Staffordshire University HR Excellence in Research Award introduction

Institutional Context

Our institutional strategy establishes Staffordshire University as a Connected University, supporting connected communities, innovative and applied learning, and talented people. The contribution of our research community, research outputs and the impact of our research is a vital component towards the delivery of this strategy. We have KPIs around the development of our research capacity and volume, engagement in collaborative research, production of excellent research outputs, commitment to research informed teaching and staff engagement in research.

Staffordshire University has been through a period of transformational change over the last two years. In January 2017 the academic workforce was restructured from four Faculties to six Schools. The University also has an almost entirely new Executive and Senior Leadership Team. Organisational Development programmes are being reviewed and repurposed alongside this application and a Research and Innovation Strategy is being written for approval in July 2018. Together with these structural changes, there have also been significant changes to internal processes and procedures. One such change is the introduction of a new Performance and Development Review (PDR) Scheme in August 2017, which will play a key role in the University's Strategic Plan. In the PDR scheme key performance data relating to research such as outputs and income are included. The new Scheme provides the opportunity to reflect and consider performance objectives, personal learning and career development goals for the forthcoming year. The scheme is designed to support everyone in maximising their contribution and furthering their learning and professional development. Whilst in early stages, the scheme will be fundamental in supporting career development for research staff. We have an academic community of 577 staff, with approximately 146 being considered research active through engaging in independent research. Within this community we have 29 Professors, 23 Associate Professors and 3 contract researchers. We have 245 registered MPhil and PhD students.

Gap Analysis and Action Plan Process

The University's Research and Innovation Committee (RIC) decided that the University should submit to the Award in 2018 and tasked Research Innovation and Impact Services (RIIS) with the development of the Award application. The RIC consists of senior representatives from across the University with an interested in research and innovation activities, the membership is attached at Annex 1 and it is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. Aside from the active researchers amongst the members, specific representation is sought from the research community from the Professoriate and through an Early Career representative.[1] A Student Union representative is also on the Committee. RIC is the formal University research committee for all policy, strategy and process decisions and reports into Academic Board.

For preparation for this submission a task group was commissioned by RIC consisting of representatives from RIIS, HR, Equality and Diversity to draft a response. This response was then reviewed by a focus groups of researchers and sent out to RIC for comment, along with a review by RIIS Senior Management Team and HR Senior Management Team. Therefore researchers have input into the development through the focus group, through capturing ongoing feedback from Schools as part of RIIS research support activities (e.g. LSE research development day, CAE research leaders, UoA leader meetings, Employee Engagement feedback) and informal discussions from the task and finish group, alongside the engagement of RIC. Currently, we have not embedded research surveys specifically for our

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[1] The University adopts the AHRC's formal definition of an ECR is an individual who is within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training, or an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. These durations exclude any period of career break, e.g. for family care or health reasons.

research community. However more regularly, formalised feedback on the broader research environment and support activities have been established in our action plan.
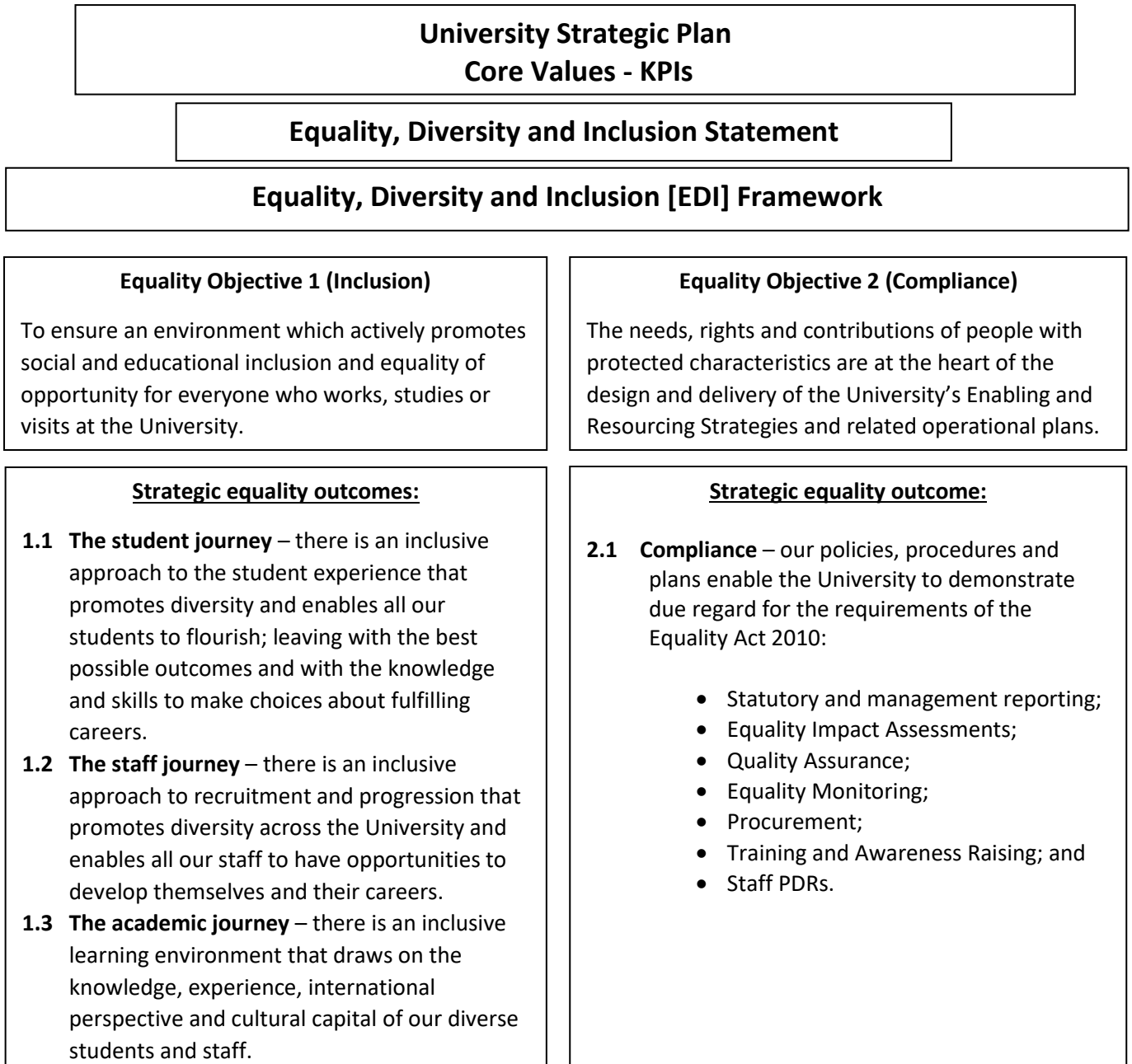
The gap analysis and action plan has been endorsed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The document will be governed by the RIC, reviewed on an annual basis. A Steering Group consisting of professional support staff from Research, Innovation and Impact Services, HR, Equality and Diversity, Employer Partnerships and the Academic Development Unit will be established to review progress on a quarterly basis. Researcher representation will be sought for this group to inform the action plan development on a continual basis; it is intended at least to have one representative per School including researchers from a range of career points. Formal responsibility sits with HR as part of the Organisational Development Framework.

