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## 1. INTRODUCTION

UEL's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy aims to support the implementation of [UEL's EDI policy](#) into practice by setting out a framework to deliver an environment and culture that is truly **inclusive** where:

- all individuals have **equality** of opportunity to succeed, and
- the **diversity** of the UEL community is valued, celebrated and staff and students are supported to be the best they can be.

## 2. CONTEXT

UEL's **mission** is to become London's leading university for civic engagement ([UEL Corporate Plan 2015-2020](#)). **Diversity** is fact for UEL and **inclusion** is an ambition that is embedded throughout UEL's values.

These are based around four key commitments:

<b>Social mobility:</b>	<i>Ensuring that our students have the opportunity to initiate change in their lives, maximise their potential and attain the educational experience that enables them to succeed in their chosen career, whatever their background</i>
<b>Social Justice:</b>	<i>Ensuring we remain committed to the principles of equality and diversity and that we continue to stand against all forms of discrimination and injustice</i>
<b>Social innovation:</b>	<i>Working with our communities to deliver applied and sustainable solutions to the societal and environmental challenges that we face</i>
<b>Social cohesion:</b>	<i>Empowering our students and staff to become ambassadors and active citizens for the long term benefit of their communities</i>

There a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) within the [Corporate Plan](#) linked to equality and diversity, specifically:

- improving **UEL's student attainment gap**
- improving the number of **female and BAME staff in senior positions to be representative** of the London population.

Our recently published [Academic Strategy 2016-2020](#) reflects our ambitions to be a research-led and informed teaching university, provides the opportunity to reconsider our approach to EDI to ensure that all our students celebrate the same outcomes for student success regardless of background, ethnicity or any other defining characteristic. UEL's [Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy](#) (due to be launched in Sept 2017) also provides the opportunity to better embed equality agenda within this portfolio of work.

Other reflections include external factors:

- **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)** which includes requires consideration of the outcomes of disadvantaged and has clear links to our EDI aims.
- Changes to the **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)** which provides challenges and opportunities to more effectively mainstream and embed inclusive teaching and learning within our curriculum design and delivery.

Further, the **UEL's Access Agreement**, sets out our approaches through all stages of the student lifecycle. Interventions are designed to impact the student population as a whole, but within these holistic approaches, the access agreement outlines how we are increasingly tailoring interventions and enhancements for specific groups of students. As detailed in the access agreement, a key element is investing in data analysis capacity and capability, which in turn should inform UEL's EDI strategy and objectives.

Finally, within the Higher Education sector there is an increasing emphasis on the **wellbeing** of students as being the responsibility of the whole institution. The TEF provides a real opportunity for HEIs' to show the 'added value' of wellbeing support. The changes in the HE landscape and the diversity amongst our student body mean that we need to look at a variety of ways to proactively engage the UEL community and deliver activities and experiences to maintain and enhance wellbeing as part of every students UEL experience. Students should not have to seek out wellbeing activities. Indeed, the need for embedding wellbeing activities into the curriculum and supporting the need to prioritise development of inclusive cultures and curriculum are key messages emanating across the sector and are ones we positively embrace at UEL.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

#### **Equality Act (2010) and the public sector equality duty (PSED)**

As part of the University's obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the University is required to demonstrate, in the exercise of its functions, due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other acts prohibited by the Equality Act (2010).
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

More detailed legislative context is provided within the [EDI policy](#).

## 4. POLICY INTO PRACTICE

The intention of this strategy is to translate our EDI policy and the values and aims detailed in our Corporate Plan into practice. Development of this strategy has been underpinned in the following ways.

### 4.1. An evidence based approach – data and consultation

Alongside understanding the broader strategic **Context** at UEL, analysis of the current picture has enabled us to begin to establish a more detailed baseline in relation to equality and diversity at UEL as well as to understand current good practice and where development is needed. As a result, **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion** Key Strategic Aims have been developed as a framework for more specific EDI objectives.

