



UCL

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2015-2020



‘A diverse intellectual community, who are engaged with and changing the world for the better; recognised for our thought leadership and critical thinking; and the catalyst for London to be the world’s leading centre of learning, research, innovation and enterprise.’

UCL 2034: The next 20 years

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

OPERATIONALISING THE STRATEGY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7

UCL is regarded as a sector leader in the field of equalities and diversity, and yet our staff and student data, and some lived experiences, tell a different story. We cannot afford to be complacent if we are to continue to recruit, develop and retain the most talented staff and students. Thus UCL is, and will continue to be, a leading proponent of 'positive action' and will take bold steps to redress past imbalances.

UCL defines 'equality' as the absence of unjust social hierarchy such as those based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion, and 'diversity' as the presence of different cultural traditions and identities.

We wish to foster a positive cultural climate where all staff and students can flourish, where no-one will feel compelled to conceal or play down elements of their identity for fear of stigma. UCL will be a place where people can be authentic and their unique perspective, experiences and skills seen as a valuable asset to the institution.



To achieve this we will:

1. Increase the 'net diversity' of senior staff in grades 9 & 10 at UCL - primarily looking at gender, race and disability - to achieve a 5% increase by 2019;
2. Improve the consistency of experience and support of staff and students around pregnancy, maternity, paternity, childcare and caring responsibilities;
3. Improve UCL's standing in relation to national award schemes, in particular the Athena SWAN Charter, ECU Race Charter and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index;
4. Champion a culture where Disabled people can thrive;
5. Take action to achieve universal and timely disclosure of student disability status, and collect and analyse student monitoring data on sexual orientation, gender identity and caring responsibilities with a view to increasing outreach and support;
6. Explore and understand the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) student attainment gap at UCL, with a view to reducing it where it exists;
7. Increase student applications and enrolments from underrepresented groups across UCL: in particular from mature students, students from underrepresented BME backgrounds, students with disabilities and maintain applications and enrolments from young male students against a falling national trend.

Strategic objective 1

Increase the 'net diversity' of senior staff in grades 9 & 10 at UCL – primarily looking at gender, race and disability - to achieve a 5% increase by 2019

Operationalising the strategy

It is UCL's expectation that, where relevant and possible, Deans and Vice-Provosts take responsibility for implementing the objectives laid out in this strategy. The primary mechanism for doing this is UCL's Equalities and Diversity Accountability Framework, where Deans and Vice-Provosts develop action plans focussed on UCL's strategic diversity priorities. The action plans are devised with expert advice from the Equalities and Diversity Team, UCL's equality groups and networks and other specialists, such as the Widening Participation Office. Progress on these action plans is reported back to UCL Council on an annual basis, including staff and student diversity data.

UCL is comprised overall of exactly 50:50 women and men, 18% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff and 3.1% disabled staff and yet at senior grades the picture is very different: the percentage of women drops to 33% and the percentage of BME staff falls to 11%; in other words the diversity in these posts is reduced by approximately a third.

The presence of diversity at the early career stages indicates that the issue is not a lack of talent in the 'pipeline' but that different groups experience a greater number of obstacles to their career progression, which are complex and far-reaching, and range from the impact of having a family to whether members of underrepresented groups are being mentored and included in professional and social networks to the same extent as their peers.

Tackling a problem as complex as this will require a concerted effort and so, in addition to centrally-run initiatives, Deans and Vice-Provosts now devise annual equalities and diversity action plans for their area which address the particular barriers to progression their staff encounter, with advice from the Equalities and Diversity Team.



Strategic objective 2

Improve the consistency of experience and support of staff and students around pregnancy, maternity, paternity, childcare and caring responsibilities

For example, in the Faculty of Engineering, activity is focussed on getting more women into engineering at an earlier stage and in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities more is being done to increase the number of BME academics and researchers overall. Deans and Vice-Provosts are held to account on their progress against UCL's equality targets in their annual appraisals and some of their performance-related pay is withheld if they don't have a diversity strategy in place.

The new target is a collaborative and flexible one that allows for differing levels of progress on different equality areas each year, but ensures that UCL as a whole moves towards greater diversity at senior levels over a five year period.

