, means that the OU needs to demonstrate how it is preventing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity across a wider range of characteristics. To support this change a project team is reviewing the processes and systems to enable collection of religion/belief and sexual orientation information for staff initially. At the same time the team is developing a new web resource to answer the most frequently asked question that job applicants and employees may have about providing this and other sensitive information, such as disability and ethnicity. Staff will be able to provide new information and update existing information confidentially through the online Staff Self Service system.

2.1.2. Following a successful pilot, **the Valued Ways of Working behavioural framework** and its associated tools have been streamlined by Human Resources into core people processes and development activities, including induction, managing performance and feedback skills, Career Development and Staff Appraisal (CDSA) and objective setting, recruitment and selection, 360 degree appraisal and tailored team development activities. The framework and tools, along with a short introductory video are available via the intranet. A 'hints and tips' for managers web page providing video assets and downloadable quick reference sheets was launched in late spring.

2.1.3. Human Resources conducted a half year review of the demographic data of participants across the **leadership and management development activities** and a report was presented to the Human Resources Divisional Executive Team in May 2011. In addition, Human Resources updated staff learning and development guides, tools and resources to incorporate information about the new equality duties.

2.1.4. A flexible working subgroup with representatives from management and the unions reviewed **flexible working policies and practices** across the University. The proposals from this review were:

- A more global approach to considering flexible working requests was required across the University, where appropriate and feasible.

- Improved recording and monitoring of data, to prevent inconsistencies of approach.

- Raise awareness generally of the University's flexible working policy.

- Raise awareness of the importance of the overriding business needs when considering flexible working requests.

2.1.5. **The third phase of the staff survey for internal staff** was conducted in 2010 which achieved an excellent response rate of 55%. Overall the quantitative results from the survey showed a positive increase in satisfaction with the OU's management, values, mission and reputation. Findings also revealed an increase in staff employed on temporary contracts, Career Development and Staff Appraisal completion rates and a large increase in the number of people reporting that they had a disability. However, there was a significant decrease in staff perception regarding job security and opportunities for promotion.

2.1.6. **An Associate lecturer (AL) staff survey** was also carried out in 2010 which achieved a response rate of 45%. The results across all questions were also positive and indicated an improvement in comparison with the 2007 results. There was a big improvement in employees reporting the OU shows respect, recognition and status. Results also indicated improved satisfaction with module teams, and communication between Associate Lecturers and the University. Associate Lecturers reported a significant improvement in performance

feedback and appraisal although the qualitative comments showed a dislike for too much monitoring of their work, and a concern about the specific lack of communication between Associate Lecturers and module teams. As found in the results for the internal staff survey, job insecurity was also a major issue for Associate Lecturers.

2.1.7. Student Services has improved the **guidance available for new Associate Lecturers** through the diversity e-learning module and will be taking steps to improve the guidance available to continuing Associate Lecturers, particularly in relation to students with mental health issues. Student Services continue to hold briefings regularly with all staff where issues around openness/sensitivity/diversity related to all students are raised and discussed - this also forms part of induction for new Student Registration and Enquiry Service Advisors. The Student Recruitment and Financial Support Manual of Policy and Procedures was updated following guidance from the Equality and Diversity Team to reflect the changes in equality law.

2.1.8. The Equality and Diversity Team has created an Equality and Diversity Management Group (EDMG) **internal blog** to support consultation on strategic equality issues.

2.1.9. Information on encouraging nominations to Senate from underrepresented categories was included in the call for nominations published on OU Life[1], and in the invitation to the informal sessions for staff interested in making a nomination. This led to a slight increase in the number of members from minority ethnic groups making nominations. An **updated version of the 'Committee Secretaries' Handbook: the role of the Committee Secretary'** was re-issued to provide additional guidance in relation to equality analysis[2].

2.1.10. Human Resources has reviewed and updated the **'information for applicants' documentation** to make reference to our Equality Scheme, our commitment to equality and diversity and information about staff networks. It also sets out the procedure for feedback from anyone who has comments or concerns about the selection process.

2.1.11. Communications reported:

- **An increase in featured equality and diversity related stories** across the range of Communications owned websites and publications.

- Media Relations proactively highlighted the work of OU in media coverage by routinely circulating press releases to minority publications.

- The Open University's **2009/ 2010 Annual Report** was produced as primarily an online report using HTML 5 for the first time. This has removed many blocks to users with peripheral devices and does not require plug-ins such as Flash or Java.

2.1.12. The Equality and Diversity team joined forces with the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum, Student Services, Institute of Educational Technology and Learning and Teaching Solutions in February 2011 to host **a cross-faculty conversation on inclusive planning and practice.** The session reminded participants of the priorities in the University's inclusion strategies, highlighted exemplar case studies from faculties and provided an opportunity for cross-faculty conversations. The aim of the session was to support faculty staff with responsibilities for inclusion strategies to plan strategically on issues of accessibility, equality and diversity, and widening participation**.**

2.1.13. Equality impact guidance has been embedded in the **OU Project Management Business Case template** which all major University Projects should use.

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[1] OU Life is the University's intranet, the University's central communication tool for staff.

[2] Equality analysis was previously known by the term 'equality impact assessment'.

2.1.14. Following a presentation at the third annual international Widening Participation Conference at Edge Hill University, Margaret Hart, Head of Widening Participation, and Tony O'Shea-Poon, Head of Equality and Diversity, were asked to contribute a chapter for a book entitled **'Institutional transformation to engage a diverse student body**,' published by Emerald Press, in May 2011.

Students and the curriculum

2.1.15. For the sixth consecutive year the University maintained its position in the top three places in the **National Student Survey Results.** Our overall satisfaction rating this year is at 93%. Over 30,000 students were surveyed, the sample size more than trebling since last year's survey. A total of 152 Higher Education Institutions and 113 Further Education Colleges from across the UK took part in the survey.

2.1.16. The University has long argued for part-time students to have access to publicly funded loans to pay their tuition fees. A key breakthrough came with the publication in October 2010 of Lord Browne's review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance in England, which highlighted the value of part-time study to the economy and recommended that **part-time students (studying a minimum of 30 credits) should be entitled to the same support as full-time students.**

2.1.17. The Centre for Widening Participation and the Centre for Outcomes Based Education have merged from August 2010 into **a single Unit called the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum (CIC).** Three areas of activity have been identified for the new Unit, which are not discrete but overlap and will mutually support each other:

- Openings [3] and the Open Programme[4].

- Curriculum Support.

- Research and scholarship in curriculum and inclusion.

2.1.18. The new **Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum** reported:

- Development of a **seminar series on widening participation,** which included a range of external speakers, to raise awareness of widening participation issues within the OU and to promote research and scholarship in the field.

- In January 2011, all **Openings tutors were invited to bid for funding for small-scale research projects** undertaken with their own tutor group to investigate key issues facing Openings students, such as student motivation and early drop out. The findings of this research will inform the development of Openings modules and particularly students support within the Openings programme.

- The **new 15 point Openings modules** now include the development of information technology (IT) skills, to promote the use of IT amongst Openings students.

- A **partnership with 'UK online centres'[5]** has been established to ensure access to IT for Openings students who do not have their own computer.

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[3] 'Openings' are introductory-level courses that have been specially designed to help students find out what it is like to study with the OU, get a taste of a subject area, develop their learning skills, and build their confidence. For more information visit the OU website: http://www8.open.ac.uk/study/explained/study-explained/our-range-courses/openings-courses

[4] The Open Programme gives students the freedom to choose the courses that make up their undergraduate qualification. For more information visit the OU website: http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/open-programme/index.htm

- An assessment strategy has been devised that will allow students to gain **credit from Openings modules without accessing information and communication technologies (ICT).**

2.1.19. **The Institute of Educational Technology's 'Assessment, Diversity and Evaluation' programme** brief (a strategic programme of work of which accessibility and diversity is a core element) was formulated in December 2009, and minor revisions were made in November 2010. A programme of activities is being carried out, consisting of discrete projects covering all of the priority areas defined in the programme brief. In particular, IET is making a full contribution to helping the University to meet its responsibilities under the 'Securing Greater Accessibility' implementation plan and the 'Ethnicity and Academic Attainment' plan.

2.1.20. To ensure that **communications from the Library,** whether in image, written or spoken format promote equality and reflect the wide diversity of Library users, all communications from the Library were screened by the Communications and Promotions Officer. Internal guidelines have been drawn up for the use of reproductive imagery from commercial stock photographers.

2.1.21. **The Recognising Achievement project (RAP**), which will enable students to gain accreditation for prior experiential learning and negotiated learning qualifications, has submitted its final report. The Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum are in the process of developing mechanisms and systems for embedding the outputs into approvals processes through pilot work with the RAF.

2.1.22. The **Learn Through Work project** will result in the presentation of a negotiated foundation degree allowing students to gain accreditation for work-related learning, prior experiential learning and employer-based training, as well as academic learning - this is likely to provide opportunities for those students who would normally find it difficult to gain accreditation for learning, or who may be discouraged from trying. The Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum are working with the Business Development Unit to explore the extent to which the Negotiated Foundation Degree might be used as a means of employer engagement. It is also under consideration as a component of an OU Higher Level Apprenticeship qualification.

2.1.23. The **Employability Project** will lead to the implementation of a university employability policy to help students develop employability skills through study. At its June 2011 meeting, Senate approved the proposed overall approach to employability and the proposed employability policy.

