Confirmed Minutes

Meeting:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
Date:	21 February 2024
Time:	2 pm to 4 pm
Venue:	EUS 104

In attendance	Designation
Maria Jackson **[Chair]**	Head of Governance and Company Secretary
Antony Charles	People, Talent and Culture Manager
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Manager
Andreea Turculet	Academic Administration and Assessment Executive
Arif Zaman*	Enterprise Outreach Manager and Senior Lecturer Business
Dominic Bailey **[Secretary]**	Quality Executive

Welcome and Apologies

1.0   Apologies
*Denotes apologies received.
**Denotes absence where apologies were not received.

M Jackson welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that apologies had been received from A Zaman.

2.0   Meeting of 31 August 2023

2.1 Unconfirmed Minutes (for approval)

The Committee members agreed that the minutes were a true record of the previous meeting and approved them without amendments.

2.2 Action Tracker/Matters Arising

2.2.1 Item 6 refers.

M Jackson to amend the Mental Health Checklist to reflect advice given prior to submission to the SMT.

Update: Completed.

3.0   Dignity and Respect Policy

The Chair presented the policy and highlighted the key amendments captured in the Summary of Changes and pointed out that these were minor and not for discussion. The most significant of these amendments had been the expansion of the definition of harassment to match that provided in our Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy.

The Chair invited members to comment on the policy and members agreed to approve the policy in line with the changes.

4.0   Disability Policy and related documents

4.1   <u>Disability Policy</u>

N Michail presented the policy and flagged the one major change related to Appendix A Section 4 which was largely re-written, and that all other changes were minor.

She went on to highlight the dates provided for the exams which were arrived at in liaison with the Assessment Executives and commented that these dates are intentionally flexible due to the three-intakes.

The Chair suggested that the policy be renamed 'Student Disability Policy' for clarity as we now have a 'Staff Disability Policy' and she highlighted some formatting issues within the document.

The policy document was approved subject to the change of name agreed and the minor formatting issues highlighted.

4.2 <u>Student Learning Support Agreement (SLSA)</u>

N Michail presented the Student Learning Support Agreement and noted there were no changes made. The Committee members agreed to approve the Agreement.

4.3 <u>Disability Office – What we do with your data.</u>

N Michail presented the Disability Office – What we do with your data document and pointed out that the only changes made were the updates to the hyperlinks.

The Committee agreed to approve the document subject to minor formatting amendments flagged by the Chair and the need to rename the Disability Office in Section 3.2 to read Disability and Wellbeing Office.

4.4 <u>Consent to Share Information form.</u>

N Michail presented the Consent to Share Information form and pointed out that the only changes made were the updates to the hyperlinks.

The Committee approved the Consent to Share Information form.

5.0   Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Report 2022-23

The Chair presented the report and pointed out that the report comes to EDIC for approval prior to going to the Board of Directors for information to evidence our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion at an Institute level.

She went on to highlight evidence of the Institute's commitment towards equality, diversity and inclusion in the form of the following:

- Our diverse staff and student profile
- Student feedback through both internal and external surveys

In terms of her own work over the last year, M Jackson reported that it had been more external facing than internal. She explained that this was because of a few reasons including the change in her job role and the establishment of two specific major projects (Employability and Digital Transformation) to which we had committed at an Institute level as part of our Strategic Framework. These two projects very much took priority at departmental/divisional level over further enhancements to our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework. It is for that reason that not all elements of the EDI Action Plan for 2022-23 have been completed. However, M Jackson explained that the Digital Transformation project has been placed on hold temporarily and the Employability

project has been subsumed within our Let's Grow programme. Consequently, she reported that she would be presenting a proposal at the March SMT meeting for us to re-engage with our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework. This would then constitute our key priority for our 2023-24 EDI Action Plan.

M Jackson thanked members for their contribution to the Annual Report and invited any comments.

The Committee members had no comments and agreed to approve the Annual Report with no amendments.

