University of Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire Business School Bronze renewal application

Applicant information

Name of institution	University of Hertfordshire
Name of department	Hertfordshire Business School
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*These sections and appendices should not contain any commentary contributing to the overall word limit.

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Section 1: An overview of the department and its approach to gender equality

1.1. Letter of endorsement from the head of the department

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AS Charter
Advance HE

July 2025

Dear Colleagues

As Dean of Hertfordshire Business School (HBS), I am pleased to endorse this Athena Swan Bronze renewal application. Over the past five years, HBS has demonstrated unwavering commitment to advancing gender equality while embedding intersectional approaches that recognize the complex identities of our diverse community of over 10,000 students and 244 staff members.

The period since our last application has been marked by unprecedented growth and transformation. Our student body has expanded by 137% from 4,287 to 10,145 students, while our academic staff increased by 52% from 161 to 244 FTE. This expansion has been strategically managed to advance our equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) objectives, with our current 55% female academic staff representation significantly exceeding the sector average of 47.3% (AdvanceHE, 2023). Our 46% Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff representation substantially surpasses the sector average of 19.1%, positioning HBS as a leader in inclusive recruitment and retention practices.

As Dean, I have personally championed these initiatives, ensuring visible senior leadership support that has been crucial to our cultural transformation. This personal commitment from executive level has been fundamental to embedding EDI principles into our strategic planning and daily operations.

Our research community has achieved near gender parity, with 46% female representation in our REF2021 submission compared to 35% in REF2014—a 31% improvement. This includes 43% female representation at Professor level within our research unit. We have achieved strong female representation in senior academic roles with 56.8% at UH9 level and 52.2% in Academic Management roles.

Student success initiatives have yielded measurable improvements. Evidence-based interventions including our Help Build Success module and dedicated support for working parents reduced student dropout rates by 33% for females (from 9% to 6%) and 25% for males (from 12% to 8%) over the past two years, narrowing the gender gap in retention from 3 to 2 percentage points. Staff engagement has strengthened through consultation processes, achieving a 62% participation rate in our 2023 pulse survey.

However, significant challenges remain. Our most pressing issue is the widening gender gap in student recruitment, with female undergraduate representation declining from 45% to 36% over five years, creating a 64% male student body. Despite increased female applications (371 female vs 629 male applications at UH8 level in 2024), appointment rates reveal concerning disparities—female candidates achieved a 3.5% success rate compared to 5.2% for males, indicating systemic barriers requiring immediate attention. Our gender pay gap currently stands at 13.7%, with intersectional analysis revealing differential impacts: BAME women experience an 18.2% pay gap compared to 11.4% for white women.

The COVID-19 pandemic required us to rapidly adapt our delivery methods and working practices, which accelerated our adoption of flexible working arrangements and digital collaboration tools. This period demonstrated our agility in maintaining EDI commitments during unprecedented challenges.

Our 2025-2030 priorities address these challenges through three strategic objectives. We will enhance intersectional data collection and analysis to better understand barriers affecting our diverse student body, developing targeted interventions including marketing strategies for our new Future Fit undergraduate programmes. We will address recruitment disparities through comprehensive selection process review career advancement support. We will strengthen our external profile in gender equality, establishing partnerships with business and community organisations to share expertise and demonstrate sector leadership.

Our robust governance framework ensures sustained progress. The EDI Implementation Team (EDIT) reports directly to the School Executive Group, with quarterly monitoring and a dedicated 0.5 FTE resource allocation overseeing delivery of 24 specific actions across three strategic priorities.

This application represents our commitment to honest self-reflection and continuous improvement. While celebrating significant achievements in staff diversity and student success, we acknowledge areas requiring attention: student gender balance and recruitment equity. The intersectional data analysis underpinning this application demonstrates our commitment to addressing the complex ways that gender intersects with other characteristics to shape experiences within our community.

HBS's journey toward gender equality is characterised by substantial progress, honest acknowledgment of challenges, and unwavering commitment to evidence-based improvement. Our achievements in staff diversity, student success, and research excellence provide a strong foundation for addressing remaining challenges through our ambitious but achievable action plan.

Professor Damian Ward
Dean of School
Hertfordshire Business School
University of Hertfordshire

University of Hertfordshire Higher Education Corporation is a higher education corporation and exempt charity, registered with the Office for Students in England as a higher education provider.

1.2 Description of the department and its context

Hertfordshire Business School (HBS) is one of the UK's largest and most diverse business schools, with over 10,000 students across Accounting, Business Analytics & Systems, Economics, HRM, Tourism, Hospitality & Events, Strategy, and Marketing. Since our last Athena Swan submission, student numbers have grown by 137% - from 4,287 to 10,145 - while maintaining a strong focus on inclusive excellence.

Our student population presents a complex demographic picture. Currently, male students make up 64% of the cohort, compared to 36% female, a widening gender gap from our 2018–19 baseline of 55% male to 45% female (Table 1), and contrary to national trends where women represent 57% of students (HESA, 2023). This challenge is addressed in Priority 1 of our action plan (Section 2.2), with targeted interventions reducing female dropout rates and increasing female representation.

Subject-level data (Appendix 2, Figures 1.5-1.7) shows gender imbalance concentrated in quantitative fields: Business Analytics (78% male), Economics (72%), and Finance (69%). In contrast, HRM (68% female) and Tourism (61%) attract more women which are more people-focused disciplines. Marketing is closest to parity at 52% female. Female part-time student representation has slightly increased (from 47.8% to 49.3%).

Among international students (67% of the cohort), the gender gap has widened by 5% at postgraduate level, coinciding with post-2022 visa policy changes that disproportionately affect female applicants with dependents.

Year	Gender	UG	PGT	PGR	
2023/2024	Female	757 (36%)	2879 (36%)	24 (42%)	3660
	Male	1318 (64%)	5134 (64%)	33 (58%)	6485
	Total	**2075**	**8013**	**57**	**10145**
2018/2019	Female	1518 (45%)	398 (46%)	29 (48%)	1945
	Male	1842 (55%)	469 (54%)	31 (52%)	2342
	Total	**3360**	**867**	**60**	**4287**

Table 1: Number of students in HBS at UG, PGT and PGR levels by gender in 2023-24 and 2018-19.

Intersectional analysis of degree attainment reveals complex achievement patterns extending beyond simple gender comparisons (Appendix 2.7-2.8). There is a 25% gap between white females (75% good degrees) and BAME males (50%), far exceeding the overall 13.4% gender gap. This highlights the need for targeted, group-specific interventions rather than generic equality measures.

Disability data shows rising UG mental health declarations, increasing from 10% to 15%. Female students are more likely to declare mental health conditions across all levels with 8%-12% gender difference (Appendix 2, 14). This is addressed in Priority Action 1.

HBS outperforms sector benchmarks in staff diversity (Figure 1, Figure 1a, Figure 2). Of 244 academic FTEs, 55% are female—above the sector average of 47.3% (AdvanceHE, 2023). Female representation has grown (52% in 2019–20 to 55% in 2023–24), alongside a 52% increase in total academic staff.

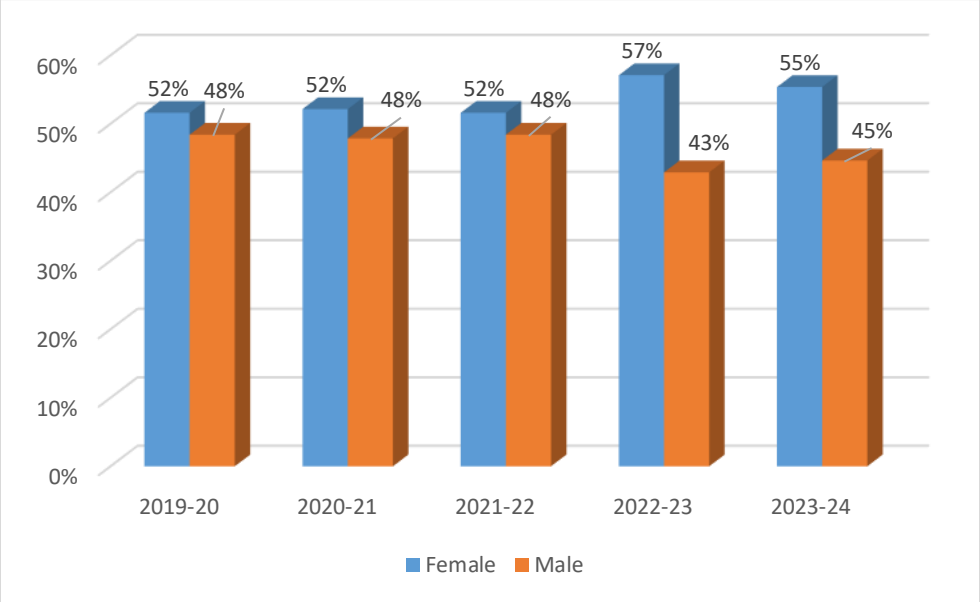


Figure 1: Total Academic Staff by Gender

The School staff demographic analysis shows our overall BAME representation is 46%, 26% higher than the 9.1% sector average. Female BAME staff represent 24% of total academic staff, with male BAME staff 22% of total academic staff. This represents sector-leading intersectional diversity.

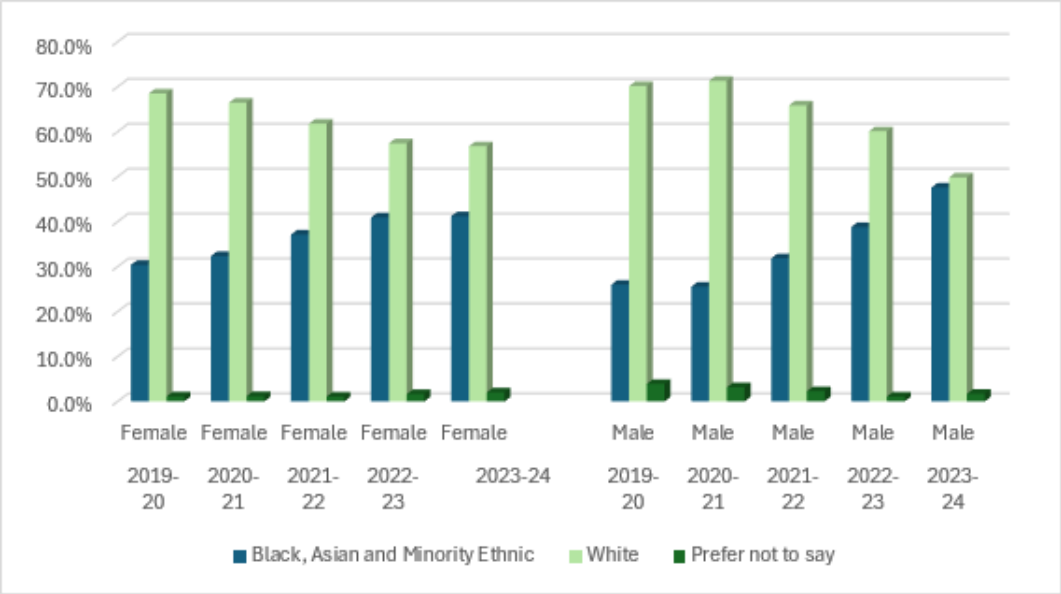


Figure 1a: Gender/Ethnicity Staff Chart

Women comprise the majority of staff across all academic grades, including senior positions. (AM1+ Academic Management: 52.2% female, UH9 Principal Lecturer/Associate Professor: 56.8% female representation, UH8 Senior Lecturer:55% female, UH7 Lecturer: 56% female representation).

While men held a higher proportion of UH8 roles between 2019 and 2022, this trend has reversed, with female numbers growing.

Our introduction of UH6 roles in 2022 (designed to support early career academics) show 69% female representation, demonstrating success in creating inclusive pathways for academic career entry.

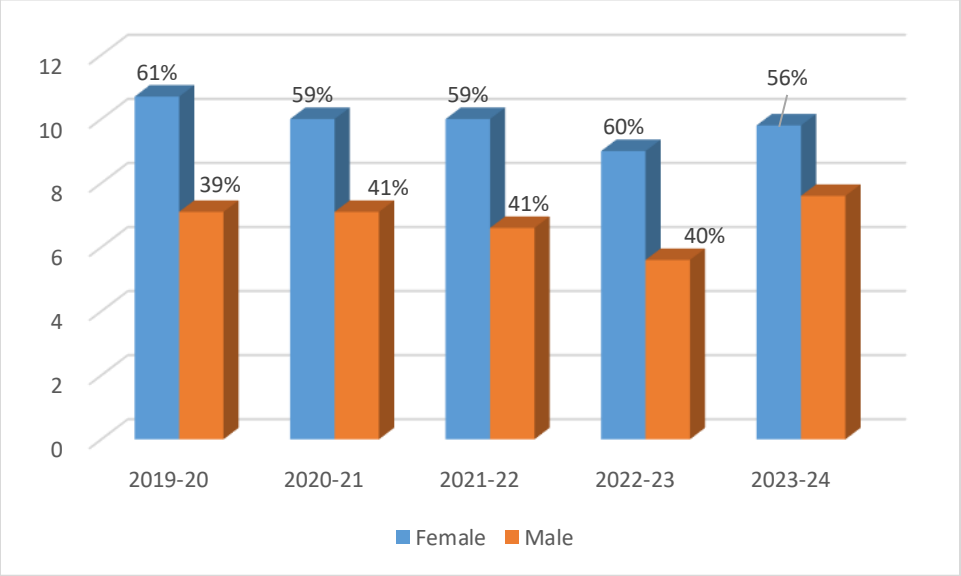


Figure 2: Staff in Management Roles by Gender AM1+

Professional Staff Demographics

Following a restructure, the majority of professional staff roles are employed centrally. HBS directly supports 18 professional staff (72% female, 28% male) (Appendix 2, Figure 5.1). This shift reflects centralisation of professional services while maintaining our commitment to diverse representation in remaining roles. However, women have consistently held approximately 70% of administrative positions over the past five years, with senior administrative positions in the University exhibiting a more balanced gender distribution.

Governance, Structure and Voice

HBS's governance reflects a strong commitment to gender-balanced leadership, with 54% female representation in senior roles (Figure 3) - (sector average, 31%, AdvanceHE, 2023). The School is led by the Dean, supported by a senior management team. A recent restructure saw streamlining from 6 to 3 ADs to enable a consistent, joined-up approach across the school, fostering greater collaboration and helping us deliver on our strategic goals.

There has been a renewed energy in the business school around EDI and gender. The Chair of EDIT reports directly to the Dean and sits on both the SLT and SEG, embedding gender equality at the heart of decision-making. This has driven cultural change, reflected in our staff survey where over 70% of both women and men positively rated leadership, career development, and flexible working (Appendix 1).

HBS' structure incorporates student perspectives through Programme Committee meetings, student representation on EDIT team, regular student consultation via focus groups and surveys, the latest survey having 36 responses with 61% female participation. (Appendix 2, Section 12).

Figure 3: HBS Structure in 2025 REDACTED

1.3 Athena Swan self-assessment process

Please provide an overview of who was involved in the preparation of this application, how it was prepared, and what plans are in place to support the department's future gender equality work.

