

**WELCOME** to the winter 2025 edition of the Business School EDI Newsletter.

### New Webpage

We now have a new EDI webpage: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Business School | The University of Aberdeen](#)

And a new dedicated EDI email: [bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk)

**Jing Cai, Julie Davidson and Stuart Hall Join the EDI committee as did Fumi Nakamaru**



**Professor Jing Cai, Personal Chair**

Jing joined the EDI committee as co-Ex-Officio with Bill Jackson. Professor Cai is also

Director of Staffing for the School.



**Julie Davidson, Accounting, Finance & Real Estate Team Lead**

Julie joined as the School Inclusion Coordinator. She has been providing administrative support for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes since March 2014.

Support Team Lead for Accounting, Finance and Real Estate in June 2023. My role involves providing administrative support to the departments as well as line managing and overseeing the day-to-day- activities of the AFRE Admin Team.



**Stuart A. Hall, Senior EDI Partner, he/him.**

Stuart has joined the University after working at University of St Andrews, UHI, Exeter and RGU, having started his career in health and social care. He will be responsible coordinating the University's 2026 Athena Swan submission, clerking the University EDI Committee, and supporting School EDI committees within Humanities.

Fumi Nakamaru has joined as clerk for the EDI committee. She works with Prof Alex Kemp as his PA, also with the Scottish Journal of Political Economy as their editorial assistant.



## **UNPRIME: [Principles for Responsible Management Education | UNPRME](#)**

The Principles for Responsible Management Education ([PRME](#)) is a United Nations-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in Business and Management Education through [Seven Principles](#) focused on serving society and safeguarding our planet. The University of Aberdeen Business School became a signatory to PRME in June 2020, at a time of reaffirmation of the University of Aberdeen's foundational purpose and at the establishment of the Business School's vision and mission.

As part of our central commitment to UNPRME, the Business School regularly share information with the PRME community on the progress made in implementing the Seven PRME Principles through a Sharing Information on Progress (SiP) report. The report highlights ways in which the school upholds various SDG's through its processes, practices and teaching. Our next SiP report is due in June, 2025 and our previous reports can be found [here](#)

*We are the first School in the University to hold the award. The University holds an overall*

*award which covers practices across the University.*

From [MySkills | Students | The University of Aberdeen](#)

In the SiP report, we evidenced how RME is embedded in the school's educational vision. We also presented examples of how RME drives the school's business model, educational efforts, courses, programs, degrees, and non-degrees, through MySkills.

MySkills is an ongoing model that empower students to take control of their educational journey. It is aimed at developing 'graduate attributes' that places active citizenship and sustainability at the heart of the attributes we wish to encourage among our graduates.

Additional details on MySkills at the institutional level can be found [here](#)

Examples of guest speakers, showcase events and courses with RME learning goals, were also included in the teaching section of the SiP report.

Dr Muhammed Bolomope is the PRME lead for the Business School, and he oversees the School's commitment to UNPRME initiatives by facilitating discussions and transformative actions towards integrating the UN SDGs in our teaching curriculum, research

themes, practice and partnership events.

For any questions, suggestions or ideas that could enhance the realization of [UNPRME principles](#), please contact [muhammed.bolomope@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:muhammed.bolomope@abdn.ac.uk). We would like to hear from you.



### **Principle 3- “Teaching” and the associated evidence.**

Examples of guest speakers, showcase events and courses with RME learning goals, to inspire faculty who are involved in teaching activities, are also included in the teaching section of the report.



## Athena Swan: Where are we now?

Athena Swan lead -Dr Varuni Wimalasiri. If you have any suggestions, please get in touch



[varuni.wimalasiri@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:varuni.wimalasiri@abdn.ac.uk)

Following Mark Whittington's retirement this Summer, I have taken on the role as Athena Swan lead for the school. Mark's leadership in taking us through to the Bronze renewal was significant, and we hope to keep the same momentum on the implementation plan that was agreed as well as work on the feedback that was provided to us by Athena Swan review panel.

School EDIC remains the review committee for the award. We are aspiring to make an application for the Silver award with a review of progress next year.

