**Lancaster University**

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

1. **Introduction**

Lancaster University’s EDI Statement supports the University’s Strategic Plan 2021-2026. In putting our values to **respect each other**, **build strong communities** and **create positive change** at the heart of what we do, we aspire to an inclusive **community of communities**, where people are treated with dignity and respect and where no one is disadvantaged because of who they are. Valuing diversity of thought, belief and background is fundamental to our collective intellectual development and enables the University to challenge convention, push boundaries and shape agendas.

We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which applies to employment, facilities, goods and services and education, including the admission and treatment of students. The Act requires the University to:

* 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, or other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, which includes ensuring that no members of the university are subjected to:
		+ less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
		+ a provision, criterion or practice that gives rise to indirect discrimination.
		+ Unwanted conduct that gives rise to harassment.
		+ A detriment for having raised an equality issue, for assisting another in raising an equality issue or for supporting another in raising an equality issue.
	2. Advance equality of opportunity, which involves:
		+ Identifying any barriers that may disproportionately affect a university member’s participation because of a protected characteristic.
		+ Remove or minimise disadvantage experienced by people due to a protected characteristic. This can include introducing different treatment where there are different needs of persons, where this need is because of a protected characteristic.
		+ Encourage people with a particular protected characteristic to participate in public life or other activities where participation of persons with such protected characteristic is disproportionately low.
	3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This involves:
		+ Tackling prejudice.
		+ Promoting understanding.
		+ Educating through relevant training.

These commitments are made with specific reference to particular protected characteristics, which includes Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation.

These commitments extend beyond the particular characteristics of a person to also cover the perceived characteristics of that person and also their association with others with a protected characteristic.

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1. **Our Aims**

In relation to each of the protected characteristics listed above, the University will continue to:

* 1. Seek to employ staff and recruit students with a diverse range of characteristics.
	2. Work to challenge and eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation either
1. because of a person’s protected characteristic,
2. because of a perceived characteristic of a person, or
3. because of a person’s association with another with a protected characteristic.
	1. Promote equality and good relations between people with different protected characteristics.
	2. Support the needs of individuals where there are specific needs that are because of a protected characteristic.
	3. Provide both staff members and students a means for raising an equality issue confidentially, to be kept informed of the progress of the issue, and to be informed of the conclusion of the matter following steps that have been taken to address the issue.
	4. Ensure that adequate training is offered on matters relating to equality and diversity issues.
4. **Protected Characteristics**

The protected characteristics include Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. Matters specific to individual protected characteristics are discussed below.

# 3.1. Age

The Age protected characteristic applies to any individual or group of a particular age or age range. The University will continue to:

1. Ensure that relevant safeguarding procedures are in operation, via the Disclosure and Barring Service, for work that involves younger people and vulnerable adults.
2. Gather mature students’ views via student surveys and seek to ensure that they receive good academic and welfare support that aims to minimise feelings of isolation.
3. Support the endeavours of the Young Staff Network.

# 3.2. Disability

The Disability protected characteristic is defined as anyone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long term means it has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months, or it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.

An impairment is also considered long term where it has currently ceased but is likely to recur. Also covered by the definition are people with a severe disfigurement, HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis. Additionally, people who have had a disability in the past are covered.

The University will continue to:

1. Welcome applications from disabled students and staff.
2. Promote a culture of positive attitude towards disability and encourage informed disclosure of disability by staff and students.
3. As far as possible, anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and students to help remove the disabling effects of practices and the environment.

This includes:

* 1. Where a provision, criterion or practice is identified as putting a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, reasonable steps will be taken to avoid the disadvantage;
	2. Where there is an identified physical feature that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, reasonable steps will be taken to avoid the disadvantage;
	3. Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage, reasonable steps will be taken to provide the auxiliary aid.
1. Follow the good practice of the Department of Work and Pension’s Disability Confident Scheme, with five commitments in respect of existing and future disabled employees with regard to inclusive and accessible recruitment; promotion of vacancies; offer an interview to disabled people; provide reasonable adjustments; and support disabled employees.
2. Hold the principle that reasonable adjustments cannot be provided retrospectively (i.e. prior to disclosure of disability).
3. Publicise the Access to Work scheme and seek to improve working conditions.
4. Develop the accessibility of our buildings and environment and ensure a regular cycle of access improvements, where practicable.
5. Provide information to all users via accessible processes and in accessible formats, where practicable.
6. Support the endeavours of the Disabled Employee Network

# 3.3. Gender reassignment

The gender reassignment protected characteristic applies to anyone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

The University will continue to:

1. Provide effective support to staff and students from proposing to reassign gender, during transition and post- transition.
2. Make provision for changes to staff and student records to reflect the individual’s current gender identity, where practicable.
3. Ensure that trans issues are considered by Estates in the designation of facilities.
4. Consider offering gender neutral and non-binary alternatives, where practicable.
5. Support the endeavours of the LGBT+ staff network and allies network

**3.4. Marriage & civil partnership**

The marriage & civil partnership protected characteristic applies to any union between a couple of different sex or a couple of the same sex or legally recognised civil partnership between a same sex couple. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for marriage & civil partnership in respect of employment.

The University will continue to:

a. Make provision for changes to staff and student records based on certificates of

marriage and civil partnership, where practicable.

# 3.5. Pregnancy & maternity

This protected characteristic also includes breastfeeding. The pregnancy & maternity of a student applies to anyone who is pregnant or has given birth within the last 26 weeks.

Pregnancy & maternity of a member of staff applies to anyone who is pregnant or is on ordinary or additional maternity leave.

The University will aim to ensure that no persons are discriminated against on the basis of pregnancy & maternity. The University will continue to:

1. undertake appropriate risk assessments where there is an identified risk to a pregnant worker or student.

