

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: A practical guide for staff**



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## 1. Introduction

The University's work in advancing equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) is underpinned by the belief that ED&I enhances our university culture, both academically and socially.

Every member of staff plays an integral role in helping us to create an inclusive culture where everyone is able to contribute positively to our community. As part of this, it is important that each member of staff reflects on how ED&I issues apply to the institution as a whole and to them as individuals, while also being aware of relevant good practice guides, policies and sources of support.

This guide is aimed at new and established members of staff, along with their line managers. It intends to provide practical examples of how you can get involved and learn more about ED&I. It also aims to prompt further discussion and may be considered during staff inductions and as part of the annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) process, allowing you to explore ways to make your practices more inclusive.

We hope this guide will help to foster confidence and understanding of the important role we all play in creating a community where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated.

If you have any questions please do get in touch with us at [equality@york.ac.uk](mailto:equality@york.ac.uk).

## 2. Getting involved

A useful way to increase your knowledge and understanding of ED&I issues is by getting involved with some of the related activities and events taking place across campus throughout the year.

- The University has various [Staff Equality Networks](#) that focus on different areas of ED&I such as Disability, Race, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation. These inclusive forums are open to all staff at the University, whether full or part-time, and provide opportunities to promote and progress specific areas of equality, share best practice and network with peers. Go online for more information about [our Networks](#) or email us at [equality@york.ac.uk](mailto:equality@york.ac.uk)
- Staff and students from across the University regularly contribute to what has become a varied calendar of religious, cultural and equality related events that take place on campus throughout the year. These events help us to celebrate and learn more about diverse identities and cultures, while acknowledging key milestones. Why not keep up-to-date on what's happening on campus via our [calendar of events](#) and by following us on Twitter at [@EqualityatYork](#) and Instagram at [@equalityatyork](#).
- The University has a network of [Departmental Equality and Diversity Champions](#), why not find out more about them and identify who your Department Champion is. You might also want to consider speaking to them about ED&I issues at a local level. See our [list of E&D Champions](#).
- This also applies to your Departmental [Athena SWAN Rep](#) and [Disability Contact](#) (for students) - make sure you're aware of who they are in case you need to approach them for advice on a particular subject.
- It is important for us to fully understand who we are as an institution and how our diverse community is comprised. This enables us to support under-represented groups and monitor their progression, so that we can take practical steps towards removing any barriers that might disproportionately affect them. With that in mind, in 2020 we are extending our staff equality monitoring categories and would like to encourage you to update your equality monitoring information via the [MyView](#) 'self-service' portal. For more information about how your data is used and stored, contact [equality@york.ac.uk](mailto:equality@york.ac.uk).
- You can also learn more about the composition of our staff and student community by reviewing our available [online equality data](#).

### 3. Finding out more

There's always more to learn about ED&I and related best practice, a good place to start is with the University's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(2017-2022\)](#).

This document sets out the University's vision for ED&I and highlights the four key areas or objectives where we need to continue the good work in order to achieve our vision.

Objective 1: Embed equality into all aspects of University life

Objective 2: Attract, attain and succeed

Objective 3: Be flexible and adaptive to the needs of our diverse University community

Objective 4: Adopt an inclusive campus approach

To request paper copies of the University's ED&I Strategy, get in touch at [equality@york.ac.uk](mailto:equality@york.ac.uk). You might also want to consider the following:

- Visit the University's new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpages](#) to find out more.
- You can keep up-to-date on relevant [equality law](#) and find out more about good equality practice from across the sector at [AdvanceHE](#).
- Also, take a look at some of the University's [ED&I policies and procedures](#).
- Colleagues from across the University have developed a range of guidance documents and examples of best practices related to ED&I that you might find useful on a day-to-day basis while supporting other members of staff and/or students, for example there is the:
  - [Inclusive and accessible events good practice guidelines](#);
  - our [good practice to assist individuals with hearing loss in meetings](#);
  - our guidance for [LGBT+ staff and students travelling outside the UK](#).
- We have also compiled some useful guidance documents produced by external organisations, for example:
  - AdvanceHE's [Religion and belief: supporting inclusion of staff and students in higher education and colleges](#);
  - LGBT Foundation's [A guide to being a trans ally](#).

## 4. Being a visible ally

We understand that in order to create a truly inclusive and welcoming campus, every member of our community has a part to play in contributing to our work in this area. With this, we would like to encourage colleagues to lead by example and act as visible allies.

- One of the ways you can help support those around you is by making sure you are aware of the relevant staff and student support services available on campus. For instance, there is the [Student Hub](#) or other [support services for students](#), along with the [Staff Counselling Service](#) and other [sources of support for staff](#). Depending on your role it may be unlikely that someone will approach you for advice about where to go for support, however if this does happen you will be able to sign-post them to the most appropriate service.
- In order to show your support and act as a visible ally for our LGBT+ staff and student community, why not consider wearing one of our rainbow lanyards and adding a preferred pronoun sticker to your ID badge - email [equality@york.ac.uk](mailto:equality@york.ac.uk) to order yours!
- Another way for you to act as a visible ally and to signal your support for diverse groups, is by including preferred pronouns (e.g. he/him/his) and your working pattern (e.g. Monday-Thursday) in your email signature. It's little things like this that help us to foster a more inclusive campus environment. It's also useful on a practical level as it enables others to know when you're unlikely to respond to emails during non-working hours.