This evidence base includes:

- Analysis of staff and student demographic data
- Consultation - analysis of responses from staff surveys (Your Voice, Gender Equality Survey) and student surveys (NSS)
- Outcomes of the institutional Athena SWAN self-assessment process
- Consultation with specific teams with key E&D responsibilities as well as broader EDI strategy survey and focus groups (Jan – March 2017)
- UEL's Access Agreement 2018-19
- Incorporating the various requirements of the Equality Act, QAA and HEFCE
- Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) research in the higher education sector

It is expected that equality and diversity data and further consultation will continue to be integral to EDI planning at UEL; including the Race Equality Charter self-assessment process and individual School Athena SWAN self-assessment processes. Additionally, as is reflected in the action plan, we will be developing data dashboards for both student and staff data to enable monitoring of progress and identification of future actions.

### 4.2. Accountability

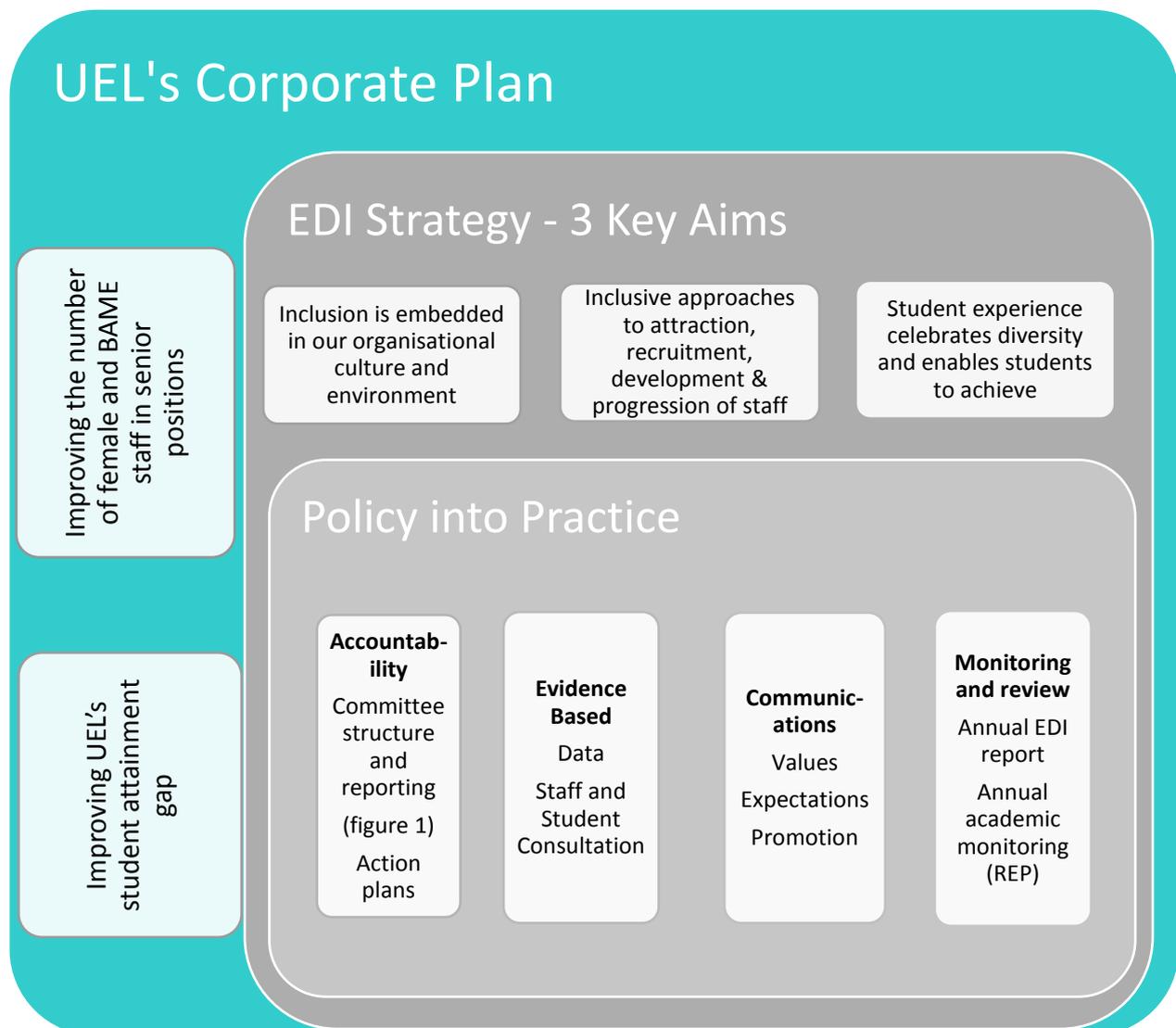
Equality and diversity governance and responsibilities at UEL are set out in our [EDI policy](#). As detailed, overall responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion including this strategy and action plan rests with the Vice Chancellor with support from the Equality & Diversity team. The Equality and Diversity Committee (E&DC), chaired by the VC, is responsible for promoting inclusive ways of working, for the development, communication and monitoring of UEL's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion strategy.

