

January 2007/01

Policy development

Final scheme

This document explains how we will meet our statutory duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. It brings together the Council's race, disability and gender equality schemes and sets out an equality action plan to address these issues.

The HEFCE Equality Scheme

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Foreword from Professor David Eastwood, Chief Executive of HEFCE

The HEFCE Equality Scheme is intended to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the law. The scheme aims to integrate equality and fair treatment issues into our core priorities and functions.

Leadership and commitment at all levels of the organisation are central to the success of the scheme. In everything we do, we will consider how we can ensure that we do not consciously or unconsciously discriminate against or disadvantage individuals or groups, and we will seek opportunities to promote equality and diversity wherever we can.

Higher education institutions are individually subject to the requirements of the legislation. Our scheme is designed to complement the work that is, and will be, taking place in the sector, and to offer support and guidance where this is useful and needed.

Our approach is described in detail in this document. The practical steps to be taken are presented as an equality action plan, to alert those in the Council and in the higher education sector to the work that needs to be done if we are to address the challenges effectively and meet the requirements of the legislation. Equality must be modelled in everything we are doing as a funding council, policy maker and employer.

The scheme has been subject to extensive consultation within the higher education sector and with other stakeholders. In general we have received a strongly positive response to our integrated approach, and have taken on board some suggestions to improve the scheme. We are committed to the continuing development of this scheme, and will be reviewing it regularly.

I would like to thank all those who have helped us develop our scheme and to everyone who has committed to working with us as we implement it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Eastwood', written in a cursive style.

Professor David Eastwood
Chief Executive

The HEFCE Equality Scheme

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions
Of interest to those responsible for	Equality and diversity management, Human resources management, Strategic planning
Reference	2007/01
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Enquiries to	e-mail equality@hefce.ac.uk tel 0117 931 7316

Introduction

Purpose

1. This is HEFCE's first merged Equality Scheme. It sets out our approach to equality and diversity, both for ourselves as an employer of 260 staff, and as a major funder of higher education in England. The Equality Scheme responds to our statutory duties to promote equality in three areas – race, disability and gender. The statutory duties are under the following legislation:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006.

Key points

2. The Equality Scheme includes our Equality Action Plan at Annex A, which lists our actions for all three areas, and our race, disability and gender equality schemes (at Annexes B, C and D respectively). The Race Equality Scheme at Annex B was originally produced in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It was consulted on in May 2002 and revised fundamentally in 2004; this is largely unchanged from when it was published as HEFCE 2005/04. The gender and disability equality schemes are newly created in response to the legislation listed in paragraph 1.

3. This document brings together our race, disability and gender equality schemes and sets out an equality action plan to address these issues. Currently there are no statutory positive duties in place to promote equality on the basis of sexual orientation, age, and religion and belief. However, we are aiming to go beyond meeting our positive statutory duties, and are committed to integrating these other strands into our Equality Scheme, so that it reflects the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. We are currently at

the planning stage of embedding these three strands into our action plan. This is an ongoing process and a high priority for us in the coming months.

HEFCE's Equality Scheme and the higher education sector

4. This Equality Scheme is intended for HEFCE, as a public sector employer of 260 staff, and as a major funder of higher education. It is also intended as guidance for the higher education sector in developing their respective schemes in response to the statutory requirements under race, disability and gender. The Equality Action Plan in Annex A details all the actions from the three schemes. Action points which have a direct impact on the higher education sector are shaded.

Equality in the higher education sector

5. We are committed to helping achieve equality for all who learn and work in higher education (HE) and for our own staff. For students, we aim to ensure that all those with the potential to benefit from higher education have the opportunity to do so, whatever their background and whenever they need it. Where appropriate we also want to help higher education institutions (HEIs) develop a more demonstrably fair and supportive environment for their staff.

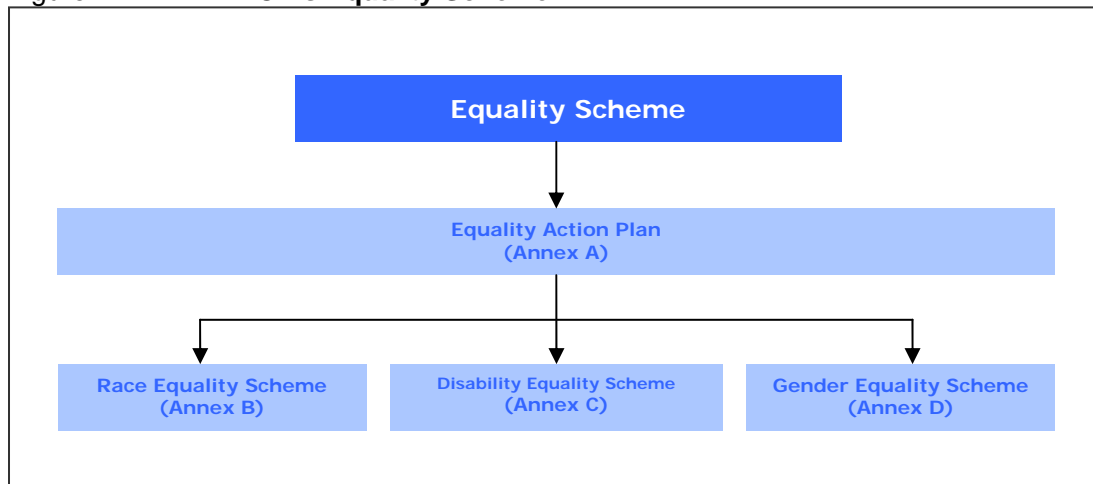
6. We promote diversity and equality in employment at HEFCE. We aim to have a diverse and well motivated workforce where all colleagues are treated fairly and with respect. We have set out our approach for gender, race and disability equality in HE within our individual equality schemes (see Annexes B, C and D).

7. Our Equality Scheme will help us to achieve our aims and give us a framework for action across all equality strands, particularly for the three that have positive duties associated with them: race, disability and gender. We believe that a combined scheme will make us better able to communicate and manage our equality commitments and action. We also believe that publishing one combined scheme is a low-burden approach to equality. This scheme demonstrates our commitment to go beyond mere compliance with the legislation, and to move towards mainstreaming equality and diversity by bringing together our work into one place, consulting widely on it and putting in place a comprehensive equality action plan to ensure our commitments are carried out.

Navigation of this Equality Scheme

8. This Equality Scheme provides an overarching view of our action plan for race, disability and gender, and respective equality schemes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 HEFCE's Equality Scheme



9. We have statutory duties to produce race, disability and gender equality schemes. Annex A, the Equality Action Plan, sets out the actions we are going to take to implement our race, disability and gender equality schemes. The schemes are at Annexes B, C and D. The three schemes are discrete and each meets our statutory duties in the respective equality area, but they are linked by virtue of being part of the

overall Equality Scheme. We are committed to avoiding duplication wherever possible, and are looking to streamline the race, disability, and gender equality schemes to better reflect the Equality Action Plan, where it will be possible to identify common and distinct themes for each of the equality strands. This will be developed into future versions of the scheme.

