

<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Trustees
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<b>Responsible for implementation:</b>	Sabbatical Officers and Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Responsible for interpretation:</b>	Board of Trustees

# Equality and Diversity Policy

## 1.0 The Policy

City St George's Students' Union's (The Union's) Equality and Diversity policy is the Union's central actor in assuring its compliance with the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

- 1.1 The Equality Duty requires the Union to *eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between persons with and without protected characteristics; and foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics.*
- 1.2 Beyond its legal obligations, the Union actively commits to promoting an inclusive environment for all people with whom it has dealings, including its employees, student members, trustees, and officers. The Union will oppose discrimination, inequality and injustice, and promote freedom of expression and the autonomous political decision-making of its members.

## 2.0 Resolutions

This policy commits the Union to the following resolutions, which will hold in perpetuity or until revised.

- 2.1 To convene a working group or sub-committee of the Board dedicated to the promotion of Equality and Diversity and protection of the Equality Duty in all the Union's dealings. The group will:
  - (a) Set the Union's Equality and Diversity Strategy, which will determine the Union's short- and medium-term concrete goals in terms of Equality and Diversity.
  - (b) Act as the Union's long-term guardians of Equality and Diversity by critically appraising the Union's other policies, activities, and default behaviours in terms of the Equality Duty.
  - (c) Consist of at least one Officer of the Union, at least one Lay Trustee of the Union, and at least three staff members of the Union, of which one will be the Deputy Chief Executive and one will be a trained Harassment Advisor from the Advice Team.
  - (d) Contain at least one member who will act as a dedicated Equality and Diversity reporting officer, to whom any staff or student member will be able to report policy breaches anonymously and confidentially.
  - (e) Work with the Union's other dedicated groups and projects including Race Equity, LGBTQ+ Equity, Gender Equity and Disability Equity groups such as their purposes are compatible.
- 2.2 To develop permanent, comprehensive assessment and improvement mechanisms for regularly reporting, tracking and reducing:
  - (a) Rates of bullying and harassment among Union membership.

- (b) Rates of sexual harassment among Union membership.
  - (c) Rates of discrimination and victimisation among Union membership.
- 2.3 In view of the Equality Duty's requirement to *foster good relations between persons with and without protected characteristics*, to install permanent, regular events, campaigns, and mechanisms for promoting, fostering, and measuring these relations within student membership and staff.
- 2.4 To develop mechanisms to regularly scrutinise the Union's performance in Equality and Diversity in the context of recruitment, promotion, and progression.
- 2.5 To routinely seek the support of external bodies in assessing and providing feedback on the Union's Equality and Diversity performance in all areas.
- 2.6 To hold to account its partners, customers, and the organisations it associates with including the University in upholding the Equality Duty in their dealings with the Union.
- 2.7 To commit to embedding inclusivity at all levels of the Union. This commitment extends to leadership positions, committees, and decision-making bodies that reflect the rich diversity of the student body.
- 2.8 To ensure Union services and facilities are accessible to all members, whilst acknowledging diverse needs and abilities. Reasonable adjustments will be implemented as necessary and where possible. Accessibility access information for events will be communicated appropriately.
- 2.9 These resolutions are designed to allow the Union to accurately understand its own Equality and Diversity performance and improve upon it iteratively to the benefit of its student members and staff. The Union also resolves to review these resolutions and ensure their fitness-for-purpose in respect of circumstances at a frequency of no-less-than-annual.

### **3.0 Responsibility**

- 3.1 The Board, along with the Deputy Chief Executive, will hold ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the protection of the Equality Duty.
- 3.2 The Board, along with the Deputy Chief Executive, will be held responsible for ensuring that all staff members, student members, and any person with whom the Union has dealings will be given transparent and free access to this policy and offered dedicated Equality and Diversity training to aid in its understanding where necessary.
- 3.3 **Equity Groups**  
The Equity groups of the EDI Committee dedicated will be responsible for short- to mid-term implementation and the monitoring of the Union's Equity and Diversity work.

