THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK GENDER EQUALITY
SCHEME 2010 – 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME 2010 - 2013

1.1 The purpose of this 2nd Gender Equality Scheme is to build on previous work to make sure that the needs of men and women and transsexual\(^1\) people are taken into account at the University, so that we create an intellectual, social and physical environment in which all students and staff achieve their potential. The University has for a number of years been working to improve aspects of its approach to gender equality. This Scheme will move us further towards ensuring that gender equality is embedded in all we do.

1.2 When the first Gender Equality Scheme was developed by the University in 2007, the former Equal Opportunities Commission reminded us that:

i) Many services are designed in a gender-blind way, which means they ignore the different needs that women and men have. For example, many transport services are designed to meet commuter needs (which are typically male) and little thought is given to safety, access for pushchairs, fares for part-time workers and more complex routes (which are typically female needs). Services are only open during the working day, which means that many men, who tend to work full-time, cannot access them because they are at work.

i) Discrimination in UK employment is still widespread.

The picture has changed very little since 2007. In April 2010 the Fawcett Society\(^2\) tells us:

- Women working full-time earn on average 17% less per hour than men working full-time.
- For women working part-time compared to men working full-time the gap is 36% per hour.
- Over 30,000 women every year lose their jobs as a result of becoming pregnant.

iii) For students, there are unequal opportunities in schools, FE and HE. There is concern nationally about the low numbers and poor academic career progression of women in science, engineering and technology (SET); similarly, the numbers of young men studying modern languages is low. Potentially discriminatory practices can affect students’ career chances.

Previous legislation relied heavily on individuals taking action to challenge discrimination. However, many people find the idea of taking legal action on their own very daunting. Also, individual cases have a limited impact on systematic causes of discrimination. The gender equality duty has not replaced dealing with individual cases but is an additional tool for tackling discrimination and promoting equality.

\(^1\) A person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has in the past undergone gender reassignment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery).

\(^2\) The Fawcett Society: [www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/](http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/)
1.3 Of course, our staff and students are affected by inequalities which are beyond the University’s control. However, research on gender divisions in wider society suggests that we need to ask ourselves a number of questions about what happens in the University. In relation to students, girls are out-performing boys in educational attainment at school, which raises concerns about underachievement amongst boys. Are male students underachieving at the University, and/or does female students’ performance continue or drop off in a different social environment?

In relation to staff, across the labour market as a whole, women tend to be concentrated in different types of jobs from men, e.g. caring work\(^3\) and also at the lower end of career ladders\(^4\). While different choices about the priority accorded to paid work versus family life play some part, there are clearly also often constraints on men’s and women’s choices. How do staff within the University fare in relation to job and progression opportunities and how far is the University perceived as an enabling and/or constraining organisation?

In relation to both students and staff, other research shows women are more exposed to sexual harassment and are more worried about crime and personal safety – but men with health or personal problems are less likely to seek help for those matters. Are these patterns replicated in the University?

In relation to transsexual people, who statistically are a very small percentage of the population, monitoring is not currently carried out in the University. However, we need to ensure that transsexual people are not disadvantaged in any way and will need to do this sensitively.

Although there are many factors beyond University control which influence opportunity, achievement and quality of life for both staff and students, the purpose of the Gender Equality Duty is to require public organisations to do what they can to promote gender equality, and hence to reduce barriers to equality. So, where we can influence or affect inequalities, we will continue to try to do so.

1.4 There is often a misunderstanding about what equality means. ‘Promoting equality’ does not necessarily mean ‘treating everyone the same’. Identical treatment may be unfair if people’s needs or circumstances are different, and this can result in unequal outcomes. We may require different approaches for men and women (at times) to promote more equal outcomes (e.g. to encourage more women to apply for promotion, or more men to seek out support services). This is known as ‘gender-sensitive provision’. In other contexts, different approaches may reflect assumptions about gender which perpetuate inequalities and therefore we might need to move to more similar treatment (e.g. making sure parental leave is equally accessible to men and women).

