Manchester Metropolitan University

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report
2020-2021

Human Resources and Organisational Development
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1. Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan University is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for all its communities, by tackling discrimination and striving to create a positive culture of inclusion for all. The University’s work is guided by our equality objectives (2021-25). This report presents an overview of progress towards our equality objectives and outlines priorities for 2022. A link to the Ethnicity, Gender and Disability Pay gap report is available via our Equality and Diversity website. This Report focuses on activity delivered in the 2020-21 academic year and was developed in accordance with the reporting requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and associated Public Sector Equality Duty.

The University gathers and publishes equalities monitoring data on its staff and students each year. We use this information to understand the diversity of the university community, and to identify whether there are differences in the experiences of people with protected characteristics to inform how we might address these. Equality data on staff and students within the UK higher education sector more broadly can be found in the Advance HE statistical reports.

During 2020/21 we made positive progress against our objectives, including an increase in the ethnic diversity of our senior academic staff, and a significant increase (57.9% to 71.0%) in the proportion of Black graduates in positive graduate destinations. We have enhanced our governance of EDI with a focus on distributed accountability and responsibility for EDI matters, and have seen increased engagement with the EDI agenda leading to greater awareness of local issues and action planning to address these. Our data highlight some key priorities for the University, including increasing ethnic and gender diversity at senior leadership level, and improving diversity in staff recruitment at all grades, including entry grades where we have a high proportion of ethnic minority staff. Our student data highlight the need to maintain focus on eliminating differential progression rates and awarding gaps for ethnically diverse students.

Despite not being a statutory requirement, for the second year we have published our Ethnicity pay gap and for the first year our Disability pay gap. This has helped us to recognise and measure differentials so that we can take appropriate action to close pay gaps and demonstrates our commitment to transparency with our EDI data. The University also engages actively with external accrediting bodies such as the Athena Swan and Race Equality charters.

The information contained in our annual staff and student equalities report informs our priorities, objectives and future strategy, and the associated action plans to address areas for improvement.
2. Progress towards our Equality Objectives

In March 2021 we published our four equality objectives for the period 2021-25:

1) Leadership, culture and governance
2) An inclusive student experience
3) An inclusive employee lifecycle
4) Celebrating diversity

This report reflects on the positive steps and progress we have taken during the past year, and also acknowledges that there is more to do to meet our objectives. The March 2021 Employee Voice Survey indicated that 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Manchester Metropolitan is committed to equality of opportunity for all. To increase this, we will continue to focus on our four equality objectives, ensuring they are recognised as the responsibility of all staff and students at Manchester Met.

We have worked closely with our Staff Equality Forums, EDI champions and the Student Union to embed our equality objectives within our University community. These groups provide a consultative mechanism through which we can test ideas, policies and practices, and through which issues of concern and opportunity can be raised, as well enabling colleagues, students and their allies to support each other.

2.1 Leadership, culture and governance

To provide more effective strategic leadership of our equality objectives, we revised the Terms of Reference for the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Committee, including a change of title to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Board (EDISB). The EDISB reports into UEG and the revised Terms of Reference include the introduction of annual reporting from Faculties and Professional Services on progress towards local implementation of our equality objectives. The EDISB will also guide work to develop an EDI strategy as part of the Road to 2030.

Senior support for our Staff Equality Forums was provided by eleven EDI champions from the University Leadership Forum who volunteered to be active allies, role model inclusive behaviours, strengthen engagement and demonstrate commitment at the most senior level to this agenda. The ‘Be Kind’ campaign, led by the Disability Staff Forum, was developed through this work as part of our return to campus in September. In addition, the Staff Equality Forums were supported to develop a set of key priorities, aligned with our equality objectives, for delivery during this academic year. These are focused on positive equality change and include initiatives around peer support and community, and celebration of key equalities events and festivals.

