

Report to Council on the Implementation of the University's Race Equality Policy 14 July 2003

1. Background to Race Equality

(i) The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth's (UWA's) Policy and Action Plan during the last 12 months. It has been produced in response to the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) (RRAA 2000), which places a General Duty on UWA (as a public body) to promote race equality. This duty requires that in all areas of its activity UWA should seek to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Further Specific Duties of the Act require that UWA should:

- prepare and publish a written statement of its Race Equality Policy and have in place arrangements for fulfilling the commitments in the policy as soon as is reasonably practicable;
- assess the impact of all its policies, including the race equality policy, on students and staff of different racial groups;
- monitor the admission and progress of students and the recruitment, retention and career progression of staff from different racial groups;
- include in the written statement of its Race Equality Policy, an indication of UWA's arrangements for publishing that statement and the results of assessment and monitoring.

(ii) In order to fulfil its responsibilities under the RRAA (2000), UWA must demonstrate that its Race Equality Policy and Action Plan is being effectively implemented and developed. It should be noted that the Commission for Racial Equality has powers to enforce the Specific Duties. For example, auditing bodies may inspect and report on the extent to which an institution is complying with both the General and Specific Duties of the RRAA.

(iii) The duties imposed by the RRAA are legally binding on the University as a corporate body and on individual members of Council, staff and students. Under the terms of the RRAA (2000), responsibility for meeting both the General and Specific Duties of the Act rests with the groups or individuals who are liable (legally responsible) for the University's acts or omissions. These are listed under the item 6 on page 4 of the Policy, which states that: *"The Council has constitutional and legal responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the policy and ensuring its effectiveness. The Council monitors the work of University Committees to ensure compliance with the General Duty."* The Policy also includes a statement on the support and guidance that the University will provide in order to make members of Council, staff and students aware of their duties and responsibilities under the Act, and to enable them to fulfil those duties and responsibilities.

(iv) Further draft Regulations on race discrimination seek to implement the EC Race Directive by 19 July 2003. These Regulations will:

- introduce a revised definition of indirect discrimination;
- introduce a new definition of harassment;
- shift the burden of proof onto the employer;
- remove exceptions to the Race Relations Act that are contrary to the principle of equal treatment.

(v) UWA's Policy and Action Plan applies to its staff and students, and to those who supply it with goods and services.

Summary: Council to understand legal obligation, General and Specific Duties and EC Race Directive.

2. Status of the Policy and Action Plan

(i) The first version of UWA's Race Equality Policy and Action Plan, prepared to meet the deadline of 31st May 2002 which HEFCW set for HEIs in Wales, was presented to Council at its meeting in July 2002. Since then UWA's policy has been reviewed by The Equality Challenge Unit of UUK. The ECU assessed the Race Equality Policies of all HEIs in Wales against the following benchmark statements:

1. Exemplar of good practice at this stage in the implementation process
2. Good / Good with certain areas needing attention
3. Developing appropriately but with significant areas needing attention
4. Developing appropriately but with major work remaining to be done
5. Not yet aligned with the requirements of the RRAA; the approach needs urgent revision

In June 2003 UWA's Policy was deemed to be developing appropriately but with major work remaining to be done.

(ii) Following the review, the Race Equality Project Officer (see (iii) below), the Director of Personnel and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Affairs (who is also Chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee) took part in a Race Equality Policies Feedback Seminar organised by HEFCW in Cardiff. Both before and after this seminar the Race Equality Project Officer consulted closely with the Race Equality Officer of the ECU about the details of UWA's Race Equality Policy and Action Plan in order to update it and ensure that it met the requirements of the RRAA (2000) and its *Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality*.

(iii) The Race Equality Project Officer has consulted widely within UWA through meetings with the Guild of Students, The Director of Student Support Services, the Director of Staff Development, the Director of Development and External Affairs, the Equal Opportunities Officer of the Guild of Students, the Director of Admissions and Recruitment, the Registrar, staff of the Careers Advisory Service and the Language and Learning Centre. Further meetings were arranged to develop more effective ways of collecting data for monitoring purposes, primarily with staff from Information Services and the Personnel and Staff Development Offices.

(iv) As a result of external and internal consultations a revised version of the Race Equality Policy and Action Plan was produced for consideration at a Special Meeting of the Equal Opportunities Committee on 27 June 2003, as were an initial set of monitoring statistics.

