## **ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION AND ANY OTHER CONDUCT THAT IS PROHIBITED BY OR UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010**

Included in this section:

*Access and Articulation, Antiracism Roundtable, Antiracism Strategy, Decolonising the Curriculum, EDI Capacity Building, Gender Pay Gap, Gender-Based Violence, the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism, Mainstreaming EDI in Policy Frameworks (Digital Accessibility Policy, Homeworking Policy, Menopause Policy, Neurodiversity Policy, Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy), Race Equality Charter Survey, Race Equality Strategy Group*

1. **Access and Articulation**
2. Widening access is one of the strands of Aberdeen 2040 within the Inclusive theme and represents the wide definition of equality, diversity and inclusion adopted by the University. The Access and Articulation Team provides pre-entry support to applicants who meet widening access criteria. The team works with school pupils, further education college students and mature applicants who meet one (or more) of the relevant criteria and aspire to study at the University. The Access and Articulation team also provides support and advice for parents, guardians, teachers and any other interested individuals or agencies.
3. Within the widening access criteria are students who would identify as belonging to one of the Vulnerable Groups (as defined by the Scottish Funding Council). The categories of students under the umbrella term ‘vulnerable groups’, are as follows:

* Care Experienced (Care Leavers)
* Estranged Students
* Student Carers (Unpaid carers)
* Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
* Veterans and Armed Forces
* Refugees & Asylum Seekers
* Reach

1. Actions that have been taken since 2021 to support inclusion of vulnerable groups include:

* Fifty new scholarship awards were awarded in 2023 at a total value of £127,200
* Reach Aberdeen has organised and/or attended forty events and engagements for pupils in seventy-five local authority secondary schools across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Highlands, Orkney, and Shetland
* The University established Free School Meals (FSM) as a widening access characteristic. Data capture, reporting lines, and promotional materials and activities have been adapted to reflect this recognition. FSM students are now treated the same as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) applicants. This is now detailed in the University’s Admissions Policy
* Sixteen events have been attended to support widening access pupils in the University’s region
* Twenty-three careers and information, advice and guidance events have been attended in priority schools and schools with high SIMD20 pupils
* Forty personal statement reviews from widening access pupils for the UCAS process have been conducted
* Fifteen career sessions across Scottish colleges have been attended
* A North East Widening Access Practitioners Forum has been created
* One hundred and sixty-eight students have registered for a transitional summer school for all new first year students starting in 2022/23
* Thirty-four students attended an on-campus event for transitioning widening access and articulation students
* Seven widening access students attended an Engineering Transitional Summer School for Advanced Entry Engineering Schools

1. The students supported by the Access and Articulation team may have specific requirements and the University endeavours to meet those to create an inclusive learning environment.
2. **Antiracism Strategy**
3. Overseen by the Race Equality Strategy Group, the University launched a bold [Antiracism Strategy](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/Antiracism%20Strategy.pdf) in October 2022 following its approval by University Court. The areas of focus in the Strategy were identified and fostered through conversations across campus and with input from Advance HE and other partners throughout 2020 and 2021. The Strategy sets out strategic ambitions on Governance, Leadership, Representation, Recruitment and Selection, Diversifying the Curriculum, Closing the Awarding Gap, Research and Reporting Racism, and Support. An Antiracism Strategy Action Plan has been developed to identify the actions which will support the implementation of the Strategy.
4. To support the formal launch of the Antiracism Strategy, [a video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_p3T9-RV_tA) featuring staff and students sharing their views on the Strategy was shared with the University community. The video highlights insights and perspectives from staff and students on how the Strategy will drive forward race equality in the University.
5. In line with our Inclusive commitments within our University Strategy, Aberdeen 2040, the Antiracism Strategy’s aims are to:

* Create an antiracist environment recognising that this is an ongoing journey for the University
* Eradicate race discrimination in all its forms on campus and proactively play our part in eradicating it in the Higher Education sector
* Ensure that all staff and students are safe on campus and feel that they belong in the University
* Embed a culture of accountability and transparency in our antiracist work – individual and organisational action to promote antiracism will be celebrated. Where behaviours fall short of expectations, these will be addressed promptly and effectively

