UHI

University of the Highlands and Islands

Gender Action Plan

Lead Officer (Post):	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager
Responsible Office/ Department:	SET
Strategic Lead:	Vice Principal Strategy, Performance and Culture
Responsible Committee:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Date of first version:	19/01/2024
Date of next review:	17/01/2025

Gender Action Plan Summary

Overview	This Gender Action Plan shows our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, demonstrating a strong focus on advancing gender equality.
Purpose	To ensure we are aligned to all relevant legislation and policy for gender equality strategy within the sector including the European Commission's and Horizon Europe gender equality strategy and plan.
Scope	UHI wide, covering staff and students linking as appropriate to APs GAPs.
Consultation	Senior Management Team (SET), Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), Human Resources Practitioner Group (HRPG), Women's Network, Safeguarding Group, Your Students Association and Menopause Working Group.
Implementation and Monitoring	Responsibility of EDI Committee
Risk Implications	Failure to maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive environment that enables UHI to attract and retain staff and students. Difficulties in attracting and retaining funding. Reputational risk
Link with Strategy	PSED Report / UHI Strategic Plan 2030

Contents

1.   Introduction

1.1   As a provider of education and employment, the university values diversity and is committed to encouraging everyone to realise their full potential. To this end, the University continues to work with students, staff, external agencies, and the wider community to develop a positive and enabling culture of work and study.

1.2   "*At UHI, we believe that every individual has the right to feel valued, respected and supported regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is not just a moral obligation, but it is also fundamental to our aim of providing flexible and supported learning opportunities*". Vicki Nairn, Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor.

1.3   UHI has several strands of activity which together underpin our gender action planning:

- Published strategies, with clear goals, detailed actions and measures that have been agreed by senior management.

- Institutional leadership and dedicated resources for the design, implementation, and monitoring of gender equality activity.

- Embedded arrangements for data collection and monitoring which informs activities and targets, allows for ongoing evaluation, and ensures an evidence-led approach.

- Training and capacity building to support the UHI community to understand and work towards our collective goals of gender equality.

2.   Leadership and Resource

2.1   Strategic leadership for the Gender Action plan will be provided by the Vice Principal Strategy, Performance and Culture as the Chair of the EDI Committee which monitors and reports on the actions of a variety of committees and groups who take forward gender actions across the staff and student community. Other resource is provided by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager as part of the HR team.

2.2   UHI is fully committed to resetting and developing a new EDI journey building on our progress to date and which incorporates our core values collaboration, openness, respect, and excellence. Each value reflects the essence of EDI, where we aspire for everyone to feel a sense of belonging. Although each partner has different values, they all place our students and staff at the heart of learning. By working together, we can create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all.

2.3   As of 2023, UHI has become a member of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, giving access to a range of resources, including webinars, case studies, employer guides, tool kits and quick guides. This will enable us to build capacity and offer training to UHI staff and also provides a roadmap (TIDEmark self-assessment) for us to focus on areas which will have the greatest impact.

2.4   EDI Committee, RKEC and the HR Practitioner Group, will steer this action plan to reach all levels and areas of UHI staff, students, and stakeholders. All committees of the university are expected to consider their role on progressing EDI within the institution as part of conducting

their work and this expectation is built into the template for all formal papers produced by these committees.

2.5   Staff and student equality networks including; Women's Network, Aurora Champions Group and Menopause Working Group will provide valuable input to finalising the Gender Action Plan.

3.   Equality Data Monitoring

3.1   Each academic partner collects their own equality monitoring data, information can be found in each AP's Public Sector Equality Monitoring Report, Gender Pay Gap reports or other relevant reports carried out by each partner.

3.2   UHI currently has a workforce which is 62% female (34% of whom are part time) split across our grade structure as follows:

Grade	Male	Female	Total
4	6%	7%	7%
5	7%	24%	18%
6	24%	23%	23%
7	21%	19%	20%
8	16%	9%	12%
9	0%	3%	2%
MG1	4%	2%	3%
SPOT	19%	9%	13%

Just 18% of male staff work part time and slightly more males than females are on temporary contracts (15% males, 12% females).