(v) The Action Plan compliments the Race Equality Policy, specifying required actions with target dates and milestones. It also includes further proposals for review and action as a part of a continuous process to enable the University to fulfil its General Duty of promoting race equality.

(vi) When approved (or as amended) by Council the updated Race Equality Policy and Action Plan will be re-submitted to HEFCW before the deadline of 31 October 2003.

Summary: Council to reinstate its commitment, understand the reviewing process required to update the policy / action plan and note the re-submission date of 31st October 2003.

3. Promotion and Positive Action

(i) Following its adoption by Council in July 2002, UWA's Race Equality Policy and Action Plan were published on UWA's website at www.aber.ac.uk/race-policy.shtml and www.aber.ac.uk/race-plan.shtml. A Welsh version of these documents is currently available in hard copy and can be obtained from Personnel Office. The new Policy and Action Plan will be translated into Welsh when approved and/or amended by Council and will be published in Welsh and English in hard copy and on the web.

(ii) Article xxiii of UWA's Charter is currently being revised in order to meet the specific requirements of the RRAA (2000) and will state "*Equal Opportunities - Men and women of any racial or ethnic group shall be equally eligible for any office or appointment in the institution and for membership of any of the Authorities thereof and all courses of study and academic distinctions of the institution shall be open to men and women of any racial or ethnic group.*"

(iii) In order to oversee the development of its Race Equality Policy and the implementation of the accompanying Action Plan, UWA has established the post of Race Equality Project Officer. This post, is currently held by Olymbia Petrou, who began work in May 2003. Since taking up the appointment, the Race Equality Project Officer has been fully occupied with investigating the most effective and efficient ways of collecting the data required for monitoring purposes, revising the Policy and Action Plan in light of the HEFCW/ECU review, consulting widely within UWA on the Policy and Action Plan and assessing its impact during the first year of its existence.

(iv) The Staff Development Office has arranged a series of training events for various categories of staff to inform them of their responsibilities under Act and to support them in carrying them out and realising the aims of the Act. In 2002/3 the Staff Development Office reported the delivery of 222 training places on equality and diversity training to staff from over 30 departments (some staff have attended more than one training session).

(v) As part of the Action Plan (2002) UWA placed a regular advertisement in the AWEMA Times (All Wales Ethnic Minority Association) to encourage members of ethnic minority groups to apply for posts with UWA.

Future Action

(vi) It is proposed that the advertisement in the AWEMA Times should be updated to maximise focus within the publication. It is also proposed that UWA consider writing an article or issuing a press release to appear in this publication to demonstrate its commitment to race equality.

(vii) The Race Equality Project Officer is investigating new approaches for the recruitment of ethnic minority staff and students in collaboration with marketing department. Manchester University has a website (<http://www.blackandasiangrad.ac.uk>) which is targeted at students, graduates and recruiters in order to promote their black and Asian graduates.

(viii) Consideration will be given to the means by which under represented groups might be encouraged to apply for posts or places to study at UWA, including actions designed to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms. Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities to meet the special needs of under represented groups. In the case of students, this is already being undertaken as part of our work with schools in the West Midlands and as the lead partner in the West and Mid Wales Reaching Wider Partnership. Whilst it is acknowledged that its rural location and the relative remoteness of Aberystwyth from large urban centres make it unrealistic for UWA to set itself the target of having a staff and student body whose ethnic composition mirrors that of the UK at large, it will be an institutional goal to take all reasonable and practicable steps to improve upon the current position.

(ix) An internal communications strategy is to be developed to promote race equality. Primarily, all staff and students should receive a summary of the Policy and its background. They should also be invited to provide feedback through their comments.

(x) A review of all UWA recruitment and marketing publications (both hard copy and electronic), is to be undertaken in order to ensure that they demonstrate the diversity of students at UWA and reflect its commitment to widening participation in HE.

(xi) Further training and support for staff will be provided to enhance their knowledge of race equality issues and develop their skills for promoting race equality.

(xii) Further consideration will be given to developing appropriate networks to promote race equality, both within UWA and through its links to external information sites, e.g. blackbritain.com, oneworld.net. In the area of networking much will be gained from working closely with the Guild of Students.

Summary: Publication of new Welsh and English Policy and Action Plan on UWA web site.

Updating of the AWEMA advertisement and proposed article.

Manchester University website investigation and review.

