Equality Impact Analysis

This form enables you to reflect on your proposed activity, and to assess the potential positive and negative impacts it might have on different members of the community. The Equality Impact Analysis is designed to help you ensure your activities are meaningfully considered and not spending your time on an activity that will later need to be changed or disbanded due to not thinking about the practical needs of diverse communities who we are required to protect. If you have any questions about how to complete this Equality Impact Analysis, please read the Guidance or contact the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team: edi@uwe.ac.uk.

Activity Title: Academic Careers Framework (ACF)

Project Manager and Contact: Prepared by Angela Hall Meza - Strategic Business Partner and Elizabeth Garnham - EDI Business Partner

Project Sponsors: Marc Griffiths PVC Regional and Dan Wood Chief People Officer

Proposed activity (change, refresh, policy, process or practice) being analysed

The introduction of the Academic Career Framework (ACF) at UWE is a strategic intervention aligned with the university's anti-racism strategy and broader equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitments. The initiative is designed to support all academic staff and their managers by promoting transparency, consistency and fairness in identifying opportunities for continuing professional development, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of staff from underrepresented or protected groups. It is not a tool to underpin recruitment or promotion activity and there is no expectation that all staff evidence every criterion. It is also not a tool for use in performance management. The ACF outlines the skills, experience and competencies required at each grade across three pathways: Teaching, Learning and Scholarship, Teaching, Learning & Research, and Teaching, Learning & Professional Practice.

This framework has the potential to positively impact all protected characteristics, particularly global majority staff, women, and disabled staff, by addressing known barriers to progression and fostering good relations between groups.

The ACF has been designed by collaboration and co-production with:

- ACF Central Working Group feedback and info

- Equality data from iTrent / EDI BP's
- National role models (York, MMU, Hertfordshire, Ulster, Sheffield Hallam)
- UWE Anti-Racism Strategy
- Feedback from AdvanceHE and Professional Development frameworks
- Feedback from Equality Networks

Assessing the activity from different perspectives

Positive Equalities Impact

- **Transparency and Clarity**: The ACF provides clear descriptors for academic expectations at each grade. For example, Grade H includes "Leadership of EDI activities at subject group/course level" (A28), and Grade J includes "Leadership of EDI activities at the school research centre level" (A38), reinforcing the importance of EDI across all levels.
- **Support for PDRs**: The framework supports managers in guiding staff through Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs), helping staff from all backgrounds to identify development needs and progression routes.
- **Addressing Known Barriers**: Research by Franssen et al. (2024)[1] highlights that a lack of clarity around promotion criteria is a barrier for Black early career researchers, in addition to lack of recognition for their work. The ACF directly addresses this by making expectations explicit.
- **Alignment with Professional Standards**: The Teaching & Learning pathway aligns with Advance HE's Professional Standards Framework (PSF) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023, including recognition through Fellowship, Senior Fellowship and Principal Fellowship (e.g. TS58, TS45, TS57), which supports inclusive teaching.
- **Valuing Teaching and Learning**: The ACF recognises teaching and learning as a core function of all academic roles. This is important for equity, as women are more likely to hold teaching focused contracts, and this recognition helps ensure their contributions are valued. The information collected about current and aspirational pathways and equalities characteristics will help enable any disparities in academia to be addressed.
- **Equalities Gap Context**[2]:

[1] Unblocking the Pipeline: Supporting the Retention, Progression and Promotion of Black Early-Career Academics - HEPI
[2] Staff statistics - People Services | UWE Bristol

- Mean gender pay gap at UWE: 9.2% (2024), with women underrepresented in the upper quartile. Women represent 66.7% of research H roles, 52.3% Academic I roles, and 44.4% Academic J roles (2024).
- Global majority pay gap: 9.4% (2024), up from 6.4% (2023), with underrepresentation at senior grades (0% at Grade H, <18.2% at Grade I, <14.8% at Grade J).
- Disabled staff pay gap: 4.8% (2024). Disabled staff represent 16.7% research H staff, 4.5% academic I staff and 7.4% academic J staff (2024)

The ACF has the potential to reduce these disparities by creating a more equitable knowledge of the evidence needed to be competitive in a promotion process.