2.1.24. **The Faculty of Health and Social Care (HSC)** are undertaking an audit of current practices to establish clear user involvement strategies related to each Department and Research area, to promote the voice and interests of people who use health and social care services. HSC have started reviewing data and will be monitoring on an ongoing basis, recruitment and support of postgraduate students with a view to encouraging greater diversity in applications, and opportunities to progress for all successful candidates.

2.1.25. **The Faculty of Education and Language Studies** are launching a new postgraduate module 'Education for Development', which is focused on exploring how education can support equality and the development of individual capabilities, in less economically developed communities.

2.1.26. **The Business Development Unit** has updated documents and processes to embed consideration of equality and diversity throughout module development, including briefing documents for consultants and critical readers. The faculties of **Arts, Social Sciences and Education and Language Studies** have also reported that equality and diversity guidance is in place for critical readers for modules in development.

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[5] The UK online centres network was set up by the government in 1999 to provide public access to computers. For more information visit the UK online centres website: http://www.ukonlinecentres.com/

2.1.27. **The Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology** have identified a named academic to be responsible for equality and diversity in courses in production and presentation. The Faculty's expectations have been increased in respect of the thoroughness with which REP03s (Course module or pack specification plans) are expected to address opportunities to create an inclusive curriculum.

2.1.28. **The Open University Business School** (OUBS) launched both a new version of the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and several undergraduate qualifications during 2010-11. This has provided an opportunity to review teaching support strategy and realign support networks accordingly. **Additional ways to support students were identified**, such as the current pilot of the MBA mentoring programme; opportunities were used to work alongside partners to gain improved understanding of student needs. In the UK, the School has strengthened its student feedback mechanisms through both formal routes and social media to be more responsive to student needs and ensure consistency of teaching delivery and standards.

2.1.29. The **underlying principles relating to equality in the Research Strategy** focus on robust scholarship being central to the delivery of the OU mission of openness and accessibility, and ensuring that research outcomes contribute to the recognition of the OU as a global leader in widening participation. There is also an emphasis on the provision of appropriate and transparent opportunities for researchers to advance their careers. The 2010-11 Central Academic Unit research strategies broadly reflect these principles. Analysis of staff data is ongoing to assess whether institutional and unit level research strategies adversely impact individuals in different equality groups. A report was made to the June 2011 meeting of Research Committee**.**

2.1.30. **'Science Starts Here'** (module code S154) has now been classified as a Gateway course, alongside Openings, leading to better access to financial support for S154 students.

2.1.31. The **Marketing and Sales** Unit reported:

- The creation of a **message bank with approved core messages** at different levels of intensity to ensure that the University communicates consistently. This list of messages has been developed around accessibility (social, financial, disability). This has been published internally and is applied to all marketing communications activities where relevant.

- An increase in the amount and diversity of Widening Participation imagery available for use within all Marketing communications. These images have been collated to create an **image bank** which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

2.1.32. An **enhanced OpenLearn website has been re-launched.** This re-launched version is part of a strategy to bring all the materials the University makes available for free together in one place. This includes TV and radio-related content formerly found on the OU/BBC website Open2.net, which has now been incorporated into OpenLearn[6]. It also includes the growing range of OU material available on iTunes and YouTube. OpenLearn won the **ICT Initiative of the Year Award** at the Times Higher Leadership and Awards Ceremony in June 2010.

2.1.33. The Open Media Unit worked with the Head of Widening Participation on a project to create a **public broadcast for OpenLearn, aroun**d **offender learning.** The project set out to breakdown the public's perceived barriers towards offender learning and the place education plays in the re-settlement and rehabilitation of offenders, through interviews with OU students in prison. The interviews are to be available on OpenLearn as part of a season on Social Justice.

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[6] For more information visit the OpenLearn website: www.open.ac.uk/openlearn

2.1.34. The OU held its **third Offender Learning Conference in November 2010**. The themes centred around: student motivation and routes into Higher Education; course experiences; and impact, outcomes and contribution to resettlement. Key note speakers included: Terry Waite, CBE, humanitarian, author and broadcaster, and Pat Jones, Director of Prisoners Education Trust.

2.1.35. A major **new foundation degree 'Healthcare Practice'** (code G24) **has been given the go ahead**. This will open the door to a qualification to thousands of healthcare assistants working in the NHS and the private sector. The foundation degree is offered in Scotland in the form of the equivalent Diploma of Higher Education in Healthcare Practice (code E76). This new foundation degree will target the growing number of healthcare assistants in the NHS and the private sector. Healthcare assistants will be able to enrol without any qualifications, and could use the foundation degree as a stepping stone into the OU's nurse education programme. It is intended to make a significant contribution to the OU's mission to widen participation and to employer engagement in the health sector**.

2.1.36. Faculty of Arts has made progress on implementation of the faculty **Widening Participation Action Plan**, for example, targets have been agreed and will be annually monitored at Arts and Humanities Programme Committee; a Programme Levels Framework is in progress, embedding employability skills across the Arts curriculum and enabling improved progression of Widening Participation students.

External developments and partnerships

2.1.37. The OU is a partner of **Race online[7] 2012** the nationwide challenge which aims to get everyone online by the end of the Olympic year. With a student and alumni community numbering almost two million nationwide, **the University is pledging to find and enthuse new 'digital champions'** willing to help their friends, family and neighbours to get online. Of the 10 million adults across the UK who have never used the internet, almost half are from socially excluded groups, according to the Race online 2012 organisers. The OU has launched a search for 10,000 partners to assist in inspiring, encouraging and education of those adults who have never used the internet. Details of a range of activities in support of Race Online 2012 have been announced on Platform[8], the OU community online, as well as on the OU Life intranet.

2.1.38. The **work of the OU received recognition earlier this year in a high-profile report** which recommended that the UK invest more than £100 million over five years to boost online learning. The UK set a 'world standard of distance learning' by establishing the OU, says the report 'Collaborate to Compete', published by the Higher Education Funding Council and written by the Online Learning Task Force, comprising academics and software experts. It recommends that the OU, with bodies concerned with higher education and developing digital technologies, should lead a £25 million initiative to develop and exploit the potential of open educational resources.

2.1.39. Will Swan, Director, Students, was a speaker at the major sector conference[9] **'The Future for Widening Participation and Fair Access,'** held in May 2011.

2.1.40. The Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum, held a research-based workshop in May 2011: **Inclusive Practice and Open Education Resources**. Professor Christine Hockings,

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[7] For more information about Race Online 2012 visit their website: http://raceonline2012.org/

[8] For details of activities promoted on Platform in support of Race Online 2012 visit the Platform website: http://www8.open.ac.uk/platform/groups/race-online-2012

[9] For details of the Westminster Briefing conference programme visit the Westminster Briefing website: http://www.westminster-briefing.com/fileadmin/westminster-briefing/Agendas/CB051_WP___FA_Agenda.pdf

University of Wolverhampton outlined ways in which one project 'Learning to Teach inclusively' is attempting to address the gap in the understanding and development of professional values and inclusive practices.

2.1.41. Open Media Unit processes have been formalised to identify OU target audiences from both a marketing and strategic perspective at a senior level. The aim is for 100% of all new partnerships/platforms to be fully assessed for their **'demographic reach'** and fit to OU marketing and strategic missions.

2.1.42. **LabSpace** (on the OU's Open Courseware website OpenLearn[10]) has been working with the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum (CIC) around FlexiLearn - the OU/UNISON Partnership answer to delivering short, flexible, interactive 'nuggets' of university level learning direct to UNISON members, by providing free access to Openings courses on its website (see below).

2.1.43. A **partnership between the OU national offices in Ireland and Wales and UNISON** was named Widening Participation Initiative of the Year at the annual Times Higher Education Awards in November 2010. The partnership[11] was set up to increase participation in education among public sector workers and has so far helped over 5,500 people to access Open University courses. Training benefits to Union members include a 10% discount on all OU health and social care courses as well as many others across the OU, access to additional study support and advice on career and progression routes. The Open University in Wales also received **a 'Quality award' from the Wales TUC** for its trades union learner engagement activities, the first university to win that honour from the national federation of unions. The award commended the OU's Openings programmes of short courses as opening up for union members the potential benefits of higher education.

2.1.44. **A team from the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology and the Open University Business School is part of a new international local government Consortium** which has secured European Commission (EC) funding for the EGOV4U projec[12]t. This project is part of the EC's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme which aims to stimulate innovation and EU competitiveness through the wider uptake and best use of ICT by citizen, governments and businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises. Building upon a European award winning model developed in Milton Keynes, EGOV4U will put accessible and relevant technology into the hands and homes of socially disadvantaged people. This is a three year project with an overall budget of 5 million Euros of which up to 2.5 million Euros is provided by the EC.

2.1.45. Visitors to the **Open University Validation Service (OUVS) annual conference** attended a wide range of presentations, including one from the Head of Equality and Diversity. The presentations were aimed at raising institutions' awareness of OU values and principles. A new equality and diversity monitoring form has been developed and implemented for all validation and institutional approval events. Managers with responsibility for approved institutions report to the University's Validation Committee on aspects of equality.

2.1.46. The OU has **collaborated with Zed books to publish a new book entitled 'The Business of Human Rights',** edited by Helen Yanacopulos (Senior Lecturer at the OU, and Aurora Voiculescu (Senior Lecturer in Socio-Legal Studies and Human Rights, University of Westminster). This collection of essays addresses the interface between the calls for corporate social responsibility and the demands for an extension of international human rights standards. This book will support students studying 'Business, human rights law and corporate social responsibility' (code W822).

