



How we're working with our local trade unions

We continue to work locally on a range of matters which are of concern to trade unions and colleagues across the sector to find ways to address areas such as academic workload pressures, stress and mental health concerns, casual working and career progression for academic staff. We will continue to engage with staff and our local trade unions on these matters. The positive progress we have made on these issues to date is summarised below:

Gender and race equality

We are committed to creating gender balance across the workforce and have successfully taken actions to reduce our gender pay gap. In 2017, we formed a working group that includes trade union colleagues to jointly and proactively work to understand the causes of our gender pay gap, and agree actions to decrease it. We are in the process of agreeing a new action plan to reduce our gender pay gap at a greater pace.

We are also committed to integrating ethnicity pay gap reporting into our gender pay gap reporting, in line with the [Caught at the Crossroads report?](#), and ahead of the expected legislative requirement to do so. We have amended the terms of reference of our local joint working group to consider ethnicity data ahead of any statutory requirements to do so:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/equality/gpg/index>

Our approach to working in partnership with trade union colleagues in this area has been highlighted as an example of good practice in the [New JNCHEs Equal Pay Reviews and Gender Pay Gap Reporting](#).

In addition, we have set ourselves ambitious targets as part of our new [Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan](#), which aims to tackle issues of under-representation, progression and attainment of Black, Asian and Other Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues. The Race Equality Strategy and Action Plan, which will be reported to the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee via the University Race Equality Steering Group, contains specific actions to increase the percentage of BAME senior and professorial staff, and professional services staff, and to continue working with recruiting managers to proactively develop interventions to improve the diversity of the talent pool.

Wellbeing & workloads

As part of our work to improve staff wellbeing, we have established a Stress Risk Management Working Group. The group includes colleagues from Human Resources, Health and Safety and trade unions, who are working collaboratively to ensure that we are able to identify and mitigate stress at the earliest opportunity.

The group has developed a Departmental Stress Risk Assessment and Action Plan template with accompanying guidance, and the identified departments have been invited to participate in stress and resilience training, which is being piloted over the next six months via Health and Safety.

We have also established an academic workload group, chaired by Professor Craig Watkins, Vice-President and Head of the Faculty of Social Sciences and member of our University Executive Board, involving trade union colleagues and academics. The working group aims to establish how the University can better support academic staff to deliver excellent research, teaching and leadership without a detrimental impact on their wellbeing due to workloads.



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We recognise the importance of creating a positive environment where colleagues are supported and feel able to talk openly and with trust about mental health problems and seek help if necessary.

A number of colleagues have completed the Mental Health First Aid training, with priority given to those in student-facing roles and to those who regularly encounter people in distress. We also held an Introduction to Mental Health session for staff delivered by Sheffield Mind during Mental Health Awareness Week in May 2019, and further activity is planned for World Mental Health Day in October 2019. We hope to develop an in-house group of Mental Health First Aid instructors who will be able to deliver further training in a variety of formats to suit different needs. You can read about all the support we offer at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/mentalhealth>

Casual working

Over the past year, following discussions with University and college Union (UCU) colleagues, we have confirmed our [commitment](#) to ensure all regular scheduled teaching is undertaken by staff on employment and not casual contracts.

We continue to monitor external funding streams and look to see where we can transfer fixed-term contracts to open-ended contracts where there is some certainty the funding is likely to continue.

Following feedback from several departments we will be creating a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) employment contract at Grade 7. This is to recognise the type of work some departments have told us they need postgraduate research students to carry out and will be available for departments to use from September 2019. This builds on the constructive work we have previously undertaken with our UCU colleagues to agree the employment status and terms of employment for our PGRs who undertake teaching alongside their studies.

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