




Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	The Ulster University Equality Scheme webpage	
Signature: Damian McAlister, Chief People Officer		

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 2025 - 31 March 2026.

PART A

Introduction

This is Ulster University's 17th 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. Further examples and a sample of activities and civic contributions can then be found in Appendix 2.

Part B of this 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 2025 – 31 March 2026).

Appendix 2

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

PART A

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 2025-26, 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.

In 2025/26, 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 and service delivery developments were made by the EDI Unit during the reporting period to promote equality of opportunity and good relations:

- The EDI team implemented an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This 'Equality Scheme Action Plan' was subjected to a public consultation exercise in April 2025, before being submitted to the ECNI. The plan is available to the public on the University [website](#) and details of the plan can be found in Part B (Question 2) of this report.
- Refreshed mandatory EDI training was rolled out to all staff within the University's Compulsory Compliance Training (CCT) suite of training. This followed the implementation of a new learning platform, Evolve, during the reporting period, and enables completion of the CCT training to be monitored more effectively.
- Twenty-five new and revised workplace policies (including the Equality Scheme Action Plan) were equality screened during the reporting period, and two public policy consultation exercises were conducted with screening assessments presented.
- The University's Policy Clinic met monthly, 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the University Council via two sub-committees, the People and Resources Committees, all Senior Managers (via the

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Senior Managers cascade) and the Senior Management Team within People and Culture.

- In each of the 'All staff' emails to communicate the training schedule and consultations, and in articles on the internal Staff News Insight channel, the Equality Scheme (and Equal Opportunities (EO) Policy) was referenced or 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, the EDI team updated its web pages to improve content accessibility. At the end of the reporting period, the University ranked third in the accessibility league for Universities.
- The University launched a JISC 'Digital Accessibility – the Foundations' course on Evolve as a baseline standard for developing understanding of web content accessibility.
- The EDI team developed a case study for inclusion in the UCEA sector resource on equality pay gaps. This provides valuable insights into Ulster's innovative work to encourage the sharing of protected characteristics information, with a focus on disability. The sector resource on equality pay gaps was launched at an online event for HR Directors on Monday 30 March.
- The EDI team completed two staff EO remonitoring exercises, in June 2025 and March 2026, to ensure that the equality and diversity information we hold is accurate, meaningful, and up to date.
- The Staff Networks continued to roll-out a comprehensive programme of activities and events for staff. The 'Carers' Network was launched, and Ulster University also gained membership of the 'Age-Friendly University Global Network' (AFUGN).
- EDI staff joined with other colleagues to organise the University's participation at the Pride marches in Belfast, Causeway and Foyle Prides in July and August 2025.

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, a training programme was rolled out during the 2025/26 Academic Year. Further detail on training activities can be found 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 2025-26 (or append the plan with progress/examples identified).

Equality Scheme Action Plan

In line with the commitments set out in its equality scheme, Ulster University has implemented an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The action plan is prioritised based on a review of effectiveness of the University’s equality scheme (*an audit of inequalities*). This review gathered and analysed information across the Section 75 categories to identify any inequalities that may exist for service users and those affected by University policies. Implemented during the 2025-26 reporting period, the action plan will last for **three** years to align with the University’s corporate planning cycle; implementation of the action measures has been incorporated into the University’s business planning process.

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’.

Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations - compliance with equality legislation						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
1.	Continue to implement the University’s Equality Scheme	The University is required by law to have in place an Equality Scheme, based on a template provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	Action ongoing The University’s Equality Scheme was approved by the ECNI on 19 June 2012. It is due for review in 2028

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2.	Develop and implement a refreshed equality scheme action plan, through consultation, to ensure that the institution is addressing equality issues holistically	This is a commitment within the University's equality scheme	May 2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The 'Equality Scheme Action Plan' was subjected to a public consultation exercise in April 2025, before being submitted to the ECNI, and implemented. The plan is available on the University's website</p>
3.	Monitor and review progress of the equality scheme action plan on an annual basis	The University is required to submit a variety of statutory equality reports at specific times. This includes the Section 75 Annual Report (The Northern Ireland Act 1998)	Annually	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>The progress of the equality scheme action plan is included within this report</p>
4.	Undertake 5-year effectiveness review of equality Scheme	The University's current Equality Scheme is due for review in 2028	2028	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	<p>Action to commence</p> <p>The 5-year effectiveness review of the Equality Scheme is scheduled to complete in 2028</p>
5.	Implement the University's Disability	The University is required by law to have in place a Disability Action Plan, based on a template	2022-2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>An update on the progress of actions within the</p>

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	Action Plan 2022-27	provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland				University's Disability Action Plan is included in this report
6.	Undertake a 5-year review of the University's Disability Action Plan 2022-27	The Disability Action Plan will expire in 2027	2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	Action to commence This 5-year review is scheduled to complete in 2027
7.	Complete the Section 75 Annual Report, including the annual report of progress of the Disability and Equality Scheme Action Plan	The University is required to submit a Section 75 Annual Progress Report (under The Northern Ireland Act 1998) including a report on progress of the equality scheme action plan and Disability Action Plan (under Section 49B of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995)	Annually 31 August	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Report submitted on time	Action ongoing The University's Section 75 Annual Report for 2024/25 was submitted to the ECNI on 1 July 2025. This included an update on the progress of actions with the Disability Action Plan. The University's Equality Scheme Action Plan was implemented during this reporting period
8.	Complete the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO) Return	The University is required to submit an Annual Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO) Return (under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998)	Annually 6 June	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met	Action ongoing The FETO Return was submitted to the ECNI by 6 June 2025: The monitored data was used to pre-populate information on the University's Equality Screening pro forma, to help inform the

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						development of new and revised policies
9.	Complete the Triennial Article 55 Review (For period 7 February 2022 – 6 February 2025)	The University is required to submit a Triennial Article 55 Review (the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998)	6 February 2026	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met Article 55 Affirmative Action Plan implemented and achieved	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The University’s triennial 12th Article 55 Review (2022-25) was submitted to the ECNI on 9 February 2026.</p> <p>Over the review period (6 February 2022 to 6 February 2025), the Catholic share of the monitored workforce continued to grow, with an overall increase of [1.5%] in their share of employment since the end of the last review in 2022. The number of staff for whom a community background could not be determined increased during the review period from 17.3% in February 2022 to 19.6% in February 2025. Most staff whose community background is ‘not determined’ work in Academic and Research posts as the University continues to attract staff from outside of Northern</p>

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						Ireland for these staff categories
10.	Calculate and publish the University's Gender Pay Gap	Under Article 19 of the Employment Act (NI) 2016) (pending), the University will be required to publish a Gender Pay Gap Report	Annually June	Damian McAlister 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 Pay Gap Analyses for 2025 were completed, including analyses of <u>gender, ethnicity and disability</u> pay gaps. These were published on the dedicated <u>Key Equality Data</u> page on the University's EDI website
11.	Develop and implement the University's 'Addressing Pay Gaps Strategic Framework Plan 2025-27'	A coherent framework would provide an oversight mechanism to take action and monitor strategies to reduce pay gaps	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	The University's 'Addressing Pay Gaps Strategic Framework Plan 2025-27' is published and actions within are monitored	Action ongoing A draft of The University's Addressing Pay Gaps Strategic Framework and Action Plan is awaiting final approval. This timeline for this action will be extended to 2026
12.	Carry out a review of equal pay to ensure that we are not undervaluing some types of jobs	This is a commitment within our Equal Pay Policy	2026 (Following national review of HERA scheme)	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Equal Pay Review completed, and recommendations endorsed by Senior Leadership Team	Action to commence This action is scheduled for 2026, following the national review of the HERA scheme

