May 2005

Equal opportunities and diversity for staff in higher education

National survey of equal opportunities practices

Project 6

Report to HEFCE, SHEFC, HEFCW by Dr Karen Ross, Coventry University

National survey of equal opportunities practices

Dr Karen Ross
Project Leader

School of Art and Design
Coventry University
Priory Street
Coventry CV1 5FB

February 2004

Background

During the progress of our previous project to formulate the *Meeting the Challenge* video resource pack, we sought examples of good practice in equality and diversity initiatives from individual HEIs, to include in the training pack. However, we found equality and diversity strategies have not been mapped within the HE sector. This is surprising when all HEIs have equality and diversity policies, and since May 2002, all HEIs must have policy responses to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. The production of a 'road map' for training began to emerge as a potential new project. Whilst reviews of specific programmes such as the *Athena* Project to promote equality for women specifically in science, engineering and technology **have** been undertaken, the resulting reports do not seem to have been widely disseminated, perhaps because such reports have been written for the funders of the research or the individual HEI rather than with a view to sharing findings. But the net effect is that review findings tend to remain in-house and good practice therefore remains locked within institutions and cannot inform the development of other strategies in other places.

Aims and objectives

To undertake a mapping survey (via questionnaire and interview) of good practice amongst HEIs in terms of specific equality and diversity strategies which they have developed over the past few years; and to determine the extent to which those strategies have achieved their objectives and/or what challenges arose which mitigated their success. Dissemination of such strategies tends to be on an ad hoc basis and this project also aimed to make a more systematic survey of the sector, using existing networks of staff (development) trainers within HEIs as the primary respondent base. The project sought to gather relevant data which could be organised into a 'mapping' survey as well as a series of case studies, which would be available as both a hard copy document as well as via an online, searchable database (www.edihe.info).

Methods

This project commenced in April 2003 and the first tasks were to develop the principal questionnaire instrument and determine what would be the most successful means by which to encourage the highest number of responses to be returned. Initially, then, we developed a questionnaire to get a sense of the scope and range of equality and diversity strategies which exist, from equality monitoring systems to mentoring and shadowing schemes for black and minority ethnic staff, to women into leadership programmes. We piloted the questionnaire with a small number of staff development colleagues and also with Amy Hayward at HEFCE. We then refined the questionnaire, incorporating all suggestions received – **see Appendix 1**.

In early June, we emailed a letter of invitation to the University Personnel Association (UPA) listserv, to which most Heads of Personnel/Human Resources (HR) subscribe – **see Appendix 2**. The invitation outlined the purpose of the project and asked recipients to either complete an online questionnaire or request a Word version to be sent by email. The initial response was very poor, with only a handful of completed questionnaires being returned in the first three weeks of the mailout. At the end of June, we sent a slightly modified version of the invitation to the equal opportunities (EO) administrators' mailbase and this generated a much higher volume of responses. In a number of cases, parts of the form were completed by different people in an HEI, with one person being responsible for finally returning the completed form. In mid-July, we send personalised emails to all the delegates who attended the regional launches of the *Meeting the Challenge* resource pack and this generated a few more responses. In mid-July, we sent a personalised email to the Heads of HR of all HEIs who had by then still not completed a questionnaire. In early September, we sent a follow-up reminder to the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) which used its own personalised mailbase of Heads of HR to send the invitation again, this time accompanied by a memo by the ECU encouraging participation in the project. In mid-September, we sent a follow-up

reminder to the EO administrators' mailbase. By mid-November, we had received replies from 87 HEIs, from across the pre- and post-1992 sector, with a good geographical spread and a good mix of HEI type, including HE colleges and specialist institutions.

Given the difficulty of trying to obtain a significant response rate and the number of strategies we employed to increase numbers, we were well into September before we had a sufficient sample base from which to identify potential case study HEIs. We were conscious that, with the beginning of the new academic year underway, asking people to give us the amount of time required to construct an in-depth case study was no longer feasible. Instead, we decided to approach people with a view to asking them about one particular initiative which they had mentioned in their questionnaire response. In this way we hoped to elicit a modest amount of information from a large number of HEIs which would give a taster of different kinds of initiatives. We decided to focus on making the database of good practice as useable as possible, with as many examples as possible, together with contact information to enable good practice to be shared and followed up. By only asking staff to talk about one particular initiative, we hoped to encourage a high level of secondary participation from HEIs who had already submitted a completed questionnaire.

