Inclusion Report

Queen Mary University of London
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Introduction

In June-September 2019 Queen Mary University of London undertook an Inclusion Review with a view to gaining insights designed to improve organisational culture.

There is growing scrutiny and expectation from national and sector bodies, as well as from staff and students, about the need for universities to demonstrate progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): driving diverse representation at all levels, reducing differential attainment gaps for minority groups and creating cultures where diverse talent can thrive.

The undertaking of this review, commissioned by the Principal, demonstrates a clear commitment from Queen Mary to scrutinise its internal culture and EDI-related practices. The findings outlined in this report are designed to help build an understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the institution, with a view to sparking additional work and action that will embed a culture of inclusion at Queen Mary.

Sustained equality, diversity and inclusion progress is hard. It requires long-term human and financial investment. This report sets out a series of recommendations designed to help the institution move forward, taking tangible steps in order to demonstrate progress. Queen Mary has a rich, ethnically diverse student population and prides itself on being the Russell Group university with the highest intake of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students, although this level of diversity is not currently reflected in the staff population, particularly across senior-level roles in academia and professional services (PS). It is hoped that the insights derived from this report will provide a foundation to shape a clear pan-institutional EDI strategy and action plan, bringing together its schools, institutes and departments and enhancing workplace culture in a consistent and cohesive way. Cementing and embedding these inclusive practices will reap invaluable benefits, for staff, students and the university as a whole, and will go a long way towards helping Queen Mary realise its long-term ambition: 'to be the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere.'

Approach

The report outlines high-level findings of a three-stage review process with associated recommendations. The following key themes have been considered:

- Recruitment;
- Informal working practices;
- EDI infrastructure;
- Development; and
- Leadership and accountability.

Detailed insights into focus groups undertaken with minority staff are included in the appendix. Focus groups explored lived experiences of the following minority groups:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff;
- Disabled staff;
- Female staff; and
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) staff.

This report is based on insights obtained through an HR review of Queen Mary’s EDI policies and practices; the voices and experiences of staff members across the institution (who contributed through interviews, minority focus groups, faculty workshops and central PS workshops); as well as responses to EDI-related questions in the 2019 staff survey.

Since undertaking the review Queen Mary has already taken steps to address key issues and act on recommendations emerging through focus groups and workshops. Clear progress has been made and a number of further initiatives are being planned. Where possible, these have been included in the report.
Scope of the review

This report focuses on the perceptions and lived experiences of staff members at Queen Mary. It does not include the student experience. This is covered through the education strategy led by the VP Education.

Insights should be understood at a pan-institutional level. Detailed school-level or departmental insights have been beyond the scope of this review.

The report explores the experiences and perspectives of staff who work across Queen Mary’s London-based campuses. It does not include insights from staff who work internationally.

It is recognised that the grouping of identities through umbrella terms such as ‘BAME’ and ‘LGBT+’ can be problematic and does not account for variation in experience. However, a more detailed analysis of minority perspectives has been beyond the scope of this project.
Review findings

Recruitment

Talent attraction

With its roots in four historic colleges in the east of London, Queen Mary University of London has become one of the UK’s leading research-focused higher education institutions. Queen Mary prides itself on having a rich, diverse student population, with 90% of home students coming from state schools, 59% of students coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, 42% being the first in their families to go into higher education and over 30% of students coming from households with an income less than £15,000.1 Queen Mary is recognised as the Russell Group university with the most ethnically diverse student population. This benefits reputation and is likely to be playing an important role in attracting diverse talent into the organisation.

Although the diversity of the student population is noted, insights from staff in workshops, focus groups and interviews suggested that Queen Mary’s Senior Executive Team (SET) and wider leadership are not perceived to be diverse or representative, even though SET has, over recent years, increased its diversity. This perception may prevent diverse candidates (both internal and external) from applying for new posts. Some staff have suggested that the lack of gender or ethnic diversity in specific schools would put them off applying for roles.

During the review process there appeared to be considerable variation in departmental approaches to recruitment. It is acknowledged that different schools and departments have different talent and recruitment needs, but a lack of consistency around processes and practices, together with a lack of enforced accountability at school or departmental level, may have increased chances of unchecked bias or inequitable processes throughout the recruitment cycle. Areas of good practice did emerge, however, with some departments taking a proactive approach to widening reach, targeting diverse candidates and/or the potential for mitigating bias within the recruitment cycle.

One faculty, for example, had introduced a standardised ‘checklist’ across its schools to mitigate the potential for bias during interview panels. Another school scrutinised the language of academic job descriptions to see if the talent pool would be affected. The school observed that women were less likely to apply for ‘senior’ lecturer roles than men at the same level or with equivalent experience. As such, the school stopped advertising for senior lecturer roles exclusively, and instead, advertised ‘lecturer/senior lecturer’ roles. This resulted in a significant uplift in applications from female academics and, in just two years, the school was able to reduce the gender representation gap. The school now has 41% female professorial representation, which is thought to be one of the highest in the country.

This approach is encouraging. However, proactive targeting of underrepresented groups did not appear to be common practice across the institution. During the review, particular concerns were raised about the language used in job descriptions which was not considered to be as inclusive as it could be. Gender-bias in language was thought to be particularly problematic. This could be deterring highly-qualified talent from applying.

Staff also observed that the narrow scope of some job descriptions, particularly for certain academic hires, was unlikely to succeed in attracting a wide or diverse candidate pool. In some cases, descriptions were thought to be so specialised or particular in scope, that staff inferred they had been written with a specific person in mind. Staff across the institution and minority voices in BAME, LGBT+ and women’s focus groups reported that they had encountered cases in which people had been lined up for roles, both within academic as well as PS appointments. This perception had discouraged some diverse staff from applying for new roles.

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1 Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2018: http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/media/hr/docs/EDI-Annual-Report-2018.pdf
During the review it was unclear what steps Queen Mary had been taking to widen the reach of its talent pool and actively target underrepresented groups. There was a perception from staff that a wider range of advertising channels could be leveraged in order to attract the most diverse candidates, particularly for PS appointments.

Although Queen Mary tracks the diversity of applicants, there are issues with data quality due to system constraints. Without robust data on the diversity of those who are shortlisted or invited to interview and those who join the organisation, it is not possible to ascertain 1) how diverse or representative the existing pool of candidates is; or 2) whether certain demographics are disproportionately more or less likely to be successful during the process.

During the review it was noted that the EDI homepage of Queen Mary’s external website was not as vibrant or informative as it could be. This may have impacted external perceptions of EDI with implications for talent attraction. An ‘event page’ was referenced for example, but with no linked events, raising questions about Queen Mary’s internal EDI activity. Although the LGBT+ staff network was signposted, this highlighted the absence of networks for other protected groups.

At the time of the review work was also needed to enhance Queen Mary’s EDI strapline. This process has now been commenced in conjunction with the communications team, and job packs are being updated. As part of this, Queen Mary’s EDI strapline on job descriptions has been reviewed and improved and will feature in new packs. Additionally, the new institutional KPI will enable the organisation to focus language in job packs and adverts. Moving forward, diverse candidates will be expressly invited to apply to address underrepresentation.

Candidate selection

Queen Mary is taking steps to mitigate bias during the recruitment process. Recruitment and unconscious bias training is mandatory prior to individuals participating on panels. Guidelines are also in place to ensure male/female gender diversity on interview panels. The code stipulates a formal condition in relation to binary gender diversity, but panellists are encouraged to consider other protected characteristics, taking steps to mitigate homogeneity by ‘constituting as diverse a panel as is possible and practicable.’ Encouragingly, some schools appear to have built on this expectation, implementing additional stipulations with regard to panel composition, mandating ethnic diversity, external representation and, in some cases, academic and PS representation.

Queen Mary will be piloting an ‘equal merit scheme’ for the appointment of academic and professional services roles in a specific school. This approach is in line with the Equal Merit Provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and involves taking a positive action approach to new appointments. This is considered to be best practice in other organisations.

At the time of the review a centralised recruitment policy did not appear to be in place, and approaches to candidate selection appeared to differ across schools and departments. Concerns were raised about potential bias in local recruitment. Qualitative insights pointed to a lack of transparency in the appointment of new roles and several examples were shared in relation to both academic and PS appointments during which a preferred candidate had purportedly been earmarked for a job, even before interviews had commenced.

In certain schools, academic staff commented on the ‘subjectivity of decision-making processes’ and the absence of formal selection criteria or decision-making guidelines. Not only was this considered to allow a high chance of bias, it was also thought to exacerbate the possible impact of internal politics or power dynamics within a specific school or department.