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<p>13.</p>	<p>Raise awareness of the 'Good Relations' (S75) duty</p>	<p>Awareness of Section 75 among staff and students has increased, but there is still work to be done in this area. Updated guidance on the Section 75 duties is available on our dedicated '<u>Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations</u>' web page, however this requires continuous dissemination and referencing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Statutory requirements met Facilitate and carry out events and celebrations to support raising awareness of the 'Good Relations' (S75) duty</p>	<p>Action ongoing Guidance on Good Relations is available on our dedicated '<u>Promoting Good Relations</u>' webpage. The University actively participates in and hosts events for the region-wide Good Relations Week, partnering with community groups, charities, and local authorities to host campus-based events such as documentary screenings, panel discussions, and educational workshops designed to foster inclusion and community engagement</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Contribute to the development of government language and culture strategies, for example, through membership of the Department for</p>	<p>The University is actively involved in the discussions around government policy through the participation of a number of our academics in working with Conradh na Gaeilge and other experts in advancing draft language and culture strategies for the Executive's Department for Communities. In January 2021, two members of staff were appointed to the</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost</p>	<p>Development of a platform for indigenous language and culture – Ulster tongues (develop an intentional and proactive programme) – Ulster Talks sessions Continue to develop and deliver academic studies – Irish Language degree</p>	<p>Action ongoing During the past year, the Community and Regional Engagement (CRE) team have been proactively involved in the recruitment of Language and Cultural Commissioners for Northern Ireland. We have also met subsequently with the Commissioners to consult on progress</p>

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	Communities' Expert Advisory Panels	Department for Communities' Expert Advisory Panels tasked with developing the language strategies (as set out in the New Decade, New Approach Deal)	2025		programme, Ulster Scots Scholarships Explore and develop additional range of languages to be taught at degree level Confucius centre – main centre of excellence The Gaelic Languages of Scotland and Ireland – PEACE Plus project	
15.	Proactively develop a programme of language and culture activities which reflect the University's commitment to the support of Irish language and Ulster-Scots activities on our campuses, under the	Ulster University is committed to taking proactive stances on EDI; celebrating all people and providing opportunities for all communities. It has a strong tradition of promoting minority languages and culture, particularly Irish and Ulster-Scots, which aligns with the 'New Decade, New Approach Deal'	Annually November Annually January Ongoing Ongoing Annually March Ongoing	Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost	Ulster Dialect Week Burns Night Event Burns Society activities Work with John Hewitt Society	Action ongoing Co-ordinated the University involvement with Fleadh Ceoil na hEireann in Belfast in August 2026. Participated in events to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge in March 2026 and Scoil Eigse Celebrated Burns Night on Campus and supported Ulster Scots engagement with our campuses through multiple events including Ulster Dialect Week and

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	banner of 'Ulster Tongues'				Seachtain na Gaeilge (Irish Language Week) Membership of The Forum on languages of Scotland and Ulster	Ulster Place Names conference in 2025. Worked directly with the John Hewitt Society as part of the collective delivering the Look North Festival. Membership of The Forum on languages of Scotland and Ulster. Been part of a successful bid for a major PEACE Plus grant entitled FLOURISH to support the Gaelic languages of Ireland and Scotland and Ulster-Scots, supporting the programme with advice and training
16.	Pro-actively develop a framework of anti-racist activity and action on our campuses which reflects and celebrates the racial diversity of our student and staff body	Ulster University is committed to fostering good relations. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding	October 2025 October 2025 October 2025 Ongoing Annually March	Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost	Black History Summit Inter-campus Sports Tournament Black Music Festival Northern Ireland Racial Heritage Project	Action ongoing Black History Week events Sponsorship of NI Race Equality Awards Sponsorship of NI Diwali Festival

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					Race Equality Awards	
17.	<p>Continue to implement the <u>Students' Union (SU) Good Relations Policy</u></p> <p>Review the Terms of Reference for the Good Relations Working Group</p>	<p>The SU Good Relations Working Group consists of SU Officers, representatives of various SU societies and University staff. The main remit of the Group is to support the implementation of the SU Good Relations Policy and action plan and provide a consultative forum for the SU as and when good relations issues arise</p>	Annually	Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience	<p>Good Relations is promoted across the Student body</p> <p>Political debate is encouraged through the Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU) political societies and Good Relations Working Group, in line with the <u>Students' Union Framework for Political Expression</u></p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>The UUSU continues to implement its <u>Good Relations Policy</u></p>

Policy development and review

	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
18.	<p>Enhance our current process for developing policies</p> <p>Review and update the University's</p>	<p>The University has committed to review all new and revised policies (in terms of impact on equality of opportunity and good relations) two years following implementation. The Office of the University Secretary maintains a</p>	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Maintain an accurate policy repository	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>A Policy Task and Finish Group was established in 2025, to undertake a comprehensive review of policy processes within the University. The Group will provide a report to the</p>

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	<p>Policy Repository</p> <p>Carry out a review of effectiveness of Policy Clinic</p>	<p>centralised repository of policies</p>				<p>Chief People Officer and CPO Department Leads drawing on best practice within the sector and recommending the way forward for the University. This report is due for completion in May 2026</p>
19.	<p>Streamline Trade Union engagement with the screening process and policy development through the joint Trade Unions policy forum</p>	<p>The University recognises the importance of thorough and timely consultation during the development of new and revised policies. Consultation with the Trade Unions is an integral part of our policy screening process</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Trade Union engagement with the screening process and policy development becomes more streamlined</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The University has established robust mechanisms to ensure that all policies, procedures, and processes relating to terms and conditions of employment undergo appropriate trade union engagement, consultation, or negotiation. These include monthly Policy Clinics, where policies related to Terms and Conditions of employment (or that may have an impact on, or cause changes to ways of working) are progressed to the monthly JUCNC and the HSW Policy Sub-Committee for appropriate engagement, consultation, or negotiation</p>

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Equal opportunities monitoring information						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
20.	<p>Continue to raise awareness of the importance and requirement to collect equal opportunities (EO) data and the purposes for which it is used</p> <p>Complete an EO data re-monitoring exercise</p>	<p>The University recognises that data collection and analysis is essential to the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme</p> <p>The University has computerised information systems for both staff data and student data that have been utilised for all policy screening. Recent HESA audit feedback indicates that some data are incomplete</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Improved quality and accuracy of our EO data</p> <p>Insight article to publicise exercise</p> <p>Bi-annual reminders to staff to raise awareness of why we monitor equal opportunities data</p> <p>All staff encouraged to review and update their equal opportunities data using the self-service area</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The EDI Team, in conjunction with the Systems, Analytics and Reward and Internal Communications teams, completed two re-monitoring exercises during the reporting period. The first (July 2025) was a simple write-out to staff to remind them to update their equality information within 2 weeks. The second consisted of a one-month (18 February -18 March 2026), multi-channel communications campaign to encourage staff to update their equality information, to bust myths, explain new ways in which we use equality information, and to encourage the sharing of disability information (including the launch of the</p>

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						triennial Staff Disability Survey
21.	Complete the annual Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) return for staff	The University is required to submit specific equality data to the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) as part of its annual staff record (see action 20)	Annually 26 September	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Statutory requirements met HESA return submitted on time	Action ongoing The University's HESA return for staff was submitted by 26 September 2025
22.	Review the use of the welcome statement in recruitment for all grades	Our institutional equal opportunities data demonstrates persistent vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. A tailored approach to using specific welcoming statements may encourage applicants to apply for posts where currently there is under-representation	2025 Ongoing Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Suite of updated welcoming statements approved by Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, and implemented Increase the numbers of local BAME applicants to Grade 2-6 posts Increase the numbers of local Protestant applicants to roles on the Derry~Londonderry campus	Action ongoing Our suite of welcoming statements was reviewed and implemented. Our Article 55 Review covering the period 7 February 2022 – 6 February 2025 identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a 9.3% increase in applications from minoritised ethnic groups compared with the previous period, including a 10.2% increase in applications to Clerical posts, a 22.5% increase in applications to Manual posts and a 13% in applications to Technical Posts.