In the end, this strategy was reasonably successful and we eventually received profiles from 54 HEIs, having spent time developing a matrix of initiatives to ensure that we could generate a number of different examples of the same kind of strategy, such as promoting diversity programmes, or a women managers' network, or childcare voucher schemes. In the process of talking to people about one initiative, staff would often tell us about other things they were doing, so some HEIs have more than one profile entry on the database. The project database includes 89 profiles on a variety of equality and diversity initiatives including training programmes, employee support schemes and diversity networks.

Where we spoke to staff about a particular training programme or personal development initiative, we also sent a questionnaire for distribution to individuals who had participated in that particular programme or strategy. One of our original aims had been to determine the factors for a successful (or otherwise) equality or diversity strategy and we decided that this might be better answered by participants than by the individuals who devised and ran the programmes. We received 53 questionnaire responses back from individuals who had been involved in a variety of programmes and their perspectives are important in identifying the strategies and formats which work and the things which don't – see website for 'Participants comments' section and **Appendix 3 for examples of the participant questionnaires.**

We began designing the website for the project in late October and by the end of December we had a test site available for participating HEIs to visit and approve their entries. Although we had already sent all participating HEIs a text copy of their entry/ies for approval, we felt it was important that individuals had the opportunity of looking at their entry as it would finally appear on the website. We also incorporated comments about the website's useability as we were testing it and refined the site during December 2003 and January 2004.

Project website
It became clear to us, as we talked about the project with colleagues, that its greatest use to the HE community would be as an online and searchable database of good practice. Although all the content is formatted to be printer-friendly, we do not imagine that many people will want to print out the whole site but rather will select specifically relevant information during any one visit. The project's principal outcome, then, is the development of the online database, although the site has a number of other sources of information including a summary of questionnaire responses of the 87participating HEIs, anonymous comments about different programmes and strategies, a small database of

equality and diversity trainers (recommended by some of the participating HEIs) and links to other useful sites.

Dissemination

Notification of the completion (and thus availability) of the website was posted to a number of HE websites, including the UPA and HE equal opportunities administrators' listservs, the ECU, UniversitiesUK and HEFCE websites. We also wrote short articles for the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and the Association of University Teachers' newsletter (*AUTlook*), and promoted the website at conferences and seminars.

The original proposal indicated an interest in developing a book-length manuscript from the project but the actual data gathered are not appropriate for such an undertaking. Instead, selected examples will be included in other publications which Karen Ross has been writing, as examples of good practice in equality and diversity work.

Due to a small underspend on the dissemination project (GMP326 'Meeting the Challenge'), HEFCE allowed us to carry over approximately £3,500 from this project to enable modifications to be made to the website as a result of users' feedback on useability, and to enable the project research assistant (Jane Osmond) to maintain the website for six months, from January to June 2004. This enabled us to keep the website up-to-date and to post up new material. In July 2004, the site was handed to HEFCE with the hope that it would continue to be maintained for at least a further 12 months.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
2003

Please use the tab key or mouse to navigate

Name of institution

About you – personal details

Name	
Post/job title	
Phone:	
Email	

How long have you worked at this institution? ☐ **0-3 years**   ☐ **4-9years**   ☐ **10 years plus**

About your institution

1   Does your institution have any of the following?

Equality/Diversity Committee	☐Yes ☐ No	
Equal Opportunity/Equalities Office/r	☐Yes ☐ No	
Disabilities Office/r	☐Yes ☐ No	
Harassment Adviser	☐Yes ☐ No	
Dignity at Work Adviser	☐Yes ☐ No	
Others not mentioned above	☐Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

2   Does your institution offer any of the following programmes/initiatives?

Programme		Who has access
Women into leadership/management	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Mentoring	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Getting promoted	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff

Careers counselling	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Workplace shadowing	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Retirement counselling	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Others not mentioned above:	☐Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

3 Does your institution offer training on any of the following?

Training		Who has access
Disability awareness	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Combating bullying and harassment	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Dignity at Work	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Race Relations Amendment Act	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
SENDA	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Promoting diversity	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Recruitment and Selection training	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Others not mentioned above	☐Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

4   Does your institution offer any of the following flexible working options?

Option		Who has access
Term-time contracts	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ academic staff ☐ support/admin staff ☐ academic and support/admin ☐ all staff
Flexitime	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ academic staff ☐ support/admin staff ☐ academic and support/admin ☐ all staff
Job share	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ academic staff ☐ support/admin staff ☐ academic and support/admin ☐ all staff
Career breaks	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ academic staff ☐ support/admin staff ☐ academic and support/admin ☐ all staff
Others not mentioned above	☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

5   Has your institution been involved in any of the following <u>national</u> schemes?

Women at the Top Management Scheme	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Athena Programme	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Race for Opportunity	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Opportunity 2000	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Employers' Network on Disability	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Others not mentioned above:	☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

6   Does your institution support and/or facilitate <u>informal </u>networking amongst any of the following staff groups?