The Gender Equality Duty gives the University an opportunity to focus on matters which affect men, women and transsexual people differently and/or unfairly. At the same time we should maintain and, where needed, develop good working practices which benefit everyone.

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\(^3\) This is referred to as ‘horizontal occupational segregation’

\(^4\) Referred to as ‘vertical occupational segregation’
2 DEVELOPING THE GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

2.1 Data gathering

Information to inform this report has been obtained from a number of sources including:

- data in Equal Opportunities Annual Reports\(^5\)
- national benchmarking information\(^6\)
- qualitative information from previous research and consultation
- information from the University’s Gender Equality Consultation exercise February – March 2007
- the University Staff Opinion Survey (conducted in 2008)\(^7\).

2.2 Engaging senior staff

In order to ensure that the first Gender Equality Scheme (2007-10) was embedded in the University’s vision for the future and supported at the highest levels, the Action Plan which accompanied it was divided into the key themes of the Corporate Plan 2005-9, each of which was the responsibility of a member or members of the University’s Senior Management Team. To ensure continuity of actions, the GES Action Plan for 2010-2013 continues to be structured in this way. The themes of the new University Plan 2010-19 are: Excellence; Internationalisation; Inclusivity and Sustainability.

3 CONTEXT

3.1 The University of York

The University takes pride in its pursuit of excellence in research, teaching and the application of knowledge. It currently has 12,719 students\(^8\) and around 3,000 staff. It is campus-based, with a large proportion (currently around 35%) of students resident in University accommodation organised into eight Colleges. The University Plan 2009-2019 sets out how the University will continue to expand student numbers, increasing them by around 20-25% to a total of 14-15,000 by 2019. This will be achieved, in part, by continuing the shift towards postgraduate and overseas students (supporting the University’s overall strategic objectives of internationalisation and inclusivity).

Women predominate as undergraduate students (54% compared to 46% male). This is a reflection of national patterns of girls’ success at school and the University’s subject mix. Females make up 55% of our postgraduates, compared to 45% male.

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\(^5\) Equality and Diversity Office Annual reports 2006-7, 2007-8 and 2008-9: [www.york.ac.uk/admin/ eo/AnnualReports.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/ eo/AnnualReports.htm)

\(^6\) The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) [http://www.hesa.ac.uk/](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/)

\(^7\) The Staff Opinion Survey Functional Area Action Plans: [www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/staffsurvey/action_plans/](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/staffsurvey/action_plans/)

\(^8\) University of York Students, Full-time and part-time only (no visitors), as at 1 December 2009.
Far more women study part-time at undergraduate level than men (mostly nursing-related courses in Health Sciences). More postgraduates (men and women) study part-time than undergraduates.

3.2 The legislative framework

In 2001, the government introduced the Race Equality Duty which required all public bodies to actively promote race equality and eliminate discrimination and racial harassment. Other duties have since been developed for other areas of equality, including the Disability Equality Duty which came into force in December 2006.

The Gender Equality Duty extended and strengthened previous legislation on gender, such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Acts. The Gender Equality Duty is a legal requirement on any public authority in Great Britain to pay due regard, in all of its functions, to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex and
- promote equality of opportunity between women, men and transsexual people

This is called the ‘General Duty’. It is supported by a set of ‘specific duties’, which set out steps to meet the general duty.

The ‘specific duties’ mean that we have to:

- have a Gender Equality Scheme
- address causes of any gender pay gap
- gather and use information on policies and practices
- consult people who might be affected by gender equality in our university (called ‘stakeholders’)
- assess the impact of University policies on men and women and transsexual people
- implement the Scheme’s actions
- report on progress annually
- review the Scheme at least every three years

The Gender Equality Duty came into force in April 2007 HE institutions are required to be proactive and demonstrate that they plan for equality. They are also required to explain each year what they have done to bring it about. The University also has a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment of transsexual staff, potential staff and students. It will need to ensure that any employment policies and practices adequately cover transsexual employees.

