



Human Resources Policy Statement - HRPS8

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Human Resources Policy Statement HRPS8

Equality and Diversity Policy

General Statement of Equality and Diversity Policy for Staff and Students

This policy applies to all members of the Middlesex University community, including students, employees of Middlesex University and MU Services Ltd, and any individuals engaged in University-related activities such as visiting lecturers, contractors, and volunteers. The use of the term 'employees' or 'staff' applies to employees of Middlesex University and MU Services Ltd.

The provisions in this policy apply irrespective of where study or work takes place, whether it is on campus, remotely, as a home worker, or through a blended pattern combining both office and home based work.

The achievement of equality of opportunities and inclusion is central to the University's mission as a provider of higher education. Our aim is to foster and develop a wide range of skills and experience which cannot be found within any single group of students or staff. In the pursuit of our aims we seek to create a community in which diversity is valued and which both reflects and services the needs of the broader communities in which we operate.

General Policy

1. Middlesex University is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity for all and continues to formulate and implement policies and practices to this end.
2. In the provision of equality of opportunities, the University realises and accepts its responsibilities under the law. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment or education on the grounds of the nine "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Operationally the University aims to reach beyond legislative boundaries to provide equality of opportunity for everyone. Therefore, the University aims to proactively avoid any form of unfair discrimination in either education or employment.

Responsibility

3. Overall responsibility for equality and diversity within the University lies with the Vice-Chancellor. Members of the University Executive and senior management are responsible for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented in their areas of responsibility.
4. The Director of Human Resources or representative is responsible for taking any action on decisions relating to equality and diversity in employment matters, co-ordinating the monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and providing general guidance in relation to this policy.
5. Deans and Directors of Services are responsible for implementing the University's Equality and Diversity Policy and for taking action on decisions relating to equality and diversity in the staffing and operation of the academic programme.

6. The University will ensure that all staff and students are made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures. All employees and students of the University are responsible for ensuring that their actions are carried out in the terms of the general policy. They may be held personally accountable should any complaint arise.
7. The development and monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy is supported by the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team and the Director of Human Resources, who are responsible for developing and co-ordinating staff initiatives that will enhance diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion within the University.

Application

8. The general policy relates to all aspects of employment and academic life, including advertisements, recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of service, training, secondment, redeployment, benefits, promotions, grievance and disciplinary procedures, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, course validation and admissions practices. The University will consider equality and diversity implications when entering into contractual relationships with other organisations such as tendered purchasing contracts and collaborative programmes of study.
9. People not employed by the University but who are involved in the University's activities, such as visitors, clients, external contractors etc., are expected to operate within the terms of the general policy.
10. The policy applies to the treatment of existing as well as potential employees and students.

Implementation

11. Consultation with staff and students will be a necessary part of implementing the general policy and the specific policies and procedures.
12. Staff and students will be informed of their responsibilities in relation to promotion and implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures during their induction to Middlesex University and at various intervals during their employment or study.
13. Appropriate training will be provided to assist with implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy.
14. Advice on the implementation of the specific policies can be accessed through Human Resource Services.
15. The University will adopt the best equality and diversity practice in the light of both internal and external research and experience.

Complaints

16. Any complaint made with regard to inequality shall be dealt with under the terms of the appropriate complaints procedures, bearing in mind the safeguarding of

individuals.

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

17. In applying all parts of this Equality and Diversity Policy, the University will have particular regard to, and place significant weight on, the importance of freedom of speech within the law, academic freedom and tolerance for controversial views in an educational context or environment. Academic freedom means that staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or privileges, or the likelihood of their securing promotion or different jobs at the University being reduced.
18. The University will not do anything that amounts to a disproportionate interference with lawful speech and academic freedom. Where the implementation of this Policy would give rise to the potential for such interference, a proportionality assessment will be undertaken before any action is taken. Where there are concerns regarding the proportionality of actions taken under the Policy the matter may be referred to the Director of Human Resource Services or representative for guidance.

Statement of Equality and Diversity Policy as it applies to the Board of Governors

General Policy

19. The Board of Governors will ensure that its own activities fully conform to the University's statement of Equality and Diversity, by aiming to provide equality of opportunity across the nine "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Socio-economic status is an additional element that the University considers beyond the protected characteristics in attaining equality of opportunity.

