



DARWIN COLLEGE

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Development Plan October 2022

As a member of the Collegiate University of Cambridge, Darwin College is committed, in its pursuit of academic excellence, to the following principles:

- Equity: the promotion of a fair community by offering equitable opportunities and addressing different needs relative to the individual
- Diversity: a community that recognizes, values and champions differences
- Inclusivity: striving for a sense of belonging in the Darwin community for all

Key Areas for Action

The following areas for action were unanimously endorsed by the Darwin College Equity, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) working group and approved by College Council in October 2022:

- Improving communication so Darwin College values are visible and support is easy to find
- Augmenting the data we have so we can better monitor trends in relation to EDI in Darwin College
- Reviewing recruitment, training, facilities and support to ensure Darwin College values are enacted across College departments
- Endorsing positive action as a means to improve equity, diversity and inclusivity within Darwin College
- Reviewing College policies and procedures, especially related to complaints, grievances and discipline
- Establishing an EDI Steering Group with oversight of the EDI development plan, who can liaise with the 'owners' and report regularly to Darwin College Council on progress

We embrace a view of equity, diversity and inclusivity *as most relevant for our community*, satisfying, but not restricted by, the nine protected characteristics laid out in UK law (Equality Act, 2010). There are areas that may be relevant for equity,

diversity and inclusion in the context of Darwin College, which are not legally protected characteristics in the UK. We also recognise that treating the characteristics separately does not account for intersectionality, which can be an important aspect of lived experience. Notably, the University of Cambridge and the UK Office for Students acknowledge certain flags for widening participation at postgraduate level based on traditionally under-represented characteristics in higher education (for example, first to attend University, care-experienced, etc). Another area where equity issues have been raised in the past among mature students/ the postgraduate population (at Darwin College and elsewhere) is having caring responsibilities (whether for dependents, elder family members, etc). With this in mind, we take a broad view of equity, diversity and inclusivity.

In particular, we need to think beyond numbers and more broadly about equity, diversity and inclusivity as being about experiences. Individuals from historically marginalised groups have voiced concerns that aggregate data do not reflect complexities and richness of identity¹. At the same time, administrative practice often pools across identity categories to avoid numbers of individuals who self-identify as being from such groups on application forms being so small. In the recommendations that follow below from our work, it is clear that the College should not simply seek to increase the numbers of students, staff or fellows expressing different identities. The focus should be on attracting a wide range of students, staff and fellows as well as supporting them to be their authentic selves within our community.

1. Darwin College Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Development Plan

At its meeting on 5th October 2022, Darwin College Council approved the following Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity development plan, summarising key areas for action. A number of the areas for action can be addressed immediately and most will be accompanied by ongoing work. This represents an actionable plan for ensuring our community embodies the College values to the fullest possible extent. The plan depends on an investment of resources associated with specific actions. To ensure accountability and to monitor the College's progress in relation to this development plan, 'owners' of actions are named below.

Council will establish an EDI Steering Group with oversight of the EDI development plan, who can liaise with the 'owners' and report regularly to Council on progress.

¹ Katwala, 2021. *Race and opportunity in Britain: Finding common ground*. British Future.

Area for action	Owners (non-exhaustive list)
1 Representation	Council Human resources Admissions committee Fellowships committee DCSA
2 Recruitment and training	Human resources Fellowships committee
3 Community and facilities	Bursary Deanery Catering DCSA
4 Values and policies	Council EDI Steering Group
5 Data and monitoring	Bursary Fellowships committee Human resources Education and research committee
6 Communication	Communication Deanery Human resources DCSA

Summary of areas for action in Darwin College

The areas for action summarised below are gathered in themes. It is worth noting that cross-cutting issues like student welfare and wellbeing are highlighted within a number of these areas.

