

# Equality and Diversity Policy

UPR EQ03 version 07.0

## Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 06.2 of UPR EQ03, with effect from 1 July 2021.

## Summary of significant changes to the previous version

Minor amendments to this document have been made to satisfy the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

## Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Hertfordshire has shown its continuing commitment to equal opportunities since 1991. This over-arching equality and diversity policy articulates a renewed vision for advancing equality and valuing diversity which supports the achievement of the University’s Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 The policy statement set out in this document summarises how the University will realise this vision, ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, and other relevant legislation.
- 1.3 The policy and principles set out in this document were approved by the Board of Governors with effect from 30 January 2012<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 The University continues to develop, as appropriate, further policies on promoting particular aspects of equality and has a separate policy to promote dignity and respect and to prevent and deal with Harassment and Bullying (see UPR EQ10).
- 1.5 This document is available on-line via:  
<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs/equality-and-diversity>
- 1.6 The University will publicise and promote its commitment to equality via the Internet, through student and staff recruitment literature, handbooks and other publications. Copies of this document (UPR EQ03) in other formats will be made available on request to the Head of Equality (Telephone: 01707 284982, e-mail: [equality@herts.ac.uk](mailto:equality@herts.ac.uk)).

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all aspects of University life and activities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Board of Governors Minutes: 862.3, 14 March 2006; 669, 22 November 2011; 716, 20 March 2012

2.2 The Board of Governors requires that all subsidiary companies wholly-owned by the University adopt this policy and any subsequent amendments to it.

2.3 This document sets out the respective responsibilities of Governors, managers, staff and students.

### **3 Definitions**

3.1 For the purposes of this document the following definitions will apply:

3.1.1 'University'

the University of Hertfordshire and, where appropriate, its wholly-owned subsidiary companies;

3.1.2 'employee/member of staff':

a person employed by the University or a subsidiary company wholly-owned by the University, on a full-time, fractional, hourly-paid, job-share, fixed term or temporary contract;

3.1.3 '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;

3.1.4 'employer':

an organisation sponsoring an apprentice registered as a student of the University of Hertfordshire;

3.1.5 'Member of the University':

a person who has a formal relationship with the University and who therefore meets some or all of the following criteria:

- i a contractual relationship exists between the University and the individual;
- ii the individual has been conferred with a title defined by the Academic Board and/or the Board of Governors;
- iii the individual is subject to the provisions of a contractual arrangement between the University and another party which relates to the delivery of a University learning, study, research or other educational service.

3.1.6 'Head of Strategic Business Unit':

Heads of academic Schools and Heads of professional Strategic Business Units.

### **4 Statement of principles and policy**

4.1 The University:

4.1.1 seeks to maintain and further develop a fair and inclusive culture and an environment that is accessible and welcoming, in which everyone is valued, respected and enabled to excel;

- 4.1.2 will ensure that everyone is treated fairly on the 'protected characteristics'<sup>2</sup> of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, 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;
- 4.1.3 anticipates the needs of disabled people and makes reasonable adjustments as required;
- 4.1.4 will continue to enhance services and facilities to ensure equality of opportunity;
- 4.1.5 seeks to eliminate any unfair treatment and unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- 4.1.6 will respond effectively to any complaints;
- 4.1.7 will, in developing policies, procedures, practices and strategies, for example, strategies relating to the built environment, ensure that they reflect the University's commitment to equality;
- 4.1.8 will ensure that equality is integral to the planning and reporting arrangements for all Strategic Business Units;
- 4.1.9 will ensure that contractual arrangements, including academic agreements, reflect the University's commitment to equality;
- 4.1.10 in determining the membership of its Board of Governors and other committees and groups across the University tasked with developing proposals and decision-making, will have due regard for the diversity of the University community;
- 4.1.11 will ensure that in their conduct, all Boards, committees and groups have due regard for the diversity of the University community and that they consider the impact on equality of their decisions and recommendations;
- 4.1.12 will offer development opportunities to Governors, managers, staff and students to ensure that they can meet their responsibilities in relation to this policy;
- 4.1.13 through education, employment and community activities, will seek to meet different needs, address patterns of disadvantage and under-representation;
- 4.1.14 will promote an ethos of inquiry in teaching, learning and research that encourages differences to be shared and explored and diversity celebrated;
- 4.1.15 will promote the policy when recruiting, delivering apprenticeship training and working with employers and apprentices
- 4.1.16 will seek to promote good relations between all Members of the University, the local community and other stakeholders, thereby contributing to the achievement of a cohesive society;

