Annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report

Background

1. This report provides an update on the work the School has undertaken to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, with a particular focus on the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and its implications for us as a higher education institution. It additionally clarifies our institutional responsibilities under this legislation.

2. The Equality Act 2010 was introduced in England, Wales and Scotland and brought together over 30 pieces of existing anti-discrimination legislation into a single law. The Equality Act (EA) 2010 protects people from discrimination (both direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation on the grounds of nine protected characteristics. These are:

   - Age
   - Disability
   - Gender Reassignment
   - Marriage or civil partnership
   - Pregnancy and maternity
   - Race
   - Religion or belief
   - Sex
   - Sexual orientation

3. The EA 2010 applies to all sectors and organisations, to all employees and service users, including students (past, present and prospective). Section 149 of the EA 2010 introduced an additional duty on organisations/institutions who carry out public functions called the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED applies to all publicly funded universities in England. It places a proactive duty on public institutions to advance equality of opportunity and remove barriers for people with protected characteristics to participate fully in public life. The three general duties of the PSED are, in the carrying out of our functions, to have regard to the need to:

   a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
   b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant[1] protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
   c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4. The Equality Act 2010 (specific duties and public authorities) Regulations 2017 additionally placed duties on public bodies to:

   a. Publish gender pay gap information about its employees on an annual basis;
   b. Publish equality information about its employees (if over 150) and other persons affected by their policies and practices (in our case – our students);
   c. Publish equality objectives every four years;
   d. Publish information on an annual basis which demonstrates what steps the organisation has taken to comply with the general duty;

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[1] For the purposes of the PSED, the protected characteristic of 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant characteristic.

e.   Ensure the information published is accessible to the public.

5.   It is the 'responsible body' of a university or college which is responsible for any potential breaches of the Equality Act, for the LSE – this is our governing body (Council).

6.   The paper is structured around the three pillars of the PSED, detailing our activities and projects supporting these goals. This report fulfils elements of our specific duty to publish equality information on an annual basis and the steps we have taken to comply with the General Duty.

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010

7.   The School aims to create an inclusive environment where all students, staff, and visitors feel safe and respected, regardless of their protected characteristics. Our compliance efforts include robust initiatives to combat harassment, policy reviews and comprehensive training programs. LSE is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment through robust policies and initiatives. Detailed below are the key measures we've undertaken to meet regulatory requirements and support our community.

8.   Relevant teams at LSE have reviewed and updated harassment and sexual violence policies and processes to comply with forthcoming regulatory requirements from the Office for Students (OfS). In collaboration with the HR and Governance teams, we have identified and implemented a comprehensive programme of work. Key areas of activity in advance of the next academic year are:

a.   Purchasing and implementing a new reporting, case and content management system (Report + Support) which will transform our approach to management of all cases, from first report through to investigation and outcome – with an added benefit of better data and insights to inform prevention activities. This will be operational by the start of the 24-25 academic year.

b.   Commissioning a new specially trained support and advice for any victims of sexual misconduct – this is in addition to the specialist services we already commission from our local Rape Crisis Centre and Survivors UK.

c.   Developing new all-staff training on recognising harassment and sexual misconduct and how to take disclosures from students or staff.

d.   Reforming our Consent Education programme for students, with the aim of all new entrants to the School receiving both online and in-person training at the start of the 24-25 academic year, and all LSESU clubs and society committees receiving an additional active bystander training course in June 24.

e.   Implementing specific training for investigators and disciplinary panel members in trauma-informed practice in July 24.

9.   On more general EDI and anti-discrimination matters, the EDI team has reviewed the current training offer. Based on this review, they have created a comprehensive list of e-learning to be provided in the upcoming academic year. In collaboration with the Organisational Learning Team, we aim to build strong EDI citizenship within LSE community. These programmes are designed to foster an inclusive environment and equip our staff and managers with the necessary skills to support diversity and inclusion effectively. They function as a 'playlist' which staff can navigate around at their own convenience.

