



MPLS EDI Action Plan (2026-2029)

INTRODUCTION

EDI is a cross-cutting function, ideally embedded across all areas of work. This action plan for the MPLS EDI Team covers the next three academic years (2026/27-2028/29). The plan maps out a selection of ongoing activities to continue and further develop over the next three years, and a small number of new activities identified as emerging priorities. The plan, which remains ambitious, focuses on activities led/owned by the team whilst also including some of the more significant collaborations with other cognate offices, teams and individuals. It has been approved by MPLS GPC in June 2026.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLAN

Existing work shown in **blue** with areas for development/expansion detailed in 'next steps'

Proposed new activity in **green**

Priority categorisation

High = necessary, impactful work to progress with some urgency

Medium = important activity to maintain or develop

Lower = key work that can be reduced to suit needs/resources or with a longer timescale to progress

Timescale: immediate (within first year), medium (second year), longer-term (third year)

The full detail tables also provide information on alignment with the University's EDI Strategy: the final column reflects the University's four strategic objectives outlined in the [EDI Strategic Plan \(2024-27\)](#).

- **Culture** – strengthen a culture of belonging;
- **Diversity** – increase staff and student diversity and representation;
- **Work** – ensure our teaching, research and engagement practices are inclusive;
- **Leadership** – support and model academic and professional leadership.

SUMMARY TABLES

No.	Overarching/intersectional actions	Priority
1.	<p>EDI support for departments: committee meetings, advice, guidance (e.g. Freedom of Speech, EHRC code of practice), coaching, drop-in sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting and analysing EDI data: staff experience survey, focus groups, staff and student demographic data; monitoring and evaluation of EDI activity, pay gap work driven centrally (gender, ethnicity, disability) • EDI training and learning: core online training (available to everyone), bespoke training by request from departments (and scaling these as appropriate), moving beyond compliance approach • Research Culture and Research Support: research culture toolkits, support for divisional researcher representatives, REF support, reviewing internal funding processes, Trusted Research (working with the Research Support team) 	High
2.	<p>Ensuring EDI is embedded in strategy, leadership and governance: divisional committees, including EDI learning in leadership programmes, embedding EDI in priority research themes/growth areas, and increasing diversity in senior leadership</p>	High
3.	<p>Resolution Service: termly webinars for individual learning, internal pool of trained resolvers/mediators, explore shared services with other University mediation services</p>	Medium
4.	<p>Communications, engagement and outreach: newsletters, EDI awards/recognition, events, identify/showcase EDI related research happening in MPLS, explore feasibility of scaling up impactful departmental outreach activities</p>	Medium
5.	<p>Inclusive and accessible spaces: embed EDI input at earliest possible stage for existing building improvements and new capital projects, learning from previous approaches (e.g. LaMB, Humanities building)</p>	Medium
6.	<p>Mental health and wellbeing: consult with departments on divisional approach to mental health support, MHFAs (renewal due 2027) and Mental Health Awareness week; monitor implementation of work-related stress policy</p>	Medium
7.	<p>Supporting EDI networks and capacity building (via admin support, comms, event funding): EDI Fellows, BIPOC STEM Network, gender equity/women’s societies, LGBTQ+ groups, Working Parents Teams group, Neurodivergent Teams group; explore societies and networks aimed at addressing class/socio-economic status; discuss potential funding opportunities with MPLS Development team</p>	Lower
8.	<p>EDI and Professional Services Staff: explore options for EDI ‘clusters’ or shared services, and collaborative working for PSS EDI leads; EDI demographic data for PSS staff; feed in EDI approaches to University’s Professional Services Programme via available channels</p>	High
9.	<p>EDI and AI: identify ways to use AI tools to enable EDI work; surface and advocate for consideration of EDI implications in AI use/work; identify academics/researchers or projects looking at AI with an EDI lens and showcase their work</p>	Medium

No.	Race Equality Actions	Priority
10.	<p>Collect and analyse race/ethnicity data for staff and students, and intersectional data (particularly gender and race) where available; look closer at recruitment, progression/promotion, turnover rates</p>	High

