



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at University of the Built Environment

Commitment Statement

Reference:

Version: 2.00

Status: Final

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Date: 26/03/2026

Approval History

Version	Date	Name	Organisation
1.00	18/04/2024	Board of Trustees	UCEM
2.00	26/03/2026	Board of Trustees	University of the Built Environment

Document History

Version	Date	Reason	Person
V0.03	02/04/2024	Finalised version ready for Board meeting	Lisa Wilks
V0.02	20/03/2024	Content expanded following initial feedback from the Board in December 2023	Lisa Wilks, Lynne Downey, Charlotte Thackeray, Sophie Elliott, Ella Wheeler
V0.01	14/11/2023	New UCEM-wide approach to EDI requiring a review of existing Board strategy document with re-write/production of new overview document	Lisa Wilks, Lynne Downey, Charlotte Thackeray
V1.01	13/03/2026	Review ahead of biennial re-approval. Rebranding	Jane Fawkes, Lyndsay Hughes

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1. Introduction

University of the Built Environment (the University) is fully committed to proactively promoting and leading Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within its education provision and the industry it serves, and within all internal and external operations. This whole-University commitment applies to students, staff, and other stakeholders, and includes treating individuals and groups equally, fairly, and without bias.

We aim for all members of our stakeholder community to have positive EDI experiences and interactions. We recognise and adhere to both legal and regulatory requirements and we aspire to lead and influence in this field within the Built Environment industry. We also commit to challenge our own internal practices across all departments and teams, so we remain relevant and up to date.

EDI continues to be a wide-ranging and further developing agenda for the University, the Built Environment industry, and society. We aim for this agenda to be managed positively for all stakeholders, and proactively led and managed at all levels throughout our Institution.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this Commitment Statement we adopt publicly available broad, regulatory, and legal definitions of EDI, for all stakeholders. Definitions will be contextualised and stated within the individual policies, procedures, and plans which we have or put into place, as part of our EDI journey.

For the avoidance of doubt, EDI includes equity and belonging as follows:

Equality is the principle of opportunity for all.

Equity is the practice of ensuring accessibility of opportunity for all.

Diversity is the fact of seeing and or/ knowing each other's differences.

Inclusion is the act of inviting and accepting (without judgement) each other's differences, including neuroinclusion.

Belonging is integrating in a way which makes everyone feel safe, wanted, and valued.

Our stakeholder groups include but are not limited to:

- Students including apprentice learners (applicants, new, existing, and alumni).
- Employer clients (potential, new, and existing).
- Staff (applicants, new, existing).
- Board members (applicants, new, existing).
- Industry bodies and partnerships, including Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (potential, new, and existing).
- Community and other partnerships.

3. Governance

Our commitment to EDI is led from the top, from the Board of Trustees through all UCEM leadership, management, and operational levels. The University also proactively networks and collaborates within its external community, to continue to lead, learn, and promote EDI.

Appendix 1 contains a high-level summary of EDI governance at the University.

4. Scope of activities

Given the broad scope of EDI across our education provision, industry influence, and working environment, several strategies and plans will be in existence or in development at any one time. These will align to the broad areas in the table below, which were the output of an internal workshop held in March 2023, led by the Lead Trustee for EDI.

Actions plans associated with each area will be owned internally by EDI representatives and will contain short to long term activities; these will be shared with the Lead Trustee for EDI monitoring purposes.

These headings may be adjusted over time to reflect the developing EDI landscape:

Awareness and education

For staff, students, prospective students, schools, and communities.

For staff this includes awareness training around the EDI agenda and the ongoing provision of relevant information and resources to support employment.

Using student data, this includes raising awareness amongst staff of emerging EDI themes and encouraging conversations and actions to address unexpected or uncomfortable patterns.

Involves working with students to interrogate their understanding of EDI, how they define it, their experiences within the built environment sector, and what they expect from the University. Actions will then be built, based initially on students' expectations.

External events and industry connections

For industry, built environment organisations and partners.

This includes influencing the built environment sector as part of the Sustainability strategy and the work of the Built Environment Futures Assembly (BEFA)..

We recognise there is much to do to support the diversification of the built environment and keep up to date with EDI reports and findings, in order to generate a diverse and inclusive industry that is fit for the future and the challenges facing it. We aim to collaborate, influence, and advocate for change.