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<sup>2</sup>

**Equality Act 2010 – Protected Characteristics**

The following are defined as protected characteristics by the Act:

age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 4.1.17 will respond appropriately to any attempts to challenge this ethos or to undermine good relations either on campus or in the wider community;
- 4.1.18 is committed to meeting its responsibilities under equality legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and will meet pro-actively its public sector Equality Duty to have 'due regard' to:
- i eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
  - ii advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
  - iii fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- 4.1.19 will continue to be transparent and open about the experiences and outcomes of different people and how they are affected by University decisions, policies and practices;
- 4.1.20 will involve all interested stakeholders, particularly the Students' Union and the Recognised Trade Unions, in analysing all relevant information in order to assess how well the University is complying with the equality duty;
- 4.1.21 will, by 31 January 2012, and at least annually thereafter, publish information relating to people who share a protected characteristic including applicants, students, staff, Alumni and service users to show how it is meeting the equality duty;
- 4.1.22 based on the above (see sections 4.1.1 - 4.1.21), will adopt and publish by 6 April 2012 and at least every four (4) years thereafter one or more specific and measurable equality objective(s) which it thinks it should achieve to meet the equality duty and will commit leadership and resources to ensure the achievement of the objective(s) identified.
- 4.2 The University considers that its commitment to equality and diversity, set out in section 4.1, enhances the experience of students and staff enabling them to excel and realise their potential, and will assist the University in achieving its strategic goals.
- 4.3 Section 6 gives detailed information on how this policy will be promoted and implemented across all areas of University activity.

## **5 Equality objectives**

The University's Equality Objectives, approved from time-to-time by the Board of Governors, are published on-line at the following location:

<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/how-we-advance-equality-of-opportunity/public-sector-equality-duty/> [recache](#)

## **6 Policy promotion and implementation**

### **6.1 Staff recruitment, employment, progression and development**

#### **6.1.1 Recruitment, selection and appointment**

- i In the recruitment and selection of staff, the University aims to:

- a attract suitable applicants from as wide a pool as possible;
  - b ensure that all applicants are treated fairly;
  - c select on merit;
  - d appoint the most suitable candidates.
- ii All staff with responsibility for recruitment and selection are required to use and comply with the University's current Recruitment and Selection regulations and procedures.
- iii The University will:
- a train staff who have responsibility for recruitment and selection, in fair recruitment and selection practices;
  - b ensure that all staff with responsibilities for recruitment and selection comply with the University's policies, procedures and practices on recruitment and selection and understand that they must be able to demonstrate that they have done so;
  - c monitor all stages of recruitment and selection using these data to identify and address any barriers, review its procedures to promote best practice and identify opportunities to advance equality.

#### 6.1.2 Employment, progression and retention

The University aims to be an employer of choice by:

- i providing a working environment that promotes and values:
  - a the dignity, safety and well-being of all employees;
  - b the diversity of staff;
  - c different patterns of employment and career development so that all staff can work effectively and achieve their potential;
- ii employing staff on permanent contracts except where there are justifiable reasons not to do so, for example, where the funding for a post is fixed term;
- iii ensuring that all posts are graded fairly, based on analytical job evaluations;
- iv undertaking periodic pay reviews to ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- v securing, through collective bargaining involving the Recognised Trade Unions, conditions of service which are objectively justifiable and equitable for all staff groups;
- vi providing services and facilities and making reasonable adjustments to premises and work arrangements to support, develop and retain disabled staff;
- vii promoting flexible working arrangements, facilities and benefits to attract and retain staff by supporting them in meeting their work and personal commitments;

- viii advertising within the University all opportunities for additional roles and responsibilities, for development, promotion, progression and recognition and ensuring that criteria and decisions are transparent, consistent and fair;
- ix undertaking regular staff audits monitoring employment and progression and identifying employment goals that need to be integrated into strategic planning;
- x developing strategies to address current patterns of under-representation in discipline areas, occupations and at senior grades;
- xi taking all reasonable steps to ensure that Modern Slavery (<https://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/modern-slavery-act-2015>) is not practiced at the University, amongst its staff, subsidiary companies or suppliers.

