

UEL QUALITY MANUAL

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Appendix E to the UEL Quality Manual serves as both a commitment of QAE and the wider university to meaningfully embed and implement equality, diversity and inclusion, respective of all protected characteristics defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#), into all academic quality assurance and enhancement processes, in addition to serving as a main point of reference for staff. These protected characteristics are defined as:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- 1.2. The overarching objective in the University of East London (UEL)'s Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award application is "" This appendix additionally exists to support the following action taken from the REC application:

“To review quality assurance and enhancement processes (inc. validation, monitoring, and review) to ensure that equality, racial justice, and liberation are meaningfully embedded and implemented.”
- 1.3. UEL has additionally been accredited with other awards to recognise its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, including the Advance HE Athena Swan bronze award for gender equality and the Stonewall Diversity Champion accreditation for LGBTQIA+ equality. This appendix additionally exists to support our progress in these areas among others.
- 1.4. When undertaking quality assurance and enhancement activities at UEL, it is expected that all staff, learners, and external partners have institutional equity at the forefront of their minds when producing course documentation and reflective/evaluative reports. This appendix provides example but not exhaustive questions staff can consider demonstrating their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in their work to uphold institutional equity.

2. Opportunities to reflect

2.1. Implementing equality, diversity and inclusion should form a part of day-to-day quality assurance and enhancement activities at UEL. Here are some examples of when the following guidance could be applied:

- Writing course and module specifications
- Responding to module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs)
- Establishing academic partnerships
- Producing initial approval forms
- Producing a continual monitoring process (CMP) report
- Writing a self-evaluation (SED) for academic review
- Producing a Module Development and Enhancement Plan (MDEP)
- Proposing course and module modifications
- Working with External Examiners (EEs)

3. Academic climate and resources

Reflect on the following:

- 3.1. Does your provision reflect the diversity of your School, Department and/or Cluster's staff and student body?
- 3.2. Are there opportunities for your School, Department and/or Cluster to further build knowledge of equality, diversity, and inclusion? What are they?
- 3.3. Can specialist software or equipment be used by all staff and students? What support is available if not?
- 3.4. Do alternative formats of core learning materials exist?
- 3.5. Do physical teaching spaces accommodate learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- 3.6. How does the course team engage with the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) to ensure courses remain contemporary in their approach to being actively anti-discriminatory?
- 3.7. Has the course team completed all applicable Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) forms?
- 3.8. Is your Moodle module structure, layout, and content accessible? Are you providing clearly labelled content?

4. Course philosophy and principles

Reflect on the following:

- 4.1. Are School Quality Committees (SQC) constituted of a fair representation of staff (with consideration to protected characteristics)?
- 4.2. Is a fair and equitable external examiner nomination process being followed? Are activities being taken to enhance it further?
- 4.3. How are staff development needs identified (and actioned) in the areas of unconscious bias, anti-discrimination, curriculum decolonisation etc.?

5. Admissions

Reflect on the following:

- 5.1. How does your course aim to appeal to applicants with different backgrounds and characteristics? How could it better appeal to applicants from demographics less likely to apply?
- 5.2. How does your course seek to address any barriers that may prevent applicants from wanting to apply?
- 5.3. Are there any biases in the sector your course intends to address (such as a lack of gender/racial diversity)?
- 5.4. What resources does your course use to appeal to candidates with different backgrounds and characteristics?

6. Modules and course structure

Reflect on the following:

- 6.1. Are there different entry points on the course which adequately take into consideration the prior learning/experience of learners with advance standing?
- 6.2. How do initial modules on the course take into consideration the course may be the first-time learners are studying at university or at a university in England?
- 6.3. How do are learners transitioned from one level of a course to the next? Do learners understand how the difficulty of learning outcomes advances? Do they understand what is required of them at the current level of study?
- 6.4. Has timetabling considered how this may impact inclusivity for learners who have family/caretaking responsibilities? Has timetabling considered how this may impact learners who follow various religious observations (ceremonies, holidays and traditions)?