1. The development of the Antiracism Strategy represented the step change in the progress the University has made and provides a robust framework against which staff and students can hold the University accountable. The Strategy is based on transparency and the University has committed to sharing progress with the University community.
2. **Action:** Publish the Antiracism Strategy Action Plan (Action 4.9)
3. **Action:** Establish a communication framework for continuing to share progress made against the Antiracism Strategy with staff and students (Action 4.10)
4. **Antiracism Roundtable**
5. The Antiracism Strategy highlights the importance of engaging with the HE sector and beyond. The University has established an Antiracism Roundtable with local partners including Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Fire Scotland, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC), NHS Grampian, Northeast Scotland College, Northeast Police Division, and Robert Gordon University. The purpose of the Roundtable is to identify where shared action could support antiracist work in the northeast of Scotland and within member organisations. Presentations on antiracism work from the University, Grampian Regional Equality Council, Police Scotland and NHS Grampian have been delivered to the Roundtable. The Roundtable has met three times since its establishment in March 2022 and is beginning to identify areas of shared working and is refining its ambitions which include supporting the development of an antiracist region in the Northeast of Scotland. To date, the following initiatives have been progressed:

* Representatives from the University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and North East Scotland College have collaborated through sharing initiatives related to decolonising the curriculum
* The participating organisations are working with Police Scotland to explore the establishment of further Third-Party Reporting Centres.
* A commitment to co-create Black History Month events and engagement in 2023

1. **Decolonising the Curriculum**
2. In May 2021, the University established a [Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/decolonising-and-enhancing-the-curriculum-steering-group-13989.php). The purpose of this subgroup of the University Education Committee is to develop an approach that addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited perspectives in the curriculum and supports Schools to develop learning materials that offer students a rich diversity of views and role models. The remit of the Group is as follows:
3. Develop a partnership and collaborative approach to working practices and the formulation of strategy, policies and guidance for the delivery of the purpose of the group.
4. Develop a set of principles and definitions that articulate the vision for the work of the group and the wider institutional goals associated with the group’s purpose.
5. Undertake a scoping exercise to understand the existing curriculum practices, and from there identify both good practice and gaps for action.
6. Put in place an institutional action plan for the work and monitor progress on the action plan.
7. Support Schools and Professional Services to develop their own plans to address the agreed vision and principles.
8. Develop a good practice toolkit and staff training for Schools so that they can:  
   a. Utilise evidence-based approaches to support their curriculum work  
   b. Gain literacy on decolonising curricula
9. Develop internal and external partnerships that will enrich the work of the group and enable the sharing of good practice.
10. Put in place an evaluation strategy.
11. The Group has six workstreams which are as follows:

Workstream 1: Context, definitions and ambitions

Workstream 2: Evidence-based practice

Workstream 3: Leading and managing critical conversations in Schools

Workstream 4: Content focused (curriculum design), assessment focused and delivery focused

Workstream 5: Quality assurance and enhancement

Workstream 6: Challenges faced in the classroom

1. The Group is in the first phase of its work and has completed, or is in the process of finalising, the following:

* Established leads for decolonising the curriculum in each of the twelve Schools, all of whom are members of the Group
* Embedded students in all the work of the Group, ensuring that they are paid for their work
* Defined ‘Decolonising the Curriculum’ for the University
* Finalising a set of resources (web-based and Toolkits) to support staff to take forward the work at School and discipline levels
* Collated examples of existing good practice across the University to support the resources
* Building in the QAA Scotland / Advance HE Antiracist Curriculum Project outputs into the University’s resources