At the time of writing this scheme, the Equality Bill had just been passed by Parliament (April 2010). The Equality Challenge Unit\(^9\) describes the new bill thus: ‘The stated aim of the Bill is to harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality’. The new Act will replace all existing equality legislation, including the Equal Pay Act.

:\(^9\) www.ecu.ac.uk

University of York Gender Equality Scheme 2010-2013
The Act introduces a concept of “protected characteristics” and looks to strengthen the law in a number of key areas by:

- creating a general public duty. HEIs will have to consider how their policies, programmes and service delivery will affect people with the protected characteristics;
- extending the range of lawful positive action to overcome or minimise a disadvantage arising from a protected characteristic;
- extending the circumstance in which a person is protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of a protected characteristic;
- allowing employment tribunals to make recommendations in discrimination cases which apply to the whole workforce.

Protected characteristics introduced by the Act include sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

In addition to examining their employment practices, an area which will require more action by institutions will be service provision. The University will have to ensure that any services it provides are equally accessible and of value to both genders.

4 WHERE WE ARE NOW

The University is committed to the implementation and monitoring of equality and diversity across the six equality strands - gender, race, religion belief and non-belief, sexual orientation, age and disability - and has a range of policies and codes on equality and diversity\(^\text{10}\). The introduction of the Equality Act will require further changes to monitoring and to such policies and codes.

We have a lot of information about gender equality in relation to both students and staff. The University’s Equality and Diversity Office has collated an annual report for the past seven years, which contains data on staff and student recruitment and progress by, among other categories, gender, ethnicity and disability, and this report is considered by Council, the governing body of the University. The report is used to highlight priorities for action and demonstrates accountability for the University’s progress on equality and diversity.

Section 4 covers information on a variety of aspects of University functions.

4.1 Academic development and student numbers growth

Student admissions and progress

There were slightly more female applicants for undergraduate study at York than the UCAS average\(^\text{11}\), but slightly fewer acceptances\(^\text{12}\). The proportion of women applying

\(^{10}\) Policies include: Equality and Diversity Policy for Students, Equal Opportunities Employment Policy, Code of Practice on Harassment, Race Equality Policy, Disability Equality Scheme. See http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eqo/policies/index.htm

\(^{11}\) 10,513 female acceptances for 2008 entry = 57% of the total. Females account for 55.9% of all applications through UCAS (Source: UCAS on-line statistics).
to York is increasing and the proportion of men decreasing, with the gap widening over time\textsuperscript{13}.

Female undergraduate students have a very slightly higher rate of non-completion than men\textsuperscript{14}, and part-time women are slightly less likely to complete than full-timers\textsuperscript{15}. Academic, health, personal and other reasons for dropping out account for many of the non-completions, but there are higher rates of academic failure for women studying part-time\textsuperscript{16}.

Amongst full-time undergraduate students, it appears that women tend to drop out before the end of their course for non-academic reasons more than men do\textsuperscript{17} (although this was not the case in 2005/06). Men are more likely to receive an 'academic failure' than women\textsuperscript{18}.

4.2 The Student Experience

Student Support: Student use of University services and facilities

Support\textsuperscript{19} for students' academic and social experience is currently provided by the University in four ways: (i) the supervisory system, (ii) the college system, (iii) student support services, and, (iv) student organisations.

(i) Supervisory system:

Every undergraduate has a Supervisor who is a member of academic staff in the student's department. Comparable arrangements are made for HYMS students. The Supervisor is usually appointed for the duration of the student's period of study and is expected to be the person to whom the student can turn for advice and help on any problem. Postgraduates have research supervisors who are closely related to their programmes of study.

(ii) College system:

Almost all students are members of one of the eight colleges for the whole period of their degree, whether or not they 'live in'. Each college has a Provost, who is supported by a resident welfare team of staff and/or senior students.

