The University
of Manchester

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Equality and Diversity Communication, Consultation and Involvement Strategy

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Equality and Diversity Communications, Consultation and Involvement Strategy

1.   Introduction

This strategy aims to provide good practice for the effective communication, consultation and involvement on equality and diversity related issues and practices.

Under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRAA), we have specific duties to enable us to meet the general duty. These are: a race equality policy; monitoring; impact assessment and ensuring adequate publishing arrangements for the policy, along with monitoring and impact assessment findings. Therefore, effective communication, consultation and involvement forms an integral part of meeting the general and specific duties.

One of the most significant elements of the new Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which goes further than the RRAA, is the emphasis on involvement of disabled people (key stakeholders) in the development and implementation of a Disability Equality Scheme; one of the specific duties to enable us to meet the general duty.

This strategy supports the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and through it, the University's strategic plan. This strategy has been developed in accordance with the guidance document, "Race Equality: Communication and Consultation Toolkit for Higher Education Institutions" (Equality Challenge Unit, December 2004). This is a working document, which will be regularly reviewed to assess its effectiveness.

2.   Definitions

Communication is the provision and exchange of information.

Consultation is active participation by stakeholders based on information they have received from an institution.

Involvement is a level of participation in which people actively participate in defining the problem, possible solutions and actually take part in the final decision.

3.   Purpose and scope

The University needs to communicate and consult in order to ensure that the working and learning experience that we provide, is effective and responsive to the needs of our staff and students and the needs of the wider community.

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Equality and Diversity Communications, Consultation and Involvement Strategy

This strategy is in line with the statutory requirements for promotion of equality and diversity and in accordance with the University of Manchester's strategic plan.

4.   Aims

This strategy has been developed to provide key directives to successfully communicating, consulting and involving stakeholders on equality and diversity initiatives, promoting prime issues and presenting the work of the department.

This strategy encompasses:
- all the major activities of the Equality and Diversity Team which require and use communication, consultation and involvement;
- creating an openness and transferability of information resources;
- communicating, consulting and involving on relevant information in a timely, accurate manner, through coordinated, appropriate and accessible channels to all stakeholders, with a special emphasis on communicating, consulting with and involving 'hard to reach' groups;
- proactively listening to the needs and views of stakeholders and prioritising responsiveness accordingly;
- encouraging greater University and local community involvement by consulting;
- developing and promoting an appropriate and positive brand for the department and the University, consolidating and reinforcing reputations.

5.   Principles of communication

Staff and students from a particular background may not have the same communication and consultation needs. We will assess each exercise to ensure the appropriate approach is followed.

The department will establish appropriate mechanisms which consider the modes of dissemination that are the most appropriate for each identified stakeholder group and the desired impact of specific communication or information.

The dissemination of information and associated communication channels will be regularly reviewed in respect of quality, effectiveness, relevance and impact. This strategy will remain a working document to be revised in accordance with recommendations resulting from a review.

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Communication and information will be made accessible to all staff members and students throughout the University community as appropriate, and will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). Information will be presented in plain English, and will be clear, consistent, unambiguous, relevant, current and timely. All published and electronic material will be branded in a recognisable style.

6. Target audience

Target audiences should be prioritised in relation to importance and influence relative to the objectives set out for the communication or information piece. Communication channels should be identified and challenged, to ensure the maximum potential impact is achievable.

6.1 Staff

The term "staff" includes all permanent, temporary, part time and full time employees and contractors. Staff can be sub divided by:
- schools, faculties or directorates
- role category
    - Academic
    - Academic related
    - Research
    - Secretarial/Clerical
    - Technical/Computing
    - General (including STARS).

Hard to reach groups of staff, are staff who may not have access to the core communication channels. Hard to reach groups are primarily defined by role category e.g. catering or grounds staff. They are employed within STARS and may work shifts and may not have access to email.

6.2 Students

The term "students" includes all undergraduate, postgraduate, part time and full time students, who are based on or off campus. Students can be sub divided by:
- schools, faculties or directorates
- year of study.

Hard to reach groups include international, mature, part time and distance learning students. These students do have access to email,

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but may not have access to extended channels of informal communication.

6.3   External stakeholders

Our external stakeholders encompass a diverse population including:
- Alumni
- Manchester's local community
- Manchester City Council
- Local businesses
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- Religious and faith groups
- Equality commissions and specialist organisations
- Local media
- Funding bodies
- Other education providers, national and international
- Prospective students
- Prospective staff
- Web community

6.4   Equality target groups

Equality target groups are generally minority groups, who are most likely to face discrimination. Provisions will be made to ensure that representations from these groups are made possible and encouraged in consultation and involvement exercises. The main groups include:
- Women
- Black and minority ethnic (BME)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT)
- Young people
- Older people
- Disabled people
- People from different faith groups

6.5   Trade Unions

The University officially recognises AMICUS, Unison and UCU. All recognised trade unions will be involved in communication and consultation exercises as appropriate.

7   Communication procedure

At the start of the communication process, clear and concise objectives will be made addressing the following issues:
- Why are we carrying out the communication?
- What are our objectives?
- What outcomes do we want?

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- Who do we want to communicate with?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- How and when will we communicate?
- What resources do we need to communicate?
- What messages are we trying to get across?
- How are we going to evaluate the success of the communication?
- How will we apply what we have learnt?

7.1 Identifying the need, purpose and outcomes

To ensure that the communication is effective, it is essential that sufficient planning is undertaken. Clear objectives will be defined and appropriate measures will be identified in order to achieve them.

7.2 Establishing suitable methods for audiences

Appendix A is a checklist of key stakeholders. This checklist is used to correctly identify stakeholders as target audiences.

The checklist refers to a variety of examples of types of external audiences. This list is not exhaustive. Further information on external audiences will be identified through other education providers, careers and education counselling services, or registers complied by umbrella and specialist organisations such as regional race equality councils, inter-faith groups, consultative committees and networks etc.

Communication is most effective when it uses a variety of channels. Section **8** of this document, provides a detailed review of all of the channels available to us for internal and external communication. Appendix B is a checklist of communication channels.

7.3 Delivering within a diverse context

Information must be provided at the right time, to the right people, in the right languages and formats. Appendix **C** is a communication timetable which will ensure that communication activities are timetabled to avoid overloading stakeholder groups.

Certain groups of staff are more susceptible to being overlooked in communication activities. 'Hard to reach' groups are typically part time workers, shift workers, night workers and potentially staff in certain roles, who do not have access to IT. Staff and students who may predominantly, be working in remote locations or even offsite e.g. at Manchester Royal Infirmary will also be considered. Appendix D is a checklist of hard to reach groups. This checklist should be used in conjunction with Appendices A and B to ensure that relevant provisions

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are made for effectively targeted communications with the key stakeholders identified.

7.4 Delivering an effective message

All communication should be in line with the principles outlined in Section **5**, in accordance with the review checklists (Appendices A, B and **D**) and in consideration of any potential barriers (Section **9**). Any communication to external stakeholders should also be reviewed in light of a wider range of potential recipients.

7.5 Review, learning and future action

When the relevant information has been disseminated an evaluation process will be carried out including:
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the communications process, including aims, objectives and strategies
- Analysis of the outcomes with a view to identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers
- Where appropriate, an action plan should be developed to improve future communications.

8. Communication channels

- Open meetings with the President and Vice Chancellor
- Management/Administration meetings
- Team meetings/briefings
- TUNG – Trade Union Negotiating Group (including consultation)
- UMSU Equality and Diversity Group
- Diversity Champions Network
- Network Groups
- Equality and Diversity Forum
- Corporate induction
- Training
- Advice
- Conferences and roadshows
- Website/intranet
- UniLife
- Email
- Posters, leaflets and handouts
- E&D newsletter
- Published minutes
- Data monitoring report
- Action plans

- Impact assessments
- Policies and procedures
- Staff surveys
- Student surveys
- Other surveys

9. Barriers to communication

9.1 Accessibility

Information needs to be presented in a clear and accessible way and in a variety of formats, so that all members of the community can receive the information.

9.2 Frame of reference

Generally people share opinions within the group where they identify themselves. They are less likely to change those opinions unless there is shift across the whole group.

9.3 Stereotypes

Stereotyping is where expectation determines communication content. When an individual encounters communication from someone who may conform to a pre-existing stereotype they hold, communication will then largely, be appreciated within the boundaries of the positive or negative perception of the stereotype.

9.4 Semantics

In transferring ideas from one individual to another, a difficulty arises in that the meaning cannot be transferred directly, but through words or symbols, which could hold a different meaning for a different person. This can be further problematic with the use of particular words or phrases which have a specialised meaning, which would require specialist knowledge to comprehend.

9.5 Concentration

One of the prevalent deflectors to effective communication is based on selective attention or concentration and the ability to retain information. These selections are created using some or all of the barriers previously mentioned. This is in addition to social and environmental pressures which the "receiver" is may also be experiencing, which can impact: the actual message itself; receiving the message; understanding the message; accepting the message; and acting upon the message.

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10. Consultation and involvement procedure

It is essential that the consultation and involvement process has a clear delegated authority. Wherever possible, the delegated authority e.g. the management team leading the consultation will include ethnic minority members, or members of equality target groups (see Section **6**).

At the start of the consultation and involvement process, clear and concise objectives will be made addressing the following issues:
- What issues are being consulted upon?
- Why are we carrying out this exercise?
- What objectives and means of achieving them will be consulted upon?
- Who will be consulted, how and why?

These issues should be further clarified by the following questions:
- Why the consultation is taking place?
- What aspects of the proposals are open to change and which are non-negotiable?
- Who will make the decisions about the outcome of the consultation?
- How will we know if the consultation process has been successful?
- Who are we consulting with, and what is the best method to engage people?
- How will our specific consultations potentially overlap with other established consultation and negotiation procedures e.g. TUNG (Trade Union Negotiating Group)?
- What critical pieces of information are needed and what information will people need in order to contribute more fully.

The effectiveness of a consultation or involvement process is dependent upon the quality and extent of information that people have to inform their views. Appendix F outlines a checklist for clarification of information required for the consultation and involvement process. This will be used at the outset, to ensure that people involved, will have the level of information required to maximise a successful outcome to the process.

10.1 Identifying the audience – consideration of methods

We will consider how to involve people appropriately within the process, with regards to the management of the process and the visibility.

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The extent of consultation will be directly proportionate to the equality relevance of the issue to be consulted e.g. staff recruitment and student admissions are both highly relevant.

General research into underlying factors which could affect equality target groups will be carried out prior to consultation which will help to determine both the scope and the resources that will be required.

The timing of a consultation process is crucial, especially where involvement is necessary prior to the development of a particular policy e.g. under the new requirements of the DDA (see Section **1**). Appendix G is a checklist on consultation timing. This will be completed to plan the timing of the consultation process.

A variety of methods will be used to collate feedback consisting of both qualitative and quantitative information, suiting the context of the review (see Section **10.4**).

10.2 Costs and resources

The resourcing for large consultation exercises may be covered by other budgets within the University. Joint working on consultation exercises will be utilised wherever possible. The available budget will reflect the scope of the consultation viable.

10.3 Creating a message

Consultation information will be coherent, consistent, credible and relevant in both content and design to the target audience.

The consultation procedure will demonstrate the serious intent for issues to be listened to, and acted upon by:
- Ensuring the team leading the consultation is credible to both managers and black and minority ethnic staff involved.
- Providing an open and honest premise to proceedings about potential shortcomings.
- Provide a timescale which allows for serious responses.
- Ensuring that there are no predetermined outcomes to the procedure.

Key members of the consultation procedure will be trained to ensure the optimum effectiveness of the exercise.

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10.4 Evaluation of consultation outcomes

The University will evaluate all consultation exercises to fairly ascertain the extent to which the procedure has been effective and representative in enabling feedback from ethnic minority groups.

A report will be compiled based upon the following content:
- What was the consultation trying to achieve?
- Who was invited, and who attended the consultation?
- Was there a sufficient number of those who attended, or is another consultation exercise necessary?
- What information was gathered during the exercise?
- What were the general themes which arose?
- What further action, both short and long term, is required?
- Who will need to be involved in this action?
- Are there any issues which require formal consideration in other arenas e.g. TUNG?

Participants, and other interested parties, will be given the opportunity to feedback following the exercise.

11. Consultation and involvement channels

- Team meetings/briefings
- TUNG – Trade Union Negotiating Group (including consultation)
- NUS Equality and Diversity Group
- Equality and Diversity Champions Group
- Equality Sub Group
- Email
- Website/Intranet
- Staff surveys
- Student surveys
- Other surveys

12 Barriers to consultation and involvement

12.1 Decisions by equality target groups not to take part, either because they have not been involved before or because they have had bad experiences of trying to participate in previous initiatives.

12.2 Complicated decision-making processes and structures which may discourage equality target groups, voluntary organisations and businesses from getting involved.

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12.3 Lack of time, resources and experience within the equality target groups, voluntary organisations and businesses to get involved.

13. Legal duties

All communication and information will comply with the Data Protection Act (1998), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the Employment Act (1982), Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations (2004).

14. List of associated documents

Practicing equality of opportunity permeates across all employment related practices however the following themes are some of the key areas of impact:

- Equality and Diversity Action Plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy

15. Accessible format information

This document can be made available in large print and electronically upon request.