Accounts of ‘nepotistic’ hiring or ‘favouritism’ were also given in relation to specific departments. In these cases less qualified staff were perceived to have been appointed on account of existing relationships with hiring managers. Staff in interviews and focus groups demonstrated frustration at this practice, suggesting that it was ‘demotivating’ and ‘depressing’ and was the cause of resentment across teams. This was also cited by minority PS staff as a reason for employees leaving the institution - with staff perceiving the system to be unfair - or not knowing how to get ahead.
A lack of provisions set up to support new hires from diverse backgrounds was also observed. In order for diverse appointments to flourish, managers must be equipped with understanding and training on how to manage diverse teams. This was not considered to be in place at the time of the review. It was also noted that minorities would benefit from support structures including mentoring, development programmes and networks. These were considered to be absent for the most part.

Encouringly, since the time of the review, Queen Mary has developed and rolled out a new recruitment policy designed to facilitate a consistent approach across the institution. If effectively enforced, this should help to mitigate the chance of bias during local recruitment.

Additional measures to support diverse hires are also being shaped. A bespoke training programme for leaders and people managers is planned to ensure they lead inclusively and are equipped to manage diverse teams. The launch of new staff networks and a centralised EDI programme of events and activities will also provide support and engagement for diverse hires.

A positive action proposal has been developed and agreed by the EDI Steering Group (EDISG) and is being taken to SET for formal sign off.

A review is currently taking place of induction processes with a core focus on EDI.

**Recommendations**

1. A more rigorous approach should be introduced to monitor recruitment data, capturing and analysing the diversity of applicants at all stages of the process. Data analysis is currently undertaken, but investment is needed to update systems and improve the quality of insights. This will enable Queen Mary to assess whether certain demographics are disproportionately more or less likely to be successful during various stages of the process. Data should be used at school/departmental level to shape tailored recruitment approaches.

2. Hiring managers should be held to account for any breaches in approach and deviation from the recruitment policy and guidelines.

3. Given the range of hiring needs across the institution, multiple recruitment channels are likely to be required to maximise impact. Hiring managers should consider using diverse recruitment websites/networks and advertising roles across a broad range of platforms, websites or forums visited by underrepresented groups or dedicated to minorities. Advertising across multiple platforms will help Queen Mary reach the widest pool of candidates.

4. Blind recruitment is considered to be an effective mechanism through which to eliminate bias in the screening/shortlisting phase. Conduct a blind recruitment pilot in a specific school, taking steps to harness learnings and disseminate across the institution. Signposting this inclusive approach at the point of vacancy advertising may help attract diverse applicants. Given Queen Mary’s need to review academic published work and metrics, it is recognised that a blind recruitment may not be practical for academic appointments.

5. Pay careful attention to the language and composition of job descriptions. Hiring managers may wish to test the linguistic gender-coding of job specifications using the gender decoder tool: [http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/](http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/) for example. This can help to ensure that descriptions are gender neutral or that they actively encourage underrepresented genders as appropriate for specific roles.

6. Work with executive recruitment agencies that specialise in diverse appointments, particularly for senior roles. The desire for a diverse pool must be clearly communicated, reinforced and prioritised over cost or time to hire. When selecting agencies, ask them to demonstrate their track record in diverse appointments and their internal approach to embedding EDI.

7. Develop a candidate feedback mechanism (such as a candidate survey) to assess applicant experiences, helping to understand what attracts talent and how current processes, brand and
culture are perceived. Cross-referencing candidate experiences with diversity data can provide insights into bias or potential discriminatory practices.

8. Enhance external EDI webpages. A range of EDI-related activities, events, role models and articles/blogs should be showcased. As part of this effort, consider creating a short video dedicated to EDI outlining the institution’s vision, commitment and EDI activities. This could include insights from the Principal and/or other senior executives, Council members, staff across the organisation and network representatives and would effectively showcase diverse role models.

9. Shape a clearly defined process through which staff can signpost recruitment practices that are deemed to be unfair or biased. This should be outlined as part of the recruitment training and should also be clearly signposted on recruitment policies and associated webpages.

10. Implement the following to mitigate bias in candidate selection:
   a. Ahead of sitting on panels, staff should indicate that they have completed required training or refresher courses. Robust checkpoints should be put in place to ensure this happens consistently. This may require the support of a quality Learning Management System;
   b. Ensure there is a common understanding of selection criteria and what to look for in candidates for specific roles. This should include clear instructions on how to submit candidate feedback and avoid bias in the language of evaluation;
   c. Create a checklist of inclusive recruitment reminders or ‘bias checks’ to be disseminated ahead of any panel. Ideally, the chair would run through this checklist with panellists ahead of interviews, to ensure full engagement and alignment; or
   d. Ensure that awareness of the impact of unconscious bias during interviews is promoted throughout the process. Panellists should be encouraged to challenge and call out bias.

Informal working practices

The overall inclusivity of Queen Mary’s workplace culture is complex to assess. The review indicated considerable cultural variation across different schools and departments, with staff sharing different experiences and perceptions of culture within their respective divisions. This is largely down to differences in demographic representation and the subsequent perceived visibility of role models; variation in the shaping and implementation of policies and practices; localised leadership; and the absence of a well-embedded EDI strategy, action plan and programme of EDI activities delivered at an institutional level.

The upside of this is that schools and departments have autonomy to shape an independent approach to EDI according to their needs. Some schools appear to be quite proactive, taking steps to embed EDI through inclusive policies and practices. On the flip side, not all schools and departments seem to prioritise EDI with equal measure; in some cases there appears to be little sustained EDI engagement, or it is considered to be a ‘box ticking’ exercise. This significant variation in perceived culture is further evidenced in responses to the staff survey with notable variation across schools in response to EDI-related questions. For example, school-level perceptions around whether ‘Queen Mary values equality, diversity and inclusion’ ranged between 15-100%.

Community engagement

During the review staff commented on the absence of a centralised EDI programme to celebrate minority or diverse identities or recognise EDI awareness days and festivals. This lack of activity and investment had led many staff to infer that EDI was not being prioritised by the institution. Since the time of review it is therefore encouraging to see that plans are now underway to launch
a centralised EDI programme including a series of events, workshops and panel discussions on EDI-related topics. Specifically, the EDISG has approved plans to deliver a monthly event in support of one major EDI-related activity or festival, such as Black History Month and LGBT+ History Month. The institution has also recognised a need to proactively provide information about religious events that are widely celebrated by staff and students such as Ramadan and Eid. The launch of this institutionally-led programme should demonstrate sustained engagement, dialogue and action around EDI, promoting awareness, understanding and inclusive behaviours across the staff and student base, as well as engaging with protected groups.

During the review staff insights highlighted the value of networks, both formal and informal. LGBT+ staff in particular spoke positively about QMOOut, the staff LGBT+ network, reporting that it had organically improved the culture at Queen Mary by enhancing the experience, visibility and connectivity of LGBT+ staff (and students). Female, BAME, disabled and PS staff all commented on the value that a well-managed network could bring, providing peer-connectivity, access to resources, signposting of development opportunities, sharing of case studies on career progression, channels to provide feedback to the organisation, as well as a platform to showcase role models.

With the exception of the LGBT+ network, equivalent networks for other protected groups were absent during the time of the review. It is therefore encouraging that Queen Mary is already seeking resource to introduce additional employee networks (with executive level support and allocated budgets) to engage with, support, and celebrate other underrepresented groups. The UCU BAME group has requested that a BAME network should be established, and plans are underway to bring this into fruition. Queen Mary intends to expand these to other protected groups including a women’s group first and foremost and a network for disabled staff in the future.

Role modelling and the importance and impact of seeing oneself represented came out strongly in the review. Staff with access to visible role models with whom they could identify suggested it was a powerful motivator, instilled a sense of belonging and helped build confidence and appetite to progress. Minority staff (identifying as BAME, female or LGBT+) reflected that seeing people with whom they could identify in senior positions was ‘encouraging’, ‘inspiring’ and gave them something ‘to aspire towards.’ However, the majority of staff providing qualitative insights reflected on the absence of relatable role models, with many suggesting that this had had a negative impact on their overall experience at Queen Mary. Staff commented that they felt ‘unrepresented’ and were uncertain whether they would have meaningful opportunities to progress.

The absence of perceived role models was further evidenced in the staff survey, with just 35% of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing that Queen Mary had visible, senior role models with whom they could identify. Research shows that there is a strong positive correlation between role model visibility and talent acquisition, motivation and retention; and, as such, it is often seen as one of the most effective interventions for success within an organisation. Visible role models, particularly in leadership or positions of influence, have a keen impact on culture. Ensuring that there are visible role models from minority groups, reflecting multiple intersections and identities, is therefore vital. With just 35% of survey respondents positively citing the presence of visible role models across the institution, there is significant room for improvement.

Since undertaking the review, the LGBT+ network has taken steps to develop a role model campaign. This is very positive and the promotion and continued visibility of role models should be a priority for the institution. Queen Mary should build on the work of the LGBT+ network in order to celebrate and showcase intersectional talent and identities from other protected groups.