1. **Equal Pay Report**
2. The University publishes its Equal Pay Report every four years. The most recent report is based on data from 2019 and was published in 2020. The report can be found here: [Equal Pay Report 2019 v4 (ON WEB).pdf (abdn.ac.uk)](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/Equal%20Pay%20Report%202019%20v4%20(ON%20WEB).pdf)
3. The report published in April 2020 is based on data obtained from the Human Resources and Payroll System as of 31st August 2019. This covered gender, ethnicity, and disability. The data indicated that the University’s overall Gender Pay Gap in 2019 was 20.2% which was a slight improvement from 2016 when the gap was 23%. The gap is indicative of the uneven distribution of males and females across the pay grades. The under-representation of females at higher grades is a factor in weighting the overall gender gap in favour of males.
4. The data also demonstrated that there are no significant pay gaps across individual grades and none which exceeded the 5% recommended threshold. The report highlighted, however, that females are disadvantaged in relation to contribution point salaries.
5. Actions being taken to address Equal Pay and which are part of the Equal Pay Report include:

* Undertake a robust Equal Pay Audit (see section 1.6 below), using an independent provider and which will follow all criteria required for the audit as per the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidelines. This was undertaken in 2021 by Zellis Consulting and the recommendations arising from it form part of the remit of the University’s Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group.
* All gaps of 5%> or repeated gaps of 3% to be investigated on an annual basis.
* Continue to monitor the rates of successful and unsuccessful promotions/regrading applicants.
* Review of the Contributions Procedure to ensure that it is used appropriately and fairly to reward staff.
* In addition to the above, the University will continue to publish its Gender Pay Gap report on an annual basis and progress actions that seek to enable equality in pay.

1. **Equal Pay Audit**
2. In 2021 an independent Equal Pay Audit was undertaken by Zellis Consulting. The Audit indicated that the University has appropriate policies and procedures in place to support equal pay for equal work for staff who identify with protected characteristics. The Audit provided recommendations for improvement. These related to workforce distribution/workforce segregation, the pay structure, including current incremental progression arrangements, intersectionality between protected characteristics, harmonisation of terms and conditions and adoption of a formal pay policy to cover areas including market supplements, starting salaries and salary on promotion/regrading.
3. The University’s Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group is responsible for overseeing the progress of the Equal Pay Audit recommendations.
4. **Gender Pay Gap**
5. Under [Aberdeen 2040](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Femail.abdn-online.ac.uk%2F5EH4-MJG2-47DFC1-H2RIM-1%2Fc.aspx&data=05%7C01%7Cceit.mackintosh%40abdn.ac.uk%7Ceefaf14ff1aa406f77f308da84e60afe%7C8c2b19ad5f9c49d490773ec3cfc52b3f%7C0%7C0%7C637968420837851957%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yFaXkho8hhCaTPv9e1kmM5Rr1L5wSgGNaExYFqkt3nA%3D&reserved=0), the University is committed to eliminating pay gaps across all protected characteristics (Commitment 5 in Aberdeen 2040). The University publishes a Gender Pay Gap report annually and the most recent report based on data as at 31st March 2021 can be found here: [Gender Equality | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)](https://abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/gender-equality.php)
6. The University’s 2021 mean Gender Pay Gap is 20.2%. In 2020, the mean Gender Pay Gap was 19.5%. The 2021 median Gender Pay Gap, which compares the mid-point salary for males and females, is 19.4% - a slight decrease from 20.2% in 2020. This is the more representative figure and the University’s interim target agreed by the University Court is to achieve a median Gender Pay Gap of 17% or lower by 2025.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Mean (%)** | **Median (%)** |
| 2017 | 22.4% | 22.2 |
| 2018 | 22.03 | 22.7 |
| 2019 | 20.6 | 22.4 |
| 2020 | 19.5 | 20.2 |
| 2021 | 20.2 | 19.4 |

