

Sheffield Hallam University Gender Equality Plan

Section 1: Mandatory requirements

Our Public Commitment to Gender Equality

Sheffield Hallam University is committed to advancing equality of opportunity, experience, and outcome, ensuring that students and staff realise their full potential. This is reflected through the University's values of inclusion and integrity, with equality, diversity and inclusion acting as key enablers to the [University Strategy](#). Our Gender Equality Plan (GEP) draws together our institutional policies, frameworks and approaches that demonstrate a clear commitment to the wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda inclusive of gender.

Ensuring that we have a genuine, abiding, and enduring commitment to gender equality and working practices is fundamental to our culture. Diversity is of critical importance in drawing together the talent, skills, and experience on which we depend. Gender is important for the University for many reasons including enhanced collaboration, differing perspectives, a better reflection of our students, improved recruitment, and retention - diverse talent we can grow, nurture, and promote. The University aspires to address all gender inequalities in a meaningful way ensuring that our staff and students have a positive experience while at the University; our specific mechanism for doing this is through Advance HE's charter for gender, Athena SWAN.

Our GEP is endorsed by the Vice Chancellor of the University and the Chief People Officer, who is the Institutional lead for EDI.

Guiding Principles

In 2021 we refreshed our Equality Objectives and launched our Hallam Values to reflect our enhanced commitment to EDI.

Our [Equality Objectives](#) embody the University's ambition to create a transformational and aspirational culture of inclusion for all students and staff. We are proud of the rich diversity of our community, and value a culture where every individual can succeed and thrive. We are committed to creating an environment that celebrates the diversity of students, staff and other stakeholders and enables everyone to achieve their full potential. We believe that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual and empowering everyone to contribute fully and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University.

The Equality Objectives have been developed around five themes that reflect our **Hallam Values of *Ambition, Collaboration, Inclusion, Innovation, and Integrity***; these were developed by, and with, colleagues from across the University and represent the beliefs, philosophies, and principles that we believe can transform lives. An implementation plan sets out to embed these Values across the University through identified workstreams and associated activity including our new Equality Objectives and EDI Delivery Plan.

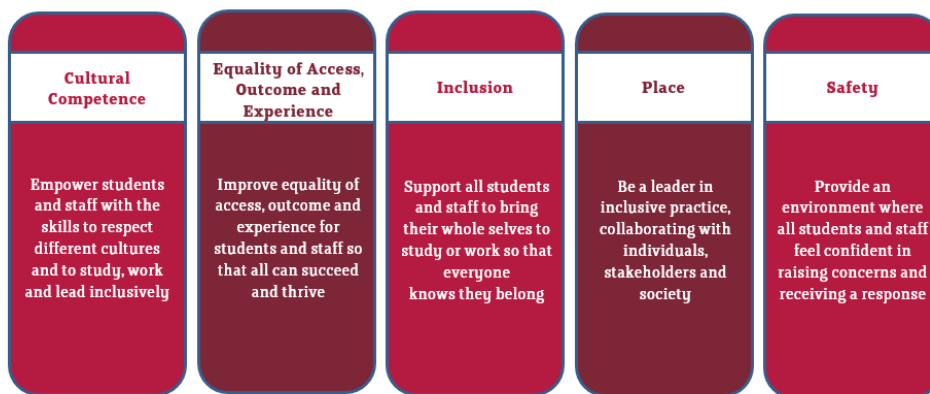


Figure 1 Sheffield Hallam Equality Objectives 2021-2024

Gender Focused Frameworks

Our [Athena Swan](#) application and SMART action plan demonstrate our specific commitment to gender equality. [The submission and associated actions plans are overseen by the Athena Swan SAT. The University](#) holds an institutional Athena SWAN Award (bronze), and gender equality work is also recognised at discipline levels: Nursing & Midwifery (bronze), Psychology, Sociology & Politics (bronze), Biosciences & Chemistry (silver), Engineering & Maths (bronze) and Natural & Built Environment (bronze). For the University, this means giving due consideration and equity of opportunity for promotion, progression, pay, reward and representation across research, professors, senior leadership, and other underrepresented gender groups such as Black, Asian and minority ethnic women, disabled/neurodiverse women and trans and non-binary staff and students. The University has a longer-term aspiration to achieve Institutional Athena Swan Silver and work is currently underway to improve the processes around our gender equality work. Our Departmental Athena Swan Champions Network has been relaunched to share best practice and explore both the challenges and opportunities.

