

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

# Strategic Equality Plan

2024-28

## VC Foreword

This plan contains important information about the work UWTSD is doing to promote equality and diversity.

As UWTSD's new Vice-Chancellor, I am particularly proud of our work to promote equality and access to education. This Strategic Equality Plan is grounded in our mission to Transform Education and Transform Lives and reflects the values of the University. As part of this plan, we are committing to being a university that understands its staff and student community and reflects this understanding in our values, culture and activities.

We are further committed to a working environment and a learning community where everyone feels safe and valued, and has an opportunity to achieve their potential. I believe that education benefits from diversity and an environment where people can come together from all backgrounds to seek knowledge, learn from each other, and develop in a way that benefits the regions in which we are located.

I would like to thank our staff, learners and students for their input into this Strategic Equality Plan and to external partners for their guidance and support.

**Professor Elwen Evans, KC  
Vice-Chancellor**

## Vision, Mission and Purpose

We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and to building strong communities on all sites and to create an inclusive, supportive learning and working environment in which all staff, students and learners can flourish and fulfil their personal potential. We actively work on removing barriers to participation, valuing differences, celebrating diversity and supporting people from all backgrounds and circumstances to fulfil their potential.

Our vision is to be a University for Wales, with a commitment to the wellbeing and heritage of the nation at the heart of all that we do. Central to our vision is the promotion and embedding of a dual-sector educational system which educates learners of all ages and backgrounds, and stimulates economic development in our region, across Wales and beyond.

The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to equality and how we will meet legal obligations contained with the Equality Act 2010. Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## About us

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) is part of the UWTSD Group (the Group), a confederation of several institutions which includes Coleg Sir Gâr and Coleg Ceredigion as constituent colleges. The University has campuses in Birmingham, Carmarthen, Cardiff, Lampeter, London, and Swansea, each with their own distinct identities which enables the delivery of our strategic focus on employability and widening participation. Each campus offers a different kind of student experience while all share a friendly, community atmosphere.

The University's mission is to transform education and by doing so transform the lives of the individuals and communities we serve.

## Developing Our Equality Objectives

This Strategic Equality Plan aligns with our institutional Strategic Plan, our Fee and Access Plans and key strategies such as the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It also fully embeds the provisions of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and aims to ensure that we continuously improve equality and diversity and enhance inclusive approaches within our organisation and in partnership with others.

To set our objectives we have reflected on the outcomes and impact of the 2020-2024 Strategic Equality Plan and on the latest data available through our Annual Equality Reports, alongside key sector reports as well as analysed staff and student data following engagement surveys such as regular pulse surveys.

All key objectives will be underpinned by a focus on data quality to ensure that robust and accurate data is available to take an evidence-based approach to setting priorities and to demonstrate the impact of our Strategic Equality Plan and compliance with our Equality duties. We will also ensure that procurement data is available and will evidence the diversity of procurement.

All key objectives will be supported by a central operational action plan, which include short- and medium-term outcomes and longer-term ambitions. We will work in partnership with staff and students in relation to the implementation of the new Strategic Equality Plan.

## Legal Context

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **General Duty:**

When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't, we also need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic;
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. We also have to particularly think about how we will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

## The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales. The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty and have been developed around four main principles:

1. **Use of evidence**
2. **Consultation and Involvement**
3. **Transparency**
4. **Leadership**

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions UWTSD must take in order to comply and include the following areas:

- Setting Equality Objectives and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan;
- Ensuring engagement with people who have an interest in how UWTSD's decisions affect them;
- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty;
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact;
- Publishing employment monitoring information annually;
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst employees and using performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of employees in relation to the General Duty;
- Setting a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified;
- Thinking about including conditions relevant to the General Duty in procurement processes.