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[10] For more information visit the OpenLearn website: http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/

[11] Information about the partnership and what it can offer can be found on the new OU/UNISON website: http://www8.open.ac.uk/choose/unison/

[12] For more information about the EGOV4U project visit the European Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/apps/projects/factsheet/index.cfm?project_ref=250509

2.2. Age

Age equality and staff

2.2.1. In March 2011 the **Council approved a recommendation to abolish the default retirement age for all University staff with effect from 1 October 2011**. From that date no member of University staff will have their employment terminated on the grounds of retirement, unless they have decided to retire by giving the normal period of notice. Staff with normal retirement dates up to and including 30 September 2011 will retire as normal, subject to the current provisions for requesting to work past retirement date. The Universities Superannuation Scheme and The Open University are introducing flexible retirement arrangements.

2.2.2. Responses to the **third staff survey for internal staff** which took place during May and June 2010 show that job satisfaction, commitment and motivation generally increase by age, however, so does stress. The results showing job security by age illustrates an interesting pattern - in early years (21-25), job security is relatively high, between the ages of 26 and 45, job security is at its lowest and from 46 years onwards job security increases.

2.2.3. **The Faculty of Social Sciences has reported progress in improving age demographics of Academic staff** with early career academics replacing retirees where possible. More junior staff have been appointed as replacements for senior colleagues in several academic areas. Social Sciences is looking to increase the use of retired Academic staff and Associate Lecturers as consultants to improve the demographics of consultants and to benefit from their expertise. There have been successes in appointing retirees as consultants in a number of roles but pressures to reduce non-staff budgets (including consultancy) is limiting success.

Age equality and students, curriculum, research and partnerships

2.2.4. **The largest growing cohort of students at the Open University is the under 25s**. The 'Young applicants in Schools Scheme' (YASS[13]) was first developed in partnership with Monkseaton High School in 1996 and has grown substantially since then. Now over 4,000 gifted and talented students from over 600 schools around the UK take part in the scheme each year, with the numbers growing fast. In a recent survey of YASS students, 95% confirmed they had a deep understanding of the subject they studied and 82% confirmed they had learnt to work more independently. From the point of view of the schools, the Open University survey revealed that all of the coordinators surveyed would, without exception, recommend the scheme to other schools or colleges and 98% of participating schools intended to continue with it.

2.2.5. A **16 year old OU school student** led the UK team to second place in an international mathematics competition. The team competed against 14 other teams from across the world in the Romanian Masters of Mathematicians competition, held in Romania in February 2011.

2.2.6. **The Faculty of Health and Social Care's (HSC) research on age, ageing and older people** is at the forefront of gerontology in the UK and internationally. Their research investigates some of the challenges that arise during the life course, using multidisciplinary and methodologically innovative approaches. HSC have undertaken a number of innovative funded studies, including:

- Research on age discrimination.

- Research on the significance of chronological age and birthdays.

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[13] For further information about YASS visit the University's website: http://www8.open.ac.uk/choose/yass/

- The management of long-term medication by older people, examining end of life in care settings

- Investigations into the meaning of place and space for late life identity

- The Oldest Generation, part of the Timescapes programme examining the role, function and design of the kitchen in the lives of people over 60.

2.2.7. Research conducted by the Centre for Inclusion in the Curriculum (CIC) identified **variation in age across students transferring credit** but locating their studies in different subjects. Further research on this is detailed in the CIC action plan 2011-12[14].

2.2.8. The **'Building a Healthier Future: Public Health and Nursing' Conference** took place at the Walton Hall Campus in May 2011. The conference was co-hosted by the Nursing and Public Health Research Groups at the University, and was aimed at fostering learning between nursing and public health work. Issues covered at the conference included 'Older people's health and staying healthy.'

2.2.9. **In partnership with the BBC World Service**, the University presented a series of special editions (monthly between February and June 2011) of 'Health Check', the weekly roundup of global health stories and issues in medicine. **Episode 1 – 'Alzheimer's Disease: is it all bad news?'**[15] provided information on research into the ways that people with Alzheimer's and their families can be supported. The programme was based in the UK, with case studies from reporters in the developing world.

2.2.10. **The Naomi Sargant debate 2011, entitled New Technology and Lifelong Learning in an Ageing Society** was held at the Channel 4 headquarters in April 2011. The debate which took the form of a panel discussion and questions and answers was chaired by the University's Chancellor, Lord Puttnam and included Julia Middleton, Chief Executive of Common Purpose; Michelle Mitchell, Director of Age UK; Charles Clarke, Visiting Professor of the University of East Anglia; and Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Professor Sargant was the University's first woman Pro Vice-Chancellor in 1974, and became the founding Senior Commissioning Editor for Educational Programming at Channel 4 in 1981. The lectures, established in her memory, are jointly organised by Channel 4, The Open University and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

2.3. Disability

Disability equality and staff

2.3.1. An event to mark the **official launch of the Disabled Staff network** took place at Walton Hall on March 2011. The network is open to all disabled employees irrespective of their work location or type of employment. The only criterion is that individuals consider themselves to have a disability. The initial meeting provided the opportunity for network members to get together, both face-to-face and via video link, to exchange views on how the network could operate and the issues it might cover.

2.3.2. A new disability question was asked in the 2009 staff survey for internal staff that included more details on how to define a disability. The same question was asked again in the **2010 Staff Survey** which saw a large increase in the percentage of people reporting that they have a disability, from 4.3 % to 6.3%. People reporting that they have a disability gave significantly more negative scores for job satisfaction, satisfaction with promotion opportunities,

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[14] Action plans supporting the University's Equality Scheme are published online on the University's Equality and Diversity website: http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/

[15] For further information visit: http://www.open.ac.uk/openlearn/body-mind/health/alzheimer-s-disease-it-all-bad-news

satisfaction with unit management, job security, work-related stress, and their assessment of the supportive nature of the managerial environment. This negative pattern of results has now been consistent across all three waves of the Staff Survey from 2008 to 2010 and action to address the experience of disabled staff will be a priority in the revised equality scheme.

2.3.3. In March 2011 disabled staff were asked to participate in **Higher Education sector research being conducted by the Learning and Skills Network.** Staff experiences and views on the OU and higher education more generally contributed to guidance for the sector.

2.3.4. There was a 97% positive response to the question 'Do Estates meet the needs of staff with a disability' in the Estates 2010 annual customer service survey, an increase from the 92% positive response in 2009. Estates reported many improvements to the accessibility of buildings including:

- Fitting a **voice enunciator** as part of the landlord works to the lift at the regional centre in East Grinstead.

- **Braille and tactile** signage fitted to Building 12 and in the Hub at Walton Hall.

- Installation of **'way finding' coloured signage** to enable partially sighted staff and visitors to navigate Walton Hall more easily.

- To support blind or visually impaired people, **spoken signage** has been installed in the Central Walkway at the Walton Hall campus.

- Providing **more accessible parking spaces** nearer to buildings.

2.3.5. **Information Technology** reported:

- All **new student facing systems comply with the OU ICE**[16] style guides which embed best practice in this area. VOICE, the University's student relationship database, has been configured to work with JAWS / Dragon screen reading / voice activation software.

- Survey work was completed for the **effective management of hearing loops** and integrated within the Audio-Visual room strategy.

Disability equality and the curriculum and teaching

2.3.6. Science subjects present many challenges for students with visual impairments because teaching methods are based on intensive use of non-text elements (graphs, tables, data sets, diagrams, and other visual representations), models and practical work. The faculty is working with Disabled Student Services and an independent consultant to **investigate visually impaired students' experiences of studying science both within the OU and in other non distance learning institutes.** The project aims to:

- Determine whether the OU is providing effective **reasonable adjustments** for blind/visually impaired science students compared to other universities.

- Provide **better guidance** for the Science Faculty in the design and delivery of inclusive modules and qualifications.

- Seek to ensure that visually impaired students have **more opportunities to study Science courses** at the University.

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[16] OU ICE is a front-end framework of HTML, CSS and JavaScript to enable rapid development of accessible, brand compliant Open University websites.

2.3.7. The Faculty of Science has completed development of the module 'Scientific Investigations' (code S155) and the development of the module 'Advanced Scientific Investigations' (code S288) is underway. Both offer **virtual routes to gain practical science experience,** to allow those unable to attend residential schools an opportunity to gain practical experience and a Science named award. Science has also updated the Block 3 resources of their Masters level module 'Contemporary Issues in science learning' (code SEH806) to include a new audio asset that explores accessible educational media.

2.3.8. **The Institute of Educational Technology (IET**) reported:

- **Usability and accessibility testing has been successfully** carried out throughout the year across a range of different areas, including for key strategic projects that the OU is promoting (such as the Rapid Acceleration Project). Recommendations from the testing have been incorporated by project and module teams.

- IET's modules have been carefully monitored for their accessibility**. '**Accessible online learning: supporting disabled students' (code H810) is an online module concerned with **improving access to learning for disabled students.** The module has been promoted to those who would benefit from professional development on accessibility, for example, librarians, teachers, those working with people with disabilities and advertised with organisations such as the RNIB and the National Association of Disabled People.

