



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028



We advance  
We activate  
[birmingham.ac.uk](http://birmingham.ac.uk)

# Introduction

We believe universities are transformative institutions that open up learning to all, increase understanding and help shape a more equal society. In our pursuit of excellence, we are committed to being a fair and inclusive organisation where all members of our community can flourish and fulfil their potential; where our students, staff and leadership reflect the talent pools from which we recruit and where a diversity of experiences and perspectives is welcomed and encouraged. This commitment will always be at the heart of our academic mission and values and is integral to the People and Culture ambitions of our Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework.

## About us

One of our key values as a University is 'open'. As a global university with campuses located in the highly diverse city of Birmingham and the international education hub of Dubai, we welcome colleagues, collaborators, and students from all backgrounds and from across the world to work and study with us. Our 41,000 students and 10,000 staff are a thriving and diverse community of over 145 nationalities. We stand for tolerance, freedom of expression within the law and against discrimination.

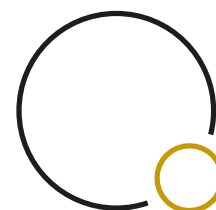
### Key terms:

**Equality:** the fair treatment of students and staff, in accordance with the UK Equality Act 2010 and the University of Birmingham Charter.

**Diversity:** the range of characteristics and experiences that make us who we are, as defined by the UK Equality Act 2010 and the University of Birmingham Charter.

**Inclusivity:** learning and working cultures that recognise and are welcoming of equality and diversity and reflect this in their practices.

**Intersectionality:** recognising that different characteristics can combine and create additional barriers to equality.



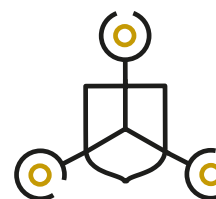
Theme 1: Challenging barriers to equality



Theme 2: Creating inclusive learning and working cultures



Theme 3: Embedding accessibility across our campuses



Theme 4: Building EDI into our organisational structures

## Our EDI priorities

We aspire to be a fully inclusive organisation that is recognised by our students, staff and wider community as empowering everyone to thrive, progress and achieve, encouraging diversity of thought and fostering greater understanding of the world around us.

To advance our vision, our EDI Strategy for 2025-2028 will build on the considerable advances made under our previous Equality Scheme, driving and delivering meaningful change across our core functions in harmony with our Birmingham 2030 ambitions.

For 2025-2028, based on analysis of our institutional data, progress to date and feedback from our community, our priority EDI areas will be:

- Reducing the success and progression gaps amongst our student population.
- Reducing our staff gender and ethnicity pay gaps.
- Increasing the diversity of staff who hold senior leadership positions.
- Recruiting, retaining and promoting a more diverse range of staff.
- Enhancing the consistency of student and staff experiences.

We have already started to put in place the necessary changes to the way in which we work to make progress in these areas. This includes allocating resources to our new EDI Centre, establishing governance structures such as the Equality Committee to ensure the University is held accountable for delivery its commitments, integrating EDI priorities into College and Professional Services plans, and enhancing data analysis to better understand our staff and student demographics. Furthermore, we are committed to making accessibility a top priority for all our staff and students.

To continue to drive meaningful change across these priority areas, our EDI Strategy is structured around four interlocking themes:

- Challenging barriers to equality
- Creating inclusive learning and working cultures
- Embedding accessibility across our campuses
- Incorporating EDI into our organisational structures

We believe that advancing our EDI activities under these four themes and their associated objectives will significantly impact our priority areas, lead to better outcomes, and support our pursuit of excellence and our Birmingham 2030 ambitions.





# Theme 1: Challenging barriers to equality

**We will be inclusive in our pursuit of excellence, creating a community in which everyone can thrive and succeed and where this is reflected in our decision-making bodies. We will take action to ensure our student and staff procedures are fair for all in terms of representation, progress, and achievement. Where there is evidence of group-based under-representation and disadvantage we will use positive action to improve outcomes.**

We will ensure the reach of our recruitment is diverse and reflects the multiple job markets our academic and Professional Services staff are drawn from. We will embed best practice in our selection processes so they are inclusive of different needs, provide all candidates with the opportunity to excel and recognise diversity of potential and excellence.

We have achieved our 2024 EDI target of 40% female grade 9 Academic staff and 30% female grade 10 Professorial staff, whilst female staff are now 44% of our grade 9 and 53% of our grade 10 Professional Services staff. In 2025-2028, we will continue to build on this progress with the aspiration of achieving parity between women and men in our senior Academic roles, recognising the challenges of specific subject areas.

We will prioritise actions across recruitment and promotion that address under-representation and barriers to progression for minoritised ethnic staff groups, extending the ethnic diversity of our early-career academic and Professional Services roles through to senior and leadership roles. We will carefully consider the complexities and varying outcomes experienced by different minoritised groups and amongst our UK and overseas staff.

We recognise that the equality landscape is changing, with an increasing focus on social exclusion as a barrier in both education and employment. In addition to our continuing work with students, we will identify ways of collecting socio-economic data for our staff and exploring and identifying ways of addressing key issues in this area.

We will further develop a whole-institution approach for equity in access and participation in education, aligning our EDI Strategy with the University's [Access and Participation Plan](#).

