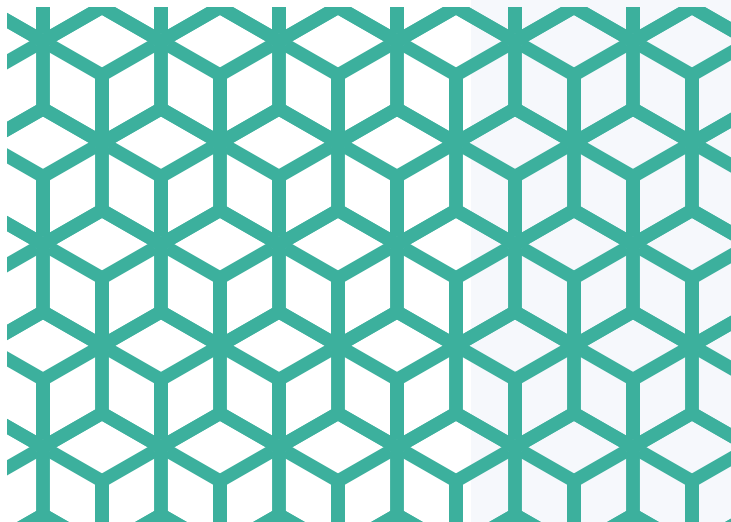

Empowering our communities

EQUITY STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN 2025-2029

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Introduction

We at Brunel University of London are truly unique as a UK higher education provider in the stunning breadth of our diverse communities that choose to study, research, and work here.

- Our community represents significant racial and ethnic diversity, with our students and colleagues belonging predominantly to Black, racially, and ethnically minoritised heritages (approximately 38% of our employees as at January 2025 and 75.3% of students as at December 2024);
- We are also home to multi-lingual, multi-faith and non-faith peoples;
- Our January 2025 data indicates that 18% of our student population, and approximately 7% of colleagues, disclose as being disabled;
- Our April 2024 data indicates that 3% of colleagues have disclosed as being neurodivergent (although nationally 15% of UK's population are estimated to be neurodivergent);

- We are a gender and sexuality-diverse community with strong advocacy for LGBTQIA+ lives. And, according to Stonewall's 2024 employer index, Brunel is positioned amongst UK's top 50 employers for nurturing an LGBTQIA+ affirmative workplace. Additionally, Brunel's trans student and colleagues policies remain committed to making the university a trans affirmative place of study and work.
- We are recognised as the UK's most international university for the second consecutive year, according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024.¹

As a university, our strength lies in the recognition and foregrounding of our collective differences that constitute and shape our community.

Advocating for diversity and difference requires education and awareness-raising, and this is a crucial dimension of enabling success by eliminating barriers.

This is why our institutional commitment to **equity** is paramount and ensures both legal / regulatory compliance **and** ethical obligations to ensure the wellbeing of our student and employee communities.



¹ Please note that this refers to our Uxbridge campus in the UK only.



We shall ensure that we:

- uphold UK's **Equality Act 2010** that enshrines in law the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- uphold the University's **Freedom of Speech Statement** in implementing this strategy to enable transparent and open exchange of ideas, while ensuring that unlawful speech that may incite violence, hatred, harassment, or distress, on grounds of protected characteristic/s is not tolerated. As such, we will support freedom of speech that may be controversial or unpopular, or that may shock, offend, or disturb, provided it is not unlawful.
- adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty, which aims to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who may or may not share these different protected characteristics.
- address and work towards eliminating discrimination based on social positions that fall outside of these nine legally protected characteristics such as, but not limited to: carers, caste, childless (not by choice), class, immigrant status, part-time employees, refugee status, socioeconomics, single parenting status, and other minoritised communities.
- recognise that a significant proportion of our students are first generation university attendees; that many in our communities come from class and socio-economically minoritised backgrounds; that many have caring responsibilities; and that many are commuter students - all of these layers further compound the potential barriers experienced by Brunel's communities.
- adhere to equality of opportunity stipulations as set by the OfS quality and standards regulations.
- pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discriminations and harassments of individuals with protected characteristic/s or individuals who call attention to unlawful discriminations and practices aimed at individuals with protected characteristic/s.
- counter the compounded impact of caste, disability, neurodivergence, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other social positions as barriers to success in studies and work, upholding and implementing African American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coinage of "**intersectionality**" that recognises that the intersection of more than one protected characteristic or social position might pose increased chances of discrimination and obstacles for a person.

Why equity?

This Equity Strategy and Delivery 2025–2029 takes a bold approach to shaping Brunel’s equity work for the next four years.