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						<p>Applications to Business Support Professional posts increased by 16.6%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> decreases in the proportion of Protestant applicants in all employment categories at Derry~Londonderry, with the exception of the Business Support Professional and Clerical categories
23.	<p>Increase the variety of <u>key equality data</u> available internally and on our website</p>	<p>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 respective annual planning processes. It will also highlight and increase awareness of equality issues at Ulster</p>	<p>Annually (June)</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Key equality data uploaded to website and disseminated to staff</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>For the first time, the University published its Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap analyses (2024) on its Key Equality Data web page, alongside the Gender Pay Gap analysis. Pay Gap analyses for 2025 were then published on the website in March 2026</p>

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Awareness raising and training						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
24.	Update mandatory EDI training for all staff	The mandatory EDI training for staff is due for review and update in 2025. The University is currently updating its Learning Management System to accommodate tailored online training	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Updated mandatory EDI training implemented and monitored	Action completed EDI Compulsory Compliance Training (CCT) was implemented in October 2025, via a new Learning Management System (Evolve). This enables line managers to track successful completion of the training, and automated personal reminders. At the end of the reporting period, 94.7% of staff had completed the EDI CCT
25.	Support understanding and adherence to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018	The University uses its website as the primary means of disseminating information. The University is required to comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience	Web content monitored continuously and updated to improve accessibility Extensive guidance on ' <u>accessible content</u> ', ' <u>accessibility standards</u> ', and ' <u>accessibility</u> ' available on UU web pages.	Action completed The University launched a JISC 'Digital Accessibility – the Foundations' course on Evolve as a baseline standard for developing understanding of web content accessibility. This complements the various extensive guidance available on UU web pages and regular content

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				<p>Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost</p>	<p>Training on 'developing accessible content' rolled out to staff</p> <p>Adobe Pro supplied to staff as required for example, when issuing all staff and student information.</p> <p>The content of a published document is available in accessible Word format</p> <p>Agreed institutional approach for rolling out training and guidance on 'content accessibility'</p>	<p>accessibility training rolled out by the Web Development team, the Centre For Quality Enhancement, and the Learning Enhancement Directorate (based on Universal Design for Learning principles).</p> <p>In August 2025, the EDI team delivered a presentation on 'Accessible Communications' to the University's Marketing and Communications team, followed by a briefing on web content accessibility, at the monthly Senior Managers Cascade meeting. This briefing was disseminated to all staff.</p> <p>At the end of the reporting period, the University ranked third overall in terms of website accessibility, on the <u>Silktide Index</u></p> <p>The University also launched a <u>Digital Accessibility in the Curriculum</u> microsite in Feb 2025.</p> <p>Furthermore, we hold:</p>
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly BlackBoard Ally clinics • Organised 4 events for Global Accessibility Awareness Day • Developed accessible PPT slide deck
26.	Implement EDI Toolkit for academics	<p>The EDI in the Curriculum Toolkit was developed by the Learning Enhancement Directorate led Inclusive and Accessible Curriculum and Assessment workstream.</p> <p>The Toolkit was developed to support Ulster staff, and our Further Education partners to reflect at a modular level to further build on their inclusive practices by considering learning design, teaching, and assessment through an EDI lens</p>	2025-2027	<p>Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience</p> <p>Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost</p>	<p>EDI toolkit pillars introduced and embedded in subject revalidation under quality assurance</p> <p>Community of Practice established in each faculty with action plans developed and implemented</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>EDI Toolkit embedded within taught programmes of the PgCert in Higher Education Practice programme.</p> <p>EDI Toolkit included in the revalidation and quality assurance documentation</p> <p>EDI Community of Practice now has 150 members with 9 events with over 200 staff in attendance sharing their inclusive and accessible practices</p>
27.	Implement EDI@UU training for students	The development of the EDI@UU programme for students provides a generic and modular training resources for students to acquire knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles of	2025-2027	Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience	<p>Programme embedded within Blackboard to ensure integration into learning platforms</p> <p>Independent access through the online Student</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>To date, we have 680 unique students who have engaged with EDI material either through the online Xerte resources (in their</p>

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		<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</p>			<p>Success Centre for flexibility and self-directed learning.</p> <p>Delivered both face-to-face and online, providing multiple engagement opportunities across all campuses</p> <p>Total of students accessing the programme during induction 4000 per year</p>	<p>own time) or in a session with Sharron Sturgess.</p> <p>In addition, the EDI Xerte has been circulated to the following cohorts –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The EDI programme is mandatory in the School of Medicine and was rolled out to all first year students through Blackboard this year.• All Communication and Media Students have access to the EDI course through their BB Ultra Programme Support Area.• Students studying for BSc in Real Estate Management take the EDI course as part of their second-year module Professional Practice and Ethics SUR340.• All year one and year three Optometry Students undertook the EDI course through Blackboard this semester as part of two modules - OPT101, Clinical Skills 1, CRN70111 and
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						<p>OPT518, Continuing Professional and Personal Development 3, CRN81861.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 2 Students on the BSc (Hons) Communication and Counselling Studies took the EDI course as part of CMM379 Reflections on Workplace Learning. 1143 in total
28.	<p>Develop a Cultural Competence Framework</p>	<p>The UU Cultural Competence Framework aims to provide staff and students with self-awareness, knowledge, skills and practical considerations of equality and intersectionality in all areas of teaching, learning, research and professional services.</p> <p>An understanding across the University community of the components of cultural competence and how these apply to all equality groups can support trust and communication, promote more effective inclusive</p>	2025-2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	<p>Cultural Competence Framework developed and disseminated across University directorates</p> <p>Introductory sessions of cultural competence delivered to staff and students</p> <p>Agreed institutional approach for rolling out training and guidance based on the Cultural Competence Framework</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>The Cultural Competence framework was also discussed between EDI and the CPO. It was agreed that the University would develop this Cultural Competence approach through engagement session or inclusion days. Cultural Competence is also part of the REC submission for the Silver Award under the curriculum working group, with specific actions to incorporate this approach in curriculum development, learning and teaching.</p>

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		practices to prevent disparities or discrimination, and will enhance an inclusive working environment				The EDI research Toolkit and the Inclusive language guide are examples of embedding a Cultural Competence approach in research and teaching and inclusive working practices
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Delivering our strategic commitment and focus on EDI

	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
29.	Reconstitute the EDI Steering Group	A dedicated and cohesive team is required to galvanise and ensure the delivery of the strategic commitment and focus on EDI and principles outlined within the institutional 'People, Place and Partnership -Delivering Sustainable Futures for All' strategy	Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Terms of reference for Steering Group agreed to reflect the People, Place and Partnership - Delivering Sustainable Futures for All' strategy Steering Group meets three times per annum to advocate and champion the delivery of EDI activities and related practices across the University. Institutional 'People, Place and Partnership -Delivering	Action ongoing Reinstatement of EDI Steering Group commenced by February 2026 with confirmation of refreshed EDI Steering Group membership. Draft terms of reference for the Steering Group were agreed in March 2026; the inaugural meeting of the reconstituted Steering Group is scheduled to take place in April 2026

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					Sustainable Futures for All' strategy aligns with Equality Scheme requirements	
30.	The EDI Steering Group will report to Council and its appropriate sub-committees and the Senior Leadership Team as necessary	An EDI Steering Group provides scrutiny and oversight at senior levels	Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Clear committee reporting line established and followed EDI reports presented to University's Resources and People Committees	Action to commence The inaugural meeting of the reconstituted Steering Group is scheduled to take place in April 2026