Limitations and Risks

Despite its strengths, the ACF may not fully deliver its intended equalities impacts because there is limitation to how far transparency alone will support equity. Risks include:

1. Unequal Access to Opportunities: The framework assumes equal access to opportunities listed, such as doctoral qualifications and leadership roles. However, data shows under-representation across the grades, particularly where a PhD is often required (e.g. TR23), and there are limited senior college roles. This requirement may disproportionately exclude staff from underrepresented backgrounds. Further some staff may not feel confident to access opportunities.

To mitigate this we will …

- Introduce annual monitoring of ACF participation and outcomes by protected characteristic to identify barriers early
- Ensure transparent signposting to opportunities on internal platforms with clear eligibility and application guidance.

2. Ambiguity in Criteria: Several criteria are vague and open to interpretation and there are unexplained acronyms (see below). Some criteria are purposely broad to account for the wide range of academic contexts.

To mitigate this we will …

- Offer training sessions and Q&A webinars for staff and line managers on how to interpret and apply the framework consistently.
- Develop detailed guidance notes and exemplars illustrating how criteria can be met across disciplines and contexts

- Incorporate diverse case studies showing success through multiple academic routes

3. Bias Towards Traditional Outputs: Although the ACF itself promotes a wide range of routes through academia, and helps to show staff how to move from one pathway to another, there is a bias towards journal articles and traditional research outputs.

To mitigate this we will …

- Include discipline-specific exemplars demonstrating non-traditional routes to excellence.
- Publicise success stories of staff progressing through non-traditional academic routes.

4. Risk of Misuse of Information (such as in recruitment)
There is a risk that pathways could be used restrictively in recruitment or promotion, e.g. requiring candidates to be on a specific pathway or valuing one pathway over another. This could undermine equality of opportunity.

To mitigate this we will …

- Train recruiting managers on the appropriate use of ACF information when used in workforce planning and recruitment decisions.
- Incorporate ACF equality principles into induction and manager training.
- Develop monitoring dashboards to track representation by pathway and recruitment stage.

Communication Approach:

- Mixed methods: emails, weekly news, staff briefings, intranet updates, FAQs, and drop-in sessions.
- Phased communication aligned with implementation stages (soft launch / new starters → wider rollout → embedding).
- Engagement-led: focus groups, Q&A sessions, and feedback loops.
- Inclusive and accessible language, targeting varied audiences

Timing:

Soft launch for new starters - will look to include all new starters within induction, introducing within 6-12 months of joining and assigning a pathway with appropriate development plans upon completion of probation.

For staff who have already completed induction and probation, the ACF will be introduced during one to ones or in PDR discussions, the timing of these are likely to start after completion of the first term, depending on the particular nuances of each college / school.

Action Planning: how will you mitigate negative and maximise positive outcomes?

Please feed information from this action plan to your activity's own planning documents e.g., action plans, risk registers, benefits maps

	Possible Positive Impact on Groups Include relevant data if possible	**Possible Negative Impact on Groups** Include relevant data if possible	**Actions Required**	**Responsible Person**	**Target date**	**Success indicators**	**Progress to date**
All (possible impacts affecting many groups)	Increased transparency, equity in promotion, clearer progression pathways.	Risk of inconsistent implementation across Colleges/Schools.	Develop training for line managers and consistency review mechanism	People Services		Uptake of ACF tools, feedback in PDRs	
Age (older people, younger people)	Flexible pathways accommodate late/early career stages and mid-career professionals moving into academia from practice.			College / School leadership		Feedback from staff surveys	
Disability, including mental health and non-visible disabilities	ACF supports alternative modes of contribution (e.g., digital, research-led).	Risk of not tailoring pathway expectations to needs. Promote support to	Consider feedback / review from networks	People Services / EDI team		Inclusive feedback mechanisms	