About HEFCE, our role and strategic aims

10. Our mission is:

Working in partnership, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) promotes and funds high quality, cost-effective teaching and research meeting the diverse needs of students, the economy and society.

11. HEFCE was set up by the Government in 1992 as a non-departmental public body. This means that we work within a policy framework set by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills but we are not part of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). We have distinct statutory duties of our own.

12. We distribute public money to universities and colleges in England that provide higher education. In 2006-07 we will allocate £6.7 billion in public funds to higher education institutions and those further education colleges (FECs) that deliver higher education. Our funds support four main areas of activity in institutions, which are:

- widening participation and fair access
- enhancing excellence in learning and teaching
- enhancing excellence in research
- enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society.

13. In addition to the distribution of funding for higher education, we are accountable for the proper use of public funds and for ensuring that the sector is financially healthy and well managed. We provide independent advice to Government on the funding needs and development of higher education in England. We ensure that the quality of learning and teaching is assessed. We identify and disseminate good practice, and contribute to evidence-informed policy development.

14. Our strategic aims are described in our 2006-11 strategic plan (HEFCE 2006/13). The key issues associated with each are outlined below.

Widening participation and fair access

15. Through our work in widening participation, we aim to ensure that all those with the potential to benefit from higher education have the opportunity to do so, whatever their background and whenever they need it. Widening participation concerns groups with below average participation rates in higher education. Under-representation is closely connected with issues of equity and social inclusion, so we are concerned with opportunities for disabled students and for mature students; and with equality of opportunity for men and women and those from minority ethnic communities.

Enhancing excellence in learning and teaching

16. Learning and teaching are at the heart of HE. They are core activities for all universities and colleges, and feature strongly in public perceptions of the HE sector's role and achievements. As learners become more diverse and stakeholders demand more and varied outcomes, the challenges faced by HEIs and FECs in regard to learning and teaching are becoming increasingly complex.

Enhancing excellence in research

17. Maintaining a dynamic, world-class research sector within HE is crucial to economic prosperity and national wellbeing. The starting point is our role within the dual-support system for the public funding of research, in supporting the core research infrastructure, underpinning work funded by other research funding bodies, and enabling the HE sector to undertake curiosity-driven research. Our approach to research policy also reflects the shared aim of the countries of the European Union to develop a knowledge-driven economy powered by a strong and innovative research base, and our belief that the UK is well-placed to play a leading role in achieving this. Against this background our approach to funding research, and to supporting the continuing development of the research base within HE, is informed by three key principles: excellence, financial sustainability and dynamism.

Enhancing the contribution of HE to the economy and society

18. As a nation we need to explore and redefine our sources of comparative advantage in the face of more challenging competition (from countries such as China and India), and to move beyond competing on price towards competing increasingly in innovative and high value-added markets. We also need to improve productivity and management of innovation, particularly in the existing workforce. The Government's framework for science and innovation highlights the considerable role that the HE knowledge base can and will play as a source of the country's global competitiveness, creating ideas, entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, as well as enhancing skills, management capability and productivity.

19. We are also committed to higher education's contribution to society, and will focus more on our support for the HE sector to contribute to the wider social agenda. This includes its contribution to civic life and developing civilising values; social, community and environmental support and regeneration; cultural, intellectual and moral enrichment; and participation as a nation and as individuals in global development, communication and problem-solving. We stress that contributing to the economy and to society are not mutually exclusive goals, we see them as inseparable. We will articulate and implement a strategy for the social dimension to the third stream funding.

20. Underpinning the strategic aims above are two cross-cutting ones, which follow.

Sustaining a high quality sector

21. Sustaining the HE sector's high standing globally and its major contribution nationally, regionally and locally is vitally important. This is a significant challenge at a time when other countries are investing more in their HE systems – and when the needs

of students, employers and others are changing and becoming more demanding. We believe that a diverse HE sector of autonomous institutions working with the full confidence of their stakeholders is the key to success. However, increasing competition will require greater focus by individual HEIs, building on their strengths and communicating their distinctiveness through powerful brands.

Enabling excellence (HEFCE as an organisation)

22. How we perform as an organisation has a major impact on how over £6 billion of public money is spent each year, how well it is accounted for, what outcomes it delivers, and how far value for money is secured. Our performance affects how universities and colleges understand and respond to the national policies and priorities that drive our allocation of these funds. It also affects stakeholders' perceptions of the English HE system – including students here and overseas. Within this context, our cross-cutting aim of enabling excellence seeks to ensure that we have the capacity and capability to deliver our strategic aims.

Equality aims for the sector

23. Our aims in relation to equality are to help the HE sector in England improve the diversity of its students, staff, leaders and governors. We do this with the support of expert bodies such as the Equality Challenge Unit, the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for HE, who are already implementing measures to help institutions support a more diverse student population, update their employment practices, and develop leaders for the future who will reflect such diversity.

24. We understand that this process of change in higher education will be demanding for both us and the sector. We appreciate that issues of equality are not always clear-cut and that discrimination can affect people in different ways. For instance, a person may experience discrimination on the basis of more than one identity, such as their disability and gender, or their race and religion. The notion of multiple identity is one which underpins our Equality Scheme and approach to equality. While we are required by law to have separate schemes for race, disability and gender we know that equality is a multi-dimensional issue. We look forward to the creation of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which we hope will bring the separate areas of equality closer together.

25. Our scheme has been written taking into account both our strategic aims and the above equality aims. It is backed up by a detailed Equality Action Plan (Annex A) which allocates responsibility to individuals across the Council for implementing equalities duties in their areas of work.

Our approach

26. We are a relatively small organisation that deals with a range of complex policy-related initiatives and services delivered to a wide range of stakeholders. Our scheme must be capable of handling that complexity, and the complexity of the issues related to equal opportunities. As a result it needs to:

- reflect the structure and focus of the equalities legislation

- take account of the work that is already being done in HEFCE and HEIs to promote equality
- build as far as practicable on existing plans, initiatives, processes and mechanisms in order to mainstream equality across our work.

27. We are committed to meeting our obligations under the equalities legislation and acting as a beacon of good practice for the sector. To so do, we will use the specific duties, including this scheme, to make equality and fair treatment – irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief – an underpinning theme in the development, delivery and refinement of our policies, initiatives and services and in the way we manage our staff.

28. The various pieces of legislation aim to put equality at the core of public service delivery as part of good generic management practice, and to ensure that a strategy and action plan are in place in every public body to eliminate conscious and unconscious discrimination. We recognise that the equalities legislation does require additional activity and work, but that these are separately justified by the benefits.

29. As an accountable body, we have primary responsibility for ensuring that the public funds we allocate are spent properly and to maximum effect. At the same time, HEIs are independent institutions and we are concerned to ensure that accountability requirements placed on them are not excessive or inappropriate. HEIs are not directly accountable to HEFCE for ensuring that they meet the requirements of equalities legislation.

