

Exception Request

Please use this document to demonstrate your measurable progress on Gender to facilitate your Exception Request to bring in additional areas of ED&I at Initial Accreditation Stage.

Target 1 Diversity Category		
Gender		
What was the specific Outcome did you hope to achieve when you set out in <i>(insert year)</i> year? (Should be at least 5 years ago)		
<i>Please provide a short summary of your Objectives and when you began your Gender Diversity journey (max. 100 words)</i>		
What targets did you set yourself in <i>(insert year)</i>? (please use bullet points)		
<i>Please reference any internal analyses carried out, referencing any relevant internal data for example your gender demographics at the time, recruitment statistics, employee engagement feedback/metrics, or employee exit data at that stage. (max. 400 words)</i>		
Short and Long-Term Impact - Who benefited? (please use bullet points)		
<i>Who benefited - for example which group of employees and/or customers and how did they benefit as a result of your Gender Diversity journey to date? (max. 400 words)</i>		
What did you learn? (please use bullet points)		
<i>What went well, and what might you have done differently based on your learning above? (max. 400 words)</i>		
How does your organisation compare to your sector averages / are you above average in your sector?		
<i>Please refer to Gender Diversity data (max. 200 words)</i>		
SMART Action plan		
<i>Please list below the key actions specific to Gender Diversity that led to you being at the current stage of progress and who in your organisation and who was responsible. SMART actions are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (Maximum of 8 actions).</i>		
Action	When was this actioned?	Who led this action?
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		
5)		
6)		
7)		
8)		

EXAMPLE

Target 1 Diversity Category

Gender

What was the specific Outcome did you hope to achieve when you set out in *(insert year)* year?
(Should be at least 5 years ago)

Please provide a short summary of your Objectives and when you began your **Gender Diversity** journey (max. 100 words)

We set ourselves a target to balance our Gender Diversity at all levels of the Organisation. Our starting point was a large imbalance at all leader levels. Our North Star Goal was, and is, to achieve parity at all levels. This is still a work in progress, but we have made great strides. We will continue the work on Gender but want to incorporate Ethnicity into our Diversity Mark submission. We have many nationalities in our workforce, especially at non-managerial levels and want to ensure we are actively working on building opportunities for all our workforce.

What targets did you set yourself in *(insert year)*? (please use bullet points)

Please reference any internal analyses carried out, referencing any **relevant internal data** for example your gender demographics at the time, recruitment statistics, employee engagement feedback/metrics, or employee exit data at that stage. (max. 400 words)

Our overall results are as follows, from our 2019 baseline to our current 2024 picture:

Board Level: No Change, 80% male, 20% female

Senior Management: Increase from 90/10 male/female to 70/30 male/female

Line Managers: Increase from 85/15 male/female to 75/25 male/female

Graduates and/or Apprentices: Increase from 80/20 male/female to 65/35 male/female

All Other Roles: No change, 68/32 male/female

We have therefore achieved against our original targets as follows:

- 20% increase in females at Senior Management level, target 15%
- 10% increase in females at Line Management level, target 10%
- 15% increase in females in our junior intake, target 12%

Key learnings were around recruitment, both internal and external. We worked with external recruiters to understand why we were below average on female junior intake. Our marketing material was very male oriented and our presence at recruitment fairs was predominantly male. Once we changed both we could see more female applicants.

For internal recruitment we used an anonymous questionnaire to female employees to ask why they wouldn't apply for promotions. We asked those who would be interested in follow-up discussions to contact us. We held small working group, were able to identify some key blockers around flexible working and support for new leaders. We have now introduced more visible flexible working policies as well as mentoring programs, open to all who are interested in progressing within the organisation. We have also:

- Prioritised diversity and inclusion over the last 3 years; it is on the agenda at board level, is visible to all Employees via reports and events
- Scored well in the D&I question with respect to gender in our employee engagement survey at 85.1 and would now like to focus on other ED&I areas
- Our Organisational culture has shifted such that everyone in our organisation (from entry level to board) understands and values the importance of Diversity and Inclusion and is invested in our success
- We have made significant progress in growing a more positive gender balance across our organisation:

- Our Graduate Intake has increased from 20% to 35% female in the last 5 years. This is higher than the Industry average of 25% and surpassed our target
- Our Female Line Management levels have increased from 15% to 25% female in the last 5 years. This includes Lead Engineers (regarded as Technical Management) as well as those with Line Management responsibilities. This is higher than the Industry average of 20%