- **Accessibility guidance for disabled students** has been consolidated into the University Computing Guide made available via the OU main website[17].

2.3.9. **Progress is being made on the Securing Greater Accessibility (SeGA) Implementation Plan** including:

- **Priorities established** via an Implementation Action Plan and agreed with Director (Students) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Quality (LTQ).

- **Role description and associated knowledge levels developed for Associate Deans** nominated to take responsibility for accessibility and their supporting Accessibility Specialist.

- **Training materials for Faculty nominees prepared** and beginning to be used.

- **Development and release of module accessibility guides** is ongoing (including ('Environments: journey through a changing world' – code U116), and 'Voices and Texts' – code A150).

- **SeGA Co-ordination Officer in place** (June 2011 - March 2012) to coordinate the implementation of outstanding actions.

2.3.10. An **accessibility guide has been developed in the Faculty of Education and Language Studies** by the 'Vivace: intermediate Italian' (code L150) module team, and this practice is to be disseminated among other module teams.

2.3.11. **Learning and Teaching Solutions** (LTS) reported:

- There is now **a single source of LTS accessibility guidelines** available through the LTS processes website.

- The **mainstream system to rollout and promote alternative formats** such as Word, MP3, ePub as standard outputs from the Word-based 'Structured Content' source

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[17] For more information about the OU computing guide visit the OU website: http://learn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4955

material is on target. The main pilot to date, the MBA module B716, has been offering e-books, DAISY books and MP3 since October 2010. Mainstream availability of these formats for all modules is expected from February 2012.

- A process is being developed for **the roll out of design reviews** into Unit developments across all Learning and Teaching Solutions Media teams, to ensure that the practical and project implications of achieving accessibility have been fully considered ahead of production.

- Media Account Managers are gradually being formally integrated at an earlier stage of new module development, to consider **use of accessibility best practice and existing and new technology**.

- **Information about the accessibility of materials** is being included in design documentation and as part of project specifications. This information will allow better communication with students in the future about accessibility of learning materials.

2.3.12. The Learning, Teaching, and Quality Office (LTQ) conducted a **mapping exercise to enable the OU to assess its performance in meeting the precepts set out in the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 'Code of Practice** for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section Three, Disabled Students'. Information in the mapping has been collated from offices from across the University by LTQ, in consultation with the Equality and Diversity Team and the Disabled Students Services Office.

Disability equality and students

2.3.13. **Dyslexia awareness week**[18] took place in November 2010. There are over 2,500 students who have disclosed dyslexia studying with the OU and support available was highlighted through personal stories on Platform, the OU community website[19]. Disabled Student Services makes available a range of study support booklets including 'Studying with dyslexia'.[20]

2.3.14. Student Services reported that:

- The number of **Disabled Student Allowance applications** forwarded by the OU in Scotland to the Students Award Agency in Scotland (SAAS) increased by 5.4% between 2008/09 and 2009/10.

- **A study booklet 'Studying with little or no sight'** for students with visual impairments was published.

- The Digital Audio project is completed. The option of **DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) talking books** has been available to module teams since October 2010.

- **Guidelines for responding to distressed and suicidal students** was produced.

- **Advocacy guidelines** for disabled students and other students on how to appoint an advocate was published.

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[18] For further information see http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/get-involved-and-fundraising/dyslexia-awareness-week.html

[19] See: http://www.open.ac.uk/platform/node/1443

[20] See http://www.open.ac.uk/disability/studying-with-dyslexia.php

2.3.15. April 2nd 2011 marked **the fourth annual celebration of World Autism Awareness Day**. The OU currently has more than 220 students who have declared they have an autistic spectrum disorder. OU colleagues encouraged students to discuss any requirements with Disability and Additional Requirements staff in their regional or national centre.[21] The OU also offers a module 'Understanding the autism spectrum' (SK124).

2.3.16. **Marketing and Sales** has been addressing the issue of increasing the proportion of new undergraduates with a declared disability by the generic inclusivity of marketing communications and breadth of media used, and specifically advertised on the 'Disability Now' website as part of brand marketing activity. The quality of alternative format prospectuses has also been improved to make them more accessible.

2.3.17. Further **on-line discussions forums** for disabled students have been held, one on 'Assistive Technologies', and one on 'Specific Learning Difficulties', providing an opportunity to exchange information and experiences.

2.3.18. **The Library** reported that:

- Agreement was reached in 2010/11 with major publishing suppliers to allow the OU to **convert non-accessible electronic articles as and when required** by students with a disability, negating the need to ask for permission for each article individually.

- Frequently Asked Questions and a podcast about accessibility were added to **the Library website**. This information has been given high prominence and is clearly visible on the Library website Homepage.

- Working in collaboration with the Library, the OU Students' Association Vice President for Student Support made a presentation to students at the end of 2010 about the support that Library Services can provide to disabled students. As a consequence of feedback received at the presentation, Librarians have been **raising awareness of the Library's services for disabled students.**

2.3.19. **'Mind the Gap', the annual Student Services Disability Conference,** for staff who support disabled students**,** this year focused on strategies to increase the retention and raise attainment for two student groups; students with Mental Health Disabilities (only 80% as likely as other students to complete their studies) and students with dyslexia (only 50% as likely to pass their course as other students). The conference also looked at how to close the current achievement gap between disabled and non-disabled students, and how to close the gap in the provision of reasonable adjustments for deaf students whose acquired first language is British Sign Language.

2.3.20. A **Securing Great Accessibility[22](SeGA)/EU4ALL[23] Disability Awareness training event** was held In March 2011, co-ordinated by the Institute of Educational Technology for all those involved in meeting the needs of disabled students. The workshop was designed to support the increasing number of people recognising that their role impacts on disabled students and to underpin further institutional embedding.

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[21] For further information see www.open.ac.uk/disability

[22] The Open University is in the process of rolling out the cross-institutional SeGA programme, which supports a continued drive towards mainstreaming the production of module materials in alternative formats, and also supports a process of clarifying and equipping staff roles across the university that impact on the accessibility of OU teaching and learning and services.

[23] For further information on EU4ALL see: www.eu4ALL-project.eu

2.3.21. Agreement has been reached with the BBC and the OU to ensure that subtitling can be made available for all the programmes for which the OU has acquired rights for commercial sale in addition to educational rights. So long as the programmes are broadcast, they automatically carry subtitles added by the BBC at the time of production.

2.3.22. **The Open Media Unit** reported that 85% of content produced in 2010/11 was fully accessible or had accessible alternatives. All commissioners across Open Media platforms are working to best practice methods to generate content that is widely accessible. Bi-annual usability tests are in place for OU owned platforms. For third party platforms the unit provides alternative formats where possible, utilises third party tools for alternative formats, or creates links to alternative formats on OU owned platforms.

2.3.23. The OU/BBC co-produced the programmes - 'Mental: a history of the Madhouse 'and 'Sectioned'. The programmes tied in with the BBC Learning's Headroom campaign, a two-year project to raise awareness of mental health and to de-stigmatise mental illness. In October 2010 **an event 'Sanity?: Attitudes to mental health' at the Cambridge Festival of Ideas, provided an opportunity to discuss the issues involved in making the programmes** with OU broadcasting executives, academic advisers and OU academics from the Faculty of Health and Social Care.

2.3.24. 'Sectioned 'was named 'best documentary' **at the MIND Mental Health Awards in 2010**, which celebrate the best portrayal of mental distress and reporting of mental health broadcast media. In addition '**Sectioned' won the Learning on Screen General Education Broadcast award**. These awards celebrate and reward excellence in the use of moving image and related media in learning, teaching and research. Open University academics, Mick McCormick, a former social worker and Lecturer in social work and Dr. Tom Heller, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Health and Social care, provided academic input and expert guidance throughout the production of the documentary.

2.3.25. OU academics Dr Ilona Roth and Dr Payam Rezale of the Life Sciences Department are the editors of a new book **'Researching the Autism Spectrum'**, published by Cambridge University Press. The book presents a multi-disciplinary perspective on autism, with contributions from leading investigators in the field.

2.4.   Gender, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity

Gender equality and staff

2.4.1. In the **2010 Staff Survey**, 69% of all responses were from women. The previous year's results showed a positive improvement across most measures, especially job satisfaction for both sexes. There were no real substantial changes in scores for 2010, apart from the widespread reporting of significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the University's management, and job insecurity. These findings are consistent for both men and women. Overall, women generally score higher across the majority of the measures.

2.4.2. Additional **paternity leave regulations** were implemented from April 2011, allowing employed fathers as well as spouses and partners (of either sex) of the child's mother, or in the case of adoption, to spouses and partners (of either sex) of the main adopter up to six months extra leave where the mother/main adopter has returned to work.

2.4.3. A decision not to proceed with a full **gender equality impact assessment for the recruitment and selection of Associate Lecturers** (ALs) was taken in 2010. In line with current University recruitment policy, the majority of AL vacancies have been filled through prior consideration of existing AL staff. This significantly reduced the scope to address occupational segregation that exists in some subject areas. Since the recruitment policy has remained unchanged in 2011 it was decided that no benefit was to be gained from

completing a full equality impact assessment. A fair selection policy is used for all recruitment both internal and external and monitoring of recruitment trends for AL staff is carried out as part of annual reporting. Equality analysis[24] will be carried out should there be any significant changes to recruitment policy or significant changes in annual monitoring statistics.