3.3   In order to monitor our progress in developing all aspects of gender equality, UHI will collect the following metrics:

- Pay:
    - Gap and Average
    - Full Vs Part Vs Hourly rates
    - Hourly rate for open ended Vs temporary contract staff pay
- Years of Service (Bracketed and Average)
- Average Age (Bracketed and Average)
- Promotion by gender over last 3 years
- Average no of employees per manager
- Staff gender split by departments
- Staff gender split between academic and professional services staff

3.4   Gender data monitoring will be led by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager and supported by the HR and Student Records Teams. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager will provide and facilitate data sets and analysis as required to support the work of the EDI Committee and other bodies such as the Athena Swan SAT.

3.5   There are many challenges around data collection, particularly around intersectional protected characteristic's as well as gender identity.   UHI has therefore instigated a staff equality

monitoring survey to begin to address these challenges which is intended to be run each academic year. This captures valuable information on a range of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation. Future reporting will aim to include job family profiles, contract type, recruitment of successful applicants and leavers.

4.   Gender Pay Gap 2023

4.1   In 2023, UHI published the Public Sector Equality Duty progress report, including UHI Gender Pay Gap information and detailed commentary on our aims, challenges and plans can be found in that report. We believe we can build on the sound structures we have in place to continue to reduce and ultimately eliminate our gender pay gap and fully deliver our equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

4.2   Since 2009 we have seen our gender pay gap steadily reduce from 32% in 2017, 22% in 2019, 17.59% in 2022 and again to today's level of 13.31% and 11.09% (median), but we believe we can and should be doing better. We have actively tried to provide an environment which has helped us to increase our female workforce by delivering on the promise to improve our flexible working practices available to staff. In 2017, our female workforce constituted 57.8% of our overall workforce, in 2019 it was 64.3%, in 2022 it was 62.44% and, now in 2023, is at 63.32%. In the last year UHI has undertaken a review over its executive team and the total number of employees at this level has been reduced. However, at the same time, the total percent of female employees at this level has now increased to 75% of the total (three females to one male).

4.3   Gender pay gap monitoring will be led by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager and supported by the HR team. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager will provide and facilitate data sets and analysis as required to support the work of the EDI Committee and other bodies such as the Athena Swan SAT in identifying appropriate actions intended to impact the gap.

5.   Athena Swan

5.1   UHI is currently working toward applying for re-accreditation of the Bronze Level Athena Swan Charter Mark at university-wide level to support and enable the existing departmental accreditation. Work will then build on the actions already in place, developing the existing programmes of activity around gender and identifying new priorities.

5.2   From 2024 a new Self-Assessment Team will be created to include a diverse range of staff and students from all parts of our university community.

6.   Aurora Leadership Programme

6.1   Aurora is Advanced HE's leadership development programme for women, and those who identify as women across the UK and Ireland. This unique partnership which takes positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector has been identified by UHI as one of the key gender action plan drivers.

6.2   UHI has engaged with the programme since 2018, each year participants from across the partnership, explore key areas associated with leadership success: identity, impact and voice, core leadership, politics and influence as well as adaptive leadership skills.

Table 1: Aurora Leadership Programme Participants

Year	Spaces	Number of applicants
2018-19	10	20
2019-20	5	14
2020-21	6	15
2021-22	6	11
2022-23	6	13

6.3   There are currently 6 participants for the UHI 2023-2024 Aurora Leadership Programme.

7. Gender Based Violence

7.1   The UHI Safeguarding Group, working with relevant staff, students and practitioner groups across the university, is responsible for progressing the gender-based violence (GBV) agenda on behalf of UHI. Work has focused on meeting sector recommendations such as Equality Safe in Higher Education (ESHE) Toolkit and taking cognisance of the Emily Test requirements, which UHI Inverness hopes to achieve by 2023. UHI led a sectoral development of online GBV staff training resources, adopted by all Scottish universities and many Colleges, as well as in other organisations. Online student GBV training was also developed and rolled out. A new GBV policy is going through formal approval, sponsored by the Deputy Principal. Around 100 staff from across the university have so far been trained as First Responders and GBV leads for each Academic Partner are being identified. An in-house online GBV disclosure tool has been developed with implementation planned in this academic year.

