Connecting Leadership to Equality and Diversity

“The vision of the diversity strategy of the Leadership Foundation is to transform positive rhetoric on equality and diversity into practical changes within HEIs resulting in:

- A more open and inclusive culture that actively promotes equality and diversity across all protected characteristics of equality including sexual orientation, disability, race (including nationality, colour or ethnic origin), age, gender, religion or belief, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.*
- The appointment of leaders at all levels who reflect the composition of the staff, student population and wider society that they serve”.

This short guide is aimed at University Leaders who are generally non-specialists, who are dealing with Equality and Diversity (E&D) in the setting of their own day to day activities but are also able to call upon the Equality and Diversity Team and other Human Resources specialists.

What are Equality and Diversity?
‘E&D’ is convenient shorthand for the combination of the principles and practice of equal opportunities, (including anti-discrimination legislation) and a broader view which ensures that employees maximise their potential and their contribution to the organisation. There is a substantial body of legislation which sets out our rights and responsibilities in education and training, in employment and in the provision of goods and services. A summary of the legislation and its key points is available on the Diversity Website [www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity).

Briefly the law requires the University to ensure that no individual is treated less favourably based on their protected characteristics (*see list above). In addition we have specific duties as a public sector organisation to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. These requirements are challenging but they can be used to encourage and improve performance and good employee relations.

How do we apply Equality and Diversity in Leadership?
This guidance focuses on employment and is aimed at anyone who manages, directs or supervises staff, whether as a designated manager or in a less structured way, for example as a Principle Investigator or a team leader.

These roles are many and varied, but there are some generally agreed principles that form the basis of good management practice. These include the ability to make the best use of resources, including people, to deliver desired outcomes; provide effective leadership; and develop staff and their performance.

Effective leaders and managers are able to value and respect all their staff, irrespective of difference, and enable them to realise their potential. They recognise that unhelpful and unquestioned attitudes and beliefs about the abilities of those perceived as ‘different’ may hinder recruitment and progression and thus deprive
their team of excellence. The diversity and variety of a workforce can be seen as an outward sign of an institution’s open minded and fair approach. Difference is not a question of better or worse and recognising its benefits can lead to more effective recruitment and development of staff. This is where E&D coalesces with good management, adding considerably to its quality and effectiveness. People who feel valued and respected at work are happier and perform better. If an individual feels for any reason that they ‘don’t fit’, their well-being will be compromised and this is likely to affect their performance. Besides the legal imperatives there are good business and ethical reasons for good management practice.

What follows is a series of prompts to help meet the challenges of managing, directing and supervising staff in ways which fulfil legal requirements and meet the highest standards of practice.

Leadership and Planning
Leadership and planning are significant tasks for a manager and will require a range of skills. If they are based upon E&D good practice they will go a long way in ensuring that freedom from discrimination and the promotion of equality are successfully established in your area of work.

1. Do you know what is on the University’s E&D Agenda and your responsibilities under the University’s Equality Scheme www.newcastle.ac.uk/diversity
2. Do you incorporate E&D objectives in your Academic Unit/Service plans? If you need help in doing so contact E&D Advisers.
3. Have you monitored the progress of your staff to make sure that this does not vary because of any protected characteristic or anything that is not relevant to their work? If you have identified any barriers, do you know what you can do to remove them? Make sure you include Research staff in this.
4. Do you recognise the full range of skills and knowledge in your team and how this can be extended through individual development? Diverse teams, made up of people from a range of backgrounds and experiences may be more difficult to manage, but are often more productive than teams made up of similar people. Do you encourage openness, fairness and a positive working environment in your Academic Unit/Service?
5. Have you encouraged flexible working and promote work-life balance - do you set a good example?
6. Do you check that the selection criteria you are using are fair and transparent for all applicants and that your decisions are made on the basis of fair and job relevant evidence from the interview and other assessments?

Bullying and Harassment and Positive Working Environments
The University has a policy and code of practice on dealing with bullying and harassment at work and study called the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/info/dignity/index.html. Part of their purpose is to underpin a culture of respect for others and dignity for all in which the avoidance of discrimination and the promotion of equality are more likely to thrive.