Application

20. In considering its own composition, the Board will try to ensure that its membership embraces the widest possible variety of backgrounds and views, consistent with ensuring that the Board has the skills and experience necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

21. The Board will particularly take into account the application of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy in all aspects of the responsibilities relating to:

- the educational character and mission of the University;
- the oversight of the activities of the University;
- the appointment, assignment, grading, appraisal, suspension, dismissal and determination of the pay and conditions of the Vice-Chancellor, Clerk to the Board of Governors and senior staff; and
- the setting of a framework for pay and conditions of other staff.

Code of Practice 1: Middlesex University as an Inclusive Employer

Policy

22. Middlesex University is committed to becoming an inclusive employer. It is important that people from all groups in society are represented at all levels of employment. This is important both for the success and development of the institution and for the provision of role models. Employment policy at Middlesex University will strive to:

- eliminate unfair discrimination at each stage of the recruitment process and throughout an individual's period of employment;
- act positively, to redress discriminatory practices;
- develop patterns of work which encourage and enable the redress of institutional employment imbalances;
- ensure that all employees and all those acting on behalf of Middlesex University are aware of, trained in, and abide by the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Recruitment & Selection

23. All aspects of recruitment and selection will be conducted in accordance with policy and procedure.

24. Every member of staff will be required to complete the mandatory online Recruitment & Selection training in advance. Following this, they will be invited to participate in a recruitment and selection panel and will ideally attend further Recruitment & Selection training. Training that incorporates equality considerations will be provided online by the Employee Engagement and Development Team.

Recruitment of Ex-offenders

25. As part of its commitment to equality and diversity, the University undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against anyone who has disclosed a criminal conviction or revealed other information. It complies fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice and has a policy on the records to posts or programmes of study. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from studying or working with the University. This will depend on the nature of the programme of study or the employment and the circumstances and background of an applicant's offence(s). Guidance on assessing a criminal record is provided by the University in its DBS Policy.

Probation

26. Policy and procedures related to the probation period of new employees shall be conducted in accordance with principles and practices of the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Procedures for Promotion

27. All opportunities for promotion will be advertised.

28. All procedures for the promotion and career development of employees will be based on the objective assessment of the ability of an individual with respect to written criteria (for example, the job description and employee specification or agreed

general promotion criteria) in accordance with equality and diversity policies and practices.

29. The constitution of recruitment and selection and promotions panels should be in accord with equality and diversity policy and practices.
30. Promotion procedures and agreements will be reviewed periodically with the appropriate trade unions. Part of this review will ensure that they are consistent with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
31. Employees who feel they have been unfairly discriminated against may pursue the matter under the Grievance Procedure.

Training in Equality and Diversity

32. All new members of staff will be required to undertake the mandatory online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training during their probationary period.
33. Information about access to training and development opportunities will be available to all staff. Systematic and equitable criteria will be applied, and the value of the provision to the individual and the institution will be monitored.
34. Action will be taken in the allocation of resources for staff development and training to support people from under-represented groups. All staff will receive training on equality and diversity.

Career Development

35. Career development opportunities will be consistently available to all staff, including secondments (see guidelines on HRS Intranet), sabbaticals, ([Human Resources Policy Statement HRPS14 Sabbatical Leave](#)) and acting up posts.
36. In most cases posts, either temporary or permanent, will be advertised. Selection for such posts should be based on objective criteria, including job description and person specification, there may be exceptional circumstances when, because of urgent need, it is not always possible to advertise the post. This may apply in the case of 'Acting up' or Secondment arrangements. In such cases guidance should be sought from Human Resource Services and reference made to the University's Recruitment and Selection procedures or secondment guidelines.
37. Staff will be given the opportunity to participate on an equitable basis in training and education which supports career development.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

38. Employees who feel that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of a protected characteristic, in any disciplinary or grievance procedure will be encouraged to pursue the matter under the relevant section of the Grievance Procedure.

Patterns of Work

39. The University will develop patterns of work which are consistent with equality and

diversity policies and practices in relation to:

- Part-time work;
- Flexible working;
- Hours of work;
- Caring and parental responsibilities: [Carers Policy](#);
- [Dependency Leave](#); and
- Career break and return to work: [Career Break Policy](#).

40. The University will review and monitor working conditions in the institution to ensure that the working and built environment, and the conditions of employment do not limit the opportunity for employment or career progression for people who have a protected characteristic.

Equal Pay

41. The University has an [Equal Pay Policy](#) and is committed to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value for all of its employees and understands that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under UK law.

