



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST of SCOTLAND
UWS

Executive Summary Report

(Public Sector Equality Duty Reports)

(published April 2025)



The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is committed to ensuring that equality is at the heart of everything we do to raise aspirations, increase opportunities and inspire achievement. The purpose of this summary Public Sector Equality Duty Report is to give an overview of the progress made by UWS in relation to meeting the general and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

Mainstreaming:

This section includes an overview of the progress made in relation to mainstreaming equality within our institution from the Public Sector Equality Duty 2023 report onwards, specifically how UWS has:

Eliminated unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation:

- Two bespoke EDI induction modules were launched in 2024 focusing on psychological safety and fostering an inclusive culture. These modules, which are core training for all staff, will enhance staff understanding and foster good relations between diverse groups across the university.
- Through collaborative working between EDI colleagues, the Disability Action Network, and a group of academic colleagues, UWS's first Neurodiversity training session was created and launched December 2024.
- On 23 August 2023, UWS played host as a partner to the Scottish Women in Sport Conference at our Lanarkshire Campus. UWS Sports Science academics were amongst the engaging programme of speakers. Attending delegates also took the opportunity to tour the sector-leading Sports Science labs in our School of Health and Life Sciences.



Fostered good relations between people from different groups:

- In March 2024, UWS re-established the EDI and Wellbeing Coordination Group, marking a significant step towards fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for both students and employees. This group plays a pivotal role in unifying our university-wide efforts to enhance Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and wellbeing outcomes.
- UWS launched Black History Month with an inspiring in-person event. We were honoured to host Professor Ed Ng, Professor of Organisational Behaviour and the Smith Professor of Equity & Inclusion in Business at Queen's University, Canada. Professor Ng delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled "Reclaiming Narratives: From Stigma to Scholarship – Why I Do Research on Inequality," which captivated the audience, including senior leaders and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- To mark 16 Days of Action, also known as 16 Days of Activism (the UN Women's annual global campaign dedicated to ending gender-based violence), UWS hosted a variety of impactful events across our campuses. These included Gender-Based Violence Support and Awareness Showcases, where key external partners highlighted their support services, resources, and efforts to combat gender-based violence. This initiative not only strengthened community connections but also increased awareness among students and employees about available support.
- At UWS, we are proud to support a vibrant community of Employee Networks, each dedicated to fostering inclusivity, support, and professional growth. To ensure the success and sustainability of our eight networks, UWS has implemented comprehensive Employee Network Guidelines. These guidelines clarify roles, provide information on establishing new networks, and outline the criteria for official recognition.



Advanced Equality of Opportunity:



UWS has been **ranked 16th in the world for its impact on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10: Reducing Inequalities**, according to the latest Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2024.

1st IN SCOTLAND FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY

In 2024, UWS was named the **best University in Scotland for social mobility** by the sector think tank HEPI. The Scottish Social Mobility Index (SSMI) ranks institutions on their contributions to social mobility by evaluating access, continuation, and graduate outcomes.



UWS is proud to deliver the **UWS Foundation Academy**, an innovative programme designed for senior school pupils across the west of Scotland. This exciting initiative offers students a unique opportunity to experience university-level study, develop specialised academic skills, and enhance the quality of their university applications.

On July 29, 2024, UWS retained the **Athena Swan Bronze Award**, following

the submission of a comprehensive evidence-based report and SMART action plan. This prestigious award underscores our commitment to advancing gender equality within higher education and research institutions globally, fostering inclusivity for all gender identities and those facing intersectional inequalities.



UWS IS COMMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Established in 2021, the UWS Vice-Chancellor's studentships are dedicated to finding research-led solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. These prestigious studentships are awarded to exceptional postgraduate research students across our four academic schools, aligning with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**.

The Academic Career Development Framework was launched in 2024 and is designed to support and enhance every type of academic career pathway within our institution. A key objective in developing this framework was to ensure inclusivity, promote equality of opportunity, and demonstrate the value UWS places on diversity. To complement this, we have developed an aligned Academic Promotion Process that ensures transparency, objectivity, and equity, supporting the framework's aims.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis and rising food and energy prices, UWS launched a **Breakfast Club** for students in 2022. This quick-response initiative which ran until 2024 provided tens of thousands of pounds' worth of free continental breakfasts for students at our Ayr, Dumfries, Lanarkshire, and Paisley campuses, reinforcing the UWS commitment to enhancing student wellbeing.

Future student wellbeing plans include providing low-cost, healthy options for students on campus, as a follow-on to the Breakfast Club initiative.



Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025:

Equality outcomes are strategic and express results institutions will achieve to improve people's life chances over a four-year period. Universities and colleges in Scotland publish a set of equality outcomes to meet the Scottish specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty every 4 years. Overall, the purpose of the equality outcomes is to:

- Outline a framework for ensuring equality of opportunity, supporting diversity, and celebrating inclusion.
- Act as a tool to support positive change that impacts on students, staff and the University community as a whole.
- Enable everyone associated with the University to have a clear understanding of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure that responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion is clearly identified and led effectively from the highest levels.

This section reviews what action has been implemented as a result of the 2021 – 2025 Equality Outcomes and what impact this has made.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 1

Students and staff most likely to experience bullying, harassment and hate due to their ethnicity, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief report that they feel safe while engaged in work, work placement or study in physical or online spaces.