1. Have you promoted a culture in which your staff feel comfortable and respected, regardless of individual differences, talents or personal characteristics?
2. Are you clear about the University’s specific policies on harassment, bullying and hate crimes/intolerance?
3. Have you ensured that staff and other managers within your department have been informed of the University’s specific policies on bullying and harassment?
4. Have you drawn on the experience and backgrounds of the people you manage and encouraged them to contribute ideas and perspectives even if their proposals challenge the traditional way of working or reaching solutions?
5. Have you monitored the incidence of the things that may be considered bullying behaviour? Do you act promptly if you become aware of an incident?
6. Do you model behaviour that promotes an inclusive working environment and values difference, setting an example for colleagues at all levels?
7. Do you ensure that complainants are not victimised for raising legitimate issues?
8. Are you sensitive when dealing with the issues covered by the protected characteristics?
   • For example, reasonable adjustments for disabled staff, staff reaching retirement age or parental leave for a gay or lesbian member of staff.

Staff Development
Training and development for staff are strategies which can improve skills and motivate people, as well as ameliorate poor performance, attitudes and behaviour.
1. Do you adopt a systematic approach to identifying training and development to meet and implement programmes in your Academic Unit/Service that will support future organisational E&D needs?
2. Are you sure that your staff are aware of their rights and their responsibilities in terms of E&D.
3. Do you communicate to staff the benefits of training, coaching and other forms of development aimed at enhancing employee skills at all levels and encouraged them to participate?
4. Have you investigated mentoring and job shadowing for your staff. These can be especially valuable in extending skills beyond those expected by an individual or a manager (which may be based on stereotypical assumptions about roles or competencies).
5. Do you monitor your staff’s participation in training and other development opportunities to see if there are any significant disparities between groups including between full-time and part-time staff?

PDR
Institutions will vary in their approach to performance assessment but these principles should apply in any methodology. [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/pdr/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/pdr/).

1. Is your approach to performance development and review based on actual performance tasks measured by impartial and objective standards?
2. Have you analysed the outcomes of performance assessment across groups? Significant differences between groups should be investigated.
3. Do you take work-life balance issues into account during appraisals and performance assessments?
4. Have you ensured that your assessment of staff performance is based upon their outputs rather than hours worked?

Promotion
1. Are promotion opportunities and procedures in your area of responsibility advertised widely and are they commensurate with your equal opportunities policies and standard recruitment procedures?
2. Are the same procedures and criteria applied to internal and external job applicants?
3. Do you analyse the promotions in your area of responsibility to see if there are any significant differences between groups both in application and outcome?
4. Has everyone involved with promotion panels been made aware of equality and diversity issues and received training?

Capability, Discipline and Grievance handling
It is important to deal with poor performance or misconduct in a fair and consistent manner to ensure that your staff know that you have high standards and are able to deal with issues effectively.
1. Do you know about the University’s Capability Procedures, Discipline and Grievance Procedures, when to use them and how these apply to E&D procedures such as the Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice?

Communications and External Relations
If your role includes external relations you will need to consider the E&D dimension in this area. Communication is important whether the department or team is large or small. There are often cultural differences in how people understand and carry out communication which can lead to inadvertent but serious misunderstandings.
1. Do you refer to E&D in the contributions you make to literature, publicity, induction materials; the intranet and external web sites; and course materials?
2. Are external partners and consultants you use aware of the University’s E&D policies and requirements?
3. Do you take account of suitable formats, other languages (where appropriate) and cultural sensitivities when producing information and developing communication strategies?
4. Can you bring the institution’s commitment to E&D to the attention of a wider audience when acting as a representative of the institution at external events, conferences, road shows, career fairs, meetings, and interviews?
5. Do you have the capacity to participate in relevant local or national initiatives for groups that are under-represented, for example the SWAN Charter Awards for women in Science, Engineering and Technology departments?
6. Do you know what the University is doing in these areas? See the Diversity Website for details of the achievements with Athena Swan http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/info/gender/athenaswan/index.php

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If you need more information or advice please contact the Equality and Diversity Team http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/ or your HR Teams. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/