

Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010 – 2013



Step free route through the Old Quad from Haymarket to
Queen Victoria Road 2009

Approved by Council 13 December 2010

Newcastle University Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010 - 2013

Contents

Action Plan 2010 – 2013	1
Newcastle University Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010 - 2013	2
1. Foreword from the Vice Chancellor.....	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Context.....	4
4. Commitment to Equality and Diversity.....	4
Research and Innovation.....	4
Learning and Teaching and the Wider Student Experience	4
Engagement.....	5
5. Equal Opportunities Policy.....	5
6. Our University Culture	5
7. Reason for a Single Equality Scheme	6
8. Public Sector Duties included in the Single Equality Scheme	6
Scope of the Scheme.....	6
Responsibility for the Scheme and Actions.....	7
Consultation and Involvement	7
Equality Impact Assessments	8
Monitoring and Review of the Scheme.....	9
9. Equality and Diversity Commitment into Action	10
10 Action Plan.....	11
Appendix 1 Equality Act 2010 changes from 1 October 2010	16

Newcastle University's Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan

1. Foreword from the Vice Chancellor

The question of a university's obligations and opportunities regarding diversity and equality is one that I have been engaged with for many years. It is a pleasure, therefore, to contribute this Foreword to our university's Single Equality Scheme, for staff and students. I hold the view that diversity has an inherent educational value. We are an institution of learning, and we will learn more from those people, those ideas, those circumstances and those phenomena that we do not know, than from those we know only too well. I have summarised this view in the phrase **quality needs diversity**. Diversity is not a sufficient condition for quality, but it is necessary, in the sense that without allowing diversity into our frame of reference we will not attain true quality.

Inequality is a risk that arises with increased diversity. Arguably, if there were no diversity there would be no need to pursue an equality agenda. Conversely, if we value diversity, we must be on our guard against inequality. We must do so on moral grounds, because inequality may signal a denial of natural rights or social justice, and on pragmatic grounds, because inequality may signal a failure to turn diversity to advantage as a driver of learning and a source of innovation.

At the University, as in society, our understanding of diversity is rooted in our recognition of groups, but our understanding of education is based on individual talent, potential and attainment. The equality agenda has to do with making sure that no individual is disadvantaged (or, indeed, advantaged) simply by virtue of belonging to any particular group.

In the educational sphere, the equality agenda accepts that not all individuals have equal intellectual ability, just as we do not all have equal physical or artistic or musical ability. It does, however, start from the premise that natural ability is

an individual trait, and that there is no ethnic, cultural, religious, socio-economic, language, gender or sexual preference group whose individuals have inherently less (or more) ability as a consequence of belonging to or identifying with that group.

Essentially, therefore, the aim of the equality agenda is to decouple circumstance from destiny. Where you were born, what culture or religion you belong to, how old you are, how rich or poor you or your parents are, what your sexual preferences are, whether or not you have any disability – these manifestations of diversity should not deny you any educational opportunity, nor impede your levels of attainment. Whether for staff or for students, we believe that ability should be able to access opportunity regardless of circumstance.



Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor

In our institutional strategy document **Vision 2021** we articulate a number of core values. Amongst these are that we are committed to excellence, that we value diversity, and that we respond to societal challenges. For me, our Single Equality Scheme ties these three values together. We value diversity because we are committed to excellence, and we recognise the existence of inequality as a concomitant societal challenge, to which we undertake to respond. Chris Brink, 1 December 2010

2. Purpose

The Single Equality Scheme is our public declaration of our commitment to develop a fully inclusive University community which recruits and retains talented staff and students from all sectors of society equally. It also sets out how we, at Newcastle University, plan to meet the duties placed on us by equality and diversity legislation and to follow best practice in all that we do: including

employing our staff, providing teaching and learning to our students and being engaged with local communities.

