



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2022-23

Contact:

- Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Name: Angela Getty Telephone: 028 95 365177 Email: ak.getty@ulster.ac.uk
- Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name: Telephone: Email:

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found on our [Equality Scheme web page](#).

Signature: Damian McAlister, Chief People Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian McAlister', enclosed in a rectangular box.

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties; and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and the Disability Action Plan.

This report reflects progress made between 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Introduction

This is Ulster University's 14th Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI).

The Report is an opportunity to demonstrate how the University has fulfilled its legislative obligations and gone beyond compliance to achieve best practice in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part A of this report provides an overview of the work undertaken at Ulster University (UU) in fulfilment of its Equality Scheme obligations. An overview of the training provided is included in Appendix 1. A sample of the range and impact of equality and good relations focussed activities and civic contributions occurring throughout the University is attached as Appendix 2.

Part B of the report relates to compliance with our legislative duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) (DDA) to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and to encourage their full participation in public life.

Appendix 1

Training programme (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023).

Appendix 2

Sample of activities and civic contributions across the University, that have helped promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

1 In 2022-23, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In 2022/23, responsibility for supporting the implementation of the University's statutory equality and good relations duties and equality scheme remained with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit, in the Office of the Chief People Officer.

The following key policy/service delivery developments were made during the reporting period to promote equality of opportunity and good relations:

- The University's new Corporate Strategy, [People, Place and Partnerships: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All](#), was launched in November 2022. The Strategy places equality of opportunity and enhanced participation at the heart of the University's culture and operational activities and subsumes the EDI Strategy 2019-2022. A new EDI Operational Plan is currently under development, to support the implementation of the Corporate Strategy.
- The five-year review of effectiveness of the University's Equality Scheme and updated Equality Scheme were submitted to the ECNI, for consideration, in November 2022.
- To enhance accessibility, a web-based version of the University's Summary Equality Scheme was created, replacing the previous PDF. This is located on a dedicated Equality Scheme tile on the University's EDI website.
- A three-year effectiveness review was carried out in relation to the Disability Action Plan (2019-2022).
- A new five-year Disability Action Plan (DAP) was launched in December 2022, after extensive internal engagement and public consultation.
- Seven new and revised workplace policies were equality screened during the reporting period, and two public policy consultation exercises were conducted with screening assessments presented.
- The EQIA Annual Monitoring Report on the Relocation of the School of Health Sciences was approved at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on 6 December 2022 and was disseminated to consultees (including the ECNI).

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- The University's Policy Clinic met on a monthly basis, providing a 'one-stop shop' to support a collaborative and consistent approach to policy development and equality screening.
- One-to-one equality screening meetings were organised with policy owners during the development and review of new and revised policies.
- Regular equality updates were provided to the University's SLT, the Resources Committee, the Senior Management Team within People and Culture, and the University's EDI Steering Group.
- In each of the eight 'All staff' emails to communicate the training schedule and consultations, and in articles on the internal Staff News Insight channel, the Summary Equality Scheme was linked in the introductory section.
- EDI was included as a core module in the University's 'ENGAGE – Great Manager Programme', with an online session delivered during the reporting period. As part of the learning for managers, information and guidance on Section 75, the DAP and the University's Reasonable Adjustment Protocol (RAP) is also included.
- The University continues to use the website as its primary means of disseminating information. To ensure compliance with the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#), and following a Cabinet Office (Government Digital Office) compliance audit in July 2022, the University amended its Accessibility Statement and committed to initiating a procedure to clear up legacy PDFs across the website. At the end of the reporting period, the University ranked no.3 in the [accessibility league for Universities](#).
- The University's Fair Employment Treatment Order (FETO) Return was submitted to the ECNI by 6 June 2022. The monitored data was used to pre-populate information on the University's Equality Screening pro forma, to help inform the development of new and revised policies.
- The Article 55 Review progressed during the reporting period.
- The Gender Pay Analyses for 2022 is underway and will be completed in the next reporting period. A Pay Gap Working Group has been established to carry out analyses of gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.
- In support of the new Corporate Strategy and as outlined in the Universities DAP, the EDI Unit carried out the University's ninth triennial survey of disabled staff between 20 December 2022 and 20 January 2023. All staff, who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long-term health condition which affects their ability to work, were invited to complete the Staff Disability Survey. The survey aimed to improve the accuracy of the data held about disabled people, to identify staff that required a reasonable adjustment or a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP), and to identify staff with an interest in joining the University's staff disability forum.
- In June 2022, the University gained the new Disability Positive AAA* Charter Mark. The accreditation from Employers for Disability NI is the only one of its kind focusing on

Disability Positive practice by celebrating employers who recruit and support disabled employees.

- The University received the Bronze Charter from Diversity Mark NI during the reporting period. It is a 'Mark of Progress' that publicly declares a commitment to building a more diverse and inclusive workplace to benefit all employees.
- Athena Swan is the framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research. The University's Athena Swan Institutional Self-Assessment Team (ISAT) continued to meet regularly and submitted the application for a Silver award in January 2023. We received notification of a successful application on 28 March 2023 and now hold an Institutional Silver Athena Swan award.
- The 'Inclusion Hour' series continued throughout the reporting period. This involves individual staff members and post-graduate students leading a discussion on various Section 75 categories. These informal awareness sessions continue to receive overwhelming positive feedback from attendees. Participants are able to discuss and learn about barriers to equal opportunities based on people's ethnicity; sexual orientation; disability and / or religious belief. The conversational virtual gatherings led by people with lived experiences have been very powerful.
- Campuses were lit-up on various dates to raise awareness on specific days, such as Non-Verbal Awareness Day on 30 September 2022, the buildings were lit up in blue and for LGBT History Month, the buildings were illuminated in rainbow colours, in February 2023.
- The Staff Networks continued to roll-out a comprehensive programme of activities and events for staff.
- To celebrate equality, diversity and inclusivity in sport, UU hosted NI's first LGBTQ+ Sports Day in June 2022, supported by Sporting Pride Ireland and the network of managers within Student Sport Ireland and UU Sports Services.
- Ulster University Business School (UUBS) and Arts & Business NI delivered a [Building and Supporting a Diverse Workforce conference](#) in March 2023, inspiring ways of starting conversations around EDI. Held at the University's Academy, this event brought together businesses from across the commercial and cultural sectors, with speakers sharing personal stories and practical advice on how to build and support a diverse workforce.
- Throughout the reporting period, the University continued to focus on enhancing staff knowledge and capacity around EDI, across all parts of the organisation. To this end, an extensive training programme was rolled out during the 2021/22 Academic Year. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 1**.

There are a wide range of activities that have helped promote equality of opportunity and good relations occurring throughout the University. A sample of those activities and civic contributions that took place during this reporting period are included in **Appendix 2**.

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- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2022-23 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

EDI Strategy Action Plan Update on Progress (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

The University’s EDI Strategy action plan reflects priorities identified in the University’s EDI Strategy 2019-2022 to advance equality.

The Strategy expired towards the end of the reporting period, with most actions now considered mainstreamed in operational plans. Any actions not completed will be rolled over, as appropriate, and considered in the emerging EDI Operational Plan, which is linked directly to the new People, Place and Partnerships Corporate Strategy.

For the purposes of this update, and consistent with question 7 of the Section 75 Annual Progress Report, progress is described using; ‘Action completed’, ‘Action ongoing’ or ‘Action to commence’.

