UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Equality and Inclusion Strategy

2021–2025

Introduction to the University of London

The University of London is an inclusive and diverse community of more than 50,000 students studying in 190 countries. We have campuses in London and Paris, over 100 Recognised Teaching Centres in 44 countries, students studying face-to-face and online, and more than 500,000 alumni.

The University of London is a Federation of 17 world-renowned, London-based Member Institutions and collaboration is at the heart of all our work. The University is the UK's leading provider of distance learning worldwide and uses this exceptional foundation of knowledge to deliver globally respected academic programmes through flexible and distance learning, offering students around the world life-changing access to education, whoever and wherever they are.

Our global network of students is supported by our staff and alumni who help them develop their study skills, encourage their curiosity, deepen their learning, develop their employability skills and look after their health and wellbeing, while supporting them to use the diversity of thought and experience they possess to leverage creativity and innovation.

We also have more than 3,500 students in intercollegiate halls in London, from across Member Institutions, who make use of the pastoral care and personal development programmes that we offer to help prepare them for independent life.

With a mission to transform lives through knowledge, the University of London brings benefits to society through its research in the humanities and connects enquiring minds across the world through public engagement – transcending. geographic, social, and cultural barriers.

Our commitment to equality and inclusion

The University of London was founded upon the principles of equality and has been providing an 'education for all' since it was founded in 1836. We are very proud of the fact that we were the first university to admit students regardless of their gender, race, or religion, the first to admit women to degree programme special examinations and, in 1865, the first to give students the opportunity to study our degrees anywhere across the globe.

Our commitment to equality and inclusion remains a key institutional value enshrined in our Statutes. We recognise that embracing equality and inclusion is critical to the success of the University and that we can only achieve our vision of being a world-class, forward looking, ambitious university by recruiting, supporting, and developing both students and staff from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds.

Our vision for equality and inclusion

Our vision is to be a place where everyone can access and benefit from the opportunities that higher education can provide and fulfil their potential. We believe that a strategic focus on equality and inclusion provides us with an opportunity to attract and retain high-quality staff and students from a broader range of backgrounds and support them in achieving higher levels of attainment and progression. This vision, coupled with our founding principles of "education for all" and the simple moral argument that no one should experience inequality because of who they are, is a core business imperative for us.

We recognise that to ensure fair access to educational and development opportunities, and to improve outcomes for all our students and staff, we need to focus on not only understanding and addressing the causes of structural inequality but also on transforming the organisational culture so that it enables every member of the community to feel safe, supported, valued, respected and able to realise their potential.

This requires all of us at the University to work together to create an inclusive environment where open and honest conversations on experiences of equality and inclusion are encouraged, diversity of thought and opinion is respected, and staff and students are actively supported to engage in co-creating and delivering activities that help us in addressing specific equality and inclusion challenges.
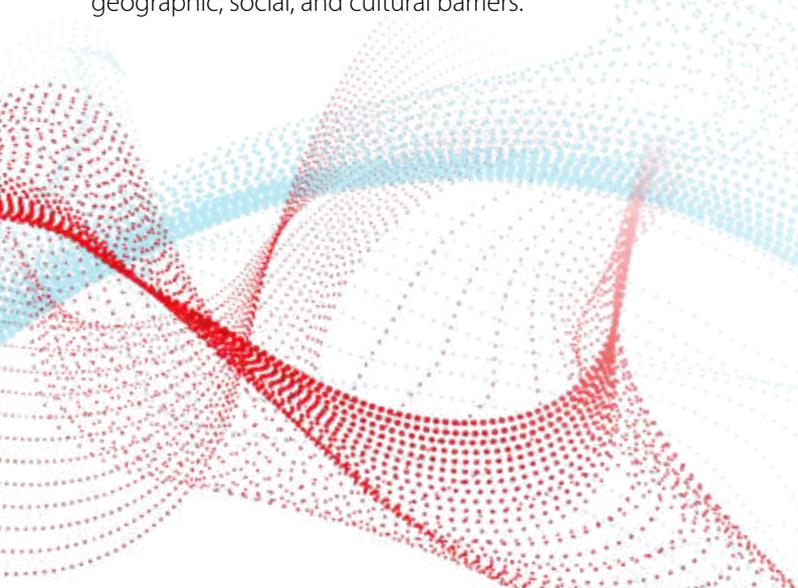
Our Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025

Our aim

The aim of our Equality and Inclusion Strategy is to support and enable the delivery of the University of London's mission, values and strategic objectives, as set out in the University Strategy **"Transforming education…Creating futures (2020-25)"**.