**Table 2**: Gender Pay Gap 2017 – 2021

1. The main reasons for the Gender Pay Gap in the University relate to occupational segregation and the impact of a greater proportion of higher salaried males in the upper salary bands compared to females. Females are under-represented at senior posts and/or over-represented in lower grades and mid-level posts. If females are under-represented, the ratios are highly impacted by even small changes in the high-level posts, for example, high earning female(s) leaving the organisation or high earning male(s) being recruited. Over 67% of staff in the lower salary quartile are female while 57% in the upper salary quartile are male and this gender occupational segregation impacts on the Gender Pay Gap.
2. The Covid-19 pandemic had a unique impact on the Gender Pay Gap figures for 2021. The University accessed the Furlough Scheme for limited numbers of posts during the pandemic and maintained salaries for those furloughed at 100%. Staff did not have the normal opportunity, however, to undertake additional hours/overtime which would be included in the calculation. In the year leading up to 31st March 2021, due to the predicted adverse impact of the pandemic on the University’s finances, the decision was taken to pause promotions, contributions and regradings. Each were reinstated, when the financial forecasting improved, and any successful promotions, regradings and contributions had an effective date after 31st March 2021.
3. The Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group has a remit to address the Gender Pay Gap by driving forward the following actions:

* Strategic commitment to eliminating all pay gaps
* Implementing the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy to support the University’s commitment to addressing the Gender Pay Gap in the forthcoming year through the equality, diversity and inclusion (positive action) measures incorporated in it to tackle occupational segregation
* Revising recognition arrangements
* The development of a Pay Policy including clarity in approach to starting salaries, salary on regarding/promotion and contribution pay. The University will develop a market supplement policy
* Continuing the University’s commitment to the Advance HE Aurora Women’s Leadership Programme with further internal development opportunities planned
* Supporting a diverse cohort of staff to participate in the International Leadership Development Programme
* Improved monitoring of our actions and increased reporting on progress or other actions required

1. **Gender-Based Violence**
2. The Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment (GBV) Strategy Group is responsible for driving change in combating GBV at the University and setting strategic goals in this area. The Group oversees the [Combating GBV Action Plan](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.abdn.ac.uk%2Fstaffnet%2Fdocuments%2FPriority%2520Action%2520Plan%2520for%2520GBV%2520(Sept%25202022).docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and develops and enhances appropriate support and reporting mechanisms at the University. The Group engages across the sector, and beyond, on addressing the root causes of, and associated issues linked to, GBV and sexual violence in society.
3. In November 2021, the University launched its Addressing GBV and Sexual Harassment Policy. The Policy was drafted following extensive input from staff and students; AUSA; Campus Trade Unions; and external groups working on combating GBV and supporting victims of sexual harassment and assault.
4. In April 2022, the University and AUSA re-signed a [Statement of Commitment](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/Signed-Joint-Statement-2022.pdf)to address GBV in the University community. The Joint Statement is a signed promise made by the University and AUSA to work together to address GBV on campus, acknowledge that work is required to provide enhanced support to victims of GBV and to support national and international initiatives to end GBV in society. Activities related to the Joint Statement are undertaken in partnership with AUSA.
5. In 2022, staff were trained in a new Risk Assessment tool called LISTEN, which is offered by EmilyTest, a Scottish Government-funded charity working to improve GBV prevention, intervention and support in further and higher education. The University is planning to roll out the training to additional key frontline staff in 2023. The University is a Pledging member of the EmilyTest Charter and will apply for full Charter status in 2023/24.
6. Tackling GBV is one of the University’s Equality Outcomes (Outcome 5) and a detailed update on actions taken can be seen in the Action Plan in Appendix A. It is noted that the National Equality Outcomes also contain a targeted Outcome which will require the University to evidence approaches that prevent and respond to violence, harassment and abuse.
7. **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA)**
8. The University established a Race Definitions Task and Finish Group to recommend a set of definitions related to its antiracism work and to progress discussions related to agreeing a definition of antisemitism. In 2022, the University adopted the [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA),](https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/) following extensive consultation and option appraisal. The JDA helps to identify, address and raise awareness of antisemitism and how it can manifest. Work is continuing with the University’s Jewish community to understand the barriers faced and to increase safety on campus. The University recognises the increase in antisemitic incidents across the sector and the importance of opening and nurturing discussion on this as part of the implementation of the Antiracism Strategy.
9. **MAINSTREAMING EDI IN POLICY FRAMEWORKS**
10. **Digital Accessibility Policy**

In May 2022, the University published its first Digital Accessibility Policy, which represented the culmination of dedicated work to enhance the University’s digital accessibility. The Policy sets out the principles, responsibilities and obligations for managing digital accessibility within the University. The Policy is designed to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and to support the University’s strategic aim to secure the highest standards of equality, diversity and inclusion. Expectations for staff who create, purchase and publish digital materials and the support available to them are detailed within the Policy. Sources of support and advice for staff members are signposted. The Policy will be reviewed in May 2023.