### 6.1.3 Staff development and training

- i The University is committed to staff development and training as a means of achieving its objectives and enabling staff to succeed in their career and work goals.
- ii The University will:
  - a ensure that priorities for staff development reflect and support staff in achieving the University's Equality Objectives;
  - b ensure that all staff development activities and training anticipate and take account of the diversity of the University community in terms of arrangements, content and methods, and that reasonable adjustments are made, as required, for disabled staff;
  - c ensure that all staff have fair access to appropriate opportunities for development and training;
  - d develop positive action staff development initiatives to achieve its Equality Objectives;
  - e monitor participation and use the outcomes in reviews of staff development.

## 6.2 Admissions, teaching, learning and assessment

### 6.2.1 Admissions, outreach, marketing and widening participation

- i The University is committed to ensuring equality in admissions (see UPR SA02<sup>3</sup> and UPR SA03<sup>4</sup>). The key selection criterion is whether an applicant has the potential to complete the programme to which they seek admission, to benefit from the educational experience and to achieve the standard required for the award concerned. The University recognises a wide range of indicators of academic potential including academic and vocational qualifications, experiential learning and access qualifications.

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<sup>3</sup> UPR SA02 'Admissions – Research Students'

<sup>4</sup> UPR SA03 'Admissions – Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students'

- ii The University welcomes applications from disabled people and will ensure that all stages of admission anticipate the requirements of disabled people, and that any reasonable adjustments to admissions procedures requested by disabled applicants are made.
- iii The Academic Board is responsible for ensuring that:
  - a admission criteria and procedures enable applicants from all educational backgrounds to demonstrate their academic potential;
  - b all programmes monitor statistically the admissions cycle to ensure fair treatment;
  - c patterns of under-representation are explored and appropriate strategies developed to address under-representation.
- iv Information on admission criteria and procedures and analyses of monitoring data will be integral to all annual monitoring evaluation reports.
- v The University will:
  - a develop marketing, outreach and recruitment strategies to meet the diverse information needs of applicants;
  - b ensure that publicity material, events and information services are relevant and accessible to all prospective or potential applicants;
  - c ensure that publicity materials, events and information services communicate effectively the University's commitment to equality;
  - d pay particular attention to language, wording, images, content and format;
  - e submit an access agreement on an annual basis to the Office for Fair Access.
- vi The University will seek to widen participation in Higher Education by:
  - a developing further its educational provision in partnership with the Hertfordshire Higher Education Consortium and other providers;
  - b encouraging flexibility in modes of attendance and timetabling, and the development of distance learning;
  - c facilitating the accreditation of prior learning, credit accumulation and transfer schemes and lifelong learning;
  - d liaison and outreach, and by developing initiatives such as mentoring, taster courses and partnerships, to raise aspirations and support applicants;
  - e providing financial support and guidance to help remove barriers to participation.



## 6.2.2 Teaching, learning and assessment

- i In teaching, learning and assessment the University recognises the diversity of the student body and learners' educational needs and seeks to promote equality and inclusivity in learning, teaching and assessment through attention to:
  - a programme content, resources and perspectives;
  - b pedagogy and approaches to teaching and learning;
  - c assessment methods and criteria;
  - d the development of StudyNet (the University's managed learning environment);
  - e placements, apprenticeships and other off-site learning opportunities;
  - f the professional development of teaching staff.
- ii Schools are expected to anticipate the requirements of disabled people in their planning of modules and programmes. Disabled students are encouraged to agree through Study Needs Agreements any additional support and reasonable adjustments they require in teaching, learning and assessment. The University provides additional aids, services and support to ensure equality of opportunity for disabled students.
- iii The University will analyse by protected characteristics, available data from the monitoring of entry qualifications, student progression, discontinuation, achievement and destination. These analyses will inform monitoring and review at programme, School and University levels to identify any patterns that cause concern and inform the development of actions to address inequalities.

## 6.3 Research

The University will ensure that:

- i through internal (and where relevant, external) regulations, codes of practice and the work of its committees, all research activities will reflect the University's commitment to promote equality and to value diversity;
- ii all those concerned with the development and organisation of research degrees are mindful of the opportunities to advance equality of opportunity;
- iii research supervisors and research students are made aware of their responsibilities and rights to fair treatment;
- iv it promotes best practice in the recruitment, employment and career development of staff who undertake research, identifying and addressing any barriers to equality of opportunity and taking positive action as appropriate;
- v the arrangements for the Research Excellence Framework comply with the framework and guidance published by Research England.

