# **UCL LGBTQ+ Equality Steering Group (LESG)**

## **Terms of Reference**

### Working definition of LGBTQ+

Here, LGBTQ+ is used as an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. It is intended as an inclusive “umbrella” abbreviation that encompasses a diverse spectrum of romantic and sexual orientations, sex characteristics and genders. It includes anyone that does not consider themselves to be heterosexual, or whose gender identity does not match their assigned sex at birth, as well as intersex individuals.

### LESG History and Relationship to Out@UCL

Out@UCL was established in 2009 as a networking group for UCL staff who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer (LGBTQ+). It continues to exist as a thriving social network both online and offline.

After a series of early networking events by Out@UCL members, the LGBTQ+ Equality Steering Group (LESG) was established as a separate, formalised steering committee that serves UCL in an advisory capacity through the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion unit (EDI).

# Aims

LESG aims to make LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion a reality at UCL, and is open to all staff who are interested in actively supporting this ambition, including allies.

# Objectives

* Ensure as far as possible that matters of sexual orientation and gender identity are embedded in the UCL EDI strategy, and make recommendations to the Office of the President & Provost and to any relevant UCL committees with the aim of facilitating progress towards these ambitions.
* Promote positive attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people and coordinate UCL’s involvement in awareness-raising events throughout the year, including LGBTQ History Month and International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHoBiT).
* Identify, discuss and share best practice for delivering LGBTQ+ equality within the Higher Education sector, in collaboration with other universities and external organisations, and by drawing on the latest research and evidence.
* Support staff directly, through coordination of the Out@UCL network and the supporter or allies network - Friends of OUT@UCL, by facilitating networking opportunities for LGBTQ+ staff at UCL, or creating and maintaining links with other relevant local networks.
* Consider the impact of UCL policies, procedures and practices as they relate to issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersectionality, and to identify any policies or practices that adversely affect LGBTQ+ staff or students.
* Liaise with and support other UCL networks and representatives including the LGBTQ Student Network and LGBT Officer. LESG will also provide a representative to the EDI forum, which is an opportunity for sharing and collaboration.
* Assist EDI with the facilitation of the Stonewall Workplace Index Application in the years it is deemed feasible to do so, and develop, coordinate and administer projects identified by members in line with the responsibilities above.

# Membership

* The Steering Group will usually be limited to 18 members, including ex-officio representatives or honorary members who will be longstanding members and useful to the group due to their institutional knowledge, role and seniority e.g. Head of Departments and Directors of Professional Services divisions.
* Members including honorary members will usually belong to the group for a term of 2 years, after which they will need to reaffirm their interest for up to another 2 years.
* When a vacancy appears, prospective members can express an interest in joining by contacting the Co-Chairs and outlining their interest and contribution.
* Any part time or full time UCL staff or PhD student who identifies within the above definition of LGBTQ+ is eligible to join.
* The Co-Chairs can approach potential new members with diversity and representation in mind. Identified members of Friends of OUT@UCL may also be invited to join the Steering Group on occasion.
* The SMT LGBTQ+ Equalities and Council Champions will be a member of the group.
* Where possible, it is desirable that the Steering Group include at least one member who is able (and willing) to carry out analysis of data at the request of the committee.

# Meetings

* The Steering group will aim to meet twice a term however meetings will be held flexibly and more frequently as needed, in line with the group’s activities.
* Meetings, including online meetings, will be held during core hours 10.00am to 4.00pm, arranged with as much notice as possible, and will normally not last more than 60 minutes without a break. Agenda items and minutes of the previous meeting should be circulated a minimum of 5 working days in advance to allow members to provide comments in advance if they are unable to attend.
* When practically possible, there will be a representative of the Office of the President & Provost (EDI) present at each meeting, however, they are not entitled to vote unless they have been approved by LESG as full members.
* For quoracy, either 7 members or half of the total membership must be present.
* Where one or more members of those present at a meeting does not agree with the action recommended by the chair (including a position of no action), the chair should ask members to vote and the outcome is decided by the majority.
* Meetings to start with a note of any apologies, and review of the minutes of the previous meeting for approval and discussion of any action points. Any corrections / emendations to minutes of the previous meeting by the Co-Chairs need to be raised at the next meeting for discussion, prior to approval.

