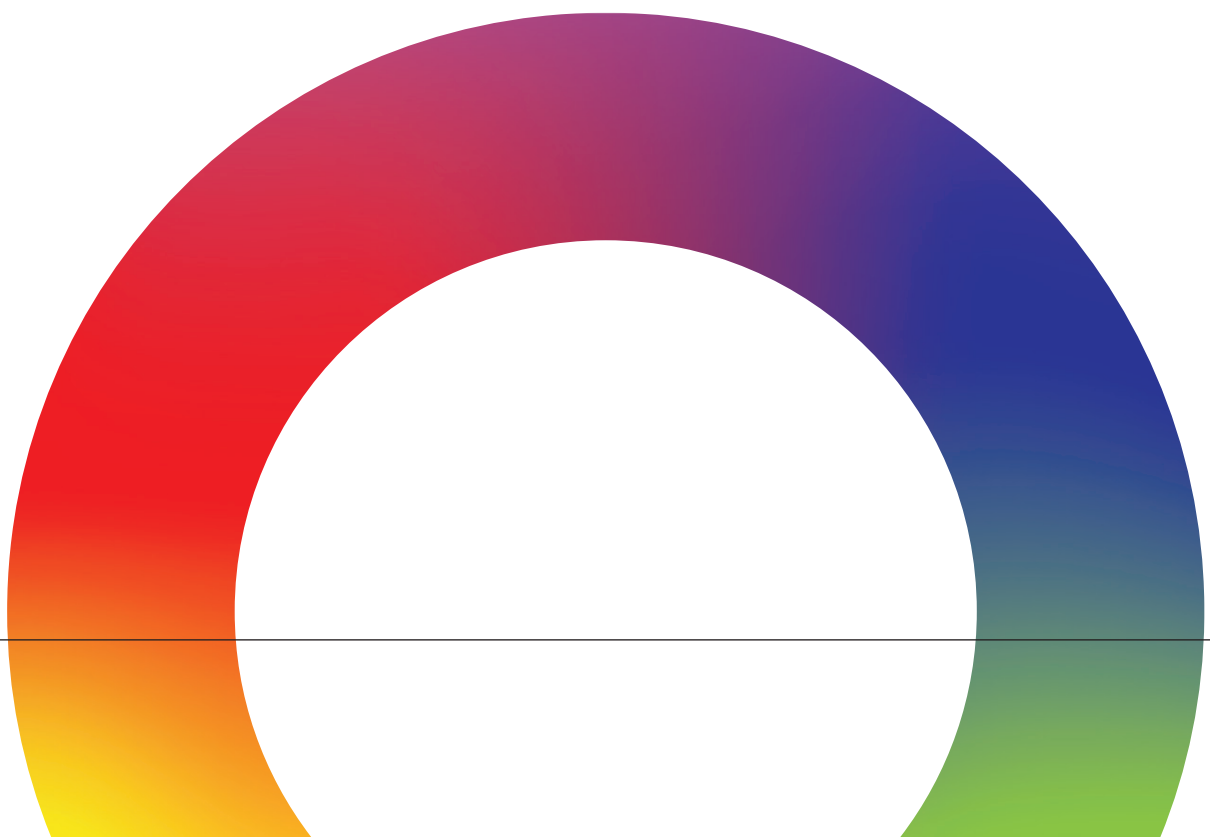


EQUALITY, DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION PLAN

2021–2025





FREEDOM TO BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

At Solent University we are proud of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). However, we recognise that there is work to do to ensure it is embedded into all aspects of University life.

We want to create positive change that is valued by our diverse communities, and have developed a clear statement of commitment on EDI, and a plan to create an inclusive environment which builds on the good work that has already been undertaken. This plan also brings together key enabling activities to create a coherent direction for the University and commits us to SMART actions.

Our EDI Plan is created collaboratively with our staff and students and comprises five strands:

- A. A clearly articulated commitment of our core value of inclusion
- B. Ambitions expressed as targets
- C. Accompanying actions
- D. Financial commitment
- E. Governance.

Phil Cotton, Chair of the Board of Governors

Professor Karen Stanton, Vice Chancellor

THIS IS WHO WE ARE,
WHAT WE STAND FOR
AND WHY WE MATTER.
WE ARE SOLENT UNIVERSITY.



A. OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We take active steps to provide an inclusive environment for all students, staff and visitors, irrespective of identity characteristics, including those protected characteristics listed within the Equality Act 2010. We take a holistic approach which recognises that an understanding of the importance of intersectionality is key to ensuring equality, diversity, and inclusion.