Staff and members of the University Court responsible for creating and/or publishing digital materials must observe the following standards:

* Web content and page structure must be fully compatible with screen readers and navigable by keyboard and speech recognition software.
* Images that convey information and are not purely decorative must have alternative content.
* Video materials must have accurate captions or accessible alternatives such as transcripts or audio descriptions.
* Documents (PDF, PowerPoint, Word, and others) must be fully accessible to screen reader software.
* Forms must be labelled and be keyboard accessible.
* Social media posts must follow best practice guidance, as recommended by the Digital Marketing Team.
* Digital materials produced in support of teaching & learning and/or professional services must only be published on University-approved platforms.

1. **Homeworking Policy**

To support the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, a Homeworking Policy was developed in 2021. The University recognised the benefits of homeworking to staff in terms of balancing work and personal life and reducing commuting. Consequently, homeworking has continued to be offered to staff where possible and the Homeworking Policy was reviewed in 2022, including a survey of staff and Line Managers. The survey had a good response rate, and the University is working with campus trade unions and staff to identify improvements which could be made following the feedback received.

1. **Menopause Policy**

The University recognises the challenges that staff and students who are experiencing the menopause or perimenopause may encounter while they work and study at the University and endeavours to create environments where individuals feel confident in asking for support. In November 2022, the University approved a Menopause Policy which applies to staff and students. It aims to raise awareness of menopause, its symptoms and the impact it can have on work and study. The responsibilities of staff, line managers, students, Human Resources, Student Advice and Support and the role of Occupational Health are detailed in the Policy. Guidance on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work and study are also included. Advice and support mechanisms for both staff and students are signposted within the Policy.

A Menopause Policy implementation plan has been developed and the University is currently identifying menopause awareness training providers to support this. It is expected that the Policy, in tandem with training, will contribute to raising awareness of menopause and its symptoms as well as ensuring that working and studying environments are supportive for those experiencing menopausal symptoms. Practical support is also being promoted, such as the provision of desk fans and light boxes.

1. **Neurodiversity Equality Policy**

The University recognises that a diversity of cognitive approaches amongst its community is a source of strength and value. In June 2022, the University approved a Neurodiversity Equality Policy. The Policy applies to staff and students and seeks to promote awareness of neurodiversity and how it affects individuals. The responsibilities of managers and the Disability Team are detailed in the Policy, as is guidance on potential adjustments for neurodiverse individuals. Confidential advice and support mechanisms are signposted for both staff and students within the Policy.

The Policy supports and promotes the services available to neurodiverse staff and students in the University e.g. the Disability Team, the Student Learning Service for students and the HR Team for staff and managers.

A Neurodiversity Equality Policy implementation plan has been developed and the University is currently identifying neurodiversity awareness training providers to support this. It is anticipated that the Policy, in tandem with training will contribute to raising awareness of neurodivergence, challenge negative stereotypical views and ensure that teaching, learning, research, and employment practices at the University are accessible to individuals who are neurodiverse.

1. **Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy – embedding EDI in the Policy to address under-representation**

In July 2022, the University launched an enhanced Recruitment and Selection of Staff Policy. The Policy applies to all staff who are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff. It details that appointments will be based on skills, experience and merit while also highlighting new initiatives to address under-representation where it exists in the University.

University staff who participate in the recruitment process are required to undertake online training modules on recruitment and selection, equality, diversity and inclusion and unconscious bias on a three yearly basis.