2.4.4.   The OU celebrated **International Women's day 2011** with new content on iTunes U and OpenLearn. OpenLearn looked at 60 of the world's most influential and pioneering women over the past 100 years. A host of video, audio and blog content from Open University students about inspiring women was also placed on OU Platform, the University's community website. On iTunes U[25], the University promoted the following three collections on its homepage:

- **'Women in Science'** - a download specially commissioned in support of International Women's day and the 2011 Year of Chemistry reached no.1 on iTunes in March 2011. 'Women in Science' looked at how individual female scientists have contributed to the advancement of science. The University asked some of the female scientists currently working in the Faculty of Science to nominate their personal choice of outstanding women of science. The academics also talked about their own experiences of being a woman in the sciences today. The download was heavily promoted by Apple, on the home page and via email distribution and promoted internally on Platform[26], OpenLearn Explore, and OU Life (staff intranet), and externally on Facebook and Twitter, reaching No. 9 in less than a week before hitting the top spot.

- **'Women are still poorly represented at the top of the legal profession'** - Gary Slapper, Professor of Law at the OU discussed the issues with Frances Gibb, Legal Editor of The Times.

- **Mompreneurs- Working mothers who run their own businesses** - Maria Laura Di Domenica, Lecturer in Organisational Behaviour, focused on women entrepreneurs with children, the reasons for their business choices, plus the challenges and rewards of balancing demands of work and family in this way.

2.4.5.   A **successful event was held in the Hub Lecture Theatre** at Walton Hall on 9th March 2011 to mark **International Women's Day** with the proceeds going to Oxfam. The event included speakers, dance presentations, visual displays and various stalls. It was organised by volunteers from across the University and led by Hilary Robertson, Senior Faculty Administrator, Arts Faculty who is also a member of the Equality and Diversity Management Group.

2.4.6.   The **Faculty of Health and Social Care has reviewed all job titles** and made changes to terms considered gendered. All posts that were called 'secretary' have been renamed as 'assistant' unless they are conventional secretary/personal assistant roles and 'administrator' has been changed to 'manager'. The **Faculty of Business and Law** has reported similar changes and that all job titles are reviewed when a Vacancy Release Form is raised to ensure they appeal to the widest field possible. The **Faculty of Social Sciences** has also reviewed job titles and job descriptions for secretarial and clerical posts to encourage the widest field of applicants especially in relation to gender, with some success in appointing male support staff.

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[24] Equality analysis is the new term to describe what was previously known as 'equality impact assessment'.

[25] For details about The Open University on iTunes U visit the OU website: http://open.edu/itunes/

[26] For further details about Platform, the OU community online visit: http://www8.open.ac.uk/platform/

2.4.7. A project plan is in place with sponsorship agreed from the Director, Students and University Secretary to develop and implement guidance and processes to ensure the University provides consistent and professional **support to transgender staff and students.** Working in partnership with the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) the University is developing a number of documents including a new policy, procedural guidance and educational information.

2.4.8. The **Estates** division has depersonalised application forms for the recruitment process to avoid any inadvertent prejudice against women applicants for non-traditional roles. Estates also reported introducing speed bumps in the Nursery Car Park at the Walton Hall Campus, reducing the speed limit to 10 mph, installing additional children caution signage and providing two additional parent and child parking bays and three parent drop off bays.

2.4.9. **Professor Helen King (Department of Classical Studies) has been named as one of the two top Classicists** in the Observer's[27] top 300 intellectuals. Professor King joined the Department of Classical Studies, Faculty of Arts, in February 2011. Previously Professor of the History of Classical Medicine, and Head of the Department of Classics at the University of Reading, Professor King has spent several years as Chair of the Research Resources in Medical History Committee and member, of the main History of Medicine Grants Panel and the Strategic and Enhancement Awards Committee for the Wellcome Trust.

2.4.10. **Associate Lecturer Dr. Phebe Mann was the winner of the United Kingdom Resource Centre** (UKRC) Women of Outstanding Achievement Award. Dr Mann is a Chartered Civil Engineer (CEng MICE), Chartered Surveyor (MRICS), Chartered Builder (MCIOB), Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (MCIArb) and European Engineer (Eur Ing). She has broken new ground in that she is the first and only woman who holds these professional qualifications concurrently in the United Kingdom.

2.4.11. **Dr Amanda Wrigley**, who completed her PHD in the Department of Classical studies in 2009, has won **the Philadelphia Constantinidis Essay in Critical Theory Award 2010** for a chapter of her thesis. Dr Wrigley, is an Associate Lecturer in The OU in the South on the level 2 course titled 'Exploring the Classical World'[28] (A219).

2.4.12. Science Faculty staff are contributing to research and scholarship relating to gender issues in science, for instance a **Gender and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Research Group** is being established, and the **International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology** is co-edited by Science staff (together with colleagues in the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology, and the Institute of Educational Technology).

Gender equality, the curriculum, students and research

2.4.13. The **role of women suffragettes** is highlighted in the online chapter of the new 15 point Arts Openings module 'Sense of the Arts' (Y180).[29]

2.4.14. **The Marketing and Sales Unit** has been addressing issues of gender imbalance in subject areas by the generic inclusivity of marketing communications and breadth of media used. In addition, steps have been taken to address this imbalance at a University 'brand' level (not specific subjects) and this resulted in a TV campaign on Dave TV in 2011.

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[27] For the Observer list visit the The Guardian website:
http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2011/may/08/top-300-british-intellectuals?intcmp=239

[28] For more information about 'Exploring the Classical Word' visit the University's website:
http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/a219.htm

[29] For further information about 'Sense of the Arts' visit the University's website:
http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/y180.htm

2.4.15. A **conference 'Higher Education for students with caring responsibilities - inspiration, flexibility and support'** was held on the Walton Hall campus in May 2011. The conference explored the ways that higher education and the opportunities it brings can be made accessible for people with caring responsibilities. Keynote speakers were Madeleine Starr, Head of Policy Development at Carers UK, and Will Swann, The Open University's Director, Students, who highlighted aspects of the situation of carers and related these to the changing political and higher education scene. A student's perspective was provided by one of the OU's carer graduates and there were several workshops focusing on the ways the University reaches out to and supports carers in Higher Education. The opportunity was also provided to display information about the work of faculties and units during the lunchtime networking session.

2.4.16. **Open University Validation Services** has made a business case for the redigitising of the records that belonged to the Council for National Academic Awards. This has been made with a view to obtaining an editable database that will facilitate the amendment of records for transgender students.

2.4.17. GenIX is an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded research project in the Faculty of Social Sciences, which aims to understand **the factors that influence the entitlements of individuals to household resources**. By focusing on heterosexual couples with or without children, the aim is to uncover the ways in which such factors have different effects according to whether they pertain to men or to women, and in particular are influenced by different perceptions of the contributions and interests of men and women. This study is being conducted cross-nationally to explore the effect of socio-economic, cultural and policy differences.

Gender equality, external developments and partnerships

2.4.18. **The Faculty of Education and Language Studies** (FELS) made a successful application to the Scottish Government for funding to develop an **access programme into teaching for rural women in Malawi.** £400,000 has been awarded over three years from the International Development Fund by the Scottish Government, to further develop its successful teacher education programme for use in Malawi. The funding will support much-needed schools-based teacher training for women in isolated and rural areas of Malawi through the OU's Teacher Education Sub-Saharan Arica (TESSA) programme. This support will enable 1000 scholarships for the TESSA project to be made available to women who aspire to become primary school teachers in their local community. It is aimed at individuals aged 18 – 40 who have completed secondary education but do not have the grades required for entry into teacher education. The first scholarship holders started training in April 2011.

2.4.19. The International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology[30], edited by Clem Herman, Senior Lecturer in Telematics, held a **Gender and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Research Seminar** at the University in March 2011, with presentations by Dorothy Gordon, (Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT) on 'Women and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the African context', and Professor Maureen McNeil (Professor of Women's Studies, University of Lancaster) on 'the Gendering of Scientific Biographies.' The webcast of the seminar is available on the OU stadium website[31].

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[30] For more information about the Journal visit the International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology website: http://genderandset.open.ac.uk/index.php/genderandset

[31] For a replay of the event visit the University's 'stadium' website: http://stadium.open.ac.uk/stadia/preview.php?whichevent=1626&s=31

2.4.20. Guests from Jordan and Egypt joined the national celebration for **Wales's 'Women making a difference'** programme at Cardiff's Mansion House recently as part of the British Council's 'Active Citizens' project. The University's 'Contemporary Wales' course and book were showcased as part of the evening's focus on Wales's multi-cultural heritage, and copies of the book were presented to the visitors from the Middle East.

2.5. Race

Race equality and staff

2.5.1. In response to the **2010 staff survey for internal staff**, white staff produced significantly more positive scores than ethnic minority groups across a broad range of measures. Areas that stand out the most are related to the differences between job satisfaction (work, colleagues, opportunities for promotion and pay) and intention to leave. These figures are consistent with last year's survey. 94% of people who completed the survey categorised themselves as white.

2.5.2. As an outcome of the 2009 internal staff survey results and a review of equality monitoring statistics and some qualitative research was undertaken to explore the experience of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff at the University. As a result of this research the following decisions were made:

- To re-launch the **BME staff network**. This network provides opportunities for existing and new BME staff to enable peer support, build confidence and reduce feelings of isolation that may be experienced by some staff.