> "To enrich our academic work in the pursuit of excellence in education, research and knowledge exchange through collaboration with our Member Institutions; developing academic programmes, networks and partnerships that further our federation's goals across London, the UK and internationally."

The three objectives set out in the University strategy are:

1. Furthering our position as the UK's leading provider of distance learning worldwide, delivering cutting-edge programmes to increased numbers of people who can benefit most from education.

2. Stimulating innovative intellectual exchange and effective public engagement, drawing on our expertise across the University in the humanities, distance learning, careers and employability, and inclusivity/widening access.

3. Developing and continuously adapting our organisation and capacity to anticipate the university of the future.

Our ambition for equality and inclusion is:

1. To ensure that our commitment to equality, inclusion and access is a key business imperative that underpins the actions we take to transform people's lives through education.

2. To use the lens of equality and inclusion in all areas of our work with students, staff, and partners and co-create solutions to widen participation, improve access and ensure success.

3. To actively tackle racism, sexism, homophobia, religious and all other forms of discrimination and exclusion and enable our students and staff to realise their full potential.

4. To collaborate with member institutions and other partners (within London and beyond) to develop thought leadership, and innovative policy and practice, that supports us to improve equality and inclusion outcomes.

Our strategic equality and inclusion objectives:

The strategic equality and objectives that we will focus on to deliver our vision and ambition are:

1. Achieve the Race Equality Charter (Bronze) award

2. Improve the confidence of our staff and students in reporting harassment and discrimination and seeking support.

3. Adopt a systematic approach to ensuring a genuinely international curriculum.

4. Improve our students' attainment.

5. Develop an inclusive career development pathway and advancement pipeline for all our staff, including our early career academics.

Our equality and inclusion objectives and key deliverables

	Objective	Key deliverables	Senior sponsor
1	Achieve the Race Equality Charter (Bronze) award	Formally sign up to the principles of Advance HE's **Race Equality Charter** and use it as an audit and improvement tool to further develop our work to identify and address structural race equality issues.	Pro VC, Strategy, Planning and Partnerships
2	Improve the confidence of our staff and students to report harassment and discrimination and seek support	Develop and roll out a new Complaints and Compliments Policy through engagement with students and staff and organisation wide communication and training to embed the new policy and its practice. Seek regular feedback (through surveys) from students and staff on their experience of reporting and seeking support for harassment and discrimination or any challenges related to the use of the policy.	Pro VC, Strategy, Planning and Partnerships Pro VC International Teaching and Learning
3	Adopt a systematic approach to ensuring a genuinely international curriculum	Pro-actively engage with our global student population and involve them in supporting us to review our curriculum from the outside, with an international lens. To expand this approach to cover academic research activities and the Libraries and Collections.	Pro VC International Teaching and Learning Pro VC Research and Engagement and Dean of School of Advance Study
4	Improve our students outcomes	Provide appropriate and tailored support to enable students to achieve the very best in educational attainment through a focus on improving continuation rates and reducing the degree awarding gap.	Pro VC International Teaching and Learning
5	Develop an inclusive career development pathway and advancement pipeline for all our staff, including our early career academics	An agreed inclusive methodology for identifying staff with potential for progression. A development framework that encourages career ownership through increased access to opportunities and improved visibility of progression options. Proportionate and visible representation at all levels of the institution of staff currently underrepresented in senior management and leadership positions across the University.	Chief Financial Officer