\textsuperscript{12} 1,705 female acceptances for 2008 entry = 53.4\% of the total. Females account for 55.2\% of all acceptances recorded by UCAS (Source: UCAS on-line statistics).
\textsuperscript{13} Applications from females = 52\% for 2005 entry, 54\% for 2006 and 2007, and 57\% for 2008 (Source: UCAS on-line statistics).
\textsuperscript{14} Females = 11.0\%, males = 10.7\%.
\textsuperscript{15} Females = 21.7\%, males = 23.9\%.
\textsuperscript{16} Females = 24\%, males = 20\%.
\textsuperscript{17} Females = 86\%, males = 80\%.
\textsuperscript{18} Females = 14\%, males 20\%.
\textsuperscript{19} From the Student Support and Development Strategy 2005-9 at \url{http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/sso/academic/ssc/ac_ssdss.html}
(iii) Student support services:

There is a network of support for students which includes the Accommodation Office, Careers Service, Open Door Team, Disability Services, Equality and Diversity Office, Financial Services (fees and charges), Immigration Advice Service, International Office, International Student Support Co-ordinator, Nursery, Student Administrative Services, Student Financial Support Unit and Welfare Advisers. Chaplains representing world faiths are also part of the student support network. All these groups and individuals are linked to departmental Supervisors, to college welfare teams and to the York University Students’ Union and Graduate Students' Association.

(iv) Student organisations:

The York University Students’ Union has an Advice and Support Centre and an elected Academic Affairs Officer and a Welfare Officer. The four liberation posts cover Disability, LGBT, Race Equality Officers and Women’s issues. The independent Graduate Students’ Association has a Welfare Officer and an Academic Officer. Other student groups within the Students’ Union include the International Students’ Association, Mature Students Association. A confidential listening service, Nightline, is run by students for students.

These four strands of student support aim to secure the personal development, physical and mental well-being, and welfare of students, helping them to realise their potential. Fundamental to them all is the principle of equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability, ethnicity, religion, culture, creed, gender reassignment.

4.3 Data collection and monitoring of student services

The following data are currently monitored in relation to students:

- Open Door Team - gender distribution, home/European/overseas and year of study. This information is reported to Student Services Committee.
- University Health Centre - students and staff using the service, age, and gender breakdown. Monitored by Student Services Committee.
- Student Welfare Advisers - gender, type of enquirer and fee status. Monitored by Student Services Committee.
- Special Cases Committee - numbers of students with impairments. Gender data could be provided if required. Monitored by Special Cases Committee.
- Disability Services - monitoring by type of disability, UG/PG, home/international. Reported to the Equality and Diversity Committee
- Harassment Advisers Network - people seeking support from the service are monitored by gender, ethnicity, age and disability. Some monitoring is also available on the alleged harasser and nature of the harassment. Monitored by the Dignity at Work and Study Committee.
- Harassment Monitoring Form - monitoring by gender, ethnicity, age and disability. Some monitoring available on the alleged harasser and nature of the harassment.
- The Nursery – can provide data on gender of parents who are students.
Data of other services used by students may need to be collected if the University is to establish whether the services are equally accessed by, or are disadvantaging, certain groups, for example:

- The University Sports Centre
- The Careers Service
- The University Library.

The following section outlines what we know about use of our services by male and female students:

(i) University Health Centre

More male than female students were registered\(^\text{20}\) (6,802 men, 6,496 women).\(^\text{21}\)

(ii) Open Door Team\(^\text{22}\)

Of students who use the service, approximately two-thirds have been women, one-third men. There is probably some reluctance to seek help amongst male students.

(ii) Student Support Office\(^\text{23}\)

Of enquiries to Student Welfare Advisers, 36% were from male students, 61% from female students, and in 3% of cases the gender was not known. There is no cross-referencing to type of enquiry at present. That kind of analysis may indicate if there were different issues faced by women or men, but any such differences could also be the result of different help-seeking patterns.

4.4 Other aspects of the student experience: bullying and harassment

The University has a well-developed welfare system for students and students have access to the University’s network of Harassment Advisers, which is co-ordinated by the University’s Equality and Diversity Office. We do know that the numbers of students seeking help from Harassment Advisers is low. However students can and do seek support over harassment issues from various sources, including college welfare teams, academic supervisors, the Students’ Union, Graduate Students’ Association and the International Students’ Association.