# Accountabilities and reporting

## Information to be received:

The Steering Group will receive reports from representatives of the Office of the President & Provost (via EDI) and Human Resources, concerning the planning and implementation of UCL’s EDI strategy in relation to LGBTQ+ identities. Reporting will include:

* Data, aggregated statistics, or key findings from UCL demographic data related to gender and sexuality or surveys which record LGBTQ+ identities;
* Recommendations from external scrutineers, such as feedback on Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index reports;
* Key matters of concern or best practice reported by Vice Deans (EDI) in relation to LGBTQ+ identities;
* Planned policy changes that are likely to be of particular relevance or impact to LGBTQ+ individuals working or studying at UCL;
* Information about external partnerships or use of the UCL estate which has been identified as likely to have an impact on LGBTQ+ individuals working or studying at UCL;

LESG may also request reports from the LGBTQ+ research network (qUCL), UCLU LGBT officer, and the moderator of the Out@UCL staff network.

## LESG reports to and seeks to influence:

The Inclusion Forum, Equality Charters Groups and The Provost and another senior members of UCL Staff

## LESG is accountable to:

Members who identify with LESG and/or The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team.

# Responsibilities of all members

It is expected that members will hold values that are in general alignment with the LESG’s terms of reference, and that they will uphold these values by promoting a culture of open dialogue, mutual respect and trust, in which members can be themselves without prejudice. Members will commit to undertaking any necessary training that may be identified by the Co-Chairs.

Members are expected to attend meetings, and membership will be reviewed if three meetings are missed without apologies. They are expected to maintain up to date knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and to speak up for organisational and cultural change, sharing their views and expertise to guide informed recommendations.

It is expected that members will contribute ideas and participate in activities, actions and projects in line with the LESG’s objectives.

# Chair/Co-chairs

Normally, LESG will have two Co-Chairs, who are elected by a blind ballot of the committee. When one of the positions becomes vacant, members will be invited to nominate themselves and provide a supporting statement to one of the Co-Chairs. To be eligible for election, members will usually have served the committee for a minimum term of 12 months and have been present at least 2 meetings. Where possible, the Co-Chairs will not identify as the same gender.

Co-Chairs are normally elected by LESG for an initial term of 3 years, after which they can be re-elected for a second 3-year term. Co-Chairs can exceptionally be removed at any time by way of a vote of no confidence passed by the majority at a meeting of LESG.

Additional responsibilities of co-chairs

* Chairing/facilitating meetings, recruiting members, coordinating committee objectives and managing the budget in consultation with members, setting the dates of meetings and circulating the agenda and minutes.
* Ensure that the views of all members are heard and discussed in a timely and balanced manner, and that where possible all items on the agenda are given adequate time for discussion. They should ensure that members are not overloaded and that the balance of power within the leadership committee is maintained.
* Work with the UCL Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team as representatives of LESG and Out@UCL, and liaise with other UCL Equalities Working Groups and relevant external groups such as Stonewall and LGBTQ Trade Union representatives.
* Serve as members of UCL Inclusion Forum.

# Recognition

Volunteering to be a member or chair is considered an institutional citizenship role at UCL. There are several ways such contributions are recognised within the institution and all volunteers will receive information about recognition from the EDI team.

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team support

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team will provide a variety of support to empower EDI working groups to best represent and lead change for marginalised communities at UCL. The EDI team will maintain links between working groups to support collaboration and consideration of multiple disadvantages experienced.

## EDI Key Contact

LESG will have a nominated key contact from the EDI team. This person will attend meetings.

They will provide information/data, advice, strategic and project support to the working group including leading on the Stonewall Workplace Index Application with support from LESG. The nominated key contact will make recommendations to LESG about policy and processes improvements and maintain links with organisations and other equalities working groups as appropriate.

## EDI Administrative support

Administrative support to include taking minutes at meetings, making room bookings for meetings and events, managing mailing list for LESG and Out@UCL, sharing relevant UCL staff survey results/data, managing payments and expenses.