Facilitate the Delivery of the EDI Strategy

	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
1	Continue to operate and review progress of EDI Steering Group.	A dedicated and cohesive team is required to galvanise and ensure the delivery of the strategic ambitions	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Steering Group meets three times per annum.	Action completed: The EDI Steering Group met twice during the reporting period. The meeting scheduled for February 2023 was

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		outlined within the EDI Strategy.				<p>postponed pending the arrival of the new Dean of EDI.</p> <p>Compliance reports and updates were considered at each meeting, as well as feedback from the EDI Steering Group sub-groups which are focused on advancing priorities from the EDI Strategy – gender, disability, race and LGBT equality. Updates on activities from the Staff and Student Networks were also provided at each meeting.</p>
2	Carry out biannual EDI pulse surveys to monitor the impact of the EDI Strategy at all levels of the organisation and test employee engagement with equality.	This will provide a better understanding of how staff/students perceive EDI in the workplace, and enhance general accountability.	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Steering Group implements the findings of the surveys to augment delivery of the EDI strategy.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>The EDI Strategy expired during the reporting period.</p> <p>However, in January 2023, all staff, who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long-term health condition which affects their ability to work, were invited to complete the Staff Disability Survey. The Survey is carried every three years and is an opportunity for the</p>

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						<p>University to gauge how disabled people experience the culture at the University. It also allows the University to identify, how, through regular engagement, improvements can be made in the work environment.</p> <p>Two Staff 'Attitudes towards disability' surveys helped inform the actions for the University's new 5-year DAP.</p> <p>The ISAT carried out a staff survey to help inform priorities and interventions for gender equality, and as part of the Athena Swan Silver Award application.</p> <p>The University is currently exploring options to maximise employee engagement and feedback across many areas, including on EDI matters.</p>
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3	Monitor and review progress of action plan on an annual basis.	This will provide a clear evidence base for future targets, goals and actions.	Annually (June)	Chief People Officer	Action plan is reviewed annually using a traffic light system and updated as necessary. Any slippage is addressed.	Action completed: Members of the EDI Steering group reviewed progress of the action plan in October 2022.
4	Submit annual monitoring report to SLT and include within S75 Annual Report.	This will provide a clear evidence base for future targets, goals and actions.	Annually	Chief People Officer	Submissions made on time.	Action completed: The S75 Annual Progress Report 2021/22 was submitted to the ECNI on time. It was submitted to the EDI Steering Group in October 2022 and Resources Committee in November 2022.
5	The EDI Steering Group will report to Council and its appropriate sub-committees and the SLT as necessary.	Provides scrutiny and oversight at senior levels.	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Clear committee reporting line established and followed.	Action completed: The Chair of the Steering Group is a member of the SLT and provides updates to the SLT, following the Steering Group meetings. EDI updates are included in the People and Culture progress report that is provided to Resources Committee as a standard agenda item.

Priority: Identify, acknowledge and address (unconscious) bias in the workplace

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	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
6	Continue to provide unconscious bias awareness training session to staff on alternating campuses, on a first come, first served basis; and to all staff sitting on promotions or recruitment panels.	Without encouragement to recognise and address unconscious bias and associated micro aggressions, the potential exists that inequality, discrimination and segregation will be perpetuated throughout the workforce. Unconscious bias training will assist staff to understand the barriers presented by unconscious bias and how it impacts on decision making, so that it can be addressed both at the individual and the institutional level.	Once a semester and align with recruitment training schedule.	Chief People Officer	All professional and support staff attend training. All staff sitting on promotions or recruitment panels AND all staff in Schools applying for an Athena Swan award attend training.	Action completed: The University's 'People Development' and 'EDI' Units provided two unconscious bias awareness sessions to Nursing Competency Test Centre (CTC) staff, using Microsoft Teams. A session was also delivered on campus to 34 Resident Assistants in May 2022. An online module, Unconscious Bias, was piloted on the Learning Management System (LMS) Staff Training Portal. This will be reviewed in the next reporting period.
7	Consider technology and software which can ensure that all recruitment advertisements use gender neutral language (i.e. Textio).		2021	Chief People Officer	Unconscious bias removed from all recruitment advertisements.	Action ongoing: This action will be reviewed in the next reporting period while various technologies and software options continue to be explored.

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Priority: Address gender role segregation within the institution						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
10	Provide necessary resources to support the University's application for an institutional Athena Swan Silver Award.	<p>The University has held an Athena Swan institutional Bronze Award since April 2014.</p> <p>The Bronze Award specifically recognises that the university has established a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff in STEM-related subject areas.</p>	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Increase the percentage of Professorial staff who are female by at least 5%.	<p>Action completed:</p> <p>The Institutional Self-Assessment Team (ISAT) was co-chaired by the Deputy Director of People and Culture and the Ulster Director, Northern Bridge PhD Consortium.</p> <p>Institutional AS Silver successfully awarded in March 2023.</p> <p>Compared with 2022, the percentage of Professorial staff who are female decreased by 1.4% to 32.1%. This decrease is due to Female staff retiring or leaving.</p>
11	Provide adequate resources to support individual Schools applications for	In May 2015, the Charter was expanded to non-STEM subjects, and	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	All Schools maintain or improve Award received. All Schools	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>Dedicated EDI staff are in place to support</p>

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	Athena Swan Awards and expansion of the Charter to non-STEM subjects.	in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.			achieve a Bronze Award.	individual Schools applications. During the reporting period, one School was successful in renewing its Bronze award. Support continued for applicants from non-STEM Schools aiming to submit over the course of this year – the School of Education, the Belfast School of Art and the School of Law. The Athena Swan Champions Network continues to meet regularly to support School Champions with updates and training.
12	Implement the Athena Swan Action Plan.	The Athena Swan Action plan is an integral part of our Bronze Charter Award. The plan sets out to achieve gender equality for female staff.	2017-2021	Chief People Officer	Advancement of gender equality: improved representation, progression and success of all staff.	Action completed: Previous action plan completed any actions outstanding, or which have been superseded have been included in the new action plan. The ISAT developed a new Athena Swan Action Plan for the application for a Silver Charter Award in January 2023.

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13	Identify opportunities for, and support delivery of, development / engagement options for women (i.e., Aurora / Wo/men’s Network).	Aurora is a unique leadership development programme for women and is delivered over an 8-month period. It combines 4 interlinked development days; an action learning set; self-directed learning and in-house mentoring. It is delivered by Advance HE (formally Leadership Foundation for Higher Education) to help address the issue of declining numbers of women in senior posts in Higher Education. It has been specifically designed to encourage women to think of themselves as future leaders and actively engage in developing their leadership potential.	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	12 spaces sponsored each year on Aurora. Provide participants with a positive experience of leadership and inspire them to recognise their talent and capabilities and support them to “step up” to promotional posts.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>There were 7 participants on the Aurora programme in 2022-23.</p> <p>The Wo/Men’s Network continued to grow in the fourth year since it was launched. Membership to the mailing list increased by 30, bringing the total number to 560, evidencing a 6% growth.</p> <p>The core operations group expanded in size from five members to 10 bringing in additional skillsets.</p> <p>The focus of the Network remains on influencing, advocacy and campaigning for policy development that supports women in the workplace.</p> <p>The refreshed mentoring programme, which was initiated towards the end</p>

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		It aims to provide a positive experience of leadership and inspire participants to recognise their talent and capabilities and support them to “step up” to promotional posts.				of the reporting period, has resulted in 4 new relationships being supported this year. An extensive programme of activities took place throughout the reporting period, which included collaboration with external partners including White Ribbon NI, Women in Business and the Soroptimist Society.
14	Implement training to encourage women to apply to be on governing boards (Council, SLT, EDI SG and sub-groups).	Cross reference with DAP action.	2021	Chief People Officer	Training offered within the University’s leadership programmes Staff encouraged to complete the ‘Boardroom Apprentice Programme’.	Action completed: On 9 May 2022, People and Culture and the Office of the University Secretary, in partnership with the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA), held an online workshop for staff to understand more about the process and benefits of going forward for appointment to the Boards of the University’s Public Bodies and to encourage a wider and more

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						<p>diverse pool of applicants.</p> <p>The Chair of the University's Council introduced the Workshop. Prior to wider dissemination, the call for participants was issued to the University's Staff DisAbility Network to particularly encourage its members to avail of this opportunity.</p> <p>22 staff participated in this workshop with positive feedback received.</p>
15	Implement Advance HE's self-audit tool of recruitment and promotion policies and practices supporting gender equality.	This tool will enable us to assess our own policies and progress against the HE sector baseline. The audit tool completed during the pilot (2017) provides with a clear evidence base for future targets, goals and actions.	Annually	Chief People Officer	University Athena Swan Silver Award. Clear evidence base from which to measure and monitor progress.	Action to commence: This action will be reviewed in the next reporting period.

