

Disability Equality Scheme





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Appendices to this document related to Impact Assessment, the Legal Rationale and Responsibilities for Implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme can be downloaded from <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/EqualitySchemes%20.aspx>

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1. Introduction

The University is committed to taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination in its policies, practices and procedures and this intention underpins the University's Equal Opportunities Policy.

The University's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is designed to assist managers to review their services and to remove barriers to disabled people. These barriers may be attitudinal, informational, environmental, organisational or cultural.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 has amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 so that it now places a duty on all public authorities to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- be pro-active in taking account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The duty places positive responsibilities on the University to work towards a more equal society by mainstreaming disability equality into the way in which we carry out our functions.

The duty has two elements, a General Duty (see above) and Specific Duties which are intended to assist public authorities in meeting the General Duty.

2. The Specific Duties

The DES is required to include statements on:

- How disabled people have been involved in the DES development;
- How the University intends to impact assess its policies, procedure and practices;
- How the University proposes to meet its General Duty within a 3-year period;
- How the University consults with disabled service users on the effect of policies, procedures and practices;
- How recruitment, development and retention affects disabled people;
- How the provision of services take account of disabled people;
- How the University makes use of information to assist in meeting its obligations;
- How it intends to review the effectiveness of the scheme's implementation
- How it intends to publish an annual report to include those steps taken as a result of information gathered.

3. Disability Statement

At the University of Bolton we are committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all. For the purposes of this statement, disability is understood in the broadest sense including physical and sensory impairments, mental health issues, medical conditions and specific learning difficulties which have an impact on day to day activities.

We aim to:

- Anticipate the needs of disabled staff and students and potential visitors.
- Recognise the particular contribution to achievement of the University's mission made by individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and/or experiences.
- Foster independent learning through comprehensive student support whilst creating an environment in which students feel they can declare their support requirements.
- Maximise our capacity to create career opportunities for people and which do not disadvantage disabled people when being considered alongside their peers and colleagues.

By ensuring that:

- Applications for student admission or as employees are assessed on the basis of the applicant's aptitudes, abilities and qualifications.
- Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria for job vacancies are automatically invited for interview and considered for employment on their abilities.
- Students and staff have access to the appropriate support and adaptations to enable them to be fully included in the life of the University.
- The views of disabled students and staff are taken into account at all times when their requirements are being assessed or discussed.
- With the individual's consent, staff have the relevant information to offer appropriate support.
- We provide staff working with disabled students and staff with organisational 'backup' including training and development opportunities, appropriate equipment and other necessary infrastructure.
- We support students and staff who become disabled during their time at the University to continue in their chosen course of study or stay in employment.
- We consult widely and regularly with student and staff representatives in addition to external organisations and use this information to improve and develop the provision of our services.
- We train all staff in order to improve their understanding of the impact of disability on students, colleagues and members of the public and how they can act to respond positively to it.
- We work to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our physical environment.

4. Social Model of Disability

The University of Bolton will use the 'social' model of disability. Following the social model should result in a better environment for all service users and the entire community and better access for disabled and service users generally.

The University of Bolton has developed a DES to help us to:

- carry out equality impact assessments on existing policies, practices and procedures to identify where action needs to be taken to make

- improvements or changes, and to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people;
- make sure that we are taking the needs and views of disabled people into account when, for example, we design and deliver services, make access improvements or develop policies;
 - continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver services to disabled people;
 - ensure that there are resources and support available to deliver our Disability Equality Scheme's core priorities.

5. Involvement of disabled people in developing the scheme.

The University is committed to working in partnership with the disabled community in the development, implementation and ongoing review of its DES. In broad categories our community consists of:

- Students and potential students
- Staff and potential staff
- Contractors
- External contacts and stakeholders
- Visitors and members of the public

To date communication and involvement has focussed on identifying what is working well, what is not working well, where there are barriers to equal opportunities and access, and where there are gaps.

The University's principal vehicle for consultation on matters relating to Equality of Opportunity, including disability, is the Equality and Diversity Committee. This is responsible for ensuring that corporate objectives relating to equal opportunities are set and met. It is responsible to the Executive Board for the creation of policies and for pursuing and monitoring these policies.

