

WSU Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report - May 2025

This report follows those provided in May 2022, 2023, and 2024, as published on our website. It seeks to update our membership and stakeholders on what actions we have taken across the 2024/25 academic year, to fulfil the commitments made within our EDI Policy (which we review annually) and to place inclusion at the heart of what we do.

The SU has an internal EDI Working Group (EDIWG), which has met monthly throughout the year to progress an action plan agreed at the start of the year with the new officer team. The plan reflected their objectives and our organisational strategy including an oversight of the SU's calendar of cultural events, activities, and campaigns. Information and documentation related to EDI can be found here on our website

<https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/equalityanddiversity/>

EDI is a key element of the SU's Strategic Framework 2023-28 which can be found here <https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/strategy/>

Below is a summary of the actions and outcomes from that action plan in 2024/25, as well as all the other programmes of work within the SU.

(i) Training and development, education, and information

It is essential that the all the staff team and members are trained and educated on a continuous basis on the importance of EDI. To this end, this year:

- We had a staff delivered by an external provider on understanding of Neurodiversity. A Power Hour for all staff aimed at developing a greater understanding of Neurodiversity was followed by a longer session for managers to learn practical tools to support any colleagues who might be neurodivergent effectively.
- Following the training, we introduced a Neurodiversity policy into our Employee Handbook, with an accompanying specific Neurodiversity reasonable adjustments process.
- We developed and delivered mandatory EDI training sessions at committee training for our Clubs, Society, and Network Committee Members. This was also delivered at all Department Rep and Course Rep trainings.
- All students who took up committee member roles or an academic representative role had a mandatory Neurodiversity training delivered to them before starting their role.

- All new core staff continued to undertake mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training as part of their induction, as did our Welcome Desk Assistants. (Staff are required to repeat this training after 3 years).
- New staff are given organisational guidelines on how to ensure their written communications are accessible.
- SU core staff were involved in the Race Equality Week 5 Day Challenge where information on different topics to raise awareness were sent each day (from Race Equality Matters)
- SU core staff received training from the Centre for Academic Skills around inclusive language for international students
- Refresher sessions are being arranged in the coming months for SU core staff around Disability Awareness and LGBTQ+ Awareness.
- The Chief Exec delivered multiple sessions throughout the year to incoming international students about safety, consent, reporting of incidents, and signposting to security and PCSOs on campus.
- We put out a statement about the violent incidences and riots that were taking place across the country during summers along with signposting for support.
- The University and the Students' Union signed the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen, and Boaters (GRTSB) Pledge, committing to support the access, retention, and outcomes in education for students from these communities.
- All WSU staff undertook GRTSB training on LearnUpon and this has been added to our mandatory training list for new staff.
- We have placed the GRTSB flag in various areas like the Help & Advice appointment room, Welcome Desk area, etc. to help display that we are a safe space for those students.
- A GRTSB spotlight was given in Welfare and Inclusion Council in their April meeting.
- We are part of a GRTSB Working group with the University, with external stakeholders with lived experience. We are planning awareness raising and a community event for GRTSB celebration month in June.
- The Help & Advice team hosted a Safety Fair for all students in the beginning of the year with more than 40 organisations having stalls which was attended by 500+ students.
- Upon feedback from students, we raised the issue of cultural competency in University services e.g. mental health when talking to students from different cultural backgrounds.

Across the year, to improve how we work, meet our responsibilities, and demonstrate our ongoing dedication to EDI:

- We continued to work with the University to ensure that Chairs and Vice Chairs of our Student Networks received a bursary and that was in line with Department Reps, due to the representative nature of their role.
- We encouraged the University to update their New and Expectant Mother's policy ensuring students who are pregnant receive the support that they need and a consistent approach across Schools.
- At our annual Teamwork Awards night, we presented trophies with braille for our visually impaired students to recognise their hard work.
- Our EDI Working Group continued to meet regularly and link in with our Welfare and Inclusion Council (a Sub Council of Student Council). The EDI action plan was updated throughout the year and progress monitored.
- We continued to run our recruitment processes for core and student staff in a transparent and inclusive way, being proactive in encouraging applications from people based on skills and competencies (and not prioritising experience) and explaining who we are as an organisation and our EDI commitments.
- Lobbied the university to celebrate Race Equality Week as part of their annual calendar, irrespective of the SU Race Equality Network's activities. The University's EDI Oversight Group now takes responsibility for this.
- We asked the University to continue providing free period products to the wider student population on a regular basis (as our supplies were not able to keep up with demand). This is being investigated.
- Our Officers set up a Working Group involving members from Student Council to enhance the accessibility of the SU website.
- All design work is run through a contrast checker for accessibility.
- We sought feedback and input from our Welfare and Inclusion Council for a second year on our elections process to support inclusivity. A new EDI plan was created for the Elections as a result, with some positive outcomes in terms of the demography of candidates.
- The Chief Exec and the President sat on the University's Access and Participation Plan Steering Group and represented the student voice to work with the diverse student population at the university.
- We continued to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to misconduct within Teamwork and addressed any reports of inappropriate behaviour within our student groups that contravened our Code of Conduct, invoking disciplinary procedures if necessary.