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16	Provide thought leadership and perspective to advance the institution's ability to recruit more female professors - evidence based consideration of promotion and progression data.	Our institutional equal opportunities data demonstrates persistent vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. For example: 36% of Professorial posts are female (2019).	Annually	Chief People Officer	Increase the percentage of Professorial staff who are female by at least 5%.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>All academic staff have access to the promotions process and criteria, so that they can inform career planning. The University monitors and analysis equality data on all applicants and promotees and collaborates with Athena Swan colleagues to hold promotion workshops. At 32.1%, the proportion of Professorial staff who are female decreased by 3.9% compared with 2019, and decreased by 1.4% compared with 2022. This is mainly due to senior staff retiring. However, female senior lecturers increased from 43% in 2019 to 45% in 2021 allowing for pool of staff to progress to professor in the next 3-5 years.</p>
17	Work with appropriate governance colleagues to identify measurable targets (over a five-year	Our institutional equal opportunities data demonstrates persistent vertical and horizontal occupational	2021	Chief People Officer	Equal participation of women and men (a minimum of 40% males and 40% females) in Grades 3, 4, 9, and Professor.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>An EDI Steering Group sub-group has been established to focus on addressing gender role segregation. As of 6</p>

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	rolling period) for gender representation at Grades 3,4,9, and Professor.	<p>segregation - on 6 February 2021:</p> <p>27% of Grade 3 staff are male and 29% of Grade 4 staff are male.</p> <p>44% of Grades 9 and 30% of Professorial posts are female.</p>			<p>Proportions of male staff in Grades 3 and 4 increase by 25%. Proportions of male staff in Grades 9 and female Professorial staff increase by at least 5%.</p>	<p>February 2022, 25.8% of Grade 3 staff are male and 25.5% of Grade 4 staff are male.</p> <p>46.2% of Grades 9 and 32.1% of Professorial posts are female.</p> <p>Work is also underway to consider the Gender Pay Position within the Institution and how the Gender Pay Gap can be addressed.</p>
Priority: Advance race equality at Ulster and build intercultural awareness						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
18	Provide necessary resources to support the University's focus on capacity for delivering race equality.	Whilst the proportions of BME staff and students are double that of Northern Ireland, there has been little	2021	Chief People Officer	Self-assessment team established to carry out an audit of race equality at Ulster.	Action to commence: This action will be considered under the EDI Operational Plan.

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19	<p>Improve the representation, progression and success of BME staff and students: Focus on working group and action planning leading to application for the Advance HE/ECU Race Equality Bronze Charter award.</p>	<p>progress in addressing BME academic flight, occupational segregation, disparities in grade representation, pay, contract type or the difference in experience at Ulster. The Race Equality Charter Pilot presented an opportunity for Ulster to represent the Northern Ireland Experience and provided a framework within which to initiate the race conversation.</p>	2021	<p>Chief People Officer and EDI Steering Group sub-group for Advancing Race Equality.</p>	<p>Race equality action plan developed and implemented. Consideration of targets.</p>	<p>Action to commence: This action will be considered under the EDI Operational Plan.</p>
20	<p>Review the use of the welcome statement in recruitment for all grades.</p>	<p>Latest data in respect proportion of Ulster's Professors who are BME added in Q1 2021:</p> <p>Only 10.5% (17) of Ulster's Professors are BME. 1 of these is female. Almost 95% who declared BME are in grade 6 and above.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Increase the numbers of local BME applicants to Grade 2-6 posts.</p>	<p>Action ongoing: Bespoke Athena Swan statements (by School) are included in all recruitment advertisements, along with a statement welcoming disabled applicants and promoting flexible working practices.</p> <p>Between 7 February 2022 and 6 February 2023, there were 25 UK BME applicants for Grade 2-6 posts. This compares with 23 UK BME applicants between 7 February 2021 and 6 February 2022.</p>

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						As at 6 February 2023, only 9.7% of Ulster's Professors are BME. 2 of these are female. 91.4% who declared BME are in grade 6 and above
21	Continue to monitor the academic promotions process to ensure that factors relating to women and BME staff are considered.	A revised promotions scheme was implemented in 2019. EO Monitoring will assist the University to identify and mitigate any perceived barriers which are preventing staff from applying or engaging in the promotions process.	2021	Chief People Officer	Increase in the success rate for female staff going forward for academic promotion. Increased numbers of female research staff going forward for promotion.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>EO data is collated for each academic promotions round, including applicant and successful 'promotee' information. The provision of these data has been incorporated in the annual workflow planning for EDI.</p> <p>The Academic promotion round is underway and will complete in the next reporting period. No Research promotion round was held within this reporting period.</p>
22	Continue to focus on delivery of the recommendations of the Equal Pay Review 2017.	The Equal Pay Review 2017 identified a mean gender pay gap of 18.8% and a median pay gap of 27.7%. One of the principal reasons for the gender pay gap is	2021	Chief People Officer	Gender Pay Gap in line with Higher Education.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>Work is underway to consider the Gender Pay Position within the Institution and how the Gender Pay Gap can be addressed. Following a review of the 'next step' recommendations made</p>

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		<p>that females are disproportionately represented in specific job categories, the lower grades and especially amongst part-time staff.</p>				<p>by People & Culture’s Gender Pay Working Group in 2021, the Chief People Officer is now progressing with a focus on Gender Pay. During the reporting period, meetings have been held between People & Culture, Trade Union representatives and other key stakeholders on the matter.</p> <p>The Chief People Officer is now bringing forward a programme of work aimed at addressing the causations. In conjunction with our Statistics, Analytics and Reward (SAR) Unit and the design team, EDI has developed infographics for the 2020 and 2021 Gender Pay Analyses.</p> <p>The first meeting of the Joint Management – Trade Union Pay Gaps Review group will take place in April 2023.</p>
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23	Carry out a triennial review of equal pay to ensure that we are not undervaluing some types of jobs.	This is a commitment within our Equal Pay Policy.	2022	Chief People Officer	Equal Pay Review completed, and recommendations endorsed by SLT.	Action to commence: This action will be considered under the P&C Operational Plan.
Priority: Continue to meet statutory requirements relating to equality of opportunity and good relations						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress 01/04/22 – 31/03/23
26	Develop and present an Annual EDI report to the EDI Steering Group and Council, presenting data, outlining key findings and progress, and recommending mitigations and methods to address any issues.	The Higher Education Code of Governance requires governing bodies to receive an annual equality monitoring report detailing work done by the institution during the year, identifying the achievement of agreed objectives, and summarising data on equality and diversity that institutions are required to produce (e.g., on staff recruitment and promotion). To some extent this is already achieved	2022	Chief People Officer	Increased variety of key equality data available internally an on our website. Report presented to the EDI Steering Group, SLT, Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee and Council.	Action to commence: With the imminent appointment of an EDI Dean, this action has been deferred and will be considered as an action in the new EDI Operational Plan.