EDIC are currently working on the implementation plan agreed upon within the Bronze application and consulting with various committees and student and staff bodies on how to make the action plan practicable.

A lot of our work in the next year will be to review the current status of our action

plan, agree practicable interventions and goals to be implemented (some examples: how do we improve equality in student recruitment and what evidence can be gathered to show the trends during the monitoring period?; or what kind of research strategies are essential for the school (i.e. based on REF priorities) and how does equality look like in each of these?, How do we measure 'wellbeing' in the school and ensure that we are doing are guided by principles of gender equality?).

The Athena Swan process and award was reviewed in 2020 and the 'Transformed Athena Swan award' to meet changing legislative and cultural changes in the UK. It also recognises gender as a spectrum rather than a binary of male-female. The award now requires us to evidence greater inclusivity in all roles, of all gender identities and those facing intersectional equalities. And that we make active commitment to enabling people to reap benefits out of their gender-related work goal, which will require input and engagement from everyone in the school to make the progression towards Silver a reality. In a sense, Silver awards are seen as a hallmark of good practice in Gender Equality (Advance HE, 2020, Appendix 1). Progress against our current action

plan is essential for the next level of the award.

Review of AS (Advanced HE) report: [Future-of-Athena-SWAN\\_Report-1\\_1600340258.pdf](#)

Our key goals and next steps:

The areas that we promised in our Bronze application are indicated in the table below, fuller list via link.

We have promised to deliver on 5 key areas which are indicated below. How we propose to deliver on these are indicated with some more detail through this link [Athena Swan Action Plan](#). And also on our [AS page](#).

	<b>Our School's pledge at Bronze level</b>
1	To improve our practices that demonstrate our commitment to Gender and other diversity characteristics
2	Raising the proportion of women applicants offers and arrivals, where this is less equal
3	Improve progression opportunities in line with improving gender equality
4	For all academics to be given equal access to research support and developing their output portfolios
5	To create an environment where everyone feels safe, values and supported

## University is conferred Advanced HE's Race Equality Charter Bronze award



The University of Aberdeen has been conferred the Race Equality Charter Bronze award in My 2024. This is an Advanced HE award and it aims to help HE institutions to improve representation, progression and success of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in HE.

[University secures its first Race Equality Charter Bronze award | News | The University of Aberdeen](#)

## How do you Decolonise your curriculum?

It is now over year since the University released the Decolonising the Curriculum toolkit [Decolonising the Curriculum | University Services and Schools | Toolkit | The University of Aberdeen.](#)

This could be workshops that you run in your course, course structure or conversations with students about the topic. We would like to run a story in our next newsletter about DCC initiatives in the school.

We would love to hear about how you use the toolkit in your teaching, get in touch:

[bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk)

## EDI stories and activities across our campuses

### EDI News from our China Campus

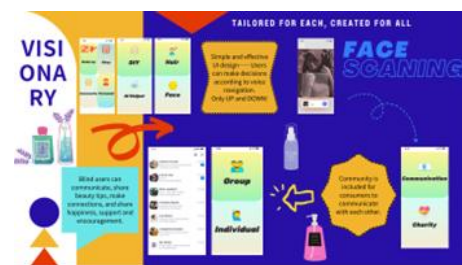
*Resetting the standards of Beauty: Students Embrace AI Technology to Foster Inclusion in the Cosmetics Industry*

*This year, our undergraduate students at the South China Normal University (SCNU) Joint Institute took a proactive step by entering the prestigious L'Oreal Brandstorm competition in China. Led by Qin Ze (a Business Management and Information Systems student), the students utilised the power of artificial intelligence to challenge and reshape traditional beauty standards that have long dominated the cosmetics industry. Their proposed project, rooted in a solid commitment to diversity, aimed to promote greater inclusivity by embracing different beauty representations and supporting inclusiveness for the visually impaired. By integrating cutting-edge technology with their commitment to diversity, these young visionaries are redefining the concept of beauty and encouraging brands to adopt more inclusive practices.*

More information about this and future events can be found [here](#):



Story by Ijeoma Okpanum (Lecturer in Management)