7. Content and curriculum

Reflect on the following:

- 7.1. How does your curriculum relate to course content on other courses, modules, or sessions delivered by other staff?
- 7.2. How does module content address bias, stereotypes, and predefined beliefs? How regularly is this reviewed?
- 7.3. How does your course content encompass the diverse nature of students' backgrounds, characteristics interests and/or prior learning experience?
- 7.4. How do you encompass different perspectives and contexts in your course content? Do your students identify with the perspectives you introduce to the curriculum?
- 7.5. How does your curriculum relate to course content on other courses, modules, or sessions delivered by other staff?
- 7.6. How does module content encourage a broader understanding of contexts and perspectives?

- 7.7. How do you approach older material that could be seen as outdated, prejudiced or discriminatory in today's context? How do you contrast this with contemporary ideas?
- 7.8. How are themes of equality, diversity and inclusion integrated into curriculum? How do you make sure there are clear links between course content and these topics so learners can relate them to the subject?
- 7.9. How does module content connect the diversity of the student cohort to key topics? Can those who identify with different characteristics identify with the curriculum?
- 7.10. How do you seek students feedback on course content? Do you seek feedback from students from a diversity of backgrounds and characteristics?

8. Learning and teaching methods

Reflect on the following:

- 8.1. How do you encourage learners with different backgrounds/characteristics to collaborate? How do you break silos? How do you do so without resorting to 'tokenism'?
- 8.2. How do you engage learners with different learning needs in different types of delivery sessions? How do you tailor your teaching styles when online vs. on-campus?
- 8.3. How do you consider your own identity and characteristics when producing learning materials? Is there unconscious bias? How do you discuss characteristics you do not necessarily identify with?
- 8.4. How do you encourage feedback and respond to it in a way that is inclusive? How do you make all your learners feel they have a voice?
- 8.5. How do you encourage learners to draw on their own lived experiences in their learning? How do you encourage their confidence to do so? How do you get learners to respect the lived experiences of others when working together?
- 8.6. How do you understand the long-term goals of your learners? How might this vary between learners of different backgrounds and characteristics? How does your teaching adapt as a result?
- 8.7. How do you address topics that could potentially be sensitive or triggering for some learners? Do you consider how this might vary by learners with different characteristics? Do you create a learning environment where learners feel safe and included?
- 8.8. How do you make sure your learning is accessible to all learners? Are alternative formats available? For example, are audio-based resources (podcasts, videos) available with text transcripts or live captions? Are links to student support clearly communicated?
- 8.9. How do you include a diversity of perspectives and standpoints in your learning and teaching (including reading materials, case studies, visual materials, etc.)? How do you facilitate learners to understand ideas outside of characteristics they are more familiar with?

- 8.10. How does your teaching and learning reflect contemporary topics locally, nationally and/or globally? Do you consider how these topics may be uniquely impacting different types of learners?
- 8.11. Primarily for creative arts subjects, how does your course obtain a balance between freedom of creative expression and inclusion (for example, in the production of film, music and creative media that may touch on sensitive topics)?
- 8.12. For synchronous virtual teaching and learning sessions (lectures, seminars, etc.), how do you encourage learner participation via chat functions if they are not comfortable/able to use video/microphone? How do you create an inclusive virtual discussion in your teaching and learning?
- 8.13. For asynchronous virtual teaching and learning (recorded lectures, readings, etc.), how do you clarify the main areas of focus for learners? Is information presented in accessible formats? Do you provide learners with sufficient time to process information from asynchronous activities before follow-up sessions?

