

Equity Strategy and Delivery Plan 2025-2029

“Empowering our communities”

BRUNEL UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
“EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES”
EQUITY STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN 2025-2029¹

1. 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 staff 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 2024.²

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.

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.

¹ 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).

² Please note that this refers to our Uxbridge campus in the UK only.

- 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 recognizes that the intersection of more than one protected characteristic or social position might pose increased chances of discrimination and obstacles for a person.

2. 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.³

- **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.

³ 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 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) 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 staff 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].

- **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.

3. 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, decolonises⁴ 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.*

⁴ 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 staff 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.

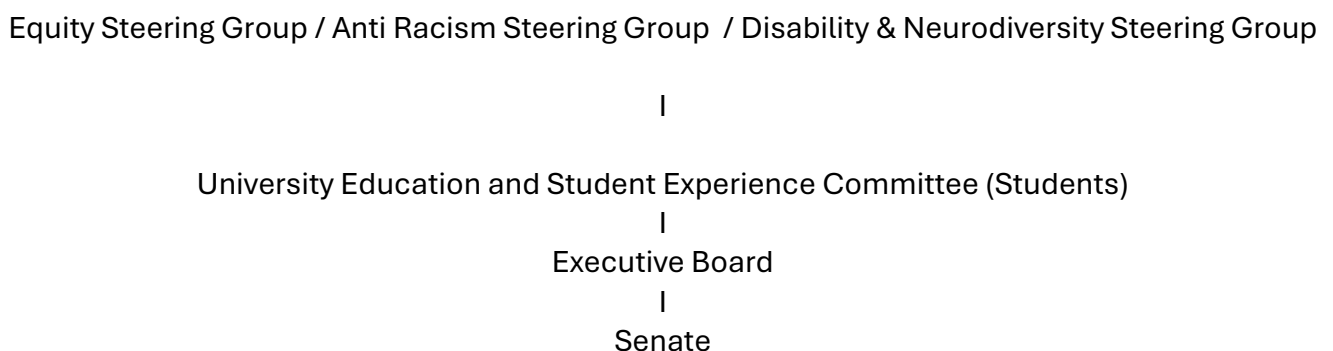
4. EQUITY ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

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



STUDENT GOVERNANCE



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.

5. 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](#)

6. BRUNEL'S EQUITY RELATED POLICIES AND REPORTS

ED&I Annual Report Staff

ED&I Annual Report Students

Brunel's PayGap Reports