Address gender inequalities

	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
31.	Sustain resourcing to ensure the University's ongoing support for gender equality through the	The Athena Swan Charter provides a structured and progressive framework for identifying, reviewing and improving the experiences of female staff (in terms of representation, progression and success), whilst considering intersectionality	Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Ongoing success of achieving Athena Swan awards across the institution All Schools, Faculties and Departments maintain or improve Award received	Action ongoing All schools and departments continue to be resourced to ensure they are active in their Athen Swan journeys. Currently all schools have their Athena Swan (AS) award, except for School of Medicine which is a

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	Athena Swan framework	The University has held an Athena Swan institutional Bronze Award since 2013 and a Silver Award since May 2023. The Silver Award specifically recognises significant commitment and progress towards gender equality				<p>relatively new school and is accumulating data to apply.</p> <p>At the same time, the University is trying to transition from school submissions to Faculty submissions.</p> <p>The School of Nursing and Paramedic Science recently received an Athena Swan Departmental Gold award, making them the first nursing school in the UK to achieve this. Ulster University has also completed the pilot scheme for PTO Athena Swan, winning its first Bronze PTO Athena Swan award, with the Chief People Officer's office achieving their first Athena Swan PTO Silver award in March 2026.</p>
32.	Implement the Athena Swan Action Plan	The Athena Swan Action plan is an integral part of our Silver Charter Award. The plan sets out to	2023-28	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Action Plan implemented	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>The Athena Swan Committee (ASC) is</p>

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		address gender inequalities and embed inclusive cultures in line with the Athena Swan Charter commitments				meeting regularly (4 times a year) to keep on track of the University's activities Athena Swan and EDI in general, including the University's Athena Swan action plan. It gets updated and fed-back to the co-chairs of the ASC during every meeting
33.	Re-apply for Diversity Mark Award	The University has been a member of Diversity Mark since May 2022. In December 2022, Ulster University was awarded Bronze Diversity Mark accreditation in recognition of its commitment to creating an inclusive and diverse workplace, through a series of planned activities (a SMART action plan)	June 2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Diversity Mark SMART Action Plan implemented Diversity Mark Accreditation renewed	Action ongoing Ulster University submitted a Diversity Mark (DM) application to renew the DM accreditation with three new targets to develop in the next two years: We will establish a Carer's Network for staff and students over the next 12 months. We will develop and deliver an Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) training and awareness programme over the next two years with 30% staff and students engagement to help us achieve our goal of increasing confidence in recognising, reporting and

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						<p>responding to Gender Based Violence.</p> <p>We will increase male representation in professional services roles at grades 4, 5 and 6 from 31% to 40% over the next two years 9% increase to help us achieve our goal of address the underrepresentation of men in clerical and mid-level professional roles.</p> <p>This award is a 'Mark of Progress' that publicly declares a commitment to building a more diverse and inclusive workplace to benefit all employees. The submission includes updates on the original targets for gender equality through Athena Swan and addressing VAWG, the inclusion of new targets to reflect the new EDI Team and structure, and current good practice across the institution</p>
34.	Review the availability of childcare facilities on or	Ulster University does not currently offer childcare as an on-site service provision to staff or students. We	2025 to 2026	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Review completed and paper submitted to the Senior Leadership Team	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>Ulster University established a Childcare Working Group in</p>

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	<p>near campuses</p>	<p>have convened a Childcare Working Group within the University to determine the feasibility and practicability of childcare facilities for students and staff at Ulster. This Group is overseeing a number of current activities which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • running a staff and student survey this autumn to help scope current internal demand; • exploring options with a number of childcare providers located close to each of our campuses to determine the feasibility of subsidised provision; • considering an in-house provision, although recognising that the current childcare market is beset with some challenges in relation to workforce; and • exploring with other local employers whether any collaborative arrangements could be enacted to enable more sustained long-term provision 				<p>November 2024 to assess the feasibility of providing childcare support for staff and students. The group examined childcare provision in other Northern Ireland HE institutions, availability of suitable campus space, local community childcare options, and responses from a university-wide childcare survey.</p> <p>A paper was submitted to to the Chief People Officer in November 2025 with the outcomes of the survey and the recommendations following the consultation exercise. Key findings of the survey (716 respondents) indicate strong demand for childcare support. The majority face high weekly childcare costs, most receive no financial assistance, and around 88% would use an on-campus facility if available. Financial assistance is the second-most valued form of support.</p>
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						Based on the evidence, the Working Group concludes that while a university-wide on-campus childcare facility is currently not feasible, meaningful support can still be provided. This includes reintroducing salary sacrifice for staff childcare costs and exploring partnership proposals, particularly a viable offer from a local child provider to establish a self-funded daycare and preschool facility on the Coleraine campus
35.	Implement Green Dot Campaign	Green Dot is an active bystander training programme for staff and students to creating a safe and supportive environment for all students and staff. The Green Dot Campaign aims to empowers individuals within our community to address unwanted sexual experiences, gender-based violence, domestic abuse and harassment.	2025-2027	Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Increased number of staff and student attending the Green Dot training from the current number of 1300 up to 4000 in three years. Increased number of participants (students and staff) attending the Green Dot Train the Trainer programme from the current number of 50	Action ongoing As at 31 March 2026, a total of 2,699 participants have completed Green Dot Workshops (2,023 Students and 676 staff). In terms of feedback – over 99% stated they would now have the tools to intervene (1,228 from 1,236 respondents) A total of 95 staff and students have completed ‘Train the Trainer’

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				Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan University Provost	participants to 150 in three years	
36.	Develop and implement a Transgender framework of good practice at UU to support Transgender Staff and Students	The Policy on Equality for Transgender Staff and Students was last updated in 2017. However, as current legislation in Northern Ireland continues to be subject to scrutiny due to the need for an updated and fit for purpose legislation, at this point in time the University plans to develop a framework of good practice and guidance to supporting Transgender staff and students and those transitioning	2025-2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Quality and Student Experience	Transgender Code of Practice and Guidance Framework developed, agreed and implemented across the institution Transgender and non-binary awareness training delivered for students and staff	Action ongoing As part of the ECNI consultation on “The meanings of ‘sex’, ‘men’, ‘women’ and ‘gender reassignment’ in equality and allied legislation in Northern Ireland, the University submitted a response in September 2025. The University also carried out a preliminary review of potential impacts of the ‘Change of Name Policy’ regarding gender and marital status. This review will conclude and an update will be provided in the next reporting period
37.	Identify opportunities for, and support delivery of, development	Aurora is a unique leadership development programme for women and is delivered over an 8-month period. It combines 4 interlinked development	Ongoing	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	8 spaces sponsored each year on Aurora. Provide participants with a positive experience of leadership and inspire	Action ongoing Ulster University EDI and People Development funded 16 women for the Advance HE Aurora leadership programme.