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		through the Section 75 Annual Report and various HESA reports. However, the provision of more comprehensive equality data will help staff to identify disadvantage and under-representation, develop a clearer picture of the lived experience of staff and students and monitor progress in addressing these issues.				
27	Increase the variety of key equality data available internally and on our website.	Key equality data is already available on the EDI Unit's website, to inform policy development (and meet the demands of S75). This provides a general overview of the staff and student equality profiles. The provision of more extensive and explicit data will assist staff to identify and mitigate equality gaps through	Annually (June)	Chief People Officer	Key equality data uploaded to website and disseminated to staff.	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>Key equality data was uploaded to the key equality website in June 2022.</p> <p>In line with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018, an accessible version of the Gender Pay Gap Analysis is also available on the Key Equality Data webpage.</p>

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		respective annual planning processes. It will also highlight and increase awareness of equality issues at UU.				
28	Continue to implement the University's Equality Scheme.	The University is required by law to have in place an Equality Scheme and a DAP, based on templates provided by the ECNI. The University's current Equality Scheme expires in 2022. The DAP expired in 2018 (following a one-year extension).	Ongoing	Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met.	Action ongoing: A dedicated EDI Unit is in place to ensure that the S75 statutory duties are complied with, and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively.
29	Undertake 5-year effectiveness review of equality Scheme.	The University is also required to submit a variety of statutory equality reports at specific times. These include: • the Section 75 Annual Report (The Northern Ireland Act 1998), • the annual report on progress of the DAP (Section 49B of	2022	Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met.	Action completed: A five-year review of the Equality Scheme was completed during the reporting period.
30	Implement the University's third DAP.		2019-2022	Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met.	Action completed: A dedicated EDI Unit is in place to ensure that the Disability Duties are complied with, and the DAP is implemented effectively. A review of the effectiveness of the University's DAP, and two Staff 'Attitudes

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		<p>the Disability Discrimination Act 1995),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Annual FETO Return 1998), • the Triennial Article 55 Review (1998), <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Pay Gap reporting (Article 19 of the Employment Act (NI) 2016) (pending). <p>A failure to comply can result in investigation, litigation or a financial penalty.</p>				<p>towards disability' surveys was completed during the reporting period. The Effectiveness Review, along with extensive internal and external consultation, informed the actions for the University's new 5-year DAP, which was launched in December 2022.</p>
31	<p>Complete the Section 75 Annual Report, including the annual report of progress of the DAP.</p>	<p>The University is also required to submit</p>	<p>Annually 31 August</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Report submitted on time</p>	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>The S75 Annual Progress Report 2021/22 was submitted to the ECNI by 31 August 2022.</p>
32	<p>Complete the FETO Return.</p>	<p>specific equality data to the HESA as part of its annual staff record.</p>	<p>Annually 6 June</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Statutory requirements met</p>	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>The FETO Return 2022 was submitted to the ECNI by 6 June 2022</p>
33	<p>Complete the Triennial Article 55 Review (for period 7 February 2019 – 6 February 2022).</p>	<p>The EDI Strategy does not detract from our statutory obligations. Rather it is evidence that Ulster is committed to going beyond mere compliance.</p>	<p>6 February 2023</p>	<p>Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Statutory requirements met.</p>	<p>Action ongoing:</p> <p>The University's 11th Article 55 Review, is almost complete, pending Census 2021 travel to work comparator data.</p>

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34	Implement the University's Article 55 Affirmative Action Plan.		Ongoing 7 February 2020– 6 February 2022	Chief People Officer	Affirmative actions achieved.	Action ongoing: The University continued to implement its Affirmative Action Programme 2020-2022 during the reporting period.
35	Complete the annual HESA return for staff.		Annually 26 September	Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	Action ongoing: The HESA Return was submitted by 26 September 2022
36	Calculate and publish the University's Gender Pay Gap.		Annually	Chief People Officer	Resources and protocols in place to ensure statutory requirements of Gender Pay Gap reporting (Article 19 of the Employment Act (NI) 2016) are met.	Action ongoing: The Gender Pay Analyses for 2022 is underway and will be completed in the next reporting period. The analysis will be uploaded to the University's 'Key Equality Data' webpage.
37	Form Gender Pay Working Group and deliver to series of actions.		Ongoing	Chief People Officer	To act to reduce the University gender pay gap so that it is in line with the HE sector mean.	Action ongoing: A Pay Gap Working Group has been established and is scheduled to meet in April 2023. This group will carry out an analysis of the gender pay data for 2022 and made recommendations for

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						addressing the University's gender pay gap.
38	Maintain the Students' Union (SU) Good Relations Policy Review the Terms of Reference for the Good Relations Working Group.	The SU Good Relations Working Group was established in October 2013. It consists of University of Ulster's Students Union (UUSU) Officers, representatives of various UUSU societies and University staff. The main remit of the Group is to support the implementation of the Student Good Relations Policy and action plan and provide a consultative forum for the UUSU as and when good relations issues arise.	Annually	Chief People Officer	Good Relations is promoted across the student body.	Action ongoing: The Section Leader for EDI met with the UUSU Officers on 22 July 2022 to provide an 'Introduction to Good Relations Working Group and the EDI Agenda'.

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- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(Tick one box only)*

Yes No (go to Q.4) Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

- 3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e., the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

- 3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(Tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Other *(please specify and give details):*

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

- 4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(Tick one box only)*

Yes, organisation wide

Yes, some departments/jobs

No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

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- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2022-23 reporting period? *(Tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

6 In the 2022-23 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(Tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2020-21 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The University's new Corporate Strategy, *People, Place and Partnerships: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All*, seeks to place equality of opportunity and enhanced participation at the heart of the University's culture and operational activities. Regular equality updates were provided to the Senior Management Team within People and Culture, the University's EDI Steering Group and to the University's SLT.

Equality action plans/measures

PART A

7 Within the 2022-23 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

10

Actions ongoing:

19

Actions to commence:

5

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

The University's EDI Action plan continued to be implemented in this reporting period. EDI Steering Group members collectively and individually continued to champion for, and – where appropriate – supported or led on the delivery of the EDI actions.

Actions not completed will be rolled over and considered in the new EDI Operational Plan which is directly linked to the University's People, Place and Partnerships Corporate Strategy.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2022-23 reporting period (points not identified in an appended plan):

The Equality Action Plan was implemented in this reporting period (see 7).

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2022-23 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

- All the time Sometimes Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2022-23 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g., the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

UU recognises the importance of thorough and timely consultation during the development of new and revised policies.

During the reporting period, the University continued to operate a monthly Policy Clinic to support the policy development and equality screening of all new and revised policies. The Clinic brings together colleagues from Employee Relations, Governance and EDI with respective policy owners.

For all public consultations, the details of policies screened are sent to over 150 groups and individuals on the University's Consultation Database. Consultation documents are made available on the University's website and are available in alternative formats, if requested. All respondents are informed of how their feedback has influenced the final policy.

During the reporting period, the mechanism to update the consultee database was also improved and made more accessible through a [MS Form](#) on the consultation webpage.

12 In the 2022-23 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: (*tick all that apply*)

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other (please specify):

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Consultees have identified these as their preferred method of consulting. Policy owners continue to consult internally with the University's four Staff Networks using MS Teams and email communications during equality screening. For example, during the development of a number of Employee Wellbeing policies including the Menopause Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy.

13 Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2022-23 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable

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Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2022-23 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

- Yes No Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

Details of consultation exercises are available on the University’s [EDI webpage](#).

