

INFORMATION ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MONITORING

1. INTRODUCTION

Equality and diversity is integral to the work of the whole University, and is embedded within the University's mission and values. Consequently, equality monitoring is an important matter for the University. As a diverse and international community it is vital that we are able to recognise and understand who our communities are so that we can plan our services to meet the needs of these communities, in order that every member can flourish and achieve their potential. The University recognises that its diversity is a key strength, and will seek to foster this further through the mechanism of collecting relevant staff equality monitoring information.

This staff guidance on collecting equality monitoring information is intended to help you to understand the principles of equality monitoring, and provide you with comprehensive information that will assist you in disclosing equality information safely and with ease and confidence.

2. CURRENT AND NEW EQUALITY MONITORING INFORMATION

The University already collects equality monitoring information relating to race and ethnicity, age, sex, and disability. This has helped us to develop a better understanding of what our staff and students need in order to learn, work, perform, and enjoy life at Aston. We believe that monitoring the equality of staff in relation to gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation will further enhance this work, enabling us to develop a more comprehensive picture of the Aston community, better understand the needs of our staff, and offer appropriate support or adjustments in a timely manner.

We recognise that equality is a journey and equality monitoring is only one aspect to this, and are committed to continually working with staff to improve how we work and deliver our services to the benefit of all. The University will commence the collection of this additional data from August 2012 onwards.

3. THE BENEFITS OF EXTENDING OUR EQUALITY MONITORING FOR STAFF

There are important reasons for the University to collect staff equality monitoring information on gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The collection of this new equality information will enable the University to further demonstrate its commitment to the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which require us to publish equality monitoring information on all the protected characteristics. Equality legislation and sector wide best practice indicate that having sound monitoring systems in place can ensure that we are able to fully assess the impact of our policies on staff and students and enables us to establish whether we are adequately preparing to meet diverse needs, to identify where we can improve, and to direct support and information appropriately.

The benefits of equality monitoring are clear not only for the University but also for individual members of staff.

- Equality monitoring can enable us to develop a clearer picture of who our communities are, can help to establish any trends, and can assist with the planning of services and facilities
- Up to date and comprehensive equality information will help us to identify anything that would make it difficult or challenging for individuals or groups from particular backgrounds to use the full range of University policies, facilities, and services.
- Equality monitoring can help us to quickly identify opportunities to direct appropriate support and services to staff in a timely and meaningful way.
- Collecting equality information on gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation also sends a clear message of the University's commitment to equality and diversity to staff and potential candidates. It will enable us to ensure these protected characteristics are treated on par with other equality characteristics, for which data is already collected.
- Equality monitoring will enable staff more effectively to assess the impact of University policies and services through the undertaking of equality impact assessments.

There is good evidence that equality monitoring can result in positive changes for staff and for the University. Whilst the University is keen to encourage the disclosure of this information it recognises that the decision to disclose this sensitive information is a personal and individual decision. Staff are reassured that disclosure of this information is voluntary and is subject to the strictest levels of confidence and security. Further information on confidentiality and data security can be found below.

4. HOW WE WILL COLLECT EQUALITY MONITORING INFORMATION

Human Resources has developed a web-based application to give you direct access to some of your personal information.

The website is at: <http://HRUtilities.aston.ac.uk>. You will need to enter your normal network username and password to login. Because the online form contains personal information, it is held behind the University's firewall, so it can only be accessed from computers on the campus network or from a remote computer which is connected to the University's network through a VPN connection.

The website contains a self-service section (available to all staff) which includes the facility to update your personal and equal opportunity information.

Some staff members will not have access to a campus computer. These staff will be asked to complete a paper form to update their personal information. This form can be found in appendix 1.

New starters are asked to disclose information as part of the application process. Equality monitoring information is removed from the interview process and recorded by HR.

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

The questions and coding framework for the new categories of gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation are based on the 2011 National Census together with the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) Coding Framework. The University is required to comply with the coding framework, to aid effective benchmarking and compliance with the HESA reporting requirements. **As a result the codes can not be changed.** The full equality monitoring coding framework can be found in appendix 2.