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	and engagement options for women (such as, Aurora, Wo/men's Network)	<p>days; two action learning sets; self-directed learning and in-house mentoring.</p> <p>Aurora is higher education's most renowned leadership development initiative for women. Run as a collaboration between Advance HE in conjunction with higher education institutions and advocates - known as Aurora Champions - it addresses the under-representation of women in leadership positions. Aurora is a leadership ignition journey, inspiring women to aspire and achieve leadership positions within higher education</p>			them to recognise their talent and capabilities and support them to aspire and achieve leadership positions within higher education	The programme this year ran at the University from October 2025 to March 2026. An event to celebrate 10 years of Aurora took place on 17 October 2025 in Coleraine
38.	Continue to implement the Returning Carers' Scheme (RCS)	The Scheme was set up to supporting staff both academic and professional, technical and operational who are carers returning from their leave with opportunities of their choosing that can potentially advance their career prospects	2025-2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Increased by 25% the number of eligible participants of the scheme (currently 44 people awarded in the last 12 months)	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>This scheme opens for application twice a year for carers returning from their leave with opportunities of their choosing that can potentially advance their career perspective once it is approved by their Heads of School or department and a designated panel.</p>

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						<p>The RCS has been continuously supporting staff in both academic and Professional, Technical and Operational (PTO) roles, 9 people successfully applied for the RCS funds between the reporting period. Additionally, 8 people applied towards the end of the reporting period. 1 applicant withdrew due to ill health and the remaining 7 were successful with their application</p>
39.	Develop Carers' Policy	The development of a Carers' Policy is a fundamental step forward advancing our gender equality commitments	2025-2027	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	<p>Carers' Working Group established and Terms of Reference agreed</p> <p>Carers' Policy developed and implemented</p> <p>Ulster University Carers Network established</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>An initial call for staff and students to get involved in the Carers' Network was issued November 2025 with more than 140 members signed up to mailing list by end February 2026.</p> <p>A pre-Launch engagement for Network members was held on campus 20 February 2026 with approximately 15 staff and students in attendance, and online engagement for</p>

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						<p>Network members was held in February 2026 with approximately 22 staff and students in attendance.</p> <p>The Carers' Network officially launched across each NI campus location in March 2026, with guest speakers including members of the University's Senior Leadership Team, and staff and student beneficiaries of the Returning Carers Scheme sharing their experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast 10 March 2026 (approximately 32 attendees) • Derry~Londonderry 11 March 2026 (approximately 15 attendees) • Coleraine 12 March 2026 (approximately 20 attendees)
Advance race equality						
	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress

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<p>40.</p>	<p>Focus on advancing race relations across the University via Advance HEs Race Equality Charter</p>	<p>Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter helps institutions in their work to identify and address the barriers facing Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and students, while also providing a framework for action and improvement</p> <p>The University is committed to advancing Race Equality</p>	<p>2024 – 2025 for initial REC development</p> <p>Race relations work - ongoing</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Advance HE Race Equality Charter Award(s) achieved</p>	<p>Action completed</p> <p>The University was awarded a Race Equality Charter Bronze Award from Advance HE in February 2026. A detailed, evidence based, 5-year Race Equality Action Plan was submitted as requirement of this Award application, and is now being implemented</p>
<p>41.</p>	<p>Develop, refine and implement the University’s Advance HE Race Equality Charter Action Plan(s)</p>	<p>The development and implementation of the University’s Race Equality Charter Action Plan(s) will set out SMART objectives to proactively advance racial and ethnic equality at the organisation for staff and students.</p> <p>The University is committed to advancing Race Equality</p>	<p>2028</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>Race equality action plan developed, refined and implemented</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>Ahead of the Bronze application submission to Advance HE in November 2025, a comprehensive, five-year, SMART race action plan was developed focusing on seven priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Unrest and Rapid Response • Reporting, Structures and Data • Curriculum • Reporting Mechanisms • Cultural Literacy • Sense of Belonging • Race Charter Communications

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						<p>The final five-year Race Equality Charter action plan was equality screened in March 2026 (Screened Out).</p> <p>Delivery of the Race Charter action plan commenced March 2026 with early action delivery including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of an institutional civil unrest / crisis response template, aligned to the University's corporate risk register, aimed at improved support for staff and students facing racism during periods of civil unrest across the region.• Development of individual risk assessment for staff, to be used in the event of staff facing social racism (off campus).• Early development of Race Charter communications strategy to promote and celebrate impact of action plan delivery to staff and students
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						<p>during five-year award period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling the reinstatement of the internal Race Charter Committee to oversee action plan delivery and sustain momentum on race relations (planned for April 2026). <p>The Race Equality Charter Action Plan February 2026 will be included in a public policy screening consultation exercise that is scheduled to launch on 1 April 2026</p>
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Advance age equality

	Enabling Action	Rationale	Timescale	Accountability	Success Measure	Progress
42.	Sustain resourcing to ensure the University’s ongoing support for age equality through gaining the Age-Friendly University	The Age-Friendly University Global Network Membership promotes age equality by engaging with the ten principles of the age-friendly university The University is committed to age equality	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Become a member of the Age-Friendly University Global Network	Action completed The University secured membership of the Age-Friendly University Global Network in 2025. Membership recognises the University's commitment to promoting positive and healthy ageing, and to enhancing the lives of older members

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	Global Network Membership (AFUGN)					of the community through innovative educational programs, research agendas, curriculum development, online education, health and wellness activities, arts and culture programs and civic engagement opportunities
43.	Develop and implement an Age Equality Action Plan in line with AFUGN membership Implement the actions within the plan	An Age Equality Action plan will set out actions to promote age equality The University is committed to age equality	2025	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	Age Equality Action Plan in place and actions implemented	Action ongoing Ulster University has been an active contributor to Business in the Community NI's Age Positive Workshops, which are informing the development of our Age Friendly Action Plan to support age inclusion across the University. Two staff focus groups have been held, and the action plan is now in development. It will incorporate Age-Friendly University Global Network (AFUGN) principles and forthcoming renewal requirements. It highlights an organisational shift towards a life stage approach, recognising that people's needs, capacity and aspirations change across their lives rather

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							than in a linear or age based way
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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 2025-26 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:

Not applicable.

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*):

Not applicable.

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 2025-26 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

Yes, organisation wide

Yes, some departments/jobs

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- 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:

5. Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 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 2025-26 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 Corporate Strategy, People, Place and Partnerships: Delivering Sustainable Futures for All, seeks to place equality of opportunity and enhanced

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participation at the heart of the University's culture and operational activities. Regular equality updates were provided to the to the University's Senior Leadership Team, People Committee and Resources Committee.

Equality action plans/measures

7. Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions
completed:

8

Actions ongoing:

31

Actions to
commence:

4

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

The Equality Scheme Action Plan was finalised and implemented during the reporting period. Therefore, a limited number of actions were completed, as follows:

- Action 2: Develop and implement a refreshed equality scheme action plan, through consultation, to ensure that the institution is addressing equality issues holistically
- Action 9: Complete the Triennial Article 55 Review (For period 7 February 2022 – 6 February 2025)
- Action 19: Streamline Trade Union engagement with the screening process and policy development through the joint Trade Unions policy forum
- Action 20: Continue to raise awareness of the importance and requirement to collect equal opportunities (EO) data and the purposes for which it is used. Complete an EO data re-monitoring exercise
- Action 24: Update mandatory EDI training for all staff
- Action 25: Support understanding and adherence to the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Action 40: Focus on advancing race relations across the University via Advance HE's Race Equality Charter
- Action 42: Sustain resourcing to ensure the University's ongoing support for age equality through gaining the Age-Friendly University Global Network Membership (AFUGN)

8. Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period (points not identified in an appended plan):

The Equality Scheme Action plan was finalised and implemented during the reporting period. Completed actions will be removed from the Action Plan, and new or updated actions added.

9. In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

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- 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 2025-26 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:

Ulster University 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.

As part of the policy development and equality screening processes, Trade Union representatives are engaged with at the early stages.

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, we facilitated a focus group consultation event with Disabled Litigants, in conjunction with Disability Action, in regard to 'A charter for the effective participation and communication between solicitors and litigants in person in Northern Ireland'. This was particularly unique in that the Charter was co-produced between Ulster University, members of the Law Society NI and the Litigant in Person Reference Group, with a design group comprised of academics, solicitors, litigants in person, McKenzie Friends and other people with lived relevant and/or professional experience. The involvement of these partners was part of a Human Centred Design

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process to develop a draft Charter for solicitors and litigants in person in family and civil proceedings. These participants are not designated public authorities and the Charter is **not an Ulster University policy** but was developed in conjunction with the University.

12. In the 2025-26 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 Staff Networks during equality screenings, using Microsoft Teams and email communications.

13. Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14. Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

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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):

25

16. Please provide the **number** of assessments that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

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 on 8 May 2025 with regards to the following that were screened between November 2024 to April 2025:

1. Fraud Management Policy
2. A charter for the effective participation and communication between solicitors and litigants in person in Northern Ireland
3. Accident/Incident Reporting and investigation procedure
4. Control of substances hazardous to health procedure
5. Measuring and monitoring of occupational hazards procedure

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6. Personal protective equipment procedure
7. Pressure systems procedure
8. Stress management (work well assessments) procedure
9. Work equipment procedure
10. Draft Equality Scheme Action Plan

The consultation period closed on 8 August 2025. A summary of feedback provided and action taken is available on the University's [consultation web page](#).

A policy consultation exercise was launched on 5 November 2025 with regards to the following that were screened between May to September 2025:

1. Children and Young People on University Premises
2. Ionising Radiation Procedure
3. Lone Working Procedure
4. Portable Appliance Testing Procedure
5. Risk Assessment Procedure
6. Policy on Research Involving Human Tissue
7. Decision to Cease Theatre Operations at the Riverside Theatre
8. Student Academic Integrity and Student Academic Misconduct Procedure
9. Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal: Centre for Food and Drug Discovery (CFDD)
10. Severe Weather Policy
11. The Cognitive Analytics and Digital Robotics Innovation Centre (CADRIC)
12. Compulsory Compliance Training (CCT)
13. Student Complaints Procedure
14. Consumer Protection (Curriculum) Policy
15. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The consultation period closed on 13 February 2026. A summary of feedback provided and action taken is available on the University's [consultation web page](#).

18. Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*Tick one box only*)

Yes

No concerns were raised

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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Following a concern raised by consultees, we updated our screening pro-forma for 'A charter for the effective participation and communication between solicitors and litigants in person in Northern Ireland'. This was to provide further clarity on the screening decision, but did not change the screening decision. All consultees were provided with the updated screening pro-forma. A summary of feedback provided and action taken is available on the University's [consultation web page](#).

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19. Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

Yes

No

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20. From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*Tick one box only*)

Yes

No, already taken place

No, scheduled to take place at a later date

Not applicable

Please provide any details:

The EDI team carried out two re-monitoring exercises within the reporting period.

This work had been postponed previously in anticipation of revised Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI) Monitoring Guidance and enhanced capabilities of the software used by the University, PeopleXD.

The purpose of both exercises was to encourage staff to check and update their Equal Opportunities (EO) records, thereby improving the accuracy of the EO monitoring data held on the University's HR database.

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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 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

Positive impacts were anticipated or observed for the following categories of people in regard to the following policies **revised** during this reporting period:

Risk Assessment Procedure

Age, Men and Women generally

Student Academic Integrity and Student Academic Misconduct Procedure

Racial Group

Positive impacts were anticipated for the following categories of people in regard to the following **new** policies:

A charter for the effective participation and communication between solicitors and litigants in person in Northern Ireland

Disability, Dependants, Men and Women generally

Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal: Centre for Food and Drug Discovery

Racial Group, Age, Sexual Orientation, Men and Women generally, Disability, Dependants

Severe Weather Warning Policy

Age, Men and Women generally, Disability, Dependants

The Cognitive Analytics and Digital Robotics Innovation Centre (CADRIC)

Racial Group, Age, Men and Women generally, Disability

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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, the 12th Article 55 Review, the development of the Equality Scheme Action Plan and the Race Equality Action Plan.

EO and hourly pay data in relation to Full Pay and Full Pay Relevant staff were used in Gender, Disability, Ethnicity and intersectional pay gap analyses and development of the University's emerging Pay Gap Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

The EDI Team completed 2 remonitoring exercises during the reporting period, to improve the accuracy of our equality (EO) information.

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 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Training

Refreshed mandatory equality training (EDI Compulsory Compliance Training - CCT) was reinstated in October 2025, following the implementation of a new staff learning platform (Evolve). All CCT is monitored on an ongoing basis by the CCT Governance Group, in line with the University's [CCT Policy](#). At the end of the reporting period, 94.7% of current staff had successfully completed the EDI CCT.

The Equality Scheme was disseminated at least eleven times during the reporting period, linked in the introductory section of the training schedule communications and in the Equality Screening of Policies consultations.

The University's Equality Scheme is located on a dedicated webpage on the EDI website. 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 refreshed content of the online Disability Awareness module was disseminated to staff during the reporting period. This has been redeveloped into an online guidance document, where staff are able to record that they have read and

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understood the guidance. This enables EDI to capture information about the overall completion rate.

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).

Four 'Introduction to Section 75 and Equality Screening' online training sessions were offered to staff, along with four 'The Disability Duties and the University's Disability Action Plan' sessions.

Two bespoke sessions on web content accessibility were delivered to the University's Marketing and Communications Team and to Senior Managers (via the Senior Managers Cascade). The briefing to Senior Managers was disseminated to all staff.

Assessing access to information and services

Staff in the EDI Section attended ECNI training and events throughout the reporting period, including Equality and AI at Work, Equality Case Law Update, Reasonable Adjustments – Developing Good Practice, Age Equality at Work, FETO, and Article 55. The University's EDI Unit engaged regularly with the Equality Commission for advice, signposting and to keep up to date with any developments or changes to practices.

Using post-training surveys and polls or chat bar functionality on Microsoft 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.

The EDI Section implemented a compulsory compliance training online module via our Learning Management System (Evolve), providing the essential introductory toolkit to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Ulster University. This provides a high-level introduction to the Section 75 and Disability duties, along with NI anti-discrimination legislation.

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Feedback from Disability Equality and Reasonable Adjustments Training shows the training effectively raises awareness, understanding and positive attitudes towards disabled people by equipping staff with practical knowledge and skills. Participants reported a clearer understanding of disability issues and legislation, increased confidence in addressing barriers through reasonable adjustments, and improved awareness of inclusive communication. Attendees highlighted the accessible delivery, practical examples and relevance to their roles, describing the session as “informative” and “demystifying”.

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

26. Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2025-26, 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. Silktide in association with Socitm have been running an [accessibility league for Universities](#) in the UK, 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, the University 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 continued to take 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, the Centre For Quality Enhancement, and the Learning Enhancement Directorate (based on Universal Design for Learning principles).

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27. How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here:

1

The ECNI received a Paragraph 10 Complaint directly from a member of the public in June 2025. The complaint alleged that the University failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme in relation to the screening of its Decision to Cease Theatre Operations at the Riverside Theatre, Coleraine.

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The ECNI's Statutory Duty Investigation Committee considered this matter at its meeting on 3 December 2025 and decided that the complaint had not been made in accordance with statutory criteria of Paragraphs 10 (4) (a) and (b). Therefore, the Committee decided **not to investigate further**.

Section 3: Looking Forward

28. Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The next review is scheduled in 2028.

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)*

- Complete a review of the policy development process and submit a report to the University's Senior Leadership Team. Recommendations within this report will aim to raise policy owners' awareness and understanding of our Equality Scheme commitments, particularly in regard to screening. This is likely to include a revised (targeted) approach to Equality Scheme and S75 training, via our Learning Management System.
- Review of the University's EDI Operational Plan, and associated Action Plan, in accordance with the University's 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 and the Disability Duties, 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 (2025-26) reporting period? *(Please tick any that apply)*

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

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

3. The following table details the actions in the University’s Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2022-2027, which sets out how the University will encourage positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in University and Public life through a series of cross-functional and unique actions.

