

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire Students' Union is committed to promoting equality and diversity for all of its members and employees. The students' union is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. This policy is intended to assist the Students' Union to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.
- 1.2 The students' union will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.
- 1.3 All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.
- 1.4 The policies and principles described in this document set out the University of Hertfordshire's (Hertfordshire Students' Union) commitment to equal opportunities and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- 1.5 In relation to student members this policy document runs concurrently with the University of Hertfordshire's Equality and Diversity Policy, and as such action may be taken under either policy.
- 1.6 Responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Trustees of Hertfordshire Students' Union.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this document the following definitions will apply:

**'Employee/member of staff':** a person undertaking paid work for Hertfordshire Students' Union on a full time, part time, job share, fixed term or temporary contract;

**'Student':** a person registered as a student of the University of Hertfordshire enrolled on a programme of study leading to a University of Hertfordshire award.

**'Member of Hertfordshire Students' Union':** a member as stated in the Union's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

## 3 Summary of Principles

- 3.1 Hertfordshire Students' Union is committed to equal opportunities and ensures equality of opportunity and fair treatment both as an employer and as a provider of a number of commercial and non-commercial services.
- 3.2 Hertfordshire Students' Union will seek to take all reasonable steps to:
  - 3.2.1 Ensure that all policies and procedures, practices and strategic planning reflect Hertfordshire Students' Union's commitment to equality and diversity.
  - 3.2.2 Create an ethos of fairness, courtesy and respect that embraces all members of Hertfordshire Students' Union, clients, visitors and contractors.
  - 3.2.3 Create an environment which is safe, accessible, caring and welcoming.
  - 3.2.4 Work constructively with appropriately recognised organisations, for example UH, NUS, ACAS and recognised trade unions, to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.
  - 3.2.5 Ensure that anyone (whether for membership or employment opportunities) and all students and staff are treated fairly on the "protected characteristics" of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and regardless of family or care

- responsibilities, socio-economic group, trade union activity or being an ex-offender (unless where required by law)
- 3.2.6 Ensure that all members of staff are trained and promoted on the basis of their abilities and the requirements of the job and are employed and retained in a non-discriminatory manner; (for further info see Recruitment and Selection Policy, Staff Development and Training Policy and Staff Handbook).
  - 3.2.7 Ensure fair treatment for everyone who is entitled to use any of the Union's services and facilities and seeks to eliminate any unfair treatment and unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Individuals may seek redress through the Union's Complaints and Grievance procedures. Hertfordshire Students' Union will respond effectively to all complaints.
  - 3.2.8 Develop opportunities in and approaches to, representation and employment that take into account patterns of under-representation with a view to encouraging, where possible, greater diversity within the Union's membership.
  - 3.2.9 Offer staff and students opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and approaches to meet their personal responsibilities.
  - 3.2.10 The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law, demographics and internal business requirements.

#### **4 Application of the Equality Principles to Members of Hertfordshire Students' Union.**

- 4.1 The Union aims to encourage members from all areas of the student body to become involved in the democratic process of Hertfordshire Students' Union.
- 4.2 The Union recognises the wide ranging diversity of tastes and interests held by the student body and seek to ensure that activities and entertainments within the union reflect such diversity.
- 4.3 The Union believes that all clubs and societies should be open and accessible to all students and that every member should be given the opportunity for involvement.
- 4.4 The Union will provide skill-based training for all Union officers and where possible for all students, subject to resources.
- 4.5 All members of staff and elected officers will attend the Equality and Diversity Training provided by the University.

#### **5 Application of the Equal Opportunities Principles to Members of Staff**

##### **5.1 Recruitment and Selection**

- 5.1.1 The Union will abide by the principles set out in their Recruitment and Selection policy. The Union aims to encourage applications from eligible applicants; to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and to appoint the individual who is best suited to the post. Selection will be on merit.
- 5.1.2 The Union will respond constructively to requests from applicants with disabilities for reasonable adjustments to be made to application and selection arrangements and, where an appointment is made, to premises and work arrangements. No applicant should be unfairly treated on the grounds listed in 3.v, or on any other reasonable grounds.
- 5.1.3 Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and kept under review to ensure they comply with relevant legislation and to ensure that they reflect best practice;

##### **5.2 Employment, promotion and retention**

- 5.2.1 The Union will make reasonable efforts to provide a working environment where the ethos, standards and practices are conducive to the well-being of all employees.
- 5.2.2 All staff are expected to comply with and actively promote the Union's Equality and Diversity Policy in their roles and will be given the necessary training to enable them to do this.
- 5.2.3 The Union will seek to ensure the development of occupational schemes and conditions of service, which are objectively justifiable and promote equity and diversity between staff groups.

- 5.2.4 The Union will seek to develop an ethos in which all staff, regardless of role, are valued and will promote a range of working patterns, schemes, facilities and benefits which recognise and help staff to resolve their work and personal commitments.
- 5.2.5 The Union will consider requests from individuals who wish to alter their working arrangements via the flexible working application because of changing personal circumstances and will develop a working environment that accepts and values different patterns of employment and career development.
- 5.2.6 The Union will seek to make reasonable adjustments for members of staff who become disabled or whose disability worsens during the course of their employment.

### **5.3 Appraisal and Development**

- 5.3.1 The Union will ensure that appropriate staff development and appraisal schemes are in place for all categories of staff which take account of the principles of equality and diversity.

### **6 Services and Facilities**

- 6.1 The Union is committed to the principles of equal access to and fair treatment in, the services it provides and the facilities it offers to its members and to its employees.
- 6.2 Where a service cannot be offered to all who wish to use it, restrictions on access will be fair and reasonable.
- 6.3 Managers with responsibility for the Union's services and facilities are encouraged to recognise the diversity of needs within the Union membership and to translate these into operational practice.
- 6.4 Staff involved in making contractual or other service provision arrangements with external public, voluntary or private organisations to obtain or provide goods, works or services, have a responsibility to ensure that these arrangements are consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **7 Community links**

- 7.1 The Union seeks to encourage staff and members to engage with all members of the local community.
- 7.2 The Union seeks to encourage greater community use of its services and facilities.
- 7.3 All visitors to the Union will be treated with courtesy and respect.

### **8. Your responsibilities**

- 8.1 Every employee is required to assist the Union to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.
- 8.2 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Union for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 8.3 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

### **9. Sanctions and Penalties**

- 9.1 It should be noted that disciplinary action may be taken against employees or members in cases where it can be shown that they have failed to comply with the requirements of this policy.

## **10. Complaints and Grievances**

- 10.1 If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Union's complaints/grievance procedure to make a complaint. The Union will deal with complaints relating to this policy in accordance with its appropriate complaints/grievance procedures.
- 10.2 The Union will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.