3. Context

Our **Vision** is of Newcastle as a civic University with a global reputation for academic excellence. **Our Mission** is: to be a world-class research-intensive university; to deliver teaching and facilitate learning of the highest quality and to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England.

There are certain fundamental **values** shared throughout the higher education sector to which we are committed, including: academic freedom; the pursuit of knowledge and understanding; a sound academic disciplinary base; a methodology based on reason and evidence; social responsibility; and transparency. In addition, we: are committed to excellence; value diversity; respond to societal challenges; accord parity of esteem to research and teaching; educate for life; are globally ambitious and regionally rooted and invest in excellent staff.

Arising from the three elements of the mission statement, we have three **core academic functions**: research and innovation; teaching and learning (and the wider student experience) and engagement. As a university, our institutional objectives are to achieve: top 20 in the UK for research quality and power; student satisfaction ratings of 90% or better in all subjects; a focus on selected societal challenge themes; a significant international profile, and financial and environmental sustainability.

4. Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Our Equality and Diversity commitment is to develop a fully inclusive University community which recruits and retains talented staff and students from all sectors of society. We will nurture that talent, ensuring that it can be developed within a positive and supportive culture that encourages everyone to flourish and reach their potential. We will build strong positive relationships between staff, students

and external stakeholders (including contractors and visitors) and promote a common vision where diversity is valued by all. Everyone must be treated with dignity and respect.

We can identify how Equality and Diversity are relevant to and will assist us to achieve our core academic objectives.

Research and Innovation

The strategic vision for research and innovation says “true academic excellence, measured against international standards, can best be achieved if knowledge creation is matched by innovation in the translation of knowledge into economic, social or cultural advances. It is this ethos of “excellence with impact” that underpins our research and innovation portfolio and deeply informs our strategy.”

One of our key objectives is to develop an innovation culture embedded throughout the University. Removing barriers to people’s ability to do their jobs effectively will allow a greater opportunity for staff and students to be flexible and innovative in their work.



The diversity of the university population will be an asset where sharing ideas and solutions with people from different backgrounds and experiences will contribute to us achieving excellence in all we do. We want to do well in the Research Excellence Framework and fulfil our commitments to Research staff set out in the Research Concordat.

Learning and Teaching and the Wider Student Experience

The Learning, Teaching and Student Experience strategy says “We regard a high quality student experience as an essential feature of excellent higher education. Our commitment, however, goes well beyond the student learning experience to

embrace all aspects of a student's time at Newcastle. This wider student experience includes: a sense of involvement in the life of the University within its local communities; an attractive social and residential experience; active participation in cultural, sporting and work experiences and a sense of wellbeing and support."

Our approach is one where we believe ability, not the group you belong to, determines success, and we will conduct an active programme of raising aspirations and widening participation. Our students should be encouraged to be active educational citizens and participate in the equality and diversity agenda. Quality and equality are partners in the ambition to move from simply providing an environment which is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation to one which positively promotes good relationships between people who work and study and engage with the University.



Engagement

The Engagement Strategy says: "Our engagement work will be characterised by openness, mutuality, humility, integrity and solidarity. Engagement means delivering our teaching, research and service activities to achieve beneficial impacts as part of our institutional culture. Our engagement with civil society is integral to ensuring that our academic and professional activities have genuine economic, social and cultural benefits. We will contribute to harmonious community relations whilst promoting diversity in North East society and contribute to the economic resilience and success of the region."

A key part of the equality and diversity agenda is engagement with our external community through lay membership of committees, public lectures, honorary degrees and partnerships with other organisations which promote and celebrate equality and diversity in the region.

5. Equal Opportunities Policy

Newcastle University is committed to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities for all students and all employees in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and are given equal opportunities within the University. No prospective student or student, job applicant or employee, should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which are not relevant to academic ability potential and attainment for students or to good employment practice for employees.

It is the University's policy, through its Single Equality Scheme to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic* and people who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

*see appendix 1 for details of the protected characteristics.

