

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy exists to explain our strong commitment to having a workplace in which everyone is treated with fairness, dignity and respect. Through this policy, our intention is to bring our Values to life and develop a mindset where we each take responsibility for building a healthy and receptive workplace which supports everyone's wellbeing.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment at UoNSU in which people are supported to make their best contribution, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions and practices celebrate diversity and individuality, and promote equality of opportunity.

POLICY

Context

This is what we have in mind when we talk about equality, diversity and inclusivity:

- Equality is where every person has equal rights and a fair chance. It's an approach that recognises that action needs to be taken to ensure a 'level playing field' for all.
- Diversity encompasses respect for others and valuing difference. It means understanding that each person is unique, and that difference should be recognised, supported and valued as part of our culture.
- Inclusivity is about being aware of any personal biases we might have and keeping them in check, adopting curiosity and empathy about different views and ways of being, and adapting our behaviour to make it easier for different people to feel accepted and valued for who they are.

These concepts are closely related. Taken together, as active intentions, they lead to a rich and stimulating workplace which can benefit from everyone's talents and perspectives in achieving its organisational objectives, where people can thrive and perform well, and where all our members can have an excellent experience. It's made explicit in our 'Values based behaviours', and it's intended to shape how each of us go about our work and interact with others.

Failing to actively include and support everyone can lead to personal distress, lost opportunity and lower performance - all of which adds up to an organisation which doesn't deliver what it could, and should, do for its members.

This policy explains what constitutes discrimination and outlines how we will go about supporting equality, diversity and inclusivity in practice.

We will take a strict approach to any breaches of this policy. Anyone who is found to have discriminated against, victimised or harassed someone will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. In some cases, such behaviour could potentially constitute gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

UoNSU is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and members. Our Values – Empowering, Inclusive and Collaborative - promote courtesy, openness and respect towards others in all aspects of our work. We value people, and we will make every effort to remove illegal or unnecessary barriers that prevent them from making a positive contribution to our union and fulfilling their potential. We aim to develop a mindset that does more than just understand what's illegal. We will challenge policies, practices, perceptions and behaviour which hold people back, and develop an enquiring and supportive attitude towards others.

Our commitment to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination also extends to how staff treat students, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers.

Discrimination

We do not discriminate against people on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, faith or belief, gender or sexual orientation. These are the 'protected characteristics' written into UK law in the 2010 Equality Act.

Discrimination can occur in different ways, and may be intentional or unintentional. It's our firm commitment to prevent and avoid all of them.

- Direct discrimination – where people are treated less favourably because they have, or are believed to have, a protected characteristic. For example, denying people access to service, leaving people out of events or applying tougher performance standards.
- Indirect discrimination – having a rule, practice or policy that aims to treat everyone the same, but which is unjustified in practice and puts certain individuals or groups at a disadvantage. For example, failing to provide food which meets the needs of people from particular religions when catering for workplace events.
- Discrimination by association – where people are treated unfairly because they have an association with someone with a protected characteristic, or they're believed to have. For example, rejecting a job application from someone with a disabled child.
- Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an environment which is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive or them.
- Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or has supported someone else's complaint.

Harassment and bullying are covered in our Dignity at Work Policy.

Monitoring

We will monitor the recruitment and progress of our staff paying particular attention to recruitment, selection, retention, training and career development/progression. This is to ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation.

We monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Applicants don't have to provide this information and it will not adversely affect their chances of recruitment if they choose not to. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and stored anonymously for monitoring purposes.

Similarly we will review periodically the employment records of our staff. Analysing the data in this way helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. If necessary we will change the policy to improve equality and diversity.

The Senior Leadership Team support policies involving staff such as the Recruitment and Selection Policy, the Learning and Development policy, customer focus, resolving issues, family friendly and performance and development policies that are designed to promote equal opportunity and protection against discrimination for all employees.

Breaches of the Policy

We take breaches of the policy very seriously. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any way, or subjected to harassment, you are encouraged to raise the matter with your line manager in the first instance. If the complaint is about your line manager, you can take it to their line manager. Should this fail to address the issue to your satisfaction, you can raise the matter through our Grievance Policy or through our Dignity at Work Policy. If you are uncertain which applies or you need advice on what to do, you should speak to the HR team who will advise you.

Allegations regarding potential breaches will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Anyone who makes an allegation in good faith will be supported, and not treated any less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made maliciously will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Policy.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. If the act is considered to be gross misconduct, then ultimately that person could be dismissed.

END