The Policy details the University’s commitment to encouraging the recruitment of staff with disabilities and applications from underrepresented groups to meet its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims. The University continues to implement the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) principles in relation to disabled candidates and the Policy will ensure that female candidates and candidates from racialised groups are represented on shortlists. Where advertisement does not lead to a diverse shortlist for University Management Group roles, further steps will be taken to widen the pool of applicants before the recruitment process is progressed.

Further new measures include incorporating a statement in job advertisements and job descriptions welcoming applications from under-represented groups in that staff category or area where there is evidence of under representation. The Policy requires the application of the ‘Rooney Rule’ for vacancies in University Management Group. This supports the mainstreaming of race equality, in line with the Antiracism Strategy.

The Policy is integral to a range of EDI initiatives such as addressing under-representation of racialised groups, particularly at the senior levels, addressing the Gender Pay Gap and eliminating bias from the recruitment and selection process. These are aims which require time to manifest, however, the requirements of the new Policy, such as understanding and reviewing equality data as part of the recruitment and selection process, should accelerate change and deliver the transformation required. The Race Equality Strategy Group, EDIC and the Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group will play an active role in monitoring the implementation of the Policy.

1. **Race Equality Strategy Group (RESG)**
2. Established in 2020 to drive progress on race equality, the Race Equality Strategy Group (RESG) is chaired by the Vice-Principal Education and Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition and comprises representatives from across the University and from a range of racialised groups. The Group supports the implementation of the Aberdeen 2040 Inclusive commitments and acts as the Self-Assessment Team for the Race Equality Charter submission. RESG is responsible for:

* Driving forward the Antiracism Strategy and monitoring its implementation to enable the University to meet its targets and ambitions
* Recommending actions to create a culture which is anti-racist, and which will support the University to tackle systemic inequalities
* Developing and monitoring a strategy to deal with racial incidents/complaints
* Addressing the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission on tackling racial harassment in universities
* Developing an approach which addresses embedded racial stereotypes and/or limited perspectives in the curriculum and supporting Schools to develop learning materials which offer students a rich diversity of views and role models
* Developing internal and external partnerships which will assist the University in understanding the lived experience of minority ethnic people, and responding to their needs
* Acting as ‘Race Equality Charter self-assessment team’ and lead the University’s Race Equality Charter Bronze application (by February 2024) through:
* Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to identify racial inequalities in the representation (e.g. ethnic profile), progression and continuation, degree attainment, and post-graduate employment of minority ethnic students, as well as in the recruitment, progression (e.g. regrading/promotion), and development of minority ethnic staff;
* Evaluation of the efficacy of the University’s policies relating to race equality and recommending change where appropriate, in consultation with other working groups and committees;
* Development of an evidence-based action plan which states clear aspirations and success criteria, and monitoring progress on its achievement.

1. **Race Equality Charter Staff and Student Surveys**
2. In February 2022, the University carried out its first Staff and Student Race Equality Charter Surveys to assess the culture of the institution and explore whether racial inequalities exist in its policies and procedures. The results indicate that inequalities exist in the University and provide insights as to the specific areas where improvement is required to achieve the University’s ambition of becoming an antiracist University, as set out in the Antiracism Strategy. The University is committed to addressing the issues that were raised in the surveys, primarily through the development and implementation of the Antiracism Strategy Action Plan.
3. **Main themes arising from the results of the surveys were:**

* Staff and students have reported that they have experienced racism and are unclear as to the most appropriate route for reporting it
* Staff indicated the importance of transparency in recruitment and selection and career development processes
* Students indicated that race could be discussed in the learning environment more frequently

1. **Areas where action is required:**

* Implementing and monitoring the new Recruitment and Selection Policy which has a focus on addressing under-representation and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion
* Build on the race literacy training delivered to staff, including senior management, to increase knowledge and awareness of antiracism
* Further promoting and developing the race incident reporting systems such as the Online Reporting Tool and the role of the Race Equality Champions
* Continue to drive decolonisation through the priorities and aims of the Decolonising the Curriculum Steering Group
* Drive work on addressing the ethnicity awarding gap through the Race Equality Strategy Group
* Embedding antiracism in University initiatives and policies for staff and students through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Student Support and Experience Committee and in all University business, working with Court members
* Continue with a rolling programme of race listening activities to further explore the results of the survey.