In compiling the gap analysis and developing our action plan, the University recognises that we are at the outset of a journey and are in the process of assessing our baseline position in relation to the core principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Ongoing engagement with our research community is fundamental to the delivery of this action plan and formulating future measures of success.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Context

The University has reframed its equality agenda around a revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement together with a set of Strategic Equality Objectives and an Action Plan [attached]. This builds on our current successes in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion and promotes a focus on inclusive equality outcomes as a long term, mainstream strategic approach to this agenda which is explicitly linked to the University's Strategic Plan, Core Values and Key Performance Indicators [See diagram below]. We are keen to ensure sustainable change in the way we work to secure long term equality of outcome for everyone who works, studies or visits at the University. In particular we will use data to inform our actions and to monitor progress. This will be informed by routine and regular engagement with students and colleagues.

University Strategic Plan
Core Values - KPIs

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion [EDI] Framework

Equality Objective 1 (Inclusion)	**Equality Objective 2 (Compliance)**
To ensure an environment which actively promotes social and educational inclusion and equality of opportunity for everyone who works, studies or visits at the University.	The needs, rights and contributions of people with protected characteristics are at the heart of the design and delivery of the University's Enabling and Resourcing Strategies and related operational plans.

Strategic equality outcomes:	**Strategic equality outcome:**
1.1 The student journey – there is an inclusive approach to the student experience that promotes diversity and enables all our students to flourish; leaving with the best possible outcomes and with the knowledge and skills to make choices about fulfilling careers. **1.2 The staff journey** – there is an inclusive approach to recruitment and progression that promotes diversity across the University and enables all our staff to have opportunities to develop themselves and their careers. **1.3 The academic journey** – there is an inclusive learning environment that draws on the knowledge, experience, international perspective and cultural capital of our diverse students and staff.	**2.1 Compliance** – our policies, procedures and plans enable the University to demonstrate due regard for the requirements of the Equality Act 2010: • Statutory and management reporting; • Equality Impact Assessments; • Quality Assurance; • Equality Monitoring; • Procurement; • Training and Awareness Raising; and • Staff PDRs.

Annex 1 – Research and Innovation Committee

Terms of Reference

1. To advise the Academic Board on matters relating to Research and Innovation.

2. To oversee the University's strategic approach to Research and Innovation, including the institutional approach to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and any future research quality assessment exercises.

3. To oversee the development and implementation of institutional policy, procedure and guidance in respect of Research Governance, Environment, Ethics, Annual Monitoring of Research Provision, Regulations, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), Doctoral and Early Career Researcher development, and to make recommendations to the Academic Board.

4. To receive and consider reports from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Director of Research, and Graduate Schools Sub-Committee and Ethics Sub-Committee.

5. To receive reports from Schools considering strategic and policy issues relating to Research and Innovation.

Two Sub-Committees will report to URC:

· **Graduate School** (to deal with research degrees provision, monitoring student progress, registration, doctoral skills training and professional development)

· **Ethics Committee** (this is required for independent peer review)

Membership

Chair: Deputy Vice Chancellor

Ex officio: Vice Chancellor

Pro Vice Chancellor (Partnerships and Region)
Director of Research
Director of Employer Partnerships
Head of Graduate School
Chair of Research Ethics Committee
Chair of the Professoriate
Dean (or representative) of each School
Librarian with Research Portfolio
Representative from Digital Services
Representative from Estates
Representative from ECRs
Member nominated by the Students' Union

Officer support: a member from RIIS