11.	Beyond Boundaries: apply for external funding to scale up	High
12.	Run MPLS Research Seminar scheme to encourage and support MPLS departments in inviting academically excellent researchers/academics from racially marginalised backgrounds to their seminar series, and explore collaborative opportunities with TORCH Race & Resistance, AfOx, CaribOx, IndOx	Medium
13.	Deliver anti-racist allyship workshop	Lower
14.	Ethnicity awarding gap project: understand existing gaps across degree levels and make recommendations	High

No.	Disability and Neuro-inclusion Actions	Priority
15.	Neuro-inclusion in STEM: training and guidance/support for departments, scaling good practice	High
16.	Division-wide roll out of Workplace Adjustment Plans (WAPs) and/or embedding it within existing induction and PDR mechanisms in partnership with relevant divisional teams	Lower
17.	Guidance/support for departments to address equitable outcomes and experiences for disabled undergraduate students; in particular, helping departments with 'competence standards' for courses to have clarity about learning outcomes, reasonable adjustments, and alternative study and assessment options (supporting the Education Policy team)	High
18.	Collect examples of departmental reasonable adjustments made (particularly in lab/STEM environments) and share more widely	Medium

No.	LGBTQ+ Actions	Priority
19.	Funding support provided to LGBTQ+ networks to organise lectures and events	Lower
20.	Work with LGBT+ Advisory Group and EDU/central teams to support trans and nonbinary staff and students particularly pending EHRC guidance	High
21.	Implement relevant LGBTQ+ Task and Finish Group recommendations at the divisional level	Medium

No.	Gender Equality Actions	Priority
22.	Support and submit Athena Swan applications: target for Silver and Gold applications, help improve data collection, accuracy, monitoring	High
23.	UG awarding gap project: help implement report recommendations (in collaboration with Education Policy team); consider how diversifying curriculum activity features here	High
24.	Women in entrepreneurship: RisingWISE, SeedWISE (supporting these programmes as needed)	Medium
25.	Support for parents and carers: Returning Carers Fund and returning parents workshops, review of MPLS Parental Leave Policy, promote and monitor use of additional paternity leave and shared parental leave, lobby Uni for support for researcher parents and for summary guidance, find out more about external projects addressing cover during parental leave	Medium

FULL DETAILS

OVERARCHING/INTERSECTIONAL ACTIVITY

No.	Action	Rationale/drivers/success measures/comments	Priority	Timescale	Owner	EDI Strategy
1.	<p>EDI support for departments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meetings, advice, guidance, coaching • Collecting and analysing EDI data: staff experience survey, focus groups, staff and student demographic data; monitoring and evaluation of EDI activity • EDI training and learning: core online training (available to everyone), bespoke training by request from departments; cascading/implementing central priorities (e.g. free speech, harassment in HE) • Research Culture activity: toolkits, support for divisional researcher representatives <p>➤ Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ explore options for more individual coaching and drop-in sessions ○ contribute to pay gap work driven centrally (gender, ethnicity, disability) ○ scale approaches from bespoke training sessions to a wider range of departments/audiences ○ roll out EDI briefing e-learning module developed by MSD and EDU once pilot is complete ○ consider how to move beyond compliance approach to EDI learning, towards a focus 	<p>Key function of the divisional office EDI team (and other divisional office teams)</p> <p>Need robust, quality data to inform decision-making; required for Athena Swan submissions and legislative requirements (e.g. gender pay gap)</p> <p>Need to provide opportunities for staff and students to increase self-awareness and reflect on structural changes they can influence</p> <p>Research Culture activity is interconnected with EDI work – closer connections will help facilitated good practice sharing and reduce duplication</p>	High	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team; MPLS Research Support team; all departments	All