Feedback and Monitoring Procedures

42. The Director of Human Resources or representative will be responsible for monitoring all applications and appointment and promotion procedures and will provide reports to the University Executive Team (UET), the People Committee and the Board of Governors through the EDI Annual Review.

43. A record of Equality (including Harassment) complaints received, action taken and trend analysis will be made available to the University Executive Team, and the People Committee.

Code of Practice 2: Middlesex University as an Equality and Diversity Institution in relation to the Education of Students

Policy

44. The University is committed to ensuring that all students enjoy equality of opportunity during their studies at Middlesex and are free from any form of discriminatory practices by the institution or its members, as defined in the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Course Publicity and Student Recruitment

45. Course publicity will be disseminated in ways which ensure that it is brought to the attention of all sectors of society. This will include the active promotion of relationships with relevant local community organisations.
46. A general statement expressing the University's commitment to equality and diversity will appear in prospectuses and publicity material.
47. Throughout the process of admissions, selection criteria will adhere to equality and diversity guidelines. In particular, age, colour, ethnic origin, family responsibility, gender, marital status, maternity and pregnancy, nationality and race, religion, belief or sexual orientation, of the applicant will not form part of the selection process, including being referred to in questions at an interview.
48. The University is committed to promoting access to higher education for a diverse range of students. The University's strategies on widening participation and the development of varied pathways and modes of study into and through higher education are aimed at facilitating the inclusion of those students deemed 'harder to reach' or who may have previously been excluded. The University will seek to extend access by a variety of means such as through access courses and collaborative links, forms of part-time study, vocational pathways, non-traditional entry, accreditation of prior experience and learning and the use of access and hardship and related funds.

Student Systems and Monitoring Procedures

49. Online welcome materials refer to the University's Equality and Diversity Policy, including the complaints procedure, access to child care provision, relevant facilities for disabled people, and student disciplinary and complaints procedures. See [MyMDX](#).
50. Clear and accessible information will be made available online about the structures and systems of support available to students in relation to equality and diversity and the range of staff who will be available to help them should a difficulty arise.
51. Monitoring systems will be established for admissions, course development and review and student progression.

Teaching/Learning: Content and Methods

52. The content of modules and teaching/learning strategies will reflect, as appropriate, the needs of education in and for a diverse society.

53. Students will be given opportunities to discuss equality and diversity in the curriculum.
54. There will be increased flexibility in study programmes to meet the needs of a widening range of learners.
55. Language support will be provided, as required, for students for whom English is not their first language.
56. Leaders of all modules and programmes will ensure that the curriculum, pedagogy and treatment of students are consistent with the University's general Equality and Diversity Policy and Codes of Practice, subject to the overarching principles set out in the section 7 of this Policy ('Code of Practice 7: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment').

Code of Practice 3: Disabled Staff and Students

Policy

57. Middlesex University is establishing systematic programmes of change across the University, to empower students and staff who are disabled to achieve their full potential. The University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to staff, students and services. These adjustments apply where a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people. These provisions do not apply to the other equality strands, and are unique to disability. The Equality Act 2010 defines what is meant by the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The three requirements of the duty are in relation to:

- Provision, criteria or practice
- Physical features
- Auxiliary aids

Definition of Disability

58. A person has a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010, if that person has or had a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. However, Middlesex University acknowledges that a person is more likely to be disadvantaged by social and environmental factors than by any impairment they may have and will undertake practical and reasonable steps to remove these wider disadvantages.

59. Middlesex University is committed to setting up systems to break down any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in the life of the University.

Implementation of Policy for Staff and Students

60. Recruitment and admissions staff will be issued with guidelines on the admission of staff and students with all forms of impairment.

61. The Student Support and Wellbeing Services will provide information on academic resources and support systems available for students with disabilities.

62. The Student Support and Wellbeing Services together with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Education and Student Experience, Deans and Human Resource Services, will be responsible for providing information on physical resources and related issues for staff and students.

63. Procedures for Admission and Recruitment

- a. The recruitment of staff and selection of students will be carried out in accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy. Candidates will be selected on objective criteria to assess suitability. Issues concerning any support needed by a disabled student or member of staff will be dealt with subsequently.
- b. Students and staff with disabilities will enjoy the same equality of opportunity available to their peers however, it is not unlawful to discriminate in favour of a disabled person. In accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity

Policy, support systems, curricular development and information will be designed to be inclusive and not exclude individual students or staff who are disabled.

