

## **Equality and Diversity – Annual Report 2020 – 2021**

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### **1. Context**

- 1.1 The Equality and Diversity Statement 2020 derives from and aligns with AUB's Strategic Plan, which has a focus on values of being "innovative, collaborative, connected and passionate". These values have been the foundation of the Equality and Diversity Statement.
- 1.2 The Board of the Arts University Bournemouth is responsible for setting and monitoring the strategic direction of AUB and has ultimate responsibility for equality and diversity. The HR Committee receives minutes of the University's Equalities Committee, but the Board has now determined that it will retain an overview of equality, diversity and inclusion, and will consider an annual review of both activity and relevant data. The roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the University Secretary and the AUB Integrated Leadership Team are clearly understood.
- 1.3 Equalities Committee monitors progress against the Equality and Diversity Action Plan. The Senior Officer (Equalities) as a dedicated equality specialist will both advance and promote equality and diversity. However, it is understood that all members of the AUB community are responsible for promoting the general public sector equality duty in their own work areas as well as contributing to a diverse and inclusive working and learning culture.

### **2. Legal Obligations**

- 2.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the general equality duty and places a legal requirement on the University to have due regard to the need to:
  - **eliminate discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - **advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.2 In addition to this, the Equalities Act introduced three 'specific duties' concerning: publication of information; equalities objectives; and manner of publication.
- 2.3 The development of the Equality and Diversity Statement has been designed to support legal obligations and the progression of the University's strategic goals.

### **3. 2020 Activity and Progress**

- 3.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty places a requirement on all higher education institutions to publish information on an annual basis and to prepare and publish equality objectives to continually develop one or more of the aims set out in the general public sector equality duty. The University's overarching equality objective, which has been published externally, is:

## Empowering all members of the AUB community to advance equality and diversity

As highlighted in the Equality and Diversity Statement through its words and actions, AUB will:

- foster a sense of belonging for all staff and students, regardless of background, and to eliminate any barriers which may inhibit this
- create a strong community of advocates where all staff and students are confident to speak up if they believe others, or AUB itself, are falling short
- endeavour to promote equity, providing according to need
- encourage 'big conversations' about discrimination, especially (but not exclusively) linked to legally protected characteristics.

3.3 AUB has also developed an equalities commitment which is shared widely.

### *AUB's Equality Commitment*

*All members of the University's community including staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to treat others fairly and respectfully regardless of the characteristics which may define their identity. These include the legally protected characteristics which are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief (including lack of belief), Sex and Sexual orientation.*

*The University has committed to provide a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness.*

## 4. Compliance

4.1 AUB adheres to all its regulatory duties, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty, and additional governmental requirements to publish its Gender Equality Pay Gap Data.

4.2 AUB has complied with the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty in respect to publishing objectives and data. These can be found on AUB's website. Updated data is reported on annually in January.

4.3 In March 2021 AUB published its latest Gender Pay Report. The reported pay gaps were as follows:

	Mean	Median
All workers	16.02%	22.68%
<i>Established staff only</i>		
Academic staff	7.46%	11.13%
Professional services	16.84%	2.93%

4.4 AUB has analysed the data available to identify the causes of these gaps and determine what action might be taken to address them. The points from this analysis are:

- a) As discussed in the report, the main factor in the overall pay gap is the very high proportion of student ambassadors who are female. This is consistent with the overall AUB student population, but it significantly depresses the mean and median values for female workers. The University has previously agreed that it does not wish to set

artificial targets to change the gender balance of its student ambassadors, which is a valuable role for the individuals concerned.

- b) A further modest impact is created by the fact that 24.7% of the male academic population are Visiting Tutors, which compares to 22% of females. As the Visiting Tutor role receives an enhanced hourly rate (to take account of preparation time as well as delivery), this raises the male mean and median values slightly compared to the female.
- c) The pay gap for established academic posts is largely attributable to the fact that there are three times as many females on Lecturer or Early Career Academic posts than males. There can be many reasons for this disparity, and this will be investigated further during 2021.
- d) The mean pay gap in the established professional services is slightly misleading. While the same proportion of male and female posts are at grades 1-4, 42% of females are at grades 1 and 2, compared to 34% of males. However, it is also important to note that these figures are significantly impacted by the salaries of the incumbent Vice-Chancellor and the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, who remained on the payroll until 31 March 2020; if these two salaries are removed, the mean gap drops to 4%.

