

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Annual Report 2024/25 – Executive Summary

In 2024/25, the Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) Committee continued to consolidate NSCD's EEDI strategy following our establishment as an independent higher education provider. The Committee, which met three times during the year and draws membership from senior leaders, staff, students and the Board of Governors, has strengthened its governance model through revised Terms of Reference, a streamlined membership structure and the introduction of annual reporting across mid- and high-level committees.

Significant progress was made in delivering the EEDI Strategy (2024–2030) and associated policies. The School completed major strands of work including Phase 2 of the EEDI Audit, a comprehensive access review and the remodelling of NSCD's Inclusivity Protocols, now published and embedded into academic governance. Alongside this, improvements to physical and digital accessibility, new building signage, an enhanced Access Webpage, a developing Visual Story and strengthened wheelchair-route communication which demonstrate meaningful action on recommendations from previous audits.

Staff and student profiles in show a diverse and evolving community. The workforce remains stable, with strong female representation and ethnic diversity broadly in line with sector benchmarks, while disability disclosure processes were strengthened. Student data highlights increasing diversity across ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic status, alongside rising representation from disadvantaged groups. Although continuation gaps persist for some widening participation cohorts, targeted monitoring and early intervention remain in place.

The School delivered a comprehensive programme of staff and student development focused on neurodiversity, resilience, inclusive practice and representation. Specialist training partners including Dance United Yorkshire, Tonic Theatre, Stop Gap, Northern Colour, Tired Movement and Elizabeth Arifien, all contributed to a progressive training offer, supported by new initiatives such as the EEDI Events Calendar and plans to further strengthen work on allyship and active bystander practice.

The Diversity Working Group (DWG), meeting half-termly, played a central role in embedding student voice and lived experience into institutional decision-making. With representation across PoGM, LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse, disabled, bursary holder, mental health and international student communities, the DWG advanced actions across policy development, student wellbeing, communication, community-building and EDI-led curriculum practice. Integration of the DWG into NSCD's academic governance structures marks a significant strengthening of the School's internal voice and accountability mechanisms.

Throughout the year, NSCD expanded its EEDI-aligned student support offer, including pilot programmes in autism/ADHD coaching, executive functioning support, gender-affirming wellbeing work and enhanced therapeutic provision. The Concerns Form, now embedded into the MyConcern safeguarding platform, provides a secure mechanism for reporting micro-aggressions, bias and broader issues, allowing the School to respond swiftly and identify recurring themes and ensure appropriate support is provided.

Looking ahead, the School will continue to implement recommendations arising from the Diversity Audit, strengthen neurodiversity support frameworks, embed inclusivity protocols into practice, further develop hybrid-access technologies, and prioritise environmental improvements to support accessibility. The work undertaken in 2024/25 provides a strong foundation for continued progress, ensuring NSCD remains a safe, equitable and inclusive place for staff, students and visitors alike.