



SENATE MEMBERS' HANDBOOK
2021–22

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The information contained in this handbook was correct at the time of publication.

Any changes approved over the course of the academic year will be reflected on Aberystwyth University's Governance website – <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance>. Consequential changes of a minor nature may be introduced without reference to an approving body.

A new version of this handbook will be produced on at least an annual basis.

This document is also available in Welsh. / *Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg.*

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UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

CHARTER, STATUTES AND ORDINANCES

Aberystwyth University, founded in 1872, is a chartered institution whose Royal Charter was first awarded in 1889, and currently functions under its most recent Supplemental Royal Charter as revised in 2018. The University is also a registered charity (number 1145141).

The University meets its many obligations and accountabilities through the following governance structure:

1. The Charter defines the objects, powers and officers of the University, and principles such as the power to teach and examine.
2. The Statutes comprise the rules concerning statutory bodies, members and officers of the University institution.
3. The Ordinances concern how the University is governed within the general framework of the Charter and Statutes.

Any proposals to revise the Charter and Statutes need approval from the Privy Council. However, Aberystwyth University's Council can itself approve changes to the Ordinances.

GOVERNANCE AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Council, as Aberystwyth University's governing body, and Senate, being the body responsible for academic governance, are both supported by a number of sub-committees.

While the number of committees which report to Council and Senate have been greatly reduced over recent years, the governance and committee structure is continually reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate structure is in place to meet changing demands.

The academic sub-committee structure which reports up to Senate was reorganised for the 2018–19 academic year in order to put a greater emphasis on academic quality and enhancement.

A copy of the governance committee structure can be found in the appendices.

2018–23 STRATEGIC PLAN

On 23 March 2018, Council formally approved Aberystwyth University's 2018–23 Strategic Plan.

For this five-year period, the University has set itself five core objectives as part of a Strategic Plan which is both ambitious and realistic; emphasising our commitment to excellent education, student experience and research with impact.

Electronic copies of the 2018–23 Strategic Plan can be downloaded at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/strategicplan/>. The Governance Department can also arrange paper copies for Council members upon request.

ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY'S COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Aberystwyth University's Supplementary Royal Charter, the Council is "the supreme governing body of the University" and is "determining the University's strategic direction and for the conduct of the University's financial, administrative and other affairs, in accordance with its objects". It has the custody and regulates the use of the University's common seal, and the Council's constitution, powers and functions are provided by Statute.

STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Aberystwyth University's Council has adopted a Statement of Primary Responsibilities, which has been incorporated into Ordinance. A copy of this Ordinance can be accessed at:

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance>.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Chair of Council

The Chair is responsible for the leadership of Council and its meetings, ensuring that Council discusses those issues which it needs to discuss and that it works effectively, in line with University's governing documents and any procedures laid down for the conduct of Council business. Additionally, the Chair must have a constructive and challenging working relationship with the Vice-Chancellor. While both their roles are distinct, the relationship must be mutually supportive and incorporate the required checks and balances.

Externally, the Chair represents the Council at meetings of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) and the Chairs of Universities Wales (ChUW).

Deputy Chair of Council

The Deputy Chair of Council is the governing body's Senior Independent Member – a role which includes providing a sounding board for the Chair of Council to sense check the effectiveness of governance arrangements, and serving as an intermediary for the other Council members where necessary. The Deputy Chair also chairs the Remuneration Committee.

Where a vacancy occurs for a Deputy Chair of Council, Council shall invite nominations with a view to electing an individual already serving on Council as an independent member.

Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is the chief academic, administrative and accounting officer of the University, with general responsibility to the Council for maintaining and promoting the efficiency and good order of the University. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the executive management of the University on a day-to-day basis, and is thereby responsible for implementing Council decisions, for consulting with staff and students as appropriate, and presenting proposals to the Council. The Vice-Chancellor is also the University's 'Accountable Officer' and is responsible for ensuring that the terms of the Financial Management Code between the University and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) are met and that that public funds are used for the purposes for which they have been allocated.