The Equality and Diversity Committee is currently chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and membership of the group includes the trade unions, President of the Students' Union and the chairs of the action groups. Only one member of this group has a declared disability, however, the Disability Promotion Group represents the view of those disabled members of staff and students who are either members of Joining Up Disability or who contribute to these groups through the various service user groups.

The structure of the Equality and Diversity Committee is outlined in diagram 1 below. A series of promotion/action groups report to the Equality and Diversity Committee on progress of their objectives and

targets as identified in diagram 1. The group that reports on disability related issues is the Disability Group which is also referred to as the Disability Action Group.

The Disability Group has a range of disability related sub groups that report on their progress (see diagram 2). This feedback is reported back to the Equality and Diversity Group through the Disability chairperson.

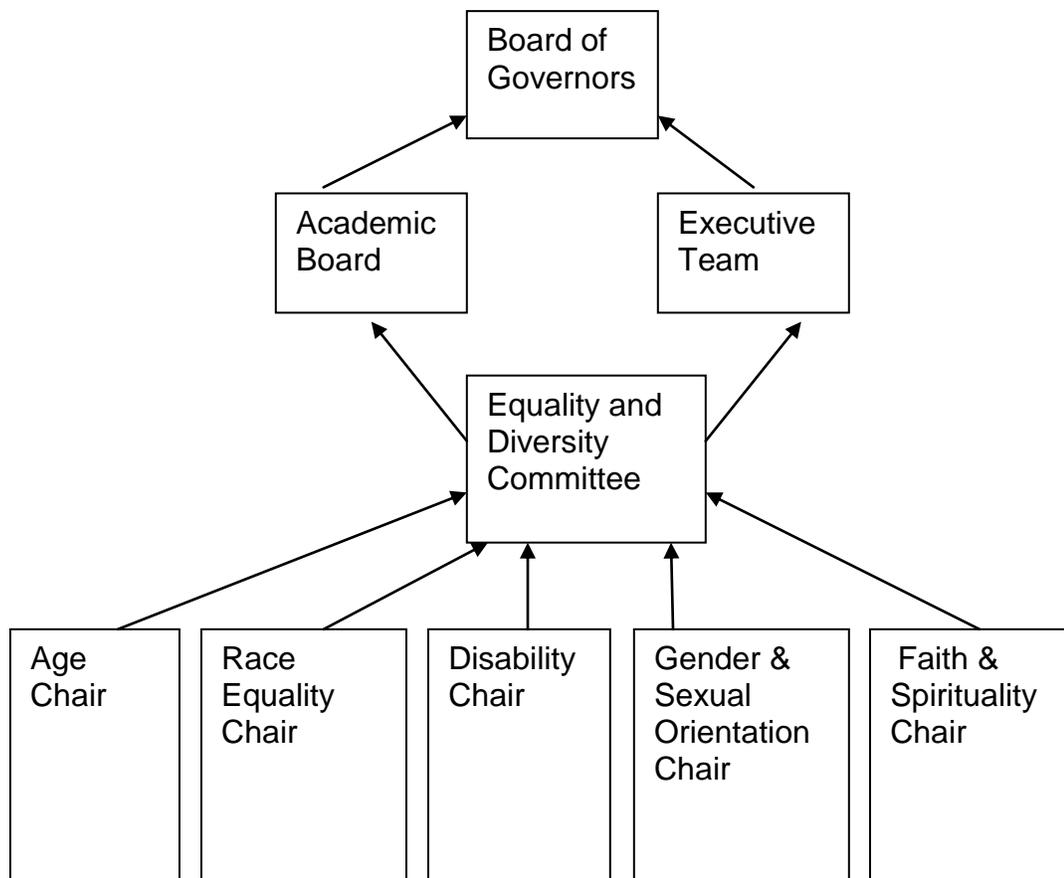


Diagram 1 – the Equality and Diversity Committee structure

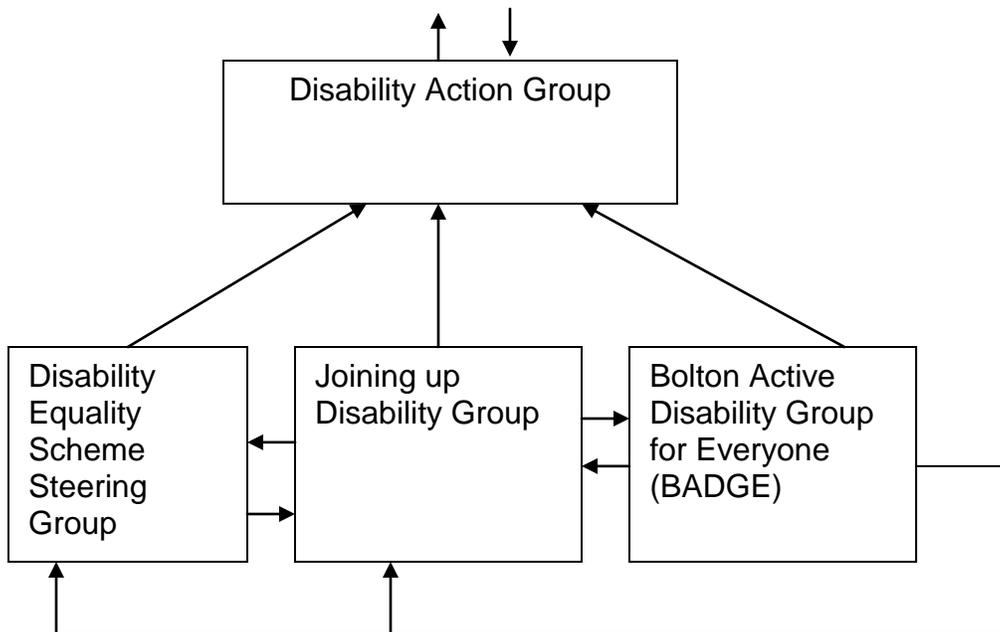


Diagram 2 – How other disability related sub groups relate to the Disability Promotion Group

In addition to the Disability Action Group within the Equality and Diversity Committee, the University has an established focus group for students and staff namely the Joining Up Disability Group. This meets once per term to contribute and advice on good practice.

The purpose of the Joining Up Disability Group is to foster inclusion for disabled students and staff throughout the University community by:

- contributing to the formulation of strategy
- preparing draft policy documents for discussion or commenting on policy presented