The Self-Assessment Team

The self-assessment team (EDI-SAT) transitioned into the EDIT team in 2017, recognising the interdependence of gender equality and broader inclusion. It adopted a structured approach with monthly meetings and quarterly strategic reviews, embedding its work into the governance framework.

Led by a rotating Chair every five years, EDIT comprises a diverse team reflective of HBS staff (60% female, 40% male, 44% BAME—exceeding the sector benchmark of 19.1% per Advance HE, 2023), spanning academia, industry, and grades UH6 to senior leadership. Membership is reviewed biannually.

EDIT is allocated 0.5 FTE, with two members receiving an additional 0.1 FTE. Student representation includes a designated member, Personal Tutors, Student Success Leads, and Programme Managers. Additional contributors support data analysis, with actions co-developed through collaboration with senior management and students.

Table 2: EDIT and SAT membership 2025 REDACTED

Methodology

A revitalised Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team (EDIT) - comprising academic and professional staff, students, and representatives from across the School, is embedded in the School's governance ensuring diverse and underrepresented voices are included. The reapplication is fully supported by senior leadership and aligned with the University's institutional EDI strategies to ensure accountability and coherence as well as aligning with the AS Principles.

Our application is underpinned by a robust mixed-methods approach, integrating HR data, student records, and surveys to analyse gender representation, progression, and outcomes. Data is disaggregated by gender and, where available, by ethnicity, disability, and contract type to enable intersectional analysis. We use cross-tabulation, benchmarking, and longitudinal tracking to identify trends and disparities, comparing findings with sector benchmarks from AdvanceHE, HESA, and HEFCE.

Data focused on staff culture survey results (Appendix 1), student data from Academic Registry, and staff data from HRIS (Appendix 2). The planned repeat of the core culture survey was delayed due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as the School focused on staff wellbeing and operational continuity. Since 2022, HBS has adopted a more frequent staff engagement cycle, including annual pulse surveys, targeted interventions, and actions based on responses, culminating in a renewed culture survey incorporating core AS questions (Appendix 1). Additional input came from the Staff Opinion Survey (2022), Pulse Survey (2023), and staff

drop-in sessions. Student perspectives were gathered through the EDIT student representative, analysis of NSS, PTES and PRES. Anonymous survey feedback is routinely monitored and reported by the Student Success teams, with student mentoring and APP Leads ensuring ongoing student involvement to address gender inequalities. Staff data was analysed by gender and intersecting characteristics such as ethnicity. Student data focused on ethnicity and attainment gaps, gender by discipline, and gender and disability. Ethical data governance was ensured through anonymisation and oversight by the Self-Assessment Team (SAT), supporting a data-driven and inclusive approach.

A RAG rating system was adopted to evaluate impact of the previous action plan, identifying barriers, and shaping future priorities with responsibilities allocated to equality leads for LGBTQ+, wellbeing, and student success. The action plan was regularly updated, drawing on insights from Section 2.

We recognise the low student consultation response rate (36 out of 10,000+) as a limitation and have addressed this in Action 1.3 of the plan.

Future plans for the SAT

Over the next five years, EDIT will continue to convene monthly to steer strategy and monitor key gender actions. We will review quarterly data monitoring with intersectional analysis, have annual impact assessment of all action plan elements, undertake biennial comprehensive culture survey implementation and conduct strategic review and priority reassessment. The EDIT-SAT team will continue as part of the wider HBS EDIT governance structure to ensure the new action plan is implemented, provide reports on progress, maintain the RAG rating and liaise with students/staff on progress. Succession planning for EDIT will includes removal of barriers to participate, mentoring for emerging EDI leaders with cross-training to ensure continuity of expertise, and integration of EDI leadership development into academic career pathways.

The SEG will maintain EDI as a standing agenda item, with AS matters reported separately. Gender-related objectives and activities will be regularly reviewed and progressed through quarterly SEG meetings, with continued oversight of developments. The Athena Swan action plan and the School APP plan will link directly to the EDIT Action Plan.

Consideration of previous panel feedback

The 2018 AS panel highlighted several areas for improvement: insufficient gender-focused data analysis, outdated staff consultation (2015 survey), lack of evidence in career development claims, weak organisational culture insights, and an action plan that was not SMART. They also noted missing data on induction, mentoring, and promotion grades.

In response, the 2025 submission demonstrates significant progress. A structured cycle of staff and student engagement has been implemented, including a 2023 pulse survey, biennial focus groups, and student consultations. Data analysis is intersectional, disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability, and contract type, with

findings informing targeted actions. The action plan is fully revised with SMART actions, clear timelines, responsibilities, and measurable outcomes. The EDIT is a key part of governance structures, ensuring sustained accountability.

Cultural transformation is evident through inclusive events, visible leadership support, and integration of EDI into strategic planning. Career development is now supported by mentoring, transparent promotion pathways, and improved development systems. These changes reflect a shift from compliance to a proactive, data-driven, inclusive approach to gender equality

Section 2: An evaluation of the department's progress and issues

2.1 Evaluating progress against the previous action plan

Please provide a critical evaluation of your most recent action plan and any other actions you have initiated since your award.

Progress evaluation from the 2018 action plan demonstrates a mixed but instructive picture of progress. Of the 38 original actions, 23 (60%) achieved their objectives, 11 (29%) made substantial progress but require ongoing attention (amber), 1 was rated red (3%) as this was outside of the direct control of the Business School, and 3 (8%) were removed due to policy changes, superseded actions or structural reorganisation (Figure 4).

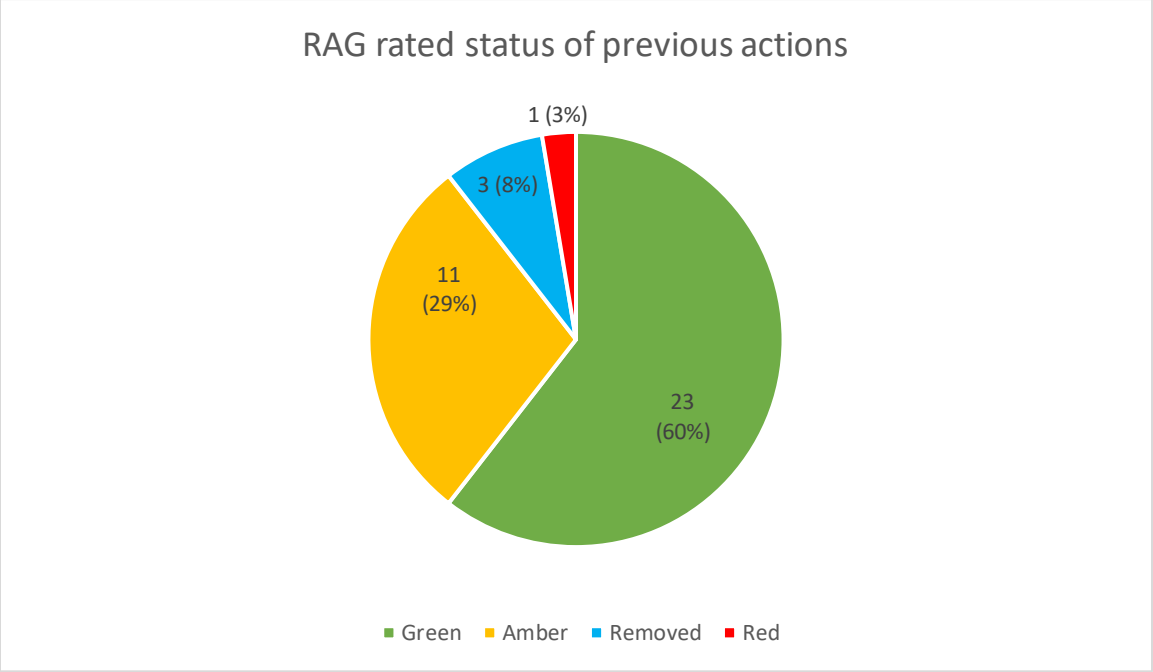


Figure 4: Status of previous actions

2.1.1. HBS Progress on AS Actions

	Objective	Rationale	Planned Activity	Responsibility	Timescale	Success Measures and impact	2025 update	RAG Rating
THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS Summary of the key outcomes from the previous action plan: Staff gender balance — Improved from 52% to 55% female academic staff Student retention — Female dropout rates reduced by 33% (9% to 6%), and male by 25% (12% to 8%). Research gender parity — Female representation increased from 35% to 46%. Leadership diversity — Maintained at 56.8% female representation at UH9 level and 52.2% in Academic Management roles. Pay gap fluctuations — Decreased to 7.9% (2023) but increased to 13.7% (2024) indicating ongoing concerns.								
AP3.1	Raise profile of AS and its activities within the School.	To create greater awareness of EDI issues. This has already been under way, with exhibition posters displayed in shared spaces; presentation and discussion at HBS monthly lunch; budget secured £3000; Engagement with the wider AS community through UH SAT and AS Champion attended conferences in Liverpool Oct 2018 and York Jan 2018.	Quarterly update in Dean's monthly newsletter. Place AS notice board in shared space for EDI-SAT updates. Run event for Black History month. Develop EDI webpage on HBS website.	Dean Dean's EA EDI-SAT AS Champion Associate Deans Facilities Manager AS Officer	January 2019 December 2018 Oct 2019, Oct annually Jun-Aug 2019	HBS staff are kept informed and are fully aware of the aims and principles of AS, as measured in the next staff survey EDI issues discussed regularly on School committees HBS staff have the opportunity to feedback and comment on the work of AS and the EDI-SAT.	Over the past five years, HBS has made significant strides in embedding gender equality into its culture, operations, and strategic planning. These efforts have been guided by the principles of the AS Charter and informed by ongoing self-assessment and stakeholder engagement. Key action areas include: 1. Leadership and Visibility – senior leadership sponsorship across EDI committees and events. 2. Data-Driven Action – EDI standing item on governance committees with enhanced monitoring. 3. Cultural Change and Engagement -12 cultural events per annum.	

							4. Policy and Practice Reform. 5. Sustained Commitment.	
AP3.2	Organise annual celebration of International Women's Day.	To recognise importance of IWD and to increase awareness throughout School. Event held in 2018.	Set up planning group to work across different disciplines/Schools to create an agenda for IWD that includes students and staff. Raise profile of event externally. Implement IWD event (in partnership with Schools across UH).	AS Champion Equality Office EDI-SAT	Jan-Mar 2019 and annually	Annual event held. Number of attendees increases year-on-year, including larger number of men, since 2018 event nearly all female.	Completed and enhanced each year and has larger participation from students and staff through our social media channels. Event participation increased – 15 staff (2019) to 65 staff and students (2024).	
AP3.3	Expand focus of AS Principles from gender to encompass broader EDI themes and promote across the work of the School.	The need to develop an intersectional approach in relation to the School, in particular in terms of race equality issues. Liaison with BME Advocate and Equality Office in engaging with these themes already taking place.	Work closely with the Race Equality Framework colleagues to highlight issues. Organise events and publicity to increase awareness of intersectional approach. Develop dedicated HBS training course on EDI principles to encourage more collegiate understanding of staff and student relations, possibly entitled 'think diversity'. Add course to staff and student inductions.	AS Champion BME Advocate Equality Office	Ongoing Ongoing 2019/20 academic year trial	Greater investigation of EDI principles, measured through attendance and staging of events around subject. School and wider consideration of EDI issues across staff and students Required attendance of staff and students, achieving 90-100% by second year	HBS has expanded its focus from gender equality to broader EDI themes and embedded these across the School's work. Intersectionality has produced measurable improvements in inclusive culture. BAME representation increased from 32% to 46% maintaining gender balance (Appendix 2 figure 11.3). BAME recruitment 46% compared to 19.1% sector average = 26.9% above. Structural change for recruitment was more successful than cultural change for students – 33% of students still remain unaware of EDI commitments (Appendix 2.12)	

AP 3.4	Continue to monitor the composition of the EDI-SAT to ensure that it is representative of the diversity of staff and students at HBS.	To ensure School EDI-SAT incorporates a wide range of experience and knowledge. Team also needs a better gender balance, as there are more women. Also, to reflect changes in staffing, turnover and the need to develop responses to new challenges.	Maintain a diverse constitution for the EDI-SAT, with special efforts to increase representation of men and professional staff. Re-advertise opportunities to join.	EDI-SAT, AS Champion	2018-2022	EDI-SAT is fully representative of the diversity within the staff and students of HBS, including a 50/50 gender balance. EDI-SAT reflects a broad range of different experience within the School.	Our EDI committee is diverse as discussed in section 3 above. There is a gender balance, but also an intersectional representation of race, culture, LGBTQ, religion and disability.	
AP3.5	Further promote AS and EDI themes and create opportunities to engage with researchers, businesses and individuals from outside UH.	Reflects the need to develop equality themes in our wider work with business and community partners, as well as improving effectiveness of EDI-SAT in developing these themes.	Annual Away Day for EDI-SAT. Discussions with HoGs, Research dept, liaison with business partners. Hold meetings with business partners to discuss EDI themes Research seminars to reflect aspects of EDI study	Dean Heads of Strategy groups ADR AS Champion	Annually March 2019-October 2019 Ongoing	Equality principles are central to whole School strategy as evidenced by School policy and practice, to be evaluated through School Survey. External partners embrace School's approach to equality and diversity through adopting policies and practices which embrace EDI principles.	HBS has made notable progress in embedding AS principles internally, however, opportunities to raise the external profile of its gender equality and broader EDI work remain underdeveloped. This is a key area of development for HBS.	
AP3.6	Improve understanding of intersectional issues as they apply to the student body and increase student engagement.	To reflect the diversity of the School's student body and to help overcome lack of awareness and gaps in attainment.	Publicity campaign aimed at students promoting EDI issues. Student activities around IWD and Black History Month. Incorporate into induction process.	AD UG AD PG Student Experience Office BME Advocate	2019-20 academic year	Greater student awareness and engagement with issues, measured through discussions with student representatives and programme tutors.	The School has moved away from an event focused strategy to raise EDI issues. Over the past five years, Hertfordshire Business School (HBS) has taken important steps to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) into the student experience and student engagement. Student engagement improvements are evidenced by reduced dropout rates	

						10% more students attending events highlighting awareness.	(Appendix 2, Figure 2.6) but intersectional analysis reveals uneven progress across demographic groups. The School recognises that intersectional issues affecting students—particularly those related to race, gender identity, disability, socio-economic background, and neurodiversity—have not been consistently addressed in a coordinated or visible way. This section is therefore rated amber, with clear opportunities for improvement.	
AP3.7	Begin to interrogate issues relevant to professional staff.	Extension of EDI-SAT work to professional staff as part of working towards Silver in 2022, looking especially at the considerable gender gap in terms of male/female employment.	Information-gathering from professional staff in next staff survey and focus groups over questions of promotion, culture and recruitment. Follow-up any issues with new actions as needed.	School Admin Manager AS Champion	2019-21	Awareness of need to narrow gender gap, from 75/25% F/M to closer to 66/33% by 2021 and increase women in management grades.	Following a restructure in support services, the majority of professional staff are employed centrally by UoH. HBS now has 18 professional staff of which 13 (72%) are female and 5 (28%) are male. This shift has had a direct impact on how EDI issues for professional staff are identified, addressed, and supported. While professional staff remain a vital part of the School's community, contributing to teaching, support and student experience – their line management development and EDI support are now largely coordinated through central university services. Professional staff within HBS are integrated and supported through EDI activities in the School. This action is removed. We will review and consider survey and focus group data undertaken at the wider university level in order to consider the experiences of the HBS PTO staff.	