The full definitions of religion or belief, sexual orientation, and gender identity can be found in appendix 3; the Legal Definitions of the Protected Characteristics.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

The University wishes to stress that all personal information held on staff is sourced and maintained securely and confidentially. Access to your information is restricted to individuals within the HR department and those responsible for maintaining IT security and systems. They are trained in information security, data protection and confidentiality.

Staff data and personal information is protected under the Data Protection Act. All staff have the right to see their own personal information records.

The University has in place the following data security measures:

- Access to staff personal data is restricted to authorised staff within the HR department
- Any incident of misuse of data will be dealt with in accordance with the University disciplinary procedures. The University is firmly committed to the prevention of discrimination and the advancement of equality for protected groups.
- Any paper monitoring forms will be sent out and should be returned in envelopes marked as confidential and for the attention of the addressee only.
- The University will encourage staff to take individual responsibility and accountability for personal or sensitive information.

7. WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION SAFE

You are also responsible for keeping your personal information safe and confidential. The following useful tips should be followed to keep your personal information secure:

- **Keep what you view on your computer screen private.** Consider if it is possible for someone to walk into your workspace and view sensitive data on your screen. Take all reasonable steps to prevent this such as turning off your monitor, closing your web browser and locking your computer when leaving your workstation.
- **Keep your equipment safe.** The HR Utilities Self Service area can safely be accessed via personal portable electronic devices such as mobile phones and i-pads whilst on campus. If you are accessing the self service area via a phone, i-pad or other electronic device, ensure you keep your equipment safe and close your web browser once you have finished using it.

- **Do not share your password.** Your system password should be kept confidential and not be shared with anyone. If you would like to change your password you can do so by holding down the Alt, Ctrl and Del keys on your keyboard and selecting change password from the options available. Alternatively contact the IT Helpdesk by telephone on Ext 3445 or by email on isa_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk.

8. HOW WE WILL USE STAFF EQUALITY MONITORING INFORMATION

The information that you provide to us will be invaluable in helping the University to monitor and analyse its staff profiles, and to meet individual needs as appropriate. The University will use your equality data in the following ways:

- In the review of University policies and procedures, particularly as part of conducting equality impact assessments
- as an opportunity to direct you to appropriate equality information, policies and support, in an appropriate and sensitive manner.
- to analyse and publish equality information on the overall staff profile, applicants and successful applicants, and leavers, in relation to gender identity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The information will be non-identifying and is an important step towards demonstrating transparency in how we are fulfilling our equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations.
- To produce statistical reports such as those returned to HESA, in order to comply with our reporting obligations. This information will be non-identifying.



Equality & Diversity Monitoring Form

Equality and diversity is integral to the work of the whole University, and is embedded within the University's mission and values.

Aston University is committed to promoting fairness and equality of opportunity in employment, ensuring that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated on the basis of their relative merits, abilities and potential.

We collect equality monitoring information to enable us to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, to assess the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy and to ensure we properly fulfil our public sector equality duty. We use this information to monitor matters such as recruitment, promotion, grading, training and pay by reference to the legally defined protected characteristics of age, sex, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, religion and belief, ethnicity and sexual orientation. We also use this information to analyse and report on our staff profile.

The information that you provide us with is covered by the Data Protection Act. This means that we have a legal duty to ensure that the information is maintained on a confidential basis. We would never disclose your information to a third party in a way which means you can be identified without first asking you for permission.

You can maintain this information online through the self-service section of the HR Utilities website which is at: <http://HRUtilities.aston.ac.uk>. Following this link will give you access. To login, you will need to enter your normal network username and password. Because the online form contains personal information, it is held behind the University's firewall, so it can only be accessed from computers on the campus network or from a remote computer which is connected to the University's network through a VPN connection.

For those without easy computer access, please complete this form and return it to Jane Tyrrell (Associate Director of HR) in the Human Resources Department in a sealed envelope marked "Private & Confidential".