An appointment to the role of Vice-Chancellor is made by Council on the recommendation of a Committee of Selection established to consider suitable candidates.

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

The Royal Charter allows for the appointment of one or more Deputy Vice-Chancellors by Council, who shall perform such functions as the Vice-Chancellor may delegate to them. At present, Council has not appointed any individuals to this role.

Pro Vice-Chancellors

The Council can appoint Pro Vice-Chancellors – the number of which shall be determined by Council on the

recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor. They are appointed for an initial term of office of up to five years (the first year being probationary). The Vice-Chancellor may recommend to the Council an extension to the term of office of a Pro Vice-Chancellor at any point during their term, subject to a maximum possible term of eight years. Pro Vice-Chancellors shall perform such functions of the Vice-Chancellor as shall be delegated to them by the Vice-Chancellor.

Clerk

The role of Clerk to Aberystwyth University's Council is appointed by the Council itself and is undertaken by the University Secretary. The Clerk has a key role in ensuring the efficient conduct of Council business: he / she works closely with the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor, gives independent advice to all members of Council, and must alert Council members should they be in danger of exceeding their powers or acting in contravention of the governing documents. The Clerk also ensures that all documentation provided for members of the governing body are concise and appropriate.

The University Secretary has oversight of the governance committee structure as well as undertaking the role of clerk to all key governance committees.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of Council is defined in Statute 5, with members derived from six different categories:

1. Ex officio Members (The Chair of Council, the Deputy Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor, and one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors or Pro Vice-Chancellors).
2. Student Members (Two students elected from and by the Students' Organisation).
3. Independent Members (Up to nine members, not being members of the staff, appointed by the Council in accordance with the Ordinances).
4. Senate Members (Up to two members of academic staff elected by and from the Senate).
5. Staff Members (One member elected by and from the staff other than the Academic Staff).
6. Co-opted Members (Such other individuals (not being members of staff, students, nor student representatives of the University) as may be co-opted by the Council. Co-opted members shall not be entitled to vote at meetings of Council, and shall not be registered as Trustees of the University).

The University's Statutes define Independent Members as those individuals who are not members of staff or students of the University. This category also includes the following ex-officio members of Council: Chair of Council, and Deputy Chair of Council. Independent Members are required to be in the majority for meetings of Council and a number of key sub-committees to be quorate.

All Council members have equal status on the governing body, and are registered as Trustees of the University unless otherwise noted.

The Council's membership for the 2020–21 academic year can be found at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/>.

ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY'S SENATE

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Aberystwyth University's Supplementary Royal Charter, the Senate is "the academic authority of the University and shall be responsible to the Council for the academic functions of the University in teaching and research and the regulation of the academic interests of the students". The Senate's constitution, powers and functions are provided by Ordinances.

STATEMENT OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Aberystwyth University's Senate has adopted a Statement of Primary Responsibilities, which has been incorporated into Ordinance. A copy of this Ordinance can be accessed at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/>.

RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNCIL

Constitutionally, the Senate reports to the Council. However, the former has considerable authority to lead on academic and student welfare matters with minimal reference to Council. Nevertheless, as the body responsible for the University's financial management, reputation and strategy, Council will ultimately be required to approve some matters already endorsed by the Senate. In such instances, the views of Senate members will be forwarded to Council and taken into account by the governing body.

ACADEMIC QUALITY

As the body with responsibility for academic governance at Aberystwyth University, Senate oversees the implementation of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education at the institution. Much of this work is taken forward on behalf of the Senate by the Academic Board, which in turn delegates certain tasks to its own committees. Senate is informed of activities in this area by means of reports at each meeting from the Academic Board, which brings forward any matters identified for further consideration by the academic governing body as necessary.