AP3.8	Run biennial staff survey and focus groups to ensure adequate staff and student consultation.	The need to maintain and extend understanding of staff and student attitudes and to monitor whether changes are taking place and whether problems are being dealt with.	Set up survey development sub-group. Decision-makers to be targeted by the Chair of the EDI-SAT so that focus group data and results informs the next HBS staff survey. Decision-makers are to be targeted by the Chair of the EDI-SAT so that bullying and harassment and the role of the DRWA informs the next HBS staff survey. Run survey.	AS Champion EDI-SAT HoGs ADR AD VL	March 2019 for survey in September 2019 March 2021 for survey in September 2021 Ongoing September 2019 then biennially	Increase in response rate from 39% in 2015 survey to 45% in 2019 survey and 50% by 2021. Specific issues raised in these surveys dealt with as appropriate. Regular consideration by decision-makers of bullying and harassment in consultation with DRWA, continues to be agenda item at relevant committee meetings. Greater awareness and consideration of EDI issues among decision-makers.	**<u>Actions on Staff (Green)</u>** HBS has significantly strengthened its approach to staff consultation and engagement over the past three years, ensuring EDI priorities are informed by meaningful and representative feedback through surveys, focus groups and workshops. Participation in the pulse survey 2023 (Appendix 2, Figure 11.2) shows we surpassed the measures set for this action and achieved a participation rate of 62%. Engagement also rose from 64% in 2022 to 67% in 2023. The results from the surveys were discussed with staff through a series of workshops and actions were implemented accordingly and continue to be measured. This structured and responsive approach to consultation ensures that EDI remains a lived, evolving priority - shaped by those it most directly affects.	

						Action on students This approach has also been extended to include student consultation, ensuring that both staff and student voices inform the School's AS and broader EDI work. Focus groups with students from underrepresented backgrounds have helped identify barriers to belonging and success and have informed curriculum development and support services. 36 students were consulted in May 2025 on equality and diversity within the School (see appendix 2,12).	

A PICTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT: STUDENT DATA								
AP4.1	Review foundation degree student cohort data to explore EDI themes and explore the diversity of students transferring over to UH.	We do not currently have access to EDI data from our feeder colleges.	Work with partner institutions to clarify need for any interventions related to diversity and equality and then develop if required.	Link tutors	2019-2021	Improve our understanding of diversity on foundation degrees through analysis of gender and other data.	The foundation degree will not be recruiting students from 2025 in the feeder colleges as numbers have been dwindling over the past few years. The dedicated direct entrant tutor is an additional resource that provides support to these students, and we have a very good idea of the diversity of these students in terms of gender and other characteristics. This will be removed as an action for the team.	
AP4.2	Review marketing and promotional strategies vis-a-vis attracting more female (and male where applicable) applicants to varied subject areas.	We attract fewer applications from female UG and PG students than the national figures suggest, at all levels of study. Additionally, a more nuanced gender breakdown shows an imbalance of men and women in different subject areas. A review of promotional material to ensure equal representation of males and females in images across all subjects and use of gender-neutral information is needed.	Monitor subject recruitment by gender and benchmark nationally. Consider whether this is affected by ethnicity and class background. Campaign to spotlight non-stereotypical students/alumni who are studying/have studied/HBS courses with case studies and posters for on and offline dissemination. Ensure equal representation at open days and promotional outreach events. Conduct a student focus group to learn more about the kind of support men and women may need to progress further.	Admissions Tutors HoGs and Marketing Exec Community engagement team EDI-SAT AD PG/AD UG	2019-20 academic year 2019-20 academic year January 2019-December 2019 Ongoing from January 2019 March 2019 2019-20 academic year 2019-20 academic year	Role models identified. Positive impact on female recruitment. Greater understanding of the impact of progression routes leads to a rise in overall applications.	As part of its APP, HBS has taken deliberate steps to address gender imbalances in subject areas and ensure fair access for all students through targeted marketing and robust data analysis. These efforts align closely with the principles of the AS Charter and have informed the School's evolving approach to inclusive education. However there are still discrepancies between the number of applications we get from female versus male applicants with applications at UG and PG level by female 24-26% lower than male applications (Appendix 2.2). The gap for PG students has widened by 5% since 2023 and this may be attributable to the change in student visa regulations and not being able to bring dependents. The gap at PGR narrows to 10%. Subject level variations are noticeable at UG with HR and Tourism predominately female, Finance remaining 69% male with only Marketing at near parity of 52% female. Overall white female applications increased by 34% but BAME female applications by only 18% which indicates that marketing strategies were less effective for intersectional groups.	

			Include talks about progression routes in personal tutorial talks to level 6 students. Develop curriculum and pastoral measures to ensure interested and well-suited students have the opportunity to progress. Encourage PG females to act as mentors to UG females.		2019-20 academic year			
AP4.3	Conduct intersectional analyses on student data to develop and improve strategies and ensure fair access to all.	UH is a post-1992 University likely to recruit students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. HBS needs to assess this strategy and attempt to monitor the progress of our UGs from these backgrounds.	Consider data taking into account socio-economic factors as well as EDI issues affecting our students. Investigate research which considers value added data in relation to intersectionality.	UH Registry AD UG AD PG Admissions tutors	2019-21	Increase in attainment for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Increase in awareness of issues affecting such students.	HBS has strategically aligned APP with AS principles to ensure a joined-up approach to equity and inclusion. Key actions, such as reviewing marketing strategies to address gender imbalances in subject areas (AP4.2) and conducting intersectional analyses of student data to inform fair access (AP4.3) directly support AS priorities around inclusive recruitment, data-driven planning, and intersectionality. These actions have enabled the School to identify and address barriers affecting underrepresented groups, inform inclusive curriculum development, and promote gender diversity across the student pipeline. By embedding APP outcomes into AS delivery, HBS ensures that its commitment to gender equality is both evidence-based and institutionally integrated.	
AP4.4	Explore conversion rates from application to acceptance for male and female UGs.	Figures show 24%M and 23%F application to acceptance rate for incoming UG students.	Set up focus groups to consult with current students how they felt about the process and incorporate their	Programme tutors UG Strategy Group	Begin investigation 2019, see improvement by 2021	See some increase in level of conversion from applications to acceptances for	The conversion from applications to acceptances (Appendix 2.2) has been increasing for females since 20/21 where it was 40%, 21/22 – 46%, 22/23 – 53% and 23/24 – 57%.	

			suggestions for improvement. (with opportunities to discuss this at programme committees/UG Strategy group)	Student Experience office AD UG		undergraduates in two years. Maintain equal gender balance in conversions	For males the conversion rate of applications to acceptances have also increased being 36% in 20/21 to 42% in 22/23 and 45% in 23/24. The overall increase in acceptances has increased in line with both female and male. However, there is a gender gap of 12% positive conversion for females. Continuation to monitor conversion is integral in the School monitoring plans.	
AP4.5	Increase overall student attainment at UG and PG level and promote academic support available to all students.	Data show that male UG students tend to under-perform relative to their female peers in the School. There is a BME male attainment gap. The male-female attainment gap reduced from 15.2% to 13.4% over three years. Intersectional analysis reveals that this improvement was not evenly distributed - the gap narrowed significantly for white students but widened for BAME students, indicating the need for more targeted interventions.	A scoping exercise is underway to help improve attainment rates of black male students. Assess impact of current strategies including student peer mentors, anonymous marking, unconscious bias training and PG workshops. Continue with this work and run brainstorming session to examine new ways in which academic skills can be enhanced. Monitor attainment rates of PG students at Programme level. Collect further information for the number of non-completions and the reasons for them.	Associate Dean Learning and Teaching Student Success and Inclusive Practice Lead Centre for Academic Skills and Excellence EDI-SAT AD UG AD PG BME Advocate	2019-2022, ongoing	Accurate data to allow for annual monitoring of impact of any initiatives on UG and PG pipeline. Narrowing of BME attainment gap. Improvement in the number of male students achieving first class degrees by 5% over three years.	We regularly monitor the data for students through both gender and ethnicity. The action set in 2018 has been superseded by our policies and processes focussed on achievement and attainment gap at modular and programme level. Our attainment initiatives have reduced gender gaps, but intersectionality analysis reveals complex patterns requiring more targeted intervention which are ongoing actions. Between 2019 to 2024 we have identified that the gap between white and other ethnicity females has closed significantly (Appendix 2.2). For example the number of black females achieving a first degree has increased by 12%. However, we have identified that the gap between black and white males has widened, and the data has enabled us to take appropriate actions. 2019-2020 to 2023-24 showed a trend increase from 67% to 71% for good degree rates. Good degree attainment has reduced the gender gap from 15.2% to 13.4% female advantage.	

							White female-male gap: 11.2% and BAME female-male gap 18.7%. BAME male students are still the lowest attainment group with 52% good degrees and targeted interventions have been actioned. Female students with disabilities showed 15% lower attainment than non-disabled peers.	
A PICTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT: ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH STAFF DATA								
AP4.6	Continue to monitor gender pay gap annually and work to reduce it and support a balance of staff at all grade levels.	Published pay information shows a disparity.	Undertake research to explore the gender pay gap and identify strategies for narrowing it. Develop plan to reduce pay gap.	Dean HR	Plan to be drawn up 2019	Reduction of pay gap, less imbalance of staff at certain levels.	Progress on equal pay has been fluctuating. We have increased the number of staff by 52%. We achieved a pay gap of 7.9% in 2023, which was below the sector average of 13.6% (AdvanceHE, 2023). Whilst the gap has increased up to 13.7% in 2024, this is still below the rate of 14% in 2019 and remains within acceptable boundaries. It is likely the increase is the result of higher male appointments at AM2+. It is worth noting that UH6 academic roles did not exist in Hertfordshire Business School in 2019-2020. In alignment with our strategic commitment to inclusivity and developing academic talent, the University introduced roles at UH6 grade that are designed to support early career academics who may not yet possess a PhD. The creation of UH6 roles aims to establish a structured talent pipeline, providing these individuals with professional growth and progression within the University. To support their professional development, UH6 role holders are allocated paid workload hours to complete a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCertHE). Successful completion of this programme leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy	

							(FHEA), aligning with the Professional Standards Framework 2023. The introduction of UH6 roles has resulted in a notably high representation of women (69% in 2023-2024) and this gender distribution underscores the university's commitment to advancing gender equality in alignment with the principles of the AS Charter. By proactively addressing gender imbalances, particularly at early stages of academic careers, the university demonstrates its dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment.	
AP4.7	Conduct intersectional analyses of staff data to develop and improve strategies and ensure fair access to all.	We have not yet interrogated the staff data by characteristics such as ethnicity, and this is essential when considering our highly diverse student body. Plans for new survey 2019, focus groups took place in spring 2018.	Collect data which takes EDI into account, such as ethnicity, age and LGBT. Analyse data and develop new actions accordingly.	ADR AS Champion HR	Aug 2019, annually Aug-Dec 2019, annually	Further insight will be gained into EDI trends related to staff in order to better address them.	Using UH tableau data enables us to look at intersectionality on gender, race, disability, religion, sexuality and also across the structural grades and appointments of the institutions. This enables us to make targeting interventions for gender pay gap, academic promotions, Learning and development.	
AP4.8	Liaise with HR about exit interview process for leavers and promote in order to find out about possible issues.	We do not currently have an exit interview procedure in place. We need to discover the reasons why staff leave and what possible steps can be taken to reduce this.	Adopt HR's new system of exit interviews for leaving staff. Consider whether these provide generalisable issues to inform management on a regular basis.	HR Heads of Subject Groups	Ongoing	Insight into reasons staff leave is gained.	Exit questionnaires are part of standard procedure now. The online Exit Questionnaire enable us to better understand the reasons why individuals leave the University and to identify future improvements. Capturing employees' experiences of working at the University can help us guide future practices, improve workplace conditions and retain employees. Detailed reports and analytics specifically for protected characteristics such as ethnicity and gender help us better understand reasons for BAME and female employees leaving HBS.	
SECTION 5: SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS **Key transition points: academic staff**								
AP5.1	Consider reasons why	The main entrance points for an	Create a career development	HBS management	May 2019 to see	Regular updates on diversity	Our recruitment and selection process has been designed to ensure a fair and consistent	

	female staff tend to gain posts through promotion rather than recruitment.	academic post to HBS are at UH07 and 8. There have been few direct appointments to UH09 although these posts have been gained through promotion.	database to monitor application/appointment. As part of this, ensure chairs of recruitment panels have diversity training and updates.	HR	improvements by 2021	training for recruitment panel chairs leading to greater consideration of direct recruitment of females at higher levels	process and all recruitment panels since 2023 have had to record the diversity mix of their panel members. All panel Chairs have to undertake training as well as compulsory Unconscious Bias training. The data shows that for UH9 and AM roles, less women apply despite higher representation of women. Data also shows that female appointments lag behind male appointments when reviewed against applications, shortlisting and appointment (Appendix 2.7). In 2024 there were 371 female and 629 male applications at UH8, but of those only 13 females were offered a role versus 33 males. Further action is required to address this disparity.	
AP5.2	Conduct audit of current recruitment literature and practices to ensure we are attracting staff who reflect the diversity of our student groups.	We reviewed our recruitment literature and School webpages to ensure that gender-neutral language is used, and any images reflect gender-balance and diversity and inclusivity generally. Nevertheless, far fewer women apply to senior-graded posts. The staff at present do not reflect the BME make-up of the student body.	SEG to draw up a strategy for developing appointments in areas/teaching which do not reflect the diversity of the School. Shortlisting panels to be representative. To make it mandatory in the School that those who sit on panels must attend E&D and unconscious bias training. Mandatory approval of recruitment adverts by School Administration Manager to provide	Dean SEG HR SAM EDI-SAT Chair	From January 2019 to 2020	SEG produced a strategy document on recruitment. All HBS job adverts have a positive action statement. 100% of adverts and appointments reviewed and approved by the SAM. 100% of recruitment and shortlisting panels are representative (gender-wise at very least). 100% of Chair panels have completed	Over the past 5 years the HBS staffing profile and demographics have significantly improved to reflect the diversity of our student groups. This can be seen clearly in the data (Appendix 11.2) which represents the intersectionality of staff with a BAME representation of 46%. This is significantly better than the sector average of 19.1% in 2022–23 (AdvancedHE, 2023). This has been achieved by regularly monitoring our progress through our EDI reports, revising our job descriptions to ensure inclusive language, diverse shortlisting panels trained in unconscious bias and advertisement of roles in BAME-focused networks. We have also introduced mentoring programmes for BAME early-career academics and partnered with local and national initiatives (e.g., Advance HE's Race Equality Charter) to support BAME talent development.	

			a consistent approach. Ensure that chairs of all recruitment panels to undertake University recruitment training as required.			recruitment training.	All recruitment panels are monitored for diverse representation, and this is reported centrally to the University. All panel Chairs are required to complete the University's recruitment training programme which includes equality and diversity actions. All recruitment panel members must complete compulsory unconscious bias training.	
AP5.3	Increase the number of female staff taking up senior leadership positions.	The data show that women are less successful at senior graded posts, although we have recently seen a number of women promoted to higher positions.	Monitor promotion and career development over a period of several years. Create a career development database to monitor application/appointment. Create mentoring opportunities for women seeking promotion with more senior staff helping less experienced colleagues prepare for promotion.	ADs HR HBS management	2019 ongoing January 2020 June 2019	Continue to maintain and where possible increased number of females in senior leadership positions. Consider gender balance when new appointments necessary. Female participation in new mentorship programme.	Progress has been made with 56.8% of females at UH9 and 52.2% in AM roles in 2024 (Appendix 2.3). Encouraging more female academics to apply for leadership and academic management roles is a key step in advancing our gender equality and will be taken forward as an action. Promotion success for female academics is 67% compared to 58% male. Female representation at School Executive level is 67%. Further actions to identify and develop talent in success planning is needed.	
AP5.4	Evaluate effectiveness of local School Induction programme.	Changes were made to the HBS local induction in 2015, but its effectiveness has not been evaluated since then.	Consult with recently-hired staff to ensure their needs have been met – through interviews and focus groups.	EDI-SAT	June 2019	Improvements to induction programme made on an informed basis.	Comprehensive structured School induction has been taking place for the last 3 years. It is successfully measured and monitored and is representative of our staffing base. HBS has increased our staffing base by 100+ and the success of our induction programme has seen a decline in exit rate from 11% to 4%, with a 96% retention rate.	