For example:

Samira Ahmed  
Equality and Diversity Officer

### **Pronouns: she/her/hers**

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Twitter: @EqualityatYork

**Working pattern: Tuesday to Thursday (08:00-16:00)**

## 5. Reflecting on your role at York

Each academic and professional support department is uniquely different and encounter a whole range of diverse challenges. You might find it useful to reflect on some of the relevant ED&I issues that occur at a local level within your department and consider how you can help to make a positive contribution to tackle some of these issues.

- Consider how you can encourage colleagues in your area to engage more with ED&I, perhaps you could help to publicise this and other related guides within your department, either via a noticeboard or internal communication.
- We all have unconscious bias' and will, from time to time, make swift judgements and assumptions about other people. Try to reflect on some of your own experiences at work and at home, and consider how the perspectives of others might differ from your own. There are many ways to do this, one way is to pick out a moment when you met someone for the first time and to recall the initial impressions you had about that person and then consider how those impressions changed over time when you became much more familiar with that person.

## 6. ED&I Training

There are lots of ED&I training and briefing sessions taking place across the University, within departments and via the Learning and Development Team, it's worth looking out for these and using them as opportunities to increase your knowledge.

- Learn more about ED&I issues by completing the online Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias [online training modules](#). This could be for the first time, or it might be worth refreshing your memory and testing your knowledge.
- The University often runs ED&I themed sessions, when you spot one of these via the events calendar for the [Learning Management System](#) (login required), you might want to consider speaking to your line manager about attending.

## 7. Suggestions for managers and Heads of Department

We want to encourage all staff to think about how they contribute to ED&I. It's important to consider how the work of your team and individual members can enhance ED&I at the University, from both a staff and student perspective.

Examples of things you might want to consider are:

- **Accessibility** - Explore ways that you and your team could improve the accessibility of the printed and online information you produce, not only for students but also for other staff (e.g. using heading styles and alt text within documents). For more information on accessible formats see the [University guidance on using heading styles to structure documents](#) alongside the [online e-accessibility wiki](#) (login required).
- **Communication and webpages** - Consider ways of making ED&I more visible within your communications and via your webpages, perhaps by incorporating links to online resources and relevant guidance documents. Ask yourself, does ED&I have a regular slot on our agenda? Are we discussing it as a team and what can we do to increase visibility of the University's overall ED&I objectives?
- **Diverse perspectives** - Consider the perspectives of staff and students from diverse and under-represented groups, and how their interactions with your team could be enhanced. What can we do differently in order to be more inclusive?
- **Flexible working** - While leading a team it's important to strive to make your working environment as inclusive as possible, balancing the needs of individuals with the requirements of their particular roles. Every department is different and one arrangement that works for one team may not work for another. However, you should consider ways your team could benefit from working more flexibly, examples include:
  - exploring opportunities for part-time working or [job-share arrangements](#);
  - where appropriate you could encourage staff to consider some of the University's other work life balance policies such as [maternity leave](#), [paternity leave](#), [shared parental leave](#), [career breaks](#) and the [flexible working policy](#).
  - encourage colleagues to make use of the University's [flexi system](#), which may lead to them starting or finishing earlier depending on what works best for them;
  - hot-desking may provide additional flexibility, along with agreeing tasks and allowing colleagues to work remotely or from home on certain days;

- it's also important, where possible, to discourage colleagues from checking emails outside of their preferred working pattern, and equally important that you lead by example by doing the same.
- **Managing change** - It is important that our policies, practices and procedures are as inclusive as they possibly can be, and we recognise that changes to processes within departments can sometimes adversely impact particular groups, either directly or indirectly. When there are any significant changes to the way your team works, you should consider carrying out an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) in order to help reinforce good decision-making and to assess the likely (or actual) impact that a new policy or process may have on particular team members.
- **Supporting colleagues** - Consider the diverse needs of your individual team members and, where possible, hold regular one-to-one meetings to explore how you can better support them. In instances where an adjustment or arrangement has been put in place to support a colleague, be sure to check in with them regularly to assess if the adjustment is still appropriate, and remember that their circumstances may change over time.
- **Professional development** - Think about how you can encourage staff from under-represented groups to put themselves forward for career development opportunities, particularly engagement with some of the broader opportunities available, such as [the Springboard programme](#), the [coaching and mentoring scheme](#), or reverse mentoring with someone from a diverse background as a two-way development opportunity.
- **Recruitment and selection** - Consider how you might recruit more diversity within your area and what some of the barriers might be to this. For instance, how diverse are your recruitment and selection panels? Do all panel members have an [understanding of unconscious bias](#) and what additional checks are you building into the process, which might help to identify bias' if they arise? Have you considered the use of [Positive Action Statements](#) during the recruitment process and whether the language used in the job advertisement is fully inclusive?



## Contact Us

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