## **5. External accreditation**

- 5.1 The University's action plan confirms that AUB will seek external accreditation of its equality activity where appropriate; and that it will seek to be 'chartermark-ready'. Unfortunately, the current criteria for Advance HE Equality Charters mitigate against applications by smaller institutions which necessarily have limited data sets. Advance HE recognises this problem and has committed on more than one occasion to review the requirements so that they are suitable for smaller HEIs, but to date there has been no action on this. A further conversation was held in April 2021, and AUB has volunteered to be on the reference group for the creation of a challenging but achievable accreditation option when this is taken forward, hopefully later in this calendar year.

## **6. Covid Pandemic**

- 6.1 Like many other institutions the pandemic required the learning and teaching provision to move on line with limited time to prepare for this. While this came with challenges, AUB responded with a clear focus on compassion and inclusion. Acknowledging the additional pressure staff would be feeling, AUB promoted wellbeing initiatives such as its longstanding Employee Assistance Programme and access to the Headspace app. Student services also promoted the wellbeing support available to all students, which moved online but received very positive feedback. Some students appeared to find the online service more accessible, and there were fewer no-shows than had historically been the case for physical services. In consequence, both physical and online wellbeing support appointments are now being offered.
- 6.2 Additionally an Equality Impact Assessment was completed at key stages of the academic planning process, exploring the potential for disadvantage or discrimination linked to altered teaching, learning and working methods necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Equality Act 2010 specifies the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership (in employment only); pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation, however, the assessment also considers potential impact on those from low household incomes, care leavers, and carers and increased impact that may occur as a result of intersectionality of categories.

## **7. Future commitments**

- 7.1 During 2020, AUB presented a joint response with the SU regarding the events in the USA with the murder of George Floyd. AUB took the opportunity to condemn racism and inequality and commit to 6 related actions:

- 1) AUB will continue to work towards an equal and diverse campus and curriculum that is fair and that is conscious about the Black experience through further supporting initiatives such as the *Annual AUB Creative Learning Conference*; particularly looking at Inclusive learning and broadening the curriculum and its content.
- 2) AUB will continue to support our staff and students' wellbeing and mental health. We will continue to make available resources such as the *Headspace wellbeing* app to all staff and students. Student Services will continue to provide counselling and wellbeing support and staff can seek counselling and wellbeing support through AUB's Employee Assistance Programme; we understand that this is a difficult time, particularly for our Black students and staff.
- 3) AUB will increase funding towards widening participation and towards financially supporting BAME students through our Access and Participation Plan. We will do this by committing ourselves to working towards tacking the BAME attainment gap; finding ways to keep students informed about current issues affecting Black communities, both academically via their courses and our main channels; look into funding projects, residencies, or for key BAME speakers and artists to come on campus.
- 4) AUB will use our social media platforms to raise awareness, to educate and make students aware that the university is supporting them: for example, AUB Library has been sharing books that may help students educate themselves about Black experience throughout history. AUB library is currently auditing course reading lists to establish a benchmark to ensure that the library collection increasingly reflects diverse voices and takes steps towards a truly global curriculum.
- 5) We will strive to influence our external partners and industry contacts to develop inclusive and diverse practices within the creative and cultural industries.
- 6) AUB will actively develop all our staff: unconscious bias training will be mandatory for all staff members; we will also explore and invest in online staff development units.

7.2 Preparatory work was already underway on these commitments before finalising and publishing them and so AUB is strongly positioned to take this work forward.

7.3 In addition to this work the SU also published its 'Anti-Racism Report'. There were 72 recommendations in the report and AUB has responded to this by identifying nine key areas for follow up work. The areas identified are:

- i. Staffing Resources
- ii. Policy and Governance
- iii. Representation
- iv. Curriculum / the academic experience
- v. Library
- vi. Gallery / MoDiP
- vii. Training and Development
- viii. External Recognition
- ix. External Funding opportunities

7.4 Work was already being undertaken in a number of these areas and AUB has strengthened its commitment for the continuation of this work. An action plan has been developed, and approved by the Board.

