

SOLENT

UNIVERSITY

SOUTHAMPTON

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

2021–2025



STUDENTS



FREEDOM TO BE WHO YOU WANT TO BE

At Solent University we welcome students from all backgrounds, and we are proud of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. However, we recognise that there is work to do to ensure it is embedded into all aspects of University life and beyond.

In consultation with staff and students, we have therefore developed a clear statement of commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, alongside a plan to create a more inclusive environment for all.

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

TO SUPPORT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 per cent 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
 - 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 per cent 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) v. 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) v. 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) v. 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.



Solent offers a very welcoming and diverse community. When I became a student here, I felt right at home even though I was so far away from it. Staff and students from different backgrounds really helped to broaden my horizons, which also helped improve my academic outcomes. ”

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

ACTIONS

TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES, WE WILL:

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/solent-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 the 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 specific 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).