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

7

16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2022-23:

2	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

A policy consultation exercise was launched in **December 2022** with regards to the following policies that were screened between April-November 2022:

1. Menopause Policy;
2. Domestic Abuse Policy; and
3. Research Impact Fund.

A second policy consultation exercise was launched in March 2023, for the following 4 policies that were screened between December 2022 – March 2023:

1. Renaming of Cinematic Arts Studio;
2. Removal of desk phones;

check/update their EO records, thereby improving the accuracy of the EO monitoring data held on the University's HR database.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(Tick one box only)*

Yes No Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2022-23 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No adverse or differential impacts were anticipated or observed for the policies revised during this reporting period. However, positive impacts were anticipated for the following categories of people in regard to the following new policies:

- **Menopause Policy**
Age, Men and Women generally, and Disability.
- **Domestic Abuse Policy**
Age, Men and Women generally, Disability, Racial group, Religious belief, Sexual Orientation and Dependants.
- **Removal of desk phones**
Age and Disability.
- **Safeguarding Policy**
Age, Disability and Dependants.

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

- During the reporting period, the University submitted its annual FETO return. The updated EO data are used in the equality screening process and included in a standard template for policy owners. The EO data helps inform the development of new and revised policies.
- EO data in relation to specific Staff categories were used in the equality screening of a number of policies during the reporting period including the Research Impact Fund.
- In September 2022, Academic Staff and Professional and Support Services Staff were invited to complete a short survey to provide a greater insight into awareness of disability issues and attitudes towards people with disabilities at the University. This information also helped inform the development of the University's new DAP 2022-2027.

- The EDI Unit carried out the University's ninth triennial survey of disabled staff between 20 December 2022 and 20 January 2023. All staff, who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long-term health condition which affects their ability to work, were invited to complete the Staff Disability Survey. The survey aimed to improve the accuracy of the data held about disabled people, to identify staff that required a reasonable adjustment or a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP), and to identify staff with an interest in joining the University's staff disability forum.
- The University's Athena Swan ISAT carried out a staff survey to help inform priorities and interventions for gender equality, and as part of the Athena Swan Silver Award application.
- During the reporting period, the Monitoring Report 2022 - '*Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on Ulster University's Relocation of the School of Health Sciences*' was published on the Consultation webpage and communicated to all Section 75 groups on the University's database.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2022-23, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme. Training

The Summary Equality Scheme was disseminated three times during the reporting period (August 2022, October 2022 and March 2023), linked in the introductory section of the training schedule communications.

A targeted approach was taken to disseminate the training programme, along with information linking to the University's Equality Scheme, to the EDI Steering Group; UU Students' Union officers; the Doctoral College; Staff Networks; Faculty Administration Offices and to Student Wellbeing Officers.

The University's Equality Scheme is located on a dedicated webpage that was revised during the reporting period to include a web-based accessible text of the [Summary Equality Scheme](#). The webpage provides detailed guidance on how the University is complying with its statutory obligations under the two duties in the Section 75 equality legislation.

The University's refreshed EDI online module was migrated onto a new learning platform to enhance usability and accessibility and launched on 1 August 2022. The new system triggers alerts to remind staff to renew their training before the expiration date. From the launch date to the end of the reporting period, 31 March 2023, 68% of current staff had successfully completed the EDI training.

The content of the online Disability Awareness module was also refreshed and updated, reflecting feedback received through the Staff Disability Awareness Surveys and other 'live' bespoke training sessions held throughout the year. The revised content is subject to a final review at the end of the reporting period before it will go live. The overall completion rate has not been captured given the extent of the review and migration period between two learning platforms.

Focussed training

Staff from the EDI Unit provided one-to-one equality screening training to 'policy owners' as required (for each new and revised policy).

Assessing access to information and services

Staff in the EDI Section attended ECNI training including: Section 75 Duties – a focus on screening; the Disability Duties and developing a DAP; and the one-day multi-stakeholder event in Belfast 'Make Equality a Priority - law reform conference' organised by the ECNI in November 2022. The University's EDI Unit engaged regularly with the ECNI for advice, signposting and to keep updated with any developments or changes to practices.

Using post-training surveys and polls / chat bar functionality on MS Teams, positive feedback was received on all training sessions. The use of online platforms to deliver training in one virtual room, across a multi-campus institution, was a positive outcome for participants in terms of accessibility.

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

One-to-one equality screening training has worked well in that policy owners obtain the skills required to complete policy screening as and when required. This makes the training more relevant to them and equips policy owners with the confidence to complete other policy screening more independently and with less assistance.

As part of the ENGAGE Programme, which aims to support line managers realise their full potential at the University, the EDI Section delivered a module providing the essential introductory toolkit to Equality at UU. This was an opportunity to provide a high-level introduction to the Section 75 duties and to share information on the emerging DAP 2022-2027, which could be disseminated in teams across the organisation.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2022-23, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The University continues to use the website as its primary means of disseminating information. Silktime in association with Socitm have been running an [accessibility league for Universities](#), measuring features such as screen reader compatibility, text and image legibility and mobile accessibility in relation to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 (the legal standard required of all public sector websites by September 2020). The league table updates each month. At the end of the reporting period, UU ranked third overall in terms of website accessibility.

To enhance accessibility and in adherence to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018, a significant review of online files has taken place across the University during the reporting period. This continues to be work in progress, which is complemented with regular content accessibility training rolled out by the Web Development team.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2022-23?

Insert number here:

In February 2023, the ECNI's Statutory Duty Investigations Committee (SDIC) concluded its investigation of two Paragraph 10 complaints raised against the Equality Scheme, in regard to the Restructuring of the Nurse Competence Test Centre (CTC). The complaints alleged that the University failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme by not conducting an equality screening of the policy decision to restructure the CTC. The University was found not to be in breach of its Equality Scheme.

On 26 October 2022 the SDIC was asked to review its decision not to investigate a Paragraph 10 complaint made by the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and Conradh na Gaeilge. The complaint alleged that the University failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme by not progressing with the EQIA on the UUSU Student Council Mandate for Bilingual Signage and was made.

At its meeting on 15 February 2023, the Committee carefully considered the request for a review and the information provided.

The SDIC decided that there was no evidence that its decision was based on information that was not accurate, as a ground for it to review its decision of September 2022.

Section 3: Looking Forward

- 28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:
A Five-Year Effectiveness Review of the Equality Scheme was completed during the reporting period. The next review is scheduled in 2027.
- 29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? (*Please provide details*)
- Publication of the Five-year Review of the Equality Scheme and amended Equality Scheme completed during the reporting period and pending approval from the ECNI.

- Complete a re-monitoring exercise to improve accuracy of staff EO monitoring information.
- Review of the University's EDI Operational Plan, and associated Action Plan, in accordance with the new University Corporate Strategy.
- In line with Chapter 5 of the Equality Scheme, the organisation will continue to focus on staff training in the next reporting period; raising awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 via updated mandatory EDI and Disability Awareness training, and to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA), with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2022-23) reporting period?
(Please tick any that apply)

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

2. The following table details the actions in the University's DAP 2022-2027, which sets out how the University will encourage positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in University/Public life, through a series of cross-functional and unique actions.

The DAP was launched towards the end of the reporting period, therefore, progress on actions will be reported in more detail in the next Annual Progress Report.