## **Black History Month celebrations on Aberdeen campus**



*The Global South Arts and Health (GSAH) Pavilion, a significant initiative of the esteemed Global Arts in Medicine Fellowship, its Aberdeen Pavilion coordinated by Dr Olushola Ajide, held an event at the University of Aberdeen Duncan Rice Library with Dr Loliya Kagher as moderator. The event was a tribute to Celebrating Black History Month and aimed at Celebrating the rich cultural heritage and contributions of Black people in the arts and health sectors. It provided a platform for creative expression, wellness, and community engagement and fostered greater diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

*At the event, there was a showcase of spoken words on creatives and community support, as well as music, talks, and panel discussions. The event focused on the power and benefits of music within black communities. It did create awareness of Black cultural history, significantly highlighting the role music*

*plays in community building and social enriching, creating an environment for social networks and opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.*

*Music has long been a part of black African culture as a powerful tool for community formation, social connections, and well-being. Over the years, this shared love for music and the community spirit it creates have helped to deal with isolation and mental health issues in the black community. Hence, there is an emphasis on the power of music as a tool for hope across diverse people and spaces.*

*Story by Loliya Kagher  
(Lecturer in Management)*



## **Celebrating Christmas in Germany**



*In Germany, many people traditionally celebrate Christmas – which marks the birth of Jesus Christ in several religions– by gathering around a Christmas tree with people they love. During the actual Christmas (24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> December), many people use the time to finally see family and friends again, to celebrate Christmas by indulging in festive food such as Stollen & Goose, reviewing the past year. Churches of different religions offer festive activities and services at this time of the year due to the religious background of Christmas.*

*European and some American countries celebrate Christmas slightly differently than Germans do. Hence, let me give you an insight the time before Christmas and the actual Christmas in Germany. The festive season, as I want to call it here, already starts in September and October, when people start indulging in typical Christmas food such as “Stollen” (similar to a fruit cake but sweeter and juicier) and Gingerbread “Lebkuchen”. The demand for Stollen and Gingerbread has reached such a high demand*

over the years, that firms specialise on producing these Christmas delicatesses, with the Dresden's stollen being the highest in demand. On November, the 11<sup>th</sup>, people traditionally eat the Martin's Goose, walk with colourful lanterns in groups at the evening of the said day and enjoy bonfires to celebrate St. Martin.

Starting on the last Sunday of November or first Sunday of December, Germans will start celebrating Advent for the following 4 weeks. On the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent, one of four candles will be lighted. The following Sundays/Advents, one more candle will be lighted. Many people use the Advent to take time for baking Christmas cookies and listening to Christmas music. Four burning candles mean that Christmas is close. At the beginning of December, the St Nicholas day is celebrated. The 6<sup>th</sup> December is celebrated not only to remind people of the blessings of St. Nicholas, but also to make it easier for children to wait for Santa Claus (or the Christmas fairy in Bavaria) on Christmas. Children in Germany will wake up on the 6<sup>th</sup> December to find sweets, oranges and nuts in their winter boots. Should a child have been naughty, it will find a piece of coal.

During December, most cities will open cosy Christmas markets which will offer

delicious food such as the traditional Bratwurst to sweet cakes, and of course, mulled wine (hot red wine with spices such as cloves and cinnamon). If one does not feel like eating, the Christmas markets also have stalls which offer traditional Christmas toys, candles, gingerbread to take away and other gifts which are mostly handmade. A walk over a Christmas market in Germany is an unforgettable adventure.

Children and Grownups usually receive their gifts from Santa Claus (or the Christmas fairy) on Christmas Eve, and not in the morning of Christmas Day as is tradition e.g. in the UK and the USA. As parents are mostly quite exhausted on Christmas eve due to last minute shopping and napping some sweets during the opening of presents, many people stick to eating potato salad and hot dogs for their dinner. The delicious Christmas goose or duck is then enjoyed on Christmas day after a good night sleep, together with friends and family.