							The induction programme is now moved into the remit of CPD responsible staff at a subject group level and is removed from the action list.	
AP5.5	Ensure transparency, understanding and encouragement in the promotion and progression process.	The staff survey revealed that staff would welcome more information, explanation and transparency about the EVALUATE process. We must also combat the perception that staff feel they have to undertake additional responsibilities on top of their roles in order to be considered for promotion.	Ensure promotion is discussed as part of the appraisal process in addition to other personal development goals. Introduce a Career Development workshop. Reiterate questions in next staff survey and monitor responses. Add a brief section on Evaluate to Staffpoint with links to further information about the process on the UH intranet with contact details for the School's HR Business Partner Provide guidelines to line managers on Evaluate process for staff wishing to develop their career potential, whilst explicitly encouraging those in full-time and PT positions to do so. In particular, to highlight and explain the Evaluate promotion process	HBS Line Managers SAM EDI-SAT SAM HR	September 2019 October 2019 September 2019 June 2019 March 2019	100% of appraisals include an opportunity to discuss personal development and promotion, as agreed through appraisal process. Agree a School target of 70% for the question: I understand the career development and promotion/progression process in my School. (This must be across both genders). Career workshop introduced.	The University Equate process is in place to support academic promotions for levels UH7 to UH8, and UH8 to UH9. The process includes 12 areas for evidence-based activities across a range of metrics including teaching and learning, academic management, research, communication etc. Applications are made through the School with the decisions on criteria for promotion taken at a University panel level. Workshops for staff to understand and prepare for the promotion process have been run across the School throughout the past 3 years. Line managers who support the process have also been to guide staff in their applications and provide a structure to help them realise their ambitions. An evolution in our Equate process is being introduced in September 2025. This has been redesigned to reflect the contemporary nature of academic work. The evaluation is based on the job criteria of the role and impact assessment for EDI has been undertaken to ensure a fairer system. Academic promotion workshops are promoted and delivered by the School and also centrally by the University. The UH appraisal process has opportunities for career and development discussions. Again a new PDR process will be introduced	

			through different channels.				in September 2025 with a focus on supporting career development and identifying challenges for support to this.	
AP5.6	In preparation for the next REF, consider gender balances in research projects and outputs to ensure that HBS reflects diversity in their research community.	Although the proportion of women submitted for REF has improved significantly since 2008, this must be monitored in preparation for the next REF.	Looking at the gender balance for the upcoming REF and encourage broader female participation in research. Positively encouraging research projects on EDI subjects. Continue to monitor weekly research events held throughout academic year to ensure a balance of speakers.	ADR	2018-2021	Improved gender balance for REF, aiming at 50/50. Three successful research projects on EDI subjects, including completed PhDs.	Data from our last REF application in 2021 shows that we had 13 female (5 BAME) and 15 male (2 BAME) in our HBS Research Unit. The Unit is now close to achieving gender parity, with over 46% female, a significant rise from the 35% of women in the REF2014 submission and above the sector average of 41%. 3 out of the 7 Professors in the submission (42.8%) were women. Women also hold significant roles in the research management structure: 2 of the 4 Research Group leaders are women, as is the Senior Research Tutor and School Research Tutor.	
SECTION 5: SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS **Career development: academic staff**								
AP5.7	Regularly encourage all staff to undertake regular training and development to increase opportunities for knowledge of AS/EDI in student and staff groups.	There are a wide number of training schemes which all staff are expected to undertake. Staff need to be made fully aware of the training provided at School level, as well as at UH level.	New training on diversity for HBS. Bulletins on training opportunities for staff. Unconscious bias training extended to all staff.	AD VL	January 2019 -2020	Greater understanding and knowledge of EDI issues among staff All staff undertake unconscious bias training	Unconscious bias training is a compulsory iHASCO training for all staff in the University. This was introduced in 2022, and all new starters have to complete this during probation. All staff have to re-take the training every 2-years. EDI related training is available from the University. Specific HBS staff development opportunities are promoted to colleagues who are encouraged to undertake regular training and development. Mandatory courses such as unconscious bias, EDI essentials and active bystander training are developed online and need to be updated after a set period, with reminders being sent to colleagues when training needs to be completed. There are other EDI related	

							staff development workshops that colleagues can sign up for in addition to the mandatory courses described above. The University holds an annual Women Rise Conference which is actively promoted across the Business School and both male and female staff were encouraged to attend.	
AP5.8	Ensure that the appraisal process is effective way of encouraging a positive experience and opportunity for staff development.	Staff Survey indicated that individuals feel the appraisal system relies too much on the skill and commitment of the appraiser. These skills must be enhanced to ensure a positive appraisal experience for all staff.	Continued monitoring of appraisal experience of staff. Liaison with HoGs on appraisal	EDI-SAT AS Champion	March 2019	An increase to 65% of those questioned in the next staff survey who have positive experience of the appraisal system.	Appraisal process improvements have enhanced staff experiences across demographic groups. Staff appraisals and development conversations are undertaken throughout all departments in the School for all staff. Staff development is a focus of the appraisal process. The success measure identified in this action plan has been superseded by the Staff Engagement survey on overall staff development and EDI questions (Appendix 2.11). The engagement rate of staff in HBS is 66% which is above UH average. The measurement of staff views on support, development and training is scored highly positively at 78%.	
AP5.9	Maintain a strong pipeline of research staff.	Working with our PhD students gives us an opportunity to recruit from a pool of early-career researchers. We need in particular to encourage women to apply for PhDs, and to ensure that they receive the support for successful completions.	Investigate why we have lower rates of application from females. Promote support mechanisms for women students, including mentoring. Market the School's research groups and their research interests to encourage more women to apply.	AD PG ADR Research Office	2019- 2020 Ongoing 2019-20 academic year	A higher proportion of women students studying research degrees by 2020, to at least 45%. Greater promotion of research interests which might encourage women, including on EDI themes. An increased pool of early-career researchers.	Increasing our research capability is a strategic objective for the business school and there has been solid progress in our recruitment of female research staff (see 5.6 above). However, at a student level, female participation remains below male participation, particular for PT PGR students where previously there were more female than male researchers, however, this trend switched in 2022-23, with 18 female and 23 males in 2024, so 43% female students. This is approaching the target set and so progress has been made in this area (Appendix 2.1), but this trend needs to be investigated further	

							and a focus on female students in the School is a priority area.	
SECTION 5: SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS **Flexible working and managing career breaks**								
AP5.10	Ensure that staff going on Maternity/ Paternity leave have access to adequate support from HR and policy information prior to going on leave.	Interviews conducted with maternity leavers and returners indicated a need for clearer information and more one-to-one support from HR.	Work with our HR Business Partner to improve transparency and understanding of policies related to parental leave and flexible working entitlement and opportunities on the University intranet. Create a line manager briefing for guidance on appropriate support for staff before, during and returning from maternity and adoption leave. Promote information about KIT days which can be used for training activities, conference attendance and other career development activities. Invite HR Business Partner to give a talk on Family Leave and Flexible working. Introduce a section to Staffpoint with brief information and links to the information on the	Staffing group HR/Line manager Staffing group HR/Line manager EDI-SAT	Jun 2019 March 2019 March 2019 February/March 2019 June 2019 February/March 2019 Ongoing	All line managers have access to up-to-date information to provide to staff going on maternity/paternity leave, as supplied by HR. 100% of staff going on maternity/paternity leave with an optional KIT agreement signed off by their line manager. An increase in positive experiences by women going on maternity leave who felt they were adequately supported by HR, as measured through staff one-to-one interviews.	The success measures for this action have been achieved in that parental leave is policy and practice within the University and Business School with all actions for support, KIT and return to work incorporated into practice. In line with this action, we have worked with the HR Business partner to improve transparency and understanding of policies related to parental leave. There is a parental leave guide that is used by line managers which outlines how to manage parental leave from notification of pregnancy, Keeping in Touch days, return to work and flexible working. All managers are provided with training on these policies. This is now standard practice in the business school. HR provide opportunities for returning staff to report and discuss their experiences of leave. The University uses SharePoint to promote the policies, which are easy to find and navigate.	

			UH intranet with contact details for HR Business Partner. Ensure line managers are aware of policies. Liaise with HR Business Partner to introduce personal interviews for those applying for maternity leave.					
AP5.11	Consider policies which would facilitate parental leavers' return, including a possible fund to ease responsibilities in early months.	We note the difficulties that those returning from maternity leave might have in dealing with aspects of their workload and also note that some HEIs have specific policies to ease the workload of those returning.	Discuss with HoGs allowances to allow returners to have their admin or teaching responsibilities temporarily lessened. Consider a dedicated fund to help provide for this.	Dean HR Business Partner EDI-SAT	2019	Fund acquired to ease return to work for those returning from maternity leave New policy adopted to ease responsibilities To increase satisfaction with the experience of returning from maternity leave, as measured in interviews with returners.	This action lay outside of the direct control of the Business School. However, a number of policies are now in place to support those returning to work after parental leave including risk assessments for breast feeding. A 'How to manage a successful return to work' is made available to all managers and this outlines how to remain in contact during leave, phased return to work and flexible working. Due to the change in working patterns following Covid-19, returning parents are now able to work from home on a more frequent basis, removing the need for a fund. This will be removed as an action for the team. Since the last submission, there have been improvements to enhanced maternity and paternity policies due to legislative changes.	
AP5.12	Look into a change in university policy regarding the level of financial support offered for maternity and paternity leave.	A main concern cited in maternity and paternity leave returner interviews was the level of financial support offered by the university, which is	Start discussion with management at School and UH levels to consider whether possible to increase paid support.	EDI-SAT Equality Office HR	April 2019-2020	Consideration by UH of improved level of financial support. Higher levels of staff satisfaction with policies, as measured by	The university offers an enhanced maternity pay policy above the statutory minimum. Whilst discussions have been held, the policy remains a central decision between the university and the unions. This will be removed as an action for the team.	

		deemed to be too low.				interviews with those taking and returning from leave.		
AP5.13	Launch campaign to improve the take-up of Shared Parental Leave (SPL), including looking at increasing length of paid parental leave.	No staff members have taken advantage of the SPL provision and financial barrier is the top reason for parents not intending to share their leave.	Ensure line managers are aware of policies. Publicity campaign to increase awareness among staff.	HR HBS management	2020	All line managers have access to up-to-date information to provide to staff regarding shared parental leave. Take up of SPL by at least one colleague. Increase in length of SPL.	All Subject Department heads and Line Managers are made aware of shared-parental leave; however, uptake remains low. This is an ongoing trend across multiple sectors.	
AP5.14	Address concerns around the perceived impact of flexible working on career development.	Focus groups revealed that there is a perceived impact of flexible working on career development, particularly for PT staff.	Mentor PT staff about career development Discuss specifically in appraisals.	HoGs EDI-SAT	September 2019	Improved perception that flexible working does not negatively impact career development, as measured through future staff focus groups and survey.	The pandemic accelerated flexible working adoption, reducing perceived career penalties. The instances of flexible working across FT and PT staff have increased exponentially. 82% agree that "HBS enables flexible working" (Appendix 1, Figure 1.3). There are examples of PT staff being promoted to senior positions, such as the Head of Accounting, however, it is recognised that more can still be done to address as the number of PT promotions in 23-24 was just 1 female and 1 male (Appendix 2.7). We will continue to focus on the reasons for this.	
SECTION 5: SUPPORTING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S CAREERS Organisation and Culture								
5.15	All HBS staff to complete Unconscious Bias training over the next year as part of Appraisal Action Plans.	Recognition that unconscious bias needs to be dealt with specifically in dealing with EDI issues.	Introduce to on-boarding activities and as part of appraisal process.	HR and Line Managers	January 2019-January 2020	100% HBS staff have undertaken unconscious bias training by January 2020.	The policy has changed from when this action was written and there are mandatory courses for EDI and unconscious bias. These are documented on the appraisal form and probation form as part of these processes. This is now mainstream University policy.	