- acting as a consultative forum for estates issues
- advising on resource allocation
- promoting awareness of the needs of disabled students and staff
- implementing practical ideas for delivering the above

Membership is available to any staff or students who have an interest in this area and wish to contribute ideas to promote good practice.

The University has established a Disability Partnership with Bolton Council, Royal Bolton NHS Trust, NHS Bolton (Primary Care Trust), Bolton at Home, Bolton Sixth Form College and Bolton Community College to involve the local community on making Bolton a better place to live and work. The first joint event with the community entitled the Better Bolton Café took place on 21 July 2006. An outcome of this was the Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone (BADGE) was formed by local

people who input on the individual partner organisation's policy and procedures. Further information on BADGE can be found on the following link <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/BADGE.aspx>.

Engagement of disabled people is essential to the successful academic, social, intellectual and administrative development of the University and the way that it interacts with the wider community. Disabled people are invited to participate through the use of consultation groups, specific projects, application processes, surveys and other relevant mechanisms as issues are identified and addressed. People who typically reflect a range of interests affecting university life include: staff, students, contractors, stakeholders from the wider community and members of the general public. The University embraces a culture that welcomes discussion, involvement, development and subsequent implementation of policies that are: appropriate, accessible and consultative with a view to yielding outcomes that are: relevant specific, proportionate, transparent, and measurable.

