



**UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON**

# **Equality and Inclusion (Dignity & Respect) Policy**

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# Equality and Inclusion (Dignity & Respect) Policy

This policy sets out our position, principles and legal obligations in relation to Equality and Inclusion.

The University of London was founded on the principles of access and inclusion to education. Today, in support of its primary purposes of the advancement of knowledge for the public benefit, the University has identified one of its core missions as:

*To transform people's lives through education, driven by a commitment to diversity, inclusion and access and a belief in their power to create new ways of knowing*

Our strategic commitment to building on our legacy continues through our commitment to creating diverse, inclusive and positive academic and professional cultures that embody the principles of dignity and respect as fundamental bases for the advancement of knowledge, and for work, research, study and public engagement.

To do this we will take practical and impactful steps in support of our purpose and mission and our legal duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

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## **1. What is the University's Policy on Equality and Inclusion?**

1.1 The University of London was founded on the principles of access and inclusion to education. Today, in support of its primary purposes of the advancement of knowledge for the public benefit, the University has identified one of its core missions as:

*To transform people's lives through education, driven by a commitment to diversity, inclusion and access and a belief in their power to create new ways of knowing*

1.2 Our strategic commitment to building on our legacy continues through our commitment to creating diverse, inclusive and positive academic and professional cultures that embody the principles of dignity and respect as fundamental to the advancement of knowledge, and for work, research, study and public engagement.

1.3 To do this we will take practical and impactful steps in support of our purpose and mission and our legal duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

## **2. What are the University's Equality and Inclusion principles?**

### **2.1 Creating a culture of dignity and respect**

2.11 The University of London is committed to creating diverse, inclusive and positive academic and professional cultures that embody the principles of dignity and respect as fundamental to the advancement of knowledge, and for work, research, study and public engagement.

2.12 Universities are places of enquiry and of challenge. Free debate and discussion and the ability to both express view and criticise them is fundamental to the creation and advancement of knowledge. However free speech and expression and responses to it in a learning environment should be underpinned by tolerance, understanding and a culture of dignity and respect.

2.13 The University will not tolerate hateful speech nor actions aimed at people because of their protected characteristics. It will actively promote an approach to fostering good relations between our staff, students, members and visitors and their different views, opinions, cultures and characteristics which will include compassionate self-expression to practice respectful dialogue about the issues experienced by individuals and communities.

2.14 The University will also take a proactive approach through this policy and its practices to effectively and responsibly eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and tackle bullying, vexatious complaints and other unprofessional behaviours causing others damage and distress.

2.15 Our governance, structures, facilities, and policies will have our approach to equality and inclusion and dignity and respect woven embedded in them and the University will enable and encourage the use of evidence in further enhancing developing our practices , informing decision making and understanding the impact of our actions.

## **2.2 Supporting inclusive journeys though our practices**

2.21 Our staff, students, members and visitors come from across the world and reflect a diversity of thought, characteristics, and background that the University of London wishes to respect and celebrate. We want everyone who engages with the University of London to feel welcome and find the experience rewarding.

2.22 We will do this by promoting a culture that:

- acknowledges the challenges of inequality of opportunity, and inequity experience, and success,
- enables spaces and places that allow our communities to come together to celebrate diversity and the benefits that it brings
- is based on the principles of inclusion, dignity and respect and takes effective and proportionate measures to eliminate unlawful harassment, discrimination, and victimisation

2.23 The University of London recognises that everyone has a different journey into and through higher education, and we will continue to develop and promote inclusive practices to enable all our communities to thrive and succeed.

2.24 Key to ensuring this inclusive approach is ensuring that our physical and virtual spaces, our facilities and services, our curriculum and the way it is accessed, delivered and assessed, our research and public engagement activities and our library are [accessible](#) and relevant.

### **3. What are our Legal obligations?**

#### **3.1 The Equality Act 2010**

The University is subject to the Equality Act 2010 and supporting regulations. The University also has additional duties as a public authority.