**Culture**

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2 Getting the Most from your Diversity Dollars,' BCG (2017)
An important indicator for cultural inclusion is the extent to which employees feel respected, heard and encouraged to participate. It is encouraging, therefore, to see the majority of staff survey respondents feeding back positively in this respect and indicating positive perceptions of workplace culture: 78% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that co-workers generally treat each other with respect; and 70% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that their manager respects and encourages varied viewpoints.

Another indicator of workplace culture relates to perceived instances of bullying and/or harassment. During interviews, workshops and focus groups staff reported accounts of bullying and/or harassment at school or departmental level. Whilst this was by no means apparent in every school or department, the concentration of accounts in relation to specific departments indicated that there were likely to be some hotspots that require further attention.

Queen Mary promotes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of behaviour that might violate the dignity of others. Although 66% of staff survey respondents answered positively that they had not witnessed bullying or harassment in the last 12 months, this raises questions about the experiences of the other 34%. The frequency of perceived instances of bullying and/or harassment, both direct and witnessed, should therefore be a cause for concern for the institution.

In departments where bullying and/or harassment appeared to be frequently observed, staff displayed a general anxiety about speaking out or challenging the status quo. Concerns about being ‘labelled part of the problem’ and/or facing negative repercussions that could affect their career were reported. Several examples were shared in which minority staff (particularly women and BAME women) had raised concerns about bullying with negative consequences.

Perceived fear or anxiety around speaking out was also expressed in relation to the staff survey. Some staff members (the majority of whom were BAME women) stated that they felt there was a risk of being identified through the process, and, had therefore felt unable to respond openly or honestly. Other staff members suggested that concerns around anonymity had prevented them from completing the survey altogether. That a fear of identification should have prevented some employees, in different parts of the organisation, from completing an anonymous survey - delivered, coordinated and analysed by an independent third party - is a cause for concern.

Surveys and staff engagement activities should be perceived as an integral and ongoing way of understanding and improving the workplace, not a means for retribution.

Whilst the admission that some staff felt unable to complete the survey openly and honestly raises questions about the potential integrity of survey responses, that some staff omitted to complete it altogether also raises questions about overall participation. 2,448 employees responded to the survey, accounting for 58% of the staff population at the time of surveying. In order to overcome non-response bias, a response rate of 50% is considered the minimum for opinion research. Whilst Queen Mary succeeded in meeting this response threshold, there is much room to improve engagement across the employee base.5

In addition to shared anxieties about speaking out across the organisation, a number of staff stated that they would not consider using formal reporting channels to address issues or call out what they considered to be malpractice. This came up consistently in focus groups, interviews and a number of workshops.

This sentiment was further reflected in the staff survey. Whilst 51% of respondents felt confident that reported instances of discrimination and/or harassment would be taken seriously, 49% of respondents did not answer positively, suggesting a widespread lack of confidence in Queen Mary’s reporting mechanisms. Qualitative insights indicated a shared mistrust of HR and an overall lack of confidence in grievance and reporting procedures. Many staff suggested that they would

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3 There are many reasons why staff may not have completed the staff survey. Whilst some staff raised concerns about anonymity, others suggested that they felt the exercise was ‘pointless’; having engaged in similar activities in the past and not observing discernible change or action as a result. Other reasons for non-completion included timing (survey dissemination intersected with summer holidays for some staff); survey saturation (some staff had undertaken something similar at school/departmental level); some staff suggested that school-level leaders had failed to promote internally; as well as a general lack of engagement from staff and lack of interest in EDI.
not raise a formal complaint as they did not feel that it would be dealt with effectively. In some cases, staff felt that making a formal report would make matters worse. Examples were shared in which staff who had reported in the past had not felt supported by HR and that, in a number of cases, issues had been exacerbated (perpetuating bullying or negative behaviours). Concerns were also raised about the impartiality of the process and the capability of representatives serving on grievance panels to deal with complex issues (such as sexual misconduct). The absence of informal reporting mechanisms was also apparent.

Since undertaking the review Queen Mary has recognised the need to strengthen reporting processes and is already taking steps to enhance its capacity for mediation. Training is taking place in January 2020 and Queen Mary has joined a network of mediators from a range of other HEIs. This will maximise capacity as well as help to ensure full independence of mediators. The institution is also reviewing its grievance policy which has been revised to emphasise informal resolution. A draft is being shared with SET in early 2020. To strengthen trust and build confidence in the system, Queen Mary may wish to consider an external audit of the grievance procedure.

The presence of microaggressions also emerged during the review. In interviews, focus groups and some workshops, staff reported exposure to unwelcome, discriminatory comments, sometimes coming from line managers or people in position of influence, the upshot of which had led them to feel unwelcome, alienated, and, on occasion, invalidated. Several of these examples had racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic undertones.

Microaggressive behaviours can compromise a sense of integration, productivity and staff engagement. In some cases, staff reported experiencing negative impacts on their mental health. For many PS staff, these experiences were exacerbated by a perceived hierarchy between academic and PS staff. Numerous examples were shared in which PS staff felt they had been disrespected, ‘talked down to’ or ‘undermined’ by academic colleagues, leaving them feeling ‘deflated’, ‘demoralised’ and disengaged. Facing these sorts of behaviours can be particularly damaging for people with one or more protected characteristics.

Encouragingly, since undertaking the review, Queen Mary has taken a number of steps to reduce the incidence of bullying, harassment and negative behaviours at an institutional level. Bold new EDI training programmes designed to challenge ways of thinking, cultural norms, conscious and unconscious bias and drive behaviour change have been developed and are now being piloted. Training includes a mandatory introduction to EDI for all staff, inclusive leadership training for leaders and line managers, a session titled ‘Talking About Race’ (including content on understanding and mitigating microaggressions), trans awareness training and disability awareness training. The institution intends to introduce LGBT+ awareness training at a later date. These new training programmes should provide a strong foundation to inform staff and set the tone for inclusion across the institution.

The development of a ‘Ways of Working’ behavioural framework, being rolled out in 2020, should also encourage positive ways of working and drive behaviour change, strengthening working relationships across the institution. It is intended that the framework be embedded across the full employment lifecycle (including recruitment, probation, promotion and reward) and will help strengthen working relationships between all staff as well as reduce perceived hierarchy between academic and PS roles.

Queen Mary has also recognised the need to refresh and innovate reporting channels. An online anonymous disclosure channel, ‘Report and Support,’ which allows staff to disclose incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct or hate crime was launched in 2019 and has now been rolled out across the institution. Moving forward, Queen Mary will take steps to drive transparency, by publishing high-level data from the tool as part of its EDI annual report.

Additionally, to help respond effectively to complaints of bullying and harassment, work to launch the Dignity Disclosure Officer network has been prioritised. At the time of the review, training for Dignity Disclosure Officers (DDOs) did not appear to have been completed. Few staff appeared to be aware of the programme, suggesting that it had not been well signposted. Those that were
aware of the scheme voiced concerns about the approach and there were doubts about how volunteers (rather than trained professionals) would be effectively trained to deal with sensitive, complex - and in some cases - legal issues.

Since undertaking the review, a second campaign to recruit DDOs has taken place and DDOs are now being trained in a range of skills including EDI awareness as well as the new Report and Support system. Role descriptions have been developed to clarify expectations of the position and signpost relevant opportunities. This is welcome progress, but there are some questions about the sustainability of the DDO role. Supporting victims of harassment or bullying may be tiring and require emotional labour. Queen Mary should consider how it plans to support staff undertaking these roles.

Given the variation of perceived culture across schools and departments, further work is being undertaken at school-level. Staff survey data is being used to inform local action plans to address any key themes identified. The survey captured insights around a number of themes, including EDI, so departments have a robust base of information from which to explore and enhance their culture and practices. Establishing an inclusive culture across the institution, without exception, is important for Queen Mary, so this local level investigation is much needed.

Lastly, Queen Mary is working with an external consultant to develop a framework for a bullying and harassment conference to take place in 2020. Hosted by Queen Mary, the conference will include a range of external speakers, and colleagues from across the sector will be invited to attend. This inter-institution approach will provide a forum to share best practice and identify innovative approaches to mitigate harassment.

**Recommendations**

1. **Launch an internal role modelling campaign,** showcasing diverse and intersectional talent at all levels of the organisation. Ensuring this campaign is visible on the external website (on EDI pages and linked to recruitment/careers pages) will help demonstrate the diversity of Queen Mary’s workforce to potential candidates.

2. **It is encouraging that additional staff networks are being launched for protected groups.** Any new or existing staff network appointments (chairs, coordinators and committee members) should be given appropriate time allocations and recognition for additional work undertaken. Appropriate space and budget should also be provided.

3. **School-level EDI focus groups or workshops should be undertaken to inform school and departmental-level action plans.** Insights would be used in addition to existing survey data to shape local-level inclusion action plans with clearly defined deliverables, lines of accountability and timelines. As well as identifying areas for improvement and hotspots for bullying, this approach would highlight EDI best practice to be disseminated across the organisation.