AP5.16	HBS Centre for Executive Leadership to deliver measurable outreach targets and contribute to better gender balance in the 2020 Business Advisory Group.	The need to extend EDI principles into our outreach work and to increase female participation in the Business Advisory group/	Discuss with CExL its plans to improve gender balance in group and outreach work.	CExL Director	June 2019-2020	Improved gender balance in Business Advisory Group to bring it closer to 50/50 F/M.	The HBS Centre for Executive Leadership has now transferred into the Business Academy and supports CPD, business help to grow clinics and networking for 178 SMEs in the local area, The Business School advisory group has grown significantly since this action was written with 40+ members representing diversity across all protected characteristics. It includes a number of highly influential women from business. This also flows into our departmental Advisory sub-groups.	
AP5.17	Capture external committee participation to better gauge staff involvement outside the University.	At present we do not have systematic measurement of staff external committee involvement on a gender basis.	Set up monitoring system for participation including by gender.	SAM	January-December 2019	Develop better understanding of staff external involvement and encourage if appropriate a better gender balance	Data on staff external involvement is being collated through other accreditation processes including the EMFD 2023 and SBC 2025, for which we are awaiting the final outcome. As a result, this data has high visibility in HBS, and this practice has now become a mainstream activity within the School.	
AP5.18	Liaise with HBS Workload Manager so that impact on changes can be measured and assessed.	The need to assess impact of workload and changes in it, especially in relation to non-standard work patterns.	Conduct investigation of impact of workload changes.	Chair of EDI-SAT HBS Workload Manager	January-September 2019	More transparency and staff satisfaction with workload assessment, reflected in the next staff survey.	Workload allocations and understanding of the workload model has been promoted within the School to raise awareness and understanding of the WLM since 2022. The issue of staff workload, rather than the workload model itself has been issued raised within the staff survey qualitative results. School actions to address staff feedback and concerns for this have been championed by the Dean with opportunities for staff voice and engagement led by the EDIT team. The Dean regularly feeds back to staff on the basis of 'You Said, We did'. Whilst this has been an ongoing action for the Dean and the EDIT team, the university is in the process of introducing a new workload	

							model. This is aimed to provide a single, equitable and consistent approach to calculating academic workloads across all of our schools, whilst also being flexible and adaptable for the needs of different areas. At the time of this application the implementation has not started, and it is an action to continue monitoring the impact and response by staff to this new workload model. It is intended to implement an Impact Assessment for staff with intersectionality on the new workload model.	
AP5.19	Enhance the visibility of role models and EDI principles through a poster campaign and new EDI webpage.	The need for role models at staff and student level reflecting the importance of a diverse approach and the successful achievements in equality.	HBS to create a staff and student poster campaign celebrating the wealth of talent and expertise across the full equality and diversity spectrum. Create new EDI webpage on HBS site	Student Experience Office AS Champion	March-June 2019	Increased visibility of role models through posters and webpage. Greater awareness of the need to promote EDI issues among the whole School.	EDIT members attend department meetings and facilitate staff focus groups EDIT events include celebrating identity and cultural differences, raising visibility of colleagues with shared experiences in the school and wellbeing initiatives. EDIT newsletters are sent to the School at regular intervals. We also have a dedicated EDI SharePoint.	
AP5.20	Target event organisers to ensure guest speaker invitations are offered with equality and diversity in mind and put in place monitoring system.	An annual programme of events is run throughout the year encompassing all areas of HBS. To ensure that this programme fully reflects EDI principles	Monitor gender balance of speakers to make sure these provide adequate variety of role models. Monitor gender balance of attendees at events to determine impact on participation.	EDI-SAT AD Commercial	2019-20	Wider engagement with events. Improved gender and BME balance of speakers at events to ensure that they reflect the wider School community.	Presenters are regularly invited to support events around pride, LGBTQ, Eid, menopause, working parents/students, black history month etc. For example, senior black female leaders during black history month. These are promoted through newsletters, social media, posters, the Dean's weekly email and weekly "We are HBS Week ahead" meetings.	
AP5.21	Develop monitoring system for participation in outreach	Role of individual staff and students' involvement in outreach activities is	Set up monitoring system to keep track of participation in outreach by gender.	EDI-SAT	2020	Greater recognition of outreach work and its contribution to the	Significant progress has been made in outreach activities through the work of the School's Employability and Enterprise team. However, it has not been possible to develop	

	activities to ensure staff and student recognition.	not currently undertaken.	Develop recognition of outreach work.			School, including relevant awards and progression. Wider understanding of EDI composition of those involved in outreach work.	a system of monitoring. This will continue to be an action for the team. New focus on school liaison activity with leadership from the UG Curriculum lead. This was centrally managed with HBS representation with the Liaison officer in 2023/24 being a black female academic. The new development team for liaison is diverse and focussed on the newly launched 26/27 UG portfolio.	

2.1.2. Green actions – Achieved objectives

Green Actions: AP 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.8, 5.10, 5.13, 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.19, 5.20, 5.21

Raising the profile of gender equality

We have successfully raised the profile of gender equality (AP3.1) in a number of areas. Our approach to cultural awareness has resulted in measurable cultural changes:

Leadership and Visibility

Gender equality has been championed by senior leadership, with visible support from the Dean, SEG and EDIT as a formal standing committee. In the 2025 culture survey, 72.9% of female staff agreed that leadership supports gender equality, up from 2018. However, the 10% perception gap with male staff (82.9%) suggests a need for more visible support targeted at women. Leadership development maintains strong female represen*t*ation: 56.8% at UH9 and 67% at SEG (AP5.3). Senior women are visible in recruitment and development, though BAME women remain underrepresented at 18% of senior roles, an ongoing priority to address intersectional barriers.

Data-Driven Action

We have systematically collected and analysed gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, promotions, pay, and student outcomes. These findings have been used to inform targeted interventions, such as revising recruitment practices, addressing gender imbalances in leadership roles.

Cultural Change and Engagement

Staff and student voices are central to shaping change initiatives e.g. Coffee and Cake sessions for working parents and students and bring your child to work days. Ideas are captured through surveys, focus groups, and open forums (AP 5.19). HBS has hosted annual events to mark gender equality milestones, raising awareness and celebrating role models. International Women's Day attendance increased from 15 staff (2019) to 65 staff and students in 2024 (AP 3.2). The monthly EDI newsletter reaches 244 staff with 67% average open rate.

Celebrating International Women's Day at HBS with staff and students (Photos REDACTED)

Gender equality is integrated in staff development, with mandatory EDI training and leadership workshops focused on inclusive practice (AP 5.7) with 89% of staff completing unconscious bias training (exceeding 80%) target.

Policy and Practice Reform

A key area for change has been our flexible working policy, introduced in COVID-19 with 83.1% of female staff agreeing it is enabled (Culture Survey 2025). All staff are equipped for remote work, including laptops and communication tools.

We successfully launched a mentoring scheme for early-career staff with a focus on supporting women and underrepresented groups.

Fairness and equality are ensured through transparent promotion criteria and our workload allocation models. Recognising the process has historically been perceived as opaque and challenging, particularly among women who may experience confidence barriers when pursuing promotions, we have introduced targeted workshops aimed at demystifying processes (AP 5.1). This initiative aligns with our commitment to foster an inclusive environment that empower staff to pursue career advancement opportunities equitably. Family-friendly policies have been promoted via internal communications, though uptake of shared parental leave remains low, reflecting sector-wide trends. (AP 5.13)

Sustained Commitment

HBS has actively contributed to institutional and sector-wide conversations on gender equality, sharing good practice and learning from peers. However, as can be seen for AP5.11, the School can contribute but ultimately some policy changes are central.

Key Learning:

Achieving gender equality requires visible senior leadership support and integration into strategic planning. Progress depends on:

- Multiple, sustained pathways to female leadership
- Data-driven, evidence-based initiatives using gender-disaggregated data
- Regular monitoring and reporting to drive awareness
- Active feedback to central EDI teams via EDIT, EDI SAT, and Committee to influence policy and strategy

Broadening our Focus

Over the past five years, HBS has embedded AS principles within a broader intersectional EDI framework, recognising the interconnected nature of structural inequalities. This shift ensures gender equality is integrated, rather than siloed, into our wider mission for inclusion and equity.

From Gender to Intersectionality

While gender remains central, HBS now considers how it intersects with race, disability, sexual orientation, age, and socio-economic background (AP 3.3) to

produce measurable improvements in the inclusive culture. BAME staff representation rose from 32% to 46%, exceeding the sector average of 19.1% (Appendix 2, Figure 11.3), while maintaining gender balance. Gender actions were aligned with other inclusive objectives and embedded in recruitment, student outcomes, staff development, and leadership, coordinated across multiple committees, ensuring a whole-School approach.

Expanded data capture now includes protected characteristics beyond gender, enabling more nuanced understanding of disparities in recruitment, attainment, and progression, in particular the APP tool (AP 4.7). EDI reports are shared with staff and students, reinforcing transparency and accountability. Student-level intersectional analysis has led to curriculum reviews and targeted projects like Black male student coaching and the Kick Start BTEC initiative. Our male empowerment group, Elevate organised for alumni Frederick Afrifa to talk after appearing on this year's The Apprentice TV series (AP 5.20).



Frederick Afrifa from The Apprentice talks to students

Curriculum and Pedagogy

Curriculum revisions address gender imbalances in subject areas. Male-dominated subjects like Business Analytics (78% male), Economics (72% male), and Finance (69% male) contrast with female-dominated areas such as HRM (68% female) and Tourism (61% female). This segregation contributes to our 21% underperformance versus the national average (36% vs 57% female participation). Action 1.4 sets targets to increase female representation by 2030 through inclusive teaching, diverse case studies, and intersectional frameworks.

Key Learning:

- Gender is considered through an intersectional lens, accounting for race, disability, sexual orientation, age, and socio-economic background.

- Initiatives such as the Race Equality Charter, LGBTQ+ campaigns, and neurodiversity workshops have fostered a visibly inclusive culture.
- Intersectionality remains central to advancing gender equality.
- Inclusive progress is shaped by staff and student input via events, forums, and surveys.
- Student engagement must be data informed.

Embedding Staff Voice Surveys, Focus Groups and EDI Action

Since 2022, the University has implemented a:

- University-wide staff survey in November 2022
- Pulse survey in November 2023
- Check-In survey in November 2024 (AP 3.8)

These surveys have provided valuable longitudinal data on staff experience, wellbeing, and perceptions of inclusion. HBS actively engaged with results, holding School-level discussions to interpret findings and embed actions: adjustments to workload allocation, targeted wellbeing initiatives, and improvements in communication and transparency.

HBS runs biennial staff focus groups to gather deeper, qualitative insights, particularly on intersectional issues not captured in quantitative data. Facilitated by EDIT, these inclusive and confidential sessions inform School priorities and are reported to SEG. Annually we utilise our *100 days of conversation* for key themes including staff development and consultation, which are actioned where feasible.

Key Learning:

- Participation in Herts staff survey cycle is key and ensuring School-level analysis and action planning.
- Sharing outcomes and progress with staff through annual EDI updates.
- Running focus groups to understand survey results and ownership of action plan by senior leadership, especially gender-based findings

Driving Student Success

Since 2019, we have successfully implemented initiatives to attract a more diverse student population, achieve gender parity and grow the application to acceptance conversion rate (AP4.4: Appendix 2.2).

Outreach has expanded through digital campaigns, school partnerships, and FE taster days, though staff involvement remains unmonitored (AP 5.21). Scholarships target underrepresented groups, including carers and low-income students.

HBS encourages students to excel in their academic studies, professional work placements, and other life-enhancing activities. Intersectional reporting on attainment at a gender and ethnicity level has been a key focus area (AP 4.5) driving curriculum changes. A new *Help Build Success* module supports first-year undergraduates, with a PG version launching in October 2025. Timetables have been redesigned for flexibility and authentic, inclusive assessment practices are embedded. The *Future Fit* programme (2026) will reduce UG on-campus days to two, recognising student's conflicting priorities in and outside of university.

Action AP4.5 (Increase student attainment) demonstrates our initiatives have reduced gender gaps, but intersectional analysis has also revealed more complex patterns requiring targeted intervention. The male-female gap fell from 15.2% to 13.4%, and BAME female attainment rose from 58% to 65%, outperforming the sector average which has remained static. However, disparities persist. BAME male attainment remains at 50%, with an 18.7% gap compared to BAME females. Disabled female students also show a 15% lower attainment rate than non-disabled peers, highlighting the need for further targeted interventions.

Key Learning:

- Targeted marketing and outreach interventions required to help address conversion rates and increase gender underrepresentation.
- Curriculum changes should better support students with caring responsibilities or from low-income backgrounds to reduce the attainment gap.
- More focus to signpost students to mental health and intersectional interventions.
- Generic services fall short e.g. black male students in the success coaching programme saw a 12% attainment boost.

2.1.3. Amber actions - substantial progress but require ongoing attention

Amber Actions: 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.6, 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 5.9, 5.14, 5.18

Although we have made progress, several actions are ongoing:

Raising our profile with external partners (AP 3.5)

Since 2019, HBS has evolved ad-hoc collaborations to systematic, evidence-based partnerships that advance gender equity in the wider business community:

HPFT Leadership Academy Partnership - our collaboration with Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust achieves exceptional female leadership development, with consistent 84-94% female participation over six years (2019-2025), significantly exceeding typical healthcare leadership programmes. Even during COVID-19 disruption, we successfully resumed with 94.4% female participation in 2021-22, positioning this as a sector-leading initiative for developing female healthcare leaders across the region.

In our **Help to Grow Management Programme** male participation remains high (73–85%), but targeted outreach improved female engagement in some cohorts from 13-15% to 33.3%, demonstrating strategic interventions can overcome structural barriers.

The Advisory Board reflects strong diversity management, evolving from 62.5% female (2019–20) to a 54.1% female/45.9% male balance (2025–26). This strategic shift broadened expertise and extended HBS equality learning across key sectors (AP5.6), supporting Priority 3 on external engagement.

However, external promotion of HBS's EDI achievements remains limited and informal, hampered significantly by the pandemic and reducing opportunities to share best practice and position HBS as a leader in inclusive business education.

Key Learning:

Missed opportunities include:

- Formal EDI partnerships with local businesses, public bodies, or NGOs
- Hosting events to showcase HBS' EDI achievements
- EDI-focused research collaborations with external academics or industry
- Promoting successes more actively on social media

Intersectionality and Student Engagement (AP 3.6 and 3.8)

Understanding of student intersectionality has deepened, contributing to improved engagement and reduced dropout rates (Appendix 2, Fig. 2.6), notably, a 33% decline for females and 25% for males. However, disparities persist. White female dropout rates fell by 40%, compared to 18% for BAME females.

Support service usage by gender, ethnicity, and disability reveals critical trends. Mental health declarations among undergraduates rose from 10% to 15%, with female students 8–12% more likely to disclose conditions, highlighting compound stressors and the need for tailored support (Appendix 2, Fig. 13). Despite holding valuable wellbeing data, its use in targeted interventions remains limited.

Student representatives have shaped EDI discussions at programme and School levels, informing inclusive practices. A curriculum review has embedded diverse case studies and authors, especially in leadership, ethics, and global business modules. A low-response student survey (0.36%) reveals poor awareness of EDI policies, highlighting the need for clearer communication.

Support services have expanded to better meet the needs of students with intersecting vulnerabilities (e.g. carers, disabled students, low-income backgrounds). Nonetheless, a 13.4% gender attainment gap remains (Appendix 2.2).

The pandemic significantly disrupted student engagement, particularly for those already marginalised. Online learning environments made it harder to identify and respond to intersectional barriers, and opportunities for informal dialogue and peer support were reduced. To counter this, we introduced a dedicated post-graduate area within HBS designed for students to be able to prepare food and drink, interact socially and hold meetings thus helping students to re-establish a community. We also introduced dedicated personal tutors and a student engagement team. The support utilisation of personal tutoring uptake increased from 45% to 72% for first year students. This has contributed to improving the dropout rates.

Key Learning:

- Students value EDI dialogue, but engagement must reflect intersectional diversity.
- Feedback is underused, and generic strategies fall short. Intersectionality data can guide tailored support. Co-curricular spaces foster belonging, while personal tutors and success officers help reduce dropouts.

Gender-Inclusive Marketing and Outreach (AP 4.2)

HBS has refined its marketing to attract a more diverse applicant pool, with some progress but persistent subject-level disparities.

Efforts include:

- Auditing materials for inclusive language and representation
- Targeted outreach to address gender imbalances in specific disciplines
- Collaboration with central teams to align with widening participation goals

These actions have improved applicant diversity and raised awareness of gender equity. However, most UG and PG subjects still show imbalance (Appendix 2.1). Addressing this requires coordinated action across recruitment and curriculum design.

Key Learning:

- Social media plays a key role in shifting perceptions and promoting diverse role models.
- Subject stereotypes persist. Finance and Accounting attract more males, while HR and Tourism draw more females. Stronger, targeted messaging is needed to challenge these norms and broaden appeal.

Recruitment, career advancement and pay (AP 4.6, 5.1-5.3, 5.8, 5.14, 5.18)

HBS has reviewed gender equity progress alongside a 52% staffing increase since 2019. Targeted actions—such as 'Find out More' sessions, boosted female applications by 47% for UH7/8 posts in 2024, and AM applications rose from 4 (2023) to 11 (2024) (Appendix 2.7). However, appointments remain disproportionate: 13 women vs. 33 men, with a 3.5% female appointment rate vs. 5.2% for males (Appendix 2.7.2), indicating systemic barriers (Action 2.1).

