

Kingston University London

EQUALITY SCHEME

Our strategy for promoting equality, diversity and respect

Revised November 2010

2009-2012

onekingston
different together ● ● ● ● ● ●

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Our General Duties.....	4
3. Meeting our specific duties.....	4
3.1 Prepare a Equality Scheme and Action Plan.....	5
3.2 Involve and consult.....	6
3.3 Conduct Equality Impact Assessments.....	6
3.4 Monitor our progress.....	7
3.5 Review the Scheme.....	7
3.6 Report and Publish the Scheme.....	7
4 Framework for the management of the Equality Scheme.....	8
5 Dealing with complaints.....	8
6 Feedback on the Equality Scheme.....	8

Appendices

1. Equality Action Plan
2. Legislation and requirements
3. Key objectives
4. Involvement and consultation
5. Nutshell Guide to Equality Impact Assessments

Foreword

Kingston University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of race, sex, disability, age, socio-economic category, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We wish to create a positive, inclusive and diverse working, learning and social environment, free from unfair discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment.

The new Equality Scheme is a key document – not just (or mainly) because the University has to comply with external requirements but because its content is central to what Kingston stands for and what we hope to achieve.

The statement that ‘Kingston University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of race, gender, disability, age, socio-economic category, sexual orientation, religion or belief’ is a natural extension of the University’s Mission Statement “to promote participation in higher education, which it regards as a democratic entitlement; to strive for excellence in learning, teaching and research; to realise the creative potential and fire the imagination of all its members; and to equip its students to make effective contributions to society and the economy”.

Kingston’s new Strategic Plan is designed to carry forward that mission, of which our commitment to equality is a key ingredient. With an increasingly diverse and global University community, it is essential we take active steps to build equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work, so we are all encouraged by an environment of mutual respect and dignity. Our Equality Scheme and Action Plan brings together, in a single public record, all the work the University undertakes to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination in the delivery of this Strategic Plan.

The Equality Scheme and Action Plan shows how we will work with our students, staff and others to build the capacity and commitment of the University in becoming an exemplar organisation on equality, diversity and inclusion by:

1. Raising awareness of diversity among our staff and students to develop practices which promote respect and foster a culture of inclusivity.
2. Understanding more about the issues students and staff can face in relation to race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other barriers, to better address disadvantage and inequality among our students and staff.
3. Encouraging the participation, attainment and progression of under-represented groups.

We will deliver these priority objectives by ensuring diversity and equality of opportunity is considered and promoted through our planning processes and operations; we will monitor our performance through better management information, and we will report on our progress and set fresh objectives for our staff, students and governors as we move forward. We will respond as the legal framework for equality develops and challenge ourselves and our partners to be bold and maintain high aspirations.

The advancement of equality concerns all of us and is the responsibility of all members of the University’s community. As members of this community, we all contribute to ensuring that Kingston University is a safe, welcoming and productive environment. By doing so, we are also contributing to the realisation of Kingston’s core mission to be an open and inclusive university.

Professor Sir Peter Scott, Vice Chancellor

1. Introduction

The words “equality” and “diversity” are widely used but not as widely understood. It is worth, therefore, taking the time to explain what we mean when we use these words. “Equality” means ensuring everyone is able to participate in all our activities on an equal footing. “Diversity” acknowledges there are differences between people which should be recognised, respected and celebrated.

The key purpose of the Equality Scheme (the Scheme) is to state our commitment to promoting equality in the participation and success of our staff and students by:

- Involving and consulting people in devising the Scheme and Action Plan
- Gathering data for analysis and monitoring
- Conducting Equality Impact Assessments
- Taking action
- Monitoring our progress
- Reporting and publishing our findings
- Making arrangements to review our Scheme

The key purpose of the Equality Action Plan (the Plan) is to demonstrate exactly what we are doing/will do to realise this commitment.

The Scheme and Action Plan take into account our Public Sector Equality Duties (which are divided into General and Specific Duties), our Strategic Plan and equality and diversity good practice.

2. Our General Duty

The general duty is set out in section 149 of the Act. In summary, we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups.

For example we will:

- Consider taking proactive steps to address disadvantage arising on grounds of age for example with study skills strategies to support mature students or buddy schemes for early researchers
- Foster good relations through addressing any tensions that exist with Lesbian, Gay and transgender staff and students and those of certain religions and beliefs. Strategies may include discussion, consultation, policies, induction and training.

3. Who is covered by the Scheme

The Equality Act uses the term ‘protected characteristic’ to describe a group that is more likely to be disadvantaged in some way. The relevant protected characteristics are – age;

disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

4. Meeting our specific duties

Specific Duties show how we are going to meet our General Duty e.g. exactly how we are going to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between different groups of people.

Currently the Government Equalities Office are finalising the Specific Duties which were consulted upon until November 10th 2010. Until these are ratified (circa April 2011) we will work with the existing Specific Duties.

Our Specific Duties are to:

- Prepare a Equality Scheme (this document) and Action Plan.
- Involve and consult people in devising the Scheme and Action Plan
- Gather data for analysis and monitoring
- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments
- Take action
- Monitor our progress
- Report and publish our findings
- Review our Scheme

3.1 Prepare a Equality Scheme and Action Plan

This Equality Scheme creates a consistent approach to ensuring we meet our General Duty.