Progress:

- The number of reports submitted from November 2023 – November 2024 via Report and Support is almost double the amount submitted compared to the number of reports submitted in November 2022 – November 2023. The increase in reports over the past two years indicates that the reporting tool is better known about and that there is increased confidence in the reporting tool.
- More content has been posted on the main UWS social media channels to promote events and campaigns to promote dignity and respect. Baseline figures have been collected to ensure UWS is able to measure the impact of these posts in the future.
- The UWS Report and Support page 'What Support is available from the University' has seen a large rise in engagement.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 2

Disclosure rates for staff and students have increased for the protected characteristics of ethnicity, disability, gender reassignment, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

Progress:

- There has been a slight increase in those filling out their ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and trans information on the employee self-service. There has been a decrease in those filling out their religion.
- For students there has been an increase in those disclosing their sexual orientation, religion and disability. However, gender reassignment and ethnicity have seen a reduction in those disclosing. Therefore, these will be key areas of focus for any future campaigns.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 3

Female staff and Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) staff apply for promotion to a comparable degree as other staff.

Progress:

- Within the first round of the revised academic promotions process there was an even 50% split between male and female applicants, aligning with our academic population split of 49.6% female and 50.4% male. Of 44 successful applicants, there was a 50% even split of 22 successful outcomes between male and female colleagues.
- 75% of applications via the new promotions process were from white colleagues, indicating a slightly lower application rate for BME colleagues and a slightly higher rate for white applicants. Success rates were 38% for white colleagues and 46% for BME colleagues, showing a higher success rate for BME applicants.
- These figures are promising and point towards the new academic career development framework and academic promotions process being a more equitable process for promotions.
- However, there was a disproportionate number of female applications outside the School structure. This will require further analysis and insight to understand the demographic nuances. Furthermore, there were no successful BME applicants for Senior Lecturer positions, despite accounting for 15% of applications, suggests a need for further analysis to determine if this is due to a developmental gap, unconscious bias, or both and a possible requirement for BME specific mentor pool.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 4

Create and progress a SMART Action plan which seeks to address staff and student gender inequalities and imbalances at UWS at both a school and institutional level.

Progress:

- A SMART Action plan has been created and is currently being progressed as part of UWS' Athena Swan Bronze Award. There has been minimal change in the representation of male and female students at school level. However, work is being undertaken to encourage students from underrepresented groups to apply. For example, if Foundation Academy pupils select a subject as their first or second choice in an area where their gender is underrepresented, we would always ensure they are given priority for a place in the taster session for that subject, making sure they have the opportunity to experience the subject first hand and challenging stereotypes.

EQUALITY OUTCOME 5

We will improve staff and student wellbeing by increasing opportunities to engage with wellbeing activities through our Colleague Survey Action Plan and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Progress:

- The most recent 2024 Colleague Survey saw an increase of 2 percentage points to the statement 'There are procedures and/or systems in place to support me if I experience excessive stress or pressure'. Male respondents saw an increase of 9 percentage points to this statement. This shows that there has been an increase in the awareness of what is in place to support staff wellbeing.
- The NSS results saw an increase from a 64.4% to 72.4% positive response to the statement 'How well communicated was information about your university/college's mental wellbeing support service'. This shows that there has been an increase in the awareness of student wellbeing support available.
- The most recent 2024 Colleague Survey saw an increase of 5 percentage points to the statement 'I can comfortably cope with my workload'.

Equality Outcomes 2025 - 2029

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have come together to identify the most persistent inequalities in Scotland's colleges and universities and to pave the way for their removal.

The National Equality Outcomes target improvements to the retention, representation and success of students and staff with a range of protected characteristics, as well as the procedures, services and support that colleges and universities should offer them to address any discrimination and disadvantage. The University of the West of Scotland is delighted to adopt the National Equality Outcomes set by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

By adopting these equality outcomes, UWS integrates them into its strategic framework. This adoption also supports the university's efforts to meet its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and to contribute to a more equitable higher education sector in Scotland. Below is an overview of the National Equality Outcomes. The full mainstreaming report includes information on ongoing activity and planned activity which will contribute to each National Equality Outcome.

1. The retention outcomes for university students aged 25 and over will improve.
2. The success and retention rates of college and university students who declare a mental health condition will improve.
3. Disabled students report feeling satisfied with the overall support and reasonable adjustments received, including from teaching staff, while on their course.
4. Disabled staff and students report feeling safe in the tertiary system.
5. Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the representation of disabled staff in the workforce and on college Boards and university Courts.
6. Trans staff and students report feeling safe to be themselves in the tertiary system.
7. Staff and students feel supported and safe and are confident that complaints of harassment or bias on the grounds of race will be dealt with appropriately because complaints procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress.
8. Institutions should also have regard to attainment levels by racial group and ensure that their curriculum is diverse and anti-racist.
9. Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the racial diversity of Court members and address any racial diversity issues in college Boards.
10. Where representation is not proportionate to the relevant population, increase the racial diversity of teaching and non-teaching staff to align with student representation in the sector.
11. Students and staff report that they have confidence in institutional report and support mechanisms because they are fit for purpose.
12. Staff and students know how to access support about violence, harassment and abuse, report their experience and feel properly supported in doing so because the services are fit for purpose.
13. Institutions can evidence approaches that prevent and respond to violence, harassment and abuse.
14. Men (staff and students) know how to access mental health support (recognising intersectionality within that group).
15. Institutions will have regard to significant imbalances on courses and take action to address it.
16. Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual staff and students report that they feel safe being 'out' at university and college.



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**The University of the West
of Scotland is a placemaker
within our communities,
driving social inclusion
and reducing inequalities
through education, research
and knowledge exchange.**

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