

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER**RACE EQUALITY GROUP**

A meeting of the Race Equality Group was held on 6 October 2003 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room A, Northcote House

PRESENT:	Paul Webley (DVC – School of Psychology) (Chair)	PW
	Sylvia Wakeham (Personnel & Staff Development) (EO Officer)	SW
	Helen Chapman (secretary)	HC
	Angelique Richardson (School of English)	AR
	Karl Woodgett (School of Classics, Ancient History & Theology)	KW
	Kate Piddington (Guild of Students)	KP
	Nick Birbeck (LaTiS)	NB
	Nick Givens (School of Education & Life Long Learning) (EO Representative)	NG
	Nicky Hudson (Peninsula Medical School)	NH
	Pirkko Markula (School of Sport & Health Sciences)	PM
	Tony Simoes da Silva (School of English)	TSDS

APOLOGIES There were no apologies

03.01 Introduction

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanked all for volunteering their services. The purpose of the group was to drive forward the University's Race Equality Policy and it would be vital to harness energy and commitment of members. Membership would involve more than attending meetings and the knowledge and expertise around the table would be invaluable.

03.02 Draft Terms of Reference (REG/03/01)

The draft terms of reference were discussed. It was PROPOSED that there should be an additional item to reflect the University's commitment to build external relationships with the local community. The REG is not a budget holder but SW will investigate avenues for additional funding, including APC. The draft terms of reference were RECOMMENDED to the Equal Opportunities Group (EOG) for approval.

03.03 Outline of Current Arrangements

SW updated the group on the work Equal Opportunities Group, the Equal Opportunities Policy and Action Plan and the Race Equality Policy and Action Plan. Policies and action plans are available on the webpage 'Equality Matters' <http://www.ex.ac.uk/eo>. In addition to REG there is a Disability Equality Group which also reports to the EOG

Within the HE sector, HEFCE have a statutory obligation to ensure that all universities are meeting the requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Through the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) they advise on equal opportunities, particularly in employment and racial equality issues. They appointed independent consultants to assess the Race Equality Policies and action plans of all HE institutions. They recommended improvements to our action plan and have required us to produce a more user-friendly version of the policy.

In July 2002 a staff opinion survey on equal opportunities indicated that the level of equal opportunities or race awareness was low. This survey will be carried out again in two or three years' time.

A procedure for staff, students or visitors to report racial and other discriminatory incidents is to be introduced during October 2003.

REG RECEIVED a paper from Kathy Hill, the University's Purchasing Co-ordinator (REG/03/02) which provided a background on the implications of the RRAA on procurement for the University

SW informed the group that the legislation **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003** comes into force in December 2003. Although religion is not always linked to race, it will be an area in which REG is involved.

PW commented that the University's calendar is based on Christian events, including the names of the terms and that there should be a move towards recognition of a multi-faith culture. For information Ramadan is from 27 October to 25 November 2003.

03.04 Action Plan

The Race Equality Policy and action plan provide the group with identified areas for progress. Aspects of the action plan were discussed with a view to deciding the work programme for REG (REG/03/03)

ECU had provided recommendations for improvement on the action plan. Working group 1 (SW, FK, TSdS, KP) will report back to the next meeting with amendments on the action plan.

Working group 2 (PM, NG, the Guild Racial and Ethnic Rights Rep) will work on the production of a user friendly leaflet setting out the University's racial equality policy, which will then be distributed throughout the University.

Working group 3 (SW, FK) will review BME representation of membership of committees and Council

Working group 4 (AR, SW, KW) will look at the implications of the pending legislation on Religion or belief in the workplace

NH and KW would join the EOG group who were working on instigating focus groups, although NH suggested that ethnicity data needed to be available.

The group discussed the perception that the University has predominately white students. Exeter was described as "a white dominated sleepy hollow". PW advised that the VC is particularly involved and committed to encouraging and attracting a wider diversity of students. Examples like the images in the prospectus were discussed and although it was agreed that the responsibility for change did not sit with REG, it was part of the overall action plan.

The EO annual report is to be compiled before the next REG meeting, SW confirmed she will be asking for information from Schools/Divisions and that the race equality elements will be identifiable as a sub-section of the EO Report. It was noted that this should include any information about research that may have been undertaken as there was a tendency for pockets of isolated research and there could well be opportunities for collaboration.

It was commented that Schools/Divisions have a Disability Representative and the possibility of a race equality representative was discussed. It was agreed that this would not be a recommendation of REG at the present time as promoting racial equality was everyone's responsibility. This is consistent with the view of EO group that it would not be a requirement. However, some Schools/Divisions have extremely useful and effective EO representatives and/or EOGs.

03.05 Monitoring and Information

Under the RRAA, monitoring and consultation is required to monitor the impact of the policy. It was agreed that there are insufficient "success" indicators and that the information on the monitoring of data needs to be more widely available.

A discussion took place on how data is gathered in the individual schools and centrally. NG reported on the survey conducted recently where questionnaires had been sent to 180 black and minority ethnic students, 35 were returned, NG is currently producing a report. It was agreed that REG would wish to receive a copy.

Data available from resources such as personnel records and SITS were discussed. SW would ask the Schools Liaison Officer for a report to the next meeting on widening participation targets and data gathering, including information on support mechanisms for BME students.

It was agreed that there should not be an overload on monitoring, but that the group needed to establish what information is readily available and what is important. The monitoring arrangements outlined in the Race Equality Policy/Action Plan were accepted as main priorities, although it was identified that there probably needs to be improvement in the data collection procedures. It was agreed that Accommodation should be included in the section for students and under the staff monitoring arrangements promotion and discretionary awards should be added. It was also noted that given small numbers of BME students in individual Schools/Division, any monitoring must respect anonymity.

03.06 Future Meetings

The working groups would arrange their own meetings in the intervening period before the next REG meeting.

The dates of the next REG meetings are, 2pm to 4pm:

12 January 2004

5 May 2004

The venue to be confirmed.