6. Data Collection

6.1 Benchmark data for disabled students

Data on the University student profiles are downloadable from <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/Uni-Diversity.aspx> or on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/AboutUs/KeyFacts.aspx>

Year	No. of disabled students
2002/03	543
2003/04	653
2004/05	695
2005/06	737
2006/07	800
2007/08	855
2008/09	1005
2009/10 (as at 4.12.09)	838*

*Please note that this does not include February 2010 intake of students

6.2 Benchmark data for disabled staff

Data on the University staff profiles are downloadable from <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/Uni-Diversity.aspx> or on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/AboutUs/KeyFacts.aspx>

Disclosure is an issue for all staff working in Higher Education and the University has made some significant progress in this area with improved staff disclosure rates including disability. The number of staff declaring a disability or no disability compared to the "not known" has now decreased to 0.72% of staff

population. The percentage of staff that have declared a disability has increased to 3.6%.

A data collection process for part time hourly paid staff and casual staff is now established.

In addition to staff profiles, benchmark data is available for recruitment and the number of instances of reasonable adjustment (s) introduced for staff with a disability. Data is are downloadable from

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/Uni-Diversity.aspx>

7. Evidence of current good practice

The University's previous good practice included in our original DES and subsequent annual reports for 2007 and 2008 can be found on the following link under "DES good practice 2006 – 2009"

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/EqualitySchemes%20.aspx>

7.1 Student Services

Student Services are based in the Student Centre. It is staffed by a team of Student Advisors and specialist staff providing information, advice and guidance to students (prospective, current and past) and staff. Student Services will deal with all enquires about general student support services. It is the first point of contact for: -

- Accommodation
- Careers and Job Shop
- Chaplaincy
- Counselling
- Sports Centre
- Student Finance
- Volunteering
- Official Letters and Council Tax
- Criminal Records Bureau information
- Disability
- University Reception Service (based in Senate House)

In addition to its key role in supporting individual students the Disability Service has a wider role in promoting understanding of legislative and accessibility requirements and disseminating good practice. It is through this that all staff can embed these requirements into their work.

For the Academic Year 2009/10 one of the Student Service's objectives is to take a leading role in the contribution, monitoring and evaluation of the University's Disability Equality Scheme and to contribute to the ongoing review and implementation of the annual Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan. All Student

Services procedures are to be reviewed to ensure that they are anticipatory and compliant.

The Disability Service offers support, advice and guidance to students who have declared a disability from pre-application to graduation, as well as to academic staff. In addition to this diagnostic screenings are offered in order to make referrals to assess for specific learning difficulties i.e. Dyslexia.

This support is offered via confidential one- to -one appointments and Drop In sessions, staff and student inductions and through awareness -raising events. The service must be accessible and therefore communication and liaison with its users is available through a variety of mediums; information packs, telephone, email, website, fax, Minicom, SMS text messaging and, when requested, British Sign Language interpreters, audio format and Braille.

The Disability Service has been extensively developed over the last seven years to cater for the needs of its users.

Practices and procedures have been consistently developed and fine tuned to deal with the ever increasing amount of students who access the service.

The service and the support that is available is publicised through the University prospectus, disability information packs & booklets, the website, academic departments, the Library and through talks given to external contacts, such as schools and colleges, adds to the increased demand on the service.

The Introduction of part IV of the DDA 1995, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act in 2001, which involved various deadlines for meeting the needs of disabled students, meant that raising awareness of the University's responsibilities under this Act became a priority.

The profile of the service has been greatly improved throughout the University through staff development sessions delivered and facilitated by the Disability Service, focusing on supporting disabled students and improving accessibility to all.

The Senior Disability Adviser liaises with the Academic and Professional Development Unit (APDU) to ensure disability awareness sessions are provided as part of the annual staff development programme for both academic and professional staff at the University. This involves presenting sessions at Academic Briefings throughout the academic year as well as running specific half- day events.

During 2009, the Disability Service successfully organised a series of Disability Awareness Training Sessions for more than 50 of the University's senior managers.

The Student Services's staff work closely with representatives of the University of Bolton's Students' Union to ensure that the Union is fully represented on those fora which discuss disability matters and also promote the inclusion of disabled students.

The Disability Service team includes 1 full time Senior Disability Adviser, 2 full time Disability Advisers and a part time Administrative Assistant. The Disability Service has continued to develop and improve the services offered to students and staff. There are more one- to -one appointments available and the service now has two Drop-In Sessions per week.