	<p>on building inclusive workplace cultures in day-to-day work and interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ REF support for Strategy, People, Research Environment (SPRE) component ○ Implementing Equity in Research report recommendations; reviewing internal funding processes ○ Trusted Research addressing security risks from international collaborations – addressing EDI implications of this work ○ Closer working between Research Culture and EDI teams 					
2.	<p>Ensuring EDI is embedded in strategy, leadership and governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divisional and central committee meetings; termly EDI agenda item at MPLS Board; including EDI learning in leadership programmes ➤ Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ explore how to embed EDI approaches to priority research themes and growth areas (e.g., AI, Quantum, Energy, Space, etc.) ○ increase diversity in senior leadership roles (e.g. HoDs, HAFs, AHs, Div Board, MPLS reps in University committees like Council, research theme leads) 	<p>Importance of EDI at leadership level to influence change</p> <p>[Data from Equality Report 2024-25: 22% MPLS Female HoDs in 2025, 4% BME members in divisional boards – across divisions]</p>	High	Ongoing	Head of Division; Divisional Registrar; AH for People; MPLS EDI team; all Departments	Leadership
3.	<p>Resolution Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Termly webinars for individual learning ● In-house pool of trained resolvers to provide facilitated conversations/mediations ➤ Next steps: explore shared services with other University mediation services 	<p>Preventative approach designed to address workplace conflict before it escalates; gives people an option to resolve issues short of a formal complaint; helps deal with some</p>	Medium	Ongoing	MPLS Resolution Service Leads	Culture

		bullying and harassment claims rooted in poor communication				
4.	<p>Communications, engagement and outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI Network newsletter and Mental Health Matters newsletter • EDI awards, summer celebration, events • Departmental outreach activity run locally to engage underrepresented groups <p>➤ Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consult with departments and networks to better understand ways to enhance engagement/community-building locally and divisionally ○ identify/showcase EDI related research happening in MPLS ○ advocating for adequate reward/recognition for those taking on extra EDI and volunteering roles ○ explore feasibility of scaling up impactful outreach activities aimed at underrepresented groups more widely beyond the initiating department 	<p>Visibility and awareness of EDI activity helps with a sense of belonging and engagement; importance of celebrating the contributions of people across the division trying to make things better; enhances the division's reputation; helps increase diversity of student body by supporting/enabling outreach activities that show positive outcomes</p>	Medium	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team	Culture
5.	<p>Inclusive and accessible spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed EDI input at earliest possible stage for existing building improvements and new capital projects, learning from previous approaches (e.g. LaMB, Humanities building) 	<p>MPLS priorities to improve the existing science estate and create new buildings/facilities (e.g. Osney Mead) should have EDI input in order to have spaces that are as inclusive as possible, and reduce the risk of accessibility issues</p>	Medium	Ongoing	MPLS Planning and Projects, and Capital Development teams; all Departments	Culture, Work
6.	<p>Mental health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) 	<p>Activity in this area has developed significantly since the last action plan –</p>	Medium	Immediate	Head of People	Culture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) • Partnership with Oxfordshire Mind (1 leadership workshop remaining) <p>➤ Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult with departments on divisional approach to mental health support and MHFAs (renewal due 2027) ○ Monitor implementation of work-related stress policy in MPLS 	<p>with the introduction of the Employee Assistance Plan and the Thriving at Oxford programme – which necessitates a review of the extent to which divisional level activity and coordination is needed.</p> <p>Legislative requirements such as those underpinning the University’s work-related stress policy.</p>			Planning; MPLS EDI team; all Departments	
7.	<p>Supporting EDI networks and capacity building (via admin support, comms, event funding)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI Fellows, BIPOC STEM Network, gender equity/women’s societies, LGBTQ+ groups, Working Parents Teams group, Neurodivergent Teams group <p>➤ Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connect with societies and networks aimed at addressing class/socio-economic status, and/or Oxford SU to promote existing efforts, sharing of information/resources, and potentially collaborate on activity ○ Discuss potential funding opportunities with MPLS Development team 	<p>Helps to expand the reach and capacity into departments and enhances divisional decision-making (including important lived experiences and perspectives to our EDI Steering Group); networks help enable local connections that can positively impact feelings of belonging</p>	Lower	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team	Culture
8.	<p>EDI and Professional Services Staff</p> <p>➤ Enhance sharing and collaborative working with EDI divisional team and EDI PSS leads in departments; encourage more collaborative working and bridging gaps between PSS and academics</p> <p>➤ Explore options for EDI ‘clusters’ or shared services in MPLS</p>	<p>PSS staff included in Athena Swan submissions; significant central activity for PSP that will affect a large number of staff – important for EDI considerations to be taken into account</p>	High	Immediate	Divisional Registrar; Head of People Planning; AH for People; MPLS EDI team	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advocate for EDI to be embedded in the University's Professional Services Programme (PSP) through available channels ➤ Review and monitor EDI demographic data for PSS staff 					
9.	<p>EDI and AI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore ways in which to use AI tools to enable EDI work (e.g. supporting Athena Swan applications, tool for people expecting to take parental leave, tool to help identify good practice examples to address known challenges) ➤ Surface and advocate for consideration of EDI implications in AI use/work (e.g. bias/discrimination resulting from AI tools, impact on marginalised communities, climate concerns, differential access to AI); interact with existing teams/groups in the AI space, in an 'interfacing' capacity ➤ Understand which academics/researchers or projects in MPLS are looking at AI with an EDI lens; showcase their work 	MPLS is a leader in AI research, and EDI should be considered and integrated where relevant; EDI work itself could be enhanced with this technology	Medium	Medium-term	AH for People; MPLS EDI team; MPLS Comms team	Work