1. All of the above actions will be addressed as part of the Antiracism Strategy Action Plan which will be published by March 2023.
2. The University is grateful to all staff and students who participated in the surveys, sharing their experiences, ideas and thoughts. This generosity is recognised and valued, and the University commits to addressing the issues raised through consultation and further engagement sessions. Racism in any form has no place in the University and any incident reported will be investigated timeously.
3. The full results of the surveys can be found here: [REC-Survey-Report-2022.docx (live.com)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.abdn.ac.uk%2Fstaffnet%2Fdocuments%2FREC-Survey-Report-2022.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).
4. Outcome 4 of the University’s Equality Outcomes captures our commitment to creating an antiracist university and fully embedding the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report “Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged” (2019) and the Universities UK report “Tackling Racial Harassment in HE” (2020). This closely aligns with the new NEOs under the protected characteristic of race.
5. Actions:

Conduct focus groups with staff and students (Action 15.1)

Develop an Antiracism Strategy Action Plan to support the implementation of the Antiracism Strategy and address the issues identified in the REC surveys (Action: 15.2)

Submit an annual report of progress and challenges to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Court (Action: 15.3)

Repeat Race Equality Charter surveys every two years (Action: 15.4)

Increase engagement in race training that is open to all staff (Action: 15.5)

1. **EDI Capacity Building**

The University is conscious of the need to support staff to champion an inclusive culture and be empowered to practically implement equality, diversity and inclusion. There are challenges associated with this given the scale of the training interventions required. The University has continued to prioritise race literacy training, and this will be followed through in 2023 with specific training provided to appropriate cohorts of staff on how to handle a racist incident appropriately, sensitively and fairly. However, the University has identified and welcomed offers of training which have presented where appropriate and is grateful to internal colleagues who have shared their expertise in a training capacity.

In the 2021 report, it was noted that an extensive suite of online modules had been procured and these have received positive feedback. The courses have been publicised and are embedded into other learning opportunities offered by the University.

1. **Autism Awareness for Support Staff**

In November and December 2022, Dr Jacqueline Ravet, Reader in Initial Teacher Education, delivered two sessions on autism awareness for support staff at the University. The purpose of these sessions was to deepen understanding of autism through exploring diagnostic criteria as well as detailing how to support students with autism.

1. **Deaf Awareness Training**

To support commitments within the University’s British Sign Language Plan, in May 2022, Signs4Life delivered a three-hour online workshop to sixteen colleagues representing areas from across the University, including postgraduate research students. The training enabled learners to:

* Identify the barriers that deaf and hard of hearing people face
* List the ways in which deaf and hard of hearing people communicate
* Understand and demonstrate how to implement positive methods of communication and offer an equal service to deaf and hard of hearing people.
* Apply the finger-spelling alphabet
* Explore the deaf community and culture

Feedback received on the Deaf Awareness Training was overall positive and most of the learners reported that the session empowered them to apply the learning in their workplace.

1. **Trans Awareness Training**

Two three-hour Transgender Awareness workshops were delivered to sixty members of staff in November 2022 by Scottish Trans Alliance. These sessions covered terms and definitions, relevant Scottish legislation, issues facing trans people in Scotland, and allyship. 83% of participants stated that they would highly recommend the training to a colleague and the University will seek to offer this training to a wider audience. The training served to support the implementation of the University’s Transgender Equality Policy and provided personal testimonies and safe opportunities to discuss specific questions and case studies.

1. **Inclusion Essentials**

Inclusion Essentials Training is online training provided by Skill Boosters and is mandatory for all new staff to complete within three months of employment. The training covers UK legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and the types of discrimination individuals are protected from in the workplace. Each of the protected characteristics are covered within the training and practical steps to eliminate bias and create an inclusive working environment. During 2022, 605 staff members undertook the “Inclusion Essentials” training.