## Key Achievements of 2020-2024

- **Creation of Wellbeing Unit:** Implemented new structures including the creation of the Wellbeing Unit. Increased resources into student wellbeing provision. Widened engagement with local, county and national statutory services.
- **Covid Support:** Supported staff and students through the pandemic, including wellbeing checks for those reporting positive tests.
- **Disclosed trauma:** New Cause for Concern policy and processes developed and introduced to enhance reporting routes and support for students who have disclosed trauma.
- **Period Dignity Campaign:** Includes provision of free sanitary products, discussions with women's networks and community groups to address period poverty. Provision of free reusable sanitary products to students claiming hardship, enhancing sustainability and support.
- **Mental Health Support:** Enhanced provision for open access 24/7 mental health support for students and staff
- **Connect Project:** Training and support delivered for students/staff to build community and enhance mental health. Additional activity included information sharing, events and activities on wellbeing themes in partnership with key stakeholders.
- **Challenging Unconscious Bias Training:** Training provided to staff to reduce inequalities and promote understanding.
- **Race Equality Action Plan:** Developed in consultation with staff and students, a Race Equality Action Plan 2021-2024 which has been implemented and monitored.
- **Race Equality Charter:** Committed to the Principles of the Race Equality Charter and working towards bronze level.
- **Disability Confident Employer:** Accredited as a Disability Confident Employer as part of government scheme
- **Cultural Competence Programme:** Delivered a compassionate leadership programme as a foundational element of a future cultural competence programme for our senior leaders.
- **Staff Consultation:** Conducted a number of staff pulse surveys to hear from our staff
- **Gender pay Gap:** Reduction in mean gender pay gap from 9.7% on 31 March 2019 to 7% on 31 March 2023.
- **Staff Wellbeing hub:** Created a new staff wellbeing hub with increased resources for staff and line managers
- **Leadership Development Programme:** We've supported 46 women through the Aurora Programme, supported four people on a new collaboration in partnership with Advance HE Diversifying Leadership Programme and supported 17 women through the Springboard Programme.
- **Digital Apprenticeship Scheme:** Launched a new scheme to develop a new pipeline of talent for the future.
- **Investments in HR systems:** Improvements in people analytics and reporting.

## A Robust & Informed Plan

To identify our Equality Objectives, we undertook a comprehensive engagement exercise. This included a regional survey in collaboration with Mid and West Wales Equality network as well as an online survey for staff, learners, students and key external stakeholders (e.g. our Trade Unions and, key external bodies for particular protected characteristics). In addition, face to face meetings were held with key internal stakeholder groups.

These engagement activities helped us understand the needs of our learning communities and our workforce and helped us shape the Equality Objectives and action plan.

We have looked at HEFCW and Welsh Government Action Plans and have reviewed the progress that we have already made in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duties. We have also reviewed national and external sources such as reports by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Welsh Government policy and priorities, UUK and AdvanceHE research reports and other relevant statistics and reports.

- EHRC reports including Is Wales Fairer? And Great Britain Monitor Report 2023
- UUK reports including 'Tackling racial harassment in higher education (2020)' and Changing the Culture reports.
- Legislative drivers such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the Socio-Economic Duty within the Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Government Reports and Strategies including Anti-Racist Wales and LGBTQ+ Action Plan
- HEFCW and AdvanceHE reports and circulars
- Internal Strategies

The University makes a commitment to its learners and specifically to Wales, its culture, heritage and language through its values and its distinctiveness.

The Welsh Language Strategy supports this commitment, and, through the work of the Welsh Language Services Centre, Institutes and Professional Services will support and secure the language's status as a means of both study and communication within the University.

## Delivery and Monitoring Processes

The actions within the Strategic Equality Plan will be delivered through a central operational action plan.

The central Operational Action Plan sets out the key priorities to be delivered over the coming 4 years with key milestones set for each target and the work will be embedded and monitored within the University's new Annual Planning Process There will be an annual review of progress made in relation to the central operational action plan which will be reported to Senate and Council.

## Reviewing Progress

Progress will be monitored within the new Annual Planning Process to evaluate the effectiveness of our approach to meeting our objectives.

The annual planning review process enables Senate and Council to monitor and scrutinise the progress of the University's priorities and actions in relation to equality and diversity.

Publication of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report is to fulfil the University's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties which includes its progress in delivering the Equality Objectives. We will use the outcomes of the annual planning review process to review and if necessary, adapt our priorities and planned actions.

# Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28

The UWTSD Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 is structured around three key domains: Understanding, Belonging, and Outcomes. Each domain is driven by a singular core aim, complemented by a series of objectives aimed at realising that aim. These objectives are further defined by a concise outline of planned steps, detailing the strategic approach towards their achievement.