A key part of the University's efforts to maximise both our influence and impact is our INSPIRE events. These are themed sessions convening influential stakeholders to

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consider the various challenges facing the sector relevant to our community, whether that is the built environment or higher education (**I**nfluence for **S**kills, **P**roductivity, **I**ndustry, **R**esearch & **E**ducation).

INSPIRE events are designed with inclusivity in mind (e.g. gender balance for event contributors etc) and are based on the following principles:

1. Demonstrating thought leadership by drawing together influential players.
2. Facilitating collaboration so that the best thoughts and ideas on topical issues can be aggregated.
3. Shaping policy by promoting taking the recommendations from events to key decision-makers.

Data (diversity)

For staff, students, and Board members.

The scope of this area is wide ranging and includes the ongoing collection and collation of data to provide information and insights, to assist in the development of actions plans and to aid decision-making.

For students this will also involve the agreement and regular production of a universal dataset, allowing us to understand our students and apprentice learners in terms of their backgrounds, protected characteristics, and lived experiences. Usage will extend to interrogating module success rates, awards, withdrawal rates, support service use, and other key interactions between students/apprentices and the University.

Learning content

For all academic programmes and activities.

Current programmes are already mapped to Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body EDI requirements and future programmes will ensure the same.

EDI and accessibility are embedded in all learning content design and build; this also includes the use of inclusive language. New developments in these areas will be incorporated.

Inclusive practices are already built into assessment, such as for students with support requirements of adjustments, however the University will implement new requirements.

Recruitment

For staff, students, and Board members.

For staff this involves scrutinising all aspects of recruitment and onboarding processes, procedures, and policies. It also involves looking at this from both the applicant/candidate, new starter, and the University perspectives.

For students, we refer to the Widening Participation agenda and action plans.

Policies and procedures

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For staff and students.

For staff this involves looking at policies and practices across the employee lifecycle through the lens of EDI.

For students this includes redesigning Equality Impact Assessments and aims to include students in these processes; also to incorporate this process into student representation opportunities.

In some cases, our plans and activities will work across these headings, particularly in the case of Widening Participation, or other regulatory or sector initiatives. Widening Participation continues to be a challenge for our industry, and we are committed to influencing and supporting the changes which are necessary for a more equal, equitable, diverse, and inclusive industry – one where everyone can thrive.

Wherever possible our plans and activities will incorporate the student and stakeholder voice, to make sure they remain relevant and up to date. As stated in the University's Freedom of Speech policy:

The University will provide opportunities for members of staff, including associate lecturers, within the principle of academic freedom, to undertake their own research to ensure the development of a vibrant disciplinary and interdisciplinary culture.*

*In line with the University's Royal Charter (section 11,3) and Section 43 of the Education Act 1986, as amended by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

At all times the University will keep abreast of any legislative changes and adapt its plans and activities accordingly.

5. Key contacts

For further information please refer to the following individuals:

Name	Role	Governance Group
Dr Liz Marr	Lead Trustee for EDI	Board of Trustees
Jane Fawkes	Deputy Vice Chancellor and University Secretary	Executive Team
Lisa Wilks	Director of HR	Senior Leadership Team Department/Team – Staff
Sophie Elliott	Director of Student Services	Senior Leadership Team Department/Team – Student

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Charlotte Thackeray	Outreach and Inclusion Lead Widening Participation/Access and Participation Plan Lead	Department/Team – Student
Ella Wheeler	Head of Student Support	Department/Team – Student

Appendix A: EDI governance at University of the Built Environment

Board of Trustees

Named lead trustee for EDI
The Board is a member of the 30% Club
Receives reports on plans and progress
Works to increase the diversity of trustees through inclusive recruitment practice

Executive Team

Lead member oversees EDI across the University
Monitors progress against annual student and staff strategies and action plans, including Widening Participation
Provides resources to support EDI activities

Senior Leadership Team

Operationalises student and staff strategies and action plans
Works across teams to deliver on plans
Undertakes professional development activities
Promotes CPD within student and staff group

Within Department / Teams

Project and working groups
Communities of practice
Affinity groups
CPD events – student and staff