We have made excellent progress towards applying for the Race Equality Charter and aim to submit our application in Summer 2022. Significant progress has also been made in
support of our institutional renewal of the Athena Swan Bronze award which we will submit in 2023. Work on both these charter marks has catalysed EDI activity in Faculties and Professional Services and resulted in a number of new actions at a local level. In addition, we renewed our Stonewall Champion membership and joined the Business Disability Forum (BDF). We will benefit from these memberships through collaboration, growing and learning from our external networks, and providing further dedicated resources for our staff.

We are also piloting an approach to hybrid working across Professional Services, with the aim of providing an inclusive, flexible working environment. We ran consultative events with Staff Equality Forums to inform our approach, and will be undertaking a full evaluation of the impact of this to inform further developments.

2.2 Inclusive Employee lifecycle
To promote a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation we committed to developing our career pathways and talent pipeline through our diverse leadership programmes. These included funding 30 places on Advance HE’s women’s development programme, Aurora, and five places on the Stellar HE programme for future senior leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Feedback confirmed that these opportunities were valued by colleagues, and we will offer both programmes again in 2021/22. We will also review the impact of the programmes on staff progression to inform our future approach.

We have also begun to develop our wider leadership programmes by embedding EDI within them, such as the Future RKE Leaders programme which ensures participants are aware of their role in supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

There were positive academic promotions outcomes for underrepresented groups, which will complement our ongoing work towards eliminating our pay gaps and increasing senior representation. In the 2020-21 promotions round, we saw a higher proportion of eligible Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff apply for and be awarded academic promotion at Reader and Professor levels than White staff. This represents a positive shift to more proportionally representative success rates. To further support this progress, we held targeted promotion workshops for women and Black, Asian and ethnic minority academics planning to apply in 2021/22. These focused on bringing clarity and transparency to the process and sharing lived experiences from a panel of peers who had previously secured promotion.

To counteract the impact of the pandemic, we developed and rolled-out the Covid Research Recovery Fund, to support staff with protected characteristics who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Since its launch in August 2021, £100K has been allocated to 27 individuals. In addition to this, equality reporting has been included for the first time in internal research funding application processes to monitor equity across applicants. The University has created a gender equality plan to meet the requirements of research funders, which sets out our actions and commitments in relation to work-life balance, leadership, recruitment and progression, integration into research and teaching, and gender-based violence.
**Enhanced engagement** with EDI and the employee voice across the University has also been a key focus at all levels, from Faculty Executive Groups to our EDI champions who are distributed across the University. We have seen significantly enhanced engagement, collaboration, data sharing and partnership working on EDI matters. To inform development of local EDI action plans, we developed an enhanced EDI dashboard of staff data which is accessible to leaders within Faculty Executive Groups and Professional Services Directorates. Local EDI Groups will support FEGs and the Professional Services Leadership Team to develop and monitor progress on these action plans. We will continue to build on this work alongside our Staff Equality Forums to embed positive change based on what our staff and data tell us.

We are improving our EDI training for staff to meet our commitments and objectives. To date, we have updated, refreshed and republished the Equality and Diversity essentials training and developed a comprehensive plan to introduce a substantial intersectional learning and development offer. We need to increase the completion rate, currently 67%, and target the areas most in need of upskilling informed by our equality charter mark analysis and external requirements, such as the Office for Students' Statement of Expectations on preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct.

In response to our data, we commissioned an external review of our staff recruitment, selection, promotion, disciplinary and grievance processes. The review has informed the development of an action plan to enhance inclusive practice, which will also inform our Race Equality Charter Action Plan. For example, we will provide training in unconscious bias for all recruiting managers. We are already working with our recruitment partners for senior roles to diversify shortlists, and are increasingly advertising vacancies through external diversity-focused recruitment sites to reach wider recruitment pools. This work will bring benefits to all equality groups in terms of inclusive practices.

### 2.3 Inclusive Student experience

**Widening Participation**

The University has continued to demonstrate its commitment to supporting the access and success of underrepresented groups through a blend of online and face-to-face activities.