4.5 Governance and Management: Human Resources

i) Staff Employment

\(^{20}\) From the University Health Centre Annual Report January 2010
\(^{21}\) From the University Health Centre Annual Report January 2010
\(^{22}\) From the University Open Door Team Annual Report 2008-09.
\(^{23}\) From the University Student Support Office Annual Report 2007-08.
There have been considerable recent changes in staff categories in the University, under the Framework Agreement\textsuperscript{24}, so, since then, identifying gender-related employment trends has been less straightforward than previously. However, the data informing this section of the Scheme are based staff categories since the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) (i.e. after August 06).

ii) Staff recruitment and progression

- As at 13 March 2010, 53\% of the University’s staff were women and 47\% men. On 31 December 2006 the proportions of women and men on the University staff were the same.
- The proportions in different staff categories varied, with, at January 2010, 30.9\% of academic staff, 49\% of research staff, 60.8\% of teaching staff and 61.6\% of support staff being women.

Detailed data on employment are available in Appendix 1 – Staff Gender Data. http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/gender/gender-data-appendix.pdf

The following is a brief summary.

a) Academic staff

24\% of female Academic staff were in Professorial grades at January 2010, compared with 26.2\% in August 2006. The figures for males were 36.1\% January 2010; 37.1\% in August 2006.

b) Research staff

Women continue to be around half of research staff overall 49\% (50.9\% in 2006).

c) Support staff

3.4\% of female support staff were in Grades 8 and above at Jan 2010. In August 2006 25.4\% of female support staff were in Grades 6-8 and 35.3\% of male support staff; in January 2010 27.4\% of female staff were in Grades 6-8 compared with 38.6\% of male support staff.

4.6 Pay

Updated information to follow.

4.7 Use of the Counselling Service for staff

Between 2002 and 2009, the University provided free access to a face-to-face counselling service available to all staff. Between 2005-06 and 2008-09 the

\textsuperscript{24} For further information about the Framework see http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/persnl/framework/index.htm
proportion of male clients assessed by the service increased from 26% to 30%, but it remained the case that the majority of the clients assessed were female (70%). This is not surprising given that fewer men than women typically access psychological therapies nationally, but it may have indicated that women experienced higher levels of stress than men, or that there was an unmet need amongst men.

In 2009, the staff counselling service was put out to tender to maximise accessibility of the service, deliver value for money and support the University in gaining recognition as an ‘employer of choice’. The University switched provider in December 2009.

The new service is an ‘employee assistance’ service which, in addition to telephone and face-to-face counselling, provides practical information and advice on debt, legal, financial, tax, family care, and other everyday matters. These services are free of charge to all University employees. The cover is also extended to partners and immediate family members (dependent members of the household over the age of 16). The service gives staff access to both an on-line help facility and a free telephone advice line which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide staff members with a referral for face-to-face counselling close to their work or home, whichever is more convenient. The advice line is also available to those for whom English is not their first language.

In the quarter of a year following the launch of the service, the proportion of men accessing the service was 36% (an increase of 6 percentage point in males accessing the service). Whilst it is too early to say whether this is a stable trend, it is an encouraging figure in terms of improving the appeal and accessibility of the service to male members of staff.

4.8 Representation on committees

A snapshot picture was undertaken in March 2010, recording the membership by gender of formal University committees. Many committee places are ex officio (i.e. a place associated with a particular role such as Head of Department or Academic Coordinator), so the constituency from which membership is drawn is a factor. The snapshot showed women occupy 28% of places on Court, Council and Senate together. However, women now fill 9 out of 20 places (45%) on the University Council, excluding student representatives who change annually. On 27 other identified committees, 40% of places overall were occupied by women. The snapshot picture at November 2006 showed women occupied 27% of places on Court, Council and Senate together and on 41 other identified committees, 35% of places overall were occupied by women.

