

# Wrexham Glyndŵr University Strategic Equality Plan – 2020-2024





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## Introduction

Wrexham Glyndŵr University's (WGU) Strategic Equality framework is underpinned by our core values; to be:

- Accessible
- Supportive
- Innovative
- Ambitious

This plan covers the period from April 2020 to March 2024 and sets out our commitment to supporting the promotion of equality and diversity within our practices, establishing an inclusive culture and environment free from discrimination.

As a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 WGU has a duty to set out its objectives; this plan provides an overarching framework for advancing equality and diversity for the benefit of our students, staff and stakeholders. The plan brings together and builds upon a number of delivery plans for specific strands of equality, aiming to develop a more holistic approach to covering all of the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010.

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The University is fully committed to EDI and supporting the diverse mix of individuals who share our learning community. In line with our values of being Accessible, Supportive, Innovative and Ambitious, we work towards our aim of providing an environment where all are supported and enabled and reflect this through the holistic approach we take to working towards inclusion.

WGU is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within its practices and activities, establishing an inclusive culture and environment where staff, students and visitors feel confident to be their authentic selves.

The University recognises the real educational and business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students who value one another, recognising that the institution is enhanced by a range of backgrounds, beliefs and cultures, working to achieve the University's mission to **inspire and enable; transforming people and places and driving economic, social and cultural success.**

The University is committed to providing a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of its staff and student population are respected, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment and bullying.

We focus on inclusion to ensure quality of opportunity for our people and demonstrate our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which is reflected in our values, to be:

**Accessible** – in the learning we provide for our students, staff and community; being pro-active in promoting the value of higher education. This is grounded in a dedication to be inclusive and fair in how we provide our services.

- Creating a community that welcomes students, staff and visitors from all backgrounds, placing them at the heart of what we do, treating them with dignity and respect and providing equality of access at all times

**Supportive** – of our learners and staff, as well as the region, helping all to gain confidence and achieve their potential.

- Working closely with our community to support growth and enhance student outcomes in an agile and responsive manner dependent on individual needs

**Innovative** - in our delivery and management of academic provision and professional services and in our relationships with partners.

- working in partnership with all who come into contact with the University, drawing on their creativity to create an inclusive curriculum and learning environment to fully support all needs

**Ambitious** – in what we seek to deliver for our students, staff and partners; recognising there is no limit to learning and knowledge.

- Building mutually beneficial relationships with partner universities and further education colleges to meet regional needs in order to support our future growth; in particular in relation to equality & diversity

The University attracts a range of staff, students and applicants and embraces the opportunity this provides to build a community who value one another, and the differing contributions this allows to achieve our mission.

The University is committed to enabling all individuals to benefit from higher education regardless of their personal characteristics of age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), gender, gender identity/expression and sexual orientation.

Whilst the Board of Governors has formal responsibility to ensure that the requirements of equality legislation are met, our plan is aimed at all staff and students, who have shared responsibility to ensure that equality and diversity is promoted within the University, taking appropriate account of the needs of all students, staff and visitors.

# Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the University is required to demonstrate due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not;
- Fostering good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not

The PSED aims to harmonise equality duties and it extends over all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The 9 protected characteristics are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• age</li><li>• disability</li><li>• gender reassignment</li><li>• pregnancy and maternity</li><li>• race</li><li>• religion or belief</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sex</li><li>• sexual orientation</li><li>• marriage and civil partnership (in relation to being treated differently at work)</li></ul>
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## Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-2024

To deliver on our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and to meet our legal duties we have identified two key Equality Objectives and the strategic equality priorities we will continue to promote. Each objective is underpinned by more detailed actions and targets which are shown in Appendix 1 – Action Plan

### **Objective 1:**

To ensure a learning and working environment that promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity for everyone who studies, works and visits WGU.

1.1 Student Journey – an inclusive approach to our student’s experience that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, enabling our students to thrive and leave the University with the ability to make successful life and career choices.

1.2 Staff Journey – an inclusive approach to recruitment, progression and the employee lifecycle that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, enabling our staff to develop and prosper in an environment where they feel treated with dignity and respect.

1.3 Community Journey – an inclusive learning and working environment that draws on the diverse perspective and cultural wealth of our local community, enabling our community to benefit and grow with the University.

## **Objective 2:**

To ensure that the needs of our students and staff are at the heart of the design and delivery of the WGU Vision & Strategy and related policies and procedures.

2.1 Demonstrate our due regard for the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring compliant policies, procedures and processes in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, in particular in relation to the following:

- Governance and Statutory reporting
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Quality Assurance
- Equality Monitoring
- Procurement
- Training and Awareness Raising

## **Delivering our Equality Objectives**

We will implement an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, linked to the WGU Strategic Equality Plan and Equality KPI's. The plan will detail how we will embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our activities, policies, procedures and processes. Updated annually the action plan will be reviewed and monitored by the Equality & Diversity Action Group, with an annual report on progress made; provided to the University's Board of Governors and appropriate committees. Our current action plan can be found by clicking [here](#).