- c. If necessary and with their permission, the Chair of the Interview Panel will inform relevant staff of the support or emergency needs of disabled staff or students on the Campus.
- d. The Director of Student Life shall, with regard to confidentiality, monitor that the ongoing needs (as reflected in point (c) above) of students who are disabled are being implemented and embedded as appropriate.
- e. In cases where adjustments require assessment of contractual conditions, advice should be sought from Human Resource Services.

64. The University has produced a guide for managers on the [Employment of Disabled People](#) to help managers recruit and retain the very best employees, to recognise and benefit from the skills and experience disabled people can bring to the workplace and to assist disabled people to meet their full potential.

The Built Environment

65. Estates and Facilities Management Services and the Student Wellbeing Service will ensure that the built environment is monitored and undertake adaptations to meet the needs of staff and students with disabilities in line with our aim to be an inclusive university.

Complaints Procedure

66. Complaints will follow the same procedures as for harassment and discrimination where that is appropriate.

Code of Practice 4: Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Gender/Sexual Reassignment and Transgender, Gender Identity and Expression

67. The Equality Act 2010 legislation outlaws discrimination, victimisation and harassment in vocational training and employment on grounds of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief.
68. Middlesex University recognises the benefits a diverse workforce can bring to the workplace, and is committed to ensuring that all aspects of its employment practice and working conditions do not discriminate against particular groups of staff.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender/Sexual Reassignment, Transgender, Gender Identity and Expression

69. It is important to note that all students in higher and further education institutions are specifically included in the legislation.
70. Middlesex University values all its staff and students equally, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, sexual reassignment and transgender status. Through the implementation of its equality and diversity policies and procedures, it will ensure that recruitment; progression and promotion are based entirely on relevant criteria which do not include sexual orientation, sexual reassignment, transgender status, gender identity and expression.
71. Middlesex University is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with equal dignity and fairness regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or trans identity. Unlawful discrimination of staff or students on the grounds of the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment may lead to the University's Staff or Student Disciplinary Procedures being invoked, and may, for very serious offences, result in dismissal for gross misconduct or expulsion. Examples of unlawful discrimination may include homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and gender identity and expression harassment.
72. The University will provide a supportive environment for staff or students who wish it to be known that they are lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and those who identify as non-binary. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexuality or gender identity at the University. To "out" someone, whether staff or student, without their permission may constitute a form of unlawful harassment. Assumptions should not be made about the sexuality or gender identity of partners of staff or students.
73. LGBTQ+ issues will be included in equality training, and in the monitoring of complaints of harassment.

Gender reassignment and/or sexual reassignment

74. The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as 'where a person has proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex'. A trans person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. We prefer to refer to this as sexual reassignment as no change to the gender expression may take place.

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, protection remains for people undergoing gender/sexual reassignment from discrimination due to absence from work. Where a trans person is absent from work because of gender/sexual reassignment, the Equality Act 2010

provides that they should be treated no less favourably than if the absence was due to sickness or injury or another reason e.g. caring for a relative.

75. Staff and students undergoing gender/sexual reassignment will receive positive support from the University to meet their particular needs during this period. The Human Resources Advisor or Business Partner should be contacted for advice on operational issues regarding staff and for student issues the Student Support and Wellbeing Service should be contacted.
76. The University recognises that staff and students who identify as LGBTQ+ and those who identify with another gender expression or identity come from diverse backgrounds and will strive to ensure that they do not face unlawful discrimination, either on grounds of their sexual orientation or with regard to other aspects of their identity or expression including but not limited to, e.g. race, age, religion, disability, sex.
77. Middlesex University aims to create an environment in which all staff and students, whatever their sexuality or gender identity, feel equally welcomed and valued, and in which unlawful discrimination is not tolerated.

Religion or belief

78. Middlesex University celebrates and values the diversity brought to its student body and workforce through individuals, and aims to create an environment where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all its employees and students are respected. Through the implementation of the relevant equality policies and procedures Middlesex University aims to ensure that:
 - admissions, recruitment and selection are based entirely on relevant criteria, which do not include religious belief or non-belief, (except in the case of a genuine occupational requirement);
 - members of any religion or those who have none, are treated with equal dignity and fairness;
 - underrepresented groups in society are encouraged to apply for jobs;
 - where possible, appropriate services are provided to meet the cultural and religious needs of all employees;
 - the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is protected, whilst acknowledging that the law permits proportionate limitations to be imposed on the manifestation or expression of that right for the purposes of protecting the rights and freedoms of others.