Ensure that identified risks to a pregnant worker or student are reduced to as low as reasonably practicable.

1. maintain contractual rights for staff (other than contractual pay) during maternity leave.
2. Support the endeavours of the Parents and Carers Staff Network.

# 3.6. Race

The race protected characteristic applies to any individual or group of a particular colour, nationality, caste, ethnic origin or national origin. Protection on the grounds of nationality is subject to compliance with immigration rules.

The University will continue to:

1. Address any perceived barriers in providing and promoting inclusive practices for staff and students from black, asian and minority ethnic groups and to target areas to remove inequalities.
2. Seek to improve our ability to recruit, retain, support and develop staff and students from black, asian and minority ethnic groups.
3. Celebrate the diversity of our UK and international staff and student community
4. Seek to secure a Race Equality Charter award.

# 3.7. Religion or belief

Religion applies to any religion or reference to religion, including a reference to a lack of religion. Belief applies to any religious or philosophical belief or reference to belief, including reference to a lack of belief. The religion or belief protected characteristic should be taken to mean the full diversity of religious and belief affiliations within the UK, including non-religious and philosophical beliefs such as atheism, agnosticism and humanism.

The University will continue to:

1. Be a secular institution that accords respect and tolerance to all religious faiths, beliefs and practices as well as those who subscribe to no faith.
2. Affirm that all members of the University community have the right to religious freedom and to the peaceful exercise of their religious faith, beliefs and customs.
3. Affirm the expectation and requirement that everyone on campus should accord full tolerance and respect for the religious faith, beliefs and practices of others.

# 3.8. Sex

The protected characteristic of sex applies to staff and students, irrespective of their sex. The University will continue to:

1. Staff Issues:
	1. undertake regular equal pay reviews to measure and address the gender pay gap between women and men.
	2. Through our Athena Swan Bronze award and action plan, take steps to promote gender equality.
	3. Support the endeavours of the Women’s Staff Network.
2. Student Issues:
	1. carry out an analysis by sex of institution-wide surveys about the student experience and learn from consultations with LUSU staff and officers, University service providers, managers and departmental equality & diversity representatives in order to take action to promote gender equality.

# 3.9. Sexual orientation

The sexual orientation protected characteristic applies to anyone’s sexual orientation towards people of the same sex, opposite sex or both.

The University will continue to:

1. Support the right of individuals to choose whether they wish to be open or not about their sexual orientation at work or study.
2. Support the endeavours of the LGBT+ staff network.

# 3.10. Managing Conflicting Regulatory Freedoms

Situations may arise where the rights of one individual cut across the rights of another: for example, a member of staff may object to lesbian, gay and bisexuality on grounds of his or her religion or belief. The University recognises anyone’s right to hold these views, but not their manifestation in such a way that discriminates, intimidates, humiliates, or is hostile or degrading to others or in any other way infringes the rights of others.

1. **Our responsibilities**

# 4.1. The University Council

As the governing body, the University Council has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University complies with all equality related legislation.

**4.2. The Vice-Chancellor** is responsible for giving a consistent and high-profile lead on EDI issues, actively promoting them both inside and outside the institution, and for ensuring that the University’s EDI Statement and related activities are implemented effectively through University structures.

**4.3. The EDI Committee** terms of reference:

1. To develop and recommend to Senate and Council as appropriate the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in accordance with the University’s Strategic Plan and provide advice and recommend to Senate and Council on all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion activities.
2. To monitor progress and report annually on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to Senate and Council.
3. To monitor relevant internal and external developments to inform future Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and policies, making recommendations as appropriate to Senate and Council.
4. In accordance with delegated authority, approve on behalf of Senate and Council policies relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. To create sub-committees and/or initiate working groups as required; to receive and consider reports from these; and to delegate to these aspects of the above in line with agreed delegated authority.
6. To receive equality, and diversity and inclusion related matters for consideration from networks and interest groups at Lancaster University.
7. To advise and consult with other governance bodies, in keeping with its own governance responsibilities, on matters related to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as the University’s strategic lead for EDI, chairs the EDI Committee and is responsible for fostering positive, diverse and representative engagement which contributes to the achievement of the University’s strategic EDI ambitions. The EDI Committee reports to both Senate and Council.

# 4.4. Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deans, Deputy Chief Executive (Operations), Directors, Heads of Department and other managers are responsible for:

1. Implementing EDI across their areas of responsibility in line with this statement.
2. Integrating EDI issues with mainstream activities.
3. Ensuring staff and students are made aware of their responsibilities.
4. Ensuring staff receive EDI awareness training.

**4.5. All Staff and Students** are responsible for:

1. Promoting equality and not discriminating between any groups or individuals.
2. Helping to create and maintain an environment where harassment and discrimination are unacceptable.
3. Dealing, as far as they can, with incidents of harassment or bullying.
4. Taking up EDI awareness training and learning opportunities.
5. Staff: reporting incidents of concern to their Head of Department or manager, area HR Partner or Trade Union representative.
6. Students: reporting incidents of concern to a relevant member of staff or a staff member or officer from LUSU.

# 4.6. Partners, Contractors and Service Providers

All partners of the University, associates, contractors, professional, statutory and accredited bodies and those who provide services to the University are responsible for complying with equality legislation and equality requirements set out in contracts with the University.

# 4.7. Breaches of our EDI Statement

There is an expectation that staff and students will adhere to our EDI Statement, and breaches may result in disciplinary action.

Further information on our commitment to creating a fairer and more inclusive University for all staff, students, visitors and our wider university community, where equality, diversity and inclusion is an integral part of our University’s plans and activities is available at: [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/hr/equality-](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/hr/equality-diversity/) [diversity/](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/hr/equality-diversity/)