For consideration or consideration and action

6.0 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report**
[For consideration and action]

6.1 September 2023 Update Report for SMT

The Chair presented the report and asked members for any comments.

The Committee members had no comments.

6.2 November 2023 Update Report for SMT

The Chair presented the report and asked members for any comments.

The Committee members had no comments.

6.3 January 2024 Update Report SMT

The Chair presented the report and asked members for any comments.

The Committee members had no comments.

7.0 **NSS 2023 From a Protected Characteristics Perspective**

The Chair explained that each year the Deputy COO produces a high-level report on our NSS results and that she then considers the results from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective to see if there is any suggestion that one particular group of students might be having a less positive experience at Bloomsbury Institute than others.

M Jackson went on to highlight the fact that although there was nothing to suggest any discrimination or cause for concern, there was a possible issue around students with a disability having a less satisfying experience than their peers in the classroom. Previously students with a disability have recorded very high levels of satisfaction. However, she stressed that the number of respondents with a disability was relatively low (12.5%). Nevertheless, when these findings were shared within the SMT, the Deputy Principal had said she would consider whether there was an issue and whether any action was needed.

A discussion ensued regarding the specifics of this discrepancy and the possible contributing factors.

8.0 **Disability Office Annual Report 2022-23**

N Michail presented her report and briefly highlighted the key areas explored in the report, namely the monitoring of services provided by SEWS, such as Mentoring Support and Togetherall as it relates to students with a disability.

Most students who declared a disability are disproportionately undergraduate and this

is possibly due to postgraduate students fearing the stigma attached to declaring a disability in higher education.

A discussion ensued regarding how to increase the number of students with a disability declaring their disability to SEWS to ensure we are providing them with the necessary services. The Chair said she was keen to revisit at some stage a suggestion she had raised previously regarding terminology. She said she was still keen to move away from terms such as "disclosing" and "declaring" given the negative connotations each term has. She said she would favour instead "sharing information" - a term that others are beginning to use. N Michail said that she did not feel that a change in terminology would have any impact and said it was important to use the terminology that is used within the sector and also within the employment market.

Following this, N Michail commented that predominantly non-native students are using Togetherall and this is a positive thing.

A discussion ensued regarding whether we issue warnings for the Mindfulness activities we have on Canvas as they can be triggering for some people. N Michail said that whilst there are no warnings on Canvas, she will tell students that they might not like them or find them useful.

M Jackson asked whether N Michail had any information yet on whether any students for our June 2024 intake had shared information on any disabilities. N Michail said she did not have any information yet although she has been in touch with 6 applicants for our October 2024 intake.

9.0 Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

9.1 APP Key Performance Indicators

M Jackson explained that the Deputy Principal leads on our Access and Participation Plan and has recently developed some Key Performance Indicators that are designed to measure whether we are successfully implementing the Strategic Measures set out within our Access and Participation Plan. These KPIs have been approved by the SMT.

In the absence of the APP KPIs document, the Chair said that this item would be deferred to the next EDIC meeting.

10.0 Issues Committee members would like to raise

There were no issues raised by members.

For information

11.0 SMT Response to Lord Haflon's Letter of 5 June 2023

The Committee received and noted the SMT's response to Lord Haflon's letter of 5 June 2023.

12.0 Staff Disability Policy

[For information – as approved by the SMT following recommended approval by the EDIC]

The Chair reported that the Staff Disability Policy had been approved by the SMT following recommended approval by EDIC. She also took the opportunity to thank A Charles for his work in developing the policy.

13.0 Update from Disability and Wellbeing Manager

There were no updates.

14.0   Update from People, Talent, and Culture Manager

A Charles shared his plans to develop a wellbeing resource for staff and the logistics of embedding this into an intranet space, and noted that this will be shared when it develops.

A Charles also reported that he would be looking shortly at arranging Mental Health First Aider refresher training.

15.0   Any Other Business

None.

16.0   Date and venue of next meeting

TBC