- To design and introduce a leadership mentoring scheme for BME staff. The aim of the **mentoring scheme, called 'Aspire'**, is to support the career development and progression of BME staff.

An event, attended by over 50 participants, was held in December 2010 to **launch Aspire and re-launch the refreshed BME network**. The Vice Chancellor welcomed participants to the event, and Honorary Graduate Professor Geoff Palmer OBE was the guest speaker. The opportunity to participate in 'Aspire' proved very popular and it was oversubscribed. Eleven mentees have been matched with mentors, who are senior members of staff from across the University and mentees will have regular one to one meetings with their mentor throughout the nine month programme.

2.5.3. Working in partnership with the University of Sussex, the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) completed a research project sponsored by the Equality Challenge Unit into the **experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic Staff working in English Higher Education Institutions**. A final report has been presented to the sponsors and will be published by the Equality Challenge Unit.

2.5.4. Staff in the office of the OU in Wales continue to be encouraged to undertake **Welsh language tuition** and now 25% of the staff are either fluent or have a good command of the Welsh language.

2.5.5. **The Hong Kong Chinese network** was established to exchange information, provide peer-support and develop social networking. This network is intended to create new opportunities for communication and support Hong Kong staff at the University. Members meet occasionally and celebrate Chinese festivals with various activities.

2.5.6. As part of **Black History Month celebrations in October 2010** the following events took place:

- The **OU sponsored community organisations** in Milton Keynes held an event at

Walton Hall campus. There were guest speakers, African drumming and dancing, a hair and fashion show, sale of African jewellery and artefacts and African inspired food.

- Estates included **Caribbean food** in their catering menus.

- To generate interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths among young people from minority ethnic communities, the Open Media Unit produced videos in conjunction with the Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology and writer and poet Benjamin Zephaniah. Known as the **Z Files**, the videos explore the lives, aspirations and careers of acclaimed black scientists, innovators and engineers and can be found on the OU Learn Channel on YouTube[32].

2.5.7. The University welcomed again Year-9 students (aged 13 to 14) from disadvantaged backgrounds as part of the **Equal Choices Schools Initiative,** a programme to give the students a flavour of working life.

2.5.8. **Estates** continued monitoring the percentage of ethnic dishes offered via the catering contract. There have been various initiatives which incorporated dishes from around the world as monthly promotions and feedback cards were provided**.**

Race equality, students, and the curriculum

2.5.9. The **Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum** reported that:

- A section on BME students has been included in the **Annual Course Report for Openings courses** to increase awareness and focus attention of course teams on the importance of enhancing completion rates for BME students.

- Openings has established **a register of Associate Lecturers, experienced in English as an additional language and literacy teaching,** to support other tutors and students for whom English is not a first language.

2.5.10. A comprehensive progress report was provided to the Widening Participation Management Group in February 2011 on the implementation of **the University-wide ethnicity and student attainment action plan.** The Action plan is on track and the attainment gap has narrowed in the past 2 years.

2.5.11. **The Faculty of Education and Language Studies (FELS)** has developed several case studies about the experience of minority ethnic students for undergraduate programmes, and follow up discussions have informed actions for 2011/12. FELS also reported the launch of a number of projects to create materials and activities for students with English as an additional language, working with a number of other Faculties including Health and Social Care and Business and Law.

2.5.12. An **iphone/ipad Chinese characters Application[33]** developed by the Department of Languages and Knowledge Media Institute is available on iTunes for download. This application is linked with the University's Beginners' Chinese Module L197. This free download version teaches the first 20 characters, some basic greetings and numbers introduced in the course materials.

2.5.13. Student Services reported:

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[32] View the Z files on the University's OU Learn Channel on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/user/oulearn

[33] More information and screen shots of the App can be found from
http://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/chinesechars/id391940955?mt=8

- With the support of the Widening Participation team, Student Services established a **student consultation group** for Studenthome and related online activities to ensure a wider engagement from diverse groups of students.

- The English for OU study website[34] which is part of the enquirer area 'Study at the OU', addresses **the use of academic English for OU study** and includes video of OU students who have English as an additional language. English for learning resources[35] for students are being updated in 2011. Tutor resources for this topic were also added in March 2011.

- As part of the **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data collection** exercise in 2010 all students were required to complete and update their details relating to ethnicity. Systems have been updated so that questions on ethnicity are now compulsory at the registration stage; this will improve collection of ethnicity data and reduce the proportion of students for whom their ethnicity data is unknown.

2.5.14. **The Institute of Educational Technology** conducted a literature review and produced a report identifying **factors that lead to high attainment for minority ethnic students**. Previous studies were reviewed and a report produced on the reasons why students choose face-to-face or online courses to identify patterns in relation to ethnicity.

2.5.15. **The Faculty of Mathematics, Computing and Technology (MCT)** commissioned an in-depth study to ascertain the differences in attainment between BME students on the Computing Programme compared to those on the Technologies Programme and the Relevant Knowledge sub programme. The results indicated that the differences in attainment were comparable to those seen across the university.

Race equality and research

2.5.16. The **'What is British Jazz?'** project funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council 'Beyond Text' programme, hosted the international conference 'Jazz and Race, Past and Present' at the OU's Walton Hall Campus in November 2010. Scholars from around the world delivered papers, with Professor Guthrie Ramsey (University of California, author of 'Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to HipHop') the keynote speaker.

2.5.17. Research carried out by Lotte Hughes, OU Lecturer in African Arts and Cultures, with the support of a UK Africa Partnerships Scheme Award, appeared in a new booklet on research in Africa by the British Academy, 'Working with Africa: Human and Social Science Research in Action'. The **study of heritage and peace issues**, supported by a £30,000 British Academy grant, was led by Lotte Hughes and Karega-Munene (United States International University, Nairobi). The booklet also mentions Lotte's ongoing Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project '**Managing Heritage, Building Peace: Museums, memorialisation and the uses of memory in Kenya',** as well as the 'Nairobi Process' which Karega and Lotte also contributed to – a search for ways to support African academics and strengthen partnerships in humanities and social science research**.**

2.5.18. A 4 year project called **OECUMENE: Citizenship after Orientalism** funded by the European Research Council and led by Professor Engin Isin, the OU's Professor of Citizenship, has been established. The project is designed to challenge traditional Western perceptions through a combination of academic research and public experience with contributions from around the world about what it means to be a citizen. The researchers for the project are drawn from across the world and include lawyers and activists as well as academics. At the conclusion there will be a major conference on the question of citizenship.

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[34] See: http://www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy/english

[35] For further information see: http://www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy/english-for-learning.php

Race equality and partnerships

2.5.19. The **OU and the World Health Organisation** are working together to address urgent health needs, in particular those relating to child and maternal health in sub-Saharan Africa. The issues concerned are:

- A joint funding strategy to support partnership activities.

- Sharing expertise in using distance and work-based learning to train and educate workers particularly those working on child and maternal health in rural communities.

- Engaging in joint research and evaluation.

2.5.20. '**Syrian School**'*,* a BBC/OU co-production, which was part of a series capturing the day-to-day lives of school children in cultures outside the UK, *w*on the prestigious **Japan Prize 2010 International contest for Educational Media**. The objective of the Japan prize is to improve the quality of educational programs around the world and to contribute to the development and fostering of international understanding and cooperation. 'Syrian School' video and activities have been added to the British Council Connecting Classrooms project for schools worldwide. Since its transmission, 'Syrian School' has been translated into 10 languages and has been shown in more than 40 countries*.*

2.5.21. Representatives from The Open University attended the **Race for Opportunity Awards dinner in July 2010.** The OU was shortlisted in the category of 'Collaboration and Partnership' for its **innovative work on Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA).** In the five years since it was created TESSA has made a remarkable and enormous difference to education across 12 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing training materials to over 400,000 teachers. The project reaches even further as teachers anywhere in the world can access the resources freely via the internet. OLNET/TESSA[36] fellowships have been awarded to 5 academics from Sub-Saharan Africa.

2.5.22. The OU's research, monitoring and evaluation work on the **English in Action (EIA)[37]** innovative DfID **(**UK Department for International Development) funded programme to improve English Language in Bangladesh has just received a **top rating in a DfID review**. Extensive baseline research was carried out at the start of EIA and major studies in 2010 have already demonstrated a substantial increase in English spoken in the classroom, and in student participation in lessons. The OU team is working with 15 postgraduate researchers at Dhaka University on ongoing research in the field. The University is now investigating possible teacher education programmes in India and Pakistan.

2.5.23. **The Faculty of Business and Law** has students registered in over 100 countries with the majority of students outside the UK based in Continental Europe and in territories where they work with partners (Russia, Eastern Europe, Africa and Far East). Through a range of interactions the School seeks to develop learning materials that are culturally sensitive (e.g. International Fellowship Programme, International Partner Research Networks, critical readers, developmental testers) and partners can partially amend teaching content ,such as case studies, to make it more relevant to their markets and students. Interaction between students and associate lecturers around the world is encouraged via online forums. **End of course surveys have been designed and provided to partners teaching Business School qualifications in translation** to test the effectiveness and relevance of teaching. In addition, the faculty has undertaken a collaborative review with their partner in South Africa to understand how the learning requirements of UK and South African students compare and the ABLE-Ghana project where the School has worked closely with five Ghanaian Schools,

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[36] For further information see: http://olnet.org/node/537

[37] Visit the EIA website: http://www.eiabd.com/eia/

both in the UK and in Ghana, to develop joint learning content using Open Educational Resources.