- The Officer team met with the Labour MP, Tom Collins, soon after his election into post to discuss the concerns and experiences of our diverse student population in Worcester.

(iii) Membership Services

We want as many of our students as possible to engage in what we do and benefit from our opportunities and services. To this end:

- We have brought in brail signs to our Help & Advice meeting room and swell text at our Welcome Desk to make it as inclusive and accessible as possible.
- We continued to liaise with colleagues from the University's Campus Experience and Development Group on how we can make our facilities and spaces more inclusive, for example, reporting issues with the Hangar Lift and obtaining privacy vinyls for it from the University.
- Our Help and Advice Service undertook an accessibility review, which led to:
 - Creating a written description of the route and layout of the advice room for VI to screen read ahead of coming to SU Building
 - Screen-reading tests across all documents and MS forms/webpages
 - Various visually impaired considerations for the advice room actioned
 - Secured access to Portable Induction Loops
 - Updated expectations on our website and shared what we do and don't do via social media.
 - List of what we can control on our website in terms of lights/sounds/smells (accessibility)
 - Introduced 'Flexible Fridays', enabling students to have a meeting with the advisors without having to prebook an appointment
- We raised with the University the need to maintain wellbeing spaces, ensuring access for students after 8pm, and having a list of all spaces in one place.
- We continued to raise student feedback around accommodation, notably heating problems faced by international students, and value for money. The University increased the temperature in halls as a result (from 19 to 20 degrees) and have also reviewed prices for 2025/26, offering a cheaper rate for one of their halls (£110 per week/52 weeks down from £131 for 42 weeks).
- Our Vice President Education continued to raise the issue around Reasonable Adjustment Plans not being followed for students, in various

committees and with members of the University Executive Board and this is being followed up.

- We worked with the University to get Dog Spending Pens working, maintained, advertised, and added on the university maps for those who use working dogs on campus. This came up as a policy through Welfare & Inclusion Council by the Vice Chair of Disabled Students' Network.
- After the very popular daytime events during the Welcome Festival, like Crafternoon, board games cafe, speed friending, etc. we hosted multiple quieter events throughout the year to appeal to a wide range of students.
- Our Race Equality Network hosted an online campaign #blackmentalmatters to celebrate the Black History Month in October and reach out to as many students as possible after the rough riots in the Summer.
- The Disabled Students' Network hosted Blindness Awareness Day by collaborating with Guide Dogs UK- bringing on lots of guide dogs and therapy dogs on campus along with having various disabled students' friendly games at the event.
- The Race Equality Network celebrated Race Equality Week in February by hosting a range of events including a cultural dance session, a cultural fashion show, a food tasting event, candle painting, an anti-racism talk, to bring together and celebrate students from different cultural backgrounds.
- Our Women's Network hosted 'Women's Week 2025: Celebrating Us' to mark International Women's Day. They held various activities like Sip & Paint, a yoga evening, a movie night, a quiz night, etc. and raised money for West Mercia Women's Aid.
- We held a diverse range of cultural events in multiple places like The Hangar, Tramps Night Club and City Campus. In collaboration with the International Experience Team, we marked festivals like Holi, Diwali, Ramadan and Eid, Chinese New Year, and Christmas.
- Our Vice President Student Activities also created a nice social space in Pierson Study Centre for students staying on campus over Christmas which was used by students over the break.
- We created a calendar with awareness days/important dates for Networks to be aware
- We worked with the Disabled Students' Network to make the Networks board in the SU accessible for students with visual impairments.
- We successfully worked with the University to give students the ability to change their preferred name on SOLE, which had come through as a policy by the Student Council.
- Our Varsity campaign, 'Play Your Part', included captains receiving active bystander training and encouraging all team players and spectators to call

out any behaviour that they didn't agree with. An online platform was also created to enable students to do this more easily.

- As part of his objective, our Vice President Student Activities managed to launch an all-events inclusive webpage on the university website with the help of the University's Comms team which will be a platform for all events that will be taking place across the university to be advertised in one place.
- We encouraged the University via their EDI Oversight Group to sign the Disabled Students' Commitment.
- We continued to run the 'Community Cupboard' and 'Period Dignity' project to support students with the ongoing cost of living crisis and provided free non-perishable food items, toiletries and sanitary products to support.

Going forward, we will continue to commit to this agenda and do our utmost to ensure our services, events, spaces, and communications are appropriate and inclusive of a diverse student body.

We look forward to creating a plan for 2025/26, working with students, our members, our staff, and stakeholders on continuously improving what we do.

End.