#### **3.2 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**

The general duty be found in [sections 149 to 157 of the Equality Act 2010](#) ('the act') and is supported by [specific duties](#) found in regulations.

#### **3.3 The general duty**

The general duty requires the University to have due regard to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. It is expected to be applied in a proportionate way depending on the circumstances and the seriousness of the potential equality impacts on those with protected characteristic.

#### **3.4 The specific duty**

The specific duty requires the University

**3.41 Equality Objectives:** To prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable objectives it thinks it should achieve its general duty. The objectives must be published not later than 30th March 2018 and subsequently at intervals of not greater than four years beginning with the date of last publication.

**3.42 Gender Pay Gap reporting:** To publish specified Gender Pay Gap information on an annual basis. This information may inform the objectives required under 3.41.

### **4. What are protected characteristics?**

4.1 The equality act (2010) defined the protected characteristics as:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

## 5. What is meant by Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation?

### 5.1 Discrimination

**5.11 Direct discrimination** means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people's memories get worse as they get older so doesn't tell one of his older employees about it, because he thinks the employee wouldn't be able to do the job.

**5.12 Indirect discrimination** can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example, a university estates team is planning to redevelop some of its properties. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of caring responsibilities.

**5.13 Discrimination and disability:** A failure to meet our duty to make reasonable adjustments is also considered discriminatory under the 'Act'. (Further detailed information can be found in the University's Disability and Inclusion Policy.)

### 5.2 Age Discrimination

**5.21** The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because:

- you are (or are not) a certain age or in a certain age group
- someone thinks you are (or are not) a specific age or age group, this is known as discrimination by perception
- you are connected to someone of a specific age or age group, this is known as discrimination by association

**5.22** Age groups can be quite wide (for example, 'people under 50' or 'under 18s'). They can also be quite specific (for example, 'people in their mid-40s'). Terms such as 'young person' and 'youthful' or 'elderly' and 'pensioner' can also indicate an age group.

### 5.3 Disability Discrimination

**5.31** Disability discrimination is when you are treated less well or put at a disadvantage for an unjustifiable reason that relates to your disability. *Please refer to the Disability and Inclusion Policy* for further information and details on reasonable adjustments.

**5.32** The treatment could be a one-off action, the application of a rule or policy or the existence of physical or communication barriers which make accessing something difficult or impossible.

**5.33** The discrimination does not have to be intentional to be unlawful.

## **5.4 Gender reassignment discrimination**

5.41 The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because of gender reassignment. In the Equality Act, gender reassignment means proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone a process to reassign your sex.

5.42 To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, you do not need to have undergone any medical treatment or surgery to change from your birth sex to your preferred gender. You can be at any stage in the transition process, from proposing to reassign your sex, undergoing a process of reassignment, or having completed it.

5.43 It does not matter whether or not you have applied for or obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate, which is the document that confirms the change of a person's legal sex.

5.44 A difference in treatment may sometimes be lawful. This will be the case where the circumstances fall under one of the exceptions in the Equality Act that allow organisations to provide different treatment or services on the basis of gender reassignment.

5.45 For example, a person who was born female and decides to spend the rest of their life as a man, and a person who was born male and has been living as a woman for some time and obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate, both have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Further information can be found in the *Trans-inclusion and gender reassignment policy*.

## **5.5 Marriage and civil partnership discrimination**

5.51 This is when you are treated differently at work because you are married or in a civil partnership.

## **5.6 Pregnancy and maternity discrimination**

5.61 Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is when you are treated unfavourably (differently) because you are pregnant, breastfeeding or you have given birth, in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act.

5.62 The treatment could be a one-off action or as a result of a rule or policy. It doesn't have to be intentional to be unlawful.