We believe that through our focus on delivering and embedding work on a few most critical equality and inclusion objectives we can progress further on our journey to become an inclusive organisation that is able to provide fair and more equal opportunities and outcomes for all our students and staff.
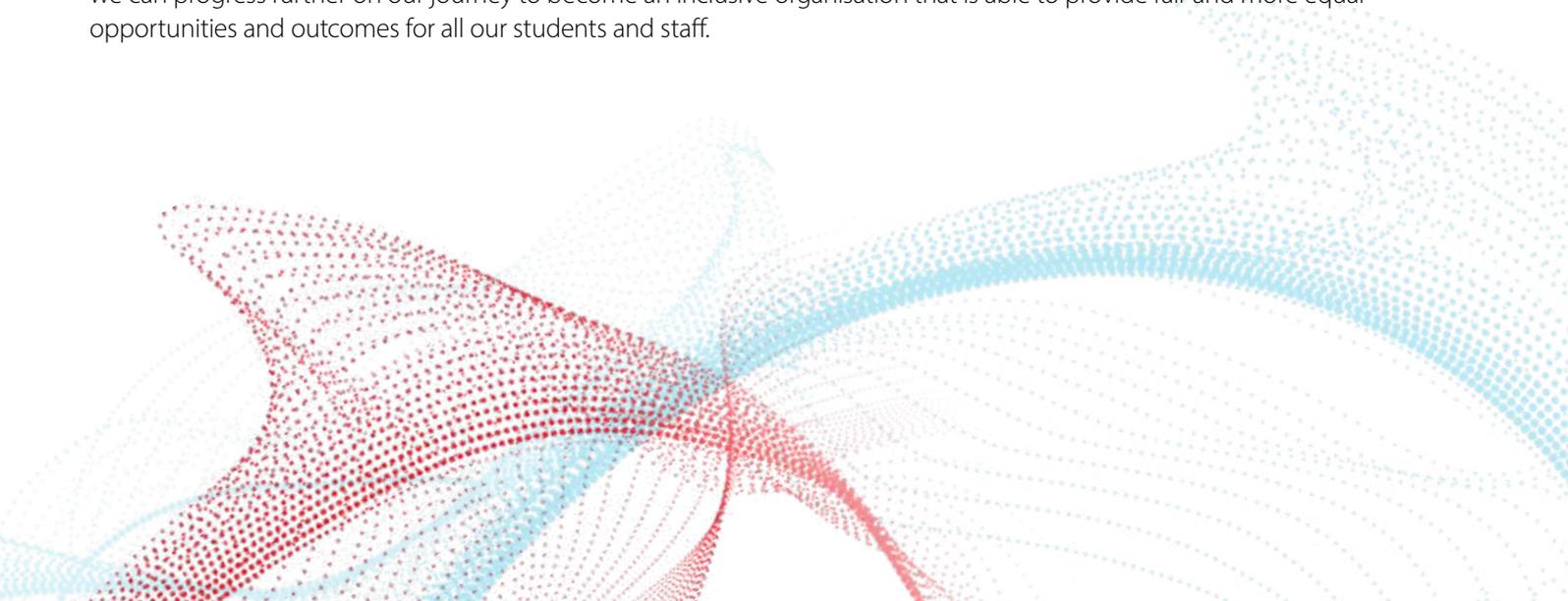
Appendix 1.

Our approach to delivering the Equality and Inclusion Strategy

1.1 Internal focus - Mainstream and embed equality and inclusion good practice to develop excellence.

Developing Excellence							
Mainstream / Embed Equality and Inclusion into our Core Functions							
Leadership and Governance	Strategy, Policy and Performance	Human Resources, Organisational Development and Organisational Culture	Academic Research and Engagement, Library Collections	Academic Practices, Design and Delivery of the Curriculum	Student Focus-Engagement, Support, Assessment and Attainment	Partnership Work-National, Regional and Member Institutions	Widening Participation and Access

1.2 External focus - Develop a Centre of Excellence for Inclusivity and Access

▶ "Recognising the University's pioneering role in advancing adult learning, we will harness our capacity to connect with a wider community of learners to address the challenges of access and inclusive academic practices."

▶ "The Centre will coordinate activities through our global programmes, through our academic inclusion projects, and by understanding our library collections through the lens of diversity."

▶ "Most importantly, the Centre will bring Member Institutions and our national scholarly communities together in order to share good practice on decolonising our curricula and academic practices, and to coordinate efforts to tackle racism, homophobia, sexism, bigotry and all forms of discrimination and exclusion."

* This is extracted from the University Strategy 2020-25

1.3 Our guiding principles to mainstream equality and inclusion.

1 Reframe the organisation's approach to equality and inclusion work – moving beyond legislative and regulatory compliance to **leveraging equality and inclusion** work as a **business imperative** that provides us with a **competitive advantage**.

2 Use a **more holistic and inter-sectional approach** to develop and deliver equality and inclusion outcomes (aligned to the University's Strategic Plan).

