

## **University of Aberdeen**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

The University of Aberdeen is committed to creating a positive culture, based on tolerance and inclusion, for all its staff, students and visitors and to promoting the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion across all of its places of work and study.

This policy aims to ensure that individuals in the university community can reach their full potential through the freedom to be themselves, be authentic and to not seek to conceal elements of their identity to avoid unfair treatment. The University also will aim to promote equality, foster good relations between individuals and take a proactive approach to celebrating the diversity of its community. These aims will be achieved by maintaining a policy which promotes equality, diversity and inclusion in the selection, training, review and promotion of staff and in the selection, education and assessment of students. Visitors to and partners of the University will be welcomed and treated fairly.

The University is committed to providing a learning, working and social environment which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation, stigmatisation and all forms of harassment and bullying.

No student, staff member or visitor will be discriminated against based on an unfair distinction including:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Identity
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background
- Trade union membership

The University will celebrate and value the contributions made by individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds, seek to challenge inequality by encouraging the University community not to be bystanders to unfair treatment, and promote increased participation of under-represented groups wherever practical and reasonable.

The University recognises that individuals identify with more than one protected characteristic and that this intersectionality can be the basis of unfavourable treatment. The University commits to proactively analysing and understanding intersectionality and to take action to mitigate its negative effects where appropriate.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the University regularly and promoted throughout the University.

## **Implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 The University is committed to working towards creating a working and learning environment which is free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice.

1.2 This policy is intended to create a culture where all forms of discriminatory behaviour are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

1.3 The University will promote a proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion which includes embedding equality into all of its functions and advancing accessibility (including digital and on-line accessibility), trust and transparency.

### **2 Responsibilities**

#### **2.1 University**

- The University Court has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy. The Senior Vice Principal, the Equality and Diversity Adviser and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee have specific responsibilities in relation to compliance with legislation and promotion of equality, inclusion and diversity;
- Complaints of discrimination, bullying, harassment or unfair treatment are treated timeously and sensitively with appropriate confidential monitoring undertaken;
- Staff and students are made aware of the policy through a range of communication methods;
- Staff, students and visitors are treated with respect and dignity at all times;
- A Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is developed and implemented;
- This policy is monitored and reviewed regularly.

#### **2.2 Staff**

- All staff have a responsibility to comply with this policy and co-operate with their Line Managers in doing so;
- Treat colleagues, students and visitors to the University with respect at all times;
- Participate in appropriate training and wider learning opportunities to assist the University in meeting its legal and strategic commitments in relation to Diversity and Inclusion;
- Challenge and/or report behaviour which is discriminatory;
- Line managers will ensure the policy is communicated to their team and will promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

#### **2.3 Students**

- Treat other students, staff and visitors to the University with respect at all times
- Challenge and/or report behaviour which is discriminatory
- Engage in development/training opportunities where applicable.

#### **2.4 Visitors and Partners**

All visitors, contractors, subcontractors, service providers and any other persons associated with the functions of the University have a responsibility to:

- Treat staff, students and others with respect at all times
- Report and/or challenge behaviour which is discriminatory

### **3 Application**

3.1 The University will apply this policy to all areas of employment including:

- Recruitment and selection of staff;
- Promotion opportunities;
- Evaluation of jobs and grading;
- Training and development opportunities;
- Discipline and grievance procedures;
- Redundancy procedures;
- Dismissals.

3.2 The University will apply this policy to its relationship with students including:

- Access and admission to courses
- Delivery of Student Support Services
- The content of the curriculum and teaching styles
- Assessment
- Accommodation

3.3 Support for staff and students in relation to Diversity and Inclusion will be provided through:

- Senior Vice Principal/Director of People
- Equality and Diversity Adviser
- Staff Equality Networks
- Student Support Services
- Personal Tutors
- Staff Wellbeing Coordinators
- Mental Health Champions
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group
- Campus Trade Unions
- Human Resources
- Multi-faith Chaplaincy
- Heads of School
- Line Managers

3.4 Where staff or students have requirements or requests related to Diversity and Inclusion e.g. 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to disability (the University has a legal obligation to make reasonable changes to the workplace, working patterns or learning environments to ensure that disabled staff can fulfil their employment duties and students can engage with their studies) or accommodations made for religious observance, these will be dealt with objectively and supported where reasonable and practicable, taking all factors into account.

3.5 The University will take allegations of discrimination, prejudice, hate crime or any other relevant complaints seriously and will investigate such complaints, which may result in disciplinary action. Following investigation, allegations of discrimination, harassment or bullying may result in action being taken up to and including dismissal.

3.6 Staff or students who wish to make a complaint of discrimination, prejudice, hate crime or any other relevant complaint should, if appropriate, direct them initially to their Line Manager or Head of Student Support. Alternatively, other sources of support can be found in Section 3.3. Formal action can be taken under the Staffing Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace.

## **4 Positive Action**

4.1 The University may take 'positive action' where appropriate to increase the representation of people from groups that have previously been under-represented in the University community.

The University can take positive action in relation to individuals from particular groups if:

- they're disadvantaged in some way in relation to work or study,
- their participation in employment or training is particularly low, or
- they have needs which are different from other people who don't share their protected characteristic.

4.2 Positive action measures could include targeted advertising of jobs; including a statement in job adverts encouraging applications from particular groups; providing mentoring or coaching to address imbalance e.g. in senior management; additional interventions to support students e.g. where an attainment gap exists or to encourage applications from a cross-section of society.

4.3 Positive action is distinct from positive discrimination, which is unlawful in the UK.

4.4 Clear evidence is required to implement positive action interventions. Advice should be sought from the Equality and Diversity Adviser.

## **5 Related Policies**

Staffing Policy against Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace.

Religion and Belief Policy and Guidance (Student Issues)

Equality and Diversity Strategy

Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Reports

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Maternity/Flexible Working Policies

Employee Engagement Strategy

Whistleblowing Policy

Grievance Policy

Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic)

Public Sector Equality Duty Report (<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/vision-2271.php>)

University Outcome Agreement

University Gender Action Plan

<b>Title</b>	Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy
<b>Author / Creator</b>	Equality & Diversity Adviser
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<b>Audience</b>	All Staff and Students
<b>Related</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Workstream for Aberdeen 2040</li> <li>• BSL Action Plan</li> <li>• Disability Confident Scheme</li> <li>• E&amp;D mandatory training</li> <li>• Specialist Disability Advisers in Student Support</li> <li>• Outcome Agreement</li> <li>• Public Sector Equality Duty</li> <li>• Flexible Working Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Subject / Description</b>	The purpose of the Policy is to establish and promote the University's commitment to ensuring all staff, students and visitors are treated fairly and to creating and maintaining a culture which promotes equality and celebrates diversity.
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	Completed March 2018
<b>Section</b>	Division of People

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