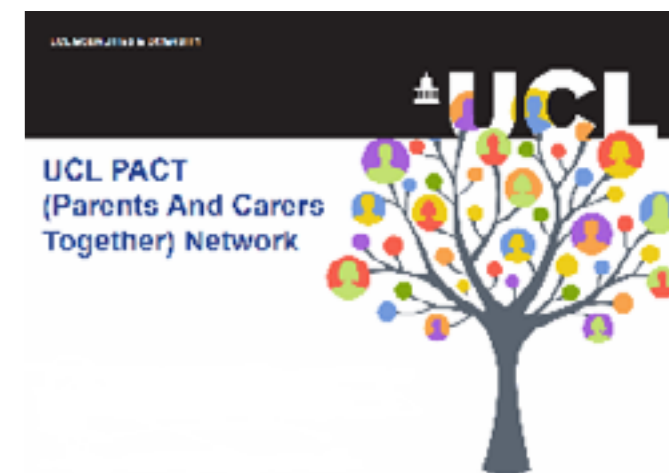
“I welcome this new collaborative approach to target setting as it means that the move towards more diversity in senior roles is still the responsibility of UCL's leaders, but there is flexibility to allow for year on year fluctuations and demographic differences between faculties”

– Geoff Lang, Director, HR Policy and Planning

Many Athena SWAN departments are actively promoting provisions such as UCL's four weeks paternity leave on full pay. While this awareness raising is a positive step, this is being done in response to a general lack of knowledge about UCL's generous maternity and paternity provision.

UCLU held interviews and a focus group with student parents and carers. Key themes that came out of these interviews were that students felt there was a lack of information and guidance at UCL, and that they did not feel considered, for example, with lectures being held until 6pm – when many London nurseries close around this time.

Feedback from departments indicates that support available for working parents and carers is patchy, and in many cases is dependent on the support from an individual PI or line manager. More needs to be done to support parents and carers before, during and on return from long term leave. For example, the Institute of Neurology is developing a maternity mentor scheme. Similarly, the Institute of Child Health have set up a departmental parents and carers group in response to feedback from staff.



“UCL recognises the importance of supporting and retaining staff who have caring responsibilities and the impact that having children can have. The Parents and Carers Together (PACT) Network has been established to enable employees to support each other as they make the transition into parenthood and caring roles. The whole idea behind setting up this network is to bring parents and carers together on one platform and address the needs of a diverse community. The network provides an informal setting to discuss the challenges of caring roles. Sometimes talking to others in a similar situation is the most powerful form of support.”

- Madiha Sajid, Chair of PACT

Maternity issues are particularly pertinent for staff on research contracts funded by external research councils and charities. There appears to be a lack of clarity across UCL about what is provided by funders – for example some pay the cost of maternity leave, others pay the cost of a cover post, others pause or extend the grant. There is also a lack of clarity around the provision at UCL. For example, PIs and researchers often don't know where the money comes from to cover to cost of maternity leave, and some staff aren't sure if maternity will be paid for by UCL if it is not covered by the funder.

The focus should not only be on support for parents and carers, but on improving the understanding of caring roles and agile working across the institution. In the 2013 staff survey, some staff cited caring responsibilities and working patterns as reasons why they had experienced bullying and harassment in the workplace, which indicates that more needs to be done to raise awareness of the needs of working parents and carers.

Strategic objective 3

Improve UCL's standing in relation to national award schemes, in particular the Athena SWAN Charter, ECU Race Charter and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

Athena SWAN

Athena SWAN is an award scheme to support and advance the careers of women in academic science. It is the most well-respected national equality scheme in the sector. UCL has had a bronze award since 2006, and was one of the founding members of the Athena SWAN charter. We have since renewed our award in 2009 and 2012.

Of a total 42 STEMM departments, UCL holds 22 awards - 8 bronze and 13 silver, and an IOP Juno Practitioner award - which is 52% of STEMM departments.

This means the university is in a position to work towards a university Silver award. There are currently only four institutions holding a silver award: Imperial College London, University of Nottingham, University of Warwick and Queens University Belfast. UCL currently has more silver awards than any other institution; only the University of Oxford has a higher number of awards overall.



Strategic objective 4

Champion a culture where Disabled people can thrive

Race Equality Charter Mark

UCL is one of 30 universities taking part in the pilot of the new Race Equality Charter Mark for higher education.