30. Our equality scheme is therefore designed not to impose an additional burden on HEIs, nor to substitute for their own strategies and action plans for addressing equality, but to rather complement their activities. We will annually review our scheme and develop support for the sector, offering information and guidance, and disseminating good practice in equality.

Responsibility for the Equality Scheme

31. This Equality Scheme is managed by our leadership, governance and management (LGM) team, with input from across the organisation. Action plans relating to it are now embedded in our corporate planning structure and within individual team plans across HEFCE. Our human resources department has an equality and diversity policy separate from this scheme, which deals with our approach and duties as an employer. We will review the need for this equality and diversity policy to be incorporated more fully into the Equality Scheme.

32. The project manager and internal equality team will develop subsequent versions of the scheme, updating the action plans and handling enquiries. They can be contacted by e-mail, equality@hefce.ac.uk, or telephone, 0117 931 7316. Steve Egan, our deputy chief executive has responsibility for this area. HEFCE's Chair and Board have the ultimate legal accountability for compliance with all equality legislation.

Legislative context

33. Three pieces of legislation are central to our Equality Scheme. These are:
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A)
 - Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005
 - Equality Act 2006.
34. These laws impose positive duties on all public bodies to promote race, disability and gender equality in everything that we do. The general duties for each are outlined below, and the specific duties are explained in the individual equality schemes in Annexes B to D.
35. Under the general duty of the RR(A)A, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
 - promote equality of opportunity
 - promote good relations between people of different races.
36. Under the DDA 2005, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
 - eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
 - eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities
 - promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
 - encourage participation by disabled people in public life
 - take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.
37. Under the Equality Act, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act, and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act
 - promote equality of opportunity between men and women.
38. We acknowledge that equality and diversity mean more than the promotion of race, disability and gender equality. We therefore regard the following legislation as relevant to our Equality Scheme:
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.
39. These laws do not have positive duties to *promote* equality associated with them but they do apply to employment and the provision of further and higher education. We must therefore ensure that through our functions, policies and employment practices, we are not discriminating on any of these grounds.

Background and summary of work already undertaken

40. We have been actively promoting equality for some years. Since the mid-1990s we have developed policy and funding initiatives relating to disabled students, and have been supporting good practice initiatives such as the Athena Project (promoting women in science, engineering and technology employment in HE) since 1999. In May 2002, we published our first Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan in response to the RR(A)A, and in 2006 we have produced an Equality Scheme to bring together our legal duties and wider commitments.

41. In 2001, we worked with the other UK HE funding councils (as well as Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals, now known as GuildHE) to establish the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), to work with HEIs on all aspects of equality for staff in HE. We have enjoyed a strong relationship with the ECU, working on joint projects (for example, the review of HEIs' race equality policies in 2002). We recently agreed to extend its funding to 2010 and to broaden its remit to include student equality issues.

42. Since 1999 we have funded projects to promote good practice in leadership, governance and management in HEIs. This started as the Good Management Practice Programme and is now the Leadership, Governance and Management Fund. Both of these programmes have funded projects on enhancing equality and diversity practice in HEIs.

43. We evaluate the impact and outcomes of our work on equality through a range of methods. For instance, an independent evaluation of our LGM Fund will (in late 2006) examine the impact of projects on equality and diversity practices in HEIs. Additionally, we recently conducted a review of the ECU's effectiveness, which has led to its extended funding and remit.

Partnership working

44. We work at a strategic level in the HE sector and therefore must deliver activity with the help of other organisations. Sometimes such partners are HEIs themselves (for example, through the LGM Fund), sometimes we engage with groups, such as the Higher Education Race Action Group (which is serviced by the ECU), and sometimes we link up with other organisations that also work at a sector level. A good example of this is the additional funding we have given to the Higher Education Academy to carry out work to support disabled students. Specific partnerships related to gender, race and disability are described in the individual schemes in Annexes B to D.

Development of the Equality Scheme

45. The actions we have undertaken to arrive at this version of our Equality Scheme are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 **Actions to develop our Equality Scheme**

Date	Action	Outcome
October 2005	Office of Public Management (OPM) consultants met with every HEFCE department individually to brief them about the new duties and undertake initial equality action planning with them.	OPM produced draft equality action plans for each team, which form the basis of the Equality Action Plan, and a report for the Council which summarised key themes and issues.
December 2005	An internal HEFCE project team was formed to further develop the equality schemes, which had representatives from the LGM, widening participation (WP) and regional teams.	Cross-Council working helped to make the scheme detailed and effective. As a result action plans are cohesive.
February 2006	First meeting of a working group with our counterparts at the DfES and the Learning and Skills Council to discuss joint approaches to equality schemes.	Ensured a joined-up approach to equality schemes is being taken across all three organisations.
May 2006	Consulted with the HEFCE trade union (PCS) and the ECU on our draft Equality Scheme.	Gained feedback, which fed into scheme improvements.
July 2006	This version of the Equality Scheme was approved by the HEFCE Board at its June 2006 meeting. Issued for consultation with the HE sector and others.	Feedback will be reported on the consultation responses and is reflected in this final Equality Scheme. The responses will be published in January 2007.

Reviewing and updating this Equality Scheme

46. Progress towards meeting our commitments detailed in the Equality Action Plan (see Annex A) will be reported annually to our Board, in line with our statutory duties under the RR(A)A, DDA 2005 and Equality Act. We commit to reviewing and updating this Equality Scheme annually. Our current strategic plan covers the period 2006-11. We make minor revisions to this each year to ensure that it stays up to date with our latest policy positions or context. It is intended that the scheme will fit into the development and planning cycle. We may make minor revisions or updates to it more frequently than that to ensure it stays up to date.

47. This scheme will be a web-based document (with a hard copy summary produced in an accessible format) to facilitate frequent updating.

Consultation and involvement

48. Consultation and involvement are both ways of ensuring we get the input we need to fulfil the various general duties highlighted at paragraphs 35-38. This Equality Scheme has been the subject to extensive consultation. We approached the consultation in an interactive way, with workshops, focus groups and surveys, to ensure as much involvement from different groups as possible, as well as engagement with HEIs.

49. We regard consultation on a new or existing policy as a fundamental and vital part of the policy development and evaluation process. We follow the protocols and minimum standards set out in our standards of service when carrying out consultations.¹ We aimed to ensure that our consultation was:

- a. Meaningful – genuinely feeding in to the decision-making process and timed to allow this to happen.
- b. Representative – based on a proper cross-section of views on whether the policy is likely to make a difference, by racial group, disability or gender.
- c. Effective – making a genuine impact on the policy development process.
- d. Appropriate for the topic and the groups involved.
- e. Promotes good practice in ensuring equalities groups' contribution and involvement are genuinely valued by HEFCE.