I hope that all students, staff and their families had a calm and peaceful Christmas



period. – Story by Eva Pocher (Lecturer in Economics)

Sources:

<https://www.hamburg.com/visitors/holidays/st-martins-day-22844>

<https://www.germany.travel/en/cities-culture/romantic-advent.html>

<https://www.mygermanyvacation.com/how-to-celebrate-saint-nicholas-day-like-a-german/>



Photos: Taken from: Facebook, "Visit Vienna", 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024



<https://shop.emil-reimann.de/weihnachten/dresdner-stollen>

## Dignity and Respect toolkit

The University has reviewed its reporting structures for all issues on Dignity and Respect for and study and introduced a new reporting tool and resources to support us and our students. There is also network of Dignity and Respect officers across the University. Please get in touch with the EDI committee if you would like to become a Dignity and Respect officer for the school.

You can find more information here [Dignity at Work and Study | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)

[Home · Online Reporting Tool · University of Aberdeen](#)

Dignity at Work and Study



## Vacant EDI positions in the school

**The School has vacancies for a number of volunteer positions. Please get in touch with us if you are interested in any of these:**

### Race Equality Champion:

The University of Aberdeen is committed to challenging racism and racial inequality in our institution and taking proactive action to create a learning, working and social environment, in which our Black, Asian, and Other Minority Ethnic students and

staff members feel safe. We acknowledge the racism in the everyday life of our racialised community members, and the institutional racism which they have to navigate. As a race equality champion you will be able to represent the school and join a network supporting initiatives across the University. [Community | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)

### Dignity and Respect Officer:

The Workplace Dignity Network aims to provide support to staff who would like to chat through wellbeing concerns. This could be in relation to bullying/harassment, stress, work relationships, work/life balance or mental health issues. The Network members are a listening ear. Sometimes it just helps to share an issue and discuss it. The Network can also signpost you to other sources of support which you may not have considered previously.

More information here: [Workplace Health, Advice & Services | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)

**Mental Health First Aiders:** [MHFA Overview and Commitment .pdf](#)

The University of Aberdeen is committed to promoting a mentally healthy environment for all our staff and students. To ensure we're looking after our mental

health as much as our physical health, we have an established network of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) who will actively promote good wellbeing and mental health practices. MHFA volunteers have the skills and knowledge to initially support an individual and to help them to information about services that can help. Mental Health First Aid skills and knowledge are intended to be part of everyone's personal skillset, as such it is recognised that these skills can be used in any situation with anyone, be that to support a staff member or a student. However, the role of MHFA within the university setting is intended to be primarily support available for staff.

### EDI contacts:

**For any general queries or contributions to next newsletter please contact School EDI : [bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:bs-edi@abdn.ac.uk) or EDI lead, Varuni Wimalasiri: [varuni.wimalasiri@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:varuni.wimalasiri@abdn.ac.uk)**

**School webpages: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Business School | The University of Aberdeen](#)**

**Contacts for Networks and school EDI committee:****Race Equality Champions**[Support | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)**Dignity Network**[Workplace Health, Advice & Services | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)**Mental Health First Aid**[Workplace Health, Advice & Services | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)**Current School EDI Committee**

School Equality, Diversity & Athena Swan Lead (Chair)	<a href="#">Dr Varuni Wimalasiri</a>
EDI-Education Lead and Representative from the Education Committee	<a href="#">Dr Eva Pocher</a>
EDI-Research Lead and Representative from School Research Committee	<a href="#">Dr Huong Vu</a>
UN-PRME Lead	<a href="#">Dr Muhammed Bolomope</a>
Inclusion Officers	Julie Davidson (Professional Services) + Vacant position (Faculty)
LGBT+ Network Representative	<a href="#">Dr Likun Mao</a>
University EDI committee	Stuart Hall
HR Representative	<a href="#">Tim Arnott</a>
School Administration Manager (or nominee)	<a href="#">Philip Jenkins-Walsh</a>
Head of School (ex officio)	<a href="#">Dr William Jackson</a> or <a href="#">Professor Jing Cai</a>
Clerk	<a href="#">Fumi Nakamaru</a>

**AU staff EDI page:**[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen](#)**AU student EDI page:**[Equality, Diversity & Inclusion | Students | The University of Aberdeen](#)