4. **To counter bullying in the long-term, the institution must have robust, effective and monitored policies in place, that are centrally implemented.** Whilst policies exist, to be effective they must include mechanisms for detecting, recording, reporting and dealing with policy breaches, and that the institution as a whole take proactive action in holding people to account.

5. **Develop team-based programmes on ‘successful ways of working together’ to encourage collaborative working between academic and PS staff at a local level.** This has been successfully piloted by a department at Queen Mary. The piloted programme informed participants about the benefits of mutual respect and took place at an off-site setting to encourage teambuilding, camaraderie and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Departments with perceived incidents of bullying/harassment (evidenced through the staff survey or complaints to HR), are encouraged to adopt a similar approach.

6. **Launch an institution-wide microaggression campaign to challenge stereotypical ways of thinking and to mitigate everyday instances of biased language and behaviours.** Digital media
or poster campaigns can be effective, resource-efficient ways to raise awareness of staff (and students). Leveraging multiple, simultaneous channels will help to maximise reach and impact. It is recommended that a microaggression awareness campaign be delivered at an institutional level exploring experiences of minority and protected groups and intersecting themes.4

7. Follow the example of other academic institutions who are making complaints processes more transparent by publishing anonymous data, annually, on the number of cases filed, the proportion that were upheld, the proportion that were rejected and the resultant outcomes or actions taken. Reporting in this way would drive transparency, demonstrating that a clear system is in place and that action is taken when needed, building staff confidence and encouraging staff to engage with the system should they need to.

8. Build on Queen Mary’s emerging EDI programme with the following:
   a. Lead EDI best practice workshops, inviting external stakeholders to share best practice approaches and insights;
   b. Launch internal ‘EDI awards’ or celebrations to recognise EDI best practice, achievements or innovative projects across the institution; and
   c. Recognise, integrate and learn from the breadth of EDI-related research that is underway across the institution. There is some excellent work in motion, but it does not appear to be signposted or joined up at a central level. Harnessing these efforts – as an institution – has the potential to uncover innovative approaches to EDI that the university can pioneer as well as set the organisation apart as an EDI thought leader. Queen Mary may wish to consider launching an ‘EDI Unit’ to oversee this effort, led by the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion in collaboration with the EDI team and the EDISG.

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**EDI infrastructure**

**Data management**

Responses to the HR review indicated that a consistent approach to tracking diversity data across the institution was lacking. Limitations in existing systems and integration capability, together with a lack of investment to innovate and update these systems have significantly hampered Queen Mary’s ability to identify and analyse trends (particularly in relation to potential discrimination or structural bias) and measure progress.

The lack of clean and consistent centralised data has made it difficult for staff to extract relevant insights at school or departmental level. As a result, schools/departments have adopted their own approach to data management, with what appears to be varying levels of success.

During the review it was evident that the lack of robust, easily accessible, centralised data had been a source of frustration to staff across the institution, particularly those who had been involved in EDI activities. Staff also reflected on the fact that issues related to data management fell disproportionately on PS staff. A lack of available resource to support data analysis was consistently reported.

Since the review Queen Mary has recognised the need for more support with data analysis and will soon be recruiting a dedicated EDI Data Analyst. This role should enable the institution to

4 For some examples of microaggression awareness campaigns, see the following:
   - Inclusion starts with I: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q88Ju6nkcg
   - An everyday dimension of racism: Why we need to understand microaggressions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCBJZQrqXG0; https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/a6eb506f-af76-42f9-b6f6-eab207df450b
   - #Whatsmicroaggression
garner rich and ongoing insights about EDI performance and progress as well as support accreditation work.

Additionally, and in connection with work underway for Athena SWAN, Queen Mary has developed a dashboard using Power BI to make quantitative analysis more accessible and more consistent across submissions. The dashboards are available across all faculties to assist with local departmental submissions. Continued refinements and improvements are underway to ensure that the Power BI tool provides as much useful data as possible, in an accessible form. A data group has also been established to facilitate ongoing discussion and refinement of data provision.

More broadly, the institution continues to innovate, update and centralise approaches to data management and is developing an integrated system that will make possible the consistent capturing, analysis and reporting of data across the institution.

Policies procedures and practices

During the review positive examples were identified in which schools, departments and faculties had implemented progressive policies or practices designed to promote EDI. Particular examples shared included trans-inclusive practices, initiatives to support female academics returning from maternity leave (relieving them of teaching duties for one or more terms in order to focus on research), funds to support childcare whilst travelling to conferences as well as policy evolutions around women’s health, fertility and equal parental leave. Some successful initiatives piloted at faculty level, such as fertility and menopause policies, had been recognised as best practice and were being rolled out across the institution. Moving forwards, Queen Mary should look to identify and share more of this local-level best practice.

In spite of EDI policies being in place, a lack of consistency around policy application across departments was apparent in the review. This was felt to be unfair and inequitable and had led to resentment and discontent amongst staff. A lack of clarity and frustration around flexible working came up as a particular point of contention. Whilst academic staff appeared to have the freedom to work flexibly, this did not appear to be the case for many PS staff, some of whom had been informed categorically that flexible working would not be available in their department, in spite of the policy statement ‘any Queen Mary employee can apply to work flexibly by requesting a change to their contract.’ This was thought to disproportionately and negatively affect women in PS roles who tended to have responsibility for childcare or other caring responsibilities.

Insights from focus groups highlighted the need for specific policies designed to support and empower minority groups. In particular, a lack of clarity around policies and practices to support staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions was cited. The need for comprehensive trans-inclusive policies was also apparent.

The perceived need for better and more effective policies was also evidenced in the staff survey, with just 36% of respondents agreeing that there were ‘effective policies in place to support [them] if [they] experience stress or pressure.’ A lack of general awareness of policies was indicated in the review. This may have contributed to this perception; staff who are unaware of existing policies are unlikely to feel supported. Additionally, a lack of confidence in the formal grievance processes, the absence of informal reporting and conflict resolution channels, as well as a general mistrust of HR, are likely to be other contributing factors.

Since the review work has taken place to improve the visibility and accessibility of EDI policies which are now clearly posted on the website. Queen Mary has also been taking steps to refresh and modernise EDI-related procedures and practices. In particular, an action plan has been shaped to embed trans inclusion. As part of this process, a trans policy has been launched together with a campaign on pronouns. Work is currently in progress to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support transition, including IT systems, gender-neutral language in communications and the provision of gender-neutral toilets. Additionally, trans-awareness training is being rolled out for front line staff and managers.

Training
The review identified a need for consistent, robust and mandatory EDI training, delivered at an institutional level. This was evidenced in the HR review as well as qualitative insights from staff in workshops, interviews and focus groups. During these sessions staff shared instances of racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, biphobic and biased language, assumptions and behaviours, some of which appeared to be quite commonplace across the institution.

It is therefore encouraging that a new suite of training is being developed and piloted. This will be rolled out to all new starters in the first instance, and more widely across existing staff in the longer term. In addition to the core programme, Queen Mary is prioritising refreshing and relaunching its unconscious bias offering, inclusive leadership, active bystander and trans awareness training. A longer-term programme encompassing a broader range of protected characteristics is also being planned, with bespoke training for leaders and people managers.

**Accreditation**

Queen Mary has been awarded an Institutional Silver for Athena SWAN, benefiting external reputation and funding. However, during the review, scepticism was expressed in relation to the overall impact and success of the programme. Staff across the institution felt that the ‘motive’ or ‘intention’ for pursuing AS was flawed, and that achieving an ‘award’ appeared to supersede any substantive or long-term commitment to gender equality or equality in more general terms. In some cases, this had led to cynicism from staff who questioned Queen Mary’s commitment to EDI.

The lack of a clear EDI strategy designed to embed gender equality (together with other diversity strands and intersectional themes), further perpetuated this view, with a great deal of AS-related effort and activity taking place across the institution, but without a clear, centralised or joined-up approach. It also appeared that AS work undertaken at an institutional level had not been appropriately prioritised or sustained, with GESAT being dissolved and then reinstated in order to meet submission deadlines.

There was a shared perception, primarily from women, that AS work was not having the desired impact on culture for women. There was unanimous recognition of the burden of work required to put forward a submission. Some women reported how they had been ‘warned off’ getting involved with AS committees because of the volume of work and associated lack of recognition. Ironically, there was recognition that the work required to undertake AS tended to fall most consistently on the female staff that the charter is designed to help.

In some cases, women reported that the obtaining of an AS award had actively ‘masked’ gender inequalities, thereby enabling inequitable behaviours and structures to be maintained.

A particular feeling of dissonance and discomfort was observed in women who had held active or leadership roles on AS committees. In these cases women reported feeling conflicted: on the one hand, they recognised that their working contexts were not fully progressive or inclusive for women; on the other hand, they felt a keen pressure from leaders and/or school heads to deliver on AS and achieve an award.