Our commitments relating to consultation and involvement for race, gender and disability specifically are described in more detail in the relevant schemes (Annexes B to D).

Impact assessment

50. Through impact assessment we can measure whether we have fulfilled the general duties highlighted at paragraphs 35-38. We are currently developing new arrangements for assessing and consulting on whether existing and proposed HEFCE policies would have an adverse impact on specific groups and opportunities for promoting equality. These new arrangements are being developed in response to the two new duties for disability and gender, and to an internal review of effectiveness of our existing mechanisms to conduct impact assessments for race equality. The approach will be fully developed and rolled out to all HEFCE staff in January 2007. Prior to this we have been assessing, in relation to new policy development and review of existing policy, the use of historical data, existing and new survey/feedback arrangements, population data (including census findings), and specially commissioned research using specifically convened meetings or focus groups.

51. Our new approach to impact assessment will be backed by issuing guidance to HEFCE staff, which will include training, and will link to the involvement of our staff in the Equality Scheme more broadly (see paragraphs 52-54). Pilot impact assessments using the new approach have been undertaken throughout autumn 2006, and this new process will be detailed in future versions of the Equality Scheme.

52. If, as a result of this new approach, we find that an existing or proposed HEFCE policy is likely to have an adverse impact on our ability to uphold equality on the basis of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, or religion or belief, then HEFCE staff responsible for the policy will consider the following:

- a. How we can best meet our duties under the legislation.

¹ See www.hefce.ac.uk under About us/Standards of Service.

- b. Alternatives that could meet the policy objectives without the adverse impact.
- c. Whether the adverse impact is unavoidable, and whether it can be justified in relation to the aims and importance of the policy. If we adapt the policy, could that compensate for any adverse effects?
- d. Taking measures that would help to reduce the predicted adverse impact.
- e. Where we wish to significantly change a policy to avoid adverse impact on equality, whether to undertake a further consultation.

53. For existing policies, we will also:

- a. Examine any relevant and appropriate data (both quantitative and qualitative).
- b. Generate relevant and appropriate data where they are not currently available, where feasible.
- c. If we determine that the policy is likely to have an adverse impact on equality, on the basis of race, disability or gender, we will apply the principles set out in paragraph 52. (We will carry out any impact assessment work in accordance with our good practice guidance published in 2004.²)
- d. Secure independent assessment of the impact of outcomes where necessary.

54. New pressures and projects can arise at any time, and policy makers must ensure that relevance of the Equality Scheme to any new work is considered at the outset. The HEFCE actions in the individual equality schemes will be reviewed annually. The nature and frequency of the review will be proportionate to the potential differential impact of the functions and policies on equality. Individual policy leaders are responsible for ensuring that these assessments take place, and they are named in the action plan.

Our monitoring arrangements

55. We have a statutory duty to monitor the HE sector for any adverse and differential impact on race of a HEFCE-sponsored policy or service. As of December 2006 and April 2007 respectively, this duty also applies to disability and gender equality. We will report on the results of that monitoring through an annual equalities report to our Board. We also have a statutory duty to monitor teaching staff by racial group under the RR(A)A, and we will monitor and publish the results of that monitoring annually. Since we can obtain data through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for students as well as staff, we are monitoring them in the same way as for staff.

56. We are committed to developing a monitoring framework that does not impose undue burdens on institutions, and does not seek to collect any data additional to that

² 'Conducting impact assessments for equal opportunities in higher education: A guide to good practice' (HEFCE 2004/37).

already being requested or collected as part of HEIs' own monitoring requirements. We will publish a summary of the monitoring information we collect on the HEFCE web-site and in other publications.

57. If we note any problems or discrepancies in the monitoring data collected which indicates an HEI is not complying with the legislation, we can offer guidance and support to that institution, in partnership with the ECU, to enable the HEI to rectify any problems. We have no enforcement powers under the legislation, as higher education institutions are not directly accountable to HEFCE in developing their respective schemes for race, disability, and gender.

58. We consulted on our monitoring arrangements for race equality in April 2004³ and received widespread support for our policies. Institutions strongly emphasised the need for us to reduce the administrative burden on them and not to impose additional data collection. It is important that we balance the concerns around burden and accountability against the relevance of a particular policy or practice on equality. Our approach uses outputs from institutions' own processes in order to minimise any additional work. In the rare instance where we require further data from HEIs in addition to that already collected through agencies such as HESA, we will do the following:

- conduct a regulatory impact assessment to ensure that the administrative burden on the sector is fully justified and understood
- only collect data or information from the sector that is essential to assessing the impact of a policy or process on equality.

59. Our monitoring arrangements will supplement where necessary, on a sector-wide basis, the work being undertaken by individual HEIs to explore whether policies and services impact differentially and adversely on people because of their race, disability or gender. For example, we will undertake the following work to support HEIs, at a sector level:

- measure levels of access to particular programmes
- undertake quantitative and qualitative data gathering
- analyse specific issues or emerging problem areas across the sector
- initiate new discussion forums
- identify and disseminate good practice
- review existing research findings.

Our communications

60. We have a number of methods of communicating with our stakeholders. For instance, we have a web-site, a newsletter (Council Briefing) and publications that we distribute on new policy developments or good practice initiatives. Our communications within the organisation include an intranet and a newsletter. Our Corporate Communications team oversees our communications activity and it regularly evaluates

³ See HEFCE 2004/16

the effectiveness of this through stakeholder surveys. It is committed to making our communication methods accessible, and regularly evaluates its performance in this area.

61. We are constantly seeking to engage effectively with our stakeholders and all the people who might be affected by our Equality Scheme. We recognise this may entail some creative thinking as some groups are known to be hard to reach or may not already be engaging with us through our established methods.

Publication

62. This scheme is published on our corporate web-site. It complies with the specific requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and the Equality Act 2006, which require a published disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006 and a published gender equality scheme by 7 April 2007.

HEFCE as an employer

63. We are a relatively small organisation, employing around 260 staff, and we believe it is important for our effectiveness to develop and reward high performance. We believe that everything we do needs to take place within a supportive learning culture, and that such a culture is best nurtured by a relatively flat structure and a non-bureaucratic style, where there is high respect for individual needs and diversity.

64. We have a diversity and equality policy, which describes how we aim to treat our staff and what happens if anyone contravenes that policy. It links to our formal harassment, disciplinary and grievance policies, which are highly relevant to equality. We regularly review our performance on staff equality through the collection and monitoring of data, consultation with our recognised trade union (the Public and Commercial Services Union, PCS), and an annual anonymised staff survey.

65. The actions related to our employment function, for instance the monitoring of our staff and applicants for jobs, and the prioritisation of the policies and functions we feel are particularly relevant to equality, are described in more detail in the individual schemes (Annexes B to D) and the Equality Action Plan (Annex A).

66. We are committed to training all our staff in equality and diversity. We have implemented equal opportunities training, which all members of staff attended in 2003. All new members of staff receive equal opportunities training as part of our induction programme. We also provide training for those staff that need specific skills to carry out their roles effectively (such as recruitment and selection, or race equality impact assessment). We are working on a further project to promote equality and diversity issues internally.