Communications strategy for promotion of the Policy and Action Plan and development of an internal consultation process.

Development of networks to promote race equality.

Race Equality training for all categories of staff.

Web links to ethnic minority sites to be investigated.

4. Embedding and Mainstreaming

(i) UWA Policies and Procedures, together with accompanying documentation, are to be reviewed to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the RRAA (2000), and that they enable the University of carry out its General and Specific Duties effectively. A priority list for the review of policies and procedures to be reviewed shown in the Action Plan for 2003/4 includes the Equal Opportunities Policy, the Harassment Policy and Procedure, Grievance Procedures, the Students Complaints Procedure and, in the following year, Staff Selection & Grading procedures.

(ii) Race equality issues should be addressed in all committee and decision-making processes, including new initiatives. A training and support strategy will be developed to support this process. It will be particularly important for Heads of Department, Chairs of Committees and members of Senate to receive race equality training and be kept up to date on the requirements of equality and diversity legislation.

(iii) The Staff Development Office will continue to develop and deliver a training and support programme to raise awareness of race equality issues. Staff should be required to attend training, take a proactive approach to the promotion of good race relations, be fully aware of general equality issues and the impact of UWA's Race Equality Policy on their work.

(iv) UWA will also work towards reviewing mentoring schemes, support groups and training courses for under-represented groups during the following year.

Summary: Mainstreaming race equality in all committee and decision making processes, review Policies / Procedures and develop a training strategy.

5. Ethnic Monitoring

(i) The intention of this Report, Policy and Action Plan, is to produce practicable targets and milestones to ensure that within a reasonable period of time, the racial composition of locally recruited staff reflects that of the local labour market and that the racial composition of staff and students recruited from across the UK in general is more representative of the UK as a whole than it is at present.

(ii) In order to monitor and assess the effectiveness and impact of UWA's Race Equality Policy, the Race Equality Project Officer has assembled data on the racial composition of its staff and student body. The purpose of this is to establish the current baseline position for comparison with national demographic indicators.

(iii) The data will be analysed to establish the reasons for any under-representation of racial groups and to investigate whether there are any institutional barriers to participation which can be removed.

(iv) The following monitoring is to be undertaken:

Student Monitoring:

- ethnic composition of student body, applications received by programme; offers made, acceptances and intake, academic progress of students including retention rates, drop-out and transfer rates, class of final degree obtained and participation in work placement programmes.

Staff monitoring:

- numbers applications received, short listed candidates, career progression including participation in training and development programmes, ethnic composition of the staff by grade, gender or type of contract (e.g. full or part-time, whether or not employed on a fixed term contract), length of service, home or international status, reasons for leaving, operation of disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints received through UWA's Harassment Policy and Procedure and complaints received under the Student Complaints and Staff Grievance Procedures are also to be monitored. A new Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is currently being distributed to all staff as part of a data update exercise and consultation process.

UWA sees the continuing process of target setting, monitoring and follow up action as being an integral part of the implementation of its Race Equality Policy.

Summary: Staff and student monitoring being undertaken, targets set and efforts are being made to identify whether there are any institutional barriers to racial equality.

6. Analysis

(i) Data on the racial composition of staff employed by the University and the student body is being gathered and collated to establish a baseline position. Much of the data is being provided by Management Information Services (MIS), the Personnel Office, Staff and Development, Admissions and Recruitment and the Academic Office. Some statistics have been obtained from the 2001 census to enable comparisons with local and national demographic data to be made.

(ii) Although data gathering is in its early stages, and a major priority for development over the next 12 months, the currently available data indicates that out of a student population of 8,439, 220 undergraduates and 278 postgraduate students are from non-white backgrounds. This represents 6% of the student body.

(iii) In terms of staff employed by the University, steps are being taken, through the distribution of a new Equal Opportunities Monitoring form using the recently revised HESA categories, to improve the data currently available. Although partly a reflection of our location, at 34, the number of staff identified as being of non-white background, is relatively small. This does not, however, include 77 staff shown as 'white other' a proportion of which are from Mediterranean countries such as Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Portugal, South America and Africa.