At March 2010 there were no women on the Remuneration Committee, and only one on each of the Finance, Graduate Awards, the Hull York Medical School (HYMS) Joint Senate and Planning Committees. The University is actively addressing those areas where there is only one female member. In order to avoid simplistic or misleading conclusions, it is important to view these figures in the context of a number of other factors, such as the gender balance of the University staff population as a whole (especially academic staff) and also the relative size of different committees (e.g. there is a difference in a committee only having one female member if the total membership is only 4, as opposed to 20, people in total).
4.9 Bullying, harassment and discrimination: Staff

For approximately 10 years the University has had a Code of Practice on Harassment, the effectiveness of which is regularly reviewed in the light of experience, and appropriately updated, and which specifically refers to gender-related harassment. It also provides a network of Harassment Advisers support for people who feel they are experiencing harassment or bullying. The network of Harassment Advisers was used in relation to 11 separate reported informal ‘cases’ in the academic year 2008-9.

In the University’s Staff Opinion Survey, conducted in 2008, 4.5% of male and 4.2% of female respondents said that they were currently being harassed or bullied at work. There were gender differences in the source of the bullying: in the survey, female respondents reported higher levels of bullying by another member of staff than males; male respondents reported higher levels of bullying by their manager or a member of their own staff. This compares with the results of the University’s Well-Being Survey conducted in 2001, in which 12.5% of staff (1 in 8) reported that they had been bullied at work. In this survey more female staff (15%) reported being bullied than male staff (10%).

In the Staff Opinion Survey, around 11% of staff felt that they had been subject to unfair discrimination at work, almost equally distributed between men and women.

Currently, work is continuing to address the issues raised in the Staff Opinion Survey on bullying and harassment via the Action Plan at www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/staffsurvey/action_plans/harassment.htm

A range of measures is being taken including:

- the provision of training aimed at managers to ensure that a) incidences of bullying and harassment brought to their attention are dealt with effectively and b) ensure that their own leadership style is fair and effective;
- regular awareness-raising training, campaigns and publicity on the issue, run by the Equality and Diversity Office.

5 ADDRESSING ISSUES FROM CONSULTATIONS: ISSUES RAISED BY STAFF

5.1 Work-life balance, childcare and careers

As previously mentioned, the University is affected by external influences. Recently, national research carried out by the CEHR revealed that women with young children are the most disadvantaged and discriminated against group in society. Similarly, a significant issue for many University respondents in the University’s consultation on Gender Equality in 2007 was to do with work-life balance and how female parents’ careers were affected by the University’s approach. It was clear that

25 From the University of York Gender Equality consultation 2007, conducted by Dr. Regan Early & Dr. Shehzad Ali.
26 Commission for Equality and Human Rights: http://www.cehr.org.uk/
whilst the majority of respondents in the consultation felt that the University had policies in place to prevent discrimination, the uneven *application* of policy meant that gender discrimination remained.

In relation to working structures which are in place to help staff with child care responsibilities, it was noted that the potential for staff to take advantage of these tended to vary between departments, job-types and seniority. Particular examples given by respondents were the ‘flexibility’ of flexible working or the scheduling of meetings. Thus there was a consensus that while University policy was generally ‘fair’, there was work to be done at the management level in order to make sure it was administered correctly.

During 2008-9, work was undertaken by HR which aimed to take these issues into account. The University has revised its approach to flexible working to provide all staff with the opportunity to request a flexible working pattern. Steps have been taken to publicise the revised policy and briefing sessions were undertaken in May/June 2009 to explain the approach to managers. HR staff continue to advise on the application of the policy and specific cases.

5.2 Parental leave including same-sex adoption

It had been felt that inequity between genders, in terms of maternity/paternity leave following childbirth, makes it difficult for females not to be the primary carers and thus causes gender-related disadvantages to female parents in their future career. The Work and Families Act 2006 extended paid maternity and adoption leave from April 2007 and provided for it to be extended further and for additional paternity leave and paternity pay to be introduced.