9. Assessment

Reflect on the following:

- 9.1. Do assessments provide opportunities for learners to approach them in a way that reflects their unique background and identity? How do all learners relate to the task set?
- 9.2. Is there scope for different approaches to the same assessment to take into account different learning styles, interests and strengths?
- 9.3. How do you consider reasonable adjustments when creating assessments? How do you design assessments that would require minimal reasonable adjustments due to inclusive design? How do you make learners feel safe to request reasonable adjustments?
- 9.4. How prepared are you to produce and provide assessments in accessible alternative formats for disabled students? Do you need support or training to learn what options are available and how to use them when planning your assessments?
- 9.5. How do you make learners feel safe to share personal experiences (where applicable) when completing assessments? How might this vary in different types of assessments, such as groupwork for example?
- 9.6. How do you ensure the language used in assessment briefing is clear and inclusive to ensure all learners can achieve well (particularly for secondary English speakers)?
- 9.7. How are learners encouraged to explore and challenge their own beliefs, opinions and biases in assessments? Do they feel safe to do so?
- 9.8. How do you ensure feedback is clear and inclusive so learners from all backgrounds and characteristics are set up for success in future assessments? Do you provide opportunities for additional feedback?

- 9.9. How is learner health and wellbeing considered during assessment periods? How do you make learners feel supported during peaks of stress on the course?
- 9.10. How do you consider national or religious holidays/festivals when setting assessment deadlines? Is there scope for advance notice when there is a clash?
- 9.11. In asynchronous activities such as learner forums, are all learners clear on the level of input (frequency, word count, time spent) required from them? How might this impact different types of learner?

10. Guidance and support

Reflect on the following:

- 10.1. How are learners made aware of the additional learning support available to them? How are they made comfortable to disclose that this is something they want to engage with?
- 10.2. How are learners made aware of the pastoral support available to them? When introducing sensitive topics, do you consider links to additional support learners can engage with if course content affects their emotional wellbeing?
- 10.3. How does the timing of additional learning support sessions complement scheduled taught sessions? Do learners have time to travel between such sessions? Are support sessions available on the same campus they are primarily based on?

11. Progression and completion

Reflect on the following:

- 11.1. Do you consider the demographic data for progression and completion of modules, levels of study, and the course in full? How does this impact future planning?

12. Information

Reflect on the following:

- 12.1. Are you being transparent with learners about the rules, norms and procedures around how academia functions?
- 12.2. Have you given learners clear information about what the UEL expectations are to clarify and demystify areas of academia that may be second nature to academic staff?

13. Course costs

Reflect on the following:

- 13.1. How are course costs communicated with learners at an appropriate stage to allow time for budgeting (where appropriate)?
- 13.2. How is financial support at UEL (SMART) communicated to learners who may experience financial difficulties to fund certain course costs?

14. Feedback from students and employers

Reflect on the following:

- 14.1. Are there fair, equitable opportunities for learners to act as 'co-creators' of their courses by providing feedback on curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessments? How do you create a learning environment where all learners feel they have a voice and will be heard? This could include both protected characteristics but also different kinds of lifestyles (learners living on-site, learners in full-time employment, learners with caregiving responsibilities, etc.).
- 14.2. How are learners encouraged to give feedback to staff and their peers which is respectful and inclusive? Do learners understand the types of statements which could be potentially hurtful or discriminatory? In anonymous feedback, how do you act on feedback provided by learners who may represent a minority (such as a single learner who identifies with a particular disability)?
- 14.3. Does the course have any equality monitoring mechanisms? Do these impact future course improvements and enhancements? How?

15. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

Reflect on the following:

- 15.1. Where applicable, does the course provide equitable opportunities for all learners to receive accreditation, chartership, membership or other status upon completion of the full course and/or at specific milestones?

