|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| U:\Logos & signatures\Logos\New LJMU_Master_Logo_Blue CMYK.jpg  Faculty of **Science** | School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences EDI Coordinator Annual Report 2020/21  Author: Dr T. Komang Ralebitso-Senior  Date: 05 June 2021 |

# Introduction

This is the first report prepared by the PBS EDI Coordinator for the Faculty of Science EDI Panel (SEDIP). It has been adapted largely from the School’s Annual Report (2020/2021) with an emphasis on how PBS is “planning to promote and embed the priority of EDI locally”, in alignment with the 2020 UKK statement on tackling racial harassment in higher education (HE). [***The UKK recommendation are used as report headings***].

# Publicly commit priority status to tackling racial harassment; Improve awareness and understanding of racism, racial harassment, white privilege and microagressions among all staff and students, including through anti-racist training; Ensure expected behaviours for online behaviour are clearly communicated to students and staff, as well as sanctions for breaches

In keeping with the University’s policy, regular reminders are given by the SMT either directly from the Director of School or via Heads of Subject on the mandatory EDI modules that all staff must undertake and pass.

# Review current policies and procedures and develop new institution-wide strategies for tackling racial harassment; Publicly commit priority status to tackling racial harassment

As part of its strategy to promote and embed the EDI ethos locally, the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences appointed an EDI Coordinator in February 2020. The SMT agreed a person specification that included a 50-hour allocation within the 550-hour model for the incumbent. The post was then advertised transparently to the School academic staff. This approach has since been shared with the PVC Strategic Initiatives at University level for potential adoption as a model of good practice, particularly in relation to the Athena SWAN agenda to recognise staff time contributions to supporting roles that are not strictly academic.

The PBS EDI Coordinator is a permanent member of the Science Faculty EDI Panel (SEDIP). The Panel is chaired by the Associate Dean Teaching and Learning with full membership consisting of EDI Coordinators for School of Sports Sciences (SPS) and School of Biological and Environmental Sciences (BES), Science Faculty Registrar, Faculty Professional/Administrative Services Representative and John Moores University Student Union (JSU) Representative. The Panel holds at least three meetings per academic semester to discuss, agree and share good practice by School and then across the Faculty. As a result, the School is fully aware of, contributes to and addresses EDI matters in harmony with the Science Faculty and University at large.

# Collect data on reports of incidents and share regularly with senior staff and governing bodies; Develop and introduce reporting systems for incidents of racial harassment; Engage directly with students and staff with lived experience of racial harassment

EDI is a standing agenda item of the SMT and Programme Development meetings. As a result, several specific mechanisms are used to promote EDI within the School. Key examples include, but are not limited to, the following actions that are facilitated, overseen or communicated by the EDI Coordinator:

1. Reports to the monthly SMT meetings – The School has devised a reporting form for consistency across different formal agenda items. The reporting form includes opportunities to identify actions/requests to advance the EDI initiative, and to highlight any supporting resources that might be required for successful implementation.
2. Reports and reminders to the academic staff cohort at the School’s weekly virtual meetings; e-mails on EDI activities, reminders and potential policy modifications.
3. Chairing of an informal PBS BAME Staff Network – This practice started in Summer 2020 where monthly meetings were held as part of the School’s response to COVID-related needs by the BAME community.
4. Representation or communication of School-specific requirements at the institutional BAME Staff Network, as necessary.

EDI Coordinator is the in-house first point of contact for staff and students on any grievances that are related directly to equality, diversity and inclusivity. The School SMT, with the EDI Coordinator, developed a 6-step ‘*EDI Process and Procedures in PBS*’ to facilitate this process. A recent use of this scheme resulted in successful pastoral support of the complainant with subsequent resolution by the Director of School and Faculty Head of Operations. Also, a recommendation was made by the complainant’s Line Manager to include a step on safeguarding a complainant while due diligence is being followed. The recommendation will be considered as part of officially establishing the PBS EDI Working Group.

# Review current policies and procedures and develop new institution-wide strategies for tackling racial harassment; Engage directly with students and staff with lived experience of racial harassment

In recognition of the inherent links in their agendas, and to avoid an unduly *ad hoc* implementation strategy, the same member of PBS staff jointly holds the roles of EDI Coordinator and Athena SWAN Champion/Co-Chair (as of September 2020). As a result, the School’s application for an Athena Bronze Award, which was submitted in May 2021, consists of specific EDI reflections that will also inform our 5-year Action Plan. Simply put, the School intends to implement key EDI-related mechanisms, including for the appointment of new staff where feasible, as an intrinsic part of its Athena aspirations. This strategy will be ensured further since the PBS Senior Management Team read and signed off the Athena application.

The PBS Athena Self-Assessment Team has developed a Canvas site to mitigate for any potential lull, and to ensure that the Athena ethos is kept ‘alive’ within the School, particularly after submission of our Bronze application. To adapt good practices from the other two Schools within the Science Faculty, this PBS site will also have an EDI tab to highlight any material on equality, diversity and inclusivity that are underpinned by the School’s Athena SWAN processes. Apart from the active involvement and enthusiasm by many of the PBS staff community, with strong representation across the University (e.g. BAME Staff Network; Addressing the BAME Attainment Gap; LJMU Reciprocal Mentoring Scheme), some members of the Athena Self-Assessment Team have a keen interest on EDI-related issues. Therefore, providing an interactive space for both these initiatives, jointly in the short-term, will ensure that the EDI momentum within the School is also officially acknowledged, captured and documented. Long-term plans will lead to external-facing microsites for EDI and Athena SWAN with wider visibility to prospective PBS staff and students.

As referenced above the EDI Coordinator has proposed the establishment of a gender-balanced PBS EDI Working Group with representation from Programme Leaders Team and EDI protected groups where feasible (Figure 1). The proposed structure was presented to the SMT in April 2021 and subsequently incorporated into the School’s Athena SWAN Bronze application, with direct references within the 5-year Action Plan. This structure will be discussed further, including with Programme Leaders at a June 2021 meeting on Decolonising the Curriculum/Inclusive Curriculum – chaired by the Director of School. The aim is to recruit staff to the Group in Summer 2021 so that we embed EDI, sustainably, within all aspects of the School’s teaching delivery, research and administrative ethos from Fall 2021 onwards.

Figure 1: Proposed structure for the PBS EDI Working Group.

# Summary

The School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences is very diverse with an average of 41% female and 18% BAME academics. Similarly, our student community consists of 30% Foundation, 35% UG, 29% PGT and 27% PGR BAME members as of 2019/20. As a direct result, we align fully with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity agenda in its full breadth, with further recognition of race as also reflected in the UUK report of November 2020 on tackling racial harassment in Higher Education. This and future PBS reports will show our on-going and planned alignments to EDI, including some of the UKK’s recommendations. Future reports will also reflect on relevant aspects of the School’s Athena SWAN Action Plan 2021 – 2025.