6. Our University Culture

We will balance our commitment to value diversity in all its forms with our obligations under the law. The law leads us to monitor and analyse what we do within specific equality strands or protected characteristics while our values recognise that people have multiple identities and different experiences as individuals, not necessarily as members of one group or another. What we value is the diversity that each individual brings and how they interact with other

people. What we want to ensure is that no one experiences disadvantage because of who they are. We will prevent discrimination on any grounds that are not justifiable.

We also want to engage with people and organisations who are active in issues related to a specific strand or protected characteristic, in a collaborative way, on the basis that one strand is not more important than another and people within these groups may not all share the same issues or concerns as others within the same group.

Other ways to influence culture change are to do so with images, information and encouragement rather than through operation of strict rules and fear of breaching legislation. Part of our recent approach to Diversity has been to celebrate our successes. The Annual Report for 2010 dedicated the whole of the first section to “successes and achievements” and we plan to continue in this way.

We also plan to hold an event series every two years which provides staff, students and the local community the opportunity to share in our experiences of diversity as a large organisation within the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the wider North East Region. We will also use other opportunities to promote and publicise success in Equality and Diversity.



**Winning photograph from
2009 Diversity Week by Peter
Kellett**

7. Reason for a Single Equality Scheme

The University has made a strategic commitment to adopt a Scheme which brings all of the Equality Strands together because:

Equality and Diversity 2010

- We recognise that inequalities are rarely experienced in isolation but are often interdependent
- We wish to focus on the “whole” picture when planning and delivering what we do
- We make a commitment to make the most of resources and deliver value for money

Development of this Scheme has involved a review and incorporation of the separate Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes which are no longer required by the Equality Act 2011. The Scheme also demonstrates our commitment to the other equality strands of Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief and Age.

8. Public Sector Duties included in the Single Equality Scheme

Scope of the Scheme

Our current and proposed actions to meet our Public Sector Duties are contained in this Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan. These are:

- to promote equality of opportunity
- prevent discrimination and harassment
- promote good relationships between people
- regularly review the Equality Scheme and Action Plan

There are 9 protected characteristics which are covered by the single Equality Scheme:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic origin or group)

- Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

See Appendix 1 for details of the protected characteristics

Responsibility for the Scheme and Actions

- **All staff in the course of their employment and all students in the course of their studies and others associated with the University**, without exception, have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the requirements of the Scheme, namely to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups. The principles of the scheme will apply in also to educational partnerships, including branch campuses of the University, whilst taking into account the culture, law and context of the host Country in which the partnership or branch campus is based.
- **University Council** is responsible for ensuring that the University acts within the requirements of the UK legislation and meets all its general and specific public duties. It is also responsible for ensuring that the commitments and behaviours required in the Equality Scheme are followed.
- **The Vice Chancellor** has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of Equal Opportunities Policies and ensuring that effective procedures are in place.
- **The Diversity Committee** has responsibility for the formulation of Equal Opportunities Policies and procedures and for overseeing their implementation. The Committee reports to the Executive Board of the University which has the authority to make decisions or to recommend the policies for approval by Council. This includes specifically advising on the

development and implementation of the Single Equality Scheme and the University's Equality and Diversity objectives.

- **The Director of Human Resources and the Academic Registrar** have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy as it pertains to staff and students respectively; ensuring that appropriate staff training and development is carried out
- **All Managers** (including Pro-Vice Chancellors, Heads of Unit, Heads of Service and all other line managers) are responsible for ensuring that the Scheme is implemented and maintained within their own Units/Services; ensuring all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying them out; taking appropriate action against staff or students who discriminate for unlawful reasons; this may include invoking appropriate University disciplinary or grievance procedures, and initiating procedures for dealing with complaints and ensuring that the Scheme and its procedures are followed within their areas of responsibility.