HEFCE governance

67. We are keen to ensure that our Board and committees reflect an increasingly diverse society. Our Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, usually for three years. We are monitoring the diversity of our Board and continue to advise the Secretary of State and the DfES about the need to ensure

adequate representation of all groups. Our Board and strategic committee members have all received detailed briefings on the requirements of the RR(A)A, DDA 2005 and Equality Act, and we issue these to new members as part of their formal inductions.

Reporting on and enforcing the Equality Scheme

68. Under the specific duties of the RR(A)A, the DDA 2005 and Equality Act, we have statutory duties to report annually on our schemes' progress. We will accomplish this by submitting an annual report to our Board, which will cover activity across the race, disability and gender schemes as well as other equality activity. The Board will also be asked to approve a revised Equality Action Plan each year, which takes account of the actions completed in the previous year. The annual reports to our Board will be published on our web-site each January.

69. Enforcement of the specific duties of the RR(A)A, DDA 2005 and Equality Act is the responsibility of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. From mid-2007, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights will be created to take on the enforcement powers of the existing commissions. HEFCE is not an enforcement body for higher education and it has no powers under any of the Acts to enforce equality or any of the positive duties within the sector. HEIs' own legal rights and responsibilities remain unaffected by this Equality Scheme.

Complaints against the Council

70. Our complaints procedure aims to maintain public confidence in the Council by ensuring that public accountability encompasses a fair, proper and constructive response to complaints. The Board has a semi-independent panel consisting of one non-executive Board member and two external lay members (drawn from a pool of suitably experienced figures independent of the Council) to consider complaints that cannot be resolved by our staff or chief executive. The effectiveness of the panel is periodically reviewed by the Board Audit Committee.

71. To make a complaint against the Council in relation to the Equality Scheme, see the HEFCE web-site under About us or request a leaflet from the Clerk to the Board at s.cannell@hefce.ac.uk.

Equality Action Plan

72. The first annual review of our Equality Action Plan will take place in July 2007. This will ensure that we can learn from the current plan, and that subsequent plans are effective and transparent in their aims and outcomes, whilst being able to respond to changing legislative requirements.

Annex A Equality Action Plan 2006-07



Actions that impact the higher education sector

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
1				Widening participation and fair access				
1.1	●	●	●	Annually monitor the student admissions to higher education and publish this information on the HEFCE web-site.	Annually in September	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	Web-based statistics and report	Ability to track numbers of people from equalities groups participating in HE
1.2	●	●	●	Continue work with UCAS and DfES to ensure that admissions mechanisms are bias-free and contain adequate equalities monitoring provisions.	Review in July 2007	John Thompson (Data Analyst)	Written update, possibly changes to UCAS process	Removing bias in admissions mechanisms so that more students from minority groups can access HE
1.3	●	●	●	Ensure that equality promotion is included in all WP publications, procurement and other documents.	Ongoing, reviewed in July 2006	All WP team	Various. References to HEFCE publications or invitations to tender	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.4	●	●	●	Assess the impact of new WP initiatives or policies to ensure they are bias-free for all equality areas.	Ongoing, reviewed in July 2006	All WP team	Various. Short reports on outcomes	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.5	●	●	●	Continue to identify opportunities to discuss equality and diversity issues associated with broader widening participation policy within the WP Strategic Committee.	Timetable of committee (three meetings per year)	Chris Scrase (Policy Officer)	Strategic committee minutes and reports to the HEFCE Board.	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.6	●	●	●	Promote findings from the joint HEFCE/ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme that specifically relate to supporting diverse students.	Reviewed in July 2006	Sarah Howls (Policy Officer)	Report	Better information to support the promotion of equality of opportunity

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
1.7	●	●	●	Review the final report of a major review of barriers to people wanting to enter higher education, explore outcomes and potential impacts relating to equalities issues.	September 2006 and ongoing	Sarah Howls (Policy Officer)	Final report published on the HEFCE web-site	Better information to support the promotion of equality of opportunity
1.8	●	●	●	Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of Aimhigher takes full account of equalities issues.	Annual	Helen Blencowe/ Chris Leonard (Senior Policy Officer)	Report	Aspirations and achievements of people in all equalities areas increase
1.9	●	●	●	Ensure Aimhigher practitioner site and Aimhigher portal are accessible and relevant to all equalities groups.	Reviewed September 2006	Chris Scrase (Policy Officer)	Accessible web-site	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.10	●	●	●	Ensure existing STEM (science, engineering, technology and mathematics) projects focus on increasing participation of all equalities groups.	Review in 2007	Katie Germer/ Sarah Howls (Policy Officer)	Regular feedback	Increase in equalities groups studying STEM subjects at HE
1.11	●	●	●	Ensure proposals for new STEM projects include a focus on increasing participation of all equalities groups.	Review in 2007	Katie Germer/ Sarah Howls (Policy Officer)	Proposal assessment	Increase in equalities groups studying STEM subjects at HE
1.12	●	●	●	Promote the need for Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) to ensure their materials, processes and procedures are accessible and relevant to people from equalities groups.	Review in 2007	Jenny Allen (Policy Officer)	Appropriate materials, processes and procedures	Vocational progression for equalities groups improves
1.13	●	●	●	Work with LLN practitioner group to ensure that curriculum development positively takes into account the needs of diverse students.	Review in 2007	Jenny Allen (Policy Officer)	Appropriate curriculum developed	Vocational progression for equalities groups improves
1.14	●	●	●	National monitoring and evaluation of LLN programmes carried out to identify their impact on people from all equalities groups.	2009	Jenny Allen (Policy Officer)	Report	Vocational progression for equalities groups improves
1.15	●	●	●	Ensure LLNs own evaluation strategy includes identifying the impact on people from all equalities groups	Review in 2007	Jenny Allen (Policy Officer)	Strategy report	Vocational progression for equalities groups improves
1.16	●	●	●	Develop institutional profiles to include their specific equality policies.	Review in 2007	Helen Blencowe (Policy Officer)	Database	Better information to support the promotion of equality of opportunity