2.5.24. **The Development Office** reported that the Health Education and Training (HEAT) programme has completed the work funded by UNICEF in Ethiopia. This work included the development of 13 theoretical modules, authored by Ethiopian health experts, and the training of tutors and other key personnel to support the 1,000 plus health extension workers currently studying as part of the pilot. HEAT is a ground-breaking health education and training solution, created by The Open University. HEAT has the potential to transform the delivery of frontline health care in developing countries. Our ambition is to reach 250,000 healthcare workers across sub-Saharan Africa by 2016.

2.5.25. The **Open University and the African Medical and Research Foundation** (AMREF) Directorate in Kenya have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together on the **education and training of health workers in Africa**. The agreement paves the way for the two organisations to extend their existing collaboration in Ethiopia to train hundreds of thousands of front-line health workers across sub-Saharan Africa, using innovative distance- and e-learning methods. The University, through its Health Education and Training (HEAT) programme, has been collaborating with AMREF in Ethiopia since April 2009, to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the country's 30,000-plus community health workers. This project, carried out with the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, is central to Ethiopia's response to the Millennium Development Goals.

2.5.26. In February 2011, Heather Barratt, Senior Partnerships Manager in Curriculum and Qualifications Office, took part in the **inaugural Dishaa**, an initiative that aims to enhance relations between India and the UK by fostering discussion among diverse leaders. It will build shared approaches to 21st century political, economic and social challenges and expand existing partnerships, friendships and dialogues that are already taking place.

2.5.27. **'Peace, Conflict and Intervention'**, held in April 2011 is part of a series of seminars on 'African Agency in Politics'[38] run by the British International Studies Association (BISA) Africa Group and led by Dr. Sophie Harman of City University and Dr William Brown of the OU. It is funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Group (ESRC) and BISA

2.5.28. The OU in the West Midlands held its first **Community Partnerships Event** in October 2010. Local community students who studied Openings courses over the last year were recognised for their achievements. A number of learners have already progressed onto longer courses that will count towards OU qualifications. Representatives from West Midlands' schools, children's centres and voluntary organisations attended the evening of celebration.

2.5.29. A two day International Centre for Criminological Comparative Research (ICCCR) **conference on 'Ethnicity, Crime and Justice: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives'** was held at Walton Hall in June 2010. The conference stemmed from a European Social Research Council funded research project on ethnicity, crime and justice in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and aimed to bring together historians and criminologists working in this field.

2.5.30. The **Bridges Programmes (Glasgow)** is a unique work shadow/work experience scheme for refugees and asylum seekers, which provides an opportunity for participants to gain first-hand experience of a working environment. Participants 'shadow' an experienced employee at a member organisation for one or two days a week over a three-month period. Mentoring and coaching are provided throughout the scheme. **The OU in Scotland has been working with Bridges on the following projects:**

- **The 'Making your experience count for Third Sector' (module U122) pilot** at Bridges ran from November 2010 – March 2011. 6 students took part.

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[38] For further information see: http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/bisa-africa/african-agency

- **The OU @ Bridges (2008-11**) is a three-year matched funded initiative whereby an OU educational advisor is in situ in Bridges one day per week as part of the Bridges team to offer referred clients information, advice and guidance on their educational needs including progression to OU study. During the 3 year period 88 clients have been referred to the OU advisor.

- The OU in Scotland has received £5,000 from the Scottish Funding Council for a project, between April and June 2011. An OU consultant experienced in research into reflection in Health and Social Care and the voluntary sector undertook **a study to explore the development of reflective practice, within processes and programmes at Bridges.**

2.6. Religion or belief

Religion or belief equality and staff

2.6.1. The 2009 staff **survey for internal staff** introduced a new question about religion/faith/belief. Across all religions a common theme occurred; staff reported they were more positive in the 2010 survey about the management at the OU, and more negative about opportunities for promotion and job security. Like the previous year's results, overall there were no real significant differences in scores across any of the questions for the different religious groups. Based on responses, Christians comprised the largest group followed by Atheists and those that preferred not to disclose their religion or belief.

2.6.2. As part of the **Staff Disclosure Project 2010/2011**, involving staff from Human Resources, the Equality and Diversity Team and Student Services, questions have been developed to gather staffing data on religion or belief. Changes to systems and processes are being made to enable collection of religion or belief data and for it to be stored in the Human Resources 'Staff Self Service' system and underlying database. In addition, web pages are being developed on the equality and diversity website to promote disclosure across all equality characteristics as well as making changes to recruitment documentation. On completion, these changes will be communicated to staff.

2.6.3. Awareness was raised about the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) sponsored **project[39] looking at the experiences of staff and students with a religion and belief in Higher Education Institutions** in the UK. Through articles placed on the staff intranet, TutorHome, and StudentHome, staff and students were encouraged to participate in the anonymous online survey.

2.6.4. The **Estates** Division has responded to staff requests related to religion in different ways, such as providing Halal meat at 'The Hub' catering facility at Walton Hall, and fitting of modesty panels to work stations.

Religion or belief equality, students and the curriculum

2.6.5. **Examination periods up to 2015** have been planned. The timing of religious festivals and its impact on the University calendar varies each year, but pro-active planning is in place to minimise the impact on students where festivals otherwise clash with examinations and language oral assessments. Between now and 2015 amendments to the 'normal' schedule have been made for six examination periods because of religious festivals. Associate Lecturers are made aware via TutorHome of the University's calendar of religious events so that they can adjust tutorial dates as necessary. Requests for adjustments in relation to day schools are responded to individually.

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[39] For information about the research project into religion or belief in higher education, the experiences of staff and students, please visit the ECU website: http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/religion-and-belief-in-higher-education-researching-the-experiences-of-staff-and-students

2.6.6. Language – its use, expression and impact is the focus of a new inter-disciplinary undergraduate module, **Voices and Texts (A150)** presented from November 2010. Designed to follow on from the introductory module in arts and humanities, 'The arts past and present' (AA100), this 20-week module focuses on language in a wide range of contexts and from the perspective of different academic subjects. These include classical studies, history, literature, music, religious studies *and* two additional subjects, creative writing and English language studies. Through three thematic areas, students explore issues prevalent in the modern world, including how authority is conferred on texts, through establishing approved canons of selected works, and how authority is challenged and re-made, analysing materials from Buddhist prayer to South African drama.

2.6.7. This year marks the **400th anniversary of the publication in 1611 of the King James bible-** the most widely read translation of the bible ever made. As one of a series of publications to mark the event, Professor Bob Owens, Faculty of Arts, was invited by Oxford University Press to edit the 1611 text of 'The Gospels' for the paperback series, Oxford World's Classics, published in March 2011. His aim has been to make the Gospels accessible to modern readers, while preserving the splendour and music and rhythms of the King James text.

2.7. Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation equality and staff

2.7.1. The 2009 **staff survey for internal staff** introduced a new question asking staff about their sexual orientation. In the 2010 staff survey for internal staff, as with the previous year's survey, 85% of employees who responded reported that they were heterosexual. Findings show that there were no significant differences in the answers to the questions in the survey across the different sexual orientation categories. This finding is consistent with the previous year's results. Again, across the different sexual orientation categories, satisfaction with the University's management and job insecurity stand out as scores that have positively increased from last year's results.

2.7.2. As part of a **Staff Disclosure Project 2010/2011**, involving staff from Human Resources, the Equality and Diversity Team and Student Services, questions have been developed to gather staffing data on sexual orientation. Changes to systems and processes are being made to enable collection of sexual orientation data and for it to be stored in the Human Resources 'Staff Self Service' system and underlying database. In addition, web pages are being developed on the equality and diversity website to promote disclosure across all equality characteristics as well as making changes to recruitment documentation. On completion, these changes will be communicated to staff.

2.7.3. As a member of the **Stonewall Diversity Champions programme** the University participated in the **2011 Workplace Equality Index**, Stonewall's comprehensive benchmarking exercise that showcases Britain's top employers for lesbian, gay and bisexual staff. The OU submitted 40 pieces of evidence and 198 responses from staff (internal staff and Associate Lecturers), the second highest response in the survey. The University scored 123 out of 200 and was ranked 152 of 378 organisations. 5 Universities ranked in the top 100. Daniel Danso from Stonewall gave a presentation on the OU results at the Equality and Diversity Management Group in April 2011.

2.7.4. Human Resources made changes to the paternity leave and adoption leave policies to make more explicit that the policies and related rules apply equally to same-sex and opposite-sex partnerships. We also amended our information for job applicants, to highlight the existence of the LGBT staff network.

2.7.5. The LGBT staff network grew to more than 75 members. The network provides an important forum for LGBT staff to discuss issues and for these to be raised with Human Resources or through the Equality and Diversity Management Group. In November the co-chair of the

LGBT staff network, attended an event at Salford University which brought together representatives from LGBT staff networks across the university sector.