Consultation and Involvement

We will consult with staff and students on the development of the Single Equality Scheme. We can do this using a variety of methods which include:

- The **Diversity Consultative Group (DCG)** is a sub-group of the Diversity Committee whose members include representatives of staff and student groups: The Students' Union liberation officers, University Trade Unions and Staff Networks. Its terms of reference are to consider items from the Diversity Committee and also feedback suggestions to the Diversity Committee to consider.
- We will consult University Managers who are responsible for helping to implement the Scheme;
- We will consult relevant groups directly as appropriate at the time. We welcome comments from any interested group including the Students' Union; Disabled Employees' Network; Trade Unions; MOSAIC for staff and alumni LGB&T; Women's Network. This list is not exhaustive.

- We will put the items out for general consultation to staff and students.

Equality Analysis and Data Publication

We will follow the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duties to assess the impact of policies and procedures and develop appropriate processes to do so. Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights commission is due in 2011.

Monitoring and Review of the Scheme

The Scheme will be reviewed in 3 years' time.

Scheme Owner	Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of HR
Approval	Approved by Staff Committee 11 October 2010. Approved by Executive Board 4 November 2010. Approved by Council 13 December 2010
Last Updated	30 th November following comments from Executive Board Vice-Chancellor's foreword included. Front page added 12 January 2011
Effective Date	1 st October 2010



Congregations

9. Equality and Diversity Commitment into Action

We have structured our actions into two areas. The first are the actions we will take on a regular basis and the second are those new initiatives or one off activities which have a specific outcome within a set timescale. Not all protected characteristics will necessarily have an action related to them and some actions will meet the needs of all staff and students. Where we do not hold data by protected characteristics with which to conduct quantitative analysis of what we do we will collect qualitative evidence using appropriate methods (surveys, focus groups etc).

Regular actions

Action	Lead
We will regularly monitor data and other evidence related to staff and students and our Key Performance Indicators and report on these in the Equality and Diversity Annual Report and other times as required to Executive Board and Council.	Equality and Diversity Adviser with Executive Director of Human Resources, Academic Registrar and Head of Marketing and Communications/ Head of Finance and Planning
We will monitor the diversity of people on committees, giving public lectures and being given honorary awards	Equality and Diversity Adviser with the Registrar
We will conduct Equality Impact Assessments on all new and reviewed policies and procedures.	Director of Human Resources with relevant Heads of Unit/Service/Equality and Diversity Adviser
We will conduct an Equal Pay Review every 4 years.	Director of Human Resources/Reward Manager/EDA
We will hold a Diversity Event every two years	Equality and Diversity Adviser

Further Developments – See section 10

We will identify what our new objectives and expected outcomes are in an Action Plan framed within the University’s Enabling Objectives (not all of the enabling objectives will necessarily have an equality related action attached to it).

- the student experience
- human resources
- financial control and sustainability
- strategic positioning
- information technology and resources
- the estate
- environmental sustainability

10 Action Plan



No	Objectives	Expected Outcome	Target date	Lead Person/others involved	Evidence of progress / success
	The Student Experience				
1.	To analyse degree classification results by gender and ethnicity to see how we compare with the national picture as set out in ECU reports. Address any issues found.	Ensure that students have equal chance of success in degree classification across different degree programmes irrespective of their gender or ethnic origin.	Repeat for 2011	Academic Registrar/ Planning Office/Equality and Diversity Adviser (EDA)/ QUiLT	Analysis in 2008 showed that, contrary to the national picture, at Newcastle, ethnic group is not predictive of a good or bad degree. The statistically significant factor was entry tariff rather than ethnic origin. Evidence on gender is yet to be collected.
2.	When full cohort analysis becomes available, to examine year on year achievement levels to see if there are any differences based on (ethnicity, gender, disability, age and other protected characteristics where appropriate)	As above related to progression year to year	2011	Academic Registrar/ Planning Office/EDA	Further work will take place in 2010
3.	To explore what use we can make of the National Student Survey data being available by diversity group (gender, ethnicity, age and disability and other protected characteristics where available). If differences are found, to take action to identify and address issues.	To ensure that students have a similar experience and level of satisfaction irrespective of their protected characteristics.	2011	Academic Registrar/ Head of QUILT/ EDA	Depending on what data is available from the NSS, report from 2011.
4.	Conduct analysis of the Annual Monitoring and Review process related to protected characteristics. Quilt to monitor and report any relevant issues to	To ensure that within individual programmes students are treated fairly according to their needs.	2010 not complete	Academic Registrar/ Head of QUILT	Guidance has been updated to improve monitoring. Need to review how this is working.