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Women managers	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Single parents	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Staff with disabilities	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Contract researchers	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Others not mentioned above:	☐ Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

7   Does your institution provide any of the following facilities/services

Facility/service		Who has access?
Workplace nursery	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Childcare vouchers	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Pensions advice	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Prayer room	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Holiday play scheme	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Availability of culturally-specific food, eg halal meat, kosher meals, etc.	☐Yes ☐ No	☐academic staff ☐support/admin staff ☐academic and support/admin ☐all staff
Others not mentioned above:	☐Yes ☐ No	If yes please describe in box:

8   Has your institution undertaken (or is intending to undertake) any of the following:

Gender Pay Audit	☐ No ☐Yes ☐ Intending to	
Disability Access Audit	☐No ☐Yes ☐ Intending to	
Race Audit (using the Leeds University Anti-Racist Toolkit}	☐No ☐Yes ☐ Intending to	
Others not mentioned above:	☐No ☐Yes ☐ Intending to	If yes please describe in box:

9   Does your institution have <u>targets </u>for the recruitment and promotion of particular groups, eg women, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic staff?

☐Yes ☐ No

If yes, could you give a couple of examples of how you are working towards achieving those targets?

10 Does your institution have joint working parties on developing equality and diversity strategies with union representatives?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, could you give a couple of examples?

```
[                                                                    ]
```

11 Does your institution have a 'Bobby Approved' website, ie, meets minimum standards for accessibility by people with disabilities?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about your institution's approach to equality and diversity issues in relation to staff?

```
[                                                                    ]
```

Thank you for completing this form

Can you please email to j.osmond@coventry.ac.uk

APPENDIX 2

Letter of invitation sent to the UPA listserv

Dear colleague

Equality and Diversity Initiatives in Higher Education

We are working in collaboration with HEFCE on a project which aims to map the sector's equality and diversity activities in order to produce a searchable database of good practice initiatives. The database will be uploaded to the HEFCE website in January 2004 and will contain short summaries of specific equality and diversity initiatives, together with relevant contact details. It will also provide more broadly-based comparative data on equality and diversity practices across the sector.

To this end, the first phase will comprise the collection of baseline data via an online questionnaire to identify which HEIs are undertaking specific equality and diversity initiatives. The second phase will be interview-based, where we will be seeking to talk to staff in personnel and staff development and equality officers about the objectives and outcomes of specific initiatives which were mentioned in their questionnaire response. The third phase will also be interview-based, this time seeking the views of individual staff who have been participants in particular training initiatives in order to gain more personal and experiential data about what works and who benefits.
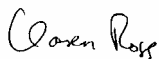
This is the first phase of the project - we have prepared two versions of the questionnaire, one accessed as an online form – www.coventry.ac.uk/equal/survey.htm
and the other downloadable as an interactive Word document –
www.coventry.ac.uk/equal/wordsurvey.htm

We have provided the interactive Word version in case all the 'answers' are not readily to hand, so that the form can be completed over a longer period and then emailed to Jane Osmond when finished.

We do hope that you will be able to participate in this study, at least in this initial phase: it is sometimes difficult to find out about other HEIs' experiences of developing equality initiatives and it would be useful to share information within the sector rather than reinvent the wheel continuously.

We look forward to your response in due course.

With all good wishes

Karen Ross
Project Leader
Equality and Diversity Initiatives in HE Project

PS – please note that both forms are best viewed in Explorer.