We value diversity; and recognise the importance of embracing a range of different ideas, histories, knowledge and culture, and the strength these bring to the quality of our work and the performance of our institution.

We challenge inequality. We recognise that patterns of inequality in society and higher education may be reflected within our University. However, we address differential outcomes for our students and staff through a range of strategies and lawful positive action.

We respect the rights of both individuals and groups to hold their own views and values, and encourage discussion and debate. However, we do not tolerate these being presented in a way that intimidates, degrades or is hostile to others.

“

I love working in higher education. I feel incredibly lucky to support the transformative difference that education makes for our students, our society, and our world. Being able to be our authentic selves at work means that we're at our best in supporting our students. As a gay man and a senior leader, it is important to lead by example. I was delighted to join Solent University in January 2022 as University Secretary and Registrar and a member of the Vice Chancellor's Group. Our values and commitment to being a university open to all are to be celebrated, and our EDI strategy reaffirms our commitment.”

**Jim Irving, University Secretary and Registrar,
Solent University**



B. OUR AMBITIONS EXPRESSED AS TARGETS

Our ambitions to improve the representation, experiences and outcomes of people who are minoritised, under-represented or are from disadvantaged backgrounds are expressed as SMART targets. These targets have been created through data analysis, thematic review of feedback, consultation, and external insight.



I am proud to be part of a diverse community of staff and students at Solent. This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan demonstrates Solent's commitment to working towards fair and equitable outcomes for all. By recognising both things that the institution is doing well and things that need to be improved, the University is showing that it is accountable for delivering positive change for all staff and students. I look forward to seeing how this plan is developed and implemented, and hope to see good practice shared and celebrated, and progress made. I think it is important that the perspectives of everybody who is part of the Solent community be taken into account, and I hope that, with all of us working together, we are able to achieve positive and meaningful change for everyone.



**Sonia Sood, Achievement Analyst,
Solent University**



STUDENTS – WE WILL:

1. Reduce the gap between the proportion of IMD Q1 entrants and IMD Q1 18-year-olds in the population from 13.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent in five years and to 0 after ten years.
2. Reduce the gap between the proportion of IMD Q2 entrants and IMD Q2 18-year-olds in the population from 6.9 per cent to 1 per cent in five years.
3. Reduce the gap between the proportion of POLAR 4 Q1 entrants and POLAR 4 Q1 18-year-olds in the population from 4 per cent to 0 in five years.
4. Asian students: reduce the gap between Asian entrants and Asian 18-year-olds in the population from 5.2 per cent to 1.2 per cent in five years and to 0 in ten years.
5. Halve the B.A.M.E. awarding gap from 21.7 per cent in 2016/17 to 10.9 per cent or less by 2021/22; and as any gap is unacceptable, we will eradicate any gap by 2029/30. We have already reduced the gap to 18 per cent in 2017/18 (national average 14 per cent).
6. Reduce the sex awarding gap by:
 - reducing the attainment difference between IMD quintile 1 or 2 male students and IMD quintile 3, 4 and 5 female students from 23 per cent in 2017/18 to 5 per cent or less in 2024/25
 - and also reducing the attainment difference between POLAR quintile 1 and 2 males and POLAR quintile 3, 4 and 5 females from 17 per cent in 2017/18 to 0 in 2024/25.
7. Eradicate the disability awarding gap by 2024/25. (2017/18 is 6 per cent, national comparator is 4 per cent).
8. Close the gap between B.A.M.E. students and White students in securing highly skilled employment-level roles by 2024/25, with particular focus on:
 - Asian students (55 per cent) vs. White students (71 per cent) – the gap of 16 per cent is to be closed.
 - B.A.M.E. students from IMD Q1 and 2 60 per cent vs. White students from IMD Q1 and 2 (70 per cent) – the gap of 10 per cent is to be closed.
 - B.A.M.E. females (53 per cent) vs. White males (73 per cent) – the gap of 20 per cent is to be closed.
9. Close any gap between females from lower participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) (61 per cent) and White males from LPNs (71 per cent) in securing HSE level roles by 2024/25 – the gap of 10 per cent is to be closed.
10. Ensure that analysis of survey feedback shows an increase in positive responses analysed by different characteristics.
11. Ensure that students report greater confidence in harassment reporting systems.
12. Improve the inclusivity of our university environment by delivering agreed changes to policy and practice identified by students, networks and staff.