Our SMART action plan for the [Concordat to Support the career Development of Researchers](#) underpins the people and culture strand of our research strategy. We have held the HR Excellence in Research Award since 2013 and have worked towards a genuine step change in the support and career development offer for researchers. Regular review, evidence gathering, and researcher-led feedback have helped monitor progress and refine our forward plans. Core actions relating to gender are cross referenced to our Athena Swan action plan to ensure consistency and a joined-up approach. For the University this means continuing actions to reduce the under-representation of female staff in Associate Professor and Professor roles, research grant applications and the Research Excellence Framework. We are also implementing actions to address concerns around the long-term impact of COVID-19 on research activity and outputs and the differential impacts on female researchers.

Dedicated Resources

We recognise that inequalities exist, and we are making cultural and systemic changes to make a difference including the strengthening and visibility of EDI leadership and governance. Our Chief People Officer has a cross-University leadership position as **Institutional lead for EDI** which covers staff and students. The Director for HR and Organisational Development (HR&OD) and the Director for Academic Development and Diversity (AD&D) provide oversight for staff and student EDI respectively and together make up the Chief People Officer Portfolio. The Institutional lead for EDI is further supported by the Extended University Leadership Team EDI Champions, including three University EDI **Champions for Gender**. These roles provide visible and active role models, supporting and advancing gender issues for staff and students and taking a lead on specific diversity issues and projects. Local Departmental EDI leads, with a specific workplan allocation,

were introduced in 2021 to further drive local action plans, share best practice and explore opportunities.

The **EDI Committee**, chaired by the Institutional EDI lead, acts as a single point of oversight for all aspects of staff and student EDI including EDI Steering Groups (including the **Gender Equality Steering Group**), EDI networks and other engagement initiatives, providing support and challenge to wider functional areas in their delivery of the EDI objectives and progress against EDI targets. Dedicated working groups support the University's commitment to Athena Swan and the Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers ensuring, where appropriate, a joined-up approach.

Our EDI networks are run by and for staff and students at the University. They hold regular meetings as well as organise and take part in events and activities to raise awareness of EDI issues. Networks provide safe welcoming spaces for people to meet, share ideas and experiences, inspire, and support each other. They also provide opportunities for staff to be active and influential in decision-making processes and effecting positive change across the University. Networks that specifically focus on Gender issues include our **Genders Network**, **Parent and Carer Network**, **Hallam LGBT+ Network** and our **Menopause Network**.

In addition to our internal networks The University has joined the [Women's Higher Education Network](#) (WHEN), a network for all self-identifying women and non-binary people in higher education (HE). We have also been a member of the [Women in Science and Engineering](#) (WISE) network since 2017, aimed at raising the representation of women employees in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). WISE also connects women from different sectors through networking, events and communities of practice.

In response to staff survey feedback on the importance of a positive working environment and inclusive culture, the University has recruited a network of **Inclusive Hallam Champions** to listen to staff concerns, signpost appropriate support and feedback ideas and issues to relevant channels. This group will be instrumental in helping wider staff members to understand EDI and will be a useful source of intelligence about the University's cultural climate.

