



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

## **Equality Scheme (2018-2023) Summary**



***Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of  
the Northern Ireland Act 1998***

**If you have any questions or comments on this Summary or if you require it in an alternative format/language please contact the Diversity & Inclusion Unit:**

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## **Introduction**

Queen's University Belfast's Equality Scheme is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation. We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and will commit the necessary resources from those available in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our Equality Scheme can be implemented effectively.

## **Section 75**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ("the Act") requires the University in carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland, we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial groups.

## **Arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 Duties**

Internal arrangements have been put in place for assessing compliance with our Section 75 Duties. Responsibility for the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme lies with Senate, our Governing Body. The Vice-Chancellor is accountable to Senate for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Equality Scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Our Operating Board oversees and reviews the implementation of the Scheme. Other arrangements include:

- All our staff job descriptions include the requirement to comply with our policies and procedures, including our Equality and Diversity Policy and for staff to complete mandatory Diversity training.
- Line managers also have specific responsibility for ensuring compliance in their own work areas.
- We prepare an Annual Progress Report summarising how we have discharged our Section 75 statutory duties (this is known as a "Section 75 Annual Progress Report"). This Report is sent to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland each year and follows its guidance.
- Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties is also reported to Senate annually.

- Our Action Plan will seek to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. It will be implemented through the framework of our Equality Scheme.
- The measures contained within our Action Plan derive from feedback received from stakeholders. This ensures that equality of opportunity and good relations are incorporated at both a strategic and operational level.
- Progress against our Action Plan will be monitored by the Diversity & Inclusion Unit and reported upon annually, both internally and externally to the Equality Commission, as part of the normal cycle of business.

## **Arrangements for consulting**

We will consult on matters to which Equality Scheme and Action Plan relates in accordance with the principles contained in the Equality Commission's guidance. We use a number of consultation techniques to ensure effective consultation and we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees who may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon.

We will consider the accessibility and format of methods of consultation in order to remove any barriers to the consultation process and to ensure meaningful consultation. Information will be made available to consultees in appropriate and where requested, alternative formats to ensure meaningful consultation.

## **Arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

We use screening and equality impact assessment (EQIA) tools to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments, we look at the intended outcomes of the policy in question and follow Equality Commission guidance. The purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

If screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may, on occasion, decide to proceed with an EQIA, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted, we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

## **Publication of assessments and monitoring**

The University will publish completed screening reports regularly on our website. EQIA reports will be published once any impact assessment has been completed. All published information will be accessible and available in alternative formats on request. Results of assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of EQIAs) are available at: [www.qub.ac.uk/diversity/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/diversity/)

Monitoring information, including EQIA monitoring information will be published within our Annual Section 75 Progress Report and on our website.

## **Staff training**

We recognise that staff training and awareness raising plays a crucial role in the effective implementation of the Section 75 duties. Focused training is provided for key staff who are directly involved in taking forward the implementation of the Equality Scheme. We provide a comprehensive menu of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training for our staff, using a blended approach of elearning and face to face sessions. All staff are required to complete online Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias elearning programmes. In addition, all new staff joining the University also receive Equality and Diversity Training as part of the induction process.

## **Public access to information and services we provide**

We strive to ensure that our information and services are accessible. We adhere to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation. We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information and where practicable we will seek to address this. To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we can provide information in alternative formats upon request, where reasonably practicable. We will continue to liaise with the Equality Commission and representative organisations with regard to good practice in this area.

## **Complaints**

The University will carry out an internal investigation of complaints by persons who believe that they have been directly affected by a failure of the University to comply with its approved Equality Scheme. A person wishing to make a complaint should contact the Diversity and Inclusion Unit, Queen's University Belfast. The University will respond substantively to the complainant within one month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes. In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, we will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Commission may require. We will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

## **Publication of the Equality Scheme**

Our Equality Scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from the Diversity and Inclusion Unit. It can be accessed online at: [www.qub.ac.uk/diversity/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/diversity/)  
We will respond to requests for the Equality Scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner.

## **Review of the Equality Scheme**

We will conduct a thorough review of our Equality Scheme, either within five years of submission to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles. Our review will evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions.

In undertaking this review, we will follow any guidance (as may be appropriate) issued by the Equality Commission.

### **Equality Action plan**

The University has adopted an Action Plan to accompany the Equality Scheme. This plan sets out the University's actions it will take to implement our Section 75 duties. The plan will be monitored annually and progress of implementation is reported within the University's Section 75 Annual Progress Report which is submitted to the Equality Commission.