

BME Staff Group Meeting

ED 10/11 : M1

Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th November 2010

In Attendance: Reuben Srinivasan, Abida Akram, (Liz Quimby-Fountain – notetaker)

1. Introduction

Reuben introduced himself. Abida Akram the newly appointed Staff Development Adviser (Equality and Diversity) gave a brief introduction of her background in the equality and diversity field (over 23 years experience) and within the public sector (last 10 years as a manager of the E&D function) delivering on employment, service delivery and community involvement issues.

Abida commenced employment at the university on 1st July 2010 and is new to the HE sector.

Abida outlined her role at Loughborough University, which predominantly is to mainstream and integrate Equality and Diversity, through all our processes. Part of that will be through training, briefing sessions, mentoring and coaching. Abida has/is/will be:-

- Completely redesigned the Respecting Diversity course which is fully interactive and Abida encouraged the group to book on for a refresher.
- Also supporting the staff groups, Equality and Diversity coordinators and the EDSC.
- Involved in various surveys and in providing advice.
- Managing the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, offering training and has revised the existing form. (Abida advised the group that incorporating an EIA or equality implications into the project approval and decision making stage had been approved by the EDSC and was awaiting final approval from Council.)
- Running training courses on mental health and disability awareness next year depending on the levels of interest expressed and she is hoping to work in partnership with officers in DANS in order to design and deliver these.
- Over the next few years- will be looking at ED issues with the students and the local community. (Her first priorities are HR issues/policies and integrating E&D into the University structures/processes.)

2. Staff Groups – the way forward

Abida confirmed to the group that a budget of £100 pa budget had been agreed with the HR Director (Rob Allan). Abida confirmed that it was up to the group to decide how they wanted to spend this, but needed Rob Allan's/Abida's approval.

Abida confirmed that she would not be attending all the meetings and would only participate if there was information/updates to pass on or if the group required her to attend for a particular reason/item. She confirmed that the group needs to decide their agenda and how often they wanted to meet.

Abida commented on her perception of the sustainability of the group (and indeed all the staff support groups) and in her experience felt it important for the group to decide on an agenda and what they want to achieve over the next year whilst keeping the group meetings more informal and supportive to each individual members of the group. Abida felt it also important that the chairing of the group was more of a joint exercise where perhaps the Chair could 'buddy up' to a member and share the responsibility for chairing the group.

It was discussed how we encourage more people to join the group, Reuben will email the existing members and try and arrange a meeting.

Reuben asked if it would be possible to see how many people visited the BME staff group web page.

Action: Liz to email the group with the minutes from this meeting and encourage their feedback on the single equality scheme questions.

Liz to investigate how many 'hits' the BME web page receives and forward the information onto Reuben.

3. Briefing on the Equality Act 2010

The group were given the briefing paper prepared by Abida. There are 9 protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

Reuben and Abida discussed how this information was cascaded through the organisation. Abida confirmed that these changes were highlighted in the

Respecting Diversity Course, Recruitment and Selection Course, ED Co-ordinators, SES consultation process and bespoke training with departments.

Action: Liz to send out electronically to all members the briefing document, SES and slides.

4. Briefing on the Single Equality Scheme

The group were provided with a copy of the draft single equality scheme. Abida requested that comments on the document and feedback on an action plan were sent to her by mid December and the following questions be considered:

Q1. What action(s) would you like the University to deliver on in 2011?

Q2 What would make a difference to you personally?

Q3. What actions do you think are needed in 2012 & 2013?

Q4. Is there anything you would like us to add or delete in the draft SES?

Abida confirmed with the group that this document has been drafted in line with new legislation but recognises it does need updating and what is missing is an Action Plan. Abida confirmed that she was in the process of consulting the staff groups, ED coordinators, and all staff/students via a web based survey.

Reuben raised the question as to what targets have been set (if any) regarding recruiting BME staff and also the differences between academic and non-academic staff in terms of career opportunities. Abida encouraged Reuben to add his thoughts to the SES feedback where all responses will be added into the action plan.

Action: The group to email Abida with feedback by end of November / mid-December.

5. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

Abida updated the group with the new form which has been revised in light of the new Equality Act. Abida hopes that by February 2011 there will be an online tool available, which should streamline the process, be much easier to complete and monitor. This is currently awaiting feedback from EDSC.

Abida commented that the EIA should be seen as a project management /service management /risk assessment tool to promote good practice. A way of measuring and evidencing any changes made and ensuring we are adhering to the law. It should highlight the positives and negatives.

Abida mentioned to the group that she is in the process of running several briefing sessions on EIAs and invited the group to arrange one to one sessions/a group session for a briefing lasting one hour & 30 minutes.

Abida outlined the best way to put an EIA into practice and commented that the best time is at the onset of a new project/change in policy /new procedure. An EIA should help you plan more successfully for present and future needs.

Reuben shall shortly be carrying out an EIA concerning the 'One Stop Shop' initiative.

Action: Abida / Reuben to arrange a separate meeting to discuss the EIA.