In November 2021, our flagship Widening Participation initiative, the First Generation Scholarship Programme, was awarded the Times Higher Education award for Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year, in recognition of the programme’s work in offering a complete journey of support for students whose parents have no direct experience of higher education. With 131 scholars enrolled on the programme for 2021 entry, and 421 since the programme began, we are on course to exceed the target of recruiting 1,000 First Generation Scholars by 2025.

In 2020/21, Greater Manchester Higher, a regional partnership funded by the Office for Students and led by Manchester Metropolitan University, engaged with over 9,000 unique learners from postcodes where, given GCSE attainment, progression to higher education is
low. The programme is now in its third phase and the partnership has engaged with over 25,000 target learners since it began in 2017.

The University’s five-year Access and Participation Plan includes targets to reduce degree awarding gaps. Our progress against these targets is reviewed by the Office for Students (OfS) to ensure our actions are effective. Figure 1 below indicates that we are on target for reducing these gaps for Black and Polar Q1 students, although progress reversed slightly in 2020/21, likely due to the impact of the pandemic for these cohorts.

*Figure 1: APP award gaps with targets, compared with progress against 2024/25 targets*

Inclusive Learning Communities

The Inclusive Learning Communities project (ILC) involves staff and students working together to close awarding gaps by increasing our Black, Asian and ethnic minority students’ sense of belonging and changing the way they are included in our teaching practices. As part of the ILC, the SU recruit **BAME Ambassadors** each year. The Ambassadors provide consultation and feedback on their learning experiences to Faculty Education Committees. In 2020/21 the Ambassadors developed a strong social media presence and delivered a variety of events and campaigns throughout the academic year. Their activities can be followed through Instagram (@mmubame) and their podcast, Shades of Tea.

In 2021, the BAME Ambassadors collected the Think Student ‘Best Campaign Supporting Diversity’ Award from Net Natives, a student specialist marketing group, for the **Big Change Project**. The Big Change Project involved a series of interviews between BAME Ambassadors and University staff in Faculties and Professional Services. These conversations have informed plans for ongoing positive change across the University, and the project will continue in 2022.

The Faculty of Science and Engineering introduced the ‘**Many Faces of Science and Engineering**’ campaign in 2021, which celebrates the diversity of staff, students and alumni.
Other Faculties have followed the success of this campaign and launched ‘Many Faces’ within their own areas.

### 2.4 Celebrating Diversity

During 2020/21 we celebrated or marked over twenty national and international awareness days in collaboration with our Staff Equality Forums. Membership of the Forums has continued to grow over the past year (700 members in 2021/22) due to the leadership, hard work and dedication of their Co-chairs throughout the pandemic. The staff forums will continue to be key partners in our EDI work. Led by staff, for staff, they provide support and a voice for underrepresented groups, and inform our approach to EDI across the University.

The University also supported work to quantify research activity into race and racism at Manchester Met. This work resulted in the establishment of a network for Race and Racism Studies and the submission of an application to the OfS for a project focused on the creative industries, to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups in postgraduate research (PGR).

In 2021 we introduced a new individual **Equality Champion award** in the annual Manchester Met staff awards. The award recognises and celebrates the dedication of staff who go above and beyond to progress EDI across the University. We received 30 nominations for the award, demonstrating the scale of active allies and inclusive role models we have across the organisation who make change happen at ground level and who are a crucial part of innovating EDI at Manchester Met.
3. Staff Data Overview

A link to the Ethnicity, Gender and Disability Pay gap report is available via our Equality and Diversity website.

Sections 3 and 4 are informed by our most recent equalities data for staff in post as at December 1st 2021, and for students in the 20/21 academic year. Key observations and comparisons to sector benchmarks are summarised below.

The proportion of disabled staff at the University was 7.5%, 2% above the sector average. Despite this, only 4.0% of senior Professional Services roles and 2.8% of senior Academic roles are filled by disabled colleagues. More positively, the relative rate of disabled staff being shortlisted for interview (1.4) suggests a positive impact of the Disability Confident Employer scheme we are part of which includes guaranteed interviews for Disabled candidates who meet the person specification for the role.

