Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Newcastle University

“Newcastle University is committed to being a fully inclusive global University community which actively seeks to recruit, support and retain staff and students from all sectors of society equally.”

Background

Newcastle University (NU) seeks to advance education, learning and research. Our vision is to address global problems through excellence in education, research and engagement and, in doing so, provide new knowledge and creative solutions that make a positive impact on the society we serve.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a core value within NU’s strategy. As a core value, EDI supports our vision, shapes our culture and reflects our principles.

Over recent years, NU has invested time and money to build up our expertise and track record in EDI. We have appointed EDI leaders (Fig 1), launched EDI initiatives, established staff networks (Fig. 2), joined charters, developed training, held think tanks and conducted detailed monitoring and reviews.

Examples of EDI Initiatives

i) NU has invested in a 3-year research project. Research with staff and students at NU includes on: transgender experience; intersectionality; gender; BME; disability. The recommendations from this research will inform future EDI actions at NU.

ii) We launched an NU EDI Fund for staff in Oct 2017; we have funded 23 projects so far e.g. a video on ‘Explaining intersectionality’, auditing Postgraduate student diversity and a project on reward and recognition for diversity roles in the Higher Education sector.

(iii) The VC’s introduced an annual Celebrating Success event dedicated to EDI staff, student and project successes (Fig. 3).

(iv) We launched a Returners Support Programme: £150K annual funding committed to supporting those returning from a period of at least 6 months’ leave due to caring responsibilities.

(v) We held our first EDI research conference in June 2018 which included presentations on: Challenges in teaching and learning about sexualities; Exploring disabled girls’ self-representation online; Not Acting Your Age.

(vi) We introduced Unconscious Bias training for key decision makers and staff involved in recruitment and selection.

Tackling the key challenges

NU has made progress with EDI but there are still challenges to be addressed:

Pay Equality: A task and finish group has been established to review the gender pay gaps across different staff grades and in relation to other protected characteristics.

Parenting and Childcare Review: We have reviewed existing policies, processes and support, secured investment over the next 3 years to become a family friendly institution, and include a work stream reviewing the specific needs and provisions for employees who are unpaid carers.

Workload Allocation Model (WAM): Aim to develop a standard WAM which takes into account research, teaching, administrative and citizenship activities.

Race Equality: We are undertaking foundational work to prepare to become a member of the Race Equality charter.

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