APPENDIX 3

Participating HEIs

Anglia Polytechnic University
Aston University
Bishop Grosseteste College
Bournemouth University
Brunel University
Canterbury Christ Church University College
Central School of Speech and Drama
City College Norwich
City University London
College of St Mark and St John
Coventry University
Cranfield University
Cumbria Institute of the Arts
Glasgow Caledonian University
Goldsmiths University of London
Heriot-Watt University
Heythrop College University of London
Imperial College London
Institute of Cancer Research
Keele University
King Alfred's, Winchester
King's College London
Kingston University
Lancaster University
Liverpool JMU
London Metropolitan University
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Middlesex University
Newman College of HE
Nottingham Trent University
Open University
Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies
Queen Mary, University of London
Queen's University Belfast
Royal Agricultural College
Royal College of Art
Royal Holloway, University of London
Royal Northern College of Music
Sheffield Hallam University
Southampton Institute
St George's Medical School, University of London
Staffordshire University
University College Chichester

University College London
University College Worcester
University of Aberdeen
University of Bath
University of Brighton
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
University of Central Lancashire
University of Durham
University of East London
University of Edinburgh
University of Essex
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Hertfordshire
University of Huddersfield
University of Hull
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Liverpool
University of Luton
University of Manchester
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
University of Plymouth
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of St Andrews
University of Strathclyde
University of Sunderland
University of Surrey Guildford
University of Surrey Roehampton
University of Sussex
University of Teesside
University of Ulster
University of Wales College of Medicine
University of Wales Swansea

APPENDIX 4

Examples of participant questionnaires

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION		
Networks		

Dear colleague

We are developing a database of equality and diversity initiatives and are interested in the views of individuals who are participating in institutionally-based networks. We understand that you are currently a member of such a network and would be grateful if you could answer a few questions about your involvement. We are keen to provide useful information to other HEIs considering developing their own networking initiatives, so that they can develop networks informed by the experiences of members. Please note that all replies will be treated in strict confidence and any responses which we include in the database will be anonymised.

Please email your response to Jane Osmond – j.osmond@coventry.ac.uk, or by mail to: Jane Osmond, CSAD (ET), Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB.

1. Are you	Female **x** ☐	Male ☐
2. What is your job title?	Diversity and Equal Opportunities Consultant	
3. What kind of network do you belong to?	☐ Black and Minority Ethnic staff ☐ **x** Disabled staff ☐ Women managers ☐ Single parents ☐ LGBT ☐ Contract Researchers	
4. What did you hope to gain from your membership of the network?	Learn from others in order to implement good practice	
5. Were those hopes met?	Yes **x** ☐	No ☐
6. If not, why not?		
7. Can you briefly describe how this network operates?	Small task group with people with disabilities and interested individuals. We meet, identify the issues, discuss ways forward, consult, plan and implement	

8. What is the single most important part of being a member of this network?	I learn from others, gauge degrees of commitment, build on being trusted to make a different (in time)
9 Do you meet up with other members of the network outside work?	Yes ☐ No **x** ☐
10. How do you think your HEI benefits from facilitating this network?	More expertise, more visible commitment and listening to staffs views
11. What (if anything) would make the network function more effectively for you?	More sharing of the work, and greater participation from all members

Thanks very much for your assistance.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Theatre Workshops: Race Awareness

COVENTRY
UNIVERSITY

Dear colleague

We are developing a database of equality and diversity initiatives and are interested in the views of individuals who have participated in a variety of personal development, equality and diversity programmes. We understand that you have recently participated in a race awareness programme using theatre workshops and would be grateful if you could answer a few questions about your experiences. We are keen to provide useful information to other HEIs considering developing their own programmes, so that they can build content which people find helpful and avoid activities which most people believe work less well. Please note that all replies will be treated in strict confidence and any responses which we include in the database will be anonymised.

Please email your response to Jane Osmond – j.osmond@coventry.ac.uk, or by mail to: Jane Osmond, CSAD (ET), Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB.

1. Are you	Female ☐x	Male ☐
2. What is your job title?	Principal Lecturer	
3. What did you hope to get out of participating in the workshops?	• Increased awareness • Sharing experiences • Action pointers	
4. Were those hopes met?	Yes ☐x	No ☐
5. If not, why not?		
6. Thinking about the workshops, what worked best for you?	• The actors' 'role plays' • Well facilitated • Could relate to them	
7. What worked least well for you?	Some of the discussion, but mostly interesting and informative	
8. For you personally, what is the single most important learning outcome from your participation in	Increased awareness and opportunity of discussing issues	

the workshops?	
9. How do you think your HEI benefits from supporting this workshop?	**In identifying situations and development action to reduce/eliminate ALL discrimination**
10. What suggestions would you give to someone developing a new race awareness workshop programme?	Also needs to consider/include racists attitudes held by black/Asian etc people toward white people – discrimination goes both/all ways

Thanks very much for your assistance.