	UTLC				
5.	Project on disclosure of disability by students as part of the drive to provide an environment where students feel that they can disclose and fully understand the support available to them.	To provide mechanisms at various stages of the student life cycle where they can easily and confidently disclose that they have a disability and receive the support they need.	2010/11	Academic Registrar/Head of Student Wellbeing	Project in process
6.	Joint project with staff to provide up to date guidance for Trans Students	To provide clear guidance so that supportive steps are identified for any students who are Trans.	2010	Academic Registrar/ Head of Student Wellbeing/EDA/Director of HR	Project in process
7.	Identify various ways of drawing together information for students with particular protected characteristics.	To ensure that all students and staff (academic staff, personal tutors etc) are aware of students' rights and responsibilities and the support available to them.	2010/11	Students' Union-Welfare and Equality Officer/EDA	
8.	Consider the diversity related issues around Internationalisation and international and other students engaging with the University and each other.	That all students, irrespective of national origins or culture, experience a high level of satisfaction at the University. Joint project with the Students' Union using evidence from the International Student Barometer.		Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor/ Head of QuILT/EDA	
9.	Joint project with staff to explore the most suitable and appropriate method for collecting data on all protected characteristics.	To find ways to make the data collection acceptable to students and staff and identify the most suitable time for collecting the data	2012-13	Academic Registrar/ Students' Union-Welfare and Equality Officer/EDA	
Human Resources					
10	Monitor staff opinion by equality strands	To ensure that staff are treated fairly	2010	Director of	Data currently being delivered.

	in the 2010 Employee Opinion Survey and compare with previous years.	irrespective of their gender, disability, ethnicity or age and other protected characteristics.		Human Resources/ Reward Manager/EDA	
11	To identify if men and women have the same access to training opportunities. Identify if there are differences and take steps to address them.	To ensure that men and women have the same opportunities for access to training and development.	2010	Director of Human Resources/ Assistant Director Staff Development	Item arising from the Employee Opinion Survey 2007 where fewer men reported accessing learning and development - to be compared with results from 2010
12	Develop a method of collecting information on why people leave the university	Explore methods of collecting data and consider appropriate methods to use to find out why they leave, including exit interviews.	2011	Director of Human Resources/ Assistant Director Policy/EDA	Project in progress
13	Complete Equality Impact Assessment on academic staff promotions process	To identify if there are differences in success, and if so why, and put steps in place to eliminate these.	2010	Director of Human Resources/ Assistant Director Policy/EDA	Still in progress
14	Develop positive approach to support staff to disclose disability and feel secure in doing so through a mechanism and guidance at different points in the life cycle of staff when they can disclose.	To provide mechanisms at various stages of the staff life cycle where they can easily and confidently disclose that they have a disability and receive the support they need. An increase in the number of disabled staff who disclose their disability.	2010/11	Director of Human Resources/EDA	Project in Progress
15	Address the low level of staff in administrative roles from BME communities in the North East by promoting the University as an employer by finding new ways to inform local communities and school leavers of work	A higher number of applicants from BME groups apply and the numbers of staff from BME groups increases.		Director of Human Resources/ EDA	