There are a number of policies, strategic plans and practices that align with and detail how we strive to make equality of opportunity a reality:

- Strategic Equality Action Plan
- Equality Impact template and guidance document
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training and Awareness raising
- Policies (including Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy for Staff and Students, Dignity at Work, a suite of Family Friendly policies and a Transitioning at Work Policy)
- Strategy for Supporting Student Learning and Achievement
- Fee and Access Plan
- People Strategy

We will also utilise a number of external frameworks to support the achievement of our objectives:

- Stonewall Workplace Index
- Disability Confident Employer



- Time to Change Pledged Employer
- Rare Aware Charter
- Social Mobility Pledge

## Monitoring Progress

The Executive Leadership Team;

- Receive an annual Equality & Diversity Report
- Receive an annual Strategic Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action plan report
- Approve all statutory reports

The Board of Governors and Executive Leadership Team guided by the Equality & Diversity Action Group champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and embed equality into decision making; promoting accountability across the Institution. It is however the responsibility of all staff members and students to contribute to an inclusive environment, that promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

## Statutory Reporting

We publish an annual Equality & Diversity Report, providing a summary of progress made towards achieving our strategic equality objectives.

## Contact Details

Organisational Development & Diversity Manager

Tel: 01978 293307

Email: [Alison.bloomfield@glyndwr.ac.uk](mailto:Alison.bloomfield@glyndwr.ac.uk)

Web: [www.glyndwr.ac.uk](http://www.glyndwr.ac.uk)

Wrexham Glyndŵr University

Mold Road

Wrexham

LL11 2AW

## Appendix 1 – Action Plan

<b>Equality Objective 1.1</b>	
<b>Student Journey</b> – an inclusive approach to our student’s experience that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, enabling our students to thrive and leave the University with the ability to make successful life and career choices	
1	Provide academic and welfare support to under-represented groups to improve their experience of higher education
2	Assess and monitor our curriculum offer for negative equality impacts; embedding the Equality Impact Assessment process into decision making processes.
3	Further develop and enhance support mechanisms for students presenting with mental health and well-being issues.
4	Monitor and review inequalities encountered by students who are undergoing/have undergone gender transition.
5	Continue to promote understanding and awareness of differing religions and beliefs.
6	Increase disclosure rates in relation to protected characteristics.
7	Review and develop interventions to enhance retention for those students with protected characteristics.
8	<p>Further develop processes to enable a fully inclusive learning environment for students with protected characteristics in line with recommendations made in the “Is Wales Fairer” report 2018, concentrating on the following during the period 2020-2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGBT+</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Religion</li> <li>- Disability</li> </ul>
9	All students to have an understanding of equality and diversity and its key concepts to encourage an inclusive learning environment.
10	Implement a monitoring process for student complaints and disciplinarys involving students with protected characteristics.



11	Review inequalities in access to our buildings and learning environments, enhancing accessibility.
12	Improve accessibility of learning resources and materials for all students, mapping the student journey from point of enquiry.
13	Improve the understanding of the representation of women attending STEM courses, to review and inform action.

### Equality Objective 1.2

**Staff Journey** – an inclusive approach to recruitment, progression and the employee lifecycle that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, enabling our staff to develop and prosper in an environment where they feel treated with dignity and respect.

1	Identify inequalities in research opportunities and careers, in particular STEM subjects in line with recommendations made in the “Is Wales Fairer” Report 2018
2	Review and monitor policies, procedures and processes in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.
3	Develop guidance on equality in procurement.
4	Further develop processes to enable a fully inclusive environment for staff with protected characteristics, in line with recommendations made in the “Is Wales Fairer” report 2018, concentrating on the following during the period 2020-2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGBT+</li> <li>- Race</li> <li>- Religion</li> <li>- Disability</li> </ul>
5	All staff to have a good understanding of equality diversity and inclusion and its concepts to enable them to foster effective working relationships and promote inclusivity within their work.
6	Provide support mechanisms for supporting staff and student’s wellbeing issues.
7	Monitor and review inequalities encountered by staff who are undergoing/have undergone gender transition.
8	Continue to promote understanding and awareness of differing religions and beliefs.
9	Monitor the number of flexible working requests that are submitted.

10	Increase disclosure rates in relation to all protected characteristics.
11	Further promote the Glyndŵr Dignity at Work Advisors (DAWA) Role in order to promote a culture of respect and encourage staff to report incidents of bullying and/or harassment.
12	Increase the representation of staff with protected characteristics, in particular BAME and female staff in senior academic positions and identified areas.
13	Address inequalities in the representation of boards and committees across the University.
14	Review the representation of disabled people in employment, implementing good practice in line with Disability Confident guidelines and best practice to ensure appropriate representation.
15	Research and implement initiatives to increase the representation of staff working in STEM subject areas.
16	Address gender, ethnicity and disability pay differences, occupational segregation and employment gaps.
17	Attain “White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation” to Support the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

### Equality Objective 1.3

**Community Journey** – an inclusive learning and working environment that draws on the diverse perspective and cultural wealth of our local community, enabling our community to benefit and grow with the University.

1	Encourage fair recruitment, development and reward in employment, exploring opportunities to increase employment rates of young people, disabled people and those from ethnic minority groups.
2	To demonstrate commitment and raise awareness of diversity and differing cultures within our community.
3	Identify underrepresented communities within the local area to engage with.
4	Increase volunteering engagement levels of staff and students within our community, to support the WGU Civic Engagement Strategy.
5	Continue to build on our strengths in widening participation to increase student numbers, welcoming students from all backgrounds within our community, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds
6	Work in partnership with employers, community organisations and enterprises in line with the University’s Employability Strategy to meet the skills agenda for the local region.

7	Review cases of identity-based abuse, harassment, hate-crime and bullying, implementing anti-hate crime strategies where necessary.
<p><b>Equality Objective 2</b></p> <p><b>Demonstrate our due regard for the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by undertaking a review of all relevant policies ensuring compliant policies, procedures and processes in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, in relation to the following:</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and Statutory reporting</li> <li>• Equality Impact Assessments</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Equality Monitoring</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Training and Awareness Raising</li> </ul>	