Career progression shows improvement: 56.8% of UH9 and 52.2% of AM roles are held by women, aligning with the 55% female staff population. The gender pay gap narrowed to 7.9% in 2023 due to increased female promotions but widened to 13.7% in 2024, driven by male AM2+ appointments. BAME women face a wider gap (18.2%) than white women (11.4%), with overall progress since 2019 minimal (-0.3%). Actions 2.2–2.4 address these disparities.

Efforts to improve equity include anonymous recruitment, diverse panels, and bias training. Development initiatives—UH9 role expansion, Equate workshops, promotion support, and research events—have supported career growth. Ten women joined the Aurora Future Leaders Scheme over two years, backed by mentoring via HBS EDIT.

Appraisals have supported advancement, and UH is implementing a new performance and development review (PDR) to enhance transparency. While clarity around the workload model has improved, it remains under review.

Key Learning:

- While female applications have increased, this hasn't consistently translated into offers.
- A deeper review of recruitment, selection, and post-shortlisting practices is needed. Policy changes—particularly around recruitment and flexible working—are essential for gender balance.
- Targeted career development for women is key to closing the gender pay gap.

Research Staff

HBS has prioritised diversifying its research community through inclusive recruitment, EDI-focused research funding (£20,000 for gender studies), mentoring by senior female professors, conferences, workshops and balanced speaker representation. Female REF participation rose from 35% (2014) to 46% (2021), and 43% of research professors are now women. Structured support has improved outcomes, with sponsored women 22% more likely to attain leadership roles.

Targeted PGR recruitment and development days has been initiated. However, female PGR participation declined from 48% to 42%, and part-time rates from 63% to 44%—addressed in Action 1.2.

Key Learning:

- Hybrid research development has boosted gender participation, especially among early career female researchers, through improved communication via email and SharePoint.
- Future actions include building research communities for staff from non-traditional backgrounds and leveraging student projects.
- Sponsorship-based mentoring, offering guidance, collaboration, and advocacy, is needed to support career advancement.

2.1.5. Actions Removed:

Actions removed: 3.7, 4.1, 5.12

Actions are standard operating procedure and/or managed centrally (AP 3.7, AP 5.12)

Foundation degrees are no longer running (Ap 4.1).

2.1.6. Red Actions: Outside the direct control of the Business School

Red Action: 5.11

This action lay outside of the direct control of the Business School.

2.2. Key priorities for future action plan

Please describe the department's key issues relating to gender equality and explain the key priorities for action.

Since 2019, the challenges outlined in HBS' AS Action Plan have shifted considerably i.e. 52% growth in staff and 137% increase in student numbers, shifting priorities and new focus areas emerging. We have consequently revised our priorities and actions as set out below, incorporating key learning and incorporating best practice already developed. These priorities are operationalised through 24 specific actions detailed in Section 3.1.

Priority 1: Student Experience and Intersectionality

HBS faces a notable gender imbalance with 64% male vs. 36% female students, underperforming the national benchmark of 57% female (HESA, 2023). HBS recognises whilst progress has been made, further work is needed to deepen impact and ensure sustainability. Undertaking undergraduate reaccreditation has highlighted underutilisation of available data to analyse and understand this issue e.g. regularly reviewing achievement by both gender and ethnicity. Analysis shows 13.4% attainment gap favouring females, but intersectional data reveals 25% gap between white females (75% good degrees) and BAME males (50%), requiring targeted rather than generic interventions.

Disability data reveals important trends requiring attention. Mental health support needs amongst students have increased from 10% to 15% at UG (50% increase). There is disparity in declarations of disability between male and female students of 8-12% but also an increase in female PGR showing the highest declaration rates, indicating vulnerabilities requiring intervention (Appendix 2, Figure 14).

New Action 1.1 – Improve the collection and use of student data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status to identify attainment gaps, monitor engagement, and evaluate the impact of interventions.

Analysis undertaken in Appendix 2.1 has highlighted gender imbalance across all our programmes except for Marketing at UG. In 2026/2027, HBS will launch a new Future Fit UG provision with a smaller range of programmes focussed on experiential learning. Promotion of the programmes will be addressed in the marketing activity actions (1.2). There is a gender imbalance across the School with 64% male student population which also needs to be addressed through marketing activities.

New Action 1.2 – continue to monitor gender and intersectional representation in subject areas and refine marketing strategies accordingly

With 33% of students unaware of EDI policies—especially among female students (36% of the population)—clearer communication is needed. Student Representative

consultative work highlights students' desire to shape EDI efforts, reinforcing the value of their input in developing inclusive policies and practices.

New Action 1.3 – Establish a structured programme of focus groups and listening events with students from diverse backgrounds (e.g. female students, Black and global majority students, LGBTQ+ students, disabled students, first-generation students).

New Action 1.4 – Develop a School-wide framework to support staff in embedding intersectional perspectives into teaching and assessment. Provide training and resources on inclusive pedagogy, co-designed with students

New Action 1.5 – Fund and support student-led initiatives that explore intersectional themes (e.g. identity, belonging).

New Action 1.6 – Increase visibility of the HBS EDI Policies and increase promotion of our cultural and awareness celebration events that reflect the diversity of the student body, ensuring inclusive representation and participation.

By taking a more intentional, student-centred, and intersectional approach, HBS will create a learning environment where all students feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed, particularly female students who are underrepresented. These actions will ensure that the AS principles are extended to the student experience.

Priority 2. Recruitment and Progression

Whilst there has been an increase in the number of female applicants to roles, female appointment rate of 3.5% vs male 5.2% (1.7 percentage point gap) indicates systemic barriers requiring investigation. This disparity is directly addressed in our future action plan through action 2.1 (Section 3.1) which commits to recruitment audit and remedial actions. Data from AP 5.1 shows female appointments lag behind male appointments when reviewed against applications, shortlisting and appointment. In 2024, 13 of 371 female UH8 applicants were offered roles, compared to 33 of 629 males (Appendix 2.7).

New Action 2.1 – Investigate the reasons why fewe**r** female applicants are achieving an offer and identify remedial actions.

Encouraging more female research and academics to apply for leadership and academic management roles is a key step in advancing our gender equality. Research shows women are less likely to self-promote and apply for leadership roles, requiring proactive encouragement and clear pathway communication. The gender pay gap data (Appendix 2.6) shows our 13.7% gap remains concerning, despite improvements. Intersectional analysis reveals BAME women face greater disparities – with an 18.2% gap vs. 11.4% for white women—and hold only 18% of senior roles despite making up 24% of staff. These figures highlight the need for targeted, not generic, action. This will also help to reduce our Gender Pay Gap (AP 4.6).

New Action 2.2 – Increase the number of females at >AM1. Provide targeted support for high potential females. Offer imposter syndrome training. Publicly celebrate female leadership role models within HBS.

New Action 2.3 – Introduce transparent and inclusive career pathways. Clearly communicate criteria and expectations for academic and leadership roles and highlight non-linear pathways.

New Action 2.4 – Provide targeted support for promotion, including workshops, mentoring for high potential females, women and non-binary in leadership training, peer mentoring and support for promotion applications.

The uptake of training and development was not addressed in the previous AS application. We believe it is valuable to evaluate the correlation between training participation and career progression by gender. Women consistently access fewer career development opportunities due to caring responsibilities, confidence gaps, and unconscious bias in selection processes for selective development opportunities.

New Action 2.5 – Annually monitor uptake of training and development by gender and role type

As outlined in AP 5.5, the institution will implement a new PDR process in September 2025. This provides an opportunity for equitable developmental support and career encouragement. It is crucial to ensure this process is transparent to provide equitable support for career development and promotion support for female staff. Research shows women receive less specific developmental feedback and

promotion encouragement during appraisals, requiring systematic monitoring. Monitoring outcomes will ensure targeted and appropriate actions.

New Action 2.6 – Annually monitor and evaluate the PDR appraisal system

The 2022 Engagement Survey feedback shows promotion process perceived as discouraging, particularly affecting women who may lack confidence to navigate these processes. However, a new equate system has been put into place this summer, which includes a focus on previous appraisal development discussions. It is important that we continue to provide guidance on the process and monitor outcomes by gender. We have also made progress on supporting staff with the equate process (AP5.5).

New Action 2.7 – annually review and evaluate the impact of the new Equate system on intersectional promotions outcomes.

To support fair workload distribution, measures were implemented following concerns from the 2022 Engagement Survey (AP 5.18). A new workload model launching in 2025/26 will affect all academic staff and must be monitored for impact, effectiveness, and equity—particularly for female staff, who disproportionately shoulder unseen administrative duties and external caring responsibilities.

New Action 2.8 – Evaluate the new workload allocation model, reviewed annually for intersectionality.

These actions demonstrate a commitment to career progression and leadership equality. The intersectional barriers to advancement are understood. Evidence of impactful, sustainable change aligned with AS principles.

Priority 3: Culture, Visibility, and Accountability

Our aim is to continue to nurture our excellent culture and to share best practice with our local community. As demonstrated in the previous sections, we have made good progress in embedding a culture of gender equality. Despite achieving 55% female academic staff (vs 47.3% sector average), our external engagement underperforms, limiting our ability to influence sector-wide gender equality and share our successful practices. However, based on our experiences in this reaccreditation process we believe we can implement better frameworks and data tools to further embed the AS principles and ensure we are able to achieve the actions outlined in this section.

New Action 3.1 – Creation of an EDIT staff dashboard to ensure visibility and increase intersectional analysis

New Action 3.2 – Establish a Gender Equality Implementation Group (EDIT-SAT) to oversee delivery and evaluation of EDI accreditation actions.

With the formation of a revised EDIT-SAT team and establishment of milestones, we will communicate successes, further strengthening our inclusive culture.

New Action 3.3 – Review the constitution and ToRs of the Gender Equality Implementation Group (EDIT-SAT) to oversee delivery and evaluation of EDI accreditation actions.

HBS has not fully capitalised on opportunities to engage with external partners (AP 3.5), limiting knowledge exchange and collaboration. This has also reduced staff and student involvement in wider EDI initiatives. We now aim to build partnerships that foster continuous learning, innovation, and the sharing of best practice to strengthen our EDI strategy.

New Action 3.4 – Establish an External EDI Engagement Strategy

New Action 3.5 – Launch an annual event bringing together researchers, alumni, business leaders, and students to explore themes such as inclusive leadership, gender equity in entrepreneurship, and intersectionality in the workplace.

New Action 3.6 – Create an EDI Knowledge Exchange Hub. Develop a digital platform to share toolkits, case studies, and research on gender equality and EDI in business. Invite external contributors and partners to co-create content and resources.

New Action 3.7 – Offer EDI consultancy or training to local businesses through student-led projects or academic expertise.

New Action 3.8 – Publish blogs, case studies, and impact stories on HBS's website and social media channels**.**

Section 3: Future action plan

. 3.1. HBS Future Action Plan 2025-2030

These three priorities form an integrated approach to addressing HBS's most significant gender equality challenges. Future actions from our 24 specific actions will help to achieve and create measurable pathways from current performance to ambitious but achievable targets, with clear accountability structures and resource allocations.						
Objective 1	Student Experience and Intersectionality – Our main aim is to foster an inclusive environment that supports student engagement and success. By analysing data broken down by gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status, we can identify gaps in achievement, track engagement, and assess the effectiveness of interventions such as our mental health provision. Action 1.4 curriculum framework informs Action 1.5 student initiative themes Action 1.6 awareness campaigns promote opportunities from Actions 1.4 and 1.5					
Action Point	**Action**	**Rationale**	**Timeline**	**Responsible**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**
1.1	Improve the collection and use of student data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status to identify attainment gaps, monitor engagement, and evaluate the impact of interventions.	Current data (Appendix 2, Table 1 and Figures 2.4-2.5) shows 13.4% attainment gap between male / female students and also varies by ethnicity. Current data collection needs more intersectional analysis, limiting our ability to identify compound disadvantages faced by students from underrepresented groups. Mental health and disability disclosure disparities between student groups UG, PG and PGR as well as higher numbers of female students accessing well-being support (Appendix 2, 14).	Start: Sept 2025 Review: Annually	EDI-SAT, UG/PG. PGR Leads	Real-time dashboard tracking 12 key metrics disaggregated by gender × ethnicity × disability × socioeconomic status" Quarterly automated reports to EDIT-SAT with trend analysis Annual intersectional analysis report with sector benchmarking **Output measures:** Number of targeted interventions implemented based on	Reduce gender attainment gaps; measurable interventions informed by intersectional data; evidence-based resource allocation. **Current baseline:** 13.4% attainment gap reduce to 8% by 2028. Reduce current intersectional attainment disparities. BAME male-female gap: from 18.7% to 12% by 2028

					data insights. Target: 3 annually	White male-female gap: maintain current 11.2% within ±2% Disability gap: reduce from 15% to 8% by 2027 **Interim milestones:** Year 1: 15% reduction in BAME male-female gap Year 2: 10% reduction in disability gap Year 3: Achieve sector average performance Increase BAME male 'good degree' attainment by 12% to 62% by 2028. Reduce the mental health support gender gap by 10% to 5% by 2027 Evidence-based resource allocation - £15K for gender-responsive mental health support annually

1.2	Continue to monitor gender and intersectional representation in subject areas and refine marketing strategies accordingly	To address gender imbalances in subject choice and improve inclusive recruitment. HBS underperforms the national business management average by 21% (36% vs 57% female participation). This requires targeted intervention. A marketing refresh is needed to inform recruitment of the new future fit programme at undergraduate level. To review marketing plans to improve the gender balance of students within the School (currently 64% male) Female PGR participation has declined from 48% to 42%	Data review by semester B 2026 incorporating 25/26 intake. Marketing refresh 2025/26 Annual impact evaluation	EDI-SAT, UG/PG Leads, Marcomms	Subject-specific recruitment dashboards with quarterly updates Gender-neutral marketing materials tested with 200+ prospective students annually Targeted social media campaigns reaching 10,000+ potential applicants annually **Output measure:** Female application rates by subject - target: 20% increase annually	Improved gender balance in underrepresented subjects. **Current baseline:** Business Analytics 22% female, Economics 28% female, Finance 31% female **Targets:** Business Analytics: 22% to 30% female by 2030 (+8 percentage points) Economics: 28% to 36% female by 2030 (+8 percentage points) Finance: 31% to 38% female by 2030 (+7 percentage points) **Interim milestones:** Year 2: 25%, 31%, 34% respectively (+3, +3, +3 percentage points) Year 4: 27%, 33%, 36% respectively (+5, +5, +5 percentage points) Improve sector underperformance gap from 21% to 10% by 2030. Achieve 45% female participation in business and management subjects by 2030.