STAFF – WE WILL:

1. Reduce the gender pay gap to 8.5 per cent by 2025.

2. Reduce the B.A.M.E. pay gap to 3 per cent by 2025.

3. Reduce differentials in proportional representation in grades for academic staff (race, sex, disability).

4. Reduce differentials in proportional representation in grades for professional services staff (race, sex, disability).

5. Reduce differentials in proportional representation in grades for senior staff (race, sex, disability).
6. Reduce differentials in proportional representation in levels of AdvanceHE Fellowships which are internally assessed (race, sex, disability).

7. Ensure that analysis of survey feedback shows an increase in positive responses analysed by different characteristics.

8. Ensure that staff report greater confidence in harassment reporting systems.

9. Improve the inclusivity of our university environment by delivering agreed changes to policy and practice identified by staff and internal and external networks.

OUR COMMUNITIES
(ALUMNI, BUSINESS AND LOCAL) – WE WILL:

1. Make a commitment to public engagement through three equality, diversity and inclusion activities a year, and by achieving an NCCPE silver engage watermark by 2022.

2. Make a commitment to our local community and manage at least three key partnerships per year through a Civic Charter launched in 2021 aimed at:

a. creating a city of life-long learning;

b. building a culturally enriched and cohesive city;

c. championing a healthy and active community;

d. driving economic and sustainable growth.
3. Become a University of Sanctuary and offer an annual sanctuary scholarship.

4. Fund through philanthropy the Local Student Bursary Scheme, providing support to at least 25 disadvantaged students a year.

5. Ensure our research can provide positive impact on our diverse communities.



C. OUR
ACTIONS

We know that to achieve sustained change we need to take a whole institutional, whole life cycle approach and recognise that, while each strand is governed separately, their inter-relations are expressed clearly and deliberately nourished.

Actions are identified for each stage of the staff and student lifecycle, covering policy, procedure and practices.



During my five years at Solent and one year as LGBTQ+ Staff Network Chair, I have always felt comfortable to be myself – openly and authentically. I believe Solent to be committed to being an inclusive, safe and diverse workplace, acknowledging that we are all valuable individuals. Solent does take real pride in this, and so they should. I hope when people come to Solent – staff or student – they know they can be out and proud, but with no expectation that they should be anything but who they are and what they’re comfortable with. I am excited to see how the network can continue to grow, and how Solent’s EDI strategy develops to ensure Solent remains the championing workplace it already is.

Kayleigh Quinn, Student Advice Team Leader,
Solent University

STUDENTS

1.

Deliver the SMART actions identified in our Access and Participation Plan which are designed to achieve our student targets [Enhanced] <https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/our-policies-and-legal-information/university-access-agreements>.
2.

Achieve Bronze status Race Equality Charter by 2022/23, with a stretch target to achieve a Silver Award by 2025/26 for staff and students.
3.

Implement, from concept (including validation and revalidation) to review, the Inclusive Curriculum Framework (ICF) <https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/documents/edi-inclusive-curriculum-framework.pdf>
4.

Continue to roll out the Transformation Academy to promote inclusivity in the online space.
5.

Include the B.A.M.E. Value Added metric as part of our measure for quality <https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/documents/edi-value-added-metric.pdf>
6.

Produce the demographics course page to identify courses with differentials for student groups with protected characteristics.
7.

Introduce a Solent Course Enhancement Programme to ensure courses with differentials are supported to achieve timely improvements.
8.

Implement the Student Partnership Framework across all levels of University life to ensure different student voices shape our decisions.
9.

Launch the new University Transgender Policy.
10.

Ensure, as part of the review cycle, that all student-related policies use gender-neutral terms.
11.

Ensure that the specific needs of our diverse student population are supported by the Student Hub and through links to local networks or organisations, for example, Chrysalis, a charity supporting trans and non-binary people in Southampton.
12.

Achieve Student Minds Mental Health Charter status by 2024.
13.

Deliver a safeguarding policy and the supportive Fitness to Study policy, with monitoring and evaluation data.
14.

Deliver annual cross-institutional EDI events where all courses conduct activities relating to EDI in their subject/industry.
15.

Implement the EDI Training Plan to students, which includes harassment and bystander and unconscious bias training.
16.

Conduct equality impact analysis on specified student policies.



17.