3 Use a **change management approach** to develop and deliver the equality and inclusion enabling plan.

* The use of a change management framework will enable us to focus on activity to transform organisational processes and culture, ensure that they are inclusive and accessible and enable us diversity to attract, nurture, develop and retain a pipeline diverse talent and encourage diversity of thought

1.4 Our Institutional Maturity Model for Equality and Inclusion

Where are we now		Where we want to be in 2025
Developing	**Delivering**	**Embedding Excellence**
▶ The organisation's focus is to ensure compliance with the law. ▶ Some activity focused on equality impact assessments, awareness raising events and equality charters. ▶ Some pockets of good practice ▶ Some engagement with diverse groups of staff and students. ▶ Activity-based equality and inclusion work that is not sustained. ▶ Lack of strategic coordination	▶ Organisation is self-aware of its strengths and areas for development. ▶ The organisation has a well-established leadership and governance structure. ▶ Has an established framework for the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information that informs evidence-based decision making. ▶ Has established routes for diversity of voice and thoughts to influence and lead change. ▶ Evaluates the outcomes and impact of equality and inclusion work. ▶ Equality and inclusion is starting to be institutionally embedded but there are still some inconsistent practices.	▶ Equality and inclusion work is actively led by the senior leaders and sponsors. ▶ Actions of managers consistently match the Institutional vision and values for equality and inclusion. ▶ The institution's culture shows clear signs of change. ▶ The lived experience of student and staff groups is generally improving for all.

* Based loosely on the Equality Framework for Local Government and John Kotter's model to accelerate change and transform culture (2014)

1.5 Our governance Framework for Equality and Inclusion

We have taken several actions to strengthen leadership and accountability on equality and inclusion at all levels through a review of the membership and Terms of Reference of our Equality and Inclusion Committee and the development of robust governance structures.

The suggested roles and responsibilities of some the governance and accountability groups are summarised in the table below:

Governance Structure	Key Role and Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	▶ As the University's Governing Body, the Board is ultimately responsible for establishing and overseeing the institution's mission and strategy. It is also responsible for ensuring that equality and inclusion is appropriately embedded within and advanced in support of that mission and strategy.
Chair of the Equality and Inclusion Committee	▶ On behalf of the Board, provide scrutiny and accountability for ensuring that the University's strategic equality and inclusion objectives and associated outcomes are delivered.
Equality and Inclusion Committee	▶ Provide leadership and accountability on equality and inclusion by setting the strategic direction of travel. ▶ Review equality and inclusion performance to ensure that we meet our regulatory and legislative obligations. ▶ Ensure that the University provides an inclusive and accessible environment for staff and students.
Senior Executive Team	▶ Ensure that appropriate leadership, resources, and governance arrangements are in place to deliver the University's equality and inclusion vision and strategy objectives. ▶ Members of Senior Executive Team to take on a lead sponsor role for equality and inclusion for a specific area of activity.
Equality and Inclusion Steering Group	▶ The membership of this group will consist of a senior representative from all departments of the University who will work with the Head of Inclusion to lead on: ▶ Mainstreaming equality and inclusion within specific business streams and/or in their department. ▶ Defining the annual equality and inclusion annual objectives for the University, reviewing progress on enabling plans and set targets for improvements. ▶ Cascading information on individual responsibilities and good practice within teams ▶ Collating and sharing good practice on equality and inclusion.
Departmental Senior Management Teams	▶ Lead on developing and implementing an equality and inclusion plan as a part of the annual planning process for the department. ▶ Use the plan as a tool for service improvement - cascade information, identify and share good practice within teams.
University of London staff, students, and partners	▶ Responsible for understanding and applying the University's equality and inclusion values, standards and behaviours in their interactions with each other.
Federal Inclusion Network	▶ To encourage collaboration and partnership work on equality and inclusion. ▶ To enable member institutions to share good practice and where appropriate develop federation wide equality and inclusion initiatives.
Head of Inclusion	▶ Provide strategic advice and professional expertise to enable the University to mainstream equality and inclusion. ▶ Work with the Federal Inclusion Network to support the sharing of good practice and enabling the use of a partnership approach to address issues that require a coordinated response from member institutions. ▶ Support Staff Networks (such as the Race Equality Group) to strengthen staff engagement and involvement in shaping the equality and inclusion vision and priorities for the University.

This material is available in alternative formats upon request.
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