						Improved gender balance in all subject areas for underrepresented students by +/- 5% annually to meet 5-year target. Female enrolment rates by subject - target: sector benchmark achievement by 2030 PGR female participation increased towards previous 48% level by 2027
1.3	Establish a structured programme of focus groups and listening events with students from diverse backgrounds (e.g. female students, Black and global majority students, LGBTQ+ students, disabled students, first-generation students).	To ensure student voices shape inclusive curriculum and support services. By listening to the experiences and challenges faced by female students, Black and global majority students, LGBTQ+ students, disabled students, and first-generation students, the university aims to create a dynamic environment where all students can thrive. These initiatives will not only inform curriculum design but also enhance support services and school policies to better cater to the diverse needs of the student body.	Launch: Jan 2026 Biannual events	Student Success Lead, EDIT-SAT, Student Reps	Bi-annual focus groups with 12-15 participants each - representing identified demographic categories Structured consultation reports with RAG-rated action recommendations Student advisory panel with 2 representatives per demographic group (12 total) Output measures:	Inclusive curriculum; improved student satisfaction and belonging. **Current baseline**: 67% students aware of EDI policies (2025 survey) Increase EDI awareness to 85% by 2027 (+18 percentage points) Achieve 85% student satisfaction with inclusive curriculum by 2028

					Number of curriculum changes implemented based on feedback Target: 8 annually Intersectional analysis of National Student Survey results by gender × ethnicity	Establish 75% positive response rate for "sense of belonging" questions Eliminate satisfaction gaps between demographic groups (currently 5-12 percentage points) Achieve 50% participation rate across all demographic groups in consultation
1.4	Develop a School-wide framework to support staff in embedding intersectional perspectives into teaching and assessment. Provide training and resources on inclusive pedagogy, co-designed with students	To ensure inclusive pedagogy and equitable learning environments, it is essential to develop a comprehensive framework that supports staff embedding intersectional perspectives into their teaching and assessment practices. This approach involves providing ongoing training and resources focused on inclusive pedagogy, co-designed with students to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. By incorporating intersectional perspectives, we can create a more inclusive curriculum that acknowledges and addresses the diverse experiences and identities of all our students. This not only enriches the learning experience but also promotes a sense of belonging and equity within HBS.	Framework: July 2026 Training: Sept 2026 Phase 1: Pilot framework development with 2 departments (Jan-September 2026) Phase 2: School-wide rollout (September 2026 - June 2027) Phase 3: Implementation and evaluation (Sept 2028-July 2029)	CPD lead, CESS Team, EDIT-SAT	Toolkit developed to include 15+ subject-specific case studies annually Mandatory 3-hour training for all staff Resource commitment: £10,000 for development and implementation project Digital repository of inclusive teaching materials and best practices	More inclusive assessment; improved outcomes for diverse students. Assessment equity: Eliminate gender disparities in subject-level outcomes Student satisfaction: Achieve 85% positive response to 'curriculum reflects diverse perspectives' (baseline: current survey data) Close 5%'sense of belonging' between demographic groups

1.5	Fund and support student-led initiatives that explore intersectional themes (e.g. identity, belonging).	To empower students and promote peer-led inclusion efforts, it is crucial to fund and support student-led initiatives that explore intersectional themes such as identity and belonging. By providing financial resources and support, we can enable students to take ownership of their learning experiences and foster a more inclusive and participatory school culture.	Setup: Mar-June 2026 - guidelines, criteria, application system First cycle: Sept 2026 -Aug 2027 - applications, selection, implementation Evaluation: Sept-Nov 2027 - impact assessment, refinement Ongoing cycles: Annual with rolling applications from 2028	EDIT-SAT, Student Success Team, UG / PG Leads	Annual grant program supporting 8-10 student initiatives (£1,000-£2,500 each) Leadership training for grant recipients on project management and evaluation Mentorship network: Academic staff mentors paired with each funded initiative Best practice case studies from successful student initiatives Peer learning: Annual student-led EDI showcase event with 100+ participants	Increased student engagement; stronger sense of belonging. Awareness improvement: From 67% to 85% EDI policy awareness Participation growth: 40% increase in EDI event attendance 75% of grant recipients report enhanced confidence Student initiatives reach 25% of student body annually through peer networks
1.6	Increase visibility of the HBS EDI Policies and increase promotion of our cultural and awareness celebration events that reflect the diversity of the student body, ensuring inclusive representation and participation.	According to the 2025 student survey (Appendix 2), not all students are aware of our EDI Policies or events. Purpose of action, to raise awareness and foster an inclusive school culture.	Start: Sept 2025 Ongoing Sept 2025 - Digital platform updates and basic communications Oct-Dec 2025 - Enhanced event programming and awareness campaigns	EDIT-SAT, Team, UG / PG Leads	Multi-platform approach: updated SharePoint, Instagram campaigns, email newsletters, QR codes in high-traffic areas Monthly themed events reaching 300+ students annually - Black History Month, Pride, International Women's Day, Diwali etc	Greater awareness of EDI; increased participation rates. Increase EDI policy awareness from 67% to 85% by 2027 Achieve 50% student participation in at least one cultural/awareness event annually

			Jan-Aug 2026 - Integration into all student touchpoints Annual assessment each September with strategy refinement		EDI information embedded in all orientation, tutorial, and student support touchpoints Materials available in multiple formats Regular pulse surveys measuring awareness and engagement	Ensure proportional attendance across all demographic groups at events 20% increase in EDI-related support service usage 80% of survey respondents report 'sense of belonging' in HBS community
Objective 2	Recruitment and Progression – In an effort to address imbalances in the selection and professional progression of our female staff members, we will implement a series of measures. These measures aim to identify and dismantle barriers that may exist within our recruitment processes and to ensure equitable opportunities for all.					
Action Point	**Action**	**Rationale**	**Timeline**	**Responsible**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**
2.1	Investigate the reasons why fewer female applicants are achieving an offer and identify remedial actions.	Data shows that female applications have increased, however, appointments are disproportionate to male counterparts (Appendix 2, Table 7.2). We need to understand and address if there is potential gender bias or structural barriers in selection processes and this will be a year 1 priority accordingly with quarterly reviews.	Initial analysis by Q1 2026. Remedial actions implemented by Q4 2026 Annual monitoring	EDIT, HR, Selection Panel Chairs	Comprehensive recruitment audit covering 200+ appointments over 3 years Further analysis of selection - investigation bias using appropriate methodology Evidence-based recommendations with cost-benefit analysis Action plan for improvement	Increased offer rates for female applicants.; more equitable selection outcomes. **Current baseline**: Female appointment rate 3.5% vs male 5.2% (1.7 percentage point gap) Achieve appointment rate parity (±0.5 percentage points by 2028 BAME female rate: increase from 2.8% to 4.5% by 2028

					Revised selection criteria implemented	Part-time appointment equity - achieve proportional representation
2.2	Increase the number of females at >AM1. Provide targeted support for high potential females.	To address the underrepresentation of women in senior roles, it is crucial to implement comprehensive strategies that build confidence and increase visibility. This involves understanding the barriers that hinder female advancement and crafting specific initiatives aimed at empowering women. By fostering a culture of inclusion and support, we can facilitate the growth of high-potential females within the organization, ensuring they have the tools and opportunities necessary to succeed. This commitment to gender equity will not only improve promotion rates for women but also create a more diverse and dynamic leadership team.	Launch support programme by Q1 2026; ongoing annually	Dean of School, EDIT, HR	Structured mentoring program pairing 10 high-potential females with senior leaders, rising to 20 annually on completion of successful pilot. Leadership development workshops with 90% completion rate and positive evaluation Quarterly 'Women in Leadership' spotlight campaign featuring 4 role models annually	Improved promotion rates for women; increased visibility for female leaders. **Current baseline**: 40% female representation at AM2+ level Increase from 40% to 50% female representation at AM2+ by 2029 (+10 percentage points) BAME women in senior roles - increase from 18% to 25% by 2028 Part-time senior representation: increase from 8% to 20% by 2029 75% of mentoring participants apply for promotion within 2 years 85% of workshop participants report increased confidence

						Female promotion application rates - 25% increase annually Female promotion success rates maintain 67% or higher
2.3	Introduce transparent and inclusive career pathways. Clearly communicate criteria and expectations for academic and leadership roles and highlight non-linear pathways.	To ensure all staff understand progression routes and feel supported regardless of their career trajectory, it is essential to set up transparent and inclusive career pathways. Current data shows women comprise 56.8% of UH9 staff but only 40% at AM2+ level, indicating progression barriers at senior levels. Additionally, BAME women represent only 18% of senior roles despite 24% of total staff, demonstrating intersectional career obstacles. Research shows unclear promotion criteria disproportionately affect women who are less likely to self-promote or navigate ambiguous systems.	Framework developed by Q3 2026; rollout by Q1 2027 Sept-Dec 2025 data gathering, stakeholder consultation Jan-June 2026 – framework development and pilot with 2 departments July-Dec 2026 - school-wide rollout and training 2027 onwards - monitoring and refinement	EDIT, Academic Promotions Committee	Visual career progression charts for all academic routes (research, teaching, leadership) with specific criteria and development timelines. Mentoring database - online platform matching junior staff with senior mentors annually Workshop program - quarterly progression workshops with 50% academic staff participation over 2 years Digital repository of 20+ diverse career progression case studies	Greater clarity and confidence in progression; improved staff satisfaction. Increase female applications for AM2+ roles by 40% by 2028. Achieve gender parity (±5%) in promotion success rates across all grades Increase BAME women in senior roles from 18% to 25% by 2029 Improvements in Staff confidence: 85% of staff report understanding of promotion criteria (baseline to be established 2025)
2.4	Provide targeted support for promotion, including workshops, mentoring for high potential females,	To reduce barriers to promotion for underrepresented groups and build leadership capacity.	Jan-June 2026 - pilot phase - 10 participants to refine approach	CPD Lead, EDIT, HR	10 high-potential women paired with senior leaders increasing 20 annually on successful	Increased promotion success rates for women and non-binary staff.

	women and non-binary in leadership training, peer mentoring and support for promotion applications.	Despite 55% overall female academic staff, women show lower promotion application rates and success. Research demonstrates women face confidence barriers, imposter syndrome, and receive less encouragement to apply for senior roles. Our 13.7% gender pay gap (18.2% for BAME women vs 11.4% white women) indicates systematic progression disparities requiring targeted intervention	Launch Sept 2026 - expanded to all eligible staff Continuous delivery - ongoing quarterly cohorts Annual evaluation each July with program refinement		completion of pilot - 12-month programs Skills development - Leadership confidence workshops reaching 40 women annually Dedicated promotion advisors/sponsors providing 1:1 support for female applicants Imposter syndrome training - bi-annual workshops with 50% attendance target Role model program - quarterly spotlight events featuring diverse female leaders	Success rate parity - achieve 67% promotion success rate for women (maintaining current rate) 30% increase in female applications for senior roles by 2027 BAME women promotion rate increase from current baseline to match white women by 2028 Leadership pipeline - 75% of mentoring participants apply for promotion within 3 years Confidence improvement –90% of workshop participants report increased leadership confidence Reduce gender pay gap to <10% by 2028 with intersectional gaps <12%
2.5	Annually monitor uptake of training and development by gender and role type	To ensure equitable access to development opportunities and identify gaps, it is essential to implement a robust monitoring system. By doing so, we can gather important data that will help us to understand the current state of	Annual review each July	HR, CPD Lead, EDIT-SAT	Comprehensive dashboard - real-time monitoring system tracking participation by gender × ethnicity × grade × training type	Data-informed interventions; improved access and participation.

		engagement and pinpoint any disparities or areas requiring improvement. Women consistently access fewer career development opportunities due to caring responsibilities, confidence gaps, and unconscious bias in selection processes. Without systematic monitoring, gender disparities in training access remain invisible, perpetuating career progression inequalities. This is particularly critical given our BAME women underrepresentation in senior roles			Gap analysis - quarterly reports identifying underrepresentation and barriers Intervention - triggers for targeted outreach when participation gaps exceed 10% Training resource allocation - annual budget redistribution based on equity data	Participation parity - achieve gender balance (±5%) in all leadership development programs by 2027 BAME women participation rates match white women across all programs Career correlation - 70% of training participants show career progression within 3 years Access equity - eliminate training access gaps related to working patterns or caring responsibilities
2.6	Annually monitor and evaluate the new appraisal system	To ensure the system supports fair and constructive development for all staff. Research shows women receive less specific developmental feedback and are less likely to be encouraged to apply for promotions during appraisals. The new PDR system provides opportunity to ensure equitable developmental support, but requires gender-disaggregated monitoring to identify bias patterns and ensure equal encouragement for career advancement	Annual review each September	HR, Line Managers, EDIT	Gender analysis - annual evaluation disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and grade Review of developmental feedback quality and promotion encouragement by demographics Targeted bias training for managers showing disparate outcomes	Improved appraisal experience; better alignment with career development. Equal quality scores for developmental feedback across all demographic groups Promotion encouragement - gender parity in promotion discussions during appraisal

					Showcase effective developmental appraisal approaches	Career planning - 80% of appraisals include specific career development actions
2.7	Annually review and evaluate the impact of the new Equate system on intersectional promotions outcomes.	To assess whether the system supports fair promotion outcomes across all identities. 2022 Engagement Survey feedback shows promotion process perceived as 'too discouraging' and 'lengthy,' particularly affecting women who may lack confidence to navigate complex systems. The new Equate system must actively support rather than inadvertently hinder female advancement, requiring systematic intersectional monitoring	Annual review each November	Promotions Committee, SEG, EDIT	Annual analysis of application rates, success rates, and time-to-decision by all demographic intersections Process improvement - Identification and removal of barriers affecting underrepresented groups Support enhancement - Enhanced guidance and support for applicants from underrepresented groups Transparency measures -reporting of promotion outcomes with demographic analysis	More equitable promotion outcomes; evidence-based improvements Achieve promotion success rate parity (±5%) across all demographic groups Application encouragement - 25% increase in applications from underrepresented groups 80% satisfaction with promotion process clarity and fairness
2.8	Evaluate the new workload allocation model, reviewed annually for intersectionality.	To ensure workload is distributed fairly and does not disadvantage any group. Workload equity particularly affects women who are more likely to take on 'invisible' administrative tasks and face caring responsibilities outside work. The 2022 survey comment 'Unrealistic workload but nothing will be done' reflects staff cynicism. The new workload model must address	Annual review each September	SEG, EDIT	Annual evaluation of workload distribution by gender, caring responsibilities, and working patterns Invisible work tracking - systematic recording of administrative and emotional labour	Fairer workload distribution and improved staff wellbeing and retention. Equal average workload scores across all demographic groups