The Directors of Student Support / Centre for Student Success are responsible for matters relating to equality of opportunity for students. The Chief Operating Officer / Head of HR is responsible for matters relating to equality of opportunity in employment and inclusion of UEL

facilities. Responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring strategies for students and staff, respectively, is reflected in the objectives and action plan.

Deans and Directors are responsible for identifying local equality and diversity challenges and developing local actions to address these with support from School / Service EDI leads. Local EDI planning and implementation is reported through Education and Student Success Committee and E&DC as appropriate.

EDI leads are responsible for championing UEL’s EDI values, to participate in the EDI leads network and for providing leadership, advice and support within their School or service and feeding back their relevant specialist expertise to E&DC.



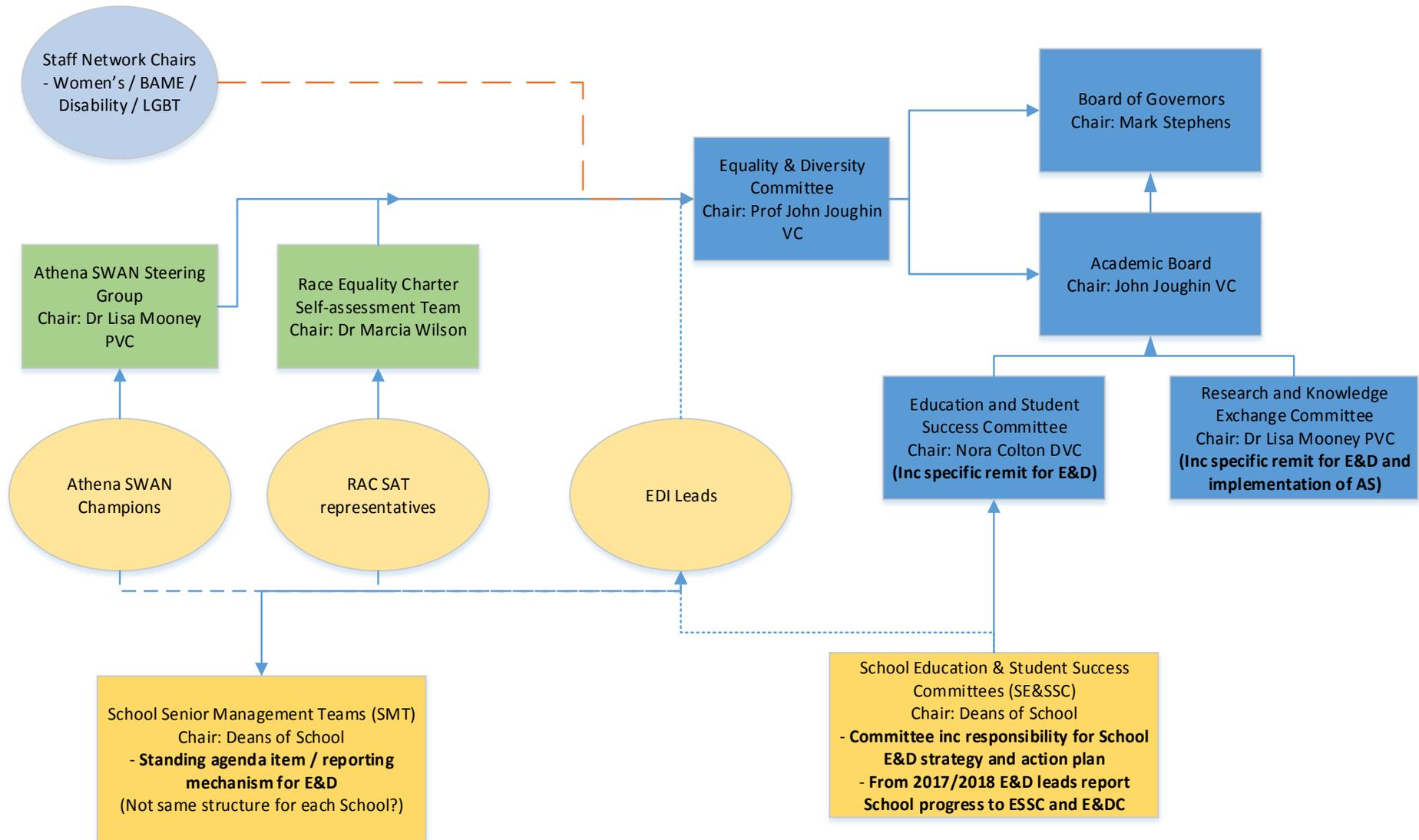


Figure 1 - E&D committee and lead reporting lines

### **4.3. Communicating our values and sharing good practice**

A key element to effective implementation of our EDI strategy is how we communicate our equality and diversity values and how we set expectations of inclusivity, wellbeing, dignity and respect for all our staff and students. Enacting these values form key elements of the EDI strategy action plan through our communications plan and staff / student inductions (on-boarding).

Further, linking to our institutional commitments around social mobility, social justice, social innovation and social cohesion and our mission to become London's leading university for civic engagement, we aim to facilitate greater recognition, networking, sharing and promotion good practice within and outside UEL.

### **4.4. Monitoring and review**

E&DC will review this strategy regularly and provide progress updates to Academic Board and Board of Governors on at least an annual basis. Accordingly, E&DC schedule of business will be reviewed annually aligned to this strategy and to other relevant committee's schedules such as Academic Board to which E&DC reports.