Dress code

79. Middlesex University imposes no dress code on its employees unless a uniform is a requirement for the role. The University welcomes the variety of appearance brought by individual styles and choices. The wearing of items arising from particular cultural/religious norms, e.g. hijab, kippah, mangalsutra, is seen as part of this welcome diversity. There are limitations to the above with regard to health and safety requirements that take precedence and may mean that for certain tasks, specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing, etc., need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be sympathetically considered by the line manager, with the aim of finding a satisfactory compromise.

Religious observance

80. Middlesex University will ensure that all staff and students know that if they have special prayer requirements, they should notify their line manager or appropriate academic, who will provide information about easily accessible facilities either on campus or in the neighbourhood. Where there are none, the University will make reasonable efforts to provide a suitable space for prayer and washing facilities if required.
81. All staff, regardless of religious belief or non- belief, are required to work in accordance with their contract. Line managers should make every attempt to ensure that those whose religion requires them to pray at certain times during the day are free to do so. In addition, reasonable efforts to accommodate requests from those who require, for example, an extra hour at midday on Friday, or not to work beyond sunset on Friday, or even on a Saturday, should be made. Any weekend working arrangements should ensure that no one is forced or pressured to work at times when their religious beliefs forbid them to do so. Student matters in this area will be covered by the University's regulations.

Leave for religious festivals

82. By custom, holiday arrangements include a day off at Christmas and for Good Friday and Easter Monday. All of these are Christian festivals. In the interests of equality, those practicing other religions or none, have a right to book three days of their holiday entitlement on the dates of most significance to them. Further requests for holiday entitlement to be taken at times of religious significance will be treated sympathetically. The number of annual leave days overall will remain as in the contract of employment for all staff, of any religious belief or of none.

Extended leave

83. If a member of staff requests extended leave at a particular time for the purpose of going on pilgrimage, the line manager should attempt to accommodate the request. If the extended leave exceeds the annual holiday entitlement, the excess days will be unpaid leave.

Food requirements

84. Middlesex University will endeavour to provide foods that meet the religious and dietary requirements of its staff and students e.g., kosher, halal. It will do this in consultation with the relevant religious groups.

Coercion or bullying

85. Any attempt at coercion or bullying of others to comply with a particular belief system may result in disciplinary action.
86. Middlesex University, through its Equality and Diversity Policy, aims to ensure equal treatment of all staff and students, of any religion or of none. It is based on the principle that everyone has the right to their own belief system, but they have no right to force this on other people. If any member of staff or student feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy, they should try to resolve the matter by discussion and if that fails, take the matter up with their manager/course tutor or Director of Student Life or Director of Human Resources. If this fails, the relevant complaints or grievance procedure can be used.

Code of Practice 5: Unlawful Discrimination

Policy

87. The University is committed to a working and learning environment that is free from unlawful discrimination.

Definitions

88. Discrimination in the workplace or in the provision of higher education is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 recognises the following 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and pregnancy and maternity. Forms of discrimination include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and, in relation to the protected characteristics of disability, discrimination arising from disability and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
89. The concept of associative discrimination in the Equality Act 2010, which is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although this does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).
90. Discrimination based on association can occur if, for example:
- a student, whose child has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, is refused access to a graduation ceremony because of fears about the child's behaviour
 - an employee is overlooked for promotion because their partner has undergone gender reassignment
91. Perceptive discrimination is covered in the Equality Act 2010. This is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (although this does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).
92. Discrimination based on perception can occur if, for example:
- an employer rejects a job application from a white woman who he wrongly thinks is black, because the applicant has an African sounding name
 - a mental health and wellbeing officer refuses to work with a student because they believe the student to be gay irrespective of whether the student is gay or not

Racial discrimination

93. The Equality Act 2010 reflects the previous law on racial discrimination. Discrimination on racial grounds, that is discrimination on grounds of colour, race, nationality (which includes citizenship), or ethnic or national origins. This is defined in three main ways:

- a. Direct discrimination - This consists of treating a person, on racial grounds, less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same circumstances. Segregating a person from others on racial grounds constitutes less favourable treatment.
- b. Indirect discrimination - This occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage unless the provision, criteria or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.
- c. Discrimination by means of victimisation - this consists of treating a person less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same circumstances because that person has made a complaint or allegation of discrimination, or has acted as a witness or informant in connection with proceedings under the Act or has been involved in any other way in its enforcement, or intends to do any of those things.