1. Representation

To consider steps to improve diversity of representation at all levels within College

2. Recruitment and training

To review materials and practices and ensure there is no direct or indirect discrimination

3. Community and facilities

To improve accessibility and visibility, and hence the experience of students, fellows and staff from minoritized groups in Darwin College

4. Values and policies

To take ownership of policies by reviewing them with an EDI lens, and to ensure these reflect the values of Darwin College

5. Data and monitoring

To ensure internal data gathering procedures are robust and transparent to gain a better understanding of what data are available (including qualitative information about experiences) and what more we may want to collect in order to monitor trends

6. Communication: internal and external

To increase recognition and understanding of a variety of perspectives and needs (religion, sexuality, disability, etc); To improve the signposting for sources of support; To use and actively promote inclusive language

2. Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group 2021-2022

Members of Darwin College often speak about the egalitarian and homely feel of the College, and these values attract prospective students, fellows and staff to apply. The College has made strides recently in many areas, for example improving recruitment and training for staff, adopting a flag flying policy that reflects our inclusive values, enacting a formal hall dress code that does not refer to gender, appointing a wellbeing advisor, the very existence of the EDI working group and many initiatives by the Darwin College Student Association.

However, there have been unfortunate instances of racism and sexual misconduct in the College, which cannot be accepted under any circumstances. There are also issues with accessibility due to the age of the College estate; perceived inequities in allocation of College resources; and some key internal procedures that are meant to ensure a safe and welcoming environment are in need of review. The work to embody our values must be ongoing, reflective, communal, and transparent. Hence, we acknowledge we would like to have a renewed vision to collectively work from.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group (EDIWG) was established by College Council in May 2021. The EDIWG, chaired by the Master and comprised of students, staff and fellows, met 10 times between May 2021 and September 2022 and provided interim reports to Council during that time. The aim of the EDIWG was to oversee initial information gathering and consultation within College and to recommend an overarching EDI development plan to College Council.

The EDI WG gathered evidence from a range of sources, including consultants from two external organisations. First, an independent document audit was commissioned from the *Diversity Trust* of existing policies and procedures in Darwin College. Second, EDI WG members gathered and reviewed documentation both internal and external to the College that is relevant to these matters (for example, the University's Race Equality Charter; the Equality Act, 2010). Finally, *Doing Diversity Differently* administered an externally-run survey of EDI culture and experiences within our community.

The EDI WG was a productive way to comprehensively reflect on these issues across the College. The group met regularly and informally, was comprised of students, staff and fellows, and benefited from the investment shown by senior leadership of the College (with the Master as Chair and a Vice Master as Secretary to the Working Group). Terms of reference, set by College Council, guided our work from the outset, meaning that our focus did not drift from the core purpose of shining a light on our strengths as well as identifying areas in need of improvement, with the support and advice of external consultants. Specific actions were taken along the way by various members of College, without waiting for the completion of the final report, showing the Darwin College community is enthusiastic for EDI initiatives.

The EDI WG found that while Darwin College is generally seen as a welcoming environment, there are key areas where the College can invest resources to improve the experiences of our community.

As the EDI WG finishes its term in October 2022 with the production of the EDI Development Plan, College Council recognises the need for an enduring body to represent these issues within Darwin College. An EDI Steering Group will be established to monitor the plan, while every part of College takes ownership and does its part to ensure we are living the College values on a daily basis.

[EDI Working group membership](#) (*asterisk for members at the time of final report)

Sara Baker (Vice-Master)*

Daniel Buhl (Darwin Student Association President)

Sarah Carlo (Darwin Student Association LGBTQ+ Officer)*

Akash Das (Darwin Student Association BAME Officer)

Mark De Rond (Official Fellow)*

Chelsea Edmonds (Darwin Student Association President)*

Hong Ge (Research Fellow)*

Wendy Godfrey (Human Resources)*

Jennifer Hawkin (Darwin Student Association Disabilities Officer)*

Chloe Katter (Darwin Student Association past President and Research Fellow)*

Tanya Mangoma (Darwin Student Association BAME Officer)

Sikhu Ngwenya (External advisor)

Anna Parker (Darwin Student Association Women's Officer)

Mike Rands (Master)*

Derek Scott (Head Porter)*

Ceilidh Welsh (Darwin Student Association Women's Officer)*