16. Work placements, field trips and study abroad

Reflect on the following:

- 16.1. Do hosting organisations for work placements and field trips hold appropriate policies on equality, diversity and inclusion (including accessibility)? Is a main contact for UEL staff and learners identified in the instance of a cause for concern?
- 16.2. Has accessibility at locations for work placements, trips and/or residential stays been reviewed? Will all learners be able to comfortably access learning facilities off-site?
- 16.3. What support do you offer to source work placements for learners who identify with different additional learning support needs? How do you work with organisations who cannot accommodate certain needs?
- 16.4. How are learners encouraged to disclose additional support needs they may require off-site or overnight (if applicable)?
- 16.5. How do you check in with learners with additional learning support needs to ensure appropriate accommodations have been made? How do you action this if they have not?
- 16.6. What happens when a work placement or field trip cannot be made accessible? Is an alternative, equitable learning experience offered?
- 16.7. When overseas, how do you ensure the safety of learners from specific protected characteristic groups? Particularly female students, LGBTQIA+ students, and students of certain religions/faiths.

- 16.8. How do you encourage learners to share any concerns they may have with such excursions?
- 16.9. Do you consider factors of off-site social activities which may negatively affect learners (such venues which serve alcohol, lack prayer rooms, do not meet dietary requirements, have age restrictions, are single-sex spaces, etc.)? How do you ensure all learners are able to participate in social activities?
- 16.10. How do you brief UK-based students on local discrimination laws before they travel overseas? Are students aware of how to stay safe (including online) while overseas? Are they aware of what support is available while overseas (inc. hormones for trans students)?

17. Academic partnerships (UK and overseas)

Reflect on the following:

- 17.1. Have you researched whether staff/students may be in danger of unprotected discrimination and possible sanctions overseas (such as in the case of gender, sexuality, religion/faith)? What action do we take in such instances? How does this affect our decision-making?
- 17.2. How do we respond to requests for course content to be censored to comply with local equality laws (such as in the case of gender, sexuality, religion/faith)?
- 17.3. How do we ensure staff safety overseas when working with international partners? How do we ensure all staff are in safe accommodation in close proximity? How do we respond to staff anxieties around international travel on the basis of potential discrimination?

18. Additional resources

AdvanceHE (2018) *Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in the curriculum: A programme standard*. Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/embedding-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-curriculum-programme-standard> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

Department for Education (DfE) (2023) *Higher education reform: equality impact assessment and analysis*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reform-equality-impact-assessment> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

GOV.UK (2023) *Foreign travel advice*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> (Accessed: 29 August 2023).

Jisc (2021) *Low-effort, high-impact: how small changes to your teaching can create a more inclusive learning environment*. Available at: <https://accessibility.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2021/02/08/low-effort-high-impact-how-small-changes-to-your-teaching-can-create-a-more-inclusive-learning-environment> (Accessed: 27 September 2023).

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2023) *Collaborative enhancement projects: equality, diversity and inclusivity*. Available at:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (2023) *The inclusive education framework*. Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/collaborative-enhancement-projects/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/the-inclusive-education-framework> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (2020) *Education inspection framework: equality, diversity and inclusion statement*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/initial-teacher-education-inspection-framework-and-handbook-2020-inspecting-the-quality-of-teacher-education/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-statement> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

Office for Students (OfS) (2023) *Effective practice in access and participation*. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/effective-practice/> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

Office for Students (OfS) (2023) *Equality opportunity risk register*. Available at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/equality-of-opportunity-risk-register/> (Accessed: 29 August 2023).

Universities UK (2022) *Supporting LGBT students studying overseas*. Available at: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-blog/supporting-lgbt-students-studying> (Accessed: 29 August 2023).

University of East London (UEL) (2019) *Race equality charter application form*. Available at: <https://uel.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uel-race-equality-application-charter-application-form-2019.pdf> (Accessed: 25 August 2023).

University of East London (UEL) (n.d.) *Promoting inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and research*. Available at: <https://uelac.sharepoint.com/sites/libraryandlearningservices/sitepages/promoting-inclusive-approaches-to-learning,-teaching-and-research.aspx> (Accessed: 25 October 2023).

World Economic Forum (2021) *3 ways to protect LGBTI rights across the world*. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/3-ways-to-protect-lgbti-rights-across-the-world/> (Accessed: 29 August 2023).