94. Activities such as the following may constitute discrimination:

- assessment systems which consistently downgrade particular groups of students without proper criterion referencing and marking scales and
- preference expressed for particular candidates at interview prior to evidence being collected from the application forms and the interview procedures.

Sex discrimination

95. Sexual harassment has been defined under the law as 'less favourable treatment' and therefore a form of discrimination.

96. Students who experience harassment or discrimination in their place of education are referred to in the Act as follows: 'It is unlawful in relation to an education establishment to discriminate against a woman ... where she is a pupil of the establishment in the way it affords her access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford her access to them or by excluding her from the establishment or subjecting her to any other detriment.'

97. Men may similarly claim unfair discrimination in similar circumstances.

Disability Discrimination

98. The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, established the offence of discrimination against disabled people in employment, in their ability to access goods and services, or in letting or selling land or property.

Discrimination arising from disability

99. The Equality Act 2010 created a new type of discrimination – discrimination arising from disability. This replaces disability-related discrimination as currently found in the Disability Discrimination Act. This is in addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation provisions relating to disability.

100. It is discrimination to treat a disabled person in a particular way that, because of their disability, amounts to treating them unfavourably when the treatment cannot be shown to be justified. For this type of discrimination to occur, the employer, or other person, must know, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability.
101. Discrimination arising from disability can occur if, for example, a student with diabetes, carrying medication related to their condition, is refused entry by the University to an event with a no drugs policy – the University may be discriminating against the student unless the treatment can be justified.

Other forms of discrimination

Pregnancy and maternity

102. Protection to women/birth parents outside of the workplace from discrimination that arises as a result of pregnancy and maternity includes higher education. The application of this to the education sector means that the University must not refuse an applicant entry to a course because they are pregnant or ask that they leave a course because they become pregnant. The University will also need to consider arrangements for students to ensure that a woman/birth parent is not treated any less favourably because they are breastfeeding. Absence related to pregnancy and maternity must be taken into account by the University. In addition, the University should not penalise students who miss examinations or course work deadlines because of pregnancy and maternity including pregnancy related illness or appointments.

Responsibility

103. The Complaints Procedures are intended to help all members of the University deal with any incidents which they may encounter.
104. Human Resource Services will be available to give staff advice on how a complaint should be progressed. Student and Legal Affairs will give advice to students on how to progress a complaint.
105. Where discrimination has occurred and the victim feels fearful and unable to make a complaint, friends and colleagues may take up the complaint on the individual's behalf in the interests of the University as a whole.

Code of Practice 6: Harassment and Bullying

Policy

106. The University is committed to a working and learning environment that is free of intimidation or unlawful harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
107. Harassment and/or bullying are serious offences that may lead to the University's Staff or Student Disciplinary Procedures being invoked, for very serious harassment or bullying offences, dismissal for gross misconduct or expulsion could occur.

Definitions

108. The Equality Act 2010 outlines three types of harassment:
 - unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant, or violating the complainant's dignity (this applies to all the protected characteristics apart from pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership) ('harassment'),
 - unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, where the conduct has the purpose or effect referred to above ('sexual harassment'),
 - treating a person less favourably than another person because they have either submitted to, or did not submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

In deciding whether conduct has the effect referred to in the definitions above, each of the following must be taken into account:

- the perception of the person who is the subject of the alleged harassment;
- the other circumstances of the case;
- whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect.

Specific forms of Harassment

Sexual harassment

109. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. It occurs in a variety of situations which share a common element: the inappropriate introduction of sexual behaviour or comments into the work or learning situation. Often, sexual harassment involves relationships of unequal power and contains elements of coercion. However, it may also involve relationships among equals.

The following behaviours may amount to unlawful sexual harassment, if they satisfy all the elements of the legal definition outlined above:

- unnecessary and unwelcome physical contact, touching or patting;
- unwelcome sexual advances;
- sexual jokes;
- suggestive and unwelcome comments or gestures emphasising the sexuality of an individual or of a group;

- presentation of sexist material such as magazines and sexually explicit pictures;
- grossly offensive remarks regarding the sexual orientation or preference of an individual or a group;
- unwelcome requests for social-sexual encounters and favours;
- using computer networks for abusive social, sexual or racial messages;
- criminal acts such as indecent exposure, sexual or physical assault.