During the review, the majority of EDI resource appeared to be AS-related (or with some expectation to support AS objectives). As such, AS appeared to be the primary vehicle for driving and embedding EDI across the institution. This was evident in roles assigned at school or departmental level, as well as centralised EDI resource. AS alone, however, is no substitute for a comprehensive EDI strategy. The level of resource applied to AS (in comparison to other, broader or more ‘foundational’ EDI activities) should be carefully considered.

Intersectionality is vital to understanding inequality and it is not clear, at this stage, the extent to which AS-related work at Queen Mary is successfully integrating intersectional themes and considerations. During the review it was clear that AS was widely perceived to be an initiative designed to support the progression of women – particularly those in academic roles. Many PS staff felt that their progression was not actively considered as part of AS, and that the programme fell short in promoting gender equality in the broadest sense.
In some schools, the exclusive focus on AS was perceived to be detrimental to other minority groups. For example, some BAME men raised concerns about the lack of support mechanisms and development opportunities designed to drive BAME progression.

Lastly, there is a risk that framing gender (in)equality in terms of ‘parity’ between women and men can erase the experiences of non-binary, genderqueer and/or intersex staff and students. AS submissions frequently use binary language to discuss gender inequality, thereby failing to account for how individuals who do not identify as women or men might experience marginalisation. Queen Mary should give consideration to this for future submissions.

Other accreditation schemes have also been undertaken, namely Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index. The Race Equality Charter has also been considered. It is recognised that these schemes can provide a useful framework for progress, but there is a risk that resources get sucked into submission work, without first laying the necessary foundations required to embed sustainable EDI practices in the long-term.

**Recommendations**

1. Continue to innovate and integrate Queen Mary’s data management systems. The institution should have a clear view of the proportion of grievances filed that relate to diversity matters and protected characteristics. Diversity data related to training, promotion and re-grading should be regularly assessed and reported on. It is encouraging that some of this work is underway, but it is important that it be maintained and completed with necessary and ongoing investment.

2. Ensure there are formal and regular touchpoints for protected groups to engage with Queen Mary, informing race, disability, gender and LGBT+ best practice. Forums should facilitate staff consultation to develop and test policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and appropriately serve minority groups. If launched, BAME, women’s and disability networks could provide effective channels for this sort of engagement.

3. There is a particular need to shape and signpost policies and practices to support Queen Mary’s disabled workforce. The institution should consider the following:
   a. Open up the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to staff. There is already some excellent work happening to support students, much of which could be used to support staff directly as well as inform line managers.
   b. Appoint and signpost a dedicated point of contact to lead on engagement with disabled staff. This would be the ‘go to’ person who can advise on policies, reasonable adjustments, community engagement and any other provisions in place to support disabled staff or staff with disabled dependants. This role might naturally sit within the DDS. If this were to be the case, it would need to be resourced accordingly.
   c. Create a webpage listing all relevant support and services for disabled staff, clearly defining how to access support and necessary next steps. This should be signposted to disabled people as well as line managers to drive awareness and encourage disabled staff to access existing support mechanisms.
   d. Implement a policy to enable disabled academics returning from long-term sick leave to take teaching sabbaticals, relieving them of teaching duties to enable them to focus on research. This has been proven to be an effective approach for returning academics who have taken extended periods of maternity leave or other career breaks.
   e. Continue to improve facility access across campuses. Improved signage, better reliable lift access and consistent lighting have been cited as key areas for attention.

4. It is important for any accreditation work to be superseded by strong EDI foundations and a comprehensive institutional EDI strategy. Much of this work is already underway, and continued attention and investment should be given to EDI data management, training, policy development and Queen Mary’s emerging EDI programme of events and activities to provide a solid bedrock for accreditation work.
5. In addition to existing resources for AS, appropriate resource should be put in place to support the submission processes for Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index and/or the Race Equality Charter if undertaken.

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Development

Identifying and nurturing talent

Queen Mary has some programmes in place designed to support the development of women and BAME staff, including Aurora and Springboard leadership programmes (for women), and the B-Mentor scheme (for BAME staff). During the review, staff who participated in these programmes talked positively about their experiences, reflecting that they had ‘boosted confidence,’ enhanced leadership skills and, in some cases, provided ‘clarity of thought’ around personal ambitions, career direction and development plans. In addition to learning and having time out to reflect on their career and development, staff appreciated the networking opportunity, commenting on the value of connecting and sharing experiences with others across the institution or, in the case of B-Mentor, expanding their network externally.

Some staff suggested that attending these programmes would likely support their career development in the future, but no one was able to share examples of how they had already progressed as a result of taking part.

Whilst a number of female staff spoke positively about their experiences of Aurora or Springboard, there was a sense that spaces on these programmes were limited or inaccessible. Staff also acknowledged issues with B-Mentor, stating that it was difficult to get on the programme, that it did not appear to be well managed and that the lack of BAME senior mentors (both at Queen Mary and other institutions), meant that opportunities were limited.

Additionally, the HR review suggested that the impact of these leadership programmes was not measured. A consequence of this is that there is no tangible way to assess whether these programmes are supporting the desired outcomes or driving return on investment.

The HR review also indicated that Queen Mary’s talent pipeline is not assessed for diversity. If the institution is to embrace and nurture its internal talent, it is important that this talent is first identified, then developed and harnessed. The lack of current diverse representation at senior levels, particularly with respect to female and BAME staff (across academia and PS), should encourage Queen Mary to take a more proactive approach to shaping and investing in its diverse talent pipeline.

In all focus groups, minority staff (female, BAME, disabled and LGBT+) commented that the lack of diversity and role models in senior positions had negatively impacted career expectations.

In focus groups, disabled staff commented on the absence of development opportunities designed to shape Queen Mary’s disabled talent pipeline. Given that programmes were in place for other protected groups (women and BAME staff), this was not considered to be fair. There was also a shared recognition that it can be harder for disabled staff to take on the sort of extra work and responsibilities that are typically considered in support of promotions, thereby disadvantaging their careers and opportunities to progress. Disabled staff commented that they would very much value a mentoring programme or other development opportunities, particularly if time could be formally set aside to undertake these activities.

This need to support the development potential of disabled staff in particular was also reflected in the staff survey, with positive responses from disabled staff to the majority of ‘development’ questions, scoring statistically significantly lower than the university overall.

More broadly, a number of staff reported that line managers across the institution did not appear to be actively engaged in developing their direct reports. This was the cause of frustration to some staff, particularly those in PS roles. To get the most out of staff, all managers should be proactively discussing development opportunities with direct reports. There was a further
perception that line managers were not always equipped to have difficult conversations about performance or development opportunities. Staff also recognised that more investment was required to bolster organisational development and enhance the capability of people managers to effectively lead and develop their teams.

Promotions

Although the new academic promotions guidelines were a point of contention for some during the review, others felt that they had brought clear benefits, especially in relation to EDI. The inclusion of the Faculty Academic Lead for EDI on faculty promotions panels, with the objective of calling out bias and assessing the inclusivity of the process, was particularly welcome. The presence of someone ‘external’ to the school or faculty was also valued, helping to bring new perspectives and/or recognising a breadth of work that was not necessarily acknowledged internally.

Staff, particularly women and BAME women, who had identified strong role models within their respective school or department, generally spoke more positively about opportunities to progress. In these cases the visibility of female or BAME role models or strong mentors was valued, positively impacting staff engagement as well as long-term career aspirations.

Insights from staff focus groups suggested that many minority staff did not feel that opportunities to progress were fair at Queen Mary. BAME females in particular suggested that the ‘bar [was] higher’ for BAME staff, and although the process for academic promotions was deemed to be largely transparent, this was not considered to be the case for people of colour, who commented on ‘goal posts changing’, an ‘invisible bar’ and ‘different standards’ compared with white counterparts.

PS staff across the institution also reported a lack of perceived opportunities to progress and felt that paths for PS promotion were unclear. PS staff also commented on the absence of PS networking opportunities. A number of people, particularly women and BAME staff, reported feeling ‘stuck’ in a particular role, without clarity on how to progress. Some commented on the value of secondments or ‘sideways steps’ that had helped them to widen experience or move up the ladder. However, there was a general lack of awareness of this kind of approach and staff felt it would be beneficial to share case studies outlining progressive steps that PS staff had taken.

Significant variation in school, institute and departmental-level approaches to promotions and progression were noted. In some cases, biased practices had been observed, with influential people actively supporting or discouraging certain people to apply. In other parts of the institution where school leaders had demonstrated a commitment to EDI and had embedded inclusive processes in their departments, certain dynamics, behaviours and trends were observed that had implicitly encouraged less-diverse candidates to apply, whilst simultaneously deterring potential minority candidates. One leader described a situation in which a candidate of equal merit, who happened to be Black and female, had been implicitly discouraged from applying for a promotion; she was ‘less certain of herself’ and when informed that there were others in the running for the promotion, and that there wasn’t certainty she would get the role, this was sufficient to deter her from applying. Her white, male counterparts, on the other hand, felt encouraged to submit applications even though they were told the same thing.