The Disability Service has developed a form to enable students to "Disclose a Disability" to any member of staff within the University and a number of staff have been trained in this process. A Consent Release form is also used with every student who has disclosed a disability. The students have the option of signing to agree to liaison with other people both inside and outside of the University e.g. tutor, Local Authorities, GPs, Community Psychiatric Nurses and Study Needs Assessors. Students can specify if they agree liaison with some people and not others.

The service now has a range of assistive technology available to loan to students who are not entitled to funded support or are still waiting for it. The Disability Service works alongside the Library in ensuring the needs of disabled students are met and also liaises at many levels with academic departments.

The Disability Service continues to use the, "Accessibility Manager", module of the central student records system. This is with the aim that it will eventually be rolled out University wide to aid the dissemination of information throughout relevant academic departments, to improve the learning experience for disabled students.

The Disability Service continues to gather feedback from Disabled students via questionnaires, focus groups and participation in awareness raising events and uses this information to develop and improve service provision.

Since the amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the University has further recognised its responsibilities to not only support disabled staff and students but to be proactive in approach to create an accessible working/learning environment.

As 2009/10 academic year commences well over 800 students have declared additional support requirements and this is anticipated to exceed 900 by the end of the academic year.

7.2 Academic Projects

The Academic Projects demonstrating good practice can be found on the following link under “DES good practice 2006 – 2009”
<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/EqualitySchemes%20.aspx>

The University has appointed two Learning and Teaching Fellows. One has been appointed with responsibility for exploring approaches to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. The other Teaching Fellow for diversity is working closely with the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) on projects, under the SMARTE initiative which will improve public transport for all members of the public with a disability.

7.3 Library

The Library works closely with both students and staff in other departments to ensure that services are appropriate for users with specific needs. In particular, its strong relationships with Estates, Student Services, and Communications and Information Technology, are facilitated via the University committee structure, detailed elsewhere, working groups, with student participation, and networking. This ensures that relevant strategic and operational areas are addressed at the right level, by the right people, and that student views are sought.

In 2001/02, the Library undertook a major review of specific need’s provision. The recommendations for enhancements to the service took into account the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), and the Special Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), the Quality Assurance Agency Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities, and the SCONUL Guidelines on services to students with specific needs. Many improvements were made as a result of the review.

As part of its work in obtaining a Government Charter Mark for excellent customer service (2002, 2005, and 2009), the Library has been more pro-active in providing and promoting its disability services, thus pre-empting newer legislation. For current Library service delivery click on
<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/StudyResources/Library/Home.aspx>

Physical access is DDA compliant, and the working environment is equipped with accessible toilet facilities, lifts, reconfigured book shelves, low- level door pushes, wide access doors and ramping, and matt laminate signage, Minicom machines and hearing loop systems are provided at the Information and Issue desks, together with portable hearing loops for use when necessary.

The Library offers an enhanced service offering a more tailored provision of additional services, matched to the needs of each individual is in operation. All students registered with the University as having specific needs are entitled to a range of additional services.

There are fully supported Enabling Technology rooms for users with specific requirements using multimedia networked computers that can access the internet, email, and electronic services, as well as all the normal networked software, plus specialist hardware and software to assist students.

A range of Library publications are available on audiocassette and in large print and Braille. Publications can be accessed in PDF format via the web pages enabling students with specific needs to access them in the Library's Enabling Technology rooms, or remotely. The Library web pages meet or exceed the minimum legal requirement of accessibility on all pages.

Staffing

Support for Additional learning Support is integral to the Library front-line services but a number of staff have specific responsibility for Additional Learning Support: 2 Library Supervisors and 2 technical and second level support. There is a very close and, to the user, seamless relationship with the University Disability Service. The Library encourages an individual induction for all users.

More information can be found on the following web-site link under "Further Help". <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Students/StudyResources/AdditionalLearningSupport/>.

NoWAL

The Library is a member of NoWAL- the North West Academic Libraries consortium. The NoWAL Diversity Group is a task and finish group which exists actively to promote equality and diversity in all areas of Library and Information provision for both staff and users. The Group recognises that addressing issues of diversity involves respect for, and sensitivity to, the needs of individuals and seeks therefore to advise and inform rather than to offer prescriptive solutions.

