

# Equality and Diversity Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Trustees
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<b>Responsible for implementation:</b>	Sabbatical Officers and Chief Executive
<b>Responsible for interpretation:</b>	Board of Trustees

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# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1.0 The Policy

City, University of London Students' Union's (The Union's) Equality and Diversity policy is the Union's central actor in assuring its compliance with the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

- 1.1 The Equality Duty requires the Union to *eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between persons with and without protected characteristics; and foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics.*
- 1.2 Beyond its legal obligations, the Union actively commits to promoting an inclusive environment for all people with whom it has dealings, including its employees, student members, trustees, and officers. The Union will oppose discrimination, inequality and injustice, and promote freedom of expression and the autonomous political decision-making of its members.

## 2.0 Resolutions

This policy commits the Union to the following resolutions, which will hold in perpetuity or until revised.

- 2.1 To convene a working group or sub-committee of the Board dedicated to the promotion of Equality and Diversity and protection of the Equality Duty in all the Union's dealings. The group will:
  - (a) Set the Union's Equality and Diversity Strategy, which will determine the Union's short- and medium-term concrete goals in terms of Equality and Diversity.
  - (b) Act as the Union's long-term guardians of Equality and Diversity by critically appraising the Union's other policies, activities, and default behaviours in terms of the Equality Duty.
  - (c) Consist of at least one Officer of the Union, at least one Lay Trustee of the Union, and at least three staff members of the Union, of which one will be the chief executive.
  - (d) Contain at least one member who will act as a dedicated Equality and Diversity reporting officer, to whom any staff or student member will be able to report policy breaches anonymously and confidentially.
  - (e) Work with the Union's other dedicated groups and projects including Race Equality and disability groups such as their purposes are compatible.
- 2.2 To develop permanent, comprehensive assessment and improvement mechanisms for regularly tracking and reducing:
  - (a) Rates of bullying and harassment among Union membership.
  - (b) Rates of sexual harassment among Union membership.
  - (c) Rates of discrimination and victimisation among Union membership.
- 2.3 In view of the Equality Duty's requirement to *foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics*, to install permanent, regular events, campaigns, and mechanisms for promoting, fostering, and measuring these relations within student membership and staff.

- 2.4 To develop mechanisms to regularly scrutinise the Union's performance in Equality and Diversity in the context of recruitment, promotion, and progression.
- 2.5 To routinely seek the support of external bodies in assessing and providing feedback on the Union's Equality and Diversity performance in all areas.
- 2.6 To hold to account its partners, customers, and the organisations it associates with including the University in upholding the Equality Duty in their dealings with the Union.
- 2.7 These resolutions are designed to allow the Union to accurately understand its own Equality and Diversity performance and improve upon it iteratively to the benefit of its student members and staff. The Union also resolves to review these resolutions and ensure their fitness-for-purpose in respect of circumstances at a frequency of no-less-than-annual.

### **3.0 Responsibility**

- 3.1 The Board, along with the Chief Executive, will hold ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the protection of the Equality Duty.
- 3.2 The Board, along with the Chief Executive, will be held responsible for ensuring that all staff members, student members, and any person with whom the Union has dealings will be given transparent and free access to this policy and offered dedicated Equality and Diversity training to aid in its understanding where necessary.
- 3.3 The working group or sub-committee of the Board dedicated to Equality and Diversity will be responsible for short- to mid-term implementation and the monitoring of the Union's Equality and Diversity work.
- 3.4 All staff will be responsible for protecting the Equality Duty in their own work.

### **4.0 Breaches**

- 4.1 If any staff member or student member feels they have become aware of a breach of this policy, they will be entitled to report this breach to the Equality and Diversity reporting officer anonymously and confidentially. It will be at the discretion of those who are affected by a breach, and those to whom they choose to disclose whether or not to apply further policy such as complaints or disciplinary proceedings, unless duty of care or those other policies necessitate action on their own terms.
- 4.2 If any staff member or student member feels they have become subject to bullying or harassment the Union will move to protect this individual from further harm unconditionally, subject to investigation.
- 4.3 If any staff member or student member feels behaviour, treatment, or systemic and routine action or inaction they are subject to violates this policy, the Union will support this member in making a complaint under the Union's complaints procedure, even complaints against the Union itself.
- 4.4 Any group or individual who deliberately breaches this policy will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. The provision of Union's services may be suspended while disciplinary proceedings are ongoing.

4.5 Any group or individual who, without intending to, nevertheless breaches this policy or commits acts of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or other prohibited behaviours under the Equality Act 2010 will also be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## 5.0 Definitions

This policy follows definitions in the Equality Act 2010. Some will be repeated here for clarity. Where no mention is made of a definition, usage will correspond with the Equality Act 2010.

### 5.1.1 Discrimination

The following characteristics are 'protected characteristics'. Any discrimination based on these characteristics will be considered unlawful.

- (a) Age
- (b) Disability
- (c) Gender Reassignment
- (d) Marriage and Civil Partnership
- (e) Race
- (f) Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- (g) Sex
- (h) Sexual Orientation

### 5.1.2 Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats one person less favourably than they would another because of a protected characteristic. (Equality Act 2010, Sect 13).

### 5.1.3 Indirect Discrimination

When a provision, criterion or practice applies to a person or persons with or without protected characteristics, and places or would place a person or persons with protected characteristics at a disadvantage and persons applying the provision, criterion, or practice cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. (Equality Act 2010, Sect 19).

### 5.1.4 Harassment

The Act outlines three types of harassment:

- (a) Unwanted conduct 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.
- (b) Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- (c) 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.

The subjective experience of the one who is harassed takes precedence when assessing whether or not harassment has taken place. Harassment may be deemed to have taken place on the grounds that the one who is harassed experiences given behaviours as harassment, even if the intention to harass is absent on the part of the harasser. In any disciplinary procedures, both the intentions behind given behaviours and the experience and understanding of these behaviours will be taken into account.