1. Actions to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress during the reporting period 01.04.22 – 31.03.23
1.1	In the Staff Disability Awareness Surveys (2022), over one-third of respondents did not know the University's DAP existed; indicating the need for increased awareness, accessibility and visibility of the Disability Duties and the DAP.	Enhance the profile and online accessibility of the DAP on the University's website; and increase awareness through social media and through the University's internal communication channels.	Increased engagement and improved knowledge of the DAP, evidenced through staff surveys, training evaluations and qualitative feedback.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2022 - 2027	In December 2022, a dedicated webpage was launched to improve visibility and awareness of the University's new DAP. This includes a web-based text of the action plan to enhance accessibility. A comprehensive background to how the DAP was developed is also included on the webpage. An awareness session for staff was provided in December 2022, which included an overview of the Disability

						Duties and the DAP.
1.2		Develop an online module, accessible on the LMS LEARN training platform for staff, in relation to the Disability Duties and the University's DAP.	All staff complete module on the Disability Duties and the DAP.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2023	This action is ongoing.
1.3	Research has suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted on people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, particularly in terms of mental health.	Working collaboratively with colleagues in Employee Wellbeing and with external organisations, the BAME+ Staff and Student Network will facilitate a half-day 'Breaking the Silence' workshop aimed at raising awareness in relation to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the BAME community and providing information and signposting to mental health support services internally and externally.	Increased awareness of mental health disabilities and knowledge of support services, evidenced through feedback following the workshop (s).	James Uhomobhi BAME+ Staff and Student Network Lead Geoff Gillan Head of Health, Safety and Wellbeing	2023	This action is ongoing.

2. Actions to encourage people with disabilities to participate in University life						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress during the reporting period 01.04.22 – 31.03.23
2.1	<p>Students with disabilities are underrepresented within the UK HEI student population, suggesting the need for universities to do more to encourage people with disabilities to apply to universities and to access additional financial support for their studies.</p> <p>Belfast Community Scholarships were launched in 2021.</p> <p>The Medical Education Scholarships were launched in 2021.</p>	<p>Dependent on philanthropic donations being secured, offer Community Scholarships and Medical Education Scholarships each year of the lifecycle of the DAP.</p>	<p>Additional funding available for students with disabilities entering UU courses.</p> <p>Increase in the number of disabled students applying successfully for the scholarships.</p>	Eddie Friel Director of Development and Alumni Relations	Annual	<p>46 scholarships were awarded in 2022/23, meaning that now 88 students at UU are being supported with scholarships of £2,000-£3,000 a year for each year of their degree (excluding placement year). This initiative supports equality of access and aims to contribute to social mobility and economic development in NI. A further 30 scholarships have been promoted during the reporting period for students entering in September 2023. Feedback from recipients has been positive, for example: <i>“Without this scholarship, I would have had to go into full-time employment as I</i></p>

						<p><i>would not have been able to cover the costs of going to university. It has made a huge difference to my life, giving me the opportunity to follow my lifetime aspiration to study a degree in Sports.”</i></p> <p>UU Community Scholar 2022</p>
2.2a	<p>People with disabilities apply for 60% more jobs than people without disabilities before finding employment (ECNI Annual Report 2020-21 Inequalities in Employment: Disability).</p> <p>The employment rate for disabled people here continues to be the lowest across all the UK regions (Breaking down barriers for disabled people in employment, Chief Commissioner - ECNI, January 2023)</p> <p>4.9% of staff at the University declared a disability in 2021.</p>	<p>Provide short-term funded placement opportunities for people with disabilities in areas where there is under-representation.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of placement opportunities for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>2022 – 2027</p>	<p>This action is ongoing.</p>

2.2b		Ring-fence posts annually across Business Support Services and work with external partners, including NI Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), to support the recruitment process.	Increase in the number of ring-fenced posts for people with disabilities.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2022 - 2027	This action is ongoing.
2.3	<p>Research has found that despite legislation regards diversity in the workplace, people with disabilities still do not experience the same access to work opportunities as people without disabilities.</p> <p>A recent survey commissioned by Inclusive Boards found that employers are apprehensive about hiring a senior employee with disabilities.</p>	Provide an opportunity for staff with disabilities to attend the Leadership Training Programme, hosted by Disability Rights UK in association with the Leadership Academy.	Staff participate in the programme, with a view to developing a tailored version of the programme that can be implemented at UU.	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Marie Duffy Lead for Advancing Disability Equality sub-group.</p>	2022 - 2027	The University's Staff disaAbility Network Chair attended the Leadership Training Programme during the reporting period.

2.4	<p>There has been a 19% increase in the number of Reasonable Adjustment Recommendations (RARs) for students over the past 5 academic years (2017/8 – 2021/22), which suggests that there is a significant reliance on RARs to remove barriers to learning for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. This approach offers flexibility in the ways students access material, engage with it and show what they know.</p>	<p>Explore further the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to maximise the teaching and learning experience for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure UDL is a strategic priority for UU by developing a Strategy and Action Plan over the life cycle of the University's DAP.</p>	<p>Working Group established within Year 1.</p> <p>Written Strategy, Action Plan and evaluation methods endorsed by the SLT (Years 2 – 4), with the aim of increasing accessibility and usability for students with all levels of ability, to progress at UU through inclusive curriculum design solutions.</p>	<p>Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality & Student Experience</p> <p>Dr Roisín Curran Interim Head - Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (CHERP)</p> <p>Marie Duffy Lead for Advancing Disability Equality sub-group</p> <p>Andy Jaffrey Head of Office for Digital Learning</p>	2022 - 2027	<p>The University secured sustainable funding for Blackboard Ally, which is a technology for automatically converting content uploaded to the VLE into alternative versions.</p> <p>15052 users have downloaded 119,742 alternative versions of content generated by Ally between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.</p> <p>This is broken down by:</p> <p>Audio 1,704 BeeLine 2,984 Braille 811 ePub 26,670 HTML 22,079 Immersive Reader 1,701</p> <p>OCR PDF 1,048 Tagged PDF 62,745</p>
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2.5	<p>As a consequence of organisations pivoting workstreams online, there has been a significant increase in the number of staff requesting support, to promote and enhance the accessibility of online events for attendees.</p> <p>The University currently does not have practical guidance to support staff in planning their events online.</p>	<p>Develop and promote guidance for staff that supports the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) to address potential barriers and to promote inclusive online events.</p>	<p>Guidance is implemented and training on elements of the guidance is rolled out to staff.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Staff disAbility Network</p>	2022-2023	<p>A comprehensive toolkit that supports the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2), was developed for staff during the reporting period. A training and awareness programme will be rolled out in the next reporting period.</p>
2.6	<p>While 1 in 5 people in Northern Ireland have a disability, applications to public boards from people with a declared disability remains consistently low at 6%. (Source: Public Appointments: Annual Report for Northern Ireland – published January 2022).</p>	<p>Promote and encourage applications for membership to Council and its committees within the University from people with a declared disability.</p> <p>Engage with all of the University's Section 75 consultees and specifically reach out to disability groups and networks to request the distribution of recruitment activity among their contacts, to help promote opportunities more widely.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of applications from those declaring a disability.</p> <p>Increased membership of people with disabilities on Council and other public bodies within the University.</p>	<p>Clare Jamison University Secretary</p>	2022-2027	<p>In October 2022, the Office of the University Secretary (OUS) conducted a recruitment exercise to appoint two external members to the University's Governing Body, the Council.</p> <p>All recruitment material included the following positive recruitment statement: <i>'Ulster University actively promotes and celebrates equality of opportunity and diversity, and, in this</i></p>