Implement a rolling programme of student-related staff development:

a.

to build better awareness of barriers to LGBTQ+ students and how to mitigate against these in policy and practice

b.

to support the implementation of the ICF

c.

to engage our staff in professional development on race equity in higher education and EDI by developing a badged SOL-based short course demonstrating staff commitment to being an inclusive educator.

d.

which requires our courses with highest B.A.M.E. student numbers to undertake training on race inequalities in higher education
- e.

which requires courses in Solent’s Course Enhancement Programme to undertake EDI training to action plan embedding EDI in the curriculum
- f.

to fully embed EDI in our Professional Development Module (towards Associate Fellowship of Advance HE) and our PGCLTHE (towards Fellowship of Advance HE).



STAFF

1. Implement a rolling programme of staff development to:
 - improve management capacity in relation to inclusive workforce development
 - promote the benefits of inclusive behaviour and the steps that need to be taken to reduce representation differentials in pay and grade
 - build better awareness and education around disability and supportive reasonable adjustments
 - build better awareness of barriers to LGBTQ+ staff and how to mitigate against these in policy and practice
 - improve awareness of harassment and sexual misconduct
 - improve the mechanism for addressing unacceptable behaviour.
2. Continue to support and learn from thriving B.A.M.E. Women and LGBTQ+ networks.
3. Improve and extend our approach to flexible working through Ways of Working.
4. Recognise and reward inclusive curriculum design, practice and scholarship through recruitment and promotion processes.
5. Achieve Bronze status Race Equality Charter by 2022/23, with a stretch target to achieve a Silver Award by 2025/26 for staff and students.
6. Develop the strategy to ensure a successful 2027 REF Code of Practice and support for staff with circumstances.
7. Achieve Concordat for Early Career Researchers by 2025.
8. Incorporate consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion in the design of research projects that have a direct impact on people – for example, technologies to help disabled people.
9. Achieve Athena Swan Bronze status by 2023 and Silver status by 2025.
10. Introduce staff and student research collaborations to explore institutional EDI challenges.
11. Ensure, as part of the review cycle, that all staff-related policies use gender-neutral terms.
12. Conduct equality impact analysis on our specified staff policies for example, recruitment and promotion.



OUR COMMUNITIES (ALUMNI, BUSINESS AND LOCAL)

1. Develop at least three partnerships per year with local organisations and charities working on shared goals for example, Unity 101.
2. Provide an offer of free access to select space and facilities for local organisations and charities.
3. Deliver annual public engagement activities including:
 - a. support, celebrate and sponsor Southampton Pride
 - b. celebrate Visibility days and Pride month
 - c. support and celebrate Black History Month
 - d. support and celebrate Refugee Week.
4. Establish an annual Sanctuary Scholarship, with the first one awarded in 2021.
5. Achieve University of Sanctuary status by 2022.
6. Achieve NCCPE Silver by 2022 for public engagement. Awarding at least 25 local student bursaries a year to students with low household income and from low participation in HE, fully funded through donations.
7. Deliver a programme of themed campaigns which foster inclusivity, address topical issues and reinforce Solent's values.
8. Incorporate consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the design of research projects that have a direct impact on people – for example, technologies to help disabled people.

D. OUR FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Annually over the five years we commit to

- on average £1,300,000 on EDI-related student activities
- a minimum of £125,000 to local student bursaries
- over £200,000 for the Solent Sanctuary Scholarship
- at least £50,000 to community partnerships.

E. OUR GOVERNANCE

Annual monitoring and evaluation, oversight and rigorous challenge is provided by the Equality, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Committee (ESWC) which is chaired by the Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor.

The Pro Vice Chancellor, Students and Teaching provides the ESWC with regular progress reports and a live progress tracker. The progress tracker is continuously monitored and updated by the EDI working group, which is a subset of the ESWC and has representation from the Students Union, Student Experience, Solent's Learning and Teaching Institute, External Relations, People and Development, Finance and the academic community.

To ensure broader ownership and engagement with EDI, the EDI Plan is included as an agenda item for the Academic Board, the Student Board and the Vice Chancellor's Group. Ultimately, the Board of Governors provides the assurance on academic character and KPIs.

“

Both the student and staff communities are really diverse in my opinion and this was a massive help in terms of broadening my horizons. This can even affect your skills and academic outcomes. Once you become more culturabe and have a taste of this global experience, you become a lot more teachable as well – more accepting and happier. ”

Teodor Mitsev, Head of Student Wellbeing at Solent Students' Union



YOUR THOUGHTS MATTER

If you would like to provide feedback on Solent's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021–25, please email: EDI@solent.ac.uk; OR fill in the feedback form: <https://www.solent.ac.uk/about/documents/edi-staff-factsheet.pdf>

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