The operational action associated with these steps will be delivered through a central operational action plan. This framework ensures a comprehensive and systematic approach to fostering equality, encompassing a range of initiatives geared towards tangible and sustainable progress in this crucial endeavour.

Domains	Objectives	Steps		
<b>Understanding</b>  To be a university that understands our staff and students and reflects this in our values, culture, and activities.	To ensure that the University understands and responds to the experience of our students.	Develop a culture of data informed decision making	Embed understanding of the experience of our students across the University	Communicate our actions in a transparent and meaningful way
	To ensure that our students know and understand their rights and these are reflected in our practice and policy.	Develop accessible and effective communication around students' rights and responsibilities	Embed student's rights and responsibilities in our culture, practice and policy	Create opportunities for regular review and consultation of our policy and practice
	To ensure the University continues to gain a wider knowledge and understanding of the major issues facing people with different protected characteristics across all of our campuses.	Continuously engage with our people to provide them with the opportunity to provide feedback on key EDI themes which will enable the University to gain a better understanding, benchmarking against trends identified within relevant reports to create specific and measurable actions.	Conduct further analysis of our workforce profile data by protected characteristics including the impact of intersectionality and develop our understanding, benchmarking against trends identified within relevant reports to create specific and measurable actions.	To continually review and improve the climate, systems and processes used to capture workforce profile data to ensure a consistent and effective approach.
<b>Belonging</b>  To be a university with an inclusive learning and working environment where everyone feels safe, valued and supported to achieve their full potential.	To ensure that all of our students are able to fully participate in university life safely.	Support students to live and study without harassment and discrimination	Further develop inclusive policies, procedures and practice	Foster a sense of collective responsibility for the wellbeing of our community
	To ensure that all students feel that they belong, their experiences are valued, and that their voices are heard and help to shape their education.	Support a culture of collaboration and co-creation	Celebrate different backgrounds, cultures and nationalities	Enable students to see themselves reflected in the University
	To ensure our leadership culture embeds the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion at all levels across the University and our leaders are role models for effective and equitable practice, supporting and equipping people managers to build inclusive teams.	Support the governing body with the continued development of appropriate governance structures in relation to EDI including advising on effective interventions to increase the diversity of our governing body and senior appointments.	To develop effective interventions for our senior leaders and people managers in relation to EDI to enable them to build and lead inclusive teams.	To continuously review the effectiveness of policies and practices in relation to EDI, considering the findings and recommendations of all relevant sector and government reports, National Strategies and new regulations.
<b>Outcomes</b>  To be an inclusive university which promotes equality of opportunity to achieve better equality outcomes.	To ensure that everyone with the ability and the interest is encouraged to consider Higher Education and apply to and access our academic programmes.	Raise aspirations and improve access to HE	Support successful transition to HE and to higher levels of study	Provide inclusive welcome and induction activity
	To ensure we provide all our students with equitable access to high-quality education and support services.	Provide a coherent and integrated student offer	Embed Universal Design principles into the delivery of our student experience	Provide inclusive facilities and resources
	To ensure that all students are supported to succeed and achieve their potential based on their effort and their abilities.	Provide high-quality services that support student wellbeing	Further develop a curriculum that understands our student body and their needs	Proactively identify and overcome barriers to student success
	To ensure we view our employee experience through the lens of equality, particularly in relation to recruitment, pay, development and progression.	We will identify and seek to remove any barriers that may exist in our attraction, retention and development practices to enable staff to reach their full potential.  We will continue to review and seek to improve our Equality Impact Assessment framework, monitoring outcomes and trends to identify appropriate actions.	Having committed to the Principles of the Race Equality Charter, we will continue to take action to achieve the Race Equality Charter Bronze level.  We will analyse and publish the gender pay gap and extend this to ethnicity and disability and address the causes of any difference in pay through a published action plan as applicable within the cycle of the Strategic Equality Plan as well as conduct Equal Pay Audits at regular intervals.	We will seek to address any identified imbalance in our workforce profile by creating career pathways and consider progression routes for early career staff.