	opportunities at the University.				
Financial control and sustainability					
16	Equality duties through Procurement - policy and practice to be reviewed in light of the Equality Act 2010.	To identify/encourage businesses who provide goods and services to the University to have commitment to Equality and Diversity/comply with Equality legislation	2011	Director of Finance and Planning / Head of Procurement/ EDA	Awaiting Equality Act guidance and then will review and adjust policy and process accordingly
Strategic positioning					
17	"Ensure that we communicate that valuing diversity is one of our core values."	The University will communicate a clear message that we have a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, dignity and respect for all.		Registrar and Director of MCD	
Information technology and resources					
18	Ensure that the requirements of disabled staff and students are built into services and resources provided by ISS	IT resources and services are useable by people with the widest range of capabilities	2012	Director of ISS/ Specialist Advisor – Assistive Technology	Improvements in cluster accessibility, feedback from students, quarterly accessibility reviews and other service monitoring systems.
The Estate					
19	Complete buildings and external environment audits	Provide Estate Access Strategy; identify funding requirements for improvement to the Estate environment; publish estate access strategy. This aligns with all the Estate Strategy and ensures that all aspects of estate related improvements are co-ordinated	2011	Director of ESS/Head of Improvements	

20	Ensure inclusive design is carried out with all ESS led projects.	There is awareness of accessibility issues within internal and external design and project teams.	2011	Director of ESS/Head of Improvements	Training provided across ESS in 2009, specialist in-house knowledge developed and available to assist. Further training to be provided in 2011
21	Consult with disabled students and staff with design on building projects and landscaping.	Better understanding of the needs of disabled students and staff.	2011	Director of ESS/Head of Improvements	Support of Estates Disability working group which provides input to building projects at appropriate design stages.
22	Provide improved external accessibility and signage across campus	Better accessibility for main campus thoroughfares and approaches to buildings	2021	Director of ESS/Head of Improvements	Coherent Campus master plan is currently on year three of a twelve year improvement plan.
	Environmental Sustainability/Engagement				
23	Improve the diversity of external lay members on committees	To have a diverse population of members on committees which reflects the population from which they are chosen		Registrar/EDA	Policy on Diversity developed 2009, first year of implementation and monitoring 2010/11
24	Review the way we disseminate and deliver information about Equality and Diversity	All activities are delivered in an environmentally efficient manner		Chair of Diversity Committee	

Appendix 1 Equality Act 2010 changes from 1 October 2010  Type of discrimination	PC = Protected Characteristic 	Age	Disability Permits more favourable treatment	Gender Reassignment	Race	Religion or Belief incl lack of belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Marriage & Civil Partnership Excl single people	Pregnancy & Maternity
Direct Discrimination Treated less favourably because of a PC		Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies
Associative Discrimination Direct Discrimination because they associate with someone with a PC		New	New	New	Already applies	Already applies	New	Already applies	Does not apply	Does not apply
Discrimination by perception Direct Discrimination because someone thinks they have a PC		Already applies	New	New	Already applies	Already applies	New	Already applies	Does not apply	Does not apply
Indirect Discrimination A rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a PC		Already applies	New	New	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Already applies	Does not apply
Harassment New: can complain of behaviour even if not directed to them		Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Already applies	Change	Does not apply	Does not apply
Harassment by a third party New: employers potentially liable for harassment of staff by people they don't employ		New	New	New	New	New	Already applies	New	Does not apply	Does not apply
Victimisation Treated badly because they have made a complaint		Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Change	Change

Contacts for further information

Equality and Diversity Team
Human Resources
Level 4
King's Gate

Julie Bullimore, Equality and Diversity Adviser
Telephone 0191 222 3440

julie.bullimore@ncl.ac.uk

Pamela Graham, Equality and Diversity Adviser
Telephone 0191 222 5974

pamela.graham1@ncl.ac.uk

Adam Jones, Equality and Diversity Assistant
Telephone 0191 222 8794

adam.jones@ncl.ac.uk

Diversity Website www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity