

Inclusion Report

Queen Mary University
of London



W O R K S

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Introduction

In June-September 2019 Queen Mary University of London undertook an Inclusion Review with a view to gaining insights designed to improve organisational culture.

There is growing scrutiny and expectation from national and sector bodies, as well as from staff and students, about the need for universities to demonstrate progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): driving diverse representation at all levels, reducing differential attainment gaps for minority groups and creating cultures where diverse talent can thrive.

The undertaking of this review, commissioned by the Principal, demonstrates a clear commitment from Queen Mary to scrutinise its internal culture and EDI-related practices. The findings outlined in this report are designed to help build an understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the institution, with a view to sparking additional work and action that will embed a culture of inclusion at Queen Mary.

Sustained equality, diversity and inclusion progress is hard. It requires long-term human and financial investment. This report sets out a series of recommendations designed to help the institution move forward, taking tangible steps in order to demonstrate progress. Queen Mary has a rich, ethnically diverse student population and prides itself on being the Russell Group university with the highest intake of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students, although this level of diversity is not currently reflected in the staff population, particularly across senior-level roles in academia and professional services (PS). It is hoped that the insights derived from this report will provide a foundation to shape a clear pan-institutional EDI strategy and action plan, bringing together its schools, institutes and departments and enhancing workplace culture in a consistent and cohesive way. Cementing and embedding these inclusive practices will reap invaluable benefits, for staff, students and the university as a whole, and will go a long way towards helping Queen Mary realise its long-term ambition: *'to be the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere.'*

Approach

The report outlines high-level findings of a three-stage review process with associated recommendations. The following key themes have been considered:

- Recruitment;
- Informal working practices;
- EDI infrastructure;
- Development; and
- Leadership and accountability.

Detailed insights into focus groups undertaken with minority staff are included in the appendix. Focus groups explored lived experiences of the following minority groups:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff;
- Disabled staff;
- Female staff; and
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) staff.

This report is based on insights obtained through an HR review of Queen Mary's EDI policies and practices; the voices and experiences of staff members across the institution (who contributed through interviews, minority focus groups, faculty workshops and central PS workshops); as well as responses to EDI-related questions in the 2019 staff survey.

Since undertaking the review Queen Mary has already taken steps to address key issues and act on recommendations emerging through focus groups and workshops. Clear progress has been made and a number of further initiatives are being planned. Where possible, these have been included in the report.

Scope of the review

This report focuses on the perceptions and lived experiences of staff members at Queen Mary. It does not include the student experience. This is covered through the education strategy led by the VP Education.

Insights should be understood at a pan-institutional level. Detailed school-level or departmental insights have been beyond the scope of this review.

The report explores the experiences and perspectives of staff who work across Queen Mary's London-based campuses. It does not include insights from staff who work internationally.

It is recognised that the grouping of identities through umbrella terms such as 'BAME' and 'LGBT+' can be problematic and does not account for variation in experience. However, a more detailed analysis of minority perspectives has been beyond the scope of this project.

Review findings

Recruitment

Talent attraction

With its roots in four historic colleges in the east of London, Queen Mary University of London has become one of the UK's leading research-focused higher education institutions. Queen Mary prides itself on having a rich, diverse student population, with 90% of home students coming from state schools, 59% of students coming from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, 42% being the first in their families to go into higher education and over 30% of students coming from households with an income less than £15,000.¹ Queen Mary is recognised as the Russell Group university with the most ethnically diverse student population. This benefits reputation and is likely to be playing an important role in attracting diverse talent into the organisation.

Although the diversity of the student population is noted, insights from staff in workshops, focus groups and interviews suggested that Queen Mary's Senior Executive Team (SET) and wider leadership are not perceived to be diverse or representative, even though SET has, over recent years, increased its diversity. This perception may prevent diverse candidates (both internal and external) from applying for new posts. Some staff have suggested that the lack of gender or ethnic diversity in specific schools would put them off applying for roles.

During the review process there appeared to be considerable variation in departmental approaches to recruitment. It is acknowledged that different schools and departments have different talent and recruitment needs, but a lack of consistency around processes and practices, together with a lack of enforced accountability at school or departmental level, may have increased chances of unchecked bias or inequitable processes throughout the recruitment cycle. Areas of good practice did emerge, however, with some departments taking a proactive approach to widening reach, targeting diverse candidates and/or the potential for mitigating bias within the recruitment cycle.

One faculty, for example, had introduced a standardised 'checklist' across its schools to mitigate the potential for bias during interview panels. Another school scrutinised the language of academic job descriptions to see if the talent pool would be affected. The school observed that women were less likely to apply for 'senior' lecturer roles than men at the same level or with equivalent experience. As such, the school stopped advertising for *senior* lecturer roles exclusively, and instead, advertised 'lecturer/senior lecturer' roles. This resulted in a significant uplift in applications from female academics and, in just two years, the school was able to reduce the gender representation gap. The school now has 41% female professorial representation, which is thought to be one of the highest in the country.

This approach is encouraging. However, proactive targeting of underrepresented groups did not appear to be common practice across the institution. During the review, particular concerns were raised about the language used in job descriptions which was not considered to be as inclusive as it could be. Gender-bias in language was thought to be particularly problematic. This could be deterring highly-qualified talent from applying.

Staff also observed that the narrow scope of some job descriptions, particularly for certain academic hires, was unlikely to succeed in attracting a wide or diverse candidate pool. In some cases, descriptions were thought to be so specialised or particular in scope, that staff inferred they had been written with a specific person in mind. Staff across the institution and minority voices in BAME, LGBT+ and women's focus groups reported that they had encountered cases in which people had been lined up for roles, both within academic as well as PS appointments. This perception had discouraged some diverse staff from applying for new roles.

¹ Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2018: <http://hr.qmul.ac.uk/media/hr/docs/EDI-Annual-Report-2018.pdf>

During the review it was unclear what steps Queen Mary had been taking to widen the reach of its talent pool and actively target underrepresented groups. There was a perception from staff that a wider range of advertising channels could be leveraged in order to attract the most diverse candidates, particularly for PS appointments.

Although Queen Mary tracks the diversity of applicants, there are issues with data quality due to system constraints. Without robust data on the diversity of those who are shortlisted or invited to interview and those who join the organisation, it is not possible to ascertain 1) how diverse or representative the existing pool of candidates is; or 2) whether certain demographics are disproportionately more or less likely to be successful during the process.

During the review it was noted that the EDI homepage of Queen Mary's external website was not as vibrant or informative as it could be. This may have impacted external perceptions of EDI with implications for talent attraction. An 'event page' was referenced for example, but with no linked events, raising questions about Queen Mary's internal EDI activity. Although the LGBT+ staff network was signposted, this highlighted the absence of networks for other protected groups.

At the time of the review work was also needed to enhance Queen Mary's EDI strapline. This process has now been commenced in conjunction with the communications team, and job packs are being updated. As part of this, Queen Mary's EDI strapline on job descriptions has been reviewed and improved and will feature in new packs. Additionally, the new institutional KPI will enable the organisation to focus language in job packs and adverts. Moving forward, diverse candidates will be expressly invited to apply to address underrepresentation.

Candidate selection

Queen Mary is taking steps to mitigate bias during the recruitment process. Recruitment and unconscious bias training is mandatory prior to individuals participating on panels. Guidelines are also in place to ensure male/female gender diversity on interview panels. The code stipulates a formal condition in relation to binary gender diversity, but panellists are encouraged to consider other protected characteristics, taking steps to mitigate homogeneity by '*constituting as diverse a panel as is possible and practicable*.' Encouragingly, some schools appear to have built on this expectation, implementing additional stipulations with regard to panel composition, mandating ethnic diversity, external representation and, in some cases, academic and PS representation.

Queen Mary will be piloting an 'equal merit scheme' for the appointment of academic and professional services roles in a specific school. This approach is in line with the Equal Merit Provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and involves taking a positive action approach to new appointments. This is considered to be best practice in other organisations.

At the time of the review a centralised recruitment policy did not appear to be in place, and approaches to candidate selection appeared to differ across schools and departments. Concerns were raised about potential bias in local recruitment. Qualitative insights pointed to a lack of transparency in the appointment of new roles and several examples were shared in relation to both academic and PS appointments during which a preferred candidate had purportedly been earmarked for a job, even before interviews had commenced.

In certain schools, academic staff commented on the '*subjectivity of decision-making processes*' and the absence of formal selection criteria or decision-making guidelines. Not only was this considered to allow a high chance of bias, it was also thought to exacerbate the possible impact of internal politics or power dynamics within a specific school or department.

Accounts of '*nepotistic*' hiring or '*favouritism*' were also given in relation to specific departments. In these cases less qualified staff were perceived to have been appointed on account of existing relationships with hiring managers. Staff in interviews and focus groups demonstrated frustration at this practice, suggesting that it was '*demotivating*' and '*depressing*' and was the cause of resentment across teams. This was also cited by minority PS staff as a reason for employees leaving the institution - with staff perceiving the system to be unfair - or not knowing how to get ahead.

A lack of provisions set up to support new hires from diverse backgrounds was also observed. In order for diverse appointments to flourish, managers must be equipped with understanding and training on how to manage diverse teams. This was not considered to be in place at the time of the review. It was also noted that minorities would benefit from support structures including mentoring, development programmes and networks. These were considered to be absent for the most part.

Encouragingly, since the time of the review, Queen Mary has developed and rolled out a new recruitment policy designed to facilitate a consistent approach across the institution. If effectively enforced, this should help to mitigate the chance of bias during local recruitment.

Additional measures to support diverse hires are also being shaped. A bespoke training programme for leaders and people managers is planned to ensure they lead inclusively and are equipped to manage diverse teams. The launch of new staff networks and a centralised EDI programme of events and activities will also provide support and engagement for diverse hires.

A positive action proposal has been developed and agreed by the EDI Steering Group (EDISG) and is being taken to SET for formal sign off.

A review is currently taking place of induction processes with a core focus on EDI.

Recommendations

1. A more rigorous approach should be introduced to monitor recruitment data, capturing and analysing the diversity of applicants at all stages of the process. Data analysis is currently undertaken, but investment is needed to update systems and improve the quality of insights. This will enable Queen Mary to assess whether certain demographics are disproportionately more or less likely to be successful during various stages of the process. Data should be used at school/departmental level to shape tailored recruitment approaches.
2. Hiring managers should be held to account for any breaches in approach and deviation from the recruitment policy and guidelines.
3. Given the range of hiring needs across the institution, multiple recruitment channels are likely to be required to maximise impact. Hiring managers should consider using diverse recruitment websites/networks and advertising roles across a broad range of platforms, websites or forums visited by underrepresented groups or dedicated to minorities. Advertising across multiple platforms will help Queen Mary reach the widest pool of candidates.
4. Blind recruitment is considered to be an effective mechanism through which to eliminate bias in the screening/shortlisting phase. Conduct a blind recruitment pilot in a specific school, taking steps to harness learnings and disseminate across the institution. Signposting this inclusive approach at the point of vacancy advertising may help attract diverse applicants. Given Queen Mary's need to review academic published work and metrics, it is recognised that a blind recruitment may not be practical for academic appointments.
5. Pay careful attention to the language and composition of job descriptions. Hiring managers may wish to test the linguistic gender-coding of job specifications using the gender decoder tool: <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/> for example. This can help to ensure that descriptions are gender neutral or that they actively encourage underrepresented genders as appropriate for specific roles.
6. Work with executive recruitment agencies that specialise in diverse appointments, particularly for senior roles. The desire for a diverse pool must be clearly communicated, reinforced and prioritised over cost or time to hire. When selecting agencies, ask them to demonstrate their track record in diverse appointments and their internal approach to embedding EDI.
7. Develop a candidate feedback mechanism (such as a candidate survey) to assess applicant experiences, helping to understand what attracts talent and how current processes, brand and

culture are perceived. Cross-referencing candidate experiences with diversity data can provide insights into bias or potential discriminatory practices.

8. Enhance external EDI webpages. A range of EDI-related activities, events, role models and articles/blogs should be showcased. As part of this effort, consider creating a short video dedicated to EDI outlining the institution's vision, commitment and EDI activities. This could include insights from the Principal and/or other senior executives, Council members, staff across the organisation and network representatives and would effectively showcase diverse role models.
9. Shape a clearly defined process through which staff can signpost recruitment practices that are deemed to be unfair or biased. This should be outlined as part of the recruitment training and should also be clearly signposted on recruitment policies and associated webpages.
10. Implement the following to mitigate bias in candidate selection:
 - a. Ahead of sitting on panels, staff should indicate that they have completed required training or refresher courses. Robust checkpoints should be put in place to ensure this happens consistently. This may require the support of a quality Learning Management System;
 - b. Ensure there is a common understanding of selection criteria and what to look for in candidates for specific roles. This should include clear instructions on how to submit candidate feedback and avoid bias in the language of evaluation;
 - c. Create a checklist of inclusive recruitment reminders or 'bias checks' to be disseminated ahead of any panel. Ideally, the chair would run through this checklist with panellists ahead of interviews, to ensure full engagement and alignment; or
 - d. Ensure that awareness of the impact of unconscious bias during interviews is promoted throughout the process. Panellists should be encouraged to challenge and call out bias.

Informal working practices

The overall inclusivity of Queen Mary's workplace culture is complex to assess. The review indicated considerable cultural variation across different schools and departments, with staff sharing different experiences and perceptions of culture within their respective divisions. This is largely down to differences in demographic representation and the subsequent perceived visibility of role models; variation in the shaping and implementation of policies and practices; localised leadership; and the absence of a well-embedded EDI strategy, action plan and programme of EDI activities delivered at an institutional level.

The upside of this is that schools and departments have autonomy to shape an independent approach to EDI according to their needs. Some schools appear to be quite proactive, taking steps to embed EDI through inclusive policies and practices. On the flip side, not all schools and departments seem to prioritise EDI with equal measure; in some cases there appears to be little sustained EDI engagement, or it is considered to be a 'box ticking' exercise. This significant variation in perceived culture is further evidenced in responses to the staff survey with notable variation across schools in response to EDI-related questions. For example, school-level perceptions around whether 'Queen Mary values equality, diversity and inclusion' ranged between 15-100%.

Community engagement

During the review staff commented on the absence of a centralised EDI programme to celebrate minority or diverse identities or recognise EDI awareness days and festivals. This lack of activity and investment had led many staff to infer that EDI was not being prioritised by the institution. Since the time of review it is therefore encouraging to see that plans are now underway to launch

a centralised EDI programme including a series of events, workshops and panel discussions on EDI-related topics. Specifically, the EDISG has approved plans to deliver a monthly event in support of one major EDI-related activity or festival, such as Black History Month and LGBT+ History Month. The institution has also recognised a need to proactively provide information about religious events that are widely celebrated by staff and students such as Ramadan and Eid. The launch of this institutionally-led programme should demonstrate sustained engagement, dialogue and action around EDI, promoting awareness, understanding and inclusive behaviours across the staff and student base, as well as engaging with protected groups.

During the review staff insights highlighted the value of networks, both formal and informal. LGBT+ staff in particular spoke positively about QMOut, the staff LGBT+ network, reporting that it had organically improved the culture at Queen Mary by enhancing the experience, visibility and connectivity of LGBT+ staff (and students). Female, BAME, disabled and PS staff all commented on the value that a well-managed network could bring, providing peer-connectivity, access to resources, signposting of development opportunities, sharing of case studies on career progression, channels to provide feedback to the organisation, as well as a platform to showcase role models.

With the exception of the LGBT+ network, equivalent networks for other protected groups were absent during the time of the review. It is therefore encouraging that Queen Mary is already seeking resource to introduce additional employee networks (with executive level support and allocated budgets) to engage with, support, and celebrate other underrepresented groups. The UCU BAME group has requested that a BAME network should be established, and plans are underway to bring this into fruition. Queen Mary intends to expand these to other protected groups including a women's group first and foremost and a network for disabled staff in the future.

Role modelling and the importance and impact of seeing oneself represented came out strongly in the review. Staff with access to visible role models with whom they could identify suggested it was a powerful motivator, instilled a sense of belonging and helped build confidence and appetite to progress. Minority staff (identifying as BAME, female or LGBT+) reflected that seeing people with whom they could identify in senior positions was 'encouraging', 'inspiring' and gave them something '*to aspire towards.*' However, the majority of staff providing qualitative insights reflected on the *absence* of relatable role models, with many suggesting that this had had a negative impact on their overall experience at Queen Mary. Staff commented that they felt '*unrepresented*' and were uncertain whether they would have meaningful opportunities to progress.

The absence of perceived role models was further evidenced in the staff survey, with just 35% of respondents agreeing/strongly agreeing that Queen Mary had visible, senior role models with whom they could identify. Research shows that there is a strong positive correlation between role model visibility and talent acquisition, motivation and retention; and, as such, it is often seen as one of the most effective interventions for success within an organisation.² Visible role models, particularly in leadership or positions of influence, have a keen impact on culture. Ensuring that there are visible role models from minority groups, reflecting multiple intersections and identities, is therefore vital. With just 35% of survey respondents positively citing the presence of visible role models across the institution, there is significant room for improvement.

Since undertaking the review, the LGBT+ network has taken steps to develop a role model campaign. This is very positive and the promotion and continued visibility of role models should be a priority for the institution. Queen Mary should build on the work of the LGBT+ network in order to celebrate and showcase intersectional talent and identities from other protected groups.

Culture

² Getting the Most from your Diversity Dollars,' BCG (2017)

An important indicator for cultural inclusion is the extent to which employees feel respected, heard and encouraged to participate. It is encouraging, therefore, to see the majority of staff survey respondents feeding back positively in this respect and indicating positive perceptions of workplace culture: 78% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that co-workers generally treat each other with respect; and 70% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that their manager respects and encourages varied viewpoints.

Another indicator of workplace culture relates to perceived instances of bullying and/or harassment. During interviews, workshops and focus groups staff reported accounts of bullying and/or harassment at school or departmental level. Whilst this was by no means apparent in every school or department, the concentration of accounts in relation to specific departments indicated that there were likely to be some hotspots that require further attention.

Queen Mary promotes a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of behaviour that might violate the dignity of others. Although 66% of staff survey respondents answered positively that they had *not* witnessed bullying or harassment in the last 12 months, this raises questions about the experiences of the other 34%. The frequency of perceived instances of bullying and/or harassment, both direct and witnessed, should therefore be a cause for concern for the institution.

In departments where bullying and/or harassment appeared to be frequently observed, staff displayed a general anxiety about speaking out or challenging the status quo. Concerns about being '*labelled part of the problem*' and/or facing negative repercussions that could affect their career were reported. Several examples were shared in which minority staff (particularly women and BAME women) had raised concerns about bullying with negative consequences.

Perceived fear or anxiety around speaking out was also expressed in relation to the staff survey. Some staff members (the majority of whom were BAME women) stated that they felt there was a risk of being identified through the process, and, had therefore felt unable to respond openly or honestly. Other staff members suggested that concerns around anonymity had prevented them from completing the survey altogether. That a fear of identification should have prevented some employees, in different parts of the organisation, from completing an anonymous survey - delivered, coordinated and analysed by an independent third party - is a cause for concern. Surveys and staff engagement activities should be perceived as an integral and ongoing way of understanding and improving the workplace, not a means for retribution.

Whilst the admission that some staff felt unable to complete the survey openly and honestly raises questions about the potential integrity of survey responses, that some staff omitted to complete it altogether also raises questions about overall participation. 2,448 employees responded to the survey, accounting for 58% of the staff population at the time of surveying. In order to overcome non-response bias, a response rate of 50% is considered the minimum for opinion research. Whilst Queen Mary succeeded in meeting this response threshold, there is much room to improve engagement across the employee base.³

In addition to shared anxieties about speaking out across the organisation, a number of staff stated that they would not consider using formal reporting channels to address issues or call out what they considered to be malpractice. This came up consistently in focus groups, interviews and a number of workshops.

This sentiment was further reflected in the staff survey. Whilst 51% of respondents felt confident that reported instances of discrimination and/or harassment would be taken seriously, 49% of respondents did not answer positively, suggesting a widespread lack of confidence in Queen Mary's reporting mechanisms. Qualitative insights indicated a shared mistrust of HR and an overall lack of confidence in grievance and reporting procedures. Many staff suggested that they would

³ There are many reasons why staff may not have completed the staff survey. Whilst some staff raised concerns about anonymity, others suggested that they felt the exercise was '*pointless*'; having engaged in similar activities in the past and not observing discernible change or action as a result. Other reasons for non-completion included timing (survey dissemination intersected with summer holidays for some staff); survey saturation (some staff had undertaken something similar at school/departmental level); some staff suggested that school-level leaders had failed to promote internally; as well as a general lack of engagement from staff and lack of interest in EDI.

not raise a formal complaint as they did not feel that it would be dealt with effectively. In some cases, staff felt that making a formal report would make matters worse. Examples were shared in which staff who had reported in the past had not felt supported by HR and that, in a number of cases, issues had been exacerbated (perpetuating bullying or negative behaviours). Concerns were also raised about the impartiality of the process and the capability of representatives serving on grievance panels to deal with complex issues (such as sexual misconduct). The absence of informal reporting mechanisms was also apparent.

Since undertaking the review Queen Mary has recognised the need to strengthen reporting processes and is already taking steps to enhance its capacity for mediation. Training is taking place in January 2020 and Queen Mary has joined a network of mediators from a range of other HEIs. This will maximise capacity as well as help to ensure full independence of mediators. The institution is also reviewing its grievance policy which has been revised to emphasise informal resolution. A draft is being shared with SET in early 2020. To strengthen trust and build confidence in the system, Queen Mary may wish to consider an external audit of the grievance procedure.

The presence of microaggressions also emerged during the review. In interviews, focus groups and some workshops, staff reported exposure to unwelcome, discriminatory comments, sometimes coming from line managers or people in position of influence, the upshot of which had led them to feel unwelcome, alienated, and, on occasion, invalidated. Several of these examples had racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic undertones.

Microaggressive behaviours can compromise a sense of integration, productivity and staff engagement. In some cases, staff reported experiencing negative impacts on their mental health. For many PS staff, these experiences were exacerbated by a perceived hierarchy between academic and PS staff. Numerous examples were shared in which PS staff felt they had been disrespected, *'talked down to'* or *'undermined'* by academic colleagues, leaving them feeling *'deflated'*, *'demoralised'* and disengaged. Facing these sorts of behaviours can be particularly damaging for people with one or more protected characteristics.

Encouragingly, since undertaking the review, Queen Mary has taken a number of steps to reduce the incidence of bullying, harassment and negative behaviours at an institutional level. Bold new EDI training programmes designed to challenge ways of thinking, cultural norms, conscious and unconscious bias and drive behaviour change have been developed and are now being piloted. Training includes a mandatory introduction to EDI for all staff, inclusive leadership training for leaders and line managers, a session titled *'Talking About Race'* (including content on understanding and mitigating microaggressions), trans awareness training and disability awareness training. The institution intends to introduce LGBT+ awareness training at a later date. These new training programmes should provide a strong foundation to inform staff and set the tone for inclusion across the institution.

The development of a *'Ways of Working'* behavioural framework, being rolled out in 2020, should also encourage positive ways of working and drive behavioural change, strengthening working relationships across the institution. It is intended that the framework be embedded across the full employment lifecycle (including recruitment, probation, promotion and reward) and will help strengthen working relationships between all staff as well as reduce perceived hierarchy between academic and PS roles.

Queen Mary has also recognised the need to refresh and innovate reporting channels. An online anonymous disclosure channel, *'Report and Support'*, which allows staff to disclose incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct or hate crime was launched in 2019 and has now been rolled out across the institution. Moving forward, Queen Mary will take steps to drive transparency, by publishing high-level data from the tool as part of its EDI annual report.

Additionally, to help respond effectively to complaints of bullying and harassment, work to launch the Dignity Disclosure Officer network has been prioritised. At the time of the review, training for Dignity Disclosure Officers (DDOs) did not appear to have been completed. Few staff appeared to be aware of the programme, suggesting that it had not been well signposted. Those that were

aware of the scheme voiced concerns about the approach and there were doubts about how volunteers (rather than trained professionals) would be effectively trained to deal with sensitive, complex - and in some cases - legal issues.

Since undertaking the review, a second campaign to recruit DDOs has taken place and DDOs are now being trained in a range of skills including EDI awareness as well as the new Report and Support system. Role descriptions have been developed to clarify expectations of the position and signpost relevant opportunities. This is welcome progress, but there are some questions about the sustainability of the DDO role. Supporting victims of harassment or bullying may be tiring and require emotional labour. Queen Mary should consider how it plans to support staff undertaking these roles.

Given the variation of perceived culture across schools and departments, further work is being undertaken at school-level. Staff survey data is being used to inform local action plans to address any key themes identified. The survey captured insights around a number of themes, including EDI, so departments have a robust base of information from which to explore and enhance their culture and practices. Establishing an inclusive culture across the institution, without exception, is important for Queen Mary, so this local level investigation is much needed.

Lastly, Queen Mary is working with an external consultant to develop a framework for a bullying and harassment conference to take place in 2020. Hosted by Queen Mary, the conference will include a range of external speakers, and colleagues from across the sector will be invited to attend. This inter-institution approach will provide a forum to share best practice and identify innovative approaches to mitigate harassment.

Recommendations

1. Launch an internal role modelling campaign, showcasing diverse and intersectional talent at all levels of the organisation. Ensuring this campaign is visible on the external website (on EDI pages and linked to recruitment/careers pages) will help demonstrate the diversity of Queen Mary's workforce to potential candidates.
2. It is encouraging that additional staff networks are being launched for protected groups. Any new or existing staff network appointments (chairs, coordinators and committee members) should be given appropriate time allocations and recognition for additional work undertaken. Appropriate space and budget should also be provided.
3. School-level EDI focus groups or workshops should be undertaken to inform school and departmental-level action plans. Insights would be used in addition to existing survey data to shape local-level inclusion action plans with clearly defined deliverables, lines of accountability and timelines. As well as identifying areas for improvement and hotspots for bullying, this approach would highlight EDI best practice to be disseminated across the organisation.
4. To counter bullying in the long-term, the institution must have robust, effective and monitored policies in place, that are centrally implemented. Whilst policies exist, to be effective they must include mechanisms for detecting, recording, reporting and dealing with policy breaches, and that the institution as a whole take proactive action in holding people to account.
5. Develop team-based programmes on 'successful ways of working together' to encourage collaborative working between academic and PS staff at a local level. This has been successfully piloted by a department at Queen Mary. The piloted programme informed participants about the benefits of mutual respect and took place at an off-site setting to encourage teambuilding, camaraderie and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Departments with perceived incidents of bullying/harassment (evidenced through the staff survey or complaints to HR), are encouraged to adopt a similar approach.
6. Launch an institution-wide microaggression campaign to challenge stereotypical ways of thinking and to mitigate everyday instances of biased language and behaviours. Digital media

or poster campaigns can be effective, resource-efficient ways to raise awareness of staff (and students). Leveraging multiple, simultaneous channels will help to maximise reach and impact. It is recommended that a microaggression awareness campaign be delivered at an institutional level exploring experiences of minority and protected groups and intersecting themes.⁴

7. Follow the example of other academic institutions who are making complaints processes more transparent by publishing anonymous data, annually, on the number of cases filed, the proportion that were upheld, the proportion that were rejected and the resultant outcomes or actions taken. Reporting in this way would drive transparency, demonstrating that a clear system is in place and that action is taken when needed, building staff confidence and encouraging staff to engage with the system should they need to.
8. Build on Queen Mary's emerging EDI programme with the following:
 - a. Lead EDI best practice workshops, inviting external stakeholders to share best practice approaches and insights;
 - b. Launch internal 'EDI awards' or celebrations to recognise EDI best practice, achievements or innovative projects across the institution; and
 - c. Recognise, integrate and learn from the breadth of EDI-related research that is underway across the institution. There is some excellent work in motion, but it does not appear to be signposted or joined up at a central level. Harnessing these efforts – as an institution – has the potential to uncover innovative approaches to EDI that the university can pioneer as well as set the organisation apart as an EDI thought leader. Queen Mary may wish to consider launching an 'EDI Unit' to oversee this effort, led by the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion in collaboration with the EDI team and the EDISG.

EDI infrastructure

Data management

Responses to the HR review indicated that a consistent approach to tracking diversity data across the institution was lacking. Limitations in existing systems and integration capability, together with a lack of investment to innovate and update these systems have significantly hampered Queen Mary's ability to identify and analyse trends (particularly in relation to potential discrimination or structural bias) and measure progress.

The lack of clean and consistent centralised data has made it difficult for staff to extract relevant insights at school or departmental level. As a result, schools/departments have adopted their own approach to data management, with what appears to be varying levels of success.

During the review it was evident that the lack of robust, easily accessible, centralised data had been a source of frustration to staff across the institution, particularly those who had been involved in EDI activities. Staff also reflected on the fact that issues related to data management fell disproportionately on PS staff. A lack of available resource to support data analysis was consistently reported.

Since the review Queen Mary has recognised the need for more support with data analysis and will soon be recruiting a dedicated EDI Data Analyst. This role should enable the institution to

⁴ For some examples of microaggression awareness campaigns, see the following:

- Inclusion starts with I: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2g88Ju6nkcg>
- An everyday dimension of racism: Why we need to understand microaggressions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCBJZQrqXG0>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/a6eb506f-e176-42f9-bbfb-eab207df430b>
- #Whatsmicroaggression

garner rich and ongoing insights about EDI performance and progress as well as support accreditation work.

Additionally, and in connection with work underway for Athena SWAN, Queen Mary has developed a dashboard using Power BI to make quantitative analysis more accessible and more consistent across submissions. The dashboards are available across all faculties to assist with local departmental submissions. Continued refinements and improvements are underway to ensure that the Power BI tool provides as much useful data as possible, in an accessible form. A data group has also been established to facilitate ongoing discussion and refinement of data provision.

More broadly, the institution continues to innovate, update and centralise approaches to data management and is developing an integrated system that will make possible the consistent capturing, analysis and reporting of data across the institution.

Policies procedures and practices

During the review positive examples were identified in which schools, departments and faculties had implemented progressive policies or practices designed to promote EDI. Particular examples shared included trans-inclusive practices, initiatives to support female academics returning from maternity leave (relieving them of teaching duties for one or more terms in order to focus on research), funds to support childcare whilst travelling to conferences as well as policy evolutions around women's health, fertility and equal parental leave. Some successful initiatives piloted at faculty level, such as fertility and menopause policies, had been recognised as best practice and were being rolled out across the institution. Moving forwards, Queen Mary should look to identify and share more of this local-level best practice.

In spite of EDI policies being in place, a lack of consistency around policy application across departments was apparent in the review. This was felt to be unfair and inequitable and had led to resentment and discontent amongst staff. A lack of clarity and frustration around flexible working came up as a particular point of contention. Whilst academic staff appeared to have the freedom to work flexibly, this did not appear to be the case for many PS staff, some of whom had been informed categorically that flexible working would not be available in their department, in spite of the policy statement '*any Queen Mary employee can apply to work flexibly by requesting a change to their contract.*' This was thought to disproportionately and negatively affect women in PS roles who tended to have responsibility for childcare or other caring responsibilities.

Insights from focus groups highlighted the need for specific policies designed to support and empower minority groups. In particular, a lack of clarity around policies and practices to support staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions was cited. The need for comprehensive trans-inclusive policies was also apparent.

The perceived need for better and more effective policies was also evidenced in the staff survey, with just 36% of respondents agreeing that there were '*effective policies in place to support [them] if [they] experience stress or pressure.*' A lack of general awareness of policies was indicated in the review. This may have contributed to this perception; staff who are unaware of existing policies are unlikely to feel supported. Additionally, a lack of confidence in the formal grievance processes, the absence of informal reporting and conflict resolution channels, as well as a general mistrust of HR, are likely to be other contributing factors.

Since the review work has taken place to improve the visibility and accessibility of EDI policies which are now clearly posted on the website. Queen Mary has also been taking steps to refresh and modernise EDI-related procedures and practices. In particular, an action plan has been shaped to embed trans inclusion. As part of this process, a trans policy has been launched together with a campaign on pronouns. Work is currently in progress to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is in place to support transition, including IT systems, gender-neutral language in communications and the provision of gender-neutral toilets. Additionally, trans-awareness training is being rolled out for front line staff and managers.

Training

The review identified a need for consistent, robust and mandatory EDI training, delivered at an institutional level. This was evidenced in the HR review as well as qualitative insights from staff in workshops, interviews and focus groups. During these sessions staff shared instances of racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, biphobic and biased language, assumptions and behaviours, some of which appeared to be quite commonplace across the institution.

It is therefore encouraging that a new suite of training is being developed and piloted. This will be rolled out to all new starters in the first instance, and more widely across existing staff in the longer term. In addition to the core programme, Queen Mary is prioritising refreshing and relaunching its unconscious bias offering, inclusive leadership, active bystander and trans awareness training. A longer-term programme encompassing a broader range of protected characteristics is also being planned, with bespoke training for leaders and people managers.

Accreditation

Queen Mary has been awarded an Institutional Silver for Athena SWAN, benefiting external reputation and funding. However, during the review, scepticism was expressed in relation to the overall impact and success of the programme. Staff across the institution felt that the '*motive*' or '*intention*' for pursuing AS was flawed, and that achieving an 'award' appeared to supersede any substantive or long-term commitment to gender equality or equality in more general terms. In some cases, this had led to cynicism from staff who questioned Queen Mary's commitment to EDI.

The lack of a clear EDI strategy designed to embed gender equality (together with other diversity strands and intersectional themes), further perpetuated this view, with a great deal of AS-related effort and activity taking place across the institution, but without a clear, centralised or joined-up approach. It also appeared that AS work undertaken at an institutional level had not been appropriately prioritised or sustained, with GESAT being dissolved and then reinstated in order to meet submission deadlines.

There was a shared perception, primarily from women, that AS work was not having the desired impact on culture for women. There was unanimous recognition of the burden of work required to put forward a submission. Some women reported how they had been '*warned off*' getting involved with AS committees because of the volume of work and associated lack of recognition. Ironically, there was recognition that the work required to undertake AS tended to fall most consistently on the female staff that the charter is designed to help.

In some cases, women reported that the obtaining of an AS award had actively '*masked*' gender inequalities, thereby enabling inequitable behaviours and structures to be maintained.

A particular feeling of dissonance and discomfort was observed in women who had held active or leadership roles on AS committees. In these cases women reported feeling conflicted: on the one hand, they recognised that their working contexts were not fully progressive or inclusive for women; on the other hand, they felt a keen pressure from leaders and/or school heads to deliver on AS and achieve an award.

During the review, the majority of EDI resource appeared to be AS-related (or with some expectation to support AS objectives). As such, AS appeared to be the primary vehicle for driving and embedding EDI across the institution. This was evident in roles assigned at school or departmental level, as well as centralised EDI resource. AS alone, however, is no substitute for a comprehensive EDI strategy. The level of resource applied to AS (in comparison to other, broader or more 'foundational' EDI activities) should be carefully considered.

Intersectionality is vital to understanding inequality and it is not clear, at this stage, the extent to which AS-related work at Queen Mary is successfully integrating intersectional themes and considerations. During the review it was clear that AS was widely perceived to be an initiative designed to support the progression of women – particularly those in academic roles. Many PS staff felt that their progression was not actively considered as part of AS, and that the programme fell short in promoting gender equality in the broadest sense.

In some schools, the exclusive focus on AS was perceived to be detrimental to other minority groups. For example, some BAME men raised concerns about the lack of support mechanisms and development opportunities designed to drive BAME progression.

Lastly, there is a risk that framing gender (in)equality in terms of 'parity' between women and men can erase the experiences of non-binary, genderqueer and/or intersex staff and students. AS submissions frequently use binary language to discuss gender inequality, thereby failing to account for how individuals who do not identify as women or men might experience marginalisation. Queen Mary should give consideration to this for future submissions.

Other accreditation schemes have also been undertaken, namely Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. The Race Equality Charter has also been considered. It is recognised that these schemes can provide a useful framework for progress, but there is a risk that resources get sucked into submission work, without first laying the necessary foundations required to embed sustainable EDI practices in the long-term.

Recommendations

1. Continue to innovate and integrate Queen Mary's data management systems. The institution should have a clear view of the proportion of grievances filed that relate to diversity matters and protected characteristics. Diversity data related to training, promotion and re-grading should be regularly assessed and reported on. It is encouraging that some of this work is underway, but it is important that it be maintained and completed with necessary and ongoing investment.
2. Ensure there are formal and regular touchpoints for protected groups to engage with Queen Mary, informing race, disability, gender and LGBT+ best practice. Forums should facilitate staff consultation to develop and test policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and appropriately serve minority groups. If launched, BAME, women's and disability networks could provide effective channels for this sort of engagement.
3. There is a particular need to shape and signpost policies and practices to support Queen Mary's disabled workforce. The institution should consider the following:
 - a. Open up the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to staff. There is already some excellent work happening to support students, much of which could be used to support staff directly as well as inform line managers.
 - b. Appoint and signpost a dedicated point of contact to lead on engagement with disabled staff. This would be the 'go to' person who can advise on policies, reasonable adjustments, community engagement and any other provisions in place to support disabled staff or staff with disabled dependants. This role might naturally sit within the DDS. If this were to be the case, it would need to be resourced accordingly.
 - c. Create a webpage listing all relevant support and services for disabled staff, clearly defining how to access support and necessary next steps. This should be signposted to disabled people as well as line managers to drive awareness and encourage disabled staff to access existing support mechanisms.
 - d. Implement a policy to enable disabled academics returning from long-term sick leave to take teaching sabbaticals, relieving them of teaching duties to enable them to focus on research. This has been proven to be an effective approach for returning academics who have taken extended periods of maternity leave or other career breaks.
 - e. Continue to improve facility access across campuses. Improved signage, better reliable lift access and consistent lighting have been cited as key areas for attention.
4. It is important for any accreditation work to be superseded by strong EDI foundations and a comprehensive institutional EDI strategy. Much of this work is already underway, and continued attention and investment should be given to EDI data management, training, policy development and Queen Mary's emerging EDI programme of events and activities to provide a solid bedrock for accreditation work.

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5. In addition to existing resources for AS, appropriate resource should be put in place to support the submission processes for Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index and/or the Race Equality Charter if undertaken.

Development

Identifying and nurturing talent

Queen Mary has some programmes in place designed to support the development of women and BAME staff, including Aurora and Springboard leadership programmes (for women), and the B-Mentor scheme (for BAME staff). During the review, staff who participated in these programmes talked positively about their experiences, reflecting that they had '*boosted confidence*,' enhanced leadership skills and, in some cases, provided '*clarity of thought*' around personal ambitions, career direction and development plans. In addition to learning and having time out to reflect on their career and development, staff appreciated the networking opportunity, commenting on the value of connecting and sharing experiences with others across the institution or, in the case of B-Mentor, expanding their network externally.

Some staff suggested that attending these programmes would likely support their career development in the future, but no one was able to share examples of how they had already progressed as a result of taking part.

Whilst a number of female staff spoke positively about their experiences of Aurora or Springboard, there was a sense that spaces on these programmes were limited or inaccessible. Staff also acknowledged issues with B-Mentor, stating that it was difficult to get on the programme, that it did not appear to be well managed and that the lack of BAME senior mentors (both at Queen Mary and other institutions), meant that opportunities were limited.

Additionally, the HR review suggested that the impact of these leadership programmes was not measured. A consequence of this is that there is no tangible way to assess whether these programmes are supporting the desired outcomes or driving return on investment.

The HR review also indicated that Queen Mary's talent pipeline is not assessed for diversity. If the institution is to embrace and nurture its internal talent, it is important that this talent is first identified, then developed and harnessed. The lack of current diverse representation at senior levels, particularly with respect to female and BAME staff (across academia and PS), should encourage Queen Mary to take a more proactive approach to shaping and investing in its diverse talent pipeline.

In all focus groups, minority staff (female, BAME, disabled and LGBT+) commented that the lack of diversity and role models in senior positions had negatively impacted career expectations.

In focus groups, disabled staff commented on the absence of development opportunities designed to shape Queen Mary's disabled talent pipeline. Given that programmes were in place for other protected groups (women and BAME staff), this was not considered to be fair. There was also a shared recognition that it can be harder for disabled staff to take on the sort of extra work and responsibilities that are typically considered in support of promotions, thereby disadvantaging their careers and opportunities to progress. Disabled staff commented that they would very much value a mentoring programme or other development opportunities, particularly if time could be formally set aside to undertake these activities.

This need to support the development potential of disabled staff in particular was also reflected in the staff survey, with positive responses from disabled staff to the majority of 'development' questions, scoring statistically significantly lower than the university overall.

More broadly, a number of staff reported that line managers across the institution did not appear to be actively engaged in developing their direct reports. This was the cause of frustration to some staff, particularly those in PS roles. To get the most out of staff, all managers should be proactively discussing development opportunities with direct reports. There was a further

perception that line managers were not always equipped to have difficult conversations about performance or development opportunities. Staff also recognised that more investment was required to bolster organisational development and enhance the capability of people managers to effectively lead and develop their teams.

Promotions

Although the new academic promotions guidelines were a point of contention for some during the review, others felt that they had brought clear benefits, especially in relation to EDI. The inclusion of the Faculty Academic Lead for EDI on faculty promotions panels, with the objective of calling out bias and assessing the inclusivity of the process, was particularly welcome. The presence of someone 'external' to the school or faculty was also valued, helping to bring new perspectives and/or recognising a breadth of work that was not necessarily acknowledged internally.

Staff, particularly women and BAME women, who had identified strong role models within their respective school or department, generally spoke more positively about opportunities to progress. In these cases the visibility of female or BAME role models or strong mentors was valued, positively impacting staff engagement as well as long-term career aspirations.

Insights from staff focus groups suggested that many minority staff did not feel that opportunities to progress were fair at Queen Mary. BAME females in particular suggested that the '*bar [was] higher*' for BAME staff, and although the process for academic promotions was deemed to be largely transparent, this was not considered to be the case for people of colour, who commented on '*goal posts changing*', an '*invisible bar*' and '*different standards*' compared with white counterparts.

PS staff across the institution also reported a lack of perceived opportunities to progress and felt that paths for PS promotion were unclear. PS staff also commented on the absence of PS networking opportunities. A number of people, particularly women and BAME staff, reported feeling '*stuck*' in a particular role, without clarity on how to progress. Some commented on the value of secondments or '*sideways steps*' that had helped them to widen experience or move up the ladder. However, there was a general lack of awareness of this kind of approach and staff felt it would be beneficial to share case studies outlining progressive steps that PS staff had taken.

Significant variation in school, institute and departmental-level approaches to promotions and progression were noted. In some cases, biased practices had been observed, with influential people actively supporting or discouraging certain people to apply. In other parts of the institution where school leaders had demonstrated a commitment to EDI and had embedded inclusive processes in their departments, certain dynamics, behaviours and trends were observed that had implicitly encouraged less-diverse candidates to apply, whilst simultaneously deterring potential minority candidates. One leader described a situation in which a candidate of equal merit, who happened to be Black and female, had been implicitly discouraged from applying for a promotion; she was 'less certain of herself' and when informed that there were others in the running for the promotion, and that there wasn't certainty she would get the role, this was sufficient to deter her from applying. Her white, male counterparts, on the other hand, felt encouraged to submit applications even though they were told the same thing.

Shared perceptions of 'nepotistic promotions' were also highlighted in the women's and disabled focus groups.

Recommendations

1. Additional work is needed to embed diversity within Queen Mary's talent management strategy. In particular, line managers should be encouraged to identify diverse staff with managerial and leadership potential, and directly engage in proactive conversations with those staff during performance appraisals. Queen Mary should analyse progression data for diverse staff, and BAME staff in particular.

2. Where possible, existing development and mentoring programmes, such as B-Mentor, should be expanded to maximise capacity and reach. Opportunities for both academic and PS staff should be clearly signposted. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives will enhance Queen Mary's internal and external reputation. Steps should be taken to carefully monitor and evaluate the success of existing programmes, capturing data on subsequent promotions (and the number of promotions applied for), impact on participant confidence, likelihood to apply for promotions as well as feedback and ratings from participants.
3. There is an opportunity for Queen Mary to further engage and develop its disabled staff population through a mentoring scheme or a leadership programme. This could be an effective empowerment tool, providing opportunities for disabled staff to develop their skills as well as encourage them to pursue further career opportunities. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives could enhance Queen Mary's reputation when it comes to disability awareness, encouraging existing disabled staff to disclose disabilities whilst helping to attract new disabled talent into the organisation.
4. Give careful consideration to the way line managers are selected, developed and managed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are able to perform their role effectively. Specific and additional training in line management, communications and inclusive leadership may be required to ensure people managers are effective and can get the most out of diverse teams.
5. Consider how best to shape pathways for PS promotions and career development. This might entail opening up development/leadership programmes explicitly for PS staff; proactively promoting opportunities for lateral development (such as secondments or cross-departmental projects); showcasing PS role models who can discuss career progression; convening workshops to promote interview skills and/or enhance CVs; or setting up networking opportunities to enable PS staff to connect, provide informal mentoring and share approaches to career development. Collaborating with existing and future employee networks (such as QMOut or institutional networks for women, BAME and disabled staff) will help ensure strong engagement from diverse staff in PS.

Leadership & accountability

Strategy

The university 2030 strategy centres around equality, diversity and inclusion, recognising inclusion as a strategic enabler for future success. Queen Mary's vision, to be *'the most inclusive university of its kind, anywhere'* is commendable, and its diverse student population provides a strong foundation with which to embark on this journey. Whilst there is much work to be done to turn this vision into a reality, it is encouraging to see this narrative outlined at the highest level.

Being 'inclusive' is one of Queen Mary's five core values:

"We will be inclusive and maintain our proud tradition of nurturing and supporting talented students and staff regardless of their background and circumstances, and continually enhance our strong engagement with our local and global communities."

Other core values also closely align with principles relating to EDI, calling for *'openness'*, *'co-operation'* and *'understanding'* (collegial), recognising the impact of *'collective working'* (pride), fostering *'innovation'* and *'disrupt[ing] conventional thought'* (ambitious) and upholding the *'highest ethical standards'* and operating with *'integrity'* (ethical). These values should underpin all that Queen Mary does, providing a strong and consistent foundation for EDI activities across the institution.

To be a leader in the field of EDI, it will be important for Queen Mary to adopt a bold and innovative approach to inclusion, pioneering new initiatives, sharing best practice and driving thought leadership across the sector. There is some work to do to embed EDI fundamentals before Queen

Mary can adopt a truly cutting-edge approach to EDI. However, the institution is already taking steps to pilot and cultivate fresh ideas. In particular, a funding proposal has been developed to offer a finite number of grants (or a defined pot of money to allocate according to need) to support staff and students to develop projects designed to further and realise Queen Mary's vision to be the most inclusive university. This could be an effective 'bottom up' approach to embedding inclusion across the university.

At the time of review a clear, coherent action plan on how to realise institutional EDI ambitions did not appear to be in place. There was a concern that without a centralised plan Queen Mary's approach to EDI risked being disparate and inefficient, and was unlikely to achieve desired outcomes. Since the review a short-term strategy has been developed with proposals outlined for a medium to long-term EDI strategy. The proposals detail an integrated approach for progressing gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality across the institution. This joined-up approach is much needed.

Moving forwards, it is proposed that the strategy is progressed as a collaboration between the EDI team and the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion, working with the EDISG.

Senior leadership

The undertaking of this external EDI review, commissioned by the Principal, demonstrates a clear commitment from Queen Mary to scrutinise its internal culture and EDI practices.

Leadership structures are already in place to facilitate cultural transformation and embed inclusion. A member of SET is currently the institutional lead for EDI across Queen Mary and another member of SET currently chairs the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team (SAT). Each academic faculty has a nominated academic lead for EDI and each school has an EDI committee. Central Professional Services also has a nominated lead for EDI together with an EDI committee.

Over recent months the Principal and VP Lead for EDI have taken steps to set the tone for inclusion across the institution through a series of all-staff communications.

The appointment of a Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion to lead EDI at the executive level is very welcome. This role will play a pivotal part in ensuring an effective EDI strategy is shaped, prioritised, embedded and sustained in the long-term. Providing appropriate operational support to deliver on EDI work and objectives will be important for this role.

In spite of all-staff EDI communications being circulated by executives, a general perception emerged during the review that Queen Mary's leadership could do more to actively engage with and support EDI initiatives. In particular, there was discussion around the perceived lack of centralised dialogue in relation to charges of institutional racism. It was noted, however, that some groups had turned down the offer to discuss this topic in an open forum.

Staff also commented on the absence of active institutional support for EDI awareness days and religious festivals, such as Black History Month, International Women's Day and Ramadan amongst others. Whilst efforts to support the LGBT+ inclusion agenda at an institutional level were recognised, they were not considered to have been well executed. Staff felt that there was a lack of necessary investment or prioritisation of what were considered to be '*basic*' EDI activities. For many, this was compounded by the perceived lack of diversity across senior roles. Staff frequently commented that leadership teams lacked diversity and staff did not feel that their identities were reflected.

Members of the staff LGBT+ network, QMOut, commented on the lack of formalised budget to support their activities, making it hard to amplify network reach and impact. Insufficient investment was also acknowledged in relation to the absence of a centralised EDI programme, designed to promote awareness, engage the institution across a range of EDI topics and celebrate key dates in the diversity calendar. Many staff demonstrated frustration that existing EDI investment and resource appeared to be almost exclusively focused on Athena SWAN.

In focus groups minority staff commented on the absence of demonstrable executive sponsorship. Executives who sponsor the EDI agenda and EDI-related initiatives not only play a

key role in setting the tone and culture of an organisation, they also work to unlock necessary investment and ensure EDI matters are prioritised. Although Queen Mary has an AS champion, this role appears to have the primary objective of delivering on AS submissions, rather than the broader and more primary objective of driving gender equality across the institution. At the current time, Queen Mary does not have appointed sponsors to champion other diversity strands.

Management

The capability of line managers (and middle managers in particular) was cited with frequency as a barrier to cultural inclusion at Queen Mary. In focus groups and interviews, staff recounted instances in which managers had demonstrated bias or prejudice through language or stereotypical assumptions about staff and students. The absence of effective performance management and poor people management emerged as a consistent theme throughout the review. A robust route to developing management capability at Queen Mary did not appear to be in place. Staff described behaviours that conflicted with Queen Mary's *'inclusive'* core value and shared examples of ineffective management practices, such as a reluctance to challenge negative or biased behaviours, poor communication, apathy around developing staff, and an inability to role model inclusive behaviours.

Governance

The EDI governance structure surfaced as a point of contention during the review. In particular, the structure did not appear to be well understood by staff across the organisation and many felt that it was overly complex and lacked institutional cohesion.

Concerns around the transparency of EDI-related governance also emerged as a consistent theme. Staff did not appear to be well informed about activities or successful EDI-related outcomes associated with existing governance structures. There was recognition that these structures were relatively new and had only been in place for the last 12 months, but there was also a recognition that progress would require action and accountability.

There was a common perception across the staff-body that the pace of EDI progress had been slow and that more demonstrable action could be taken. Staff questioned whether the steering group, committees and forums were achieving desired outcomes.

In the staff survey, just 40% of respondents agreed with the statement *'Things Queen Mary does turn out well.'* During workshops, focus groups and interviews staff frequently commented on the absence of clear EDI deliverables, tangible action or progress reports and lessons learned. This led to a shared perception that EDI initiatives were neither successful nor impactful. Whilst the staff survey question was general (and did not refer exclusively to EDI-related activities), it is conceivable that with more demonstrable action, more reporting on progress and transparency around EDI-related matters, staff might be encouraged to reflect more positively on the outcomes of *'things Queen Mary does.'*

Lastly, the remit and responsibilities of the EDI Senior/Academic Lead may need to be redefined in order to ensure the role can effectively facilitate the work of existing EDI roles and structures. This should be addressed with the appointment of the new VP, People, Culture and Inclusion.

Recommendations

1. Build on existing short-term strategy to shape a clear, centralised EDI strategic action plan with clear objectives and actions designed to support gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality. Action plans should be designed to embed EDI across the institution and account for intersectional themes. Action plans should be widely disseminated and progress reported on in a timely fashion. Transparency around this work (and delivery of a race equality action plan in particular), will help demonstrate Queen Mary's commitment to EDI and address charges of institutional racism.
2. The strategic action plan should be accompanied with the provision of resource and strategic direction at the highest level of the organisation together with credible investment. The appointment of the Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion is an important step and

provides a powerful opportunity to set out the institution's longer-term strategy, EDI priorities, budget and action plans.

3. More can be done to visibly champion EDI from the top. Transparency, open dialogue and engagement around EDI is much needed at the current time to galvanise trust across the staff (and student) population. In addition to sharing a comprehensive and integrated EDI strategic action plan, it is recommended that leaders undertake a series of open discussions, town halls or forums, engaging all staff and students proactively on the topic of EDI, sharing strategic action plans, providing channels for feedback and dialogue, and promoting a collaborative approach to embedding inclusion.
4. Leaders should be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment by attending and speaking at EDI-related events and activities, actively engaging with and celebrating EDI awareness days and festivals, supporting staff networks and, where possible, spending time talking to people and listening to staff and student opinions and experiences. Leaders can also demonstrate awareness and support for inclusion issues through blogging or having an active voice on social media channels.
5. Appoint senior sponsors to champion key diversity strands. Sponsors should be visible and vocal advocates who use their platform to champion inclusion at every opportunity. Sponsors must be passionate and authentic advocates for inclusion and work in close collaboration with the staff groups/networks they represent. Sponsors can be allies or share affinity with the group that they champion.⁵ Whilst it is encouraging that Queen Mary has a dedicated Athena SWAN (AS) champion at SET level, this role should be expanded beyond AS to drive gender equality in the broadest sense.
6. Convene EDI leadership roundtables with executives from other institutions. Roundtables would bring together leaders (principals, VPs, deans and other executives) to promote thought leadership, share best practice, investigate new, innovative approaches to inclusion in academia, explore collaborations⁶ and set new benchmarks and standards of practice for the sector. These sessions would begin to position Queen Mary as a sector leader and would also provide invaluable opportunities for sharing, learning and innovating approaches to inclusion. Queen Mary may also wish convene other cross-institutional stakeholder groups such as executive sponsors, EDI managers and chairs of staff networks.
7. Leaders on SET, Senate, Council and those in leadership roles at school and department-level are encouraged to become more vocal and visible, and actively engage in role model campaigns. This will help to address the perceived absence of diverse role models at senior levels. Additionally, Queen Mary should continue to work to ensure that diverse appointments are reflected at the highest level across the institution, both for academic and PS roles. To achieve this, inclusive recruitment practices should be implemented for all senior-level appointments.
8. Develop and embed a strong culture of performance management. This will help to drive accountability and high performance, enabling the institution to achieve the best outcomes and workforce. People managers must be set up for success with the capability to manage diverse teams, uphold and role model organisational values, implement policies and support learning and development activities.⁷

⁵ Some of the most effective sponsorship models include the appointment of dual champions: an ally champion and a minority champion with shared affinity with the represented group.

⁶ Inter-institution collaborations might involve cross-organisational development or mentoring programmes, network events or the co-creation of policies, procedures and practices.

⁷ Queen Mary may wish to consider implementing a 360 feedback process for leaders and managers, assessing inclusive leadership and associated behaviours. If undertaken effectively, 360 feedback can be a useful tool to strengthen team work and accountability, assess good diversity behaviour and encourage managers to lead by example.

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9. Existing governance groups (steering groups, committees, forums, etc) should clearly contribute to the organisational EDI strategy in a joined-up and cohesive way, with well-defined objectives, lines of accountability and timelines for delivery. A more cohesive approach at school and faculty level with consistent frameworks would promote efficiency and the sharing of best practice. Moving forward, it will be important for governance groups to focus on action and delivery.
 10. Steering groups should be set up for protected groups, such race equality, disability equality and LGBT+ equality to support the development, monitoring and reviewing of Queen Mary's strategic action plans. Ideally, these groups should have representation on the EDISG.
 11. Improve transparency by widely disseminating EDI action plans and reporting on progress. Minutes from all committees and steering groups should be made available and consistently published on websites and staff intranets. More transparency around EDI work (progress on goals achieved as well as failures or lessons learned) will help demonstrate action and accountability, building trust across the workforce and challenging negative perceptions about the outcomes of the *'things Queen Mary does.'*

Appendix

Appendix 1: Summary of recommendations

Recruitment

1. A more rigorous approach to monitoring recruitment data, capturing and analysing the diversity of applicants at all stages of the process should be introduced. Data analysis is currently undertaken, but investment is needed to update systems and improve the quality of insights.
2. Hiring managers should be held to account for any breaches in approach and deviation from the recruitment policy and guidelines.
3. Given the range of hiring needs across the institution, multiple recruitment channels are likely to be required to maximise impact. Hiring managers should consider using diverse recruitment websites/networks and advertising roles across a broad range of platforms, websites or forums visited by underrepresented groups or dedicated to minorities. Advertising across multiple platforms will help Queen Mary reach the widest pool of candidates.
4. A blind recruitment pilot should be conducted in a specific school, taking steps to harness learnings and disseminate across the institution. Signposting this inclusive approach at the point of vacancy advertising may help attract diverse applicants.
5. Pay attention to the language and composition of job descriptions. Hiring managers may wish to test the linguistic gender-coding of job specifications using the gender decoder tool: <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/> for example. This can help to ensure that descriptions are gender neutral or that they actively encourage underrepresented genders as appropriate for specific roles.
6. Work with executive recruitment agencies that specialise in diverse appointments, particularly for senior roles. The desire for a diverse pool must be clearly communicated, reinforced and prioritised over cost or time to hire. When selecting agencies, ask them to demonstrate their track record in diverse appointments and their internal approach to embedding EDI.
7. Develop a candidate feedback mechanism (such as a candidate survey) to assess applicant experiences. Cross-referencing candidate experiences with diversity data can provide insights into bias or potential discriminatory practices that may be present within the recruitment journey.
8. Enhance Queen Mary's external EDI webpages. A range of EDI-related activities, events, role models and articles/blogs should be showcased. As part of this effort, consider creating a short video dedicated to EDI outlining the institution's vision, commitment and EDI activities.
9. Shape a clearly defined process through which staff can signpost or raise a flag about recruitment practices that are deemed to be unfair, inequitable or biased. This should be outlined as part of the recruitment training and be clearly signposted on recruitment policies and associated webpages.
10. Implement the following to mitigate bias in candidate selection:
 - a. Ahead of sitting on panels, staff should indicate that they have completed required training or refresher courses. Robust checkpoints should be put in place to ensure this happens consistently. This may require the support of a quality Learning Management System for an organisation of Queen Mary's size and complexity;

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- b. Ensure there is a common understanding of selection criteria and what to look for in candidates for specific roles. This should include clear instructions on how to submit candidate feedback and avoid bias in language of evaluation;
 - c. Create a checklist of inclusive recruitment reminders and 'bias checks' to be disseminated ahead of panels. Ideally, the chair would run through this checklist with panellists ahead of any interview, to ensure full engagement and alignment; or
 - d. Ensure that awareness of the impact of unconscious (or conscious) bias during interviews is promoted throughout the process. Panellists should be encouraged to challenge and call out bias.

Informal working practices

1. Launch an internal role modelling campaign, showcasing diverse and intersectional talent at all levels of the organisation. Ensure this campaign is visible on the external website (on EDI pages and linked to recruitment/careers pages).
2. Any new or existing staff network appointments (chairs, coordinators and committee members) should be given appropriate time allocations and recognition for additional work undertaken. Appropriate space and budget should also be provided.
3. Undertake a school-level EDI focus group or workshop to inform local action plans. As well as identifying key areas for improvement and hotspots for bullying, this approach would also serve to highlight areas of EDI best practice that could be disseminated across the organisation.
4. To counter bullying in the long-term, ensure robust, effective and monitored policies are in place, that are centrally implemented. Whilst policies exist, they must include better mechanisms for detecting, recording, reporting and dealing with policy breaches, and that the institution as a whole take proactive action in holding people to account.
5. Develop team-based programmes on 'successful ways of working together' to encourage collaborative working between academic and PS staff at a local level. This has been successfully piloted by a department at Queen Mary. The piloted programme informed participants about the benefits of mutual respect and took place at an off-site setting to encourage teambuilding, camaraderie and strengthen interpersonal relationships. Departments with perceived incidents of bullying/harassment (evidenced through the staff survey or complaints to HR), are encouraged to adopt a similar approach.
6. Launch an institution-wide microaggression campaign to challenge stereotypical ways of thinking and mitigate everyday instances of biased language, behaviours and thought processes. Digital media or poster campaigns can be effective, resource-efficient ways to raise awareness of staff (and students). Leveraging multiple, simultaneous channels will help to maximise reach and impact.
7. Make complaints processes more transparent by publishing anonymous data, annually, on the number of cases filed, the proportion that were upheld, the proportion that were rejected and the resultant outcomes or actions taken. Reporting in this way would drive transparency, demonstrating that a clear system is in place and that action is taken when needed, building staff confidence and encouraging staff to engage with the system should they need to.
8. Build on emerging EDI programme with the following:
 - a. Lead EDI best practice workshops, inviting external stakeholders to share best practice approaches and insights;
 - b. Launch EDI awards or celebrations to recognise EDI best practice, achievements or innovative projects across the institution; and
 - c. Recognise, integrate and learn from the breadth of academic EDI-related research that is currently underway across the institution. Queen Mary may wish to consider

launching an 'EDI Unit' to oversee this effort, led by the incoming VP People, Culture and Inclusion in collaboration with the EDI team and the EDISG.

EDI Infrastructure

1. Continue to innovate and integrate Queen Mary's data management systems. The institution should have a clear view of the proportion of grievances filed that relate to diversity matters and protected characteristics. Diversity data related to training, promotion and re-grading should also be regularly assessed and reported on.
2. Ensure there are formal and regular touchpoints for protected groups to engage with Queen Mary, informing race, disability, gender and LGBT+ best practice. Forums should facilitate staff consultation to develop and test policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and appropriately serving all minority groups. If launched, BAME, women's and disability networks could provide effective channels for this sort of engagement.
3. Shape and signpost policies and practices to support Queen Mary's disabled staff population. The institution should consider the following:
 - a. Open up the Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) to staff. There is already some excellent work happening to support students, much of which could be used to support staff directly as well as inform line managers.
 - b. Appoint and signpost a dedicated point of contact to lead on engagement with disabled staff. This would be the 'go to' person who can advise on policies, reasonable adjustments, community engagement and any other provisions in place to support disabled staff or staff with disabled dependants. This role might naturally sit within the DDS. If this were to be the case, it would need to be resourced accordingly.
 - c. Create a webpage listing all relevant support and services for disabled staff, clearly defining how to access support and necessary next steps. This should be signposted to disabled people as well as line managers to drive awareness and encourage disabled staff to access existing support mechanisms.
 - d. Implement a policy to enable disabled academics returning from long-term sick leave to take teaching sabbaticals, relieving them of teaching duties to enable them to focus on research. This has been proven to be an effective approach for returning academics who have taken extended periods of maternity leave or other career breaks.
 - e. Continue to improve facility access across campuses. Improved signage, better reliable lift access and consistent lighting have been cited as key areas for attention.
4. It is important for any accreditation work to be superseded by strong EDI foundations and a comprehensive institutional EDI strategy. Much of this work is already underway, and continued attention and investment should be given to EDI data management, training, policy development and Queen Mary's emerging EDI programme of events and activities to provide a solid bedrock for accreditation work.
5. In addition to existing resources for AS, appropriate resource should be put in place to support the submission processes for Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index and/or the Race Equality Charter if undertaken.

Development

1. Additional work is needed to embed diversity within Queen Mary's talent management strategy. In particular, line managers should be encouraged to identify diverse staff with managerial and leadership potential, and directly engage in proactive conversations with those staff during performance appraisals. Queen Mary should consider and analyse progression data for diverse staff, and BAME staff in particular.
2. Existing development and mentoring programmes, such as B-Mentor, should be expanded to maximise capacity and reach. Opportunities for both academic and PS staff should be clearly

signposted. Steps should be taken to carefully monitor and evaluate the success of existing leadership and development programmes.

3. Further engage and develop disabled staff through a mentoring scheme or a leadership programme for disabled staff. Ensuring visibility around these initiatives could enhance Queen Mary's internal and external reputation when it comes to disability awareness, encouraging existing disabled staff to disclose disabilities whilst helping to attract new disabled talent into the organisation.
4. Give careful consideration to the way line managers are selected, developed and managed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are able to perform their role effectively. Specific and additional training in line management, communications and inclusive leadership may be required to ensure people managers are effective and can get the most out of diverse teams.
5. Consider how to shape clear pathways for PS promotions and career development. This might entail opening up PS development/leadership programmes; proactively promoting opportunities for lateral development (such as secondments or cross-departmental projects); showcasing PS role models who can discuss career progression; convening workshops designed to promote interview skills and/or enhance CVs; or setting up networking opportunities or events to enable PS staff to connect with each other, provide informal mentoring and share approaches to career development. Collaborating with existing and future employee networks (such as QMOut or institutional networks for women, BAME and disabled staff) will help ensure strong engagement from diverse staff in PS.

Leadership & accountability

1. Build on existing short-term strategy to shape a clear, centralised EDI strategic action plan with clear objectives and actions designed to support gender, race, disability and LGBT+ equality. Action plans should be designed to embed EDI across the institution and account for intersectional themes. Action plans should be widely disseminated and progress reported on in a timely fashion. Transparency around this work (and delivery of a race equality action plan in particular), will help demonstrate Queen Mary's commitment to EDI and address charges of institutional racism.
2. The strategic action plan should be accompanied with the provision of resource and strategic direction at the highest level of the organisation together with credible investment. The appointment of the Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion is an important step and provides a powerful opportunity to set out the institution's longer-term strategy, EDI priorities, budget and action plans.
3. Transparency, open dialogue and engagement around EDI is much needed at the current time to galvanise trust across the staff (and student) population. In addition to sharing a comprehensive and integrated EDI strategic action plan, it is recommended that leaders undertake a series of open discussions, town halls or forums, engaging all staff and students proactively on the topic of EDI, providing channels for feedback and dialogue, and promoting a collaborative approach to embedding inclusion.
4. Leaders should be encouraged to demonstrate their commitment by attending and speaking at EDI-related events and activities, actively engaging with and celebrating EDI awareness days and festivals, supporting staff networks and, where possible, spending time talking to people and listening to staff and student opinions and experiences. Leaders can also demonstrate awareness and support for inclusion issues through blogging or having an active voice on social media channels.
5. Appoint senior sponsors to champion diversity strands. Sponsors should be visible and vocal advocates who use their platform to champion inclusion at every opportunity. Sponsors must be passionate and authentic advocates for inclusion and work in close collaboration with the

staff groups/networks they represent. Expand Athena SWAN champion role at SET level to focus on gender equality in the broadest sense.

6. Convene EDI leadership roundtables with executives from other institutions. Roundtables would bring together leaders (principals, VPs, deans and other executives) to promote thought leadership, share best practice, investigate innovative approaches to inclusion in academia, explore collaborations⁸ and set new benchmarks and standards of practice for the sector. These sessions would begin to position Queen Mary as a sector leader and would also provide invaluable opportunities for sharing, learning and innovating approaches to inclusion.
7. Leaders on SET, Senate, Council and those in leadership roles at school and department-level are encouraged to become more vocal and visible, and actively engage in role model campaigns. This will help to address the perceived absence of diverse role models at senior levels. Additionally, Queen Mary should continue to work to ensure that diverse appointments are reflected at the highest level across the institution, both for academic and PS roles. To achieve this, inclusive recruitment practices should be implemented for all senior-level appointments.
8. Develop and embed a strong culture of performance management. This will help to drive accountability and high performance, enabling the institution to achieve the best outcomes and workforce. People managers must be set up for success with the capability to manage diverse teams, uphold and role model organisational values, implement relevant policies and support learning and development activities.⁹
9. Existing governance groups (steering groups, committees, forums, etc) should clearly contribute to the organisational EDI strategy in a joined-up and cohesive way, with well-defined objectives, lines of accountability and timelines for delivery. A more cohesive approach at school and faculty level with consistent frameworks would promote efficiency and the sharing of best practice. It will be important for governance groups to focus on action and delivery moving forward.
10. Steering groups should be set up for protected groups, such as race equality, disability equality and LGBT+ equality to support the development, monitoring and reviewing of Queen Mary's strategic action plans. Ideally, these groups should have representation on the EDISG.
11. Improve transparency around EDI-related activity by widely disseminating action plans and reporting on progress. Minutes from all committees and steering groups should be made available and consistently published on websites and staff intranets. More transparency around EDI work, progress on goals achieved as well as failures or lessons learned will help demonstrate action and accountability, building trust across the workforce.

⁸ Inter-institution collaborations might involve cross-organisational development or mentoring programmes, network events and the co-creation of policies, procedures and practices.

⁹ For example, Queen Mary may wish to consider implementing a 360 feedback process for leaders and managers, assessing inclusive leadership and associated behaviours. If undertaken effectively, 360 feedback can be a useful tool to strengthen team work and accountability, assess good diversity behaviour and encourage managers to lead by example.

Appendix 2: Focus Group - Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff

Key strengths

Queen Mary has a rich, ethnically diverse student population. Whilst this appears to be the upshot of the institution's geographical location in East London, it clearly instils a sense of pride within the BAME staff community (and broader staff population as evidenced in other interviews and workshops).

Instances of senior-level BAME representation were reflected on at a micro-level. For example, BAME staff in departments and schools with exposure to ethnically diverse leaders and role models reported that this visibility was both keenly acknowledged and valued. Qualitative reflections suggested that the presence of engaged, visible BAME role models provided a keen support structure for staff and bolstered aspirations to progress. BAME staff who acknowledged the presence of visible BAME leaders and role models within their departments were much more likely to speak positively about their experience at Queen Mary and the institution's overall approach to EDI.

A number of BAME staff who had been involved in BAME-specific mentoring schemes reported that these opportunities had been valued and had had a positive impact on their outlook, confidence and career aspirations.

Staff acknowledged that the trade unions had taken an active role in engaging with BAME staff, providing listening groups and spaces for BAME employees to share workplace experiences. These opportunities appeared to be keenly valued by those BAME staff who had attended them. Employees reported that having a safe space to reflect, listen, share lived experiences and support one another had helped to mitigate feelings of isolation and/or self-doubt. It was also noted that, if harnessed appropriately, insights from these sessions could provide the institution with essential information about shared experiences, challenges and bias faced by Queen Mary's BAME staff population.

A number of employees reflected on the presence of passionate and active BAME academics who were taking steps to improve the culture organically for BAME staff and students through workshops, talks, learning sessions on '*building inclusive classrooms*' and informal networking opportunities.

Whilst these sessions appeared to be grassroots and lacked formal, institutional support, they were recognised and valued by those BAME staff who were aware of them.

Key risks

The need for greater ethnic diversity across Queen Mary was strongly expressed by all BAME staff who participated in the focus groups and interviews. BAME staff consistently observed a lack of BAME role models or BAME staff in senior, influential positions across the institution. Although notable exceptions were shared (in specific departments and schools), the general absence of visible, BAME leaders was keenly felt by academic and PS staff alike. A number of BAME staff members acknowledged that the absence of BAME staff in leadership roles had led them to feel '*alienated*' and '*unrepresented*' and to question whether they would have opportunities to progress at Queen Mary.

A number of BAME staff reflected that there were few BAME colleagues at their level; others reported that, in their department, they had no BAME peers at all. Many staff expressed that they were frequently the only person of colour in a room or meeting, recounting that this had negatively impacted their confidence, perceived credibility and/or ability to actively participate. In these contexts, BAME staff frequently reported feeling that their voices were not heard or respectfully acknowledged.

Participants also suggested that the lack of visible, BAME leaders across the organisation had led them to believe that race equality (and EDI overall) was not a key priority for Queen Mary. There was a common perception that there was much rhetoric around equality, diversity and inclusion, but little demonstrable action. Given the lack of reported progress (particularly in terms of BAME representation in senior roles), many staff perceived Queen Mary's EDI efforts to be '*superficial*' and/or '*tokenistic*.'

A recurrent theme across all focus groups and interviews was the prevalence of racially-biased, dismissive or uninclusive language and racially insensitive behaviours. The examples shared might typically be classed as racial microaggressions or workplace incivilities.¹⁰ Staff reported exposure to unwelcome, discriminatory comments, sometimes coming from line managers, leaders or people in

¹⁰ Workplace incivility can be defined as 'low-intensity acts which violate the norms of respectful behaviours established in a specific setting, and whose intent to harm is ambiguous'. Di Marco, D., Hoel, H., Arenas, A. Munduate, L. Workplace incivility as modern sexual prejudice (2015).

position of influence, the upshot of which had led them to feel unwelcome, alienated, insulted and, on occasion, invalidated. As well as having a detrimental impact on the overall culture of an organisation, the presence and prevalence of microaggressive behaviours can seriously compromise a sense of integration, belonging, productivity and staff engagement. In some cases, staff reported experiencing negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.

The presence of microaggressive language and behaviours was also reported as being present within different minority ethnic groups, particularly within lower grade PS roles. In these cases the larger ethnic group was generally considered to be the 'dominant group' and identified as the instigator of micro-aggressive behaviours.

In spite of the perceived prevalence of daily microaggressions, there did not appear to be an effective mechanism in place for reporting, addressing or mitigating these behaviours. BAME staff frequently highlighted that there was nowhere to go to report negative experiences or a way to access support from the institution if needed. There was a shared perception that formal HR channels were '*ineffective*' at best or '*grossly inadequate*' at worst.

Whilst isolated examples were shared in which instances of overtly racist language had been dealt with proactively, effectively and with a zero-tolerance approach by leaders in certain schools, this was not been the experience of most BAME staff who participated. The majority of staff reflected that these behaviours frequently went unchecked and that this perpetuated a culture in which racist behaviours were not only tolerated, but in some cases, seemingly encouraged.

When describing workplace experiences, many BAME staff, especially BAME women, observed a discrepancy between the behaviours that white colleagues could demonstrate without negative consequence - and those seen as acceptable for BAME staff. Outspokenness and assertion were cited as behaviours that appeared to be judged differently when coming from a white person. For Black women in particular, these qualities were often described as '*aggressive*,' '*loud*,' '*dominant*' or '*disruptive*.'

There was a common perception that there was a lack of formal, institutional support for race equality at Queen Mary. In particular, participants commented on the lack of a coherent strategy designed to drive race equality across the staff population. Staff also commented on the absence of

formal, visible activities to celebrate Black History Month or other cultural festivals at an institutional level. These types of activities were considered to be commonplace and well embedded in other organisations or competing HE institutions. Whilst student-focused activities or initiatives led by the Student's Union were acknowledged, this highlighted the absence of a centralised programme of activity designed to engage Queen Mary's staff population.

The lack of a formalised, centralised employee network to support, connect and empower BAME staff was also observed.

Some BAME staff suggested that they had, on a number of occasions over recent years, contributed their thoughts, experiences and constructive suggestions to drive race equality at Queen Mary. Little demonstrable action had been observed as a result of these conversations, however, and many expressed that they felt '*worn down*' or '*exhausted*' by the process. The lack of action resulting from previously gathered insights (such as surveys or trade union workshops) was clearly the cause of frustration to staff members, and had led many employees to question whether there was, in fact, real appetite for change.

Overall, there was a feeling that there was a lack of institutional will to address racial inequalities at Queen Mary. This was evidenced in the perceived lack of fundamentals or '*basic measures*' in place designed to promote race equality including: the absence of a centralised, institutional strategy; the lack of BAME staff in senior, influential roles; a lack of wide-reaching and consistent support structures designed to harness and accelerate BAME talent; and the absence of a BAME network with clear sponsorship from Queen Mary's executive team. Reflections on structural barriers were also considered, such as the ethnicity pay gap; a lack of formalised or transparent paths for progression (particularly in PS roles); the absence of effective reporting mechanisms to address discriminatory behaviours (both formal and informal); as well as a lack of clear policies designed to combat institutional racism.

Unconscious bias training was welcomed as a preliminary step by some, but many perceived Queen Mary's programme to be a '*tick box*' exercise with little impact in changing or challenging race discriminatory behaviours. Additionally, focused race awareness training for staff and line managers appeared to be entirely absent (this was also indicated in the HR review). Leaders, line managers and peers were not perceived to be well informed on

how to identify and/or call out racist or microaggressive behaviours. This was considered to be particularly problematic for an organisation looking to embed long-term inclusion; if unacceptable behaviours go unchallenged, they are likely to continue and risk being amplified.

There was a shared perception that BAME staff did not operate on a '*level playing field*', and that they had to work harder and achieve more in order to progress compared to their white counterparts. This perception was expressed by BAME women in particular. Bias in promotions and a lack of transparency in promotional paths, particularly in PS roles, was also cited on a number of occasions.

One participant described the culture as one where [REDACTED] and a number of people commented on the presence of informal networks - primarily made up of white colleagues (and often gathering over alcohol) - playing a critical role in the identification, nurturing and supporting of talent.

Participants also reflected that perceived bias in the system and previous negative experiences had led them to question the effectiveness of the system. As a result, a number of staff said they no longer felt compelled to apply for new opportunities or promotions as this was perceived to be '*pointless*' or '*emotionally draining*'.

Some participants expressed they had had positive experiences on the B-mentor mentoring programme, whereas others commented that they had applied multiple times, but were not successful. Others suggested that their applications were not acknowledged. Many reflected that although the programme was welcome in principle, it had limited reach, did not appear to be sustainable and was not effectively managed.

Appendix 3: Focus Group - Disabled Staff

Focus

- Culture
- EDI infrastructure
- Development
- Leadership

Key strengths

The majority of disabled staff who took part in the focus groups had been at Queen Mary for a significant time period, 8 years or more. This may be indicative of a sense of loyalty and commitment from Queen Mary's disabled staff population.

Disabled members of staff who participated in the focus groups largely reported feeling safe and secure at Queen Mary.

Line managers were generally reported as being flexible and accommodating when it came to disabilities, providing time off as needed for medical appointments and being receptive to requests for adjustments.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service (DDS) was recognised as providing effective and comprehensive support services to disabled students. It is clearly signposted as the 'go to' place for general advice, guidance, information on needs assessment, access to mentoring support, assistance on accessing the curriculum as well as other services.

External, active support from unions and case workers was very much valued by those staff members who had engaged with them, utilised their services, and been able to articulate needs and requests for adjustments as a result.

It was acknowledged that Queen Mary collaborates with the organisation AccessAble to create a set of access guides for all the university's physical locations, covering all campuses.

Key risks

A lack of visibility around disabled staff was reported at Queen Mary. Generally, disabled staff did not feel well connected with other disabled staff; neither did they feel well included within the wider institution. Participants felt that this compromised a sense of integration and belonging. It also prevented Queen Mary's disabled community (and the wider staff population) from actively sharing information, experiences and insights and/or providing support to one another.

The perceived lack of integration and belonging felt by disabled staff was further evidenced in the EDI section of the staff survey. Just 47% of respondents identifying as disabled reported feeling '*included in the workplace at Queen Mary*' and 33% reported that they felt '*able to bring [their] whole [selves] to work*'. Both of these scores were statistically significantly worse than responses reported by staff without disabilities, who responded more positively at 68% and 60% respectively.

A lack of visibility around Queen Mary's disabled staff population was also observed when trying to organise sessions. Identifying and engaging disabled staff was not a straightforward process. It required active and direct follow up, personal introductions/referrals and multiple individual interviews. This was not the case for other focus groups undertaken, which were consistently oversubscribed. This could be down to a number of factors, including: low engagement in standard institutional communications channels; low representation of disabled staff; a lack of trust in the process or fear of exposure; apathy or a lack of interest in supporting EDI-related initiatives; or insufficient time or resources to be able to actively participate.

Whilst the DDS appeared to be well-regarded for the services it provides to students at Queen Mary, there is no equivalent service for staff. Participants also noted that there was no clearly defined or designated point of contact to advise on matters related to disability and a general lack of awareness about any policies, procedures or practices in place to support the disabled workforce. As a consequence of this, disabled staff may not be accessing the level of support they need. Additionally, there was a perceived tacit expectation that disabled employees should proactively seek out support or come up with solutions to challenges faced, rather than be given expert advice up front by the institution. It was acknowledged that this created an extra burden of responsibility for disabled employees which may not be sustainable for everyone, particularly those with recently acquired impairments or declining health conditions.

There appeared to be a general reticence to be open about disabilities, particularly invisible disabilities and/or mental health issues. There was a shared perception that there was an ingrained culture of stigma around disability at Queen Mary, and that the disclosure of a disability could lead people to be regarded as '*less capable*' by line managers and colleagues.

An absence of formal engagement and interaction with disabled staff was noted. Disabled staff were therefore not always aware of or able to access provisions in place to support them. Equally, the absence of formal and

regular interaction with disabled staff means that the institution is unlikely to be as aware of the common and evolving needs and/or issues faced by disabled staff. The institution is subsequently unable to inform, improve and adapt its policies, processes and practices. On occasions where disabled staff had offered up lived experiences and insights, some staff members reported being undermined, having their experiences rejected or nullified. This lack of openness to engage, listen and learn has prevented the institution from embedding a true culture of inclusion for disabled staff and risked alienating its existing disabled population.

There was a general lack of awareness about policies and procedures in place designed to support disabled staff. This lack of awareness was observed across HR, line managers and the disabled staff population itself. Any existing support did not appear to be well signposted and there was a general perception that appropriate support structures (policies, procedures, practices, etc.) were not in place.

Disability awareness training for staff and line managers appeared to be absent and a general lack of disability awareness across the institution was consistently reported. Leaders, line managers and peers were perceived to be ill informed on how to work effectively and thoughtfully with disabled colleagues. This had made daily activities challenging for disabled staff, causing additional stress or anxiety, and preventing their full participation. Instances of negative language and/or disrespectful behaviours were also cited, leaving some disabled staff feeling marginalised. Subsequent negative implications on mental health and wellbeing were noted.

There was a perception that HR was not considered to be well equipped to support staff with disabilities. In addition to a lack of disability expertise and awareness, HR was perceived to be unresponsive when it came to matters and questions relating to disability. This may be down to the absence of a clearly designated contact to lead on and take responsibility for staff-related disability matters.

A lack of trust in HR and formal procedures was further evidenced in data from the EDI section of the staff survey. Just 31% of staff who identified as having a disability had confidence that reports of discrimination or harassment would be taken seriously at Queen Mary. This was statistically significantly worse than responses reported by staff without disabilities (55%).

Disabled staff did not appear to have the same development opportunities as those afforded to other minority groups at Queen Mary (such as mentoring or bespoke leadership programmes). There was also a shared recognition that it can be much harder for disabled staff to take on the sort of extra work or

responsibilities that are typically considered in support of promotions, thereby disadvantaging their careers and opportunities to progress. At the same time, disabled staff reported that the additional amount of effort, time and commitment required for them to carry out these duties was rarely recognised or taken into account. This had led some disabled staff to feel undervalued and underappreciated.

This perception was further evidenced in the 'development' section of the staff survey, with just 34% of disabled respondents suggesting that they felt '*supported in [their] plans for future development*' at Queen Mary. This was statistically significantly worse than responses from non-disabled staff, 49% of whom responded positively to this question. Moreover, responses to all development-related questions from disabled staff were consistently lower and, generally, statistically significantly worse than responses from non-disabled staff.¹¹

There was a perception from staff who had experienced prolonged periods of sick leave or absence from the workplace, that the provision of cover during periods of absence was rarely effective or adequate. Other colleagues in the department often ended up '*picking up the slack*' which was thought to fuel resentment towards the person off sick and lead to feelings of guilt and exclusion by the disabled staff member. Moreover, transitions back to work after a prolonged period of absence did not appear to be well supported by the organisation, particularly for academic staff with research obligations.

A fundamental lack of dialogue around disability at an institutional level was consistently noted. An absence of disabled role models and senior leaders with disabilities was also reported. In the staff survey, just 20% of staff who identified as having a disability cited that there were visible, senior role models with whom they could identify. This is statistically significantly worse than the overall university score of 35%, which is itself low. The lack of visible, disabled role models and absence of a strong narrative or disability strategy at an institutional level led staff to infer that equality and inclusion were not priorities for the institution. Again, this appeared to be further evidenced in data emerging from the EDI section of the staff survey with just 41% of staff who identified as having a disability stating that Queen Mary valued equality, diversity and inclusion. This is statistically significantly worse than the overall university score of 65%, and is, perhaps, indicative of the lack of perceived support by disabled staff.

The absence of a positive narrative in relation to disability, coming from the top, and the lack of a clearly defined strategy to embed disability equality and awareness may have perpetuated existing stigma, discouraging some staff (and potentially students) from disclosing their disabilities and dissuading disabled talent from applying to the organisation.

¹¹ With the exception of Q5.2 about the occurrence of appraisals and probation meetings, all responses to the development questions in the survey from disabled staff were lower and statistically significantly worse than those from non-disabled staff.

Appendix 4: Focus Group - Female Staff

Focus

- Culture
- Development
- Leadership
- EDI infrastructure

Key strengths

Particular departments or schools with women in senior positions tended to be perceived positively by other women in those departments and schools. The visibility of female role models was both acknowledged and valued, positively impacting female staff engagement and long-term career aspirations at Queen Mary.

Whilst the majority of women acknowledged significant limitations in terms of the approach and impact of the Athena SWAN Charter, it was recognised that the institutional silver award had benefited the university's external reputation.

Positive examples were shared in which some schools had demonstrated innovative policies and practices designed to actively support the progression and wellbeing of women. For example, initiatives supporting female academics returning from maternity leave by relieving them of teaching duties for a set period of time to focus on research, were considered to be very welcome.

Schools and departments that had actively implemented policies designed to support employees with childcare or caring responsibilities were generally welcomed by female staff. For example, some departments implemented a 'no meeting' policy outside of the hours of 10am-4pm to ensure that staff doing school runs (or with other caring responsibilities) were not excluded.

Although extensive engagement had not been demonstrated by the majority of women attending the focus groups and interviews, the provision of leadership development programmes designed to accelerate female progression, such as Aurora or Springboard, appeared to be keenly valued by those who had attended them. In addition to learning and having time out to reflect on their career and development, women also valued the networking opportunity, allowing them to connect with other women across the institution.

Key risks

Whilst departments or schools with visible female leadership were recognised as having a positive impact on women working in those departments, many schools and departments were cited as lacking senior,

female representation altogether. Women working in these male-dominated departments often reported that the absence of senior women and female voices in management had compromised feelings of belonging or limited their aspirations to progress. Participants also expressed feelings of isolation and fears of *'tokenism'* when they had found themselves to be a solitary female presence, or in a small minority.

When in a minority context, women also reported feelings of voicelessness in meetings: recounting that they did not get space to speak, that colleagues talked over them, that their perspectives were undermined, or that a male colleague had been given credit for a point they had raised. This absence of voice was also perceived to correlate with the lack of female representation at senior levels in certain schools and departments.

A recurrent theme across all gender-related focus groups and interviews was the prevalence of sexist, biased, dismissive or misogynistic language and behaviours projected towards female staff. In some cases, these were reported to have come from line managers or people in positions of influence. These instances appeared to be particularly prevalent within (though not confined to) departments and schools with few female senior leaders or those lacking senior female representation altogether. The examples shared might typically be understood as everyday microaggressions or workplace incivilities¹² which, if left unchecked, could perpetuate unhelpful and negative stereotypes, and have serious implications on staff wellbeing and workplace culture.

Other examples recounted an absence of action or recognition from leaders who had been present on occasions during which negative or biased language or behaviours had been displayed. This absence of action and inclusive leadership was perceived to be particularly problematic, with some women citing that negative comments and *'misogynistic banter'* were not only tolerated, but, in some cases, seemingly encouraged. In focus groups, many female staff demonstrated frustration and anger at this dearth of action from leaders and managers; others reported feelings of discomfort, embarrassment and/or a lack of self-worth. Several women talked about the energy it took to challenge, cope with or defy the limiting assumptions or stereotypes that were attached to their gender. Implications for confidence and mental wellbeing were also acknowledged.