1. Actions to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress during the reporting period 01.04.25 – 31.03.26
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	Action ongoing Awareness of the University’s DAP will be measured in the 2026/2027 Staff Disability Awareness Survey and this can be reported on in the next reporting period.
1.2		Develop an online module, accessible on the LMS LEARN training platform for staff, in relation to the Disability Duties	All staff complete module on the Disability Duties and the DAP.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2023	Action ongoing This training will be further developed and migrated to the new training platform,

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		and the University's DAP.				Evolve in the next reporting period.
1.4	On 1 June 2022, Ulster University was one of the first of three organisations to achieve 'Disability Positive AAA*' accreditation from Employers for Disability, in recognition of the work the University has undertaken in implementing a wide array of practical measures to attract and retain employees and service users with disabilities. The audit completed during this exercise provided valuable feedback on a small number of areas where action is needed. Disability Positive Accreditation lasts for three years	Reapply for Employers for Disability (EFDNI) Disability Positive AAA* Accreditation. Disabled staff and students participate in 'Disability Pride' month.	Recommendations arising from Disability Positive Audit implemented. Staff achieve individual Disability Positive accreditation on completion of bespoke EFDNI training. Disability Positive Audit completed and submitted. University's Disability Positive AAA* accreditation is maintained.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer Caroline McMenamin EDI Section Lead (Disability and Age)	2025	Action ongoing The University is currently applying for Employers for Disability (EFDNI) Disability Positive AAA* Re-Accreditation.

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2. Actions to encourage people with disabilities to participate in University life						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress during the reporting period 01.04.25 – 31.03.26
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><u>Belfast Community Scholarships</u> were launched in 2021.</p> <p>The <u>Medical Education Scholarships</u> 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>	<p>Aidan O’Kane Director of Advancement and Alumni Engagement</p>	<p>Annual</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>This year the University awarded 31 of 117 (36.3%) applicants with an Inspire Scholarship: 21 at £9k, and 10 at £6k.</p> <p>15 of the 117 applications were in receipt of DLA or PIP.</p> <p>6 of these 15 were successful in their application. (Note: DLA or PIP was not the sole criteria and students received a score and were ranked based on each of the Widening Access and Participation (WAP) criteria met).</p>

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<p>2.2a</p>	<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 (<u>Breaking down barriers for disabled people in employment</u>, 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>Action ongoing</p> <p>The Graduate Boost Programme continues to deliver strong strategic impact in supporting disabled graduates into employment. The third cohort, launched in January 2026, comprises 13 participants undertaking 15-week internships with inclusive employers, alongside completion of a 15-credit postgraduate module. The programme remains in progress, with early indications suggesting that around 30% of participants will secure job offers upon completion, demonstrating its effectiveness in addressing barriers to highly skilled employment. This is particularly significant given the persistently lower employment rates and outcomes experienced by disabled graduates compared to their peers. DfE has confirmed continuation of the programme into the 2026/27 academic year, underlining both its success to date and</p>
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						<p>its ongoing strategic value. Central to this impact is the intensive support and mentoring provided to both graduates and employers, which strengthens pathways into sustainable employment outcomes.</p>
2.2b		<p>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.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of ring-fenced posts for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>2022 - 2027</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>Following the most recent review, it was recognised that achieving this objective required a stronger focus on establishing robust foundations to ensure a more sustainable outcome. Prior to considering the ringfencing of roles, it was necessary to review the accessibility of the recruitment process in its entirety.</p> <p>Key actions taken include:</p> <p>Reviewing recruitment accessibility: A holistic review of the end-to-end recruitment process to identify barriers and opportunities to improve accessibility.</p> <p>Introduction of a new applicant landing site: Launched in January 2026,</p>

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					<p>this site provides comprehensive information to support candidates throughout the recruitment journey.</p> <p>Enhanced applicant guidance: A strong emphasis has been placed on supporting applicants through clear guidance on completing applications and on the availability of reasonable adjustments, among other supports.</p> <p>Engagement with external benchmarking initiatives: The University has signed up to the Open Doors scheme with BITCNI. The Head of Resourcing is an active member, enabling benchmarking and collaborative working with other organisations. It is anticipated that the learning gained through these actions will support the University in meeting this objective in a more meaningful way, by establishing a framework for informed and conscious decision-making.</p>
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<p>2.3</p>	<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>	<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.</p>	<p>Staff participate in the programme, with a view to developing a tailored version of the programme that can be implemented at UU.</p>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p> <p>Caroline McMenamin, EDI Section Leader (Disability and Age)</p>	<p>2022 - 2027</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>During the reporting period, we received no expressions of interest in participating in this programme.</p>
<p>2.4</p>	<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</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</p>	<p>Working Group established within Year 1.</p> <p>Written Strategy, Action Plan and evaluation methods endorsed by the SLT (Years 2 –</p>	<p>Professor Odette Hutchinson Pro-Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Student Experience</p> <p>Dr Roisín Curran Interim Head - Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (CHERP)</p>	<p>2022 - 2027</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>11/12 wellbeing and belonging projects and Institutional Guidance have been completed, supported by 52 Wellbeing Leads and 541 engagements across 16 network events. The Projects are now integrated into institutional systems, including</p>

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	<p>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>UU by developing a Strategy and Action Plan over the life cycle of the University's DAP.</p>	<p>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>Andy Jaffrey Head of Office for Digital Learning</p>		<p>Student Success delivery reaching 8,010 students in 2025–26, while the Staff Practice Hub has recorded 665 users and 14,699 visits.</p> <p>Four sessions to celebrate Digital Accessibility Awareness Day in May 2025 with 50 staff in attendance. Using Blackboard Ally to support accessible design; Designing accessible presentations, audio and video; Designing accessible communication, social media and online events.</p> <p>Four Ally accessibility clinics to support staff understanding around Ally reports.</p> <p>Nov 2025 an adapted JISC course was launched called <u>Digital Accessibility: The Foundations on Evolve</u> for all staff.</p> <p>Feb 2025 a microsite to support staff around designing accessible content was lunched called <u>Digital Accessibility in the Curriculum</u>.</p>
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						<p>Collaborated with marketing have updated content on their webpage, as well as an accessible PPT template for staff.</p> <p>03 March 2026 EDI CoP organised a Digital Accessibility event incorporating student voice sharing their experiences within UU with 38 staff.</p> <p>The EDI Toolkit has built an EDI CoP with over 150 members across UU. Since the launch there have been three F2F events across all campuses and six online events with over 200 staff.</p> <p>To compliment the toolkit a fully online short programme has been co-designed with academic colleagues and international students that explores key concepts in supporting international students within participants contexts – <u>Introduction to Teaching International Students</u></p> <p>UDL approaches and language are now commonly used in student assignments</p>
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						to design for inclusive and accessible teaching and learning practices. The UDL framework is aligned to the PSF across the course. The overall marks have increased in terms of the pass rate this term.
2.6	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>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>	Clare Jamison University Secretary	2022-2027	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>During the reporting period, the University included a welcoming statement within its recruitment processes for new external lay members and staff members of Council, explicitly promoting equality of opportunity. The Council was particularly keen to strengthen the diversity of its membership and therefore actively encouraged applications from individuals from underrepresented groups. These included women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals, disabled people, and applicants from across the full range of grades, roles, and campus locations.</p> <p>To support this objective, the University advertised Council</p>

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						vacancies across a wide range of platforms, including Ulster University’s Section 75 Consultee List and relevant equality networks. Recruitment information was made available in accessible formats on request, ensuring that the process was inclusive and accessible to all prospective applicants.
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 and the Access to Work Programme.</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>Caroline McMenamin EDI Section Leader (Disability and Age)</p>	2022	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>This action is still under review.</p> <p>Work continued for the development of a Reasonable Adjustment Guidance document, in collaboration with key stakeholders. The team provided ongoing individualised support to staff and line managers across Faculties and Departments, giving advice on reasonable adjustment and the University process. The EDI team also hosted the ECNI and EFDNI session on ‘reasonable adjustments in the workplace’.</p>