1. **Tackling Racial Bias**

Tackling Racial Bias is an online training course from Skills Boosters that is mandatory for all staff to complete within three months of employment.

The course seeks to give learners an understanding of:

* The changing nature of racism
* How racial bias, prejudice and discrimination manifest themselves in the workplace
* The impact of racial and religious stereotypes
* How to find out the extent to which racial bias is a problem in your organisation
* Key steps for leaders, HR teams and Learning and Development departments to take in tackling racism and race bias.

During 2022, 459 members of staff undertook the “Tackling Racial Bias” training.

1. **Understanding Unconscious Bias**

This course is mandatory for all staff members who are involved in the recruitment and/or promotion of staff and/or students. The course provides psychological insights into how behaviour might be affected by prejudice and reviews what can be done to reduce or eliminate its influence in decision making. The course contains insightful video content, including re-staged psychological experiments, original drama scenarios and expert analysis.

The course seeks to provide an understanding of:

* How and why people are biased
* How unconscious bias can impact on the workplace and on working relationships
* What we can do to reduce or eliminate bias from our decision-making process
* How to address bias in specific situations, such as recruitment and performance management.

409 members of staff undertook the “Understanding Unconscious Bias” training in 2022.

1. **Online Equality Diversity Inclusion Training**

In addition to the mandatory online training, the University has a broad range of online equality, diversity and inclusion training available to all staff and students on the Staff Development webpage. The courses are interactive and video-based and there is a strong focus on lived experience. Courses include:

* Allyship
* Being Disability Confident
* Cultural Awareness in the Workplace
* Disability Etiquette
* Disabled Adventures in Work and Recruitment
* The Diversity Challenge
* The Effective Bystander
* Gender Matters
* The Impact of Micro Behaviours
* Inclusive Language and Communication
* Inclusive Leadership
* Maternity and Paternity
* Menopause in the Workplace
* Mental Health – Doing the Right Thing
* Mental Health – Managing Stress
* Mental Health – Stress Less
* Mental Health Overview
* The Multi-Generational Workforce: Tackling Age Bias
* Neurodiversity Inclusion
* Sexual Orientation
* Supporting Trans and Non-Binary People at Work: A Managers Guide
* Tackling Race Bias at Work: A Manager’s Guide
* Tackling Sexual harassment at work – a manager’s guide
* Trans and Non-Binary Awareness
* Understanding and Confronting Sexual Harassment at Work
* Understanding Equality Impact Assessments
* Understanding and Tackling Gender Bias
* Working Effectively with the Equality Act

1. **Race Literacy Training**

Tailored race literacy training sessions were delivered in 2021 by Challenge Consultancy to members of the University Management Group (who received training on leading an antiracist university) and frontline staff in Professional Services roles (353 attendees). In March and April 2022, five race literacy training sessions, available to all staff and postgraduate research students, were delivered via Zoom. 459 individuals booked to attend the sessions. The Race Equality Strategy Group (RESG) noted that this was a low uptake and agreed that methods of increasing engagement should be explored. Action to address this is being taken forward and is captured in Appendix A.

The aim of this course was to enable participants to increase their understanding of how race can impact staff and student experiences in the University, and build participants’ knowledge, understanding and confidence in relation to race and discussion about race. The feedback collated by Challenge Consultancy from the participants was positive with 94% reporting that the course was very easy/easy to understand, 86% found the course very relevant for their work, 77% found the pace and the length of the course about right, 99% and 96% considered the trainer and training methods, respectively, as very good/good.

Analysis of the open comments provided through the feedback form indicate that participants felt that:

* The training provided them with helpful and practical knowledge to take their anti-racist journey forward.
* The training sessions were not long enough and that they would benefit from further and more in-depth training sessions.
* Race training should be mandatory for all staff.

The University is committed to ensuring that training sessions on race equality continue to be delivered regularly. Training and education play a vital role in the University’s journey to become an anti-racist Institution. University Court and frontline staff will engage in further training by April 2023 as part of an ongoing race training plan. Frontline staff will receive training on handling a disclosure of a racist incident sensitively and appropriately.