



LMSU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out London Metropolitan Students' Union's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and commits us to taking a proactive approach to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive community where everyone has the chance to realise their full potential.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1 Set out how London Metropolitan Students' Union (LMSU) will meet its legal equality duties, as set out in the Equality Act 2010
- 1.2 Outline LMSU's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and how it will implement this in practice
- 1.3 Set out the roles, responsibilities and requirements of LMSU staff, volunteers and members
- 1.4 Commit LMSU to monitoring, review and continual improvement in all areas of equality, diversity and inclusion

2. Introduction and principles

LMSU is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment and takes

proactive steps to promoting equal opportunities as an employer, as a democratic, representative and campaigning body, and as a provider of services, activities and events to our diverse student membership.

In addition to promoting an inclusive culture for all by providing equality of opportunity, LMSU also recognises the value of difference and is committed to enhancing diversity, recognising, respecting and valuing different identities, perspectives and backgrounds.

The general principles behind this policy are:

- 2.1 Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to be recognised and valued for who they are and to live without fear of unfair and discriminatory attitudes and practices
- 2.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the core of all of LMSU's activity from our decision making to our operations and is a fundamental driver for the effective delivery of our vision, mission and strategic priorities
- 2.3 LMSU is committed to ensuring that there are adequate procedures and practices in place to ensure an equitable, diverse and inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to realise their full potential

3. Definitions

'Equality' (or 'Equality of opportunity') is about ensuring that every individual is treated fairly and has equal opportunities regardless of their background, circumstances or characteristics. Equality recognises that people have different starting points and that steps may need to be taken to ensure a 'level playing field'.

'Diversity' means difference and is about recognising, valuing and respecting all forms of difference in individuals, both visible and invisible.

'Inclusion' (or 'inclusive practice') is about recognising and meeting the needs of different individuals in order to create a cohesive community where everyone feels welcome and respected.

'Protected characteristics' are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. The 'protection' relates to protection from discrimination. For definitions of the 9 protected characteristics see **Appendix 1**

'Discrimination' is the treatment of an individual / a particular group of people less favourably than others on the basis of a protected characteristic. The Equality Act outlines two types of discrimination:

1. Direct discrimination: where an individual or group of people are treated less favourably than others for a reason related to a protected characteristic
2. Indirect discrimination: where a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way has a negative or disproportionate effect on an individual or a group of people with a protected characteristic

'Harassment' is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that is meant to, or has the effect of, violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person

'Victimisation' is detrimental treatment because a person has taken, or intends to take, action under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination), or if they are supporting someone else who is doing so.

'Hate incidents' are non-crime incidents directed towards someone that are motivated by hostility or prejudice related to a protected characteristic. When a hate incident becomes a criminal offence, it becomes a **'hate crime'**.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of all activities of LMSU and its subsidiaries, including:

- Democracy, representation and campaigning
- Student opportunities
- Student services
- Communications, advertising and sponsorship
- Facilities, events and products
- Employment practices
- Governance
- Management and planning

It applies to all those involved in the Students' Union, including members, staff, elected representatives, volunteers, visitors, clients, contractors, consultants, partners, customers, and potential as well as existing employees. It also applies to members of the public using LMSU's facilities or services.

5. Legal equality duties

LMSU has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that our practices and procedures follow legal requirements and good practice and places a duty on us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics

The Act prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

LMSU is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all and will take proactive steps to ensure that our policies, procedures and practices meet and exceed our equality duties.

6. The Union's commitments

In order to meet our legal equality duties and achieve our equality, diversity and inclusion aims, LMSU makes the following commitments:

LMSU will:

- 6.1 Produce, implement, monitor and review policies, procedures and practices that promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- 6.2 Not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, and will take action against anyone who behaves in this way
- 6.3 Strive to create a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for people's differences, in which students and staff are actively encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of any protected characteristic or other irrelevant distinction
- 6.4 Seek to ensure that our activities, services and events reflect the diversity of our student body, providing a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, free from harassment, victimisation, discrimination or any other form of less favourable treatment
- 6.5 Ensure that all staff and students understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion

7. How the Union will implement its commitments:

In order to achieve our commitments, LMSU will:

- 7.1 Review existing and/or create new policies, procedures and practices that ensure everyone is treated equitably, with dignity and respect, and to safeguard against

anyone being treated less favourably as a result of belonging to one of the protected groups. This will include ensuring that the Union has inclusive recruitment processes