## **6.4 Services and facilities**

- 6.4.1 All services and facilities, whether available to the public or to Members of the University, will reflect the University's commitment to fair access and equal treatment. All users will be treated with courtesy and respect.
- 6.4.2 Managers of services and facilities are expected to proactively:
- i identify and respond to the changing diversity of the University community;
  - ii ensure accessibility for disabled people by anticipating their needs, providing auxiliary aids and services and making reasonable adjustments;
  - iii indicate in annual reports how they have identified needs and developed services.

## **6.5 Contracts**

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.

## **6.6 Community links and partnerships**

The University seeks to develop community relationships and partnerships to:

- i encourage participation in Higher Education by all sections of the community;
- ii encourage greater community use of University services and facilities;
- iii encourage the engagement of staff and students in the local community;
- iv create and maintain harmonious relationships between the University and local residents, working together with the Police Service to promote a safe community;
- v involve the local community, as appropriate, in University developments;
- vi value the local community as a source of expertise for the University.

# **7 Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities**

7.1 All Members of the University are expected to comply with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy and will be given opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required for the successful implementation of this policy.

7.2 Specific roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are specified in this section (7).

## **7.3 Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors:

- i is responsible for ensuring that the University complies with legal requirements and has oversight of matters relating to equality and diversity;
- ii will approve Equality Objectives that will be reviewed at least every four (4) years;

- iii will receive an annual report on progress against the operational Action Plan through which the policy will be implemented;
- iv will receive reports, as necessary, at other times;
- v will receive a report concerning each three-yearly review of the effectiveness of this policy and the progress made towards the achievement of the Equality Objectives.

#### **7.4 Vice-Chancellor**

The Vice-Chancellor has responsibility for ensuring the development and implementation of the Action Plan which underpins this Equality and Diversity Policy, that staff are trained in and are aware of their legal responsibilities and that any failure to comply with the policy is dealt with appropriately.

#### **7.5 Heads of Strategic Business Units and other managers**

Heads of Strategic Business Units and other managers:

- i are responsible for identifying achievable equality goals for which they are accountable;
- ii are responsible for managing staff fairly and objectively in accordance with the University's employment policies and procedures;
- iii will lead on equality and by example, to ensure that their staff work within the University's equality policies;
- iv will ensure that the University's commitment to fair treatment and to valuing people as individuals underlies all relationships with students, staff and other members of the University, clients, community groups, business partners and other stakeholders.

#### **7.6 Members of staff**

It is an explicit requirement of their employment that all members of University staff will:

- i behave consistently with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy;
- ii participate in appropriate training and development to meet their personal and professional responsibilities;
- iii seek to promote equality through their work;
- iv seek advice and guidance as required.

#### **7.7 Students**

Students are required to comply with the Student Code of Conduct (see UPR SA01<sup>5</sup>) and to behave in ways that are consistent with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

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<sup>5</sup> UPR SA01 'Student Code of Conduct'

## 7.8 Employers

Where a student is an apprentice, the student's employer is responsible for complying with all applicable equality law (whether in relation to race, sex, gender reassignment, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy, maternity or otherwise).

## 8 Monitoring, assessing impact on equality and publishing

The University will publish information relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic who are employees, students, Alumni, service users and other people affected by the University's policies and practices. This information will include the outcomes of monitoring, surveys and of impact assessments. Information will be published in accessible ways including on the University's website and will be shared with all interested stakeholders.

## 9 Compliance with this policy

- 9.1 The University will deal with any complaints relating to this policy through the relevant complaints/grievance procedures.
- 9.2 Disciplinary action may be taken where there is reason to believe that staff or students have failed to comply with the requirements of this policy.

## 10 Review of policy

- 10.1 The Head of Equality is responsible for:
- i reporting annually to the Academic Board and to the Board of Governors on the progress made against the agreed Action Plan;
  - ii reviewing this Policy every year (1) and on the progress against Equality Objectives making recommendations to the Academic Board and to the Board of Governors concerning any changes which might be necessary.
- 10.2 The University will use a range of approaches to consult and involve students and staff as well as the Students' Union and the Recognised Trade Unions in the review of this policy. It will work with other public authorities to develop and use consultative arrangements that involve local community groups and other stakeholders.

Sharon Harrison-Barker  
Secretary and Registrar  
Signed: **1 July 2021**

### Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at [governanceservices@herts.ac.uk](mailto:governanceservices@herts.ac.uk) or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.