EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to equality of opportunity, the pursuit of diversity amongst its employees and student population and a supportive environment for all members of our community. This policy sets out the commitment of the University, its Board of Governors, Vice Chancellor and senior management to promote equality of opportunity and work to eliminate any unlawful or unfair discrimination and harassment in the workplace or at study. It expects that all employees 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.

1.2 We are committed to providing equality for all irrespective of:

- Age.
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity.

Under the Equality Act (2010) these are known as 'protected characteristics'.

1.3. It is University practice for University policies to be subject to a process of monitoring for any pontifical adverse impact on protected characteristic groups, this is known as a "Equality Check" (Equality Impact Assessment).

1.4 This policy is in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Commitments

2.1 We will:

- Value diversity and promote equality of opportunity for all.
- Promote, respect and encourage good relations within and between groups.
- Aim to meet the different needs of different groups, as appropriate, whilst promoting shared values.
- Promote an inclusive and harmonious place of work and study where there is mutual respect and where harassment and bullying, intimidation or violence is not tolerated.
- Prevent unlawful discrimination and victimisation.
- Comply with our legal obligations.
- Take seriously and address any breaches of this policy.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Each manager is accountable for delivering the equality commitment in their area or responsibility. Human Resources (HR) also has specific responsibilities for supporting and guiding the implementation of this policy.

3.2 All employees and students of the University, those carrying out work or delivering services on behalf of the University and any partners, are required to comply with this policy. Everyone is required to promote a culture free from illegal discrimination and all forms of harassments and bullying. In addition, failure to adhere to these responsibilities under the law may lead to civil actions or criminal proceedings. Any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying will be investigated and may be grounds for expulsion of a student and for employees may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice – subject to the relevant process being followed.

4. Implementation of the Policy

4.1 The University's managers will ensure that:

- Employees and students are aware of the equality and diversity policies and the procedures for making a complaint.
- The implementation of all equality policies and schemes is monitored and progress reported.
- Equality is taken into consideration, where appropriate, in policies, strategies and procedures to ensure that they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate.
- Employees, students and their union representatives are provided with appropriate forums e.g. the Organisational Development, Equality and Diversity Committee and any adhoc committees, to discuss equality and diversity issues and raise any concerns.
- Procedures are in place for the fair appointment, promotion and development of employees, and the fair selection, teaching and assessment of students, free from unjustifiable discrimination.
- Managers and employees are provided with appropriate equality training and development including being able to undertake Equality Checks, where appropriate.
- Compliance with the equality policies is part of the job descriptions of all employees.
- Actions by employees to implement the equality policies and any single equality scheme will be reviewed as part of the performance review process.
- We seek commitments from our suppliers that they are taking steps to promote equality and eliminate discrimination.

4.2 Everyone is expected to support and implement the equality and diversity policies and ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to discrimination or harassment in any way.

5. Complaints of Discrimination

5.1 If a student, an employee or visitor believes that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation the University will take the matter very seriously. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the agreed procedures. Anyone who makes a complaint of discrimination will not be victimised and we will make every effort to ensure victimisation does not occur and that any complaints are dealt with promptly.

5.2 Students can raise the matter through the Student Complaints Procedure. Details are available at: https://www.bolton.ac.uk/student-policy-zone/

5.3 Employees can raise the matter through the University's Grievance Procedure. Details are available from: https://www.bolton.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/StaffGrievanceProcedure.pdf

5.4 The University has a separate policy relating to harassment and bullying which also sets out the specific procedure for seeking support or making a complaint in relation to harassment or bullying. The Harassment and Bullying Policy can be downloaded from: https://www.bolton.ac.uk/assets/Equality-and-diversity/Harassment-and-Bullying-policy-Oct-2013-2.pdf

6. The Student Experience

6.1 Admissions – all appropriately qualified applicants will be given equal consideration during the selection process and will not be discriminated against on any grounds referred to in paragraph 1.2 of this policy statement. We welcome and support people with disabilities, including specific learning disabilities and will make reasonable adjustments and endeavour to meet specific requirements.

6.2 Selection – entry qualification for courses will only include those that are necessary and justifiable. All selection processes will be thorough, carried out objectively, and will only address the applicant's suitability of the course requirements. Employees involved in the selection 4 process will be adequately trained to achieve this. Some students can be invited to an information interview before or after an offer has been made to identify any reasonable adjustments.

6.3 Curricula – it is the responsibility of the relevant Dean / Heads of School, Programme Leaders and all other employees who set and teach curricula and syllabi, to promote equality and to avoid bias and discrimination in these areas. All employees are encouraged to capitalise on opportunities to promote equality, where appropriate through the curricula.

6.4 Learning materials should be non-discriminatory. If discriminatory material is used to make a point, the discriminatory nature should be pointed out by the employee using the material.

6.5 Advice and Support - counselling and advice for students relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying is available from the student counsellor, harassment advisors and the Students Union Advice Centre.

6.6 Physical Environment – the University recognises it has an anticipatory duty to ensure accessibility across the campus and to ensure that this is effectively monitored.

7. The Employee Experience

7.1 Recruitment – all appropriately qualified applicants will be given equal consideration during the recruitment process and will not be discriminated against on any grounds referred to in paragraph 1.2 of this policy statement. A recruitment monitoring form will be used. Information gathered on this form will not be used in the selection process and will only be used for monitoring purposes by HR.

7.2 Selection and Promotion – selection criteria for all posts will be clearly defined and reflected in the Job Description, Person Specification or Further Particulars. Short listing and interviewing processes will be thorough, carried out objectively and without illegal discrimination. All employees involved in these processes will be appropriately trained in recruitment and selection and be aware of relevant employment legislation. Interview and promotion panels will aim to include both genders other than in exceptional circumstance, which must be referred to HR. The University welcomes applications from suitably qualified disabled people and will make reasonable adjustments to the selection process and to the workplace and working arrangements to accommodate successful disabled candidates.

7.3 Working Conditions – the University will listen to individual needs and will have discussions with employees to assist with any requests such as religious observance and caring for dependants in line with current policies, procedures and the relevant legislation.

7.4 Advice and Support – is available from HR and the Student Services and Experience Team. Specific advice for employees in connection with the learning, teaching and support of disabled students is available from the Disability Services.

8. Advertising and Information

8.1 University publications and advertisements for employees and student recruitment will state the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity. Language and images used in all publications, written and electronic material will not be discriminatory. The Student Prospectus will show clear entry requirements for courses and outline facilities available to students. Where further particulars are sent out to applicants, they should refer to the University's Equality and Diversity Policies.

8.2 Information regarding job vacancies will be circulated throughout the University and all posts will be advertised externally, unless there are justifiable reasons to do otherwise, which have been agreed by HR.

9. Publication of this Policy

9.1 This policy will be published by HR on the University website and drawn to the attention of employees, students and other interested parties.

Equal Opportunities Policy	
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