		gender-based disparities in task allocation and recognition			contributions e.g., over hours, weekend working, additional workload Workload rebalancing protocols when gender disparities identified Additional support for staff with caring responsibilities	Equal recognition and reward for administrative contributions Wellbeing improvement – increase health and wellbeing staff survey score from current baseline of 67% to 75% (Engagement Survey 2022) Eliminate gender-based turnover disparities
Objective 3	Culture, visibility, and accountability remain priorities as we plan to introduce additional structures to support the implementation and monitoring of our AS agenda. We will also collaborate with the wider community to share outcomes, exchange best practices, and offer consultancy services where possible.					
Action Point	**Action**	**Rationale**	**Timeline**	**Responsible**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**
3.1	Create a comprehensive EDI dashboard addressing HBS's specific data gaps. Creation will ensure visibility and increase intersectional analysis	To improve transparency and enable data-driven decision-making on EDI issues, the creation of an EDIT staff dashboard is essential. This dashboard will serve as a centralised platform where the team can track, manage, and analyse EDI data effectively. It will not only ensure visibility but also facilitate intersectional analysis, helping to identify and address any disparities or gaps within HBS. By consolidating EDI data, we can monitor progress, implement informed interventions, and make	Dashboard designed by Q2 2026; launched by Q3 2026 Q4 2025: Requirements gathering with current 25-member EDIT team Q1 2026 - Development phase with IT support	EDIT, HR, IT	Intersectional Analytics - 15 key metrics disaggregated by gender × ethnicity × disability × socioeconomic status Predictive Alerts - automated flagging when gaps exceed 5% e.g. current 18.7% BAME female-male gap vs 11.2% white gap Quarterly updates on recruitment - current female appointment rate 3.5% vs male 5.2%, promotion success rates and student outcomes	Enhanced monitoring of EDI progress. Informed interventions. Increase from current ad-hoc analysis to 100% decisions supported by dashboard data within 12 months Reduce time to identify disparities from current 12-month cycles to quarterly Target 25% reduction in largest gaps (BAME male-female 18.7% → 14% by 2027)

		strategic decisions that align with the university's EDI goals. The interactive nature of the dashboard will allow for real-time updates and customisable reports, making it a valuable tool for continuous improvement in equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, enabling proactive intervention rather than reactive analysis.	Q2 2026: Pilot with core EDIT team Q3 2026: Full launch with training for academic staff Q4 2026 - First impact assessment and system refinement		Sector comparison showing HBS performance vs sector/national averages ROI measurement for interventions (e.g., Help Build Success module impact on retention)	Evidence-based Actions: 5+ targeted interventions annually based on dashboard insights Track intervention impact (e.g., Help Build Success module effect on retention)
3.2	Review the constitution and ToRs of the Gender Equality Implementation Group (EDIT-SAT) to oversee delivery and evaluation of EDI accreditation actions.	To ensure accountability and sustained progress on AS actions, it is essential to establish robust frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. By reconstituting the ToR and responsibilities of the EDI-SAT for overseeing the implementation and assessment of these initiatives, HBS can better track its progress and identify areas for improvement. HBS's current EDIT team has achieved significant cultural change (78% staff agreement on leadership support) but needs reconstitution with authority to drive systematic change. With 137% growth in student numbers and 52% staff increase, robust governance is essential.	Group formed by Q4 2025; meets quarterly Sept 2025 – SEG approved with Dean endorsement Q4 2025: EDIT-SAT establishment with enhanced terms of reference March 2026: First quarterly review with SEG	EDIT Chair – CPD Lead, UG / PG Leads, Student Success Lead, EEE Lead	Written authority from SEG with decision-making powers up to £25k annually Intersectional Expertise - ensure representation matches HBS demographics (current: 60% female, 44% BAME) Dedicated student panel with representatives from each of the 6 subject areas/programmes Performance Dashboard: Quarterly RAG-rated progress reports on all 24 actions External Advisory - annual review by AS experienced academic Research Integration - direct link to HBS's REF research unit (currently 46% female vs 35% in REF2014)	Stronger governance and accountability. 100% of EDI decisions reviewed by SEG quarterly 85% of action milestones met on time (vs current informal monitoring) Student Engagement: Increase from current 0.36% survey response rate (36/10,000 students) to 5% participation in EDI activities Staff Satisfaction: Maintain current 78% leadership support rating while expanding scope Succession Planning -100% of EDIT roles with identified successors and mentoring plans

			Ongoing: Monthly meetings with quarterly strategic reviews			
3.3	Create transparency through celebration of gender equality milestones and key achievements	To foster a positive culture and raise awareness of progress, it is crucial to celebrate milestones and key achievements in gender equality. Highlighting these successes not only promotes transparency but also reinforces the commitment to EDI within HBS. HBS has demonstrated success in celebration events (IWD attendance increased 333% from 15 to 65 participants). Building on this momentum can drive broader engagement and address the finding that 33% of students remain unaware of EDI policies.	Q1 2026: Launch expanded celebration program building on IWD success Q1 2026: Establish monthly communication rhythm December 2025: First EDI award celebrated in Deans Award Ongoing: Monthly features, quarterly social campaigns	EDIT, AD ESS, UG & PG Curriculum Leads	Annual Awards Ceremony for HBS to include "HBS Gender Equality Excellence Awards" Monthly Spotlights: Role model features in newsletter (current 67% open rate to 244 staff) Social Media Campaign: #HBSGenderEquality with target 1,000+ engagements quarterly Student-led content creation program with supported internships EDI Impact Showcase - annual report featuring measurable outcomes (e.g., 33% female dropout reduction) Alumni Network - Gender equality alumni panel leveraging HBS's business connections	Increased staff engagement and visibility of gender equality efforts Event Participation: Grow from current 65 IWD participants to 200+, HBS Gender Equality Excellence Awards launched with 100 nominations by 2027 Awareness Increase: Improve student EDI awareness from 67% to 85% by 2027 Social Reach: 2,000+ social media followers across platforms by 2028 Application Impact: 15% increase in applications citing HBS's inclusive culture Media Recognition: 5+ external media mentions annually highlighting HBS gender equality work by 2028 Staff Pride: 85% staff report feeling proud of HBS's EDI leadership (new metric)

3.4	Establish an External EDI Engagement Strategy	Establishing an External EDI Engagement Strategy is important because it allows HBS to build partnerships and share best practices. This strategy helps to enhance the impact and reputation for EDI leadership, ensuring that the progress made within HBS is recognised and adopted more widely. By engaging with external bodies, we can foster a broader dialogue on EDI issues, drive collective progress, and contribute to creating an inclusive and equitable environment in the wider community. Build on current Advisory Board 54% female representation. HBS has strong business partnerships (Advisory Board with 40-50 members, Help to Grow program) but limited EDI focus. The application notes "opportunities to raise the external profile of its gender equality and broader EDI work remain underdeveloped" despite sector-leading diversity statistics.	Q1 2026: Strategy development building on Advisory Board relationships Q2 2026: Initial partnership discussions with current business contacts January 2027: Formal partnership agreements with 3 organisations Q1 2027: First external forum leveraging HBS's business school network Ongoing: Quarterly partnership reviews, annual strategy updates	EEE Lead, EDIT, SEG	Partnership Strategy: Build on existing Advisory Board relationships to create 10 formal EDI partnerships by 2028 Business Integration: Integrate gender equality into Help to Grow program (currently 73-85% male participation) Academic Collaboration: Partner with 3 other business schools for comparative research by 2028 Policy Influence: contribute to 2 policy consultation responses on gender equality in business education by 2028 Speaking Circuit: 12+ external speaking engagements for HBS leaders by 2028 Best Practice Hub: Digital repository showcasing HBS's achievements (55% female staff, 46% BAME representation)	Broader impact and reputation for EDI leadership. Revenue Generation: £35k annual income from consultancy by 2028 (building on existing business expertise) Sector Recognition: HBS cited in 5+ 2+ external best practice reports by 2030 Partnership Impact - 8/10 partner organisations implement HBS-influenced gender equality initiatives by 2030 Research Collaboration: 3 joint publications highlighting HBS innovations by 2028 Policy Influence: HBS expertise referenced in 2+ national policy documents by 2030 Help to Grow Enhancement: Increase female participation from 15-33% to 40% by 2028

3.5	Launch an annual event bringing together researchers, alumni, business leaders, and students to explore themes such as inclusive leadership, gender equity in entrepreneurship, and intersectionality in the workplace.	Showcasing progress, fostering dialogue, and building networks are important because they help raise awareness and understanding of EDI issues. These efforts contribute to shaping a more inclusive and equitable environment, both within HBS and in the wider community. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, we can drive collective progress, enhance our impact, and strengthen our reputation as leaders in gender equality. HBS is uniquely positioned as one of the UK's largest business schools with strong business connections and proven event management (IWD growth, Advisory Board meetings). An annual event can showcase HBS's sector-leading diversity while addressing the identified gap in external engagement.	First event by Q2 2027. Q2 2026: Initial planning leveraging Advisory Board and business contacts Q4 2026: Sponsor recruitment and speaker confirmation Q2 2027: First "HBS Business Gender Equality Summit" Q3 2027: Evaluation and Year 2 planning Annual cycle thereafter with increasing ambition	EEE Team, EDIT, UG / PG Leads	Business Gender Equality Summit: Annual conference with 100+ attendees from business and academia Student Showcase: Platform for student-led research on gender equality in business Alumni Integration: Gender equality alumni panel featuring HBS graduates in leadership roles Research Presentation: Academic papers from HBS's research unit (46% female researchers) Business Workshop: Practical sessions for local businesses building on Help to Grow model Media Partnership: Collaboration with business media for coverage and thought leadership	Increased visibility of AS work and strengthening community ties. Attendance Growth: Year 1: 50+ attendees → Year 5: 300+ attendees Revenue Sustainability: Break-even by Year 2, £10k surplus by Year 5 Business Impact: 10+ businesses implement gender equality initiatives inspired by summit Student Opportunity: 20+ student internships/placements created through networking Academic Output: 3+ research collaborations initiated at each summit Reputation Enhancement: HBS recognised as leader in business gender equality
3.6	Create an EDI Knowledge Exchange Hub. Develop a digital platform to share	By developing a digital platform to support learning and collaboration on EDI in business, we aim to create a centralised resource for sharing valuable	Platform live by Q4 2027	Digital Learning Team, EDIT, EEE Lead	HBS Gender Equality Toolkit: Professional resource hub for HBS business community and alumni – with the ambition of moving to a subscription model	Enhance knowledge sharing and Sector influence. User Base: 300+ registered users within 5 years

	toolkits, case studies, and research on gender equality and EDI in business. Invite external contributors and partners to co-create content and resources.	insights and best practices. This hub will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, enabling both internal and external stakeholders to access a wealth of information on gender equality and EDI. The involvement of external contributors and partners will enhance the diversity and richness of the content, promoting innovation and continuous improvement in EDI practices. HBS has demonstrated capability in digital innovation and business expertise. A knowledge exchange hub can monetise HBS's sector-leading diversity practices while supporting the University's revenue goals.			Case Study Library: 50+ real business cases from HBS partnerships and Advisory Board Assessment Tools: Gender equality maturity assessment for businesses (based on HBS's own journey) HBS Best Practice and Research Impact Repository (Hub) - repository of interventions with impact case studies and data from academic publications from HBS's research outputs, KTPs etc	Business Impact: 100+ community businesses using HBS tools to improve gender equality in 5 years. Academic Recognition: Hub cited in 10+ academic publications in 5 years
3.7	Offer EDI consultancy or training to local businesses through student-led projects or academic expertise.	To apply academic knowledge in practice not only provides students with invaluable practical experience, enhancing their skills and employability, but it also brings tangible benefits to the local businesses and communities. By leveraging the expertise of students and academic staff, businesses can access innovative solutions and strategies that might otherwise be unavailable to them. This approach helps bridge the gap between academia and industry,	Q2 2026: Pilot program design with 5 businesses from Advisory Board Q1 2026: Student module approval and first pilot module underway	EEE, Department Leads, UG / PG Leads	Expand the student Consultancy Module Credit-bearing modules at UG and PG with real business clients (1 per programme by 2028) Executive Education: Gender equality training for business leaders (building on current CPD expertise)	Real-world impact; student skill development; community benefit Business Gender Equity consulting – achieve a 50% increase in female participation in all business development activities by 2030 e.g., Help to Grow and Business Academy participation Support 10 local business annually to improve gender

		fostering a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and community engagement. HBS serves 10,145 students and has strong business connections through its Advisory Board and Business Academy. The application identifies an opportunity to "support 10 local businesses annually" through targets, which can be expanded into a sustainable consultancy model.	October 2026: Launch with 10 business clients Q4 2026: Evaluation and expansion planning 2027-2030: Scale to 10+ businesses annually with sustainable revenue model		Assessment Service: Comprehensive gender equality audits for organisations Implementation Support: 12-month transformation programs for businesses Policy Development: Bespoke EDI strategy creation for community businesses and organisations	representation and gender equity training – 2026 to 2030. £25k annual revenue by 2028 from consultancy services utilising HBS expertise in gender and EDI. Student Benefit: 200+ students annually gain real-world consultancy experience by 2027 70% of client businesses achieve measurable gender equality improvements Employment Outcomes: 90% of participating students report enhanced employability (UH graduate outcomes 86%)
3.8	Publish blogs, case studies, and impact stories on HBS's website and social media channels.	By regularly publishing this content, HBS can effectively showcase its commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), thereby increasing awareness and engagement with EDI initiatives. HBS needs to leverage its sector-leading diversity achievements (55% female staff, 46% BAME representation) to build thought leadership and support recruitment. The application shows current newsletter reaches 244 staff with	Monthly content from Q1 2026	Marcomms, EDIT, EEE Lead	Published stories, social media analytics Business Gender Equality Blog: Quarterly posts targeting community businesses and alumni Research Briefings: Six-monthly academic insights for practitioners (leveraging 46% female research unit) based on outputs of internal research seminars.	Increased awareness and engagement with EDI initiatives Digital Reach: 1000+ monthly website visitors to EDI content by 2030 Social Following: 5,000+ LinkedIn followers for HBS exposed to gender equality content by 2028 Recruitment Impact: 30% increase in applications mentioning HBS's inclusive reputation by 2028

		67% open rate, indicating strong internal engagement that can be scaled externally.			Success Story Videos: Quarterly features showcasing HBS achievements and alumni impact Podcast Series: "Gender Equality in Business" featuring HBS staff and external experts LinkedIn Thought Leadership: Engagement building HBS's professional reputation	Speaking Opportunities: 10+ conference invitations for HBS leaders by 2028 Academic Influence: HBS content cited in 10+ peer-reviewed publications annually by 2030

Appendix 1: Consultation data REDACTED

APPENDIX 2: Data Tables REDACTED

Appendix 3: Glossary

Please provide a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in the application.

AD	Associate Dean
AEB	Academic English Business
AM	Academic Management
AMER	Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report
AP	Action Point
APP	Access and Participation Plan
AS	Athena SWAN
BAME	Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CEG	Chief Executive Group
CEP	Continuous Enhancement Planning
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
ECR	Early Career Researcher
EDI	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
EDIT	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team
FHEA	Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
FT	Full-time
FTE	Full-time equivalent
G&D	Grievance and Disciplinary
HBS	Hertfordshire Business School
HE	Higher Education
HoD	Head of Department
HPFT	Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
HR	Human Resources
HRIS	Human Resources Information Systems
HRBP	Human Resources Business Partner
HRM	Human Resource Management
IWD	International Women's Day
KIT	Keeping in Touch
L&T	Learning and Teaching
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender queer, plus other sexual orientations and gender identities
MRes	Master of Research
NSS	National Student Survey
PG	Postgraduate
PGT	Postgraduate taught
PGR	Postgraduate research
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PL	Principal Lecturer
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

PT/(P/T)	Part-time
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
RAG	Red, Amber Green
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RF	Research Fellow
SAC	School Academic Committee
SAT	Self-Assessment Team
SEG	Senior Executive Group
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SMT	Senior Management Team
SSAS	Student Success and Academic Skills Team
UB	Unconscious Bias
UG	Undergraduate
UH	University of Hertfordshire
VL	Visiting Lecturer