Sexual orientation equality and curriculum, research and external engagement

2.7.6. Dr Rebecca L Jones, Lecturer , **Faculty of Health and Social care**, and Dr Richard Ward, the University of Manchester , School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work have edited a book **'LGBT issues: Looking Beyond Categories**,' Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh ' (2010). A focus of the book is on how categories like 'lesbian', 'gay', 'bisexual', and 'trans' shape everyday practice and service use. It looks at the circumstances in which people choose to describe themselves with these identity labels and the situations in which they reject or feel constrained by them. Intended primarily for a practitioner audience and for those studying in the field of health and social care this volume will also interest academics and an international audience because of its distinctive theoretical sophistication about the nature of sexual identities. Dr Jones and Dr Ward have also written an Outline, funded by Research in Practice for Adults, '**How can adult social care services become more accessible and appropriate to LGBT people?**' The Outline identifies five key approaches for promoting more equitable provision for lesbian, gay bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) people. It is supported by a range of examples taken from the evidence base for social care and sexuality.

2.7.7. The Centre for Professional Learning and Development worked in partnership with the Equality Council to develop and launch a new online module called 'Managing Diversity'. The module is part of a suite of online professional development courses, primarily aimed at people in the workplace. The module includes detailed discussion on sexual orientation issues in the workplace.

2.7.8. The University renamed its Maths and Computing building as the Alan Turing building, and held an event with a number of talks and an opening ceremony. This renaming of a major building at the University further acknowledges Turing's enormous contribution, and took place shortly after both Bletchley Park and the previous Prime Minister took steps to acknowledge the ill-treatment that Turing received because of his sexuality.

3. Annexes

Annex A: About The Open University

The Open University is open to people, places, methods and ideas. We promote educational opportunity and social justice by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

The Open University is distinctive among higher education institutions. From our roots in Prime Minister Harold Wilson's vision of a 'university of the air' becoming a reality with the granting of the Royal Charter in 1969 to our current position as a world leader in the provision of higher education distance learning, the journey has been an extraordinary one and more than 2 million students have studied with The Open University.

The University has no minimum entry requirements for admission to undergraduate modules and around one third of our UK undergraduates have entry qualifications lower than those normally required by other UK universities. We accept students of all ages including students under the age of 16 where it is evident they can achieve the learning outcomes of the module. More than 250,000 students enrol each year and around 12,000 students have declared disabilities.

We teach primarily at a distance through a system of supported open learning which includes the provision of high quality print and multimedia teaching materials, together with personalised tuition, learning feedback and support. Personalised tuition takes the form of correspondence, face-to-face and online tutorials, telephone tuition, and residential and day schools, depending on the module being studied.

The Open University is the UK's only UK-wide university and we have had offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales since our inception. Through economies of scale, the University is able to deliver a breadth and quality of programmes to each of the nations of the UK.

In addition to offices in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh, the University has ten offices across England and a headquarters at Milton Keynes. Our recruitment pool is local, national and international and there are around 5,500 academic, administrative and support staff and around 7,000 associate lecturer teaching staff, the vast majority of whom work part-time.

The potential to understand and respond to the needs of local communities is greatly enhanced through our network of national and regional centres, and outreach and marketing teams play a vital role in realising the University's strategic objective of encouraging and enabling a more culturally, socially and economically diverse student group to learn, achieve and prosper.

The University continues to expand its global reach. We manage partnerships with more than 20 education providers, reaching more than 45,000 students in more than 30 countries, including China, India, Russia, Singapore and seven Arab countries. We are the only British university which focuses on delivering learning through capacity-building inside developing nations, employing our expertise in teaching and research to enhance educational infrastructures. The Development Office coordinates partnerships and development work across 13 countries, including major programmes to support teacher and health care worker training, in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

Annex B: Publication of equality information

As a public authority, the OU is required to publish information about its employees and other persons affected by its policies not later than 31st January 2012 and then at annual intervals. The OU has published a significant range of data on its employees, students, and governance bodies annually for many years in order to provide transparency. This data has included a wide range of indicators on the participation, experience and outcomes for different groups of people.

We have introduced biennial monitoring for some of our indicators, where previous monitoring did not show major issues or where issues were known and unlikely to change quickly. This approach allowed us to conduct more robust analysis and we intend to continue this approach so that future analysis is meaningful and our equality work continues to be evidence based.

What we have published this year

This year we have published the following nine monitoring reports:

a) Governance – showing the membership composition of our Senate and our Council

b) Internal staff – showing workforce composition, promotions, training and development, cases of grievance, bullying and harassment, gender pay gap, and responses from our staff survey

c) Associate Lecturer staff – showing workforce composition, access to the Associate Lecturer development fund, cases of disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment, information about the gender pay gap, and staff returning from maternity leave

d) Agency staff – showing workforce composition

e) Consultants – showing workforce composition

f) Residential Schools – showing cases of disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment

g) Students – showing participation, module completion and academic attainment for UK undergraduates and postgraduates and non-UK based students

h) Student complaints – showing complaints, appeals and cases reviewed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

i) Student feedback – showing key findings from our most recent Courses Survey and Withdrawal Survey

Most of the reports provide information broken down by age, disability, ethnicity and gender, with some survey reports providing information broken down by religion or belief and sexual orientation. These reports are available on our Equality and Diversity website at http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity/.

Gaps in our data

We have identified the following data gaps or deficiencies:

a) Apart from staff surveys, we have no monitoring of religion or belief, or sexual orientation for our staff and students, although we are committed to introducing this

b) We have paper-based monitoring of community background for our staff in Northern Ireland

c) We have no way at present to identify and target support at students with care responsibilities

d) Our data for staff returning from maternity leave is not robust

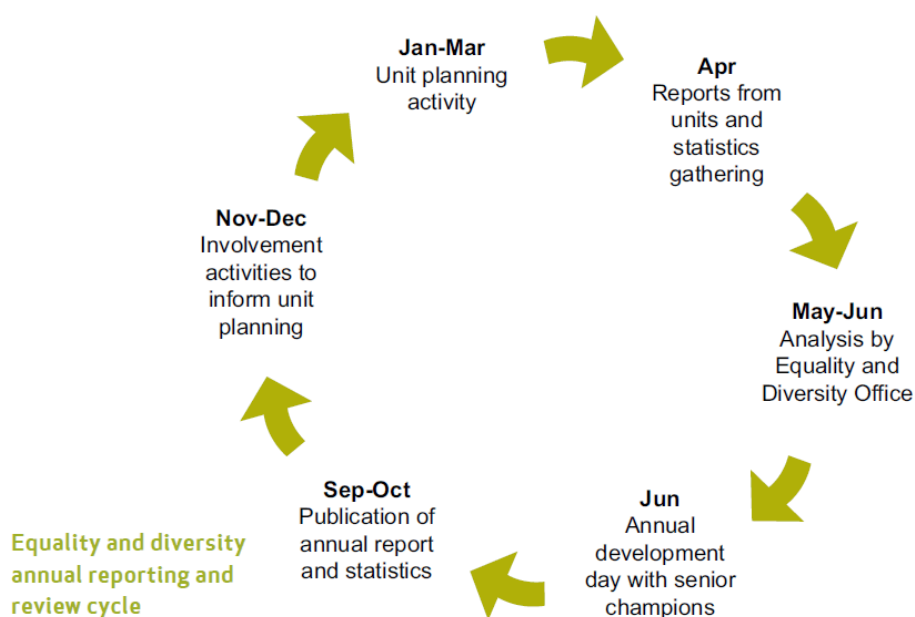Our revised equality scheme will set out our plans to address these data gaps.

Considering the relatively small number of transgender staff and students and therefore the unreliability of data, along with the importance of maintaining individual privacy, which is a legal requirement as well as an ethical duty, we do not consider it helpful to introduce transgender monitoring. Instead we will rely on qualitative information when assessing the experience of transgender staff and students and we will strengthen our policy and guidance in this area.

Annex C: Our equality annual reporting and review cycle

The table below sets out our monitoring strategy, showing the groups of staff and students we produce reports for, the indicators that are monitored and the frequency of monitoring. Indicators that are monitored every two years are those where previous monitoring has not shown any major issues or where the issues are known and are unlikely to change quickly.

Group	Annual monitoring	Biennial monitoring
Undergraduate and postgraduate UK students	Participation, course completion and academic attainment Complaints and appeals Student feedback	Reasonable adjustments
International students		Participation, course completion and academic attainment
Senate and Council		Composition
Internal staff	Workforce composition Recruitment Promotions Development Leavers	Grievances, disciplinary, bullying and harassment Reasonable adjustments
Associate lecturer staff*	Workforce composition Recruitment Development Leavers	Grievances, disciplinary, bullying and harassment Reasonable adjustments
Consultants		Workforce composition
Agency temporary staff		Workforce composition
Residential schools staff	Workforce composition	Grievances, disciplinary, bullying and harassment Reasonable adjustments

The University has an annual reporting and review cycle for equality and diversity, which ensures that equality challenges are identified, prioritised, resourced and reviewed on a regular basis. This is shown in the diagram below.

Equality and diversity annual reporting and review cycle

- **Jan-Mar** Unit planning activity
- **Apr** Reports from units and statistics gathering
- **May-Jun** Analysis by Equality and Diversity Office
- **Jun** Annual development day with senior champions
- **Sep-Oct** Publication of annual report and statistics
- **Nov-Dec** Involvement activities to inform unit planning

Annex D: Our equality vision and principles

Our equality vision and principles are set out in our Equality Scheme and guide all of our equality and diversity work.

Our vision of a fair and just society

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.

Our equality and diversity principles

1. We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.

2. We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and experiences, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.

3. We recognise that patterns of under-representation and differences in outcomes at The Open University can be challenged through positive action programmes.

4. We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.

5. We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.