7.4 Staff

Human Resources Strategy and Annual Departmental Plans

These set out how the organisation will maximise the contribution of its staff in delivering services and achieving their annual planning priorities. As a two ticks symbol holder we review our progress in meeting the national minimum standards for the recruitment, retention and promotion of disabled people on an annual basis.

The University seeks to anticipate the needs of disabled staff and remove barriers to every aspect of their employment covering recruitment, personal and professional development, promotion, and other terms and conditions to enable them to make a positive contribution in the workplace. In addition to those commitments identified in the Disability Statement (see page 5) the University aims to:

- Encourage a culture where disabled staff can declare their disabilities in a supportive environment
- Provide a framework that ensure a consistent and equitable approach to make reasonable adjustments for the University of Bolton staff community
- Support staff in the University by encouraging a culture where management take an active interest in the health and wellbeing of their staff through regular communication and anticipate the needs of disabled staff wherever possible
- Provide access to appropriate advice and assistance to optimise staff physical and psychological wellbeing in the workplace
- Actively promote disability awareness that fosters positive attitudes by providing diversity training programmes and events
- Make reasonable adjustments to the working environment to allow disabled applicants to be appointed

The University conducted a diversity survey in 2006, a second survey was not undertaken in 2008 due to lack of resources and changes in Personnel Services, however it is anticipated that a survey will be conducted during 2010. Further details of the Diversity Survey can be found on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/Home.aspx>

The policy on Reasonable Adjustment has been written and will be embedded into the process of job evaluation exercise outcomes in due course. The delay is due to the University rolling out job evaluation during summer 2009, later than originally anticipated.

Diversity Training and Staff Development

Disability issues are an area covered on all staff personal development plans (PDP's).

Changing attitudes and behaviours is essential to making diversity training successful. This training is delivered by TheatreAnd, an innovative training, development and creative presentation company who incorporate drama-based training techniques to deliver a series of workshops identifying different equality strands, including disability, to focus on driving behavioural and attitudinal changes. This training is mandatory and rolled out to all staff.

The University has made SENDA and Disability Equality and Disability Awareness training mandatory for all staff which is facilitated through Personnel Services and delivered by the Disability Service.

All new staff receive induction on a one-to-one basis on equality and diversity from the HR Community Officer in Personnel Services and from the Disability Service on SENDA and disability awareness.

The Diversity Matters web page now outlines some of the main objectives in the Disability Equality Scheme and is used as a staff development tool.

The annual staff Teaching and Learning Conference that is held annually regularly includes sessions on disability issues.

Policies on Reasonable Adjustment, Dignity and Respect and Disability have been promoted throughout the University and the HR Community Officer has a programme of training delivery on Managing a Diverse Team, Sickness Absence Management, and Positive Mental Health in Your Team that is being rolled out to managers. This training and awareness raising is supported by the Well Being and Diversity Matters web pages that provide a staff development tool and information site.

Dignity and Respect at Work and in Learning and Study

The Dignity and Respect at Work and in Learning and Study Policy and Procedures seek to encourage staff, students and visitors to come forward with their concerns that will be dealt with in complete confidence, impartiality and with sensitivity. The University of Bolton has Dignity and Respect Advisers to provide a networked support system for members of the University's community who believe that they are experiencing harassment.

The policy and Dignity and Respect at Work procedures can be found on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/WellBeing/Culture.aspx>

7.5 Estates

During 2008, the University merged its two campuses. The challenges for staff and students have been enormous, with huge changes to most academic Schools, many support services including Student Services, and Library, and the Student Union. Physical access and facilities have been a priority with for example, the Library having wide entrance doors and ramps for students in wheelchairs.

Access plans assist in prioritising necessary works for improving accessibility to our campus buildings with target dates for improvement.

7.6 Finance, Procurement and Purchasing

The University of Bolton will ensure that procurement policies and practices take account of our legal duties to promote equality and comply with DES. We will do this by:

- Placing an expectation on our appointed contractors to share and deliver our equality and diversity goals

- Make sure that disability equality along with other areas of diversity is taken into account when procuring goods, works or services from external providers
- Monitoring our contracts for compliance including appropriate terms and conditions.