In relation specifically to sexual harassment, under the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, employers have a legal duty to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of employees. Responsibilities and the procedure for raising complaints are covered in the Dignity at Work Policy.

Sex related harassment

110. The definition of sex related harassment will apply to unwanted conduct related to the complainant's sex or that of another person. This form of harassment is different from sexual harassment. Individuals who are not subjected to the unwanted conduct themselves will also receive protection. For example, an individual experiences a work environment where sexual banter is commonplace, although it may not be directed at them or caused by their presence, but it creates an offensive environment for them.

Racial harassment

111. The following behaviours may amount to unlawful harassment related to race if they satisfy all the elements of the legal definition outlined above:

- derogatory name-calling;
- presentation of racist material such as comics and pamphlets;
- insults and racist jokes;
- recruitment of others to racist organisations and groups;
- ridicule of an individual for cultural differences;
- unfair allocation of work and responsibilities;
- racist graffiti or insignia;
- verbal abuse and threats;
- incitement to commit a hostile or offensive act on racial grounds;
- physical attack.

Third Party Harassment

112. Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic by third parties such as clients or customers. Please note that the law on harassment does not cover the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

113. University employees, workers or students who have a complaint against any other third party (such as a contractor) or a member of the public should speak with their line manager or HR Advisor/HR Business Partner; and students should raise the complaint through the students complaints procedure in the first instance. In order to address the complaint, it may be necessary to notify third parties and use their local complaints procedure or notify University Security and/or the police when complaints involve members of the public.

Victimisation

114. Victimisation occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so, or being about to do so.

Bullying

115. Bullying frequently involves the misuse of power by someone in a position of authority (e.g. where a lecturer, manager or supervisor is able to affect another person's job, career or grade). However, it may also occur between people of the opposite sex or the same sex, between colleagues, or between students, between staff and student(s) or through upward bullying by a subordinate of their manager or by a student(s) of staff.
116. The University will not tolerate bullying as it can demean and undermine staff or students (individually or collectively) through negative acts or persistent behaviours, which leaves them hurt, frightened, angry or powerless.
117. Differences in culture and attitudes may mean that the person alleged to have caused offence may not have done so intentionally. However, the effect the behaviour has on the recipient and how this behaviour would be regarded by any reasonable person, will also be an important factor in considering if bullying has occurred, as well as the intention of the alleged offender.
118. Staff and students need to be aware that not all bullying occurs face-to-face, it may be conducted by letter, electronically by e-mail or over the telephone and may include copying correspondence that is critical of someone to others who do not need to know.
119. For staff, there are other less direct (often unseen by others) forms of bullying such as unfair allocation of work and responsibilities or removal of the same without justification, monitoring work unnecessarily and intrusively.
120. Bullying can be an accumulation of small incidents, which have formed an underlying pattern of behaviour. However, a single occurrence may be serious enough to be dealt with under the University's Student or Staff Disciplinary Procedures.
121. Any difficulty in defining what constitutes bullying should not deter staff or students from complaining of behaviour that causes distress.
122. The University is committed to removing bullying as the effects on the recipient can cause a range of negative physical and emotional symptoms and problems, including stress.
123. The term 'manager' is used generically to encompass those who line manage staff as well as academic staff members and non-academic staff who provide support services to students. It should not be implied that bullying is only carried out by line managers. Students do not have managers but the principles outlined apply equally to students in their relationships with other students and members of staff.

Bullying is **not**:

- legitimate and constructive and fair criticism of performance or behaviour;
- action taken in response to misconduct or poor performance in a fair and consistent way in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, although staff and students may sometimes feel emotional and physical symptoms as a result;
- vigorous academic debate; neither is it: the action of a manager making reasonable but perhaps unpopular, work requests of their staff;
- the appropriate expression or manifestation of opinions and beliefs.

The test of reasonableness (i.e. the reasonable behaviour of a reasonable person) should be applied where differences in perception are apparent.

Responsibility

124. The Staff Complaints Procedure is intended to help all members of the University deal with any incidents which they may encounter. The Student Complaints Procedure is intended to help all members of the student body deal with any incidents which they may encounter.
125. The University undertakes to remove all graffiti in the shortest possible time.
126. Managers, colleagues, friends, union representatives and the Human Resources Service have a responsibility for ensuring that individuals do not have to suffer any form of harassment or discrimination, and that they are encouraged and supported in any legitimate complaint.
127. A witness of an incident of harassment may feel that the person experiencing it is unable to take appropriate action and may therefore give support as necessary and/or take action.
128. The steps which can be taken are outlined in the appropriate complaints procedures.