All staff training	Training for line managers
Inclusion Essentials	Implementing Reasonable Adjustments – A Guide for Accommodating Disability on Campus
Bullying and Harassment: Effective Interventions	Race Bias in the Workplace: A Guide for Managers
Tackling Age Bias	Supporting Trans and Non-Binary People at Work: Manager's Guide
Neurodiversity: An Introduction for Students, Faculty and Staff	Tackling Gender Bias
Trans and Non-Binary Awareness	Supporting Working Carers: Advice for Managers
Understanding Gender Bias	Introduction to UK Equality Legislation for Managers
Sexual Orientation (15 mins)	Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: A Guide for Managers
How to be an Ally – A Guide for Students, Faculty and Staff	
Disability Inclusion	
Working Effectively with the Equality Act	
Public Sector Equality Duty	
The Effective Bystander	
Understanding Race Bias	

Table 1: Training List for All Staff and Line Managers

Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not

10. LSE is dedicated to promoting equal opportunities for all university community members. This involves identifying and removing barriers that may prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. LSE supports underrepresented groups through targeted initiatives, scholarships, and supportive policies that encourage broader participation in both academic and extracurricular activities, much of this work is led by our Widening Participation Team. To advance gender equality, the LSE has achieved a bronze Athena Swan institutional award from Advance HE and two departmental Swan awards held by the departments of Mathematics and Statistics.

11. LSE faces strategic decisions regarding future participation in EDI charters. There are significant benefits to sector equality frameworks (for example conditionality in certain research funding applications) but also drawbacks such as burden, opportunity cost, and the risk of siloed efforts. In response to its members' requests for a more integrated strategy, Advance-HE announced the development of a new holistic EDI charter, which includes socio-economic status and wellbeing in addition to the protected characteristics of UK equality legislation. This approach aims to build on the achievements of Athena Swan and

their Race Equality Charter, ensuring alignment with regulatory requirements like Access and Participation Plans. LSE become a pathfinder institution for the new Holistic Charter development work to ensure its voice is heard in discussions.

12. LSE has implemented several initiatives to support gender equality across research, education, and people development. These initiatives include mentorship programs for female staff and students, comprehensive training programs such as unconscious bias training, mandatory anti-bullying and anti-harassment training for senior leadership, and EDI training as part of the Head of Departments induction.

13. The LSE institutional Athena Swan framework and action plan is based on four key aims which align with LSE 2030 strategy:

Aims	Actions
Ensure women are being promoted at the same speed as men	Address the burden of pastoral support, increase the transparency and clarity of the promotions process.
Increase the overall proportion of women in academic roles	Continue to ensure vacancies are advertised widely and transparently. Promote family-friendly and flexible policies.
Address issues of bullying and harassment and ensure that incidents that do occur are reported and well-handles	Implement measures, communicate, and promote relevant tools and programmes such as Report it stop it.
Support and encourage LSE departments to apply for their own AS awards	Provide information, advice, and guidance on the AS process. Provide mechanisms for departments to share good practice.

Table 2: LSE Institutional Athena Swan Key Aims

14. The Race Equity Framework at LSE builds on existing efforts, expanding actions and maintaining focus and accountability to advance race equality. Organised into three pillars— Education, Research, and Our People—the Framework supports the Race Equity Action Plan, which has six key priorities:

Priorities	Description
Building Confidence in Race Equity	Enhancing staff confidence around race equity.
Diverse Pipeline of Social Scientists	Developing a diverse future generation of social scientists.
Career Development for Professional Services Staff	Improving support, career development, and progression.
Diverse Leadership and Governance	Making school leadership and governance more diverse and inclusive.
Inclusive Environment for Students	Ensuring the diverse global student population sees LSE as inclusive and enabling.