The charter mark is intended to inspire a strategic approach to improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students at the university. At UCL there remains a striking disparity between the proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students (29% of UK-domiciled students and 62% of non-UK domiciled students) and BME academic staff (11% in total) Only 6% of our most senior professional services staff are from a BME background, despite London being one of the most diverse cities in the world.

Participation in the charter mark involves a full evaluation of UCL to identify the racialised barriers that exist and the cultural and systemic changes that are necessary to remove them.

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

The Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) is 'the definitive list of the most gay-friendly workplaces'. Organisations with the most inclusive policies and practices are included in the Top 100 list, which covers a wide range of functions such as training, staff networks, career development and procurement. In recent years UCL has featured at #82 and #52 and aspires to be in the top 50 of the best employers.

Disabled people face many barriers, particularly in the workplace. These can include physical barriers – such as poor access to buildings - and social barriers, where negative or ignorant attitudes from staff towards Disabled people are conveyed. UCL's main advisory group on disability issues, the Staff Disability Forum (SDF), was established in May 2014. The aim of the group was to make disability equality a reality at UCL. To aid raising disability awareness and connect people who have an interest in these issues, a social network, Enable@UCL, was also set up in 2015 and is open to all.

In particular, we have had feedback from Disabled staff describing harmful attitudes from colleagues and managers towards 'hidden' disabilities, such as learning disabilities and mental health conditions. More needs to be done to educate staff about the barriers they may unwittingly create. The intent is to improve relationships and remove negative attitudes by gaining a wider understanding of the barriers and encouraging a creative and inclusive approach to removing them.

Working closely with the Disabled Student's Officer, amongst other key stakeholders at UCL, means that we can create a truly accessible environment where Disabled staff and students can flourish.

Strategic objective 5

Take action to achieve universal and timely disclosure of student disability status, and collect and analyse student monitoring data on sexual orientation, gender identity and caring responsibilities with a view to increasing outreach and support

“UCL has all the right ingredients in place to become the leading university employer of Disabled people – and in fact the responsibility to do so, given our founding ethos of championing access to education for all; we now just need the ambition, conviction and leadership at the highest level to make that a reality. Building on the work of the SDF and the new Enable@UCL network, and working in collaboration with a very active student disability network and the other equalities groups, together we can put disability issues at the forefront of UCL’s priorities rather than being the afterthought that we sometimes are.”

- Laura Cream – member of the Staff Disability Forum

Students at risk of finding it difficult to navigate education are often the most in need of timely and effective support to ensure they remain in and succeed in higher education. NUS (2014) report ‘Beyond the Straight and Narrow’ states that “Without a consistent monitoring it is hard to evaluate how many students self-define as LGBT, how well they succeed at university and the impact this has on their professional career.” Considering UCL’s range of student support services and an ever expanding diverse student body the drivers to fully understand our students are many. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requiring universities to take proactive measures to address inequality is one such driver. Another is the need to know our service users well in order to provide the best possible services. A third driver is that a more accurate representation of UCL students’ lives will aid the case for more inclusive teaching, learning and research practices, which in turn will reduce the need to work reactively, therefore relieving the mounting pressure on student services e.g. the eight week waiting list to access student psychological support in 2013-14.



As part of UCLU’s consultation on the new diversity strategy students in focus groups and interviews were asked if they would be happy disclosing data that wasn’t currently captured by UCL. The conversations had with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* (+ inclusive) students and students with caring responsibilities both revealed that most of these students would be happy to share such data.

“As long as there was a disclosed purpose, I would be more than happy to answer the question. It’s just that, otherwise, I would question what it would be used for.”

– Bisexual student

On the other hand students of faith had very mixed feelings with around half strongly objecting to disclosing such information.

“I personally have qualms about that but I am not ashamed of my religion”

– Christian student

There are many considerations that inform people’s decision to disclose equality data. Some of these considerations are: assurance that data will be kept confidential, knowing that the data will be used for something important and knowing that the data will be used to provide you with relevant information, advice and guidance. The latter is particularly pertinent for disabled students who will not receive support if they do not disclose their disability to the institution.

42% of disabled students disclosed a disability on application

37% of disabled students disclosed at induction during their first year

The below table compares UCL’s disability disclosure rates to those of other Russell Group universities, highlighting a disclosure rate of just 5% which has been static for 3 year (from 2010/11 – 2012/13).