					<p><i>context, the Committee would welcome and encourage nominations from all communities - particularly those from members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, disabled and LGBT+ communities.</i></p> <p>In addition, the online advertisement stated that <i>'Candidates should also share our values and passion for diversity, openness and inclusivity and a drive to support us in delivery of our new strategy, People, Place and Partnership'</i>.</p> <p>The opportunity was circulated to:</p> <p>All the University's Section 75 Consultee list.</p> <p>The University's four Staff Networks.</p> <p>Diversifying.io website -a careers platform for people to find jobs and opportunities with employers and organisations who are</p>
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						<p>serious about diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>EDI colleagues reached out specifically on behalf of OUS to Disability Action NI and Employers for Disability NI, as pan-disability organisations who had a network of contacts to encourage applications.</p> <p>A wide and diverse pool of sixteen applications was received.</p>
2.7	<p>While 1 in 5 people in Northern Ireland have a disability, applications to public boards from people with a declared disability remains consistently low at 6%. (Source: Public Appointments: Annual Report for Northern Ireland – published January 2022).</p>	<p>Facilitate/host a 'Demystifying public appointments' online workshop delivered by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.</p> <p>The workshop will provide information and insights into the public appointments process. Promotion of this event will be targeted firstly to members of the University's Staff disaBility Network.</p>	<p>Increased awareness and confidence from people with disabilities in relation to the public appointments process, evidenced through feedback from the workshop.</p>	<p>Clare Jamison University Secretary</p> <p>Mark Latuske Deputy Director, People & Culture</p>	2022	<p>This action rolled over from the previous DAP and is now considered complete.</p> <p>During the reporting period, People and Culture and the OUS, in partnership with the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA), held an online workshop for staff to understand more about the process and benefits of going forward for appointment to the Boards of the University's Public Bodies and to encourage a wider and</p>

						<p>more diverse pool of applicants.</p> <p>The Chair of the University's Council introduced the Workshop.</p> <p>Prior to wider dissemination, the call for participants was issued to the University's Staff DisAbility Network to particularly encourage its members to avail of this opportunity.</p> <p>22 staff participated in this workshop with positive feedback.</p>
2.8	<p>According to Workplace Today, making reasonable workplace adjustments can unlock a hidden talent pool.</p> <p>It can also help promote UU as an inclusive place to work and learn.</p>	<p>As part of the on-boarding process, develop a tile signposting staff to the Reasonable Adjustments Protocol and to the Staff disAbility Network on the University's new On-boarding Social Hub.</p> <p>Include signposting within the Social Hub that provides support and guidance for new disabled staff, or existing staff with a newly acquired disability, highlighting the RAP</p>	<p>The Staff disAbility Network provides an opportunity for staff with disabilities and long-term conditions to be represented and participate in University life.</p> <p>Staff with disabilities receive support at the earliest possible opportunity to aid them to perform their duties and maintain work.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Staff disAbility Network</p>	2022	<p>A dedicated Staff disAbility Network tile was added to the University's new On-boarding Social Hub during the reporting period. The tile provides direct access to the Network's webpage and to a SharePoint site which includes a wide range of support and guidance resources in relation to various disabilities and long-term health conditions.</p>

		<p>and the Access to Work Programme.</p>				<p>A Focus Group, which includes Trade Union representatives, was established during the reporting period, to refresh the University's RAP. The RAP sets out to encourage disabled staff to meet with their line managers to discuss and agree appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable and support their full participation at work.</p> <p>While the RAP continues to be shared with members of Employers for Disability NI as a model of best practice, a review is underway to ensure the process aligns with various data protection legislation. The review also seeks to improve the employee experience by offering a more seamless process and continuity, should a member of staff change roles or managers, while tailored adjustments have been previously agreed.</p>
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2.9	<p>The University has a legal responsibility under SENDO legislation to provide reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. The Student Wellbeing team administer these recommendations (RARs) to support students, but the current process of email distribution relies heavily on the student's course director to distribute the information to appropriate teaching staff.</p>	<p>Implement a change project to update the RAR distribution process within the Student Wellbeing CRM to feed into live SharePoint lists.</p> <p>Develop an updated RAR form to streamline recommendations for clarity.</p> <p>Develop School RAR Administration role within the process to allow to nominate staff within each school to have access to full School RAR list.</p> <p>Ensure robust consultation with relevant academic, administrative and professional services staff.</p> <p>Develop clear guidance and training on the new process as well as our responsibility to fulfil RARs appropriately.</p>	<p>Improved RAR distribution process in SharePoint where all parties with appropriate access can access RARs for sharing/distribution to other appropriate staff within their school/department.</p> <p>Better 'live' RAR information management in SharePoint.</p> <p>Improved understanding and engagement with the RAR process.</p>	<p>Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality & Student Experience</p> <p>Elaine Hartin Chief Strategy & Finance Officer</p>	2022-2023	<p>Initial consultation, scoping and development of the RAR transformation is now progressing to completion, with the testing phase to commence in Semester 1 2023/24.</p> <p>The next phase will include transfer of existing RARs to the new system. Further planning will also be required for the development and delivery of training materials, collation of RAR Admin nominations and planning for the optimal time to launch.</p>
2.10	<p>Traditional accessibility barriers to print, audio, and visual media for students with disabilities can be much more easily overcome through web technologies. There are physical</p>	<p>Establish an Internal Disability Advisory Forum, which is representative of the staff and student body, to engage with and to help inform decision making and project planning.</p>	<p>Enhanced engagement between staff, students and external stakeholders.</p> <p>Improved digital and physical accessibility.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Michael Fitzpatrick Director of Estates</p>	2023 Meetings arranged as required throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan.	<p>In the Staff Disability Survey carried out in January 2023, people were asked to indicate if they had an interest in joining a new Disability Advisory.</p>

	barriers in accessing new buildings and facilities for staff, students and visitors at the University.			Mark Taglietti Director of Digital Services David Longstaff UU Students Union	Review of membership carried out every two years (31 March 2025 and 31 March 2027).	Forum representative of the staff and student body. 19 people responded positively to this question, both academic and professional support services staff. Contact has been made with all those who responded and further actions to progress the Forum will be included in the next reporting period.
2.11	There is potential to enhance disability inclusion in the learning environment by developing external networks and by engaging with global innovators, decision-makers and opinion leaders to identify, curate and share inclusive learning solutions.	To engage with the Department for Communities and host a Trust Inclusion Policy Co-Design Workshop at the University.	A new co-designed Disability Employment Policy for Northern Ireland.	Professor Mark Durkin – Executive Dean – UUBS Dr Paul Joseph-Richard UUBS	2023 - 2027	On the 27 January 2023, the UUBS, in collaboration with the Department for Communities (DfC), organised a Policy Co-Design workshop. 80 delegates, including a diverse range of employers, people professionals, academics and students shared their views and shaped the core elements of a new employer facing government scheme titled 'Trust Inclusion'. The end-of-workshop evaluation shows that the participants contributed many policy-modifying ideas on how employers can enhance

						their knowledge of disability, adopt and apply the most effective disability employment practices, and foster a more inclusive environment at workplaces. UUBS continues to engage with the DfC in initiatives that aim to reduce the disability employment gap in NI.
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3. Actions to promote both positive duties						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	
3.1	Increase awareness of UU thought leadership and academic expertise relating to disability.	Proactive efforts to further enhance relationships across all Faculties to identify and showcase research or teaching that directly impacts on disability in society e.g. patient care, policy influence, attitudinal studies, participation, recovery/rehabilitation/diagnostics etc.	Enhanced focus on patient/societal outcomes and impact of relevant research. Social media and press coverage (including the use of internal communications) of civic impact in action.	Professor Liam Maguire Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research	2022 - 2027	Research which impacts on disability in society is undertaken in different areas in the University. A number of articles highlighting research that impacts on disability have been published on the University's internal website and detail of current research projects is available on Faculty websites.