- 3.3.1 All career staff and Students' Union Officers are required to be a member of and contribute to at least one Equity group.
- 3.3.2 All Equity groups will be led by both a career staff member and a student representative.
- 3.3.3 All Equity groups will meet at least every 3 months and deliver on actions which will be reported to the EDI Committee for feedback.
- 3.4 All staff members, elected officers, stakeholders, and student members hold shared responsibilities for upholding the Equality Duty and promoting an inclusive environment.
- 3.5 Individuals will actively challenge discriminatory behaviours and foster an atmosphere of respect and embrace diversity in decision making processes and advocate for inclusivity.

## **4.0 Training**

- 4.1 All staff and elected officers will receive relevant and up to date Equity and Diversity training. In addition, staff within specific teams or with specific roles will receive enhanced Equity and Diversity training as required and agreed by the SLT or the EDI Board, for example specialist training for those involved in recruitment and selection.
- 4.2 The Union will actively promote and share resources that educate and raise awareness to its members on Equity and Diversity matters.

## **5.0 Breaches**

- 5.1 If any staff member or student member feels they have become aware of a breach of this policy, they will be entitled to report this breach to the Equality and Diversity reporting officer confidentially and with the option to remain anonymous. It will be at the discretion of those who are affected by a breach, and those to whom they choose to disclose whether or not to apply further policy such as complaints or disciplinary proceedings, unless duty of care or those other policies necessitate action on their own terms.
- 5.2 If any staff member or student member feels they have become subject to bullying or harassment the Union will move to protect this individual from further harm unconditionally, subject to investigation.
- 5.3 If any staff member or student member feels behaviour, treatment, or systemic and routine action or inaction they are subject to violates this policy, the Union will support this member in making a complaint under the Union's complaints procedure, even complaints against the Union itself.

- 5.4 Any group or individual who deliberately breaches this policy will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. The provision of Union's services may be suspended while disciplinary proceedings are ongoing.
- 5.5 In some instances of a breach, the Union may have a duty to involve the University for guidance on necessary precautionary measures and actions.
- 5.6 Any group or individual who, without intending to, nevertheless breaches this policy or commits acts of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or other prohibited behaviours under the Equality Act 2010 will also be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## 6.0 Support

- 6.1 Student members can receive impartial and confidential advice on reporting breach of this policy from Union Advice. Any conflicts of interests in receiving advice will be addressed via the Union Advice Conflict of Interest Policy found in the Union Advice Handbook.
- 6.2 The Union will make every effort to signpost its members to appropriate support which may include services internal and external to the University.
- 6.3 The Union acknowledges the evolving nature of interactions via online platforms, and the impact online bullying and harassment has on the well-being of its members and the Union commits to provide support to address and mitigate this.

## 7.0 Definitions

This policy follows definitions in the Equality Act 2010. Some will be repeated here for clarity. Where no mention is made of a definition, usage will correspond with the Equality Act 2010.

### 7.1.1 Discrimination

The following characteristics are 'protected characteristics'. Any discrimination based on these characteristics will be considered unlawful.

- (a) Age
- (b) Disability
- (c) Gender Reassignment
- (d) Marriage and Civil Partnership
- (e) Race
- (f) Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- (g) Sex
- (h) Sexual Orientation

### 7.1.2 Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats one person less favourably than they would another because of a protected characteristic. (Equality Act 2010, Sect 13).

#### 7.1.3 Indirect Discrimination

When a provision, criterion or practice applies to a person or persons with or without protected characteristics, and places or would place a person or persons with protected characteristics at a disadvantage and persons applying the provision, criterion, or practice cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. (Equality Act 2010, Sect 19).

#### 7.1.4 Harassment

The Act outlines three types of harassment:

- (a) Unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant, or violating the complainant's dignity.
- (b) Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- (c) Treating a person less favourably than another person because they have either submitted to, or did not submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

The subjective experience of the one who is harassed takes precedence when assessing whether or not harassment has taken place. Harassment may be deemed to have taken place on the grounds that the one who is harassed experiences given behaviours as harassment, even if the intention to harass is absent on the part of the harasser. In any disciplinary procedures, both the intentions behind given behaviours and the experience and understanding of these behaviours will be taken into account.

#### 7.1.6 Career Staff

A member of Union staff who is on a permanent or fixed term contract employed via a joint contract with City St George's, University of London.

#### 7.1.7 Equity Group

Established groups of students and career staff who are focusing on striving for equity for one of more key areas of EDI.