Institution	HE students Known to be disabled	Total number of students	% students known to be disabled
The University of Birmingham	2,125	30,700	7%
The University of Bristol	1,895	19,470	10%
The University of Cambridge	1,300	19,385	7%
University of Durham	1,675	16,800	10%
The University of Edinburgh	2,390	27,690	9%
The University of Glasgow	1,775	26,635	7%
Imperial College	830	16,000	5%
King’s College London	2,070	27,290	8%
The University of Leeds	2,420	30,385	8%
LSE	685	9,945	7%
The University of Manchester	3,100	38,430	8%
The University of Newcastle	1,155	21,190	5%
The University of Oxford	1,725	25,670	7%
Queen Mary University London	1,185	15,040	8%
University College London	1,345	26,275	5%
The University of Warwick	1,495	26,150	6%
Totals and average percentage	42,630	568,390	8%

Strategic objective 6

Explore and understand the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) student attainment gap at UCL, with a view to reducing it where it exists

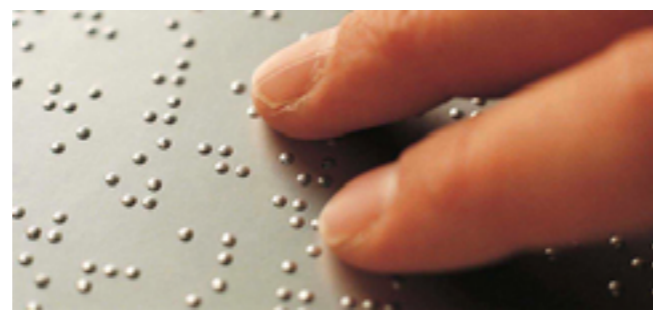
The reasons for this could be many including:

- fewer disabled students choosing to study at UCL due to London's transport system
- a large number of listed and therefore inaccessible buildings
- and previous difficulties in education impacting their success.

There were two clear reasons for not disclosing to UCL which students brought to UCLU's attention during the focus groups. The first was that some students did not know about Student Disability Services and therefore were not aware of the support they would receive if they registered. The second reason is that students were concerned about the impact disclosing a disability (especially mental health conditions) might have on their future professional qualifications and employment.

This is further evidenced in the Equality Challenge Unit's (2012) briefing on increasing disclosure and take up of disabled students allowance, where it states reasons such as "fear of being discriminated against in the admissions process", "fear of stigma and prejudice" and "student not regarding themselves as disabled, or 'not disabled enough'."

Thus, in order to get an accurate representation of the student body any data collection work must be coupled with efforts to create and communicate a culture where people feel confident disclosing and many of the above mentioned concerns are addressed.



In common with the rest of the higher education sector, at UCL there is a gap between the degree attainment of white British students and that of British students from a black or minority ethnic ('BME') background.

Research shows that British BME degree students do less well even when a range of factors, including their socio-economic background, are taken into account. As an institution, UCL must understand and address any cultural or systemic barriers that may be leading to these differences in attainment.

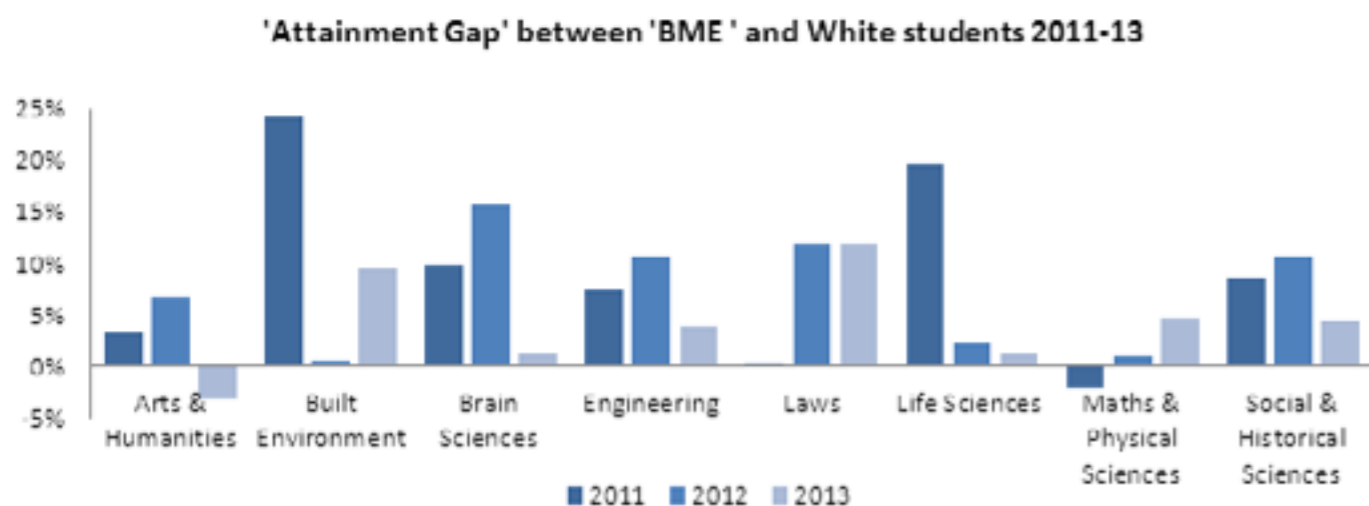
'Students from all backgrounds come to UCL because of its rich and radical history and promises of success. It is therefore unfortunate and, frankly, frightening that statistics show this not to be the case. The BME attainment gap is not acceptable and it is vital UCL tackles it to ensure we uphold our status as 'London's Global University'. Thankfully UCL as an institution is fully behind tackling this. I hope student opinions are listened to whilst changes are being made.'