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
1.17	●	●	●	Share good practice on equality in specific thematic areas such as partnerships. Key areas will be Action on Access, Disability Equality Partnership and Aimhigher communications.	Ongoing, reviewed in July 2006	Chris Scrase/ Katie Germer (Policy Officer)	Good practice on equality included in joint publications.	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.18	●	●	●	Explore ways in which Action on Access, the Communications Resources Team and the Disability Equality Partnership can access groups outside their own networks (sharing information on good practice with business, advertising conferences more widely).	Ongoing, reviewed in July 2006	Chris Scrase/ Katie Germer (Policy Officer)	Various	Promote positive attitudes in all equalities areas
1.19	●	●	●	To incorporate the ability to summarise by race, disability and gender into the Longitudinal Survey of Destination of HEI Leavers	January 2007	All WP team	Database	Better information to support the promotion of equality of opportunity
1.20	●			Audit Aimhigher plans for references to interventions relating to people from minority ethnic groups.	September 2006	Chris Leonard (Senior Policy Officer)	Report	Better information to support the promotion of equality of opportunity
1.21			●	Continue to deliver equality policy for disabled students through the Disability Equality Partnership.	Review in 2007	Katie Germer (Policy Officer)	Regular feedback and short reports	Promote positive attitudes to and involvement of disabled people
2				Enhancing excellence in learning and teaching				
2.1	●	●	●	Monitor the responses from the 2005 and 2006 National Student Survey and investigate any sector-wide differences emerging.	2005 results: December 2006 2006 results: spring 2007	Louisa Baker (Policy Officer)	Report	Relationship with the Higher Education Academy and the Equality Challenge Unit to identify the ways to enhance the experience of students from a minority ethnic background, or who have a disability.
2.2	●	●	●	Work with regional teams and institutions to support and monitor the equality and diversity dimension in institutions' learning and teaching strategies, and disseminate any resultant good practice.	Review in 2007	Peter Seddon (Policy Officer)	Publication issued annually to include feedback on the annual monitoring	Promote greater awareness within the Council and across the sector of current best practice

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
							statement	
2.3	●	●	●	Monitor the Higher Education Academy's progress on embedding equality through its annual report and business plan.	January 2006 and ongoing annually	Peter Seddon (Policy Officer)	Higher Education Academy's annual report	Relationship with the Higher Education Academy will demonstrate the Council's commitment to actively promoting the needs of a diverse student body
2.4	●	●	●	Build equality and the support for diverse students into HEFCE's contracts with the Higher Education Academy (includes the development of professional standards for HE teachers), the QAA and Foundation Degree Forward.	Ongoing, reviewed in December 2006	Alan Palmer (Policy Officer)	Various, including funding agreements and annual reports	All relationships with partner bodies will demonstrate the Council's commitment to actively promoting the needs of a diverse student body
2.5	●	●	●	Review, as part of the development of the Council's new work based learning (WBL) strategy, the consequences and effects of WBL in terms of race, gender and disability.	December 2006	Wendy Staples (Policy Officer)	Report	Appropriate consideration of the effects of WBL will be given in the writing of the strategy
2.6	●	●	●	The new teaching funding method will be impact assessed to ensure no adverse impact on equality target groups.	December 2006	Chris Taylor (Policy Officer)	New model presented to the Board in September 2006 and final version published in February 2007	A teaching funding method that will fairly reflect the costs inherent in delivering HE to a diverse student body

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
2.7	●	●	●	To ensure that the annual monitoring statements linked to learning and teaching activity show how HEIs are actively meeting the positive duties.	2006-07	Peter Seddon (Policy Officer)	Overview of HEI reported activity used to inform policy creation. [note: AMS is currently used to report by exception only so this data may not be an accurate picture for all HEIs]	Promote greater awareness within the Council and across the sector of current best practice
2.8	●	●	●	Develop best practice in partnership work and incorporate equality duties, throughout and at the initial stages of partnership. Use involvement in partnerships to address the needs of under-represented groups, specifically minority ethnic groups, women and people with disabilities. For example, LLNs and Sector Skills Councils to address under-representation in specific areas such as veterinary medicine.	Review in 2007	Alan Palmer (Policy Officer)	Best practice disseminated across staff involved with managing partnership relationships	All relationships with partner bodies will demonstrate the Council's commitment to actively promoting the needs of a diverse student body
3				Enhancing excellence in research				
3.1	●	●	●	Ensure that HEIs have a policy on how they will select staff for assessment under the RAE in line with institutional equal opportunities policies.	November 2007	Ed Hughes (RAE Manager)	Guidance to HEIs on submissions	HEIs will have full guidance on how to adhere to policies
3.2	●	●	●	Monitor by gender, race and disability the selection of staff for the 2008 RAE.	Summer 2009	ASG	Summary data available	Increased knowledge of RAE recipients
3.3	●	●	●	Promote equality briefings and codes of practice at regional RAE 'roadshows' in 2006.	Summer 2006	Ed Hughes (RAE Manager)	Roadshows attended by ECU and briefings given	HEIs will be fully briefed on policies
3.4	●	●	●	Seek opportunities to discuss equality and diversity and its impact on the research policy agenda at the HEFCE Strategic Committee for Research.	Schedule of meetings Review in 2007	Paul Hubbard (Head of Research Policy)	Inclusion in committee papers and minutes. Reports to	Raise committee awareness of equality issues in research and give due consideration to them

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
							HEFCE Board 3 times per year	
3.5	●	●	●	Manage the Council's relationship and funding agreements with Research Councils in developing and implementing research capacity building initiatives to support implementation of the equality duties.	Review in July 2006	Paul Hubbard (Head of Research Policy)	Inclusion in funding agreement	Due consideration will be given to equality issues on policies
3.6	●	●	●	To analyse postgraduate research completion rates based on gender, race and disability.	June 2007	Suzanne Wilson (Policy Officer)	Consider outcome of analysis on disability	We will have a full understanding of impact on disability
4				Enhancing the contribution of HE to business, economy and society				
4.1	●	●	●	Raise the profile of the duty to promote equality at visits to HEIs and regional or national meetings.	Review in 2007	Business and community team	Staff in HEIs are familiar with the requirements of the disability duty	Raised awareness of the positive duties
4.2	●	●	●	To identify good practice case studies from HEIs which illustrate positive action around gender, race and disability, while ensuring that this is carefully balanced against wider considerations.	November 2006	Simon Whittemore (Policy Officer)	Good practice published	Raised awareness and more effective practice in HEIs
4.3	●	●	●	To incorporate references to equality in the guidance which accompanies the HE Business and Community Interaction Survey (specifically that around Table 5 - for public events).	Review in 2007	Adrian Day (Policy Officer)	Good practice communicated to the sector	Raised awareness and improved information on completion
4.4	●	●	●	To identify examples of HEIs targeting and addressing social and economic needs in response to third stream funding requirements, thereby demonstrating active promotion of the positive duties.	Review in 2007	Alex Thompson (Policy Officer)	Good practice published	Raised awareness of the positive duties
4.5	●	●	●	To use the team's influencing and facilitation role via networks and partnerships to actively promote the new duties.	Review in 2007	Business and community team	Speeches, presentations, correspondence, etc	Raised awareness of the positive duties

