

Cardiff School of City and Regional Planning

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to consider the School's performance in relation to promoting equal opportunities against the priorities identified in its own "Code of Good Practice"; and to devise a plan for improving matters, where appropriate.

The "Code of Good Practice" identifies five areas of school activities, and these are considered in turn:

A. Student Application and Admissions

Objective i.) Monitor applications and admissions.

Current position: admissions are monitored (University wide) in relation to gender (all students), disability (all students) and ethnicity (Undergraduate students only). This information is disaggregated, but at present the only statistics relating to gender are available in CPLAN.

Action Acquire monitoring data for the school relating to gender, ethnicity, disability and (if available) Welsh as a first language for all stages of student admissions (School Administrator to initiate).

Objective ii) To avoid any unjustified under-representation of any group.

Gender In 1999-2000, 62% of UK Undergraduate students in CPLAN were male, 43% of UK Postgraduate students were male and 50% of Research students were male.

Action

- i) All admission tutors to prepare a report comparing CPLAN's position with comparator institutions (E.G. Newcastle, Sheffield) and with the national picture.
- ii) Undergraduate Admissions team to generate a programme of positive action to increase the recruitment of female undergraduates.
- iii) All admissions tutors to review the ratio of male:female applicants admitted in relation to ratios admitted

Ethnicity No data is available for the school,
Action School Administrator to obtain precise data, and then initiate action as in relation to gender.

B. Student Experience and School Culture

As part of their Equal Opportunities module, BSc2 students recently considered the student experience in CPLAN. This was a pilot exercise, and results must be treated cautiously; however, they identified a number of aspects of the school, which they felt, gave clear signals to some groups.

These were:

- i) Poor accessibility of the building (inside and out), the lack of induction loop etc.
- ii) The dearth of female academic staff
- iii) The imbalance between older and younger academic staff.
- iv) Assumptions made, in social activities and other remarks, about the centrality of pubs and drinking to student life.

They did not report any bullying or harassment (though the exercise would have been unlikely to unearth experiences of these).

- Action**
- i) Undertake a series of focus group discussing the “student experience” (perhaps led by a Ph.D. student or a Researcher). To be co-ordinated by Equal Opportunities Committee
 - ii) As a matter of urgency Management Team to draw up an Action Plan for improving accessibility to/in Glamorgan Building
 - iii) Huw Thomas to convene a meeting with Head of School, Cardiff County Council, Estates and others to discuss ii

C. Effect of Student Employment

In addition to the above, a systematic survey of a key aspect of contemporary student life – paid employment – has also been undertaken. The results suggest that for a significant minority of students paid work is both necessary, and interferes with their studies. The school will wish to make sure that this minority is not unduly disadvantaged i.e. that student performance is not unduly influenced by income and wealth.

- Action**
- i) Consider the implications of the survey of Student Employment

D. Curriculum

It could be argued that if staff and students are sensitive to Equal Opportunities then the curriculum, and its delivery, will tend to support it.

- Action**
- Huw Thomas to circulate to all staff the findings of the BSc2 group-work, and ask them to consider ways in which securing a variety of guest speakers etc. can add to the quality of the student experience.

E. Assessment

- Objective**
- To ensure that assessment procedures do not (unintentionally) disadvantage certain groups. This is something under continuous review by Teaching Committee, and, indeed, the University. The current extension of double marking and blind marking is the latest initiative in this area.

- Action**
- Teaching Committee to continue to keep the situation under review.

F. Staff Selection

- Objectives**
- i) To recruit the best staff from all backgrounds
 - ii) Promoting on the basis of merit, and avoiding discrimination
 - iii) Allocating responsibilities and roles without reference to stereotypes
 - iv) Enhancing equality of contractual conditions and security between staff

Present position

Recruitment There is, clearly, a serious imbalance in recruitment of both academic (teaching and research) and non-academic staff. White able-bodied males (many middle-aged) predominate among the former and white able-bodied females among the latter. A similar imbalance is evident throughout the university, but is more pronounced in CPLAN. Action needs to be taken

Action

- Management Team to take responsibility for a series of actions:
- i) All contract researchers and 2nd / 3rd / 4th year Ph.D. students with an interest in an academic career should receive formal mentoring which must involve discussion of their career plans, and appropriate strengthening of C.V.'s. There must be at least 2 formal meetings annually to discuss these matters, with a report on personal files.
 - ii) A series of actions must be taken to increase the pool of female, ethnic minority and if possible, disabled applicants for research / teaching posts. This means inter alia, projecting a more positive image of the school to these people. Actions should include:
 - a. Ensuring that women / ethnic minorities / disabled speakers are invited to seminars in the school.
 - b. Using women / ethnic minority / disabled external examiners.
 - c. All Research Groups to appoint at least one female Honorary Chair or Honorary Senior Research Fellow
 - d. Head of School and Equal Opportunities Committee to ensure that the school's determination to tackle the imbalances in recruitment (in the context of promoting equal opportunities in general) is publicised in 'Planning' etc.
 - iii) In relation to non-academic staff, exploring with Personnel the possibility of developing a relationship with NEWEMPLOY, an agency devoted to improving the employability of black and ethnic minority residents of Cardiff. (Other organisations may also be interested – E.G. Cardiff Women's Workshop?)
 - iv)
 - a. All academic and non-academic staff on fixed contracts must have an annual discussion with the Head of School (and, if they wish, one other person of their choice) of their progress to date and prospects within the school.
 - b. Once an individual has been on a short term contract for one year, Head of School (and Management Team) must produce a clear plan of how the school intends converting the contract into a permanent one, or, alternatively, providing opportunities for strengthening the C.V. to assist with getting a job elsewhere. These plans must be prepared (and updated) by 31st August annually, and discussed with the individuals concerned.