

HSU Gender Equality Plan

1. Introduction and Commitment

Health Sciences University (HSU) is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and supportive environment for all staff and students. Plans for achieving gender equality are embedded within a range of procedures, initiatives and action plans. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) sets out our actions to promote gender equity across our institution. As a small and specialist institution, our approach aligns with our values, culture, and capacity. The plan supports HSU's commitment to a responsible and inclusive research culture. It aligns with our institutional Action Plan under the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), which emphasises fairness, transparency, and equity across all aspects of academic life. This GEP is approved by the Vice-Chancellor and will be reviewed annually.

Signed:

Professor Lesley Haig

Vice-Chancellor

23 October 2025

2. Alignment of our Culture

The GEP forms an integral part of HSU's commitment to fostering a responsible and inclusive culture.

By embedding gender equality within our and culture, we aim to:

- Promote fairness, transparency, and inclusivity across all stages of staff recruitment, and career progression
- Ensure that diversity and equality considerations are central
- Align data collection, monitoring, and reporting processes to efficiently track progress on gender equality and responsible metrics
- Foster a university environment where all staff, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute fully

3. Governance and Resourcing

Responsibility for the GEP sits with:

- **GEP Lead:** Rebecca Old, Head of People & Development
- **Reporting to:** People & Place Committee

This role is supported through an internal working group comprising of academic, professional services, and student representatives. No new roles have been created; instead, existing responsibilities have been aligned to support this plan within current resources.

4. Evidence and Data

We collect and review gender data annually. This data is reviewed by the GEP lead and reported internally to the relevant committees. Our gender pay gap report is published on the HSU website and contains our action plan for enhancement.

5. Training and Awareness

HSU is committed to having a diverse and inclusive culture which offers equality and opportunity for all by eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting respectful relations on campus. We are committed to supporting an environment in which all colleagues, students, patients and visitors are treated with respect in which a zero-tolerance approach is taken to bullying, harassment or discrimination; all people have the opportunity to realise their full potential. We take a proportionate approach by integrating equality, diversity and inclusion awareness into staff development, recruitment processes and leadership expectations.

Training is provided in varied forms and covers unconscious bias, inclusive recruitment, equality, diversity and inclusion principals and staff with line management responsibilities are offered regular training with a People Advisor. It is mandatory for staff with research assessment responsibilities to complete a 'bias in research assessment' module. We also draw on freely available training resources (such as Advance HE, EC-funded materials, or sector toolkits) and adapt them to our institutional context. We also encourage staff to participate in relevant CPD through professional networks and external partners.

6. Gender Dimension in Academic Activity

HSU recognises that gender and other forms of diversity can influence all aspects of academic activity, including education, research, professional practice, knowledge exchange and innovation. We aim to foster an environment in which consideration of gender and equality is embedded within institutional practices and decision-making wherever relevant. In doing so, HSU seeks to operate in line with sector good practice, including guidance from the European Commission (Horizon Europe resources and toolkits), the Office for Students (on access and participation), equality legislation, and other relevant professional and sector frameworks. This approach underlines our commitment to maintaining high-quality, inclusive, and socially responsible academic activity across the institution. In practice, these principles are reflected across HSU's existing processes, including curriculum design and review, research ethics, staff development, and knowledge exchange activities, ensuring that the consideration of gender and equality is embedded in our day-to-day academic operations.

7. Recommended Requirements

- To support a healthy work life balance and organisational culture and to ensure we are supporting all staff, we use a flexible approach with focusing on the needs of the individual and the role. This is demonstrated through our Flexible Working Request Policy and Procedure, our Working Flexible framework and our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy and Procedure. We monitor the uptake of formal flexible working arrangements to ensure fairness and to inform ongoing improvements.
- The integration of gender balance into leadership decision making is evident in HSU's approach to flexible working, recruitment and selection and equality as well as staff data.
- Recruiting and selecting the right people is of paramount importance to the continued success of HSU. Using a professional and transparent approach, free of bias and discrimination, we aim to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre.
- Our Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure confirms our commitment to providing a safe and respectful environment where the whole community can study, work and live free from sexual violence and sexual harassment. The policy states a clear process for any staff or student can report cases of sexual harassment, how the case will be managed and the support available for all involved in the process.
- To support fairness in career development and progression, we are reviewing our Academic Framework and promotion procedures to ensure that they are transparent, inclusive, and aligned with principles of equality, diversity, and responsible research assessment. This aligns with our CoARA commitment and action plan. Gender-disaggregated data on promotion applications and outcomes will be monitored annually to identify and address any disparities.
- We are committed to supporting gender equality in the student experience. This work is embedded within our Access and Participation Plan, where we monitor admissions, progression, and attainment by gender and take targeted action to address any disparities. Student representation on committees and in leadership roles is encouraged and supported to ensure diverse voices are heard in decision-making. Inclusive curriculum design and teaching practices aim to reflect a range of perspectives and promote equality of opportunity for all students.

8. Contact and Feedback

For questions or to provide feedback on this Gender Equality Plan, please contact:

Rebecca Old

Head of People & Development

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