Anchored in the university strategy of “Powered by Diversity”, in close synergy with the university’s Values, and designed to guide culture change at Brunel, this Equity Strategy and Delivery embeds equity work at the heart of all university business—education, research, and outreach throughout student and employee journeys — and makes equity and access considerations their starting points rather than an afterthought.

As a higher education provider with the scale of diversity as Brunel, our commitment to equitable educational provisions, outcomes, and student experience is our ethical obligation, our moral duty, and our legal responsibility. It is critical that we understand that delivering

these commitments requires an understanding that they are intrinsically linked to ensuring equitable employee experience.

As such, the language and practice of **equity** is crucial for this next stage in Brunel’s journey towards building a university based on principles of anti-oppression and social justice.²

- **Equity** recognises that not everyone starts with the same opportunities in life; educational institutions, like all social institutions, are not always level playing fields for all communities that choose to study and work within them - Brunel is no exception.
- **Equity** signals the urgency to understand and identify systemic barriers experienced by particular communities at Brunel and systematically eliminate them.
- **Equity** in the context of access for our disabled and neurodivergent communities reinforces that the university takes its legal duty very seriously to ensure accessible service provisions and inclusive education and employment environments to its disabled

and neurodivergent communities, making reasonable adjustments as appropriate and taking an anticipatory approach.

- **Equity** designs and implements bespoke support systems and opportunities to enable systemic change, aimed at foreground success for all.
- **Equity** enables healing, through recognition of historic and systemic injustices, through moral and ethical actions.
- **Equity** shifts the dial for us as a university towards a bolder position, moving away from the language of EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion). It recognises with honesty that for Brunel “equality”, while an aspiration, is not a reality; that “diversity” on its own does not guarantee social justice; and that “inclusion” happens only on the terms of the centre that has been built, and continues to function on, several lines of social privileges.

² Social justice refers to the fair and equitable distribution of opportunities, rights, participation and resources within society, with particular attention to reducing systemic disadvantages that affect individuals and groups based on social identities that are legally protected by UK’s Equality Act 2010 and others that are still subjected to systemic discrimination (including, but not restricted to: immigrant status, part-time colleagues, carers, class, to name some).

Social justice in the higher education context means designing and governing the university so that everyone can flourish academically and civically, with the burdens of historic and contemporary inequities actively redressed rather than reproduced. This works alongside fostering an inclusive environment where lawful perspectives can be expressed, debated, and respected in accordance with academic freedom and legal commitments to freedom of expression such that students and colleagues may express views within the law that are in opposition to institutional positions, including those contained in strategies and policies. [This definition draws on John Rawls A Theory of Justice and is in line with UK equality legislations].

Three equity pillars, actions and performance indicators

At the heart of our new Equity Strategy and Delivery Plan are three pillars which are anchored in the university's strategy "Powered by Diversity", underpinned by the university's Values.

These three pillars commit to:

Pillar 1: Build and sustain an equitable university

A university built on principles of equity, that recognises and implements bespoke needs and support mechanisms to remove systemic barriers to success for students, doctoral researchers and employees.

Pillar 2: Foster and deliver social justice-driven education, research, and outcomes

A university that foregrounds curriculum design and delivery that is representative of our communities, decolonises¹ our educational provisions and assessment methods, diversifies teaching, learning, and research materials; that uplifts minoritised scholars and scholarship that foregrounds plurality of knowledge-systems wherever appropriate; that ensures resources and support for communities who are historically minoritised in our research cultures; that eliminates barriers to success for students (undergraduates, taught postgraduates, doctoral researchers, and apprenticeships) and employees; that ensures mental health support for employees and students are built into institutional resources to enable every member of our community to thrive.

*This pillar builds on work that has already taken place across the institution to tackle the ethnicity awarding gap and foster curriculum provisions that are representative of our communities.

¹ The work of decolonisation within Brunel's university curriculum will uphold principles of academic freedom, such that lawful perspectives can be expressed, debated, and respected within learning environments by students and colleagues in the spirit of open enquiry and learning, and in line with the University's Freedom of Speech Statement. Please note that this footnote stands true of every reference to decolonisation within this document.

Pillar 3: Empower our diverse communities

A university that listens to and learns with our diverse communities and our lived experiences, recognises and unlearns biases, practices anti-racism, serves as role models for our future generations, championing difference as strength, and enables and empowers our communities to shape our decision-making processes and what we stand for.

Each pillar will be delivered via a year-by-year list of associated actions, timelines for completion, and held accountable via appropriately linked performance indicators as outlined in the Equity Delivery Plan.