- 7.2 Introduce systems to collect and analyse demographic data to measure whether or not we are reflective of the student body as an employer, as a democratic, representative and campaigning body, and as a provider of services, activities and events to our diverse student membership
- 7.3. Undertake equality assessments of all of our activities, services and events to ensure that they are inclusive, meet the different needs of those who benefit from and engage with them and do not have potential to discriminate against any group
- 7.4 Develop, implement, monitor and review an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and action plan and set organisational, area and individual targets
- 7.5 Establish a working group to embed and support equality, diversity, and inclusion across all areas of the Union and monitor and report on progress towards targets
- 7.6 Provide information and appropriate training to staff and students so they understand their responsibilities and are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to cultivate an equitable, diverse and inclusive community
- 7.7 Develop a strong and visible system for reporting and acting upon harassment, discrimination, victimisation, hate incidents and hate crimes
- 7.8 Celebrate the diversity of our staff and students, seeking out and actively listening to different experiences and ideas to inform changes that will help create a positive, inclusive atmosphere for everyone
- 7.9 Provide an annual report to our Trustee Board, updating them on progress towards the full implementation of this policy and identifying our priorities in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion
- 7.10 Require those working with us or for us to support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and actively work towards the full implementation of this policy. Any breach of this policy will be investigated and, where appropriate, dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures

8. Roles, responsibilities and requirements

The Trustee Board, as a group, has overall responsibility for ensuring the Union meets its legal equality duties, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, and that it has effective systems in place to ensure the Union is working towards meeting its commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion

The Executive Officers have responsibility for implementing relevant campaigning policies and ensuring effective campaigns are run that support equality, diversity and inclusion

Student Council has responsibility for discussing any equality-related issues affecting students and for making recommendations in terms of Students' Union priorities, policy and campaign positions to the Trustee Board. Student Council also offers direction and holds to account the Students' Union Executive

The CEO has responsibility for specific equality issues in relation to staff and employment and for ensuring that the Union has sufficient resources in place to support the full implementation of this policy

The Director of Membership / Deputy CEO has responsibility for leading the Union to achieve the full implementation of this policy

All staff in the course of their employment have a responsibility to ensure that they fully comply with this policy, and all other organisational policies, at all times and to actively work to ensure it's full implementation

Volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that they fully comply with this policy, and all other relevant organisational policies, at all times while undertaking their volunteer roles as well as abiding by the LMSU Members' Code of Conduct

Student members are expected to comply with this policy as well as abiding by the LMSU Members' Code of Conduct at all times

Visitors, clients, contractors, consultants, partners, customers and members of the public using LMSU's facilities or services are expected to comply with this policy at all times during their engagement with the Students' Union

9. Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy will be regularly monitored and reported on by LMSU's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with annual reports produced for the Trustee Board. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or in light of any legal or other developments that will impact upon our legal equality duties, ensuring that students and staff are involved in this process to improve its effectiveness

Appendix 1 Definitions of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010

Please note: The definitions provided below are taken directly from the Equality Act 2010. LMSU policies, practices, and procedures however specifically extend beyond these definitions to cover other characteristics and encompass all gender identities including trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming.

There are nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

1. Age

Definition

In relation to the protected characteristic of age, the Equality Act 2010 defines this as a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular age group. A reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same age group. A reference to an age group is a reference to a group of persons defined by reference to age, whether by reference to a particular age or to a range of ages.

2. Disability

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as anyone 'with a physical or mental impairment', which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

3. Gender reassignment

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristic of gender reassignment as 'the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing

physiological or other attributes of sex'. The Act refers to a transsexual person as a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

4. Marriage and civil partnership

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 states that a person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is in a civil partnership.

5. Pregnancy and maternity

Definition

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

A woman is protected from less favourable treatment whilst she is pregnant, on maternity leave or breast-feeding.

6. Race

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 defines race as including colour; nationality; and ethnic or national origins. It defines a racial group as a group of persons defined by reference to race. A racial group can comprise two or more distinct racial groups.

7. Religion or belief

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 states that 'Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief'.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission states that for a belief to be protected by the Equality Act:

- It must be genuinely held;
- It must be a belief and not an opinion or viewpoint based on information available at the moment;
- It must be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour;

- It must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance;
- It must be worthy of respect in a democratic society; and
- It must be compatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

8. Sex (or gender)

Definition

A person's sex (also referred to as gender) refers to the fact that they are male or female. In relation to a group of people, it refers to either men or women or to either boys or girls.

9. Sexual orientation

Definition

The Equality Act 2010 states that 'sexual orientation means a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex; persons of the opposite sex; or persons of either sex'.