Addressing the Awarding Gap	Focusing on the awarding gap for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

Table 3: Race Equity Framework Priorities

15. Further support for race equity in 2023 was provided through successful Race equity workshops and trainings at division and departmental levels. The workshops significantly enhanced participants' understanding of race equity issues and fostered inclusive practices for staff and PhD recruitment.

16. We re-launched the Race Equity Innovation Fund in 2023, which grants between £3,000 to £4,000 for innovative race equity projects (as listed in Table 4) to promote inclusivity encourage innovative approaches in tackling racial inequalities and to empower marginalised communities.

Project name	Objectives/ target group
RISE (Realise, Inspire, Support, Empower) Coaching Programme.	Targets 12 Black and Global Majority PSS staff members in bands 4-6 at LSE, providing tailored coaching and development opportunities.
Melting Pot: Stand in My Shoes	Captures the experiences of international students from diverse ethnic backgrounds through storytelling.
Race Equity Internship programme	Develop professional skills, enhance post-graduation outcomes of UK-domiciled students from Black, Asian and Diverse Heritage backgrounds.
It's More than Money: Telling the Story of Racial Wealth Divides in the UK and South Africa	Digital storytelling tool to provide nuanced understanding of racial wealth disparities in the UK and South Africa.

Table 4: Race Equity Innovation Fund, Awarded Projects

17. To provide a new strategic framework to take our work on disability equity forward for staff and students, we have established a new Disability Working Group, aligning with the School's 2030 Strategy, particularly Priority 3: "Develop LSE for everyone." The 'Disability @LSE Working Group' is tasked with assessing the current state of equity and accessibility for disabled staff and students and making recommendations to the Inclusion Management Board. This includes reviewing and potentially adopting sector best practices such as the Disabled Students Commitment and the Disability Confident Employer Scheme, in which LSE currently holds a Level 2 status.

18. LSE has implemented several initiatives to support LGBTQ+ staff and students. The EDI Team's LGBTQ+ Action Plan, launched in 2022 focuses on six key areas identified through consultations with the SMC and LSE community.

Priorities	Description
Education & Awareness	Improve training for staff and students. Identify training providers and content.

Communications & Visibility	Enhance communications on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Increase visibility and transparency.
Policies and Practices	Review and improve policies and resources for LGBTQ+ inclusion.
Community Engagement	Engage students, staff, and alumni through events and feedback
Safeguarding	Develop infrastructure and culture to protect LGBTQ+ individuals.
Impact	Measure impact and ensure intersectional focus across all areas.

Table 5: LGBTQ+ Action Plan Priorities

19. LSE continues to engage with its community, incorporating input from students and alumni into action planning. Projects such as the new Gender Expression Fund, developed in collaboration with the Students' Union, are vital in understanding and addressing the needs of LGBTQ+ staff and students.

20. The establishment of an LGBTQ+ Benchmarking Forum, in collaboration with peer institutions like UCL, King's College, and Imperial College, ensures that LSE's work is aligned with sector-wide best practices. The forum aids in monitoring the progress of LSE's LGBTQ+ commitments and action plan, providing both collaboration, accountability and guidance.

Fostering good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not

21. LSE promotes understanding and good relations among individuals from diverse backgrounds through projects and initiatives that build mutual respect and unity. These efforts include diversity training, cultural exchange programmes, and relevant events to celebrate our diverse community.

22. The creation of the new Hall-Carpenter Room in the Saw Swee Hock Building, in partnership with the LSESU, offers a unique dedicated and inclusive environment where marginalised groups within the School community can come together, engage in activities, and build connections. Through organised programmes, events, and exhibitions, the Hall Carpenter Room forms a supportive and welcoming environment where individuals can thrive, collaborate, and celebrate their identities and experiences.