The annual equality and diversity report will provide commentary on progress in implementing the strategy and objectives and will continue to provide data analysis in relation to protected characteristics as well as progress against baseline and targets set.

### **4.5 Aligning with other university strategies**

As outlined above, the EDI strategy links to a number of strands within the institution; as such it is anticipated that EDI will continue to be aligned and reflect collaboration, these include the following:

- Academic Strategy
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy
- People Strategy
- Access Agreement
- Civic Engagement
- UEL's institutional strategic planning cycle.

### **5.1. Key Aim 1. Inclusion is embedded in our organisational culture and environment**

Inclusion should be an intrinsic part of everything we do:

- the way we communicate,
- the way we work and interact with our colleagues, our students and communities,
- our day-to-day decision making.

Everyone has a responsibility to create a culture that is both diverse and inclusive, as well as one that inspires, challenges and makes everyone feel valued and respected. This strategy aims to translate UEL's EDI policy into practice through setting out a framework which embeds accountabilities, enables ongoing understanding of current issues for UEL and provides support mechanisms for implementation.

### **5.2. Key Aim 2. Inclusive UEL staff experience reflecting our approaches to the attraction, recruitment, development and progression of staff**

Our recruitment activities and the development and progression of staff are critical in achieving an organisation that is not only well equipped to provide the best support, teaching and research for our diverse student community, but also representative and understanding of the needs of our students.

### **5.3. Key Aim 3. Inclusive UEL student experience which celebrates diversity and enables all our students to succeed**

Supporting the Academic Strategy to develop a learning environment that is inclusive for all students, and that allows students from all backgrounds, experiences, beliefs and faiths, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities and ages to experience UEL as a platform for progression, development and success.