The proportion of Black, Asian or ethnic minority staff at the University has risen by 1.9% this year to 16.4%. This is above the sector average of 15.5%. 16.1% of our academic staff are Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority, an increase of 1.4% on the previous year, but lower than the sector average of 18%. The proportion of UK staff from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds is slightly higher than the sector at 12.5% compared with 10.8%. While the proportion of non-UK staff from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds is considerably higher than the sector at 41.2% compared with 32.3%.

Ethnic diversity at senior levels has increased this year, with 9.5% Senior Academic roles now held by Black, Asian or ethnic minority staff compared with 5.4% last year. This is still lower than the proportion in the Standard Academic population (15.8%). In Professional Services, the proportion of Black, Asian or ethnic minority staff in senior roles has fallen to 1.9% from 4.0% last year. This is much lower than the 17.1% representation in Standard Professional Services roles. Recruitment data suggest that Black, Asian or ethnic minority applicants are still less likely to be shortlisted or appointed to roles at the University compared with White applicants with relative rates of 0.71 for shortlisting and 0.71 for appointment.

While 55.1% of all staff are female, only 40.5% of Senior Academics and 39.1% of Professors are female. 47.3% of Senior Academics and 36.3% of Professors were female in 2019-20. In terms of recruitment, females have a higher likelihood of being shortlisted than males (1.11) and those who are shortlisted are more likely to be offered a role (1.15).

At Manchester Met, 8.5% of staff identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other, compared with the sector average of 6.4%. The proportions of LGBO staff in senior roles in both Academic and Professional services are similar to the proportions of LGBO staff working at more junior levels. LGBO applicants are slightly less likely to be shortlisted (with a relative shortlisting rate of 0.91 compared with heterosexual applicants), but those who are shortlisted are equally likely to be offered a role (with a relative offer rate of 1.00).
4. Student Data Overview

The proportion of disabled students at the University (13.7%) has fallen slightly since last year, and is slightly lower than the sector benchmark (14.6%). Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (34.5%), make up the largest group, which is similar to the sector average. The proportion of disabled students reporting a mental health condition at the University (32.8%), though stable year-on-year, remains higher than the average for the sector (28.6%).

For the first time, disabled students had a higher rate of progression from level 4 to level 5 (85.0%) than non-disabled students (84.2%). Similar proportions of disabled students were awarded a first or upper second class degree as non-disabled students (82.4%). Despite this, there was an 11.5% satisfaction gap in the NSS for students with Specific Learning difficulties, and a 4.3% satisfaction gap for students with all other disabilities, compared with students with no known disability.

The proportion of Black, Asian or ethnic minority students at Manchester Metropolitan (35.4%) continues to be notably higher than the sector average of 25.3%. Asian students comprise 20.3% of all our students. The rate of progression from Level 4 to Level 5 was only slightly lower for Black, Asian or ethnic minority students (83.5%) than for White students (84.8%). The lowest progression rate was for Black students (81.4%) and the highest for students of Other ethnic backgrounds (87.0%). There remains a wider gap in degree award for Black, Asian and ethnic minority students, of whom 72.7% were awarded a good honours degree compared with 87.1% of White students, resulting in an award gap of 14.4%. Our Access and Participation Plan targets for UK students aim to remove award gaps for Black and Asian students relative to White students by 2030. For UK Black students, this years’ award gap has increased slightly to 18.7%, higher than the 15.9% gap last year, but still considerably lower than the 24.5% gap in 2018/19. For UK Asian students, the gap has also increased this year to 15.8% from 12.7% last year, but remains smaller than the 18.1% gap in 2018/19.

Pleasingly, there has been a large increase in the proportion of Black alumni in positive graduate destinations this year (71.0% compared to 57.9% last year). The positive graduate outcomes rate is lowest for Asian students (57.5%).