In 2010 the University reflects the statutory position on maternity/paternity leave. Following a change in the law, there will be a facility for fathers of children due on or after 3 April 2011 to take a period of extended paternity leave (between 2 – 26 weeks), commencing no earlier than 20 weeks after the birth. This is contingent on the child’s mother returning to work, and qualifying conditions apply. The arrangements apply equally to same-sex relationships and adoption cases.

The University will be considering the implications of this new legislation and will bring forward arrangements for its implementation in due course.

5.3 Part-time working and job-share

In the April 2007 consultation there was a widespread feeling that females who were the primary child carers could be disadvantaged by the nature of the jobs in which they worked. In particular, part-time workers were felt to suffer from a lack of promotion opportunities, too high a workload and a reduced opportunity to undertake training which could aid career progression. Job-share opportunities were thought potentially to mitigate against these disadvantages and it was felt that such opportunities ought to be more widely created and advertised.
From 2010 the ‘vacancy request form’ has been updated to highlight the University’s approach to job-sharing. This states that it is assumed that a post is suitable for job-sharing unless it is objectively justifiable and the recruiting manager gives reasons why this should not apply. The recruitment process is currently being reviewed and this will form part of that review.

The 2007 consultation raised concerns regarding part-time and flexible working, and issues arising from timetabling, particularly applied to those working in administration. In addition, administrative staff felt that having child-care responsibilities gave rise to more challenges for them than for academic staff because administrative work allowed less flexibility. Academic staff tended to express concerns about a ‘long-hours’ culture which makes it difficult for those with child-care responsibilities to remain in academia. A desire for more opportunity for part-time work and job-sharing was articulated by these participants. There was also a feeling that academia could still be a male-dominated environment, with females being, in effect, disenfranchised because of a lack of effective representation at senior and management levels, and a working atmosphere that was not felt to be supportive.

Two issues raised previously through consultation related to work-life balance and career progression and suggested that:

- the teaching timetable should be produced earlier in order to better facilitate staff and students’ ability to plan for their other responsibilities
- there is insufficient career development support for staff.28

6 ADDRESSING ISSUES FROM CONSULTATIONS: ISSUES RAISED BY STUDENTS

Although students were encouraged to participate in the 2007 gender consultation process, there was little involvement from them. Whilst a good deal is known in 2010 about aspects of the student experience, the University still needs to, with input from students and student organisations, do some further work to inform the development of this Scheme. These issues are still to be addressed by the University.

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28 In particular - women and minority ethnic staff.
7 DOING THE DUTY

7.1 Current good practice

The University has done a great deal to promote gender equality over the past few years and it has recently won national accolades for its work (see below). Its commitment to equality has been long-standing. Among many ‘good practice’ examples we could draw on are the following:

(i) Structures to support equality

- The University has had an Equality and Diversity Office since 1998, which now comprises a team of three people including administrative support, and has collected EO data since 1999, long before such data collection was required.
- The new University Corporate Plan has ‘Inclusivity’ as one of its themes.

(ii) Training and development

- For several years, training has been provided for staff on a range of equality and diversity issues including gender, and some academic courses cover such issues.
- The Equality and Diversity on-line module called ‘Diversity in the Workplace’ was relaunched in October 2010. The section on gender equality within the module links to University developments on equality via the Equality and Diversity Office website.
- For many years it has been a requirement that staff involved on recruitment panels must be trained in equality and diversity.

(iii) Policy and committees

- There is specific guidance on aspects of gender equality in relevant policies and Codes of practice, for example on Recruitment and Selection and on Harassment.
- All senior University Committees include equality in their terms of reference - a good practice initiative noted by the HEFCE in its review of UK Higher Education Institutions’ (HEIs’) Race Equality Policies in 2004; the aim was to ensure that Committees include equality and diversity in their decision-making to the benefit of all staff and students, which would, of course, benefit men and women.
- As a result of previous research carried out by the University some years ago, the criteria for promotion were examined by Promotions Committee ensure that they do not disadvantage those who have career breaks, have non-traditional routes into their careers or who work part-time.