(iv) In terms of demographic comparators, 1.4% of the population of Ceredigion is shown as non-white in the 2001 census. This compares with 2.1% for Wales and 7.9% for the UK as a whole. The main concentrations of ethnic minorities by local authority area are in the south of Wales. Cardiff has the highest number and proportion in its population (just under 26,000 or 8.4%) followed by Newport (nearly 7,000 or 4.8%) and Swansea (nearly 5,000 or 2.2%). For locally recruited staff (primarily allied or support staff) the percentage from non-white backgrounds is 2.5%. This is not altogether unexpected as, apart from the hospital, most of the ethnic minority representation in the area has come about as a result of staff attracted to the University. For academic staff the percentage is 2.25% from non-white backgrounds.

(v) These figures must be interpreted with caution as they refer to the population as a whole rather than a specific age group or those identified as being of working age. More work will be done in this area to provide additional information for a more comprehensive report next year. The survey of our own staff will have been completed by then and that will help us deal with gaps in the data where, at present, the information has been withheld or is simply unknown.

(vi) The work undertaken so far has confirmed the ECU Advisory Service view that it is essential that the University develops robust Recruitment and Selection monitoring systems to ensure that the processes and procedures in place are fair and non-discriminatory. To enable analysis of this sort to proceed, new computerised systems will be required in the Personnel Office. Discussions are to take place with MIS to see how that can be best achieved by developing the systems that are already in place. The need for accurate, timely and reliable data on employment generally within the University is a further priority to assist with information gathering over the next 12 months.

Summary: Staff, student and demographic comparisons

7. Breach of Policy and Racial Harassment Review

(i) Any breach of the Race Equality Policy will be investigated and, where appropriate, dealt with under the appropriate procedure. Staff or students who feel that they are subject to racial harassment are also directed towards sources of advice and support, both within UWA and externally.

Further work needs to be done in this area as follows:

- A review of the University's code of practice
- The development of a better monitoring procedure
- Monitoring claims of racial harassment and the outcome of such harassment cases
- Provision of staff development for advisers
- A review of the harassment contact scheme

(ii) Vulnerable groups are to be identified and security measures reviewed in order to protect the individual or group concerned. Support schemes may also need to be re-launched and publicised to raise awareness.

Summary: The Policy will not permit racial discrimination and harassment, networking support groups to be reviewed

8. Benefits

(i) Council should note that as well as meeting a legal requirement, the implementation of this policy as an integral part of its wider commitment to diversity and equal opportunities helps UWA meet the needs of its students, encourage them to achieve their full potential and raise educational standards. It promotes a positive and inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for people's differences, and shows commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination. It prepares students to be full citizens in today's multi-ethnic society and improves staff morale and performance by creating an inclusive environment in which staff and students of all ethnic groups are encouraged to develop to their full potential. These benefits and further comments are listed on page 3 of UWA's Race Equality Policy.

Summary: Benefits should be recognised and embraced.

9. Conclusions

(i) This report reviews the progress made following the initial creation of UWA's Policy and Action Plan during May 2002. It assesses the impact of the Policy and Action Plan during its first year in applying monitoring tools, taking positive action, etc., and enabling future strategies to be proposed for Council approval.

(ii) The policy is already having a positive impact on UWA's ethos and working culture, as was evident in interviews with many departments during the process of updating the Policy and Action Plan. However, it was strongly felt that UWA needed to show its commitment to diversity by employing expertise, i.e. an Equal Opportunities Officer, to work with both staff and students to embed diversity, including race equality, as a fundamental principle within UWA.

(iii) A full review of UWA's Policies, Procedures and publications will be undertaken during the coming year to embed race equality more effectively in all institutional functions.

(iv) The main achievements for UWA in 2002 – 2003 on race equality issues are as follows:

- Employing a Race Equality Project Officer
- Reviewing and updating the Race Equality Policy and Action Plan
- Meeting the Specific Duties contained with RRAA (2000)
- Preparing a Report for Council
- Revising Personnel's Equal Opportunities Form
- Institution-wide consultation on the revised Policy and Action Plan
- The delivery of training sessions (ECU and Staff Development Office)
- Consultation with the Race Equality Advisor of the Equality Challenge Unit Advisory Service
- The provision of Race Equality training / awareness sessions
- Identifying data requirements to make the policy fully effective.

(v) Universities play an important role in preparing people for life in Britain's diverse and multi-ethnic society. Race Equality should be proactive, internally driven and seen as an investment in the future success of the University. It is important that the policy is embedded in the decision making processes of the University and that all members of the University understand and accept their responsibilities in their day to day activities. A training programme to raise awareness will assist that process over the next 12 month period.