SPECIFIC TO PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Race Equality						
No.	Action	Rationale/drivers/success measures/comments	Priority	Timescale	Owner	EDI Strategy
10.	<p>Collect and analyse race/ethnicity data for staff and students, and intersectional data (particularly gender and race) where available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Next steps: look closer at recruitment, progression/promotion, turnover rates; review 	Accurate data has been particularly difficult to acquire beyond students on course and staff in post; important to dig deeper into available data to	High	Immediate	MPLS EDI team	Diversity

	ethnicity/race data and nationality (e.g., between UK vs international)	better understand challenges and areas of focus				
11.	<p>Beyond Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcases researchers of colour, engaging with Oxfordshire state schools, teachers, children and community groups <p>➤ Next steps: apply for EPSRC funding to scale nationally; search for other funding options</p>	Award-winning (VC's Diversity Award), flagship activity that gives needed visibility to researchers of colour (particularly those early in their careers); connects MPLS to local/regional schools and organisations, in line with the University's community engagement ambitions; inspires children and teachers to see STEM creatively and that there are scientists who look like them	High	Immediate	AH for People; MPLS EDI team	Diversity
12.	Run MPLS Research Seminar scheme to encourage and support MPLS departments in inviting academically excellent researchers/academics from racially marginalised backgrounds to their seminar series, and explore collaborative opportunities with TORCH Race & Resistance, AfOx, CaribOx, IndOx	Builds connections and gives visibility to a diverse range of STEM academics; helps academics expand connections/networks and increases potential for collaborative work; supports rising stars to experience the Oxford environment	Medium	Immediate	AH for People; MPLS EDI team	Diversity
13.	Deliver anti-racist allyship workshop	Related to Action 4 (EDI training) above	Lower	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team	Culture
14.	Ethnicity awarding gap project – to understand existing gaps across degree levels and make recommendations	Builds on the UG gender awarding gap project from 2025-26; addresses Race Equality Charter action identified for MPLS; addresses requests from departments for support	High	Immediate	MPLS EDI team; Education Policy team	Work

Disability and Neuro-inclusion

No.	Action	Rationale/drivers/success measures/comments	Priority	Timescale	Owner	EDI Strategy
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15.	Neuro-inclusion in STEM – training and guidance/support for departments ➤ Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ scaling good practice like Chem’s neuro-inclusion in labs work, and Biology’s peer support group ○ collect learnings from Computer Science pilot re: giving interview questions in advance for PSS roles 	While staff data isn’t collected for neurodivergence, previous student data has shown higher numbers of neurodivergent students enrolled in MPLS compared with other divisions; demand for support/guidance re: neuro-inclusion continues to be high	High	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team	Work, Culture
16.	Division-wide roll out of Workplace Adjustment Plans (WAPs) and/or embedding it within existing induction and PDR mechanisms, following EDU pilot with Hums	Div Office and Chemistry were part of a previous pilot of WAPs; waiting for EDU to progress work before rolling out	Lower	Longer-term	MPLS EDI team; HR leads	Work
17.	Guidance/support for departments to address equitable outcomes and experiences for disabled undergraduate students; in particular, helping departments with ‘competence standards’ for courses to have clarity about learning outcomes, reasonable adjustments, and alternative study and assessment options	Connected with SWSS project team that includes divisional posts (Heather Tilley for MPLS) to achieve Access and Participation Plan (2025-29) targets	High	Immediate	Education Policy team	Work
18.	Collect examples of departmental reasonable adjustments made (particularly in lab/STEM environments) and share more widely	Address feedback received from disability focus groups – people wanting more information about possible reasonable adjustments	Medium	Medium-term	MPLS EDI team	Work, Culture