7.5 The plan includes the need to set ambitious and measurable targets in relation to staff recruitment, alongside the targets already set for student access, success and progression

through the Access and Participation Plan. There is also a commitment to increase the staff base in support of EDI activity, which includes an academic appointment to support course teams in promoting diversity through the curriculum.

- 7.6 The University's 'Curriculum 21' project is explicitly designed to respond to the need to create graduates who are ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the employment environment which awaits them. There is a strong focus on collaboration between disciplines, but also the foregrounding of key global challenges such as environmental sustainability, and equality and diversity. The new academic appointment will work with course teams to consider both content and learning design, and ensure that there is an explicit appreciation of the assumptions which underpin the curriculum, and a rationale for these.
- 7.7 As part of the planned actions it was also agreed that the University Secretary and the SU President would work with interested parties to consider how the EDI agenda might be covered in a more innovative and participatory way. This is one example of AUB's key values of being "innovative, collaborative, connected and passionate" and shows the alignment between AUB's EDI commitments and its core values. One initial open meeting was held during May 2021, and further opportunities to open out the diversity conversation will be planned for the next year.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The last year has been extremely challenging for all HEIs; much of the work which was originally scheduled could not be completed as the University moved its operations online, and the priority focus was on delivering learning and teaching, and student support, in the virtual environment; and planning for the new academic year. The new University EDI action plan, with its indicators and targets, will be the focus of attention for the coming year. Further details of the 2020/2021 objectives and outcomes can be found in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

**2020/2021 Actions**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Success Measure</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>Belonging</b>	<p>Consider how and where we might gather robust data on staff and students sense of belonging</p> <p>Consider how to measure this data to ensure that the actions arising from it serve to ensure inclusion and belonging</p>	<p>Baseline data sets identified and reports scheduled to go to Equalities Committee</p> <p>Clear measurable actions set</p>	Apr 2021	Equalities Committee / Senior Officer (Equalities)	Progress has been limited in the last year but the EDI action plan suggests alternative approaches to this agenda. Additional qualitative data opportunities may arise from this. In the meantime quantitative data is collected and published for external bodies is considered robust.
<b>Equality to Equity</b>	<p>Consider the implications of equalities 'champions' on more committees and working groups. How can we strengthen and promote the equalities agenda if there are not more opportunities for discussion</p> <p>Consider utilising experienced members of the Equalities Committee (or other suitable candidates) to act as observers on recruiting panels (spot checks) to monitor the success of Unconscious Bias training</p>	<p>Decision made on how to promote equalities</p> <p>Unconscious Bias 'audits' carried out</p>	Jul 2021	Equalities Committee / Senior Officer (Equalities)	There is currently a review of the EDI staffing resource, and once this has been agreed and implemented there will be greater scope to consider new ways of working.

<b>External Recognition</b>	Consider if a working group could be set up either as a precursor to completing Advance HE's REC or as a stand-alone entity designed to support the development of race equality	Identify actions which would be required prior to engaging in any external recognition process (ie where current arrangements fall short of expectations)  Actions which are transferable to support other protected characteristics identified and implemented to ensure parity across disadvantaged groups	Jul 2021	Equalities Committee / Senior Officer (Equalities)	An annual review of external recognition opportunities forms part of the EDI action mplan.
<b>Community of Advocates</b>	Seek to understand the gaps in people's knowledge and confidence.  Consider if it would be appropriate to measure an individual's contribution to equality and inclusion as part of the SPR process.	Identify gaps and supportive training in development	Jul 2021	Equalities Committee / Senior Officer (Equalities)	AUB remains committed to mandated equalities training which is given at point of induction and on a 3 yearly cycle thereafter. Mandatory training includes Equalities Overview and Unconscious Bias training. The EDI action plan encourages a review of training, especially identifying approaches which have proved successful across the sector.
<b>Any Impact Welcomed</b>	Consider mechanisms to communicate the equalities agenda widely (Is it appropriate to capitalise on the success of 'Paul's Place'? Would a 'Town Hall' encourage engagement?)  If sessions are run how can we ensure everyone leaves with an	Events with an equalities focused widely attended	Jul 2021	VC Office / Senior Officer (Equalities)	The changing circumstances due to Covid has meant that these communication forums have been focused on delivering operational information. However, the VCs messages have clearly

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	action (large or small) to participate in				communicated his commitment to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging and additional support for staff and students is often publicised via these communications.
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