The Senate considers an annual report on Academic Quality processes at the University, for recommendation to Council, which in turn forms the basis of the annual declaration on Academic Quality which must be made by the Council.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Chair of Senate

As chief academic, administrative and accounting officer of the University, the Vice-Chancellor is *ex-officio* Chair of Senate. Should the Vice-Chancellor be unable to attend a meeting of Senate, the role of Chair of Senate shall be filled by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor or a Pro Vice-Chancellor present, as nominated by the Vice-Chancellor, shall preside. In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor and any Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor, the members then present shall choose one of themselves (not being a student) to preside at that meeting.

Clerk

The University Secretary, as Clerk to the Council, also undertakes the role of Clerk to the Senate. As Clerk to the Senate, the University Secretary works with the Vice-Chancellor to ensure that the academic governing body's business is discharged effectively.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of Senate is set out in Ordinance, with members divided between *ex-officio* and elected categories.

The Senate's current membership is set out at the following website, which is regularly updated to reflect changes: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/senate/>.

Eligibility to stand for election as a departmental representative on Senate and to vote in such elections is restricted to academic members of staff. At its meeting on 10 June 2015, Senate resolved that academic status for the purposes of these elections be defined as “those members of staff on an academic contract, as defined by the relevant HESA Academic Employment Function records in the Human Resources records system, whose substantive roles at the University are as employed academics”.

The Senate's membership for the 2020–21 academic year can be found at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/>.

STANDING ORDERS

The Senate's Standing Orders were reviewed during the 2017–18 academic year, with the revisions formally approved by the governing body on 06 July 2018. The current version can be accessed at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/>.

Separate Standing Orders have been agreed for Senate's sub-committees – the University's academic committees – and a copy can be found on the above website.

THE ROLE OF A SENATE MEMBER

The following section outlines various procedures, policies and principles to which members of Aberystwyth University's Senate should adhere.

APPOINTMENTS TO SENATE

Individuals are appointed to Senate either to serve in an *ex-officio* capacity or are elected by specific constituencies. The processes followed to appoint representatives from academic departments or the non-academic staff representatives are outlined in specific Ordinances (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/governance/>). These Ordinances also provide information on the permissible terms of office (usually three years, renewable for one further term) and provisions for any alternate members.

APPOINTMENTS AS SENATE MEMBERS ON COUNCIL

Two Senate members on Council are elected by and from the Senate membership itself. Individuals are elected to serve for three years in the first instance, and can be re-elected in accordance with the processes outlined in the relevant Ordinance.

APPOINTMENTS TO SENATE'S SUB-COMMITTEES

Individuals are primarily appointed to serve on the Academic Board and its sub-committees in an *ex-officio* capacity. This ensures that the most appropriate individuals are present at meetings to ensure that business can be carried out effectively. Other members are appointed as relevant by the Academic Faculties and Departments as their representatives. There are no Senate members who are directly elected by the academic governing body to serve on these sub-committees. The different working practices of the sub-committees are reflected in the separate Standing Orders which have been agreed for their operation.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There is a general obligation on all members of the Senate, as well as University staff members in general, to disclose at the earliest practicable opportunity any financial or other beneficial interests (including substantial gifts or hospitality) that they or a family member or any organisation in which they hold office or employment, may have in any transaction under consideration between the University and a third party. The circumstances in which such a declaration is appropriate are:

1. When the Senate or any of its committees has business which is materially relevant to those interests; or
2. When in the course of a meeting the member becomes aware that they have or may have a financial or other beneficial interest in the specific item of business to be discussed or decided upon.

For Senate members, the proper manner of indicating an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is to inform the Chair or the Clerk in advance of the meeting or to draw it to the attention of the Chair of the meeting once the member becomes aware of a conflict during the course of discussion. The individual should then withdraw and take no further part in the subsequent discussion. Members may not participate in decision-making processes that affect their own interests.

Members are not considered to have a pecuniary interest in matters under discussion merely by virtue of being a member of staff or student of the institution.