LGBTQ+						
No.	Action	Rationale/drivers/success measures/comments	Priority	Timescale	Owner	EDI Strategy
19.	Funding support provided to LGBTQ+ networks to organise lectures and events (e.g., in Maths, Biology and Physics; LGBTQ+ STEMinar conference)	Support for existing networks rather than re-inventing activity	Lower	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team	Culture, Work

20.	Work with LGBT+ Advisory Group and EDU/central teams to support trans and nonbinary staff and students particularly pending EHRC guidance	Anticipated changes to EHRC guidance have caused stress and anxiety for trans and nonbinary staff and students	High	Immediate	MPLS EDI team with EDU & LGBT+ Advisory Group	Culture, Work
21.	Implement relevant LGBTQ+ Task and Finish Group recommendations at the divisional level ¹	Recommendations approved by JCEDI	Medium	Medium-term	MPLS EDI team with EDU	Culture, Work

Gender Equality						
No.	Action	Rationale/drivers/success measures/comments	Priority	Timescale	Owner	EDI Strategy
22.	Support and submit Athena Swan applications: target for Silver and Gold applications ➤ Next steps: contribute to central efforts to improve data collection, accuracy, and monitoring	Institutional AS commitment, and divisional target	High	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team; all Departments	All
23.	UG awarding gap project ➤ Next steps: implement report recommendations; consider how diversifying curriculum activity	Divisional priority	High	Ongoing	Education Policy team; MPLS EDI	Work

¹ (1) **Strengthen communications and engagement through visible support for LGBTQ+ members of the collegiate University**, in particular by: (a) refreshing the current LGBTQ+ Role Models and Allies webpages as a new LGBTQ+ Leaders webpage, seeking new nominations for staff, students and senior leaders to be featured; (b) promoting leading scholarship and good practice on LGBTQ+ topics; and (c) working in partnership with LGBTQ+ groups to organise community-building engagement events throughout the year.

(2) **Review and refresh leadership development on LGBTQ+ inclusion** by: (a) relaunching the current EDU training programmes on LGBTQ+ inclusion and building a train-the-trainer model for delivery; and (b) supporting and enabling LGBTQ+ staff and student leaders through targeted leadership development programmes, which include attention to building relationships with the wider LGBTQ+ community.

(3) **Align work on LGBTQ+ inclusion with the Objectives of the Collegiate University EDI Strategic Plan** by: (a) moving to the EDI Strategic Plan as the primary framework for progressing LGBTQ+ inclusion work; and (b) ensuring that actions arising from these recommendations are delivered through the EDU, academic divisions, departments and college partners alongside, and with parity to, existing actions on race, gender and disability.

(4) **Promote intellectual and academic leadership on LGBTQ+ subjects and model pluralism on LGBTQ+ matters** by: (a) spotlighting the University's academic leadership in LGBTQ+ topics across disciplines, by partnering with academic divisions through existing research showcases; and (b) showcasing the pluralism and intersectionality of the academic, professional and student community working in LGBTQ+ topics.

	features here (working with experts in History of Science, Dept of Education, History Faculty)				team; all Departments	
24.	Women in entrepreneurship – RisingWISE, SeedWISE	Flagship activity that has been shortlisted for the VC awards	Medium	Ongoing	MPLS Enterprise team	Diversity
25.	<p>Support for parents and carers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning Carers Fund and returning parents workshops • Review of MPLS Parental Leave Policy <p>➤ Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lobby University to address support for researcher parents (as raised by MPLS Parental Leave Policy for fixed term researchers), and to provide summary parental guidance to staff and HR colleagues ○ Promote and monitor use of Oxford University Additional Paternity/Partner Leave and Shared Parental Leave ○ Find out more about the Rover Researchers scheme in Cambridge that addresses cover for researchers on leave 	Institutional AS commitment, and divisional priority	Medium	Ongoing	MPLS EDI team, Head of People Planning	Diversity