## Key success measures:

1. The diversity of qualified applicants (by gender, ethnicity and disability) for Academic and Professional Services posts is reflected in appointments made, within a 10% range.
2. Female Academics are 35 - 40% of grade 10 Professors (31.5% in 2024) and 45% - 50% of grade 9 Academic staff (44% in 2024).
3. Minoritised ethnic Academics are 18% of grade 10 Professors (13% in 2024)
4. Minoritised ethnic Professional Services staff increase from 8% (2024) of grade 10 staff and from 7% (2024) of grade 9 staff.
5. Our gender pay gap (13.9% in 2024) and ethnicity pay gap (13% in 2024) reduce and fall within the lowest quartile of pay gaps amongst Russell Group universities.
6. The degree awarding gap (good honours outcomes) for our students from the most-deprived backgrounds compared with students from the least-deprived backgrounds for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 awards is reduced, from 12% in 2024 to 6%.
7. The degree awarding gap (good honours outcomes) for Black compared to White students for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 awards is reduced, from 17% in 2024 to 9%.
8. The progression to employment and further study gap for our students from the most-deprived backgrounds compared with students from the least-deprived backgrounds is reduced from 6% to 3%.





## Theme 2: Creating inclusive learning and working cultures

**We will be responsive to the diverse needs of our community, celebrating and increasing understanding of the multiple factors that shape individual identities and fostering an inclusive culture that promotes a sense of belonging.**

We will continue to develop our calendar of history months and celebratory events, promoting inclusion and understanding of diverse perspectives and seeking opportunities to explore new facets of student and staff experiences.

To reflect the fast-changing student demographics on our campuses and the diverse needs of our staff, we will take action to embed diversity of needs into the development of policies, practices and activities, including improving the inclusivity of our research culture.

We will have a strong focus on improving the experience of our disabled staff and strengthening our organisational understanding of how our neurodiverse staff experience working at the University.

We will enhance the EDI understanding and competencies of our students and staff at all levels of the University and encourage meaningful engagement with EDI that supports positive culture change, offering a range of opportunities for all members of the University to expand their EDI knowledge.

Additionally, we will continue to embed EDI as a key component of our leadership development programmes and focus on developing managers' EDI skills, increasing our capacity to deliver an informed and consistent approach to EDI across the University.

### **Key success measures:**

1. Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey positive response rate to whether the University takes EDI seriously increases by 10% (from 69% in 2024).
2. Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey and National Student Survey satisfaction ratings show no more than a 5% difference between different protected characteristics.
3. Achievement of institutional Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter awards.



## Theme 3: Embedding accessibility across our campuses

**We will prioritise creating an accessible and inclusive University, encompassing our physical estate, digital presence and learning delivery. The University's Accessibility Oversight Group will coordinate this key area of activity and monitor progress across these three strands of work.**

Accessibility will be a key driver in the development of our physical estate, via our Estates Masterplan and our Campus Vision for 2025-2045. We will prioritise integrating inclusive design across our facilities to meet the diverse needs of students, staff and visitors to our campus.

Digital accessibility will be central to the development of our online content and learning materials, ensuring all students and staff can fully utilise resources.

### Key success measures:

1. Successful delivery of the annually agreed Campus Access Improvement Priority Plan.
2. Successful delivery of the University's Digital Accessibility Strategy.
3. Staff disability disclosure rate aligns with the higher education sector average (69% in 2024, compared to a sector average of 92%).
4. Achievement of Level 3 Disability Confident accreditation.



## Theme 4: Building EDI into our organisational structures

We will develop structures to holistically embed our EDI Strategy across the breadth of the University, integrating EDI into our core activities and accelerating change at local level, supported by clear reporting lines and accountabilities.

Our EDI Strategy will be contextualised within our Dubai campus and our UK academic Colleges to meaningfully address local challenges. In tandem, we will develop a cohesive delivery and reporting structure for progressing our EDI Strategy across our Professional Services directorates.

We will continue to prioritise the achievement and progression of Athena Swan awards within our academic Schools as a key means of addressing gender equality and improving staff and student experiences.

Feedback from our students and staff communities indicates representation at senior levels is a key

marker of how the University's commitment to EDI is perceived. We will take action to increase the gender and ethnic diversity of our leadership and seek opportunities to enhance organisational decision-making through diverse representation.

### Key success measures:

1. Successful development and delivery of EDI Strategy action plans for our Dubai campus and within our Academic Colleges and major Professional Services units.
2. We achieve greater diversity in our decision-making bodies and leadership forums.
3. 100% of academic Schools hold an Athena Swan gender equality award.



# Delivering our EDI Strategy

Delivery of the EDI Strategy will be underpinned by Implementation Plans at institutional-level and via local plans in Dubai, our Academic Colleges and larger Professional Services directorates.

As we implement our EDI Strategy, we will prioritise transparency and accountability, regularly communicating with our students, staff and wider community about progress, through newsletters and events and seeking views and input of stakeholders through quarterly EDI Listening Events. To ensure we remain at the forefront of EDI initiatives, we will establish an external advisory board to support and challenge our EDI work, progress and achievements.

## **Our People**

Everyone at the University has a role to play in creating an inclusive culture that supports the successful delivery of our EDI Strategy. For individual staff and students this is through inclusive behaviours and actions, such as engaging with opportunities to support and amplify positive culture change. For our University leadership, it is meaningfully modelling our institutional commitment and vision for EDI across institutional decision-making and our pursuit of excellence.

## **Our EDI Structure**

Our EDI Centre, Academic Services Student EDI Team, Academic Colleges and our Dubai campus lead on the delivery of the core EDI Strategy activities and projects for staff and students. Across our organisation, we are building an EDI structure within our Colleges and Professional Services to drive and embed the local delivery of our EDI objectives. Heads of College and Professional Services have responsibility for progressing EDI within their Colleges and Budget Centres.

## **Our EDI Governance**

Implementation of our EDI Strategy and Strategy Implementation Plan is overseen by the University EDI Committee. The Committee is led by the Provost, with membership drawn from the EDI Centre, Academic Services, College EDI Leads and Guild of Students. The Committee reports to the University Executive Board and delivers an annual report to University Council on progress against the EDI strategy objectives.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

We will publish the EDI Strategy annual report and student and staff data every year to ensure transparency and accountability of our activities and progress.