Equity accountability through institutional governance structures

The governance responsibility of ensuring that our Equity Strategy & Equity Delivery Plan is embedded, reviewed, implemented and delivered through every dimension of the institution is reported through the following structures:

EMPLOYEE GOVERNANCE

- Equity Steering Group / Anti Racism Steering Group / Disability & Neurodiversity Steering Group
- HR Equity Committee (Employee) / University Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee
- Executive Board
- Council

STUDENT GOVERNANCE

- Equity Steering Group / Anti Racism Steering Group / Disability & Neurodiversity Steering Group
- University Education and Student Experience Committee (Students)
- Senate

Every individual at Brunel - employee and student - will be responsible for upholding and implementing the principles, values, and proposed actions that underpin this Equity Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Every strategy and policy document at Brunel will need to align themselves with this Equity Strategy and Delivery Plan, and every stakeholder in charge of these policies will be responsible for doing so. Review of these strategies needs to be prioritised once this Equity and Strategy Delivery Plan is published.

The successful completion and sustainability of these performance indicators between 2025 and 2029 will mark the first stage of the journey of culture change at Brunel.

List of key public legislation documents

Please find below a list of key legislation that underpins Brunel's Equity Strategy and Delivery Plan 2025-2029.

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Public Sector Equality Duty Guidance**
- **Office for Students Equality and Diversity Guidelines**
- **Gender Pay Gap Reporting Guidance**

BRUNEL'S EQUITY RELATED POLICIES AND REPORTS

- Equity Annual Report Colleagues
- Equity Annual Report Students
- Pay Gap Reports



Equity Strategy Delivery Plan

Pillar 1	Strategic Key Focus	Key Actions	Owner/s	Headline KPIs / Measures	Implementation by
Pillar 1: Build and sustain an equitable university	Equity data and institutional intelligence	Strengthen equity data collection, disclosure and accessibility to support monitoring and evidence-based decision-making.	Chief People and Culture Office	The Equity staff Dashboard is introduced and routinely utilised by the Executive Board and other identified users to support strategic and operational decision-making.	Academic year 2027/2028
				Increase in disclosure rate by colleagues across all protected characteristics, with at least 10% increase in disclosure for disability, neurodiversity and ethnicity.	Academic year 2027/2028
	Fair recruitment and progression	Monitor recruitment processes, promote equitable practices and strengthen positive action approaches.	Chief People and Culture Office	Continued improvement in the ratio between applications to hire for minoritised and disabled applicants/new colleagues year on year to at least equivalent.	Annually
	Inclusive employment practices and working environments	Expand flexible working and review workload models. Ensure policies address barriers that disproportionately affect Black, Asian and racially minoritised groups, and disabled colleagues Embed inclusive policies and practices across HR processes, promotion, PDRs and support mechanisms to ensure institutional policies address barriers affecting colleagues across all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Improve the implementation of reasonable adjustments and provide training for managers and HR colleagues.	Chief People and Culture Office	Increase in the percentage of staff accessing flexible working arrangements across staff groups and grades.	Academic year 2026/2027
				Chief People and Culture Office	Ensure promotion outcomes are equitable by monitoring and reducing disparities across protected characteristics year-on-year.
			Chief People and Culture Office	Year-on-year increase in promotion application rates from minoritised groups. Increase in percentage of staff reporting (via survey) that PDR and promotion processes are fair and inclusive.	Academic year 2027/2028
			Chief People and Culture Officer Equity & Inclusion APVC	Mandatory training on the duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 – all managers and HR staff.	Academic year 2026/2027
	Pay equity and career progression	Implement equitable and standardised career progression, pay and recruitment frameworks, including equal pay audits and consistent starting salaries, to ensure fair and unbiased outcomes across all colleague groups.	Chief People and Culture Officer	Pay gaps for gender, ethnicity and disability at or below sector average. Brunel pay gaps to be aligned with or below sector gender (12%); ethnicity (6.4%) pay gaps.	Academic year 2027/2028
	Representation in senior roles	Deliver targeted recruitment, sponsorship, mentoring and leadership development initiatives to increase representation of underrepresented groups in senior roles and address progression disparities.	Chief People and Culture Officer	Year on year increase in the number of women Professors and Black women Professors.	Annually
				Year-on-year increase in representation of impacted protected characteristics in senior roles for gender, ethnicity and disability to be equal to or less than the sector average	Annually
Achieve a sustained year-on-year increase in the number and proportion of colleagues from Black and racially minoritised ethnicities in grades SPOT/11/10 measured annually via EDI workforce data.				Annually	