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29 See Professional and Organisational Development (POD) website: [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/pod/](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/pod/)
30 Human Resources website: [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/index.cfm](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/index.cfm)
31 [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/)
(iv) Learning and Teaching

- Inclusivity is supported through the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- The University carried out a two-and-a-half year project on Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum\(^{32}\) which has led to innovations in the classroom and in research and attracted national interest.
- The Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning has developed a web resource on equality and diversity in learning and teaching.\(^{33}\)

(v) Facilities and services

- The University already has a number of facilities in place to support women and men, such as a University nursery and a childcare voucher scheme, and is currently broadening its provision of flexible working schemes across the University as far as practicable. For further details see 5.2 above. A full range of initiatives are available on the HR website.\(^{34}\)
- It provides women-only accommodation, as far as is practicable, for students who request it.

7.2 The Research Excellence Framework (REF)

All staff involved in the selection of staff for the REF are be expected to be fully conversant with equality and diversity principles, and with the University’s policies on equality and diversity, as well as with the legislative environment as it relates to the REF. All decisions should therefore be both transparent and easily auditable, with the decision making process clearly communicated to staff.

As part of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, training was given to all staff undertaking selection decisions as appropriate. In pursuit of this, in order to ensure equitable treatment of all staff regardless of the nature of their contracts, the University has undertaken to support staff on fixed-term contracts, including the provision of specific training. Whether a staff member’s contract is permanent or fixed-term will not be used as a criterion for inclusion in future REF.

7.3 Supporting Women in Science: the Athena SWAN\(^{35}\) initiative

The above work has contributed to a significant recent development: recognition of the University’s commitment to women in Science. The University has won five national awards under the Athena SWAN Charter, which is a scheme that recognises excellence in gender equality in science, engineering and technology employment in higher education.

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\(^{32}\) Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum webpage: [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/eddevelopment/index.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/eddevelopment/index.htm)

\(^{33}\) [http://www.york.ac.uk/feit/equality_and_diversity/index.htm](http://www.york.ac.uk/feit/equality_and_diversity/index.htm)

\(^{34}\) [http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/employees/parents_carers/](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/employees/parents_carers/)

York was the first university in Yorkshire to win the Athena SWAN Bronze Award from the Royal Society in recognition of its success in providing positive support for women scientists during their careers.

The Chemistry Department has become the first academic department in the UK to win the Athena Swan gold award. The Department of Psychology has won a silver award, the first in the country to do so, and with the success of a silver award in the Department of Biology, York is the only University to hold three departmental silver Athena Swan awards.

The University is working to attract women into science, both in academic and technical capacities. It is seeking to retain those women who might otherwise drift away, by introducing more flexibility into the workforce - and, at the same time, creating a better work environment for all staff.

8 TAKING EQUALITY FORWARD

The University recognises that though much has been achieved, there is still work to do to embed equality and we have identified some further priorities from the gender equality consultation and other research.


www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/gender/Progress2008-10&Priorities2010-13.pdf

9 IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The University has developed a procedure on Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) which is currently being implemented across the University. Legislation requires that University policies, procedures and practices are impact assessed for gender equality. The University procedure includes assessment across all the equality strands. Progress during 2009 included the formation of a Steering Group, the prioritisation for EQIA of central University policies and the development of web pages and guidance. Policies identified as ‘high’ priority have now been assessed, and work commenced during 2010 on medium- priority policies. The procedure will be ‘mainstreamed’ into academic departments University during 2010- 2011.

Throughout the development of the procedure, guidance on best practice has been taken from the Equality Challenge Unit.

36 http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/EQIA.htm
10 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING THE SCHEME AND THE ACTION PLAN

Progress against the actions in this scheme will regularly be reviewed. The University’s Equality and Diversity Committee will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this Scheme and Action Plan. Any issues with gender implications arising from EQIA or consultation will be incorporated into the Action Plan.

For further information and comments about this Scheme please contact:

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