Shared perceptions of ‘nepotistic promotions’ were also highlighted in the women’s and disabled focus groups.

Recommendations

1. Additional work is needed to embed diversity within Queen Mary’s talent management strategy. In particular, line managers should be encouraged to identify diverse staff with managerial and leadership potential, and directly engage in proactive conversations with those staff during performance appraisals. Queen Mary should analyse progression data for diverse staff, and BAME staff in particular.
2. Where possible, existing development and mentoring programmes, such as B-Mentor, should be expanded to maximise capacity and reach. Opportunities for both academic and PS staff should be clearly signposted. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives will enhance Queen Mary’s internal and external reputation. Steps should be taken to carefully monitor and evaluate the success of existing programmes, capturing data on subsequent promotions (and the number of promotions applied for), impact on participant confidence, likelihood to apply for promotions as well as feedback and ratings from participants.

3. There is an opportunity for Queen Mary to further engage and develop its disabled staff population through a mentoring scheme or a leadership programme. This could be an effective empowerment tool, providing opportunities for disabled staff to develop their skills as well as encourage them to pursue further career opportunities. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives could enhance Queen Mary’s reputation when it comes to disability awareness, encouraging existing disabled staff to disclose disabilities whilst helping to attract new disabled talent into the organisation.

4. Give careful consideration to the way line managers are selected, developed and managed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are able to perform their role effectively. Specific and additional training in line management, communications and inclusive leadership may be required to ensure people managers are effective and can get the most out of diverse teams.

5. Consider how best to shape pathways for PS promotions and career development. This might entail opening up development/leadership programmes explicitly for PS staff; proactively promoting opportunities for lateral development (such as secondments or cross-departmental projects); showcasing PS role models who can discuss career progression; convening workshops to promote interview skills and/or enhance CVs; or setting up networking opportunities to enable PS staff to connect, provide informal mentoring and share approaches to career development. Collaborating with existing and future employee networks (such as QMOOut or institutional networks for women, BAME and disabled staff) will help ensure strong engagement from diverse staff in PS.

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Leadership & accountability

Strategy

The university 2030 strategy centres around equality, diversity and inclusion, recognising inclusion as a strategic enabler for future success. Queen Mary’s vision, to be ‘the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere’ is commendable, and its diverse student population provides a strong foundation with which to embark on this journey. Whilst there is much work to be done to turn this vision into a reality, it is encouraging to see this narrative outlined at the highest level.

Being ‘inclusive’ is one of Queen Mary’s five core values:

“We will be inclusive and maintain our proud tradition of nurturing and supporting talented students and staff regardless of their background and circumstances, and continually enhance our strong engagement with our local and global communities.”

Other core values also closely align with principles relating to EDI, calling for ‘openness’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘understanding’ (collegial), recognising the impact of ‘collective working’ (pride), fostering ‘innovation’ and ‘disrupt[ing] conventional thought’ (ambitious) and upholding the ‘highest ethical standards’ and operating with ‘integrity’ (ethical). These values should underpin all that Queen Mary does, providing a strong and consistent foundation for EDI activities across the institution.

To be a leader in the field of EDI, it will be important for Queen Mary to adopt a bold and innovative approach to inclusion, pioneering new initiatives, sharing best practice and driving thought leadership across the sector. There is some work to do to embed EDI fundamentals before Queen
Mary can adopt a truly cutting-edge approach to EDI. However, the institution is already taking steps to pilot and cultivate fresh ideas. In particular, a funding proposal has been developed to offer a finite number of grants (or a defined pot of money to allocate according to need) to support staff and students to develop projects designed to further and realise Queen Mary’s vision to be the most inclusive university. This could be an effective ‘bottom up’ approach to embedding inclusion across the university.

At the time of review a clear, coherent action plan on how to realise institutional EDI ambitions did not appear to be in place. There was a concern that without a centralised plan Queen Mary’s approach to EDI risked being disparate and inefficient, and was unlikely to achieve desired outcomes. Since the review a short-term strategy has been developed with proposals outlined for a medium to long-term EDI strategy. The proposals detail an integrated approach for progressing gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality across the institution. This joined-up approach is much needed.

Moving forwards, it is proposed that the strategy is progressed as a collaboration between the EDI team and the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion, working with the EDISG.

**Senior leadership**

The undertaking of this external EDI review, commissioned by the Principal, demonstrates a clear commitment from Queen Mary to scrutinise its internal culture and EDI practices.

Leadership structures are already in place to facilitate cultural transformation and embed inclusion. A member of SET is currently the institutional lead for EDI across Queen Mary and another member of SET currently chairs the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT). Each academic faculty has a nominated academic lead for EDI and each school has an EDI committee. Central Professional Services also has a nominated lead for EDI together with an EDI committee.

Over recent months the Principal and VP Lead for EDI have taken steps to set the tone for inclusion across the institution through a series of all-staff communications.

The appointment of a Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion to lead EDI at the executive level is very welcome. This role will play a pivotal part in ensuring an effective EDI strategy is shaped, prioritised, embedded and sustained in the long-term. Providing appropriate operational support to deliver on EDI work and objectives will be important for this role.

In spite of all-staff EDI communications being circulated by executives, a general perception emerged during the review that Queen Mary’s leadership could do more to actively engage with and support EDI initiatives. In particular, there was discussion around the perceived lack of centralised dialogue in relation to charges of institutional racism. It was noted, however, that some groups had turned down the offer to discuss this topic in an open forum.

Staff also commented on the absence of active institutional support for EDI awareness days and religious festivals, such as Black History Month, International Women’s Day and Ramadan amongst others. Whilst efforts to support the LGBT+ inclusion agenda at an institutional level were recognised, they were not considered to have been well executed. Staff felt that there was a lack of necessary investment or prioritisation of what were considered to be ‘basic’ EDI activities. For many, this was compounded by the perceived lack of diversity across senior roles. Staff frequently commented that leadership teams lacked diversity and staff did not feel that their identities were reflected.

Members of the staff LGBT+ network, QMOut, commented on the lack of formalised budget to support their activities, making it hard to amplify network reach and impact. Insufficient investment was also acknowledged in relation to the absence of a centralised EDI programme, designed to promote awareness, engage the institution across a range of EDI topics and celebrate key dates in the diversity calendar. Many staff demonstrated frustration that existing EDI investment and resource appeared to be almost exclusively focused on Athena SWAN.

In focus groups minority staff commented on the absence of demonstrable executive sponsorship. Executives who sponsor the EDI agenda and EDI-related initiatives not only play a
key role in setting the tone and culture of an organisation, they also work to unlock necessary investment and ensure EDI matters are prioritised. Although Queen Mary has an AS champion, this role appears to have the primary objective of delivering on AS submissions, rather than the broader and more primary objective of driving gender equality across the institution. At the current time, Queen Mary does not have appointed sponsors to champion other diversity strands.

Management

The capability of line managers (and middle managers in particular) was cited with frequency as a barrier to cultural inclusion at Queen Mary. In focus groups and interviews, staff recounted instances in which managers had demonstrated bias or prejudice through language or stereotypical assumptions about staff and students. The absence of effective performance management and poor people management emerged as a consistent theme throughout the review. A robust route to developing management capability at Queen Mary did not appear to be in place. Staff described behaviours that conflicted with Queen Mary’s ‘inclusive’ core value and shared examples of ineffective management practices, such as a reluctance to challenge negative or biased behaviours, poor communication, apathy around developing staff, and an inability to role model inclusive behaviours.

Governance

The EDI governance structure surfaced as a point of contention during the review. In particular, the structure did not appear to be well understood by staff across the organisation and many felt that it was overly complex and lacked institutional cohesion.

Concerns around the transparency of EDI-related governance also emerged as a consistent theme. Staff did not appear to be well informed about activities or successful EDI-related outcomes associated with existing governance structures. There was recognition that these structures were relatively new and had only been in place for the last 12 months, but there was also a recognition that progress would require action and accountability.

There was a common perception across the staff-body that the pace of EDI progress had been slow and that more demonstrable action could be taken. Staff questioned whether the steering group, committees and forums were achieving desired outcomes.

In the staff survey, just 40% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘Things Queen Mary does turn out well.’ During workshops, focus groups and interviews staff frequently commented on the absence of clear EDI deliverables, tangible action or progress reports and lessons learned. This led to a shared perception that EDI initiatives were neither successful nor impactful. Whilst the staff survey question was general (and did not refer exclusively to EDI-related activities), it is conceivable that with more demonstrable action, more reporting on progress and transparency around EDI-related matters, staff might be encouraged to reflect more positively on the outcomes of ‘things Queen Mary does.’