- Hajera Begum, UCLU Black and Minority Ethnic Students' Officer

Strategic objective 7

Increase student applications and enrolments from underrepresented groups across UCL: in particular from mature students, students from underrepresented BME backgrounds, students with disabilities and maintain applications and enrolments from young male students against a falling national trend

The graph below shows UCL's attainment gap, which is defined as the difference between the proportion of BME and White students who are awarded a 1st or 2:1 degree.



	Mature	BME	Disability	Young male
National average	20.7%	23.6%	10.6%	45.5%
UCL average	10.8%	38.9%	5.2%	47.7%

In early 2014, UCL, and UCLU's BME Student Sabbatical Officer, conducted a study of BME student attainment. It included extensive data analysis, a literature review, focus groups with students and concluded with a comprehensive set of recommendations which will be implemented over the next three years. As one example, UCL has made an ambitious commitment to implement a full curriculum review by 2017.

Mature students

Mature students are currently underrepresented at UCL in comparison with the national average. Activities to increase applications and enrolments from mature students have been running at UCL since 2012. Of those who take part in UCL's mature student outreach activities, 43% go on to make an application. These activities will continue and increase. Collaborative activity is currently being explored with UEL in Newham and East London.

Underrepresented BME backgrounds

“I got the impression that UCL was a very fast paced, energetic, and multicultural university. The multicultural aspect really struck me - I remember at one point that as my group and I sat down to eat lunch on one of the courses, we overheard a group of students speaking Chinese to each other. A whole table of UCL students alongside us were speaking in another language, and the ease that they had with their culture within the university was really apparent. I didn't feel like a young black female, out of place in a very white male environment. I felt like a girl of Caribbean heritage, surrounded by many other ethnicities, with stories to tell.”

Students from African Caribbean and Other Black backgrounds are underrepresented at UCL, based on the young population of the UK. UCL works with the Amos Bursary, the Social Mobility Foundation and ACD, charities that support students from Black and African Caribbean backgrounds in their HE ambitions. Students from these backgrounds are prioritised when considering applications for outreach projects at UCL.

Disabled Students

“I met a lot of individuals who were going on the same journey as I am in life, being Deaf and wanting to go to university.”

5.2% of undergraduates at UCL declare a disability compared with a sector average of 10.6%. Of particular concern are the numbers of Deaf students entering UCL, which is currently less than 1% of the undergraduate body (nationally, 2% of young adults are thought to be deaf or hard of hearing). UCL has introduced a residential summer school for Deaf and hard of hearing students. Disabled students are prioritised on outreach projects. The Widening Participation and UK Undergraduate Recruitment Office undergo regular training in different aspects of disability awareness.



Young males

Nationally, enrolments from male students are decreasing. At UCL, applications and offers remain high, but enrolments are lower and dropped by 1.8% in 2013/14. Male participation on widening participation projects is low across the sector at circa 33%; UCL's male participation rate for outreach projects is 39%.



**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
University College London
Gower Street
WC1E 6BT**

www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/equalities

Published in October 2015