		line managers how to tailor reasonable adjustments based on individual needs					
Women and men	Highlights the value of teaching and practice, where women may be more represented. Varying ratio of Gender with women representing Circa 63% of academic staff in CHSS, 51% in CBAL and 39% in CATE		Include pathway representation in gender pay gap analysis. Very clear guidance will aid women in applying even if they don't meet 100% of the criteria (as per recruitment stats).	People services / EDI / Athena SWAN leads		Improved gender equity in promotion	
Trans and non-binary people, including gender reassignment	ACF commitment to inclusive roles and environments	Risk – not enough representation to make fair analysis	Embed inclusive language	Internal comms and People Services		Case studies and pathway uptake data	
Marriage and/or **civil partnership**	No impact identified	N/A	N/A				

Pregnancy and/or **maternity**, including Adoption	Promotes flexible academic careers.	Risk of career disruption during parental leave.	Align ACF review with Maternity return support	People Services		Continuity planning PDR's	
Race, including ethnicity and citizenship	Strong alignment with Anti-Racism Strategy. Advocates for diverse role models.	Risk of systemic barriers to progression remaining.	Targeted support via 100 BWPN and mentorship programmes	People Services, EDI and Colleges		Staff progression data, improved retention	
Religion and/or belief, including those without religion and/or belief	Support for inclusive teaching and scheduling.		Include staff networks in feedback	People managers		Staff engagement / feedback	
Sexual orientation	Inclusive and supportive community model	Need to ensure representation in leadership roles		Internal Comms / EDI		Engagement in Staff Networks	
Other specific group (e.g., International or Access)	Encourages non-UK academic and professional perspectives.		Review international staff support aligned with pathway mobility	People Services		Feedback from international staff	

Project manager next steps

Does this Equality Analysis require consultation of 3 or 6 weeks 3 weeks

Is further monitoring or engagement required? (In addition to the formal Equality Impact Analysis consultation, e.g., with the Students' Union, Disability Services, relevant staff groups) No

What measure / statistic / data will you use to check if the activity has had a positive, negative, or neutral outcome?

- Feedback from staff surveys and PDR conversations (look to capture anonymous/ high level data from people managers as to impact of using the ACF in development conversations)
- Uptake of new pathway tools
- HEA Fellowship progression
- Monitoring of career progression data by protected characteristics
- Assessment of any change in number or nature of employee relations issues
- Engagement with Academic managers through ACF working group and engagement with Trade Unions through meetings with UCU

When will you review this Equality Impact Analysis? Enter date or project stage suitable to the proposal:

This is a working document and will look to review during the rollout and embedding of the ACF, a review of the equality data post implementation to track movement / potential impacts. We will look to conduct this review by May 2026 in order to consider and changes in process for the next Academic Year

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Team Review

The EDI Team has reviewed this Equality Impact Analysis and is satisfied that it is ready for formal consultation

EDI representative: Elizabeth Garnham Date: 11/11/2025

College/Service/Departmental Sign off

I am satisfied with the results from investigation, consultation, and analysis. The progression of this EA will continue to throughout the activity/project and I will ensure that a review is undertaken following the final implementation of the proposal, to assess its actual impact. Any actions or feedback that results as a consequence of ongoing project changes will be monitored and incorporated within the stated processes. Any negative outcomes will be resolved with the appropriate stakeholders identified.

Project Sponsors: Dan Wood – CPO

Date: Signed off via email 4/11/25

So what?

Consultation and engagement feedback is extremely important in Equality Impact Analysis. Listening to student and staff voices and acting on their feedback mean that activities become fit for purpose for diverse student and staff communities. Complete the 'You Said, We Did' table **before and after formal consultation**, and throughout the remaining lifetime of your activity to show the impact of feedback on your activity. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team will be in touch to gather examples of this feedback to share with equality stakeholders. Please add additional rows to the table as

required.

You said	We did

Please forward an electronic copy to the EDI Team by emailing edi@uwe.ac.uk

The original signed hard copy and/or electronic copy should be kept with your team for actions, review, and progression of Freedom of Information requests.