Lastly, the remit and responsibilities of the EDI Senior/Academic Lead may need to be redefined in order to ensure the role can effectively facilitate the work of existing EDI roles and structures. This should be addressed with the appointment of the new VP, People, Culture and Inclusion.

Recommendations

1. Build on existing short-term strategy to shape a clear, centralised EDI strategic action plan with clear objectives and actions designed to support gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality. Action plans should be designed to embed EDI across the institution and account for intersectional themes. Action plans should be widely disseminated and progress reported on in a timely fashion. Transparency around this work (and delivery of a race equality action plan in particular), will help demonstrate Queen Mary’s commitment to EDI and address charges of institutional racism.

2. The strategic action plan should be accompanied with the provision of resource and strategic direction at the highest level of the organisation together with credible investment. The appointment of the Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion is an important step and
provides a powerful opportunity to set out the institution’s longer-term strategy, EDI priorities, budget and action plans.

3. More can be done to visibly champion EDI from the top. Transparency, open dialogue and engagement around EDI is much needed at the current time to galvanise trust across the staff (and student) population. In addition to sharing a comprehensive and integrated EDI strategic action plan, it is recommended that leaders undertake a series of open discussions, town halls or forums, engaging all staff and students proactively on the topic of EDI, sharing strategic action plans, providing channels for feedback and dialogue, and promoting a collaborative approach to embedding inclusion.

4. Leaders should be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment by attending and speaking at EDI-related events and activities, actively engaging with and celebrating EDI awareness days and festivals, supporting staff networks and, where possible, spending time talking to people and listening to staff and student opinions and experiences. Leaders can also demonstrate awareness and support for inclusion issues through blogging or having an active voice on social media channels.

5. Appoint senior sponsors to champion key diversity strands. Sponsors should be visible and vocal advocates who use their platform to champion inclusion at every opportunity. Sponsors must be passionate and authentic advocates for inclusion and work in close collaboration with the staff groups/networks they represent. Sponsors can be allies or share affinity with the group that they champion. Whilst it is encouraging that Queen Mary has a dedicated Athena SWAN (AS) champion at SET level, this role should be expanded beyond AS to drive gender equality in the broadest sense.

6. Convene EDI leadership roundtables with executives from other institutions. Roundtables would bring together leaders (principals, VPs, deans and other executives) to promote thought leadership, share best practice, investigate new, innovative approaches to inclusion in academia, explore collaborations and set new benchmarks and standards of practice for the sector. These sessions would begin to position Queen Mary as a sector leader and would also provide invaluable opportunities for sharing, learning and innovating approaches to inclusion. Queen Mary may also wish convene other cross-institutional stakeholder groups such as executive sponsors, EDI managers and chairs of staff networks.

7. Leaders on SET, Senate, Council and those in leadership roles at school and department-level are encouraged to become more vocal and visible, and actively engage in role model campaigns. This will help to address the perceived absence of diverse role models at senior levels. Additionally, Queen Mary should continue to work to ensure that diverse appointments are reflected at the highest level across the institution, both for academic and PS roles. To achieve this, inclusive recruitment practices should be implemented for all senior-level appointments.

8. Develop and embed a strong culture of performance management. This will help to drive accountability and high performance, enabling the institution to achieve the best outcomes and workforce. People managers must be set up for success with the capability to manage diverse teams, uphold and role model organisational values, implement policies and support learning and development activities.

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5 Some of the most effective sponsorship models include the appointment of dual champions: an ally champion and a minority champion with shared affinity with the represented group.
6 Inter-institution collaborations might involve cross-organisational development or mentoring programmes, network events or the co-creation of policies, procedures and practices.
7 Queen Mary may wish to consider implementing a 360 feedback process for leaders and managers, assessing inclusive leadership and associated behaviours. If undertaken effectively, 360 feedback can be a useful tool to strengthen team work and accountability, assess good diversity behaviour and encourage managers to lead by example.
9. Existing governance groups (steering groups, committees, forums, etc) should clearly contribute to the organisational EDI strategy in a joined-up and cohesive way, with well-defined objectives, lines of accountability and timelines for delivery. A more cohesive approach at school and faculty level with consistent frameworks would promote efficiency and the sharing of best practice. Moving forward, it will be important for governance groups to focus on action and delivery.

10. Steering groups should be set up for protected groups, such as race equality, disability equality and LGBT+ equality to support the development, monitoring and reviewing of Queen Mary’s strategic action plans. Ideally, these groups should have representation on the EDISG.

11. Improve transparency by widely disseminating EDI action plans and reporting on progress. Minutes from all committees and steering groups should be made available and consistently published on websites and staff intranets. More transparency around EDI work (progress on goals achieved as well as failures or lessons learned) will help demonstrate action and accountability, building trust across the workforce and challenging negative perceptions about the outcomes of the ‘things Queen Mary does.’
Appendix

Appendix 1: Summary of recommendations

Recruitment

1. A more rigorous approach to monitoring recruitment data, capturing and analysing the diversity of applicants at all stages of the process should be introduced. Data analysis is currently undertaken, but investment is needed to update systems and improve the quality of insights.

2. Hiring managers should be held to account for any breaches in approach and deviation from the recruitment policy and guidelines.

3. Given the range of hiring needs across the institution, multiple recruitment channels are likely to be required to maximise impact. Hiring managers should consider using diverse recruitment websites/networks and advertising roles across a broad range of platforms, websites or forums visited by underrepresented groups or dedicated to minorities. Advertising across multiple platforms will help Queen Mary reach the widest pool of candidates.

4. A blind recruitment pilot should be conducted in a specific school, taking steps to harness learnings and disseminate across the institution. Signposting this inclusive approach at the point of vacancy advertising may help attract diverse applicants.

5. Pay attention to the language and composition of job descriptions. Hiring managers may wish to test the linguistic gender-coding of job specifications using the gender decoder tool: http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/ for example. This can help to ensure that descriptions are gender neutral or that they actively encourage underrepresented genders as appropriate for specific roles.

6. Work with executive recruitment agencies that specialise in diverse appointments, particularly for senior roles. The desire for a diverse pool must be clearly communicated, reinforced and prioritised over cost or time to hire. When selecting agencies, ask them to demonstrate their track record in diverse appointments and their internal approach to embedding EDI.

7. Develop a candidate feedback mechanism (such as a candidate survey) to assess applicant experiences. Cross-referencing candidate experiences with diversity data can provide insights into bias or potential discriminatory practices that may be present within the recruitment journey.

8. Enhance Queen Mary’s external EDI webpages. A range of EDI-related activities, events, role models and articles/blogs should be showcased. As part of this effort, consider creating a short video dedicated to EDI outlining the institution’s vision, commitment and EDI activities.

9. Shape a clearly defined process through which staff can signpost or raise a flag about recruitment practices that are deemed to be unfair, inequitable or biased. This should be outlined as part of the recruitment training and be clearly signposted on recruitment policies and associated webpages.

10. Implement the following to mitigate bias in candidate selection:
   a. Ahead of sitting on panels, staff should indicate that they have completed required training or refresher courses. Robust checkpoints should be put in place to ensure this happens consistently. This may require the support of a quality Learning Management System for an organisation of Queen Mary’s size and complexity;
b. Ensure there is a common understanding of selection criteria and what to look for in candidates for specific roles. This should include clear instructions on how to submit candidate feedback and avoid bias in language of evaluation;
c. Create a checklist of inclusive recruitment reminders and ‘bias checks’ to be disseminated ahead of panels. Ideally, the chair would run through this checklist with panellists ahead of any interview, to ensure full engagement and alignment; or
d. Ensure that awareness of the impact of unconscious (or conscious) bias during interviews is promoted throughout the process. Panellists should be encouraged to challenge and call out bias.

Informal working practices

1. Launch an internal role modelling campaign, showcasing diverse and intersectional talent at all levels of the organisation. Ensure this campaign is visible on the external website (on EDI pages and linked to recruitment/careers pages).

2. Any new or existing staff network appointments (chairs, coordinators and committee members) should be given appropriate time allocations and recognition for additional work undertaken. Appropriate space and budget should also be provided.

3. Undertake a school-level EDI focus group or workshop to inform local action plans. As well as identifying key areas for improvement and hotspots for bullying, this approach would also serve to highlight areas of EDI best practice that could be disseminated across the organisation.

4. To counter bullying in the long-term, ensure robust, effective and monitored policies are in place, that are centrally implemented. Whilst policies exist, they must include better mechanisms for detecting, recording, reporting and dealing with policy breaches, and that the institution as a whole take proactive action in holding people to account.

5. Develop team-based programmes on ‘successful ways of working together’ to encourage collaborative working between academic and PS staff at a local level. This has been successfully piloted by a department at Queen Mary. The piloted programme informed participants about the benefits of mutual respect and took place at an off-site setting to encourage teambuilding, camaraderie and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Departments with perceived incidents of bullying/harassment (evidenced through the staff survey or complaints to HR), are encouraged to adopt a similar approach.