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
5				Sustaining a high quality higher education sector				
5.1	●	●	●	Discuss issues relating to equality in HEIs at HEFCE regional teams' senior management (RTSM) group meetings.	Ongoing, reviewed in July 2006	Chair of RTSM	Agenda item and minutes of discussion (internal use only)	Improved strategies for institutional engagement regarding the positive duties
5.2	●	●	●	Support institutions to fulfil their obligations under the general duties through discussions with HEIs' senior management teams, reviewing HEIs' annual monitoring statements and providing feedback to them.	Ongoing, review in July 2007	All HEFCE regional consultants	Ad hoc assistance and support	Greater awareness of the general duties' requirements and the support available from HEFCE and ECU among HEI senior management teams.
5.3	●	●	●	Investigate the need for specific training around the general duties for HEFCE regional teams.	Review in 2007	Chair of RTSM	A rationale for implementing (or not) a training programme	Staff trained and supported adequately to support HEIs more effectively in implementing the general duties
5.4	●	●	●	Ensure HEFCE regional teams are copied into all correspondence to institutions that relates to equality matters.	Ongoing, review progress in July 2007	Chair of RTSM	Letters and e-mails are copied to regional teams to keep them informed of institutional progress or other issues	HEFCE regional teams have fuller knowledge of all equality issues within HEIs
5.5	●	●	●	Support institutions to fulfil their legal obligations for race, disability and gender equality through guidance in the Strategic Development Fund (SDF). HEIs are asked to provide outline equality impact assessments in their SDF proposals and to describe the measures they plan to take to mitigate any possible adverse impacts.	June 2006, new guidance, then ongoing	HEFCE SDF publication team, then regional consultants	New guidance, assistance and support in SDF processes	Raised awareness of applicants and SDF projects which take equality properly into account from the beginning.

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
5.6	●	●	●	Consider how applications to the Leadership, Governance and Management Fund (LGM) can be made more accessible and its aims promoted to as wide an audience as possible.	Review in 2007	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	The profile of the LGM Fund is raised among diverse stakeholders	More diverse pool of applicants to LGM fund
5.7	●	●	●	Encourage and stimulate applications to the LGM Fund which would promote any aspect of equality.	Review in 2007	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	Presentations and other promotional literature	Greater number of bids to the fund which focus on supporting HEIs in promoting equality through LGM activities
5.8	●	●	●	Equal opportunities monitoring information is mainstreamed throughout HEFCE 2006/21, 'The higher education workforce in England: a framework for the future', and published to enable institutional benchmarking.	Annually each January	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	Completed strategy will be published on the HEFCE web-site	Raised awareness of national trends for workforce planning purposes.
5.9	●	●	●	To work with the ECU to provide more guidance and support on specific equality areas for dissemination to the HE sector.	July 2008	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	Guidance material on specific equality areas	The HE sector is more informed of specific equality areas, and better equipped to address these issues
5.10	●	●	●	To work with the HE funding councils in Scotland and Wales to promote equality and diversity issues.	Review in 2007	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	LGM convenes a support and challenge group of the UK funding councils	Greater synergy between the UK funding councils and solutions found to problems of equality implementation
5.11	●	●	●	Produce annual monitoring statistics for staff on all available equality areas (race, gender and disability status).	Annually in September	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	Statistics published in an accessible format on the HEFCE web-site	Up to date information is disseminated to the sector and other stakeholders
5.12	●	●	●	To review the LGM Fund assessment template to ensure that it specifically assesses the positive duties in relation to race, gender and disability.	August 2006	Pramod Philip (LGM Fund Consultant)	Updated template	Panel members will be able to assess applications effectively for their potential impact on equality duties.

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
5.13	●	●	●	To introduce monitoring requirements for HEIs in relation to race, disability and gender as a condition of LGM Fund grant.	August 2006	Pramod Philip (LGM Fund Consultant)	Equality monitoring is included in final reports to LGM Fund secretariat	Project leaders are made aware of their positive duty to promote and monitor the equality outcomes of their projects and this informs future LGM policy
5.14	●	●	●	Identify opportunities to promote equal opportunities good practice in Good Management Practice Fund projects through HE and non-HE press and publicity outlets.	Review in 2007	Pramod Philip (LGM Fund Consultant)	Positive press coverage in HE and non-HE outlets	Raised stakeholder awareness of positive action through projects
5.15	●	●	●	Develop, implement and review the Council's race, disability and gender equality schemes and action plans, including: review the schemes and action plan annually: consult widely on the schemes' development both internally and externally to the Council; ensure the schemes remain relevant and proportionate to both the positive duties and the Council's needs; report annually to the HEFCE Board on progress made against the action plan.	By December 2006 and review each year	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	Board paper in October each year	Race, disability and gender equality is effectively promoted throughout the Council and progress is reported to the Board
5.16	●	●	●	Manage the Council's relationship and funding agreement with the ECU and contracting it to support the HE sector's implementation of the positive duties on race, disability and gender.	Ongoing, review each year in November	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	ECU's annual review published in October each year	The HE sector receives high quality support from the ECU, measured through independent evaluations and stakeholder surveys
5.17	●	●	●	Monitor and support the activities of the Leadership Foundation in promoting equality of opportunity for leaders in HE.	Ongoing, review each October	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	Leadership Foundation annual report published each October	Ultimately, that the pool of leaders in HE becomes more diverse, which can be measured through HESA data
5.18	●	●	●	Work with the ECU to produce good practice guidance on equality issues as needs are identified in the HE sector.	Review in 2007	Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	Good practice guides published and disseminated widely	HEIs receive up to date and credible information to enable best practice.

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
5.19	●	●	●	Continue to identify opportunities to discuss equality and diversity issues associated with broader LGM policy within the LGM Strategic Committee.	Timetable of committee (three meetings per year)	Alison Johns (Head of Leadership Governance & Management)	Strategic committee minutes and reports to the HEFCE Board	Equality is effectively promoted at strategic committee level and becomes mainstreamed through the work of the committee
5.20	●	●	●	Be alert to the opportunities to promote physical access/disability equality in the next round of capital funding.	Ongoing, review each June	Andrew Smith (Head of Estates and Sustainable Development)	Disability equality issues will be included in the capital funding process.	Opportunities to promote disability equality in HEFCE's capital investment framework are considered.
6				Enabling excellence in delivery: organisational development within HEFCE				
6.1	●	●	●	Human Resources Continue to train recruitment and selection panel members in equal opportunities issues.	Ongoing throughout 2006-07	Tracey Vardy (Human Resources Manager)	Panel members trained	Panel members will be aware of relevant legislation and conduct regarding gender discrimination
6.2	●	●	●	Monitoring all staff in post by disability, race and gender with regard to: recruitment, promotion, staff turnover, dismissals, access to training, appraisal scores, involvement in grievance, disciplinary and complaints procedures.	Annually in April each year; reviewed in April 2006	Sarah de Vere/Tracey Vardy (Human Resources Manager)	Accurate data for: new HR database, monitoring workforce against targets, annual Board report in April	Continually review targets to monitor workforce and application of policies
6.3	●	●	●	Embedding equality awareness training in induction sessions (building on all staff mandatory training) to ensure that all staff are aware of the Council's duties under the positive duties.	Review in 2007	Trish Archer/Tracey Vardy (Human Resources Manager)	Induction sessions are carried out quarterly and evaluated annually	Employees will be aware of relevant legislation and conduct regarding gender discrimination
6.4	●	●	●	Equal opportunities recruitment targets are reviewed and adjusted as necessary.	Review in 2007	Tracey Vardy (Human Resources Manager)	Board paper on staffing issues and statistics produced	Continually review targets to monitor workforce