Data on Religion and Belief show that 20.3% of students at Manchester Metropolitan are Muslim, significantly greater than the sector-wide representation level of 9.8%.

In relation to gender, the progression gap for male students was 5%, compared with 2.6% for the sector. The degree award gap was also higher for male students (6%) compared with 3.6% for the sector. Female students, however, are less satisfied, with 68.4% satisfaction in the National Student Survey, compared with 72.2% for male respondents. Female students are also slightly less likely to be in graduate level employment (68.0%) compared with male students (69.7%).
5. Key priorities for 2022

In response to this report, we will continue to progress our EDI work and ensure accountability and commitment are embedded across the University. Key actions and aims for the year ahead include:

Leadership, culture and governance

- Support the ‘Road to 2030’ strategy, with a new *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*, building on our equality objectives and incorporating our race equality priorities.

- Recruit a **Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** to facilitate the embedding of EDI across our communities, encompassing both staff and students, and a culture that enhances belonging, equity and success for all.

- Embed our revised governance structures including the re-focused *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Board*, supporting EDI delivery groups across faculties and professional services to develop and progress local action plans building on our equality objectives and tailored to local data and issues.

- Refine and modernise our approach to *Equality Impact Assessments* across the University while streamlining the process to ensure inclusion is embedded throughout.

- Introduce **inclusive leadership** training, to support managers develop their knowledge, awareness and competency to create effective, inclusive environments within which their team members can thrive.

An inclusive student experience and an inclusive employee lifecycle

We have combined these two themes to summarise our plans for the year ahead, reflecting the interconnectedness of our work with staff and students, and to reflect the approaches expected in our equality charter accreditation work.

- Launch a new suite of *equality, diversity and inclusion training*, guidance and support including sexual harassment and misconduct, tackling bias, guidance to support disabled and neurodiverse staff and students, and refreshing our Equality and Diversity e-learning essentials training.

- Continue to raise awareness and deliver communications and events in collaboration with our Staff Equality Forums.
• Continue to deliver on the Vice-Chancellor’s commitment to **improving race equality**. As a vehicle for this we will submit our institutional **Race Equality Charter bronze** award application. This will set out the findings of our detailed self-assessment on race equality for staff and students, along with a five-year action plan to address key issues identified during this process.

• Reaffirm the University’s **commitment to disability, mental health and neurodiversity inclusion**. We will renew our Business Disability Forum membership and submit our DWP **Disability Confident reaccreditation** in 2022. We will establish a new disability working group to identify and develop an action plan which will aim to remove barriers and develop key priorities.

• Continue work towards our institutional **Athena Swan Charter bronze** renewal for Spring 2023, and continue to implement our current bronze award action plan by addressing representation and gender equality across the University.

• Further inclusive, equitable approaches to **recruitment, selection, progression and development** for both our academic and professional services staff pipelines, particularly in the context of race equality.

• Intensify our efforts to address our student **awarding and progression gaps** by building clearly targeted action into our Education Strategy, reviewing curriculum content, delivery and student support, and working in collaboration with students.

• Develop a new action plan for the HR Excellence in Research Award to provide equal access to resources that support equality, diversity and inclusion in research and knowledge exchange such as how to access childcare to attend conferences, how to manage individual circumstances appropriately, and returning to work after periods of parental and caring leave.

**Celebrating diversity**

• Our five **staff equality forums** representing Gender, Race, Parents and Carers, LGBTQ+ and Disability will continue to work towards their key annual priorities in 2022. These build on the needs and experiences of the staff they represent through the sharing of ideas and expertise and providing opportunities to discuss issues as a collective.

• Continue to lead the way in celebrating and marking national inclusion dates to raise awareness throughout the year as a collective effort between staff, students and our wider communities. This will include Black History Month, Pride, Disability History Month, Time to Talk day, Disability pride month, LGBT History Month, International Women’s Day and intersectional events.