Code of Practice 7: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

129. The University will have particular regard to, and place significant weight on, the importance of freedom of speech within the law, academic freedom and tolerance for controversial views in an educational context or environment. Academic freedom means that staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or privileges, or the likelihood of their securing promotion or different jobs at the University being reduced. Whilst relevant to all parts of this Equality and Diversity Policy, these principles are also of significant relevance in relation to matters concerning curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
130. There is no specific exemption related to the concept of academic freedom in the Equality Act 2010, but there is reference to the curriculum. The purpose of this is to ensure that the Act does not inhibit HEIs from including a full range of issues, ideas and materials from multiple perspectives in their curriculum. The University will apply a rebuttable presumption to the effect that students being exposed to any of the following is unlikely to amount to harassment: the content of higher education course materials, including but not limited to books, videos, sound recordings, and pictures; and, statements made and views expressed by a person as part of teaching, research or discussions about any subject matter which is connected with the content of a higher education course.

Policy

131. Subject to the University's overarching commitment to freedom of speech and academic freedom outlined above, the University is committed to an education for all students on all programmes and modules with a curriculum which reflects a global outlook, drawing upon theorists from both western and non-western backgrounds. Programmes are to be designed that consider the learning and teaching methods, assessments, delivery and resources which reflect our student body and which do not unlawfully discriminate against students on the grounds of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or disability. The policy embraces the development of a multi-cultural curriculum with freedom of speech and thought in the context of scholarly dialogue.
132. The Equality Act (2010) provides the minimum legal requirements in the way in which an HEI provides education for students. Pedagogy, curriculum design and delivery are required to comply with the main provisions of the Act, including those relating to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. However, alongside the protected characteristics within the act considerations should be made in considering students entry routes and commuter students within the curriculum design.

Course Development

133. The process of review and validation shall include the consideration of how reflective the learning and teaching is of the student demographics. Curriculum should encourage the interrogation of traditional frameworks, models and assumptions in a scholarly manner.

134. The teaching and learning strategies of all programmes should provide opportunities to discuss the formation of judgements and the criteria used to assess value. Programme teams should review annually the modules to ensure resources, assessments, activities and materials are current and champion equality, diversity and inclusion.

Subject and Programme Delivery

135. Within all areas of teaching and in the provision of learning resources and other student support, the University will:
- recognise and support models of good practice in this or other institutions;
 - use material which recognises and values diversity, developing such materials where necessary;
 - promote teaching which promotes global thinking, acknowledging global theorists from western and non-western viewpoints.
 - encourage and support staff to review all learning support materials annually to ensure that their provision does not contravene the Equality and Diversity Policy;
 - develop programmes and new modules designed especially for disadvantaged groups;
 - establish a comprehensive range of programmes of study for disadvantaged groups to gain access to courses;
 - ensure that assessment procedures avoid stereotyping the abilities and potential of students and take account of disability:
 - where appropriate use anonymised marking; and
 - monitor the delivery of subjects and programmes with respect to this policy.

Complaints Procedure

136. The relevant Complaints Procedure should be invoked in case of any complaint.

If you are a member of staff, you should use the University's Staff Complaints Procedure. Students should use the Student Complaints Procedure [[University Regulations](#)].

This policy was approved by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 12 July 1993. It was reviewed and updated during 1997 and the revised policy approved by the Chair of the Human Resource Committee on behalf of the Board of Governors in February 1998. The Policy was further updated during 2000 and approved by the Human Resources Committee on 13 February 2001. The policy was further updated during 2003 and approved by the Human Resources Committee on 17 September 2003. It was reviewed in the summer of 2004 following consultation with staff, Executive Briefing Group and the recognised Trade Unions (NATFHE and UNISON). The revised version was approved by the by Executive on 28 October 2004 and by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on (15 November 2004). It is to be reviewed as/when required.

Revised May 2013 to incorporate legislative changes and in 2017 to incorporate Trans best practice, Revised to include current HR practice and approved by the EDI Committee on 19 May 2020. Revised 18 November 2020 in support of the Stonewall WEI. Revised in June

2021 to incorporate changes to job roles and blended working. Revised in August 2022 in support of the Stonewall WEI. Revised in September 2024 to incorporate the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, employers have a legal duty to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of employees. Updated in October 2025 to ensure policy is in line with Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom.

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