If you require another alternative format please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Contact Details:

Equality and Diversity
C28, Sackville Street Building,
Sackville Street,
Manchester,
M60 1QD

Tel: 0161 306 5857
Fax: 0161 306 5877
Minicom: 0161 306 5870

Email: equalityanddiversity@manchester.ac.uk

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A   Identification of stakeholders checklist

Main Audience	Target Audience	Audience Required?
Staff	Depts/schools/faculties	
	Grades	
	Academic	
	Academic related	
	Research	
	Secretarial/Clerical	
	Technical/Computing	
	General (including STARS)	
	Management	
Students	List depts/schools/faculities	
	Year of study	
	Programme of study	
	Undergraduate	
	Postgraduate	
	Research	
	International/ Home/ EU	
	Part time	
	Full time	
Other Internal Stakeholders	Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resrouces	
	Café Scientifique	
	Centre for Continuing Education	
	Contact Theatre	
	Jodrell Bank	
	John Rylands Library	
	Manchester Museum	
	Tabley House	
	Whitworth Art Gallery	
External Stakeholders	Alumni	
	Local community	
	Manchester City Council	
	Local businesses	
	Community and voluntary section organisations	
	Religious and faith groups	
	Equality commissions and specialist organisations	
	Local media	
	Funding bodies	

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	Other education providers, national and international	
	Prospective students	
	Prospective staff	
	Web community	
Equality target groups	Women	
	Black and minority ethnic (BME)	
	Lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT)	
	Young people	
	Older people	
	Disabled people	
	People from different faith groups	
Recognised trade unions	AMICUS, GMB, UCU	
	UMSU	

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B   Identification of communication channels checklist

Communication Channel	Channel Required?
Open meetings	
Management /Administration meetings	
Team meetings/briefings	
NUS Equality and Diversity Group	
Equality and Diversity Forum	
Equality and Diversity Champions Group	
Equality Sub Groups	
Corporate induction	
Training	
Advice	
Conferences/roadshows	
Website/intranet	
UniLife	
Email	
Posters, leaflets and handouts	
E&D newsletter	
Published minutes	
Data monitoring report	
Action plans	
Policies and procedures	
Media relations	

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C   Communication Timetable

Activity	Main Audience	Channel/(s)	Duration	Timing

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D   Hard to reach groups checklist

Main Audience	Target Audience	Targets Group	Action Required?

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E   Overview of communication channels

Communication channel	Staff	Students	External	Downwards	Upwards	Laterally
Open meetings with the President and Vice Chancellor	*			*		
Management/Administration meetings	*			*	*	*
Team meetings/briefings	*			*	*	
TUNG – Trade Union Negotiating Group (including consultation)	*			*	*	*
NUS Equality and Diversity Group	*			*	*	*
Equality and Diversity Champions Group		*			*	*
Equality and Diversity Forum	*		*	*	*	*
Corporate induction						
Training	*	*			*	
Advice	*			*		
Conferences and roadshows	*			*		
Website/intranet	*	*		*	*	
UniLife	*	*	*	*		

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Communication channel	Staff	Students	External	Downwards	Upwards	Laterally
Email	*	*	*	*		
Posters, leaflets and handouts	*		*(some)	*		
E&D newsletter	*	*		*	*	*
Published minutes	*	*		*		
Data monitoring report	*	*	*(selective?)	*		
Action plans	*	*	*	*	*	*
Impact assessments	*	*	*	*		
Policies and procedures	*	*	*	*		
Staff surveys	*	*	*	*	*	*
Student surveys	*			*		*
Other surveys	*				*	*

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F   Clarification of information for consultation checklist

1. When is the consultation taking place?

2. What is the overall context in which consultation is taking place?

3. What are the issues for consultation?

4. What will happen to contributions made during consultation?

5. Are there any external constraints that may limit the options available?

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6. What is included in the consultation?

7. What is not to be included in the consultation?

8. How and when will the outputs be communicated?

9. Who are they key stakeholders who should receive the results?

10. What resources are required to undertake this consultation?

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G   Consultation timing checklist

	Impact	Time
1. When must the final decision be taken?	**Set overall timescale**	
2. Are there interim deadlines e.g. key committee's schedules, financial deadlines?	**Set stages**	
3. Are there times to avoid such as main vacation periods, periods of religious observance or examination periods?		
4. Are there aspects of the consultation that have a minimum time to be effective e.g. surveys?		

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5. Are there parallel issues to be determined with different timescales?		
6. Do those being consulted have their own schedules which may affect their response e.g. trade unions or BME groups consulting with members?		
Start procedure by:		

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H   Overview of consultation channels

Consultation Channel	Channel Required?
Team meetings/briefings	
Consultation Forum with trade unions	
NUS Equality and Diversity Group	
Equality and Diversity Champions Group	
Equality Sub Groups	
Email	
Website/intranet	
Staff survey	
Student surveys	
Other surveys	