

## **Equal Opportunities Policy Statement**

### **Introduction**

1. The University is committed to equality of opportunity, the pursuit of diversity amongst its staff and student population and a supportive environment for all members of our community. It expects that all staff and students alike will contribute to and actively support the University in working towards the elimination of discrimination and harassment and the promotion of equality of opportunity in terms of access to the University's services, employment opportunities and support for students in their welfare and education.
2. This policy has been reviewed in response to and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

### **Policy Statement**

3. This policy is intended to assist the University to put this commitment into practice and to comply with all current and future legislation which relates to equality and diversity and to. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees, students, visitors and contractors do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.
4. We will promote a culture of respect for people and welcome diversity of origin, background and experience amongst our staff and student community as enriching the experience of all those who participate in the life and work of the University.
5. Striving to ensure that the work, teaching and learning environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities. The University has separate policies, which deal with these issues.
6. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, students, visitors or contractors are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the appropriate University disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation by a member of staff may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice, in the event that a member of staff is found guilty at a disciplinary hearing.

### **The Law**

7. It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in staff recruitment or employment, student recruitment, retention, assessment, progression or support because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national

origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

8. Discrimination also includes that by association or perception due to a protected characteristic.
9. **Associative discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership).
10. **Perceptive discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership).
11. All University policies are subjected to a process of monitoring for any adverse impact on protected characteristic groups by law. This is known as Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

### **Elimination of Discrimination**

12. The University is committed to the elimination of unfair discrimination on any grounds, whether this is direct in nature or arises out on the imposition of conditions or requirements which have a disproportionately adverse effect on particular groups which cannot be shown to be justifiable on any other grounds.
13. With respect to staff, selection criteria and procedures will be reviewed as appropriate to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and that no issues which are irrelevant to the needs of the post are considered as part of the selection or promotion process.
14. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disabled applicants who meet essential selection criteria in the opinion of the full selection panel will not be subject to assessment in competition with other candidates at the shortlisting stage and will automatically be invited for interview.
15. We are committed to an inclusive and supportive approach to learning, from pre-enrolment to graduation. We will continuously review both our programmes and facilities to ensure not only that there are no barriers to students with disabilities and those with additional support requirements but also that we anticipate and take positive action to meet their special needs.
16. Recruitment and selection procedures for students will ensure that individuals have fair access to programmes or study and all course elements. The

achievement of students will be not be influenced by matters which are irrelevant to their merits and abilities. Where appropriate the University will seek advice from those groups and communities whose needs it seeks to meet.

17. The University will endeavour to ensure that all of its statements are made in non-discriminatory language.

### **Elimination of Harassment**

18. All employees, students, visitors and contractors will be expected to conduct themselves with proper respect for others and for their lawful choices.

19. Procedures are in place to deal with complaints of discrimination and harassment, this includes third party harassment that is related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) by third parties such as students, visitors or contractors.

20. The University has a separate policy that explains what harassment and bullying is and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

21. If employees feel that they may have been discriminated against, experience or observe harassment and bullying, they can access the University's Staff Grievance procedure to make a complaint.

22. If a student, visitor or contractor feels that they have been discriminated against, experience or observe harassment and bullying they can access the University's Harassment and Bullying procedure. In some cases student related incidents may be directed through the Students Complaints procedure.

23. The University will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance, incident or complaint of discrimination or harassment and bullying that it upholds. Individuals will not be penalised for raising a grievance or complaint, even if their grievance or complaint is not upheld, unless the complaint is both untrue, made in bad faith and / or is deemed to be vexatious.

24. Employees should report any bullying or harassment including incidents by visitors, contractors or suppliers to their line manager who will take appropriate action.

25. Students should report any incidents to their Course Leader, Student Liaison Officer or Student Advisor who will provide advice on the appropriate course of action.

26. The University will not discriminate unlawfully against visitors using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the University or contractors providing goods, facilities or services on the University's behalf.

## **Promotion of Equal Opportunities**

27. The University will positively encourage members of under represented groups to approach the University whether it is for employment or education services. It will also investigate any reasons why such groups would not find the University a receptive and supportive environment and, where appropriate, will allocate resources and take remedial action.
28. All employees will be given equal access to career development opportunities and, where appropriate and permissible under legislation, employees of under represented groups will be given training and encouragement to achieve equal opportunity within the University.
29. In relation to students, the University will seek guidance from the professional and other bodies with expertise in areas in which it particularly seeks to promote equal opportunities and will liaise constructively with student representatives with specific responsibility for equal opportunity issues.

## **Responsibility**

30. All members of our community have a responsibility to adhere to the legal, policy and moral requirements embodied in this document and actively to promote the principles of diversity.
31. The Vice Chancellor is responsible to the Governors for the implementation of the policy on a University wide basis and for allocation of resources in connection with the policy.
32. The Academic Senate is responsible for adherence to this policy in all matters relating to the curriculum and programmes of study, including criteria for the admission of students.
33. Deans of Schools, Directors, and Heads of Departments are responsible for the local implementation of this policy.
34. The Head of HR Strategy & Personnel is responsible for the overall promotion and monitoring of this policy in all matters relating to employment.
35. The Head of Student Services is responsible for the overall promotion and monitoring of this policy as it affects students.
36. The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for ensuring that corporate objectives relating to equal opportunities are set and met. It is responsible to senior management for the creation of policies and for pursuing and monitoring of these policies.
37. Employees and students can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the University for any act of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Employees and students who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

38. This policy has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, and the promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, gender and disability and avoidance of discrimination to other equality groups related to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender reassignment.

## **Monitoring and review**

39. This policy will be monitored periodically by the University to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the University will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of employees, students, student applicants, and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the University will implement them.
40. The University will maintain staff and student records for the purpose of monitoring the success of its equal opportunity policy and the achievement of the targets which the University sets in these areas, with particular reference to levels or penetration of under represented or disadvantaged groups within the workforce (and its divisions and strata) and within the student body (and its main areas of study).
41. Priorities, responsibilities and timescales associated with the commitment to promote equality of opportunity will be specified in annual action plans to be drawn up by the Equality and Diversity Committee. These will be made available in the Single Equality Scheme.

## **Other Related Policies**

- Recruitment and Selection Policy (Staff)
- Race Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Policy on Harassment and Bullying in the Work Place (Staff)
- Student Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Recruitment and Admissions Policy (Students)
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Policy on Religion and Belief
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Staff Development
- Guidelines for Equality Impact Assessment

### Dissemination of and Access to the Policy

42. This policy will be published on the University of Bolton's website to be available to all staff, students and visitors. All contractors will be directed to this policy document through the University's procurement process.
43. The University will provide training in equality and diversity to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.
44. The University will provide mandatory training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work at the University to make them disability aware and help them understand their rights and responsibilities under this and related policies and what they can do to contribute to a teaching and learning environment free of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. The University will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints associated with alleged acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
45. The University will provide training opportunities for students to help them understand their responsibilities under this and related policies and what they can do to help contribute to a teaching and learning environment free of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

<b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b>	
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