Our aims in producing the Scheme are to:

- Connect our commitment to equality and diversity to the University's strategic priorities, targets and planning cycle
- Use existing systems and accountability structures to integrate action arising from impact assessment, institutional research and wider best practice
- Make clear what we are asking of all those we work with and avoid duplication or confusion
- Demonstrate how we intend to fulfil statutory requirements to actual and potential learners, employees, partners and others.

The Plan will be updated twice each year to reflect:

- The University's strategic priorities (see Appendix 2)
- Actions arising from equality impact assessments
- Management information (including the Annual Equality Report)
- Consultation and involvement of learners, staff and community groups
- Our commitment with regard to race, gender and disability equality legislation
- Best practice in equality and diversity, nationally and internationally

- The Plan will have three categories of action:
- Proactive actions (reflecting, strategic priorities, best practice)
 - Actions arising from equality impact assessment
 - Actions arising from Equality legislation

Our Scheme and Plan recognises and takes into account that staff and student experiences may not be limited to any one of their equalities dimensions (for example race, disability or sex), and we will take a multi-dimensional approach to our work on equality and diversity.

The importance of thinking in a multi-dimensional way is demonstrated by the following extract taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission which highlights how gender and disability inter-relate: "Only 47% of disabled women are in employment, compared with 53% of disabled men. Of the disabled women in employment, only 52% work full-time. This compares with an employment rate of 75% for non-disabled women and 86% for non-disabled men."

3.2 Involve and consult

The purpose of the Scheme is to build equality into all aspects of University life. Integral to this purpose is the involvement and consultation of learners, staff, partners and others so their priorities and concerns can be identified and translated into action planning.

Appendix 3 details the involvement and consultation carried out in developing the Scheme and Action Plan.

3.3 Conduct Equality Impact Assessments

The University has had a specific duty to conduct equality impact assessments in the areas of race (since May 2002), disability (since December 2006) and gender (since April 2007) and is including the areas of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.

The University has used the staff and student life-cycles to frame our equality impact assessments (Appendix 4).

Recommendations from the equality impact assessments will be prioritised by Deans and Directors and strategic actions, once agreed by the Equality Committee, will be included in the Equality Action Plan.

Equality impact assessments:

- Establish whether existing and new policies, practices or procedures have a positive, negative or neutral impact on people of different communities, the aim being to eliminate negative impact and improve positive impact.
- Are based upon data to establish what different groups experience in terms of recruitment, retention and success in their career as a student or member of staff.
- Include action planning, to ensure the results of data analysis and impact assessment are acted on; also to take action to set up structures to improve data, involvement, etc.
- Should eventually be part of quality assurance processes

3.4 Monitor our progress

The University will collect, analyse and publish in the Annual Equality Report, staff and student equality data to inform target setting and measurement of our progress (see Appendix 5). We will also be looking at:

For our students	For our Staff
Ethnicity, disability and gender profiles	Ethnicity, disability and gender profiles by grade, type of work and type of contract
Application and conversion figures	Job application and appointments
Retention, achievement and success rates ¹	Promotion applications and success rates
Work placement participation and satisfaction levels	Training applications
Student feedback	Staff feedback
Complaints and satisfaction expressed by students or their sponsors	Grievances Staff satisfaction

3.5 Review the Scheme

The Scheme will be formally reviewed in 2011. In the interim, as part of its annual self assessment process, the University will monitor the effectiveness of the Action Plan and regularly review arrangements for implementing the Equality Scheme through the committee structure.

3.6 Report and Publish the Scheme

To ensure transparency in equality work and to keep Kingston University's community informed of progress, the Scheme, the Action Plan and composite documents will be promoted to and shared with stakeholders using a variety of media. Equality impact assessment reports will be made available as they are completed. The Equality Report

¹ Including employment rates

which provides key data and findings for our staff and students and progress on equality and diversity activities is published on an annual basis.

4 Framework for the management of the Equality Scheme

We are all responsible for delivering the Equality Scheme. Specifically:

- A strategic Equality Committee has been established to provide leadership for corporate policies, programmes and initiatives concerned with equality and diversity issues. It provides a source of assurance to the Board of Governors on equality and diversity matters. The Committee maintains overall responsibility for the University's Equality Scheme, Action Plan and has responsibility for ensuring that legislative requirements in relation to race, disability and gender equality are met.
- Senior managers: The Equality Action Plan sets out a number of key equality objectives for senior managers. It is their responsibility to ensure appropriate actions are taken to achieve these objectives and those emerging from impact assessments by feeding them into individual faculty and departmental plans and operations.

5 Dealing with complaints

Anyone who considers they have been discriminated against or witness discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic

- Students have the following options:
 - Course tutor or leader
 - Harassment Contact Scheme
 - Student Complaint Procedure which outlines the steps involved and the support available
- Staff have the following options:
 - Line Manager or Dean or Director
 - Dignity at Work procedure for those who are subject to bullying and harassment
 - Harassment Contact Scheme
 - Grievance procedure

6 Feedback on the Equality Scheme

We welcome your views on the Scheme and invite you to send comments to equality@kingston.ac.uk

7 Useful Links

- The Equality Act
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf

- Consultation on the public sector Equality Duty

Government Equalities Office - The Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality

Duty

Promoting equality through transparency A consultation

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/news/specific_duties_consultation.aspx

- Information about the Equality Act and implications for the Higher Education Sector - Equality Challenge Unit

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/equality-act-2010>