¹² Workplace incivility can be defined as 'low-intensity acts which violate the norms of respectful behaviours established in a specific setting, and whose intent to harm is ambiguous'. Di Marco, D., Hoel, H., Arenas, A., Munduate, L. Workplace incivility as modern sexual prejudice (2015).

Although both academic and PS staff reported exposure to dismissive, sexist comments or behaviours, this appeared to be particularly prevalent for women in PS roles. In these examples, male academic staff demonstrated disrespectful, biased and/or rude behaviours, which had led many participants to feel '*belittled*,' '*devalued*' or '*undermined*.' There was a shared observation that there is a discernible divide between academic and PS staff, creating a perceived hierarchy which undermines a culture of mutual respect. Given the high proportion of women in PS roles compared with men, it was suggested that women were disproportionately more likely to be exposed to these negative behaviours.

From an academic perspective, participants reported having their research or areas of specialism undermined or devalued by male colleagues. In particular, examples were recounted in which female academics had faced resistance when wanting to provide advanced modules in key areas of specialism. In these cases individuals had been told themes should be incorporated '*more generally*' or into a single lecture. Female academics also reported that they felt that teaching and/or pastoral duties - the majority of which appeared to be undertaken by women - were not fully appreciated or recognised, both by male colleagues and the institution as a whole. There was a shared feeling that this imbalance was having a detrimental impact on the career advancement of female academics overall.

Some schools were reported to have undertaken reviews that had uncovered discrepancies in workload distribution between male and female academics, with women being assigned 8-10% more work on average than their male counterparts. Women were thought to have been more likely to agree to take on additional responsibilities, whereas male academics were thought to have pushed back in order to '*concentrate on research*.' There was a shared consensus that this uneven workload was not effectively recognised and that it was having a detrimental impact on female career advancement. In some cases, this dynamic appeared to be exacerbated by an element of '*selective incompetence*' in relation to pastoral or administrative duties, in which male academics (typically older), had been reported to make statements like: '*I'm terrible with students; you don't want me in front of them*.'

When describing workplace experiences, many women observed a discrepancy between the behaviours that male colleagues could demonstrate without negative consequence - and sometimes even exploit - and those seen as acceptable for women. Outspokenness, assertion and frustration were cited as behaviours that appeared to be perceived more favourably when coming from men. For women, these qualities were

There was also a concern that existing programmes lacked long-term sustainability, having been driven by passionate individuals in the past (rather than being embedded in the university infrastructure). Consequently, many of these programmes were considered to be precarious or to have been compromised following the departure of key people. The perceived long-term success of these initiatives was also unclear. For example, participating attendees did not acknowledge any tangible career advancement following engagement on a programme. Equally, there was no awareness of impact metrics designed to track proportions of female programme attendees who had applied for and/or been successfully promoted.

There were several accounts of bullying reported at school or departmental level across all faculties. Whilst this was not consistent across all schools, hotspots emerged that require urgent attention. In departments where harassment or bullying behaviours were consistently reported, participants displayed a general fear and anxiety of speaking out and challenging the status quo. Staff repeatedly reported concerns about being *'labelled part of the problem'* and/or negative repercussions that could affect their career. One example was shared [REDACTED]

As a result of these perceptions, a large proportion of participants said that they would not consider using formal reporting channels to address issues or call out what they considered to be malpractice. Reasons for this included fear of exposure, fear of being labelled a troublemaker, fear of inaction/apathy by the institution and consequent negative impacts on wellbeing and mental health.

There appeared to be a shared and wide-reaching mistrust of HR and an overall lack of confidence in the grievance and reporting procedures. A significant proportion of women suggested that they would not raise a formal complaint or grievance as they did not feel that it would be dealt with effectively. Many feared it would make matters worse. Those who had reported issues in the past suggested that they had not felt supported by HR, and that, in a number of cases, issues were exacerbated (perpetuating bullying behaviours), and that the complaint was not handled effectively. There was a shared view that the process did not provide appropriate support to those who had been victimised and that there was a notable lack of information and transparency about next steps or outcomes.

Given a general lack of confidence in the system, many women reported that they did not know where to go or

who to turn to in order to seek advice or guidance when faced with a context in which they feel they were being harassed, bullied, discriminated against or treated unfairly. In one example, a female staff member paid an external HR consultant for advice because she felt she lacked this support internally.

In addition to particular concerns raised about the grievance policy and process, attendees also reflected on the inconsistent application of policies, procedures and practices more generally across the institution. Whilst some policies were recognised as being progressive and positively supporting gender equality (such as flexible working, a 'no meeting' provision between the hours of 10am-4pm, and relief of teaching duties for academic staff returning from maternity leave), these were by no means considered to be ubiquitous. In some departments they appeared to be completely absent. Schools, departments and managers were thought to be quite autonomous in their approach to policy implementation. This was considered to have had an impact on the overall perceived culture of a department, with a great deal of variance between different schools and institutes. One institute was referred to as '*The Wild West*' on more than one occasion, suggesting there was little respect for centralised processes and practices. Not only was this deemed to be unfair and inequitable (since not everyone was able to benefit from policies in place), it was also suggested that inconsistent practices had led to higher chances of bias in formal processes, particularly in relation to recruitment and promotions.

Lastly, there was a shared perception that work around Athena SWAN is not having the desired impact on culture for women at Queen Mary. There was unanimous recognition of the sheer burden of work required to put forward a submission. Many who had been directly involved in this process described their experiences as '*exhausting*' and/or '*frustrating*.' Other women reported how they had been actively '*warned off*' getting involved with Athena SWAN committees because of the sheer volume of work required and associated lack of recognition. Rather ironically, it was acknowledged that the burden of work required to undertake Athena SWAN, tended to fall most consistently on the female staff the charter is designed to help.

In some cases, women reported that the obtaining of an Athena SWAN award had actively masked gender inequalities, thereby enabling inequitable behaviours and structures to be maintained. A particular feeling of dissonance and discomfort was observed in women who played an active or leadership role on an Athena SWAN committee. In these cases women reported feeling deeply conflicted: on the one hand, they recognised that their working contexts were not progressive or inclusive for women; on the other hand, they felt pressure from leaders and/or school heads to deliver on Athena SWAN and achieve an award.

Appendix 5: Focus Group - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT+) Staff

Focus

- Culture
- EDI infrastructure
- Leadership

Key strengths

There was a shared perception from many lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) staff, that, generally speaking, the culture at Queen Mary is quite inclusive for LGB people.

The establishment of a grassroots LGBT+ network appeared to be keenly valued by LGBT+ staff. The network was reported to have taken steps to improve the culture, experience and connectivity of LGBT+ staff (and students) at Queen Mary. This effort had been warmly welcomed by the LGBT+ staff population and was perceived to be an important support structure for staff and students alike.

Schools and departments which had out, visible leaders were perceived as positive and welcoming by LGBT+ staff. The presence of out leaders (or visible engagement and support from ally leaders) was considered to be indicative of an *'accepting,' 'supportive culture'* and encouraged openness and authenticity from LGBT+ staff and students.

Campaigns celebrating LGBT+ identities were thought to have helped drive visibility and enhance a sense of belonging for some LGBT+ staff.

Some schools were reported to have taken proactive steps to promote transgender inclusion, instilling trans-inclusive processes and practices at a local level.

Key risks

Whilst the presence of out, visible leaders was considered to contribute to a positive, open and inclusive culture in some schools, this experience was not ubiquitous. Other schools and departments appeared to be more hostile towards LGBT+ staff with reported instances of negative language, bias or bullying. This was thought to have had implications for the workplace culture, and prevented some staff from being open and undermining a sense of belonging.

Some members of the community reported that they did not feel able to be themselves at work and made a conscious effort to assimilate or hide aspects of their identity. For staff members identifying as something other than heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual, this sentiment was particularly evident in the staff survey, with just 17% of respondents reporting that they were

able to *'bring [their] whole [selves] to work.'* This was statistically significantly worse than the overall university score of 55% and demonstrates that more work is required to create a culture that embraces all sexual orientations. This 'covering' can prevent staff from contributing to their fullest and can negatively impact productivity and staff wellbeing.

Although the LGBT+ network was a recognised and valued support structure for staff, it was not considered to be well signposted. A general lack of awareness from staff and line managers and an absence of formal touchpoints, highlighting the network, its associated activities and opportunities to join were consistently reported. This lack of awareness is likely to be preventing full engagement and participation from LGBT+ staff (or staff with LGBT+ family members) who might otherwise be involved.

At the time of the focus groups the LGBT+ network pages on the external website did not appear to be up to date. Notably, the page highlighted activities undertaken by the network, QMOut, in 2013 and 2014 for IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia). Whilst it was encouraging to note that Queen Mary had observed IDAHOBIT in the past, it begged the question of how the institution had engaged with IDAHOBIT (and other major LGBT+ awareness days and/or celebrations) over the last five years.

It was acknowledged that the LGBT+ network was a grassroots effort, led by a few passionate, committed volunteers. There was no formal resource attributed to the network (no time, allocation, budget or provision of space to meet, work or organise). Not only did this limit the potential reach and impact of the network, it created an additional burden of work and responsibility for volunteers that was neither acknowledged nor recognised by the institution. This model is not sustainable in the long term. With the growth of the network, volunteers were increasingly feeling the strain. Without formal support or recognition from the institution there is a risk that volunteers may become disengaged, that network members feel disillusioned with Queen Mary's commitment to inclusion and the longevity of the network be compromised.

There was a common perception that trans inclusion was not well embedded across Queen Mary. An absence of clear policy and training was reported, and transgender, non-binary and gender-non-confirming identities were not considered to be well understood. There was a perception that information management systems were not currently equipped to support staff and student data updates. This risked undermining Queen Mary's culture of inclusion and could lead to alienation of transgender, non-binary and gender-non conforming staff and students.

This perception was further evidenced in the EDI section of the staff survey. Data suggested that just 20% of respondents identifying as gender non-confirming (intersex/non-binary or gender fluid), stated that Queen Mary values equality, diversity and inclusion. This was statistically significantly worse than the overall university score of 65%, and was indicative of the lack of perceived support and inclusion for gender non-confirming staff. Additionally, just 30% of gender non-confirming respondents reported that they had *not* witnessed bullying or harassment in the last 12 months, which, again, was statistically significantly worse than the overall university score of 66%, and could indicate that this group is more likely to be exposed to negative behaviours.

Although it was recognised that there had been some effort to support and celebrate the LGBT+ inclusion agenda at an institutional level, this was not considered to have been well executed. The raising of a rainbow flag, by SET in support of LGBT+ History Month (LGBTHM), but without the presence of the network or LGBT+ ambassadors, had led many network members to question the authenticity of Queen Mary's commitment to LGBT+ inclusion. Additionally, logos created for Pride month did not appropriately or accurately reflect the Pride rainbow flag, demonstrating a lack of institutional awareness, undermining the attempt at creating an inclusive logo and causing offence to some members of the community.

It was felt that the LGBT+ inclusion agenda was not as visible, celebrated or prioritised at Queen Mary compared with other London universities and HE establishments. The absence of a clear institutional strategy and demonstrable action in relation to LGBT+ inclusion was consistently acknowledged. For example, many staff commented on the lack of a centralised programme in place to observe LGBT+ awareness days such as LGBTHM, Pride, Transgender day of Visibility, Lesbian Day of Visibility, Bi Day of Visibility and National Coming Out Day amongst others.

Staff also reported that although Queen Mary was present at London Pride under the University of London umbrella, this contrasted to other London universities who marched in their own right under their own banners. This had led some staff (and potentially students) to question the authenticity of Queen Mary's overall commitment to the LGBT+ inclusion agenda.

There was a shared perception that leadership and members of SET could do much more to actively champion and visibly support the network and the broader LGBT+ inclusion agenda. There was a feeling that without clear leadership and engagement from the top there was a risk that LGBT+ inclusion would not be given the attention, focus or visibility that it required and that

LGBT+ inclusive values and behaviours would not be cascaded throughout the organisation.

There was recognition from staff that data on Queen Mary's LGBT+ staff population was limited and unlikely to be representative. Data from the staff survey demonstrated that 9% of survey respondents identified as LGB+. This is significantly above the UK average of 2% and the London average of 2.6%¹³. This suggests strong engagement with the survey from Queen Mary's LGB+ population. This may be down to support from the staff network, QMOut, who actively signposted the survey and encouraged members to participate.

Whilst the overall LGB+ self-identification rates are encouraging, it is important to note that 10% of respondents chose not to disclose, selecting a '*prefer not to say*' option. This suggests that more can be done to create a culture where staff at Queen Mary feel comfortable and at ease disclosing their sexual orientation.

¹³<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017>