23. Considering recent global conflicts, such as the Israel-Gaza situation, it is crucial to create spaces for dialogue and support. The School encourages activities that include peace-building workshops, interfaith dialogues, and forums addressing harassment. These initiatives aim to bridge differences, address grievances constructively, and cultivate a campus environment where all members feel valued and heard. In March 2024, the Faith Centre invited the 'Together for Humanity' organisation to provide a platform to share stories and promote dialogue, featuring peacebuilders who offer models for bridge-building and respectful communication. Such events deliver students and staff a deeper understanding of

the complexities involved in such conflicts, promotes informed decisions from different perspectives and fosters a sense of global responsibility.

24. LSE's equality staff networks listed below, and the Students' Union play a crucial role in developing good relations and supporting our EDI efforts:

- EmbRace – Ethnic and Minorities Broadening Racial Awareness and Cultural Exchange
- POWER – Professional Women's Staff Network
- SPECTRUM – LGBTQ+ Staff Network
- Parents and Carers' Network
- DAWN – Disability and Wellbeing Staff Network
- GEF – Gender Equality Forum

25. They strengthen the voices of diverse groups, provide essential insights, and help in understanding the unique challenges faced by different communities. The EDI team maintains close communication and collaboration with networks, as well as with student union and academic EDI representatives with the aim of taking a unified and comprehensive approach to EDI work. They actively contribute to EDI through events, seminars, and intersectional activities, many of which have recently taken place in the Hall Carpenter Room. A few examples of the events organised are as follows:

DAWN & Parents and Carers	Event on neurodiversity, work and parenting
DAWN, EmbRace & Spectrum	Examining the unique experiences of disabled people from queer, neurodivergent and POC backgrounds.
EDI Representatives	Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy Workshop
EmbRace & LSE Power	Black History Month: Special Book Club
All networks	International Day of Staff Networks event
Parents and Carers, LSE Power	A talk on Step-parenting, on Stepmothers Day
EDI Representatives	Upcoming workshops on decolonising the curriculum, everyday ableism, neurodiversity and LGBTQ+ language
LSE Power (Gender Allies)	Women's History Month: Engaging Men in Feminism and Violence Prevention

Table 6: Staff networks and EDI representatives' events

Publishing equality information

26. We have a statutory duty under the EA 2010 to publish equality information about our staff and students on an annual basis. We have prepared this report for publication, and it is available to members on request.

27. More broadly, we have undertaken significant development work this year on our EDI data, particularly around our workforce where the dataset has undergone significant improvements and is being further developed and refined via our HR data transformation programme. The priorities for our data are to:

a. Collect data in a manner which is acceptable and understandable to our community, to enable high levels of disclosure of personal characteristics,

b. Create systems which enable the highest quality data to enable robust analysis, insight and action planning,

c. Ensure our data is comparable with the wider HE sector to enable benchmarking of our progress or gaps, and the wider UK context (e.g. national administrative datasets) and where possible our international HE context.

Areas for future development

28. The newly established Inclusion Management Board, chaired by the President, is overseeing the development of the School's new EDI objectives, which align with the LSE's 2030 strategic goals. Our draft objectives are:

   - Advancing equality of opportunity: Enhancing representation and participation in our staff and student populations

   - Engaging with communities: for the purposes of fostering good relations and advancing equality.

   - Safeguarding the Community: Eliminating all forms of unlawful harassment and sexual misconduct

   - Staff and student Experience: Cultivating positive interactions, inclusivity and fostering good relations between different groups in the School community

   - Research with purpose: Attract, support and develop a diverse community of talented researchers who operate inside an inspiring and inclusive research environment and culture.

   - Embed EDI values into institutional Operations: ensuring EDI values are embedded into institutional policies, infrastructure and operations.

29. We will continue testing our goals, develop an implementation framework and action, and proceed with the implementation of these plans. Key focus areas include student recruitment and attainment, staff recruitment and progression, inclusive leadership and governance, navigating the new regulatory and legislative landscape around freedom of speech and academic freedom and creating an inclusive culture through fostering good relations between different groups on campus. Our progress will be shared and overseen by the Inclusion Management Board.