Pillar 2	Strategic Key Focus	Key Actions	Owner/s	Headline KPIs / Measures	Implementation by
Pillar 2: Foster and deliver social justice-driven education, research, and outcomes	Address student continuation and awarding gaps	Strengthen analysis of equity disparities in student experience and outcomes and implement targeted institutional and departmental action plans.	Pro Vice Chancellor – Education Vice Deans for Education Associate Deans for Equity & Inclusion Equity Lead (Students)	Reduce continuation gap between Black and White students by 5%	Academic year 2028/2029
		Develop university-wide commitment and departmental action plans as part of annual College Plans to address awarding gaps in programmes and modules		Reduce continuation gap by entry qualifications (A-level, BTEC and similar qualifications) by 5%	Academic year 2028/2029
		Develop ‘decolonising’ the curriculum project including a review of current approaches and develop institutional language framework		Decrease difference in continuation rates between disabled and non-disabled students by 2%	Academic year 2028/2029
		Enhance provision of training, resources and guidance to support colleagues to design and deliver equitable and accessible teaching, learning and assessment practices.		Decrease differentials in degree outcomes between Black, Asian and White students by 7%	Academic year 2028/2029
		Develop initiatives to strengthen belonging and student voice for Black students.		Halve difference in award outcomes by entry qualifications.	Academic year 2028/2029
				Reduce difference in award outcomes between disabled and non-disabled students by 2%	Academic year 2028/2029
	Deliver equitable, inclusive and safe student experience	Support colleagues across the university to provide an equitable, inclusive and safe student experience. Meet compliance with Office for Students E6 condition of registration relating to harassment, sexual misconduct and safeguarding. Ensure the voice of students informs the University's ongoing work addressing systemic and/or institutional inequities	Senior Legal Counsel - Student Affairs and Casework	Provision of advice, information and support to enable equitable and inclusive service delivery and student support.	Annually
	Enhance disability and neurodivergence-affirmative culture	Strengthen compliance with equality duties for disabled students under the Equality Act, 2010 and complete implementation of Improvement Plan to meet EHRC Advice Note Implement initiatives to improve delivery of support and inclusion for disabled and neurodivergent students across the student journey. Continue work as signee of sector Disabled Student Commitment initiative.	Pro Vice Chancellor – Education Associate Pro Vice Chancellors - Quality Assurance and Student Experience Equity Lead for Students	Delivery of training sessions, development of guidance and resources for colleagues to support disabled students and enhancement of quality assurance policies and procedures Improvement of provision of joined up university support for disabled and neurodivergent students and positive student experience	Academic year 2027/2028 Annually
	Research equity and diverse academic pipeline	Strengthen equity in doctoral researcher and postdoctoral researcher experience and support a diverse academic pipeline.	Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Pro Vice Chancellor for Education Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion	Publication of findings and recommendations from equity survey of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.	Academic year 2027/2028
Inclusive research culture	Embed equity principles within research culture and REF preparation.	Deputy Vice Chancellor Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion.	Equity training for research leadership and Equality Impact Assessments for REF2029 selections.	Academic year 2027/2028	

Pillar 3	Strategic Key Focus	Key Actions	Owner/s	Headline KPIs / Measures	Implementation by
Pillar 3: Empower our diverse communities	Inclusive institutional culture	Foster a culture where colleagues from diverse communities feel valued, respected and able to thrive.	Chief People and Culture Officer Equity & Inclusion APVC	Achieve successful Stonewall Proud accreditation.	Academic year 2026/2027
				Renewal of Disability Confident Leader.	June 2026
				Achieve a successful application for the Race Equality Charter Award.	Academic year 2027/2028
				Achieve a successful application for the Athena Swan Silver Award.	July 2028
				Achieve a successful Menopause Friendly accreditation.	Academic year 2027/2028
	Staff voice and participation	Ensure staff networks contribute to governance, policy development and institutional strategy.	Chief People and Culture Officer Equity & Inclusion APVC	Staff networks are actively involved in policy discussions, contributions to institutional governance, policy development, charter mark accreditation and strategy initiatives, with their input documented, considered, and visibly reflected in decision-making.	Academic year 2026/2027
	Governance and accountability	Embed equity within institutional governance structures and strengthen leadership accountability.	Chief People and Culture Officer	Senior leader commitment to equity.	Ongoing
	Safe reporting and institutional trust	Strengthen complaints procedures and reporting mechanisms to address discrimination and inequity.	Chief People and Culture Officer	Percentage of formal complaints against those upheld in line with HR procedures, within the expected timeframe, with corrective action taken where applicable, and positive colleague satisfaction with the process. Increase the percentage of staff who are aware of and confident in using reporting mechanisms, and who believe concerns are handled fairly and effectively, measured via staff survey.	Academic year 2027/2028



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Please note that this strategy document will remain live to remain responsive to the need for review during this four-year period and any substantial changes will seek feedback from Equity Steering Group, Legal, trade unions and staff networks and will be led by the Equity Collective. This strategy recognises and builds on Brunel's previous EDI strategy (2020-2024).