8. Impact Assessment

Impact assessments are an essential tool for achieving disability equality within our organisation. As part of their Disability Equality Scheme all public authorities must include a statement of their methods for assessing the impact and potential impact of their policies on equality for disabled persons.

The purpose of impact assessment is both to ensure that all University decisions and activities do not disadvantage disabled people, and also to identify where they might better promote equality of opportunity, including consideration of where the different parts of the disability equality duty (such as promoting positive attitudes) might be built into those policies and practices.

Equality impact assessment outcomes will be published on the University web pages.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We will involve disabled people in the evaluation of our scheme and action plans and ensure that the scheme is evaluated. This will include:

- Students and potential students
- Staff and potential staff
- Contractors
- External contacts and stakeholders
- Visitors and members of the public

This process will include making any changes to the scheme so that continuous performance improvements and overall effectiveness demonstrate our commitment to the disability equality duty.

The DES will be reviewed on an annual basis reviewed by the University Secretary with a report to the Board of Governors.

The DES Action Plan will be reviewed quarterly and accompanied by published progress reports through the Equality and Diversity Committee route.

10. Publication of outcomes

Disability Equality Scheme outcomes will be published on the Diversity Matters web pages on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/POD/DiversityMatters/EqualitySchemes%20.aspx> and on <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/AboutUs/UniversityPolicy/Home.aspx>

Regular progress reports are published in line with Equality and Diversity Committee review timetables.

These are published in paper and alternative formats on request to be made available to each university department, partner organisations and to the general public.

Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan 2010 - 2012

Objective	Action	Target date	Lead	Outcome	Progress to date
1. Disability awareness training to be mandatory for all staff	All new and existing staff to have had training by 2011. Action to be monitored via the PDP or Appraisal process as appropriate.	December 2011	Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Chair of Equality and Diversity Committee	1. SENDA training as part of Induction. 2. Half day mandatory training course for all senior managers. 3. General disability awareness training for all staff 4. Tailored training for supporting academic staff in accessible curriculum delivery.	Completed Completed Ongoing Ongoing
2. Impact Assessment 100% compliance	All new and current policies and procedures to be impact assessed	Completion in a 3 year cycle 2011	Director of Planning on behalf of Governance and Management Group	Legal compliance and enhanced University experience for all relevant staff and students.	New policies being impact assessed
3. A physical access audit of the new single Campus to be completed by December 2009	December 2009	Audit to be commissioned	Director of Estates	An accessible campus plan with target dates for improvements.	Conditioning survey completed. Action plan awaited
4. Curriculum access audit to be initiated.	December 2010	Audit to be commissioned and planned in 2009 for completion in 2010	Director of Learning Teaching Retention and Professional Practice (Lead) Dean of Quality and Standards Directors of Schools	Procedures in place for inclusion of disability issues in the curriculum.	Ongoing

			Disability Task Group		
5. Improve collection of statistics on disabled staff and students for more effective planning.	A) Staff	December 2009	Head of HR Strategy and Personnel	Increased number of staff declaring a disability or no disability compared to not known category	Not known disclosure rate down to 0.72% of staff population
	i. Increase numbers of staff declaring a disability.				
	ii. Produce University guidance for disabled staff and their managers.	Staff training delivered by December 2010	Head of HR Strategy and Personnel	Improved support for disabled staff.	Positive reasonable adjustment (s) for staff at return to work interviews and PDP processes
	B) Students.	Include action on current statistics for 2009/10 Local Plans	Directors of School	Improved support for disabled students.	Ongoing
	i. Schools to analyse and act on data on disabled students by subject and course				
	ii. Ensure that the University is meeting QAA Code of Practice requirements.	Make recommendations on revised QAA Code of Practice (due for consultation January 2010)	Disability Action Group of Equality and Diversity Committee.	Recommendations and compliance with updated Code of Practice.	

Disability Equality Scheme

If you require information contained in this document in an alternative format, such as large print, Braille or audio tape contact:

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