Personal Details

Employee Ref No: (if known)		Title (Professor, Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss etc)	
Forename:		Preferred Forename:	
Surname:		Personal Email Address:	
School/Department:		Subdivision:	

Home address:		Mobile Telephone Number:	
		Home Telephone Number:	
Postcode:			

Equality & Diversity Information

Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Marital Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		Sexual Orientation: <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/> Gay Man <input type="checkbox"/> Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/> Gay Woman/Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
Religion: <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/> Christian <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> No religion <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual <input type="checkbox"/> Other religion or belief <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say		Ethnic Origin: <input type="checkbox"/> White – British <input type="checkbox"/> White – Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Other white background <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British – Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British – African <input type="checkbox"/> Other black background <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – white and black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – white and black African <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed – white and Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Other mixed background <input type="checkbox"/> Other background <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say	
Disability: The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.			
Do you have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If you have answered yes above, please give details: <input type="checkbox"/> Specific learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia) <input type="checkbox"/> General learning disability (e.g. Down's syndrome) <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive impairment (e.g. autistic spectrum disorder, resulting from head injury) <input type="checkbox"/> Long-standing illness or health condition (e.g. cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, epilepsy) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition (e.g. depression, schizophrenia) <input type="checkbox"/> Physical impairment or mobility issues (e.g. a wheelchair user, difficulty using chair arms) <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf or serious hearing impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Blind or serious visual impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Other type of disability <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple disabilities			
Would you like someone to contact you about making reasonable adjustments to accommodate your disability? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

APPENDIX 2

EQUALITY MONITORING CODING FRAMEWORK

There are changes in the area of equality monitoring which relate to new legislative requirements and to the 2011 Census. The Equality Act (2010) defines a new Public Sector Equality Duty that expands the range of equality characteristics that apply to higher education institutions to include gender identity, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

The proposed questions and codes are outlined in the table below. These are based on the Census 2011 categories and the HESA Coding Framework 2012/13, and therefore higher education institutions will have limited flexibility in making changes to the code descriptors.

Type of change	New field
Name	Religious Belief
Description of change	This field records the religious belief of staff, on the basis of their own self-assessment.
Suggested Question	What is your religion or belief?
Code Descriptors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No religion • Buddhist • Christian • Hindu • Jewish • Muslim • Sikh • Spiritual • Any other religion or belief • Information refused / Prefer not to say
Reason for collection	<p>To ensure religion and belief is treated on par with other equality characteristics, for which data is already collected.</p> <p>To monitor and identify any equal opportunities issues and plan more effectively to reasonably accommodate the religious and belief needs of staff.</p> <p>To raise awareness of equality and diversity across all staff groups.</p>
Other Information	The Equality Challenge Unit have recommended inclusion of code 'Spiritual' which was not included in the Census 2011. This will be grouped with 'Any other religion or belief' for onward analysis. All other categories are consistent with the Census 2011.

Type of change	New field
Name	Sexual Orientation
Description of change	This field records the sexual orientation of staff, on the basis of their own self-assessment
Suggested question	What is your sexual orientation?

Code Descriptors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bisexual • Gay man • Gay woman/lesbian • Heterosexual • Other • Information refused / Prefer not to say
Reason for collection	
Other Information	<p>To ensure sexual orientation is treated on par with other equality characteristics, for which data is already collected.</p> <p>To monitor and identify any equal opportunities issues and plan more effectively to meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-sexual staff.</p> <p>To promote Aston as a 'gay friendly' University.</p> <p>To facilitate a culture where all staff feel supported to disclose their sexuality if they wish to do so.</p> <p>To raise awareness of equality and diversity across all staff groups.</p>

Type of change	New field
Name	Gender identity
Description of change	This field will record the gender identity of staff. Staff should, accordingly to their own self-assessment, indicate if their gender identity is the same as the gender originally assigned to them at birth.
Suggested question	Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were originally assigned at birth?
Code Descriptors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Information refused / Prefer not to say
Reason for collection	<p>To ensure gender identity is treated on par with other equality characteristics, for which data is already collected.</p> <p>To monitor and identify any equal opportunities issues and plan more effectively to meet the needs of Transgender staff.</p> <p>To facilitate more effective communication with Transgender staff and direct services and support more appropriately.</p> <p>To raise awareness of equality and diversity across all staff groups.</p>