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
							annually in April	
6.5	●	●	●	Monitor other HEFCE teams' equality action plans and their implications for staff training and development.	Review in 2007	Trish Archer (Human Resources Manager)	Align outcomes of teams' plans with training/development requirements for HR plan	Continually review against targets across the organisation
6.6			●	Office Services To explore opportunities in the ergonomic impact assessment to promote the positive duty under the DDA.	Review in 2007	Office Services	Survey conducted. Continual review	A more ergonomic workplace
6.7			●	To reassess the implications of Bristol and Centre Point buildings in terms of the needs of disabled people, given the renewal of the lease and forthcoming rent review.	Review in 2007	Office Services	Survey conducted by disabled consultant, and landlord advised of findings. Issues had impact on lease renewal and rent review. Continual review	More accessible building
6.8	●	●	●	Corporate Communications Continue to identify opportunities to feature articles relevant to equality and diversity in Council Briefing, HEFCE's external newsletter.	Ongoing, reviewed December 2006	Philip Walker, Brian Best (Deputy Head of Corporate Communications)	Articles promoting the Council's equality and diversity activities are printed	Institutions aware of HEFCE's role in promoting good practice about diversity
6.9	●	●	●	To promote the achievement of under-represented groups, specifically women (in senior posts), people with disabilities and minority ethnic groups, in the external newsletter Council Briefing.	Review in 2007	Brian Best (Press & Communications Officer)	Articles in Council Briefing	Greater awareness of value and achievements of under-represented groups

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
6.10	●	●	●	To review HEFCE's house style in relation to its web-site to ensure that it is accessible in relation to the forthcoming positive duties.	June 2007	Shelley Hollingsworth, ITS (Web Content Editor)	Review completed	Accessible web-site
6.11	●	●	●	To review HEFCE's house style in relation to its printed publications to ensure that they are accessible in relation to the forthcoming positive duties.	January 2007	Helen Buttery, Rowland Spyer (Publications Manager)	Review completed	Accessible publications
6.12	●	●	●	Continue to ensure that taken as a whole visual images of students and staff on HEFCE publications represent diversity.	Review in 2007	Rowland Spyer, Helen Buttery (Publications Manager)	Range of images in different publications	Demonstrate the diversity of the sector
6.13	●	●	●	Continue to develop 'admin-hefce', the HEFCE open e-mail group with more than 4,000 subscribers. The e-mail group is a way for HEFCE to reach staff at all levels in HEIs and is free to subscribe to.	Ongoing review in December 2006	Philip Walker, Helen Buttery (Deputy Head of Corporate Communications)	Providing an open and easily accessible means of keeping up to date with all HEFCE's news	Increased number of subscribers
6.14	●	●	●	Identify opportunities in our day-to-day work to send material to appropriate groups. Add a box to the press release check list to prompt us to do this	December 2006	Philip Walker (Deputy Head of Corporate Communications)	Press releases sent appropriately to different groups	Groups are aware of our activities and policies in relation to their concerns
6.15			●	Publish good practice on the intranet on how to hold accessible events. Continue to provide event materials in large print on request.	End summer 2006	Philip Walker (Deputy Head of Corporate Communications)	Colleagues in the Council who organise events to be aware of guidance	All conference organisers adhere to guidance when organising an event
6.16	●	●	●	To review (with advice from policy colleagues) our list of stakeholder organisations to ensure that equal opportunities organisations are appropriately represented.	December 2006	Roger Grinyer/Amy Norton (Head of Corporate Communications)	Revised list of stakeholder organisations	Better stakeholder relationships with equality organisations

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
6.17	●	●	●	To hold one or more internal HEFCE briefings with a diversity focus.	Ongoing, began July 2006	Philip Walker/Amy Norton (Policy Officer)	Briefings are carried out	Raised awareness equalities issues, and a better understanding of diversity
6.18	●	●	●	ITS To continue to ensure W3C WAI*-AA compliance as standard for HEFCE web-sites and where possible comply with WAI-AAA. *World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative	Review in 2007	ITS	Ensure compliance	Accessible web-site
6.19			●	Review and update the existing disability section of the external web-site. Consider the need for other sections of the HEFCE web-site on other equal opportunities issues.	June 2007	Amy Norton/Shelley Hollingsworth (Policy Officer)	Revised content on HEFCE web-site	Raised awareness
6.20			●	Ensure that all future software development meets minimum accessibility requirements where reasonably possible. To review and assess all legacy windows/clients for accessibility and plan for upgrade where reasonably possible.	December 2006	Paul Newnham (Senior Systems Analyst)	Change in software requirements	All HEFCE interfaces are reasonably accessible
6.21	●	●	●	Board Secretariat Continue to raise with the appropriate government departments how to maximise the diversity of nominations for the HEFCE Board, in line with the public appointments process.	Annual, reviewed in July 2006	Simon Cannell (Clerk to the Board)	Government departments are aware of the issues and case for a more diverse HEFCE board	Increased Board diversity
6.22	●	●	●	Ensure that all new Board and strategic committee members are briefed on their responsibilities, liabilities and accountabilities under the equality acts.	Ongoing, annual review in July 2006	Simon Cannell (Clerk to the Board)	Briefings are carried out and all members are aware of the Acts' requirements	Increased Board awareness

No.	Race	Gender	Disability	Actions by HEFCE from April 2006-07	Timescale	Lead person	Output	Outcome
6.23	●	●	●	Assurance Service Circulate a refresher message to CHEIA (HEIs' audit network), alerting institutions about the compliance and risk issues associated with not meeting the requirements of equality legislation. The HEFCE Head of Assurance updated the sector at the internal auditors' 2006 conference (September) on the implications of the legislative changes for internal auditors and on HEFCE's action plans.	December 2006	Paul Greaves (Head of Assurance)	E-message to CHEIA mailbase list.	Increasing awareness among sector internal auditors of equalities compliance risks
6.24	●	●	●	Ensure equalities issues remain embedded in the HEFCE strategic and operating plans, and specific actions included in team plans.	Annually (January-March) as part of planning cycle updates	Lucy Pow (Head of Planning)	Revised strategic plan and operating plan summary published on web annually, with appropriate equalities actions included.	Equalities actions embedded in HEFCE's work at all levels
6.25	●	●	●	Produce an executive summary document covering the main points of the HEFCE Equality Scheme for senior management, governors, and vice chancellors, who do not have time to read the full scheme	March 2007	Yasir Mirza (Policy Officer)	A short guide that covers the equality scheme	Senior management, governors, and vice chancellors will be able to understand the main points of the Equality Scheme without having to read the whole document