Data Collection and Monitoring

An annual [EDI report](#) provides an overview of our staff and student populations, the work undertaken, a review of our Institutional performance over the last year, and examines our aspirations and ambition for further work. We also publish an annual [Pay Gap report](#) demonstrating our progress in reducing all our pay gaps, including gender; the report is supported by an improvement plan, which along with the Athena Swan action plan, addresses how we intend to continue to improve. [Reducing our median gender pay gap is one of the University's key performance indicators.](#)

Through the University's participation in the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) was undertaken on our submission. Equality analyses were undertaken on every internal research assessment to determine representation with respect to equality groups, to monitor trends and to inform interventions to reduce under-representation. Data informed recommendations are embedded into action plans for Athena SWAN and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

An annual report is provided to Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team providing gender disaggregated baseline data to monitor progress against actions plans, identify issues of concern and to ensure appropriate actions are undertaken as required.

Training

The University strives to make EDI visible, accessible, and relevant to our staff and students. The Chief People Officer's portfolio maintains EDI webpages which includes, policy, guidance, best practice and a suite of training and development resources for each of the protected characteristics including a dedicated site for gender.

All staff are asked complete EDI training as part of the University's commitment to do the right thing and present fairness of opportunity for all staff and students regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sex, disability, sexuality, or any other protected characteristics; training includes an **Equality Essentials module** and an **Unconscious Bias module**, with an additional module for all managers and those undertaking recruitment.

In 2021, the University introduced a new staff learning and development programme, **Protect & Respect**, comprised of a series of face-to-face sessions and e-learning modules focusing on how we can continue to build a safe and inclusive culture, with a genuine respect for different viewpoints and a sense of belonging, togetherness, and wellbeing. This programme complements our Hallam Values, the Inclusive Hallam Champions network, and the University's Equality Objectives 2021-2024. As part of our wider skills training our students have access to the **Tackling Harassment Programme** and specifically **Active Bystander Training** which combines evidence-based best practices with expert learning design to raise awareness, counteract barriers to reporting and intervention, and promote positive cultural change.

We invest in leadership development such as the Advance HE programme, **Aurora**; aimed at people who self-identify as women the programme brings together leadership experts and higher education institutions to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector. This is complemented by our internal **Aspire** scheme, developed by our Women Professors' Group – the programme recognises the intersectional nature of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and race, and creates opportunities for those who identify as women from underrepresented groups to help create durable pipelines to senior or Professorial positions.

Training is complemented by our [Inclusive Hallam event series](#) exploring some of society's most challenging EDI issues and asking: "What can we all do to help make inclusion the norm within our communities and wider society?" The series seeks to support open discussions about the lived experience of protected groups including gender. It has also celebrated women's achievements at the University through International Women's Day. Our on-line web presence seeks to showcase positive and gender-inclusive stories, news, achievements, and case studies.

The University has introduced a requirement to complete an equality impact assessment when a need for a new policy or practice is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. This must form part of any new policy, event, or funding activity to ensure the impact of any activity on individuals or groups with protected characteristics (including gender) are considered at the outset. Assessments are reviewed and once approved, added to a document library to ensure they are accessible and to promote learning.

Our Academic Development and Diversity Team provides academic workforce development and hosts a suite of resources, training and advice that addresses applied inclusive teaching practice (see Thematic areas below and specifically Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content).

Section 2: Thematic Areas

In addition to the above mandatory requirements, our support for the following recommended five thematic areas are highlighted below.

Work-life Balance and Organisational Culture

Our Equality Objectives and Hallam Values provide the framework for an engaged and positive organisational culture. The University is committed to supporting employees to achieve a healthy balance between their work and personal lives and we offer a range of [benefits](#) to support this including flexible working, career breaks and other family-friendly benefits. Gender specific approaches are set out in our institutional [Athena Swan application](#) and our Departmental [Athena Swan applications](#) under section 5.6 Organisation and Culture.

However, the recent impact of Covid-19 has intensified inequalities and our staff and students have had to adapt to new ways of digital and remote working. The University has ensured that people have been central to our response to the pandemic and has provided support throughout. In response to staff engagement, flexible and hybrid models of working have been introduced increasing our agility. Never-the-less the pandemic has had notable impacts on health, wellbeing and engagement and the University has dedicated resources to Wellbeing and Welfare including our Employee Assistance Programme, which provides confidential support for both personal and professional problems 365 days a year, 24/7 online, telephone and face to face.

Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-making

Visible leadership is recognised as essential to advancing the EDI agenda for our staff and students; the Extended **University Leadership Team EDI Champions** have been established including three University EDI **Champions for Gender** to raise profile, provide accountability and to provide a strategic steer for gender. Further Gender specific approaches are set out in our institutional [Athena Swan application](#) and our Departmental [Athena Swan applications](#) under section 5.6 Organisation and Culture. We have committed to targets for the advancement of women into senior roles, particularly our University Leadership Team and to creating an inclusive environment for transgender and non-binary staff and students.

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

The provision of EDI training, new guidance and policy is facilitating a positive shift towards inclusive recruitment practices. We are embedding diversity in our panels, both for recruitment and promotions ensuring supporting processes encourage a diversity of candidates. As a minimum requirement, all panels must be gender balanced. Gender specific approaches to career progression are further set out in our institutional [Athena Swan application](#) and our Departmental [Athena Swan applications](#) under section 5.6 Organisation and Culture. Specific deliverables have been identified to address gender equality relating to the student lifecycle and also the career pipeline, particularly at entry level and more senior roles, exploring the barriers to career progression. Targets focus on priority areas such as increasing the representation of women in particular subject areas notably STEMM.

Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

The Dean of Research acts as one of the University EDI Gender Champions and each teaching department has an EDI lead who promotes visibility of EDI and gender in both research and teaching communities. Integration of the gender dimension into the research and teaching content is addressed in our institutional [Athena Swan application](#) and our Departmental [Athena Swan applications](#) under section 5.6 Organisation and Culture.

In addition to Athena Swan priorities, our research and innovation strategic priorities embed EDI in our deliverables, placing clear focus on supporting and developing our people. The University's [action plan](#) and commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, drives researcher development and in line with our Athena Swan objectives, actions are viewed through a gender lens. Our action plan places emphasis on gender in the following exemplar actions:

- Minimise the under-representation of women in the [Research Excellent Framework](#) and internal assessment exercise in terms of allocation of time for research, inclusion in assessment programmes and output production.
- Provision of visibility and support for research programmes that address gender issues as part of our commitment to the UN SDG 5 (gender equality) through our research programmes focused on ending gender-based violence for women and girls.
- Ensuring gender balance on peer review panels for internal funding calls and providing career advancement opportunities (Early Career Research and Innovation Fellowships) that actively encourage applications from women, with a commitment to actively monitor engagement and to implement appropriate actions and interventions as required.
- The development of guidance by researchers and for researchers on integrating sex and gender into research programme design, approach, engagement, and impact.

Our Academic Development and Diversity Team provides academic workforce development to support staff in their work with students, both service and academic-related, and support to enable the delivery of effective and inclusive pedagogic and academic practices. The team's role is primarily aimed at building on and developing sector-leading, transdisciplinary approaches to enhancing teaching excellence and an excellent student experience. The team hosts a suite of resources, training and advice that addresses applied inclusive teaching practice that aims to minimise or remove barriers to learning or assessment and support the success of all students whilst maintaining academic standards.

Measures Against Gender-based Violence, including Sexual Harassment

The University strives to promote a safe community and will not tolerate any kind of abuse, harassment or offensive behaviour based on prejudice. Two core policies enshrine this ethos: a) our staff **Dignity at work policy** and b) our **Student Anti- Harassment Policy and Support for Students**. Policies address acceptable behaviour for staff and students, as well as outlining what would be considered bullying and discrimination. Clear routes are outlined for reporting to ensure the University can take necessary and appropriate action. Policies are supported by clear communications and training through the **Protect and Respect Programme** and **Active Bystander Training** as outlined in the above training section.

Our [Report and Support](#) service provides support for both staff and students who have experienced sexual violence, harassment, abuse or hate crime and offers a confidential, secure way to report incidents. Specially trained sexual violence liaison officer can provide give practical and emotional support, provide options for formal reporting and also referral for expert services outside of the University.

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