6. Launch an institution-wide microaggression campaign to challenge stereotypical ways of thinking and mitigate everyday instances of biased language, behaviours and thought processes. Digital media or poster campaigns can be effective, resource-efficient ways to raise awareness of staff (and students). Leveraging multiple, simultaneous channels will help to maximise reach and impact.

7. Make complaints processes more transparent by publishing anonymous data, annually, on the number of cases filed, the proportion that were upheld, the proportion that were rejected and the resultant outcomes or actions taken. Reporting in this way would drive transparency, demonstrating that a clear system is in place and that action is taken when needed, building staff confidence and encouraging staff to engage with the system should they need to.

8. Build on emerging EDI programme with the following:
   a. Lead EDI best practice workshops, inviting external stakeholders to share best practice approaches and insights;
   b. Launch EDI awards or celebrations to recognise EDI best practice, achievements or innovative projects across the institution; and
   c. Recognise, integrate and learn from the breadth of academic EDI-related research that is currently underway across the institution. Queen Mary may wish to consider
launching an ‘EDI Unit’ to oversee this effort, led by the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion in collaboration with the EDI team and the EDISG.

**EDI Infrastructure**

1. Continue to innovate and integrate Queen Mary’s data management systems. The institution should have a clear view of the proportion of grievances filed that relate to diversity matters and protected characteristics. Diversity data related to training, promotion and re-grading should also be regularly assessed and reported on.

2. Ensure there are formal and regular touchpoints for protected groups to engage with Queen Mary, informing race, disability, gender and LGBT+ best practice. Forums should facilitate staff consultation to develop and test policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and appropriately serving all minority groups. If launched, BAME, women’s and disability networks could provide effective channels for this sort of engagement.

3. Shape and signpost policies and practices to support Queen Mary’s disabled staff population. The institution should consider the following:
   a. Open up the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to staff. There is already some excellent work happening to support students, much of which could be used to support staff directly as well as inform line managers.
   b. Appoint and signpost a dedicated point of contact to lead on engagement with disabled staff. This would be the ‘go to’ person who can advise on policies, reasonable adjustments, community engagement and any other provisions in place to support disabled staff or staff with disabled dependants. This role might naturally sit within the DDS. If this were to be the case, it would need to be resourced accordingly.
   c. Create a webpage listing all relevant support and services for disabled staff, clearly defining how to access support and necessary next steps. This should be signposted to disabled people as well as line managers to drive awareness and encourage disabled staff to access existing support mechanisms.
   d. Implement a policy to enable disabled academics returning from long-term sick leave to take teaching sabbaticals, relieving them of teaching duties to enable them to focus on research. This has been proven to be an effective approach for returning academics who have taken extended periods of maternity leave or other career breaks.
   e. Continue to improve facility access across campuses. Improved signage, better reliable lift access and consistent lighting have been cited as key areas for attention.

4. It is important for any accreditation work to be superseded by strong EDI foundations and a comprehensive institutional EDI strategy. Much of this work is already underway, and continued attention and investment should be given to EDI data management, training, policy development and Queen Mary’s emerging EDI programme of events and activities to provide a solid bedrock for accreditation work.

5. In addition to existing resources for AS, appropriate resource should be put in place to support the submission processes for Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index and/or the Race Equality Charter if undertaken.

**Development**

1. Additional work is needed to embed diversity within Queen Mary’s talent management strategy. In particular, line managers should be encouraged to identify diverse staff with managerial and leadership potential, and directly engage in proactive conversations with those staff during performance appraisals. Queen Mary should consider and analyse progression data for diverse staff, and BAME staff in particular.

2. Existing development and mentoring programmes, such as B-Mentor, should be expanded to maximise capacity and reach. Opportunities for both academic and PS staff should be clearly
signposted. Steps should be taken to carefully monitor and evaluate the success of existing leadership and development programmes.

3. Further engage and develop disabled staff through a mentoring scheme or a leadership programme for disabled staff. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives could enhance Queen Mary’s internal and external reputation when it comes to disability awareness, encouraging existing disabled staff to disclose disabilities whilst helping to attract new disabled talent into the organisation.

4. Give careful consideration to the way line managers are selected, developed and managed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are able to perform their role effectively. Specific and additional training in line management, communications and inclusive leadership may be required to ensure people managers are effective and can get the most out of diverse teams.

5. Consider how to shape clear pathways for PS promotions and career development. This might entail opening up PS development/leadership programmes; proactively promoting opportunities for lateral development (such as secondments or cross-departmental projects); showcasing PS role models who can discuss career progression; convening workshops designed to promote interview skills and/or enhance CVs; or setting up networking opportunities or events to enable PS staff to connect with each other, provide informal mentoring and share approaches to career development. Collaborating with existing and future employee networks (such as QMOut or institutional networks for women, BAME and disabled staff) will help ensure strong engagement from diverse staff in PS.

Leadership & accountability

1. Build on existing short-term strategy to shape a clear, centralised EDI strategic action plan with clear objectives and actions designed to support gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality. Action plans should be designed to embed EDI across the institution and account for intersectional themes. Action plans should be widely disseminated and progress reported on in a timely fashion. Transparency around this work (and delivery of a race equality action plan in particular), will help demonstrate Queen Mary’s commitment to EDI and address charges of institutional racism.

2. The strategic action plan should be accompanied with the provision of resource and strategic direction at the highest level of the organisation together with credible investment. The appointment of the Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion is an important step and provides a powerful opportunity to set out the institution’s longer-term strategy, EDI priorities, budget and action plans.

3. Transparency, open dialogue and engagement around EDI is much needed at the current time to galvanise trust across the staff (and student) population. In addition to sharing a comprehensive and integrated EDI strategic action plan, it is recommended that leaders undertake a series of open discussions, town halls or forums, engaging all staff and students proactively on the topic of EDI, providing channels for feedback and dialogue, and promoting a collaborative approach to embedding inclusion.

4. Leaders should be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment by attending and speaking at EDI-related events and activities, actively engaging with and celebrating EDI awareness days and festivals, supporting staff networks and, where possible, spending time talking to people and listening to staff and student opinions and experiences. Leaders can also demonstrate awareness and support for inclusion issues through blogging or having an active voice on social media channels.

5. Appoint senior sponsors to champion diversity strands. Sponsors should be visible and vocal advocates who use their platform to champion inclusion at every opportunity. Sponsors must be passionate and authentic advocates for inclusion and work in close collaboration with the
staff groups/networks they represent. Expand Athena SWAN champion role at SET level to focus on gender equality in the broadest sense.

6. Convene EDI leadership roundtables with executives from other institutions. Roundtables would bring together leaders (principals, VPs, deans and other executives) to promote thought leadership, share best practice, investigate innovative approaches to inclusion in academia, explore collaborations and set new benchmarks and standards of practice for the sector. These sessions would begin to position Queen Mary as a sector leader and would also provide invaluable opportunities for sharing, learning and innovating approaches to inclusion.

7. Leaders on SET, Senate, Council and those in leadership roles at school and department-level are encouraged to become more vocal and visible, and actively engage in role model campaigns. This will help to address the perceived absence of diverse role models at senior levels. Additionally, Queen Mary should continue to work to ensure that diverse appointments are reflected at the highest level across the institution, both for academic and PS roles. To achieve this, inclusive recruitment practices should be implemented for all senior-level appointments.

8. Develop and embed a strong culture of performance management. This will help to drive accountability and high performance, enabling the institution to achieve the best outcomes and workforce. People managers must be set up for success with the capability to manage diverse teams, uphold and role model organisational values, implement relevant policies and support learning and development activities.

9. Existing governance groups (steering groups, committees, forums, etc) should clearly contribute to the organisational EDI strategy in a joined-up and cohesive way, with well-defined objectives, lines of accountability and timelines for delivery. A more cohesive approach at school and faculty level with consistent frameworks would promote efficiency and the sharing of best practice. It will be important for governance groups to focus on action and delivery moving forward.

10. Steering groups should be set up for protected groups, such as race equality, disability equality and LGBT+ equality to support the development, monitoring and reviewing of Queen Mary’s strategic action plans. Ideally, these groups should have representation on the EDISG.

11. Improve transparency around EDI-related activity by widely disseminating action plans and reporting on progress. Minutes from all committees and steering groups should be made available and consistently published on websites and staff intranets. More transparency around EDI work, progress on goals achieved as well as failures or lessons learned will help demonstrate action and accountability, building trust across the workforce.

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8 Inter-institution collaborations might involve cross-organisational development or mentoring programmes, network events and the co-creation of policies, procedures and practices.

9 For example, Queen Mary may wish to consider implementing a 360 feedback process for leaders and managers, assessing inclusive leadership and associated behaviours. If undertaken effectively, 360 feedback can be a useful tool to strengthen teamwork and accountability, assess good diversity behaviour and encourage managers to lead by example.