CORPORATE DECISION MAKING

Senate should exercise its duties in a corporate manner. Should any member of Aberystwyth University's Senate have any queries or concerns about the way in which a decision was reached or any other aspect of

the University's governance, management or practices, these should be discussed in the first instance with either the Chair of Senate, the Chair of Council, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, or with the Chair of a relevant sub-committee. The Clerk to Senate can provide preliminary advice in confidence to members as necessary.

SUPPORT FOR SENATE MEMBERS

THE UNIVERSITY SECRETARY AND THE GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT

Based within the Governance Department, the University Secretary and the Governance Department support the University's main committees and provides advice to members on their responsibilities.

Both the University Secretary and Governance Administrator can provide practical guidance and assistance to Senate members. Members are also advised to inform the University Secretary in advance should they wish to raise any matter during a Senate meeting – this ensures that the agenda can be prepared accordingly.

INDUCTION AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

Newly appointed members to Aberystwyth University's Senate receive an induction which is tailored to their individual requirements. As a minimum, each new member will receive a copy of this handbook.

DISTRIBUTION OF PAPERWORK

All paperwork for Senate meetings is made available via the University's SharePoint server. Historic papers are also available via SharePoint, and can be accessed at <http://sharepoint.aber.ac.uk>. You will require your Aberystwyth University username and password to access the SharePoint server, and the Governance Department can provide you with access privileges. Provision is also made to provide Senate paperwork in a format suitable for use on an iPad or other tablet device.

Paper copies can be provided to members as necessary, although electronic distribution is preferred for reasons of cost, environmental impact and speed of distribution. The University Secretary will discuss your individual requirements.

USEFUL CONTACTS

GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT

University Secretary

Geraint Pugh

gop2@aber.ac.uk / 01970 62 2114

Governance Administrator

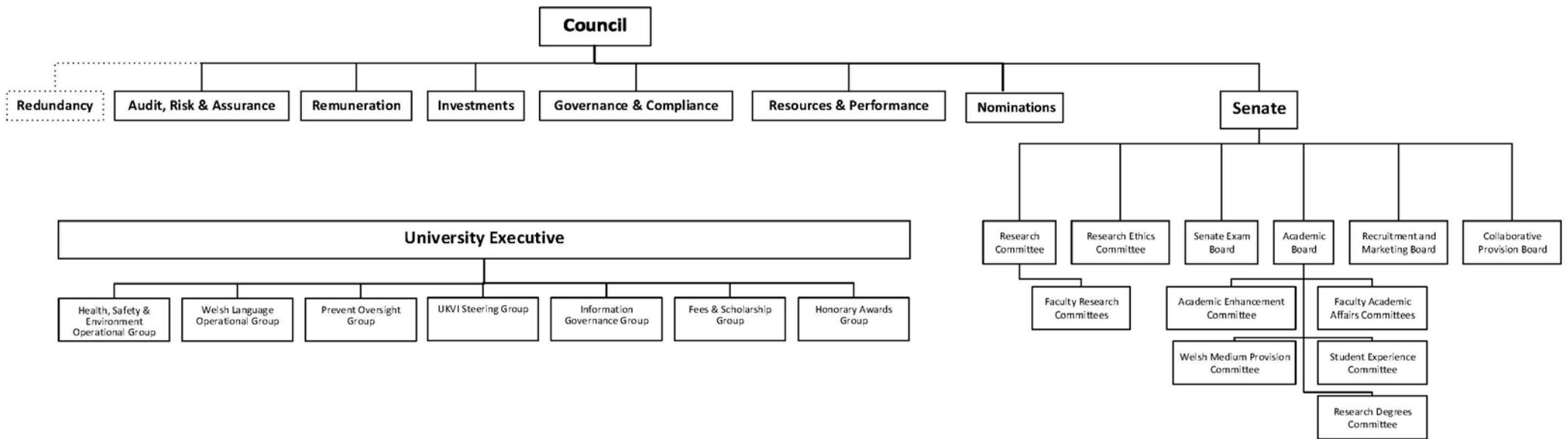
Helen Wyn Davies

hhd@aber.ac.uk / 01970 62 2048

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Where possible, please use the address secretary@aber.ac.uk for general e-mail correspondence so that they can be dealt with at the earliest opportunity by either the University Secretary or Governance Administrator.

ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY'S GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following details a number of acronyms and abbreviations which are used both at Aberystwyth University and in the Higher Education sector more generally. This list is not exhaustive.

ABS	Aberystwyth Business School
ADPC	Academic Development and Planning Committee
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AIEC	Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus
APC	Academic Progress Committee
AR	Academic Registry
ARAC	Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
AU	Aberystwyth University
AUM	Aberystwyth University Mauritius
AUPAS	Aberystwyth University Pension and Assurance Scheme
AUSU	Aberystwyth University Students' Union
BBSRC	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
BIS	Business Information Systems (at AU); or Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CADARN	Collaborating and Developing across Regional Networks
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CDSAP	Centre for the Development of Staff and Academic Practice
ChUW	Chairs of Universities Wales
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CUC	Committee of University Chairs
CWPSI	Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion
DARO	Development and Alumni Relations Office
DGES	Department of Geography and Earth Sciences
DLHE	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education
DSA	Disabled Student Allowance
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
EDD	Estates Development Department
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FBPS	Faculty of Business and Physical Sciences
FE	Further Education
FELS	Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences
FoI	Freedom of Information Act
FRS	Financial Reporting Standard
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GCC	Governance and Compliance Committee
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERA	Higher Education Role Analysis
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate (or Inspector)

HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health, Safety and Environment (Committee / Department)
HTS	Highly Trusted Sponsor status
IBERS	Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IIP	Investors in People
IMLA	Information Management, Libraries and Archives
InterPol	Department of International Politics
IPD	Institute of Professional Development
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IS	Information Services
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee (of the Higher Education Funding Councils)
KESS	Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSW	Learned Society of Wales
NAO	National Audit Office
NDPB	Non-departmental public body ('quango')
NERC	Natural Environment Research Council
NSS	National Student Survey
NUS	National Union of Students
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator
OU	Open University
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
QE	Quality Enhancement
QR	Quality-related research
R&D	Research and Development
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RBI	Research, Business and Innovation
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RPC	Resources and Performance Committee
RS	Royal Society
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SELL	School of Education and Lifelong Learning
SES	Sports and Exercise Science
SLC	Student Loans Company
SLTA	Student-led Teaching Awards
SORP	Statement of Recommended (Accounting) Practice
SSCC	Student-Staff Consultative Committee
TFTS	Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies
THE	Times Higher Education
TRAC	Transparent Approach to Costing

UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association
UCU	University and College Union
UG	Undergraduate
UnisWales	Universities Wales
UoA	Unit of Assessment
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
USS	Universities Superannuation Scheme
UUK	Universities UK
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WA	Widening Access
WEFO	Wales European Funding Office
WG	Welsh Government
WP	Widening Participation

POLICIES ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Aberystwyth University is committed to promoting equality and diversity, and endeavours to be inclusive, valuing the diversity of its staff, students and community

Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan

On 27 March 2020, Council approved Aberystwyth University's 'Strategic Equality Action Plan 2020–24'. This document – which sets out five objectives – can be accessed at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/>.

Equality Video

An equality video has been produced to promote Aberystwyth University's Equality Scheme and demonstrate that equality and diversity are at the heart of the University's inclusive and supportive learning and working environment in which dignity, respect and co-operation are essential to all our activities. Senate members are encouraged to watch this short video, which is available at:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/video/>.

Diversity in the Workplace

The 'Diversity in the Workplace e-Learning Course' provides mandatory training for all members of Aberystwyth University Staff.

The training is provided by means of an online tutorial. This tutorial can be done in one sitting (about 30 minutes) or in 'bite-sized' chunks at your convenience. The quiz contained within the programme must be completed for you to finish the training.

You will require your Aberystwyth University e-mail log-in details to access the e-Learning course, which is available at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/diversitycourse/>.