8. Gender Equality Actions and Responsibilities

Strategy actions

1.   Update existing strategies as required.

2.   Continue to identify new strategic priorities as EDI maturity within the organisation develops.

3.   Publish strategies, reports and data as widely as appropriate to support communication of UHI as an institution of choice for diverse communities.

Leadership and resource actions

4.   Identify future funding opportunities to expand gender-based development programmes e.g. Aurora

5.   Ensure Athena Swan SAT is appropriately embedded into governance and leadership structures so that actions identified can be agreed and supported at institutional level.

Data collection and monitoring actions

6.   Develop reporting tools within staff and student systems to support analysis of issues and

   underpin evidence-based action planning.

7. Reduce the median gender pay gap.

Training and capacity building actions

8. Maintain focus on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, equality impact assessment and other relevant equality related information as an area for improvement and training support.
9. Utilise staff and student networks to identify areas of EDI focus for greatest impact.
10. Develop and communicate programmes for managers utilising Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion materials
11. Monitor annual progress in building understanding using TIDEmark self-assessment process.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for full overview of actions, lead, status and comments.

9. Summary

9.1 As a regional bilingual tertiary partnership, UHI is diverse at its very heart: We serve one of the largest student populations in Scotland across both further and higher education in the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire comprising the largest geographical coverage of any campus-based institution in the United Kingdom. This diverse and flexible partnership is our greatest strength and empowers us to deliver supported learning from access level to PhD, which suits more people at more levels for more reasons. We are proud of our unique place and deep roots in our communities.

9.2 Our staff, students and the communities we serve are central to our future planning and vision of becoming a connected and diverse organisation. Enhancing equality and inclusion will ensure all staff and students can be the best version of themselves, regardless of their socio-economic background or protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation).

10. Glossary of Terms

Protected Characteristics: the Equality Act (2010) ("the Act") prohibits unfavourable treatment on the basis of the following nine protected characteristics.

Age: This refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds, or people over 50).

Disability: A person has a disability if they have physical or mental needs which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some disabilities may require reasonable adjustments to be made to remove or minimise barriers to participation (see 2.7: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Persons).

Gender Reassignment: Gender reassignment is when a person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: In Scotland, marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman, but also includes same-sex couples.

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'.

Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples. In society, civil partnership is generally recognised simply as 'marriage'.

Pregnancy and Maternity: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.

Race: Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion or Belief: Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief is defined as religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices, or the way you live, for it to be included in the definition.

Sex: Refers to whether a person is a man or a woman.

Sexual Orientation: A person's attraction towards their own sex/gender, another sex/gender, all sexes/genders or none.

Unconscious Bias: Describes a subconscious attitude that affects the way individuals think and feel about others around them.

11. Appendix 1

Gender Action Plan Status

	Action	Lead	Status	Comments
1.	Update existing strategies as required.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	
2.	Continue to identify new strategic priorities as EDI maturity within the organisation develops.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	
3.	Publish strategies, reports and data as widely as appropriate to support communication of UHI as an institution of choice for diverse communities.	Communications Team	Ongoing	
4.	Identify future funding opportunities to expand gender-based development programmes e.g. Aurora	HR Team	Ongoing	
5.	Ensure Athena Swan SAT is appropriately embedded into governance and leadership structures so that actions identified can be agreed and supported at institutional level.	University Secretary	Ongoing	
6.	Develop reporting tools within staff	HR/LIS	Ongoing	

	and student systems to support analysis of issues and underpin evidence-based action planning.			
7.	Reduce the median gender pay gap.	HR	Ongoing	
8.	Maintain focus on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, equality impact assessment and other relevant equality related information as an area for improvement and training support.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	
9.	Utilise staff and student networks to identify areas of EDI focus for greatest impact.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	
10.	Develop and communicate programmes for managers utilising Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion materials	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	
11.	Monitor annual progress in building understanding using TIDEmark self-assessment process.	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	Ongoing	