

Equality and Diversity Update Report, December 2009

1 Introduction

This update details the University's move towards compliance with the equality legislation and public duties.

In order to be compliant, the University as a public body must undertake the following general duties: -

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Promote equality.
- Improve relationships between individuals with protected characteristics and other people
- Take account of the needs of disabled people

As a public body, the University must also take account of the specific duties to: -

- Create and maintain: a Race Equality Policy, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme, (and work towards religion and belief, sexual orientation and age schemes).
- Monitor recruitment/admission and success of staff and students according to: race, disability and sex.
- Equality Impact Assess policies, practices, plans and procedures.
- Publish the policy/schemes, the results of impact assessments and monitoring information.
- Involve and engage individuals and groups.

2 Create and Maintain Equality Schemes and Policy

Each of the University's equality schemes and policies must be renewed or revised every three years. The Disability Scheme 2009-12 was written and published in December. The Gender Scheme is due for renewal in April 2010. A revised Race Policy (2008) has been approved by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and was published in September 2008. <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/aboutdmu/policy/index.jsp>

3 Monitor Recruitment and Success of Staff and Students

Results of the monitoring of the recruitment and admission of staff and students are reported on, as is the retention and achievement of students and promotion of academic staff.

4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An equality impact assessment is the term given to a review of an institution's policies to ensure that the institution is not discriminating unlawfully and that it is making a positive contribution to equality. It is the process of assessing the impact of existing or proposed policies and practices in relation to their consequence for equality.

An action working project has been testing and developing an equality impact assessment approach for De Montfort University. The new (draft) materials are being rolled out to all Faculties and Directorates for implementation.

All Faculties and Directorates may be supported by the Equality & Diversity Adviser.

5 Publish

The annual reports on: Disability for the period December 2008-2009, Gender 2008-2009 and Race 2008-2009 have been prepared and published on the DMU website. All user emails have been circulated to staff. <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/aboutdmu/policy/index.jsp>

6 Involve and Engage

An overarching involvement and engagement strategy will be developed this year.

The Student Services Directorate sent out a student Diversity Survey in Autumn 2009.

Disabled Student and Disabled Staff groups have met.

7 Constitution of the Equality and Diversity Committee

The Equality and Diversity Committee has been reconstituted to better reflect a range of roles that are significant in taking the work of the committee forward. The Committee will report to VCG, Finance and HR.

8 The Equality Bill 2009

The Equality Bill is currently making its way throughout the parliamentary processes. The key proposed legislative changes that will impact on DMU are: -

- To take account of sexual orientation, age and religion and belief as a public body
- To publish and report on equality objectives
- To report on the gender pay gap
- Extend protection to people who “associate” with others with the protected characteristics
- To proactively consult with and address concerns from all equality groups

9 Equality Developments at DMU

Involving Disabled Students

DMU was successful in being selected to be one of seven sites to participate in an “Involving Disabled Students in HE” project. The project is led jointly by the Equality Challenge Unit and the Higher Education Academy. The “Student Voice” group has met four times and has identified a number of topics it wants to explore further with the University.

Involving Disabled Staff

Disabled Staff at DMU have met twice since June 2009. They have identified a number of themes to explore with the University. (Additionally the University has just been awarded the positive about disabled people two ticks symbol from Job Centre Plus).

Work Placements

DMU has been selected to participate in research commissioned by the Equality Challenge Unit and work placements in the Arts and Cultural sector.

Athena Swan

The Athena Swan Charter recognises and celebrates good employment practice for women working in Science, Engineering and Technology in higher education and research. A small steering group is supporting the work and will encourage initiatives which appropriately work towards achieving bronze, silver and gold awards (www.athenaswan.org.uk)

Christine Nightingale – Equality and Diversity Adviser (December 2009)