Short and Long-Term Impact - Who benefited? (please use bullet points)

Who benefited - for example which group of employees and/or customers and how did they benefit as a result of your Gender Diversity journey to date? (max. 400 words)

As stated above, we achieved the following:

- Increased engagement with our female employees at all levels of the organisation. Using our questionnaires and working sessions to ‘dig deep’ we have made a demonstrable difference and we will continue this approach across all areas of diversity
- We surpassed our targets as set above:
 - Grow Female Graduate Intake by 10% in 5 years, we achieved 15%
 - Grow Female Senior Leadership by 8% in 5 years, we achieved 20%
- We were open in our communications; our strategy was communicated and includes the following:
 - Our purpose and how this links to our company values
 - Our gender equality/ EDI vision for the organisation and the practical steps we took to promote Gender Equality including:
 - Review of Recruitment policies and job advertisements
 - Graduate Fairs approach with marketing to include all genders
 - Interview process so that females were on all panels
 - This did and continues to link to our growth strategy
 - Our measurable objectives are listed above with growth over target for Graduate and Leader recruitment
 - We believe this has and continues to promote active and inclusive leadership
- We believe that we have also benefited as an organisation, we have been open in our external communications and marketing material, showing we aim to be a diverse and inclusive organisation. This has contributed to an increase in female applicants externally
- We reviewed our employee engagement survey results focussing on the Diversity & Inclusion question ‘How much of a priority is diversity and inclusion to senior leaders at this company?’ This scored 64.1 in 2019 and 67.2 in 2021 – we saw an uplift to 75 in 2023 and aim for 80 in 2025. Also, our D&I gender-specific question scored 85.1 in our most recent survey

Overall, we believe our whole organisation has benefitted from the work we have undertaken. We have made all employees aware of our strategy and the rationale behind it. Our leaders are aware of the importance of a diverse workforce and we will use our engagement survey to capture feedback and continue to engage our employees.

What did you learn? (please use bullet points)

What went well, and what might you have done differently based on your learning above? (max. 400 words)

What worked well:

- Being open with our employees and engaging with them to drive our conversations and actions
- Working with external experts on recruitment to understand our challenges
- Board and Senior Leader support was critical to our success, and we will have this approach across all our ED&I strategic work
- Setting clear targets; tangible detail was key to our success, knowing what we wanted to achieve
- Communication and marketing

One thing we might have done differently was to engage some of our longer-serving line managers earlier in the process to educate them more diligently on the ‘why’. This was a major culture shift for some, and we should have recognised and accommodated this to help them both understand and manage changes.

How does your organisation compare to your sector averages / are you above average in your sector?

Please refer to Gender Diversity data (max. 200 words)

Based on local surveys in our industry covering employee numbers and salary bands we have moved from below average to above average in numbers of female employees; see progress below for more numeric details. We made significant progress in growing a more positive gender balance across our organisation -

- Our Graduate Intake increased from 20% female to 35% female in the last 5 years. This is significantly higher than the Industry average of 25% and surpassed our target
- Our Female Line Management levels increased from 15% female to 25% female in the last 5 years.. This is higher than the Industry average of 20%

SMART Action plan

*Please list below the **key actions specific to Gender Diversity** that led to you being at the current stage of progress and who in your organisation and who was responsible. **SMART actions are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (Maximum of 8 actions).***

Action	When was this actioned?	Who led this action?
1) ED&I Board level integration	2019	CEO
2) ED&I Strategy Developed & Launched	Q3 2020	ED&I Leader
3) ED&I Strategy Implementation	Q4 2020	ED&I Leader
4) Data analysis project	Project began Mar 2020, ongoing	Head of IT
5) Employee led ED&I Gender working group focused with inputs from external research and work with recruitment firm.	April 2020, ongoing	Diversity Champion
6) Review data and survey results with key stakeholders (Board, HR, Staff Working Group, Management)	August 2020, ongoing	Diversity Champion
7) Allocate resourcing and budget for diversity working groups with a focus on recruitment activities, internal and external	Mar 2020, ongoing	FD, Diversity Champion
8) Draft strategy on Gender recruitment approach to be reviewed with all stakeholders and finalised, then sign-off on final strategy from CEO	October 2020	Diversity Champion + HR Director plus CEO sign-off