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<p>2.9</p>	<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</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 and Student Experience</p> <p>Elaine Hartin Chief Strategy and Finance Officer</p>	<p>2022-2023</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>Working with Digital Services, the Student Wellbeing team launched a new 'RAR Distribution SharePoint Site' to support staff in accessing important information to support our disabled students when required.</p> <p>School and professional services RAR Administrators were appointed, to facilitate centralised access to the list of students with RARs across all programmes within the School.</p> <p>To support the implementation of the updated RAR distribution process, the Head of Student Support, along with Digital Services staff provided live demonstrations of the system to relevant staff.</p>
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		responsibility to fulfil RARs appropriately.				
2.10	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 barriers in accessing new buildings and facilities for staff, students and visitors at the University.	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.	Enhanced engagement between staff, students and external stakeholders. Improved digital and physical accessibility.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer Michael Fitzpatrick Director of Estates Mark Taglietti Director of Digital Services David Longstaff UU Students Union	2023 Meetings arranged as required throughout the lifetime of the Action Plan. Review of membership carried out every two years (31 March 2025 and 31 March 2027).	Action ongoing Estates Services met with the EDI Section Lead for Disability and Age and EDI advisor for Disability and Age, and remains content to engage with a Disability Advisory Forum once established. In the interim, accessibility remains a key consideration in all of our estate interventions. The forum has been reestablished and renamed The Accessibility Committee. It is led by EDI and includes representation from key departments across the University. The committee was reestablished in January 2026. Its purpose is to monitor, coordinate, receive reports on, and resolve accessibility related issues across the University. The overarching aim is to improve both digital and physical accessibility. The committee currently has two subgroups: 1. Physical Accessibility

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						<p>2. Digital Accessibility</p> <p>Furthermore, Digital Services are represented at the Accessibility Committee by Customer Services staff. Committee formed to proactively identify, coordinate, and resolve accessibility-related issues.</p> <p>Specialist AV staff are working with EDI, Student Wellbeing and Estates to develop Hearing Loop standards.</p> <p>Digital Services New Student Induction video checked by an Assistive Technology Co-Ordinator within Student Experience and Wellbeing to ensure full accessibility.</p> <p>Digital Services are developing a new library of short, step by step Panopto video guides to enhance their student and staff web pages. The aim is to help students quickly find clear, visual guidance when they need it.</p> <p>UUSU continues to support this action and there remains significant input on our Student Council through protected seats</p>
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						for students with disabilities to voice their opinions. In addition, the UUSU Disability Empowerment Network has been active throughout the year, hosting various events to raise awareness, build community, and create opportunities for Disabled students to connect and share experiences. UUSU also ran a targeted social media campaign throughout the year highlighting key awareness dates, including the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, ADHD Awareness Month, Dyslexia Awareness Week, the International Day of Sign Languages, and World Hearing Day. Proudly, in 2025 UUSU achieved Autism NI Accreditation as an employer, reflecting its commitment to inclusive workplace practices for both its staff and student membership.
2.12	The University employs an array of measures to encourage staff to share disability information, so	Encourage staff to share disability information.	Refreshed and streamlined 'Process for Making Reasonable Adjustments for	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2025 2027	Action ongoing The University has taken a range of actions to encourage staff to share and keep their disability information up to date. These actions have

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	<p>that appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made. However, our declaration rate is lower than expected compared with the local population. In 2023, 5.6% of staff declared a disability, an increase of 0.5% compared with 2018. In AY2022/23, 15.5% of students declared a disability, an increase of 5.1% compared with AY2017/18. The NI Census (2021) found that 24% of the NI population stated that at their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability.</p>		<p>Disabled staff implemented</p> <p>Enhanced monitoring of reasonable adjustments provided informs planning</p> <p>Disclosure Guidelines disseminated</p> <p>Triennial Disability Survey completed</p> <p>Disabled staff representation mirrors that of students</p>		<p>2025</p> <p>2026</p> <p>2027</p>	<p>included promotion through training sessions and staff meetings, a comprehensive communications campaign encouraging staff to update their equality data, and the sharing of a personal story from a disabled staff member highlighting the benefits of disclosing a disability in order to access appropriate support. More recently, staff were also encouraged to share or update their information through the Staff Disability Survey:</p> <p>The University’s triennial Staff Disability Survey was completed during the reporting period, receiving 56 responses. The survey enables disabled staff to confidentially share disability-related information, supports the provision of reasonable adjustments, and encourages the review and updating of equality monitoring data. Analysis is underway, with a report to follow.</p>
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3. Actions to promote both positive duties						
	Rationale	Action	Performance indicator / target	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress during the reporting period 01.04.25 – 31.03.26
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	Action ongoing We continue to promote the breadth of research expertise at Ulster University. A number of examples of articles showcasing research that impacts on disability are linked below: Article 1 Article 2 Article 3 Article 4
3.2	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	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	Improved knowledge and understanding of d/Deaf culture and an increased awareness of sign language, evidenced through feedback from participants who attend the sessions. The action will also help staff to	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer Caroline McMenamin, EDI Section Leader (Disability and Age)	2022 - 2027	Action ongoing We anticipate the passing of the Sign Language (NI) Bill 2025 in April 2026, making British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) legally recognised languages in Northern Ireland. The Bill will require public bodies to provide accessible services, and the Department for

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	<p>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 hearing loss and help promote an inclusive working and learning environment.</p>	<p>training on demand for staff.</p>	<p>communicate better with people with hearing loss and to promote an inclusive working and learning environment.</p>			<p>Communities to provide free sign language classes to deaf people under 25 and their families.</p>
3.4	<p>The completion rate of the mandatory online Disability Awareness training is 56% for current staff.</p>	<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</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>	<p>Damian McAlister Chief People Officer</p>	<p>2022 - 2027</p>	<p>Action ongoing</p> <p>Since the training has been published, in August 2025, 24 staff have completed the quiz; however, page analytics indicate wider engagement, with 114 unique viewers accessing the training and an average time spent of 19 minutes 52 seconds.</p>

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		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.				This training will be further developed and migrated to the new training platform, Evolve, and is currently included on the list of courses scheduled for transfer.
3.5	The DAP is a living document, and the actions are designed to 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).	Disseminate the DAP to all staff, students and stakeholders, with regular communications and increased visibility and accessibility of the Plan on the University's website.	All staff and students have an increased understanding of the two disability duties, evidenced through surveys and training evaluations. Staff and students engage regularly to provide updates on actions, as well as proposals to include new actions.	Damian McAlister Chief People Officer	2022 - 2027	Action ongoing Four sessions were offered to staff on 'Disability Duties' and the DAP, and the DAP is referenced throughout our EDI and Disability Awareness training. We will continue to offer these training sessions during the next reporting period.
3.6	Statutory reporting requirement.	Report progress of actions within the DAP 2022 – 2027 to	Increased engagement at a	Damian McAlister	2022 - 2027	Action ongoing

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		<p>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>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>Chief People Officer</p>		<p>Completion of related actions is reported to SLT and to the Resources and People committees.</p>
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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 this period, the EDI Unit established an Accessibility Forum (renamed the Accessibility Committee), to provide an opportunity for colleagues to give feedback and inform new actions.

The University's accessibility forum was re-established in January 2026 and renamed the Accessibility Committee. Led by EDI and comprising representatives from key departments, the committee's purpose is to:

- Monitor, coordinate, and resolve accessibility-related issues.
- Improve both physical and digital accessibility across the University.

Two subgroups were established to address,

- Physical Accessibility
- Digital Accessibility

(b) Quantitative

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

The EDI Unit also has arranged training sessions for University staff in relation to Disability Awareness. Details of courses and numbers attended are listed in Appendix 1.

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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 and/or any other changes?

No. The DAP 2022 to 2027 was launched in December 2022, following a 12-week public consultation exercise. The plan continues to be implemented during this reporting period. To date no additional steps have been added.

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 DAP has a 5-year cycle and is due for review in 2027. Given the focus of EDI in the Corporate Strategy, 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.

End of Document.