						To be more proactive in identifying opportunities for wider publicity of relevant research, there will be a monthly <i>Marketing & Comms Research Focus</i> agenda item at meetings of the Research Leadership Team.
3.2	<p>British Sign Language (BSL) legislation is currently passing through Westminster and similar legislation is proposed for BSL and Irish Sign Language (ISL) in NI. A sign language act would require the government to ensure the use of British and Irish sign language across public services. This action is included in preparation for the legislation and in response to a growing demand from staff to attend sign language training.</p> <p>The action will also help staff to communicate better with people with</p>	<p>Provide a series of awareness sessions in regard to d/Deaf culture, British and Irish Sign Language, and Sign Communication; and to develop an online awareness module through the LMS LEARN system to allow access to training on demand for staff.</p>	<p>Improved knowledge and understanding of d/Deaf culture and an increased awareness of sign language, evidenced through feedback from participants who attend the sessions.</p> <p>The action will also help staff to communicate better with people with hearing loss and to promote an inclusive working and learning environment.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Marie Duffy Lead for Advancing Disability Equality Subgroup</p> <p>Staff disaBility Network</p>	2022 - 2027	<p>4 Introduction to BSL online sessions took place during the reporting period with 25 people participating in total.</p> <p>An online module for LMS LEARN is currently being developed and the University is exploring options for the delivery of Irish Sign Language.</p>

	hearing loss and help promote an inclusive working and learning environment.					
3.3	<p>People with disabilities apply for 60% more jobs than people without disabilities, before finding employment (ECNI Annual Report 2020-21 Inequalities in Employment: Disability).</p>	<p>UUBS, along with the Employability and Careers section, will support the implementation of the GradEmployNI programme in partnership with Leonard Cheshire Charity.</p> <p>The programme consists of 12 online workshops on topics such as Human Resource Management, Future of work, Accounting and Finance, Leadership working in teams, technology at work, Future of work, innovation and entrepreneurship. Each learner will be coached by a named academic from the UUBS.</p> <p>The programme involves Graduates attending a business bootcamp, which is aimed at empowering graduates with disabilities, with skills on how to manage the recruitment process with their individual circumstances and to ultimately succeed in securing a job opportunity,</p>	<p>Successful matches of students with internship positions. Graduates will have increased their own personal awareness and knowledge of the recruitment process. Participants will have developed many skills to help them overcome barriers in the recruitment process.</p> <p>Participants will have attended at least 10 workshops as a group and will have had two one-to-one coaching sessions with an academic</p> <p>They will have gained insight, confidence and the skills required in the workplace. For example, research, report writing, creating presentations, handling project work and general administration.</p>	<p>Professor Mark Durkin Executive Dean - UUBS.</p> <p>Dr Paul Joseph-Richard UUBS.</p> <p>Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor - Academic Quality & Student Experience</p> <p>Dr Stella So Employability and Careers</p>	2022	<p>The GradEmployNI programme was delivered as planned. 24 graduates with visible and non-visible disabilities participated in the programme from March 2022 to 29 June 2022.</p> <p>A week of induction programme was delivered by Dr Stella So (UU Employability Office), and this introductory week was followed by the delivery of 14 workshops on Business and Management topics. Each student was given a mentor and all students had two mentoring sessions.</p> <p>25 academics from UUBS engaged in this process. 18 local employers offered the students 14-week placements.</p>

		<p>whether it is an internship, placement, part time job or a graduate role.</p> <p>The programme aims to build overall confidence to help overcome barriers that people with disabilities often face when searching and applying for job opportunities.</p>			<p>On the 29 June 2022, all students received a certificate of completion.</p> <p>At the end of the programme, all 24 students secured meaningful jobs, suited to their life circumstances and health conditions.</p> <p>With the help of staff from Disability Action, programme participants were supported to maintain their jobs. Dr Joseph-Richard, the Programme Lead, continues to mentor the participants and is nurturing a confidence-building partnership with all the candidates.</p> <p>At the end of the reporting period, all candidates are still in jobs and their lives and livelihoods have been transformed fully. The students report outcomes such as improved self-confidence, enhanced financial stability, and a greater sense of personal fulfilment and purpose. They continue to enjoy improved career prospects</p>
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						as they being to make a positive contribution to the overall economy.
3.4	The completion rate of the mandatory online Disability Awareness training is 56% for current staff.	<p>Refresh the online Disability Awareness training module on the University's new LMS LEARN system, to help make it more relevant, interactive and engaging.</p> <p>Increased awareness of the Disability Awareness training through the enhanced functionality of the LMS LEARN system which can send automated reminders to staff, as well as promoting the training through regular communications on the University's social media and internal news channels.</p>	<p>Increase completion rate by at least 5% of current staff each year, in the lifecycle of the DAP.</p> <p>Increased awareness of disability issues and our shared roles in supporting colleagues and students with disabilities.</p>	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2022 - 2027	<p>During the reporting period, there was a significant training programme for staff on a wide range of disability matters (as detailed in Appendix 1).</p> <p>The content of the online Disability Awareness module was updated to reflect feedback received through the Staff Disability Awareness Surveys and other 'live' bespoke training sessions held throughout the year. The revised content is subject to a final review at the end of the reporting period. The overall completion rate has not been captured given the extent of the review and migration period between two learning platforms.</p>
3.5	The DAP is a living document, and the actions are designed to	Disseminate the DAP to all staff, students and stakeholders, with regular	All staff and students have an increased understanding of the two disability duties,	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan.	A new dedicated webpage was developed to enhance visibility and accessibility

	<p>be flexible and responsive to changing priorities over the five-year period. These priorities will help create and sustain an inclusive culture that differentiates us as a place of learning and achievement, where we are all proud to work and study. (See also action 1.2).</p>	<p>communications and increased visibility and accessibility of the Plan on the University's website.</p>	<p>evidenced through surveys and training evaluations. Staff and students engage regularly to provide updates on actions, as well as proposals to include new actions.</p>			<p>to the DAP during the reporting period. The Plan was disseminated to all staff and students via a global email and an online presentation was delivered for staff in December 2022. Regular training on the Disability Duties and the DAP has provided an opportunity for people to inform potential new actions.</p>
3.6	<p>Statutory reporting requirement.</p>	<p>Report progress of actions within the DAP 2022 – 2027 to the University's SLT and the EDI Steering Group every six months.</p> <p>Provide updates on actions to the ECNI through the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Report.</p>	<p>Increased engagement at a senior level within the University.</p> <p>Targets are met and actions reviewed if necessary. Increased awareness of disability inclusion across the University, evidenced through staff disability awareness surveys.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan</p>	<p>The Three-Year Effectiveness Review and the DAP were endorsed by the SLT, and considered by the EDI Steering Group during the reporting period.</p> <p>Annual updates on the action plan have been included in the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Report.</p>

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

During the reporting period, the EDI Unit completed a review of the three-year DAP with a comprehensive report; [‘Effectiveness Review of the University’s Disability Action Plan \(2019-2022\)’](#)

This Review was used as a basis to develop the University’s new DAP 2022-27. The feedback from [Staff Surveys for Academic Staff](#) and [Professional and Support Services](#) was also used to monitor the effectiveness of actions and to develop and inform new actions.

The EDI Unit researched DAPs of other organisations in the public sector, to find out what they are doing to help people with disabilities. Through engagement with other people in the public sector, ideas and good practice were shared. The ECNI’s Guidance on what should be in a DAP was also used.

A 12-week public consultation on the new Draft DAP 2022-2027 was launched in September 2022. At the end of the consultation, the EDI Unit reviewed all of the responses received and, where appropriate, changes were made to the Plan. This is included in the summary feedback, [Consultation Comments and Responses Table](#).

During this period, the EDI Unit delivered an internal presentation to staff on the Disability Duties and the draft DAP, to provide an opportunity for colleagues to give feedback and inform new actions.

(b) Quantitative

The EDI Unit monitors changes to the staff and student disability profile on an annual basis.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No. The DAP 2022-2027 was launched in December 2022, following a 12-week public consultation exercise. The plan continues to be implemented during this reporting period.

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

The new DAP has a 5-year cycle, and it was launched towards the end of this reporting period. Given the focus of EDI in the new Corporate Strategy, along with the imminent appointment of a new Dean for EDI (for staff and students), it is expected that new actions will be added to the DAP in consultation with Departments and Schools across the University. Completed actions will be removed.