**Minutes of the EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OPERATIONAL GROUP   
Tuesday 13rd February 2018, 10.00am in MA 224, City Campus**

**Present: Apologies**

Emma Wedge - **Chair** (EW) Andrew Penco (AP)

Will Cooling – **Secretary** (WC) Jo Brake-Oakes (JBO)

Crispin Dale (CD) Tracy McCoy (TM)

Penny Welch (PW) Ruth Fairclough (RF)

Catharine Lamond (CL) Clair Jenkins (CJ)

Adam Burns (AB) Amanda Shipley (AS)

Suneeta Patel (SP) Sarah Slater (SS)

Ikenna Mirembe (IR)

Ryan Tallon (RT)

Sheila Gill (SG)

Valeria Arzenton (VA)

Jay Marshall (JM)

Hamza Shaikh (HS)

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| **2** | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**  **The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.**  EW gave an update on the progress made against updating the Equality & Diversity Committee Terms of Reference. She explained the Terms of Reference will be reviewed at its next meeting on Thursday 19th April, which will be the first led by the new Chair. As part of this review, adding the Staff Networks onto the Committee will be considered.  WC confirmed that he had ensured that the rationale for changing Accessible Toilets to Accessible and All Genders Toilets was disseminated through Geoff’s Update as requested.  SH gave an update about the problems he has encountered with booking BSL interpreters since the procedure was changed due to the new IR35 regulations. JM said that there is a meeting on the 22nd February with the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Student Forum where this will be considered in detail. SH said that he wanted to raise the issue to the Operational Group. EW confirmed that this is an issue that OVC is aware of.  **ACTION: Dean of Students to feedback to Operational Group about the conclusion of the meeting with the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Student Forum.** |
| **3** | **Chair’s Items**  EW gave an update on the University’s performance in the Stonewall WEI 2018. The University finished 62nd, which was an increase of 102 places from last year.  **ACTION: Information about the submission, as well as the feedback from Stonewall, to be discussed at the next meeting.**  EW explained that the Equality Challenge Unit will be merged with the Leadership Foundation, Higher Education Academy and Guild HE. ECU has explained that the merger should not significantly change their operations, especially due to continuity of staff. PW raised a note of caution that such mergers can lead to organisations becoming more remote from the grassroots.  **ACTION: Invite ECU to attend an E&D Operational Group Meeting**  EW and WC gave an update on the recruitment of two new staff members in the Equality and Diversity Unit. They will be recruited on Fixed-Term Contracts, with staff members encouraged to consider applying as a secondment. There was a discussion that the contracts were too short, with WC explaining that the contract lengths were dictated by the length of the funding.  WC also noted the departure of Dr Chijioke Obasi from the University, and thanked her for her work on equality and diversity. He explained that Tracy Mccoy would be her replacement as the Faculty of Arts representative on the Operational Group, and that a new election would soon be organised for the new BAME Staff Network Co-Chair. In discussion about the future of Faculty of Arts Equality and Diversity, WC noted that her responsibilities have been divided between several staff members, including CD. PW noted that the previous University Framework each Faculty should have an Associate Dean with responsible for Equality and Diversity. EW says that the framework is in the process of being revised.  **ACTION**: **University Framework to be circulated to the Operational Group** |
| **4** | **University of Wolverhampton Race and Gender Equality Survey**  WC introduced the proposed survey. He explained that the University had received permission from the Equality Challenge Unit to combine the surveys for Athena Swan, Race Equality Charter and the forthcoming ECU audit of our E&D Governance. He explained that the Race Equality Charter Survey actually covers many of the issues that we need for Athena SWAN.  SG said that she had sought feedback from people within her Faculty, and they weren’t happy about the merged survey. EW explained how the decision has been made based on feedback from academic board and staff members about staff being asked to complete surveys too frequently. It was later agreed by EW to reconsider the Survey structure.  **ACTION: EW and WC to reconsider the structure of the survey, and explore possible how to deliver a separate Race Equality Charter Survey.**  PW raised some questions about the wording of certain questions, and WC explained that these questions were set by ECU. CD raised a query about the organisation of the survey to ensure the sex/race discrimination questions aren’t too confusing. WC said he would look at this as part of the wider reconsideration of the structure.  CD asked why it was a Race and Gender Equality Survey. WC explained that this is structured to feed into two surveys based on those issues. LGBT issues are addressed through the Stonewall Workplace Equality Survey and it is anticipated that issues related to disability cannot be full surveyed until the University has decided which relevant charter-mark it wants to work towards. |
| **5** | **Policy Statement on Gender Equality**  It was agreed that all Operational Group members to provide feedback on the draft Policy Statement on Gender Equality by Tuesday 20th February.  **ACTION: Operational Group members to email feedback on the draft Policy Statement on Gender Equality to WC by 20th February.** |
| **6** | **Harassment Against Women at Universities**  WC and PW introduced the report UUK Report on Rape, Sexual Assault and Harassment in Universities, and requested feedback about how it applies to the University. EW said that it was very rare to receive a complaint about sexual harassment, and these are dealt with on a case by case basis. She explained that we work with the police to ensure that issues are dealt with. PW stressed that she felt these procedures worked well, citing the example of some recent safeguarding issues she had raised with EW, but wanted clarity about the proactive steps the University is taking to prevent harassment against women on campus.  **ACTION: ODOS to review its guidance against the Universities UK report.** |
| **7** | **Equality and Diversity Events**  WC asked for Operational Group members to promote Equality and Diversity Events, and to suggest inputs for these events. There was a discussion between SG and WC, where WC acknowledged SG’s belief that it was not necessary to organise events for Asian History Month. SH asked for the University to organise events for Deaf History Month, in addition to Deafest. It was agreed that this was investigated.  **ACTION: WC, JE and SH to develop plans for events to raise awareness of deaf and disabled history** |
| **8** | **Review of Equality Check**  WC introduced the Equality Check pro-forma, and asked for feedback from the Operational Group about how to improve the form. SG asked how routinely the Equality Check, EW responded by saying that she is concerned that it is not consistently used by all committees. It was agreed that the form needs to be amended to ensure people proactively build positive impact on equality and diversity into decision-making, and have better guidance about how to mitigate negative impact.  **ACTION: Operational Group Members to email any further ideas for revisions to the Equality Check Pro-Forma by 29TH March. WC/EW to then produce revised Equality Check form and guidance.** |