## **5.7 Race discrimination**

5.71 The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because of your race.

5.72 In the Equality Act, race can mean your colour, or your nationality (including your citizenship). It can also mean your ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as your current nationality. *For example, you may have Chinese national origins and be living in Britain with a British passport.*

5.73 Race also covers ethnic and racial groups. This means a group of people who all share the same protected characteristic of ethnicity or race. A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, *for example black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.*

5.74 You may be discriminated against because of one or more aspects of your race, for example people born in Britain to Jamaican parents could be discriminated against because they are British citizens, or because of their Jamaican national origins.

## **5.8 Religion or belief discrimination**

5.81 The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because:

- you are (or are not) of a particular religion
- you hold (or do not hold) a particular philosophical belief
- someone thinks you are of a particular religion or hold a particular belief (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone who has a religion or belief (this is known as discrimination by association)

5.82 In the Equality Act religion or belief can mean any religion, for example an organised religion like Christianity, Judaism, Islam or Buddhism, or a smaller religion like Rastafarianism or Paganism, as long as it has a clear structure and belief system. The Equality Act also covers non-belief or a lack of religion or belief.

## **5.9 Sex discrimination**

5.91 Sex discrimination is when you are treated differently because of your sex. You must not be discriminated against because:

- you are (or are not) a particular sex
- someone thinks you are the opposite sex (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone of a particular sex (this is known as discrimination by association)

5.92 In the Equality Act 2010, sex is understood as binary being either male or female. It can mean a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.

5.93 Under the Act, a person's legal sex is the sex recorded on their birth certificate or their Gender Recognition Certificate. A trans person can change their legal sex by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate.

## **5.10 Sexual orientation discrimination**

5.101 The Equality Act 2010 says you must not be discriminated against because:

- you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual



- someone thinks you have a particular sexual orientation (this is known as discrimination by perception)
- you are connected to someone who has a particular sexual orientation (this is known as discrimination by association)

5.102 In the Equality Act, sexual orientation includes how you choose to express your sexual orientation, such as through your appearance or the places you visit.

### **5.11 Harassment (including Sexual Harassment)**

5.111 Harassment, under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), is any unwanted behaviour in relation to their protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them and that given the circumstances of the behaviour the impact cannot be considered reasonable. It includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, and any less favourable treatment of the subject of harassment on the basis that they gave either rejected or submitted to the unwanted conduct.

5.112 Harassment, is also defined in section 1 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, an offence is committed only if the person knows the conduct amounts to harassment of the other, or a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to harassment of the other person.

5.113 The University does not tolerate harassment as defined in law, nor does it tolerate vexatious claims of harassment and recognises that is required by law to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of our employees in the course of their employment.

5.114 The University's approach to harassment and sexual misconduct of students is in accordance with Condition of Registration E6 - defined in the 'Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure (Students).

### **5.12 Victimisation**

5.121 Victimisation (defined in Section 27 of the Equality Act 2010) takes place where one person treats another less favourably because he or she has asserted their legal rights in line with the Act or helped someone else to do so.

5.122 Victimisation may occur if, for example:

- A student alleges that they have encountered sexism from a tutor, and as a result they are ignored by other staff members.
- A member of staff starts behaves in a hostile manner to a colleague, who previously supported a colleague, in submitting a formal complaint against the senior manager for racist behaviour.
- An employer brands an employee as a 'troublemaker' because they raised a lack of job-share opportunities as being discriminatory.

5.123 This is treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act', or because an employer, service provider or other organisation believes that you have done or are going to do a protected act. The reason for the treatment does not need to be linked to a protected characteristic.

5.124 A protected act is:

- making a claim or complaint of discrimination (under the Equality Act)
- helping someone else to make a claim by giving evidence or information
- making an allegation that you or someone else has breached the Equality Act
- doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act.

## **6. What is meant by bullying**

6.1 There is no legal definition of bullying however it is reasonable to assume that behaviour that meets the test for direct discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the basis of a protected characteristic may be considered a form of bullying.

6.2 Bullying does not have to related to a protected characteristic:

- It may also be the case that harassment as defined under the Harassment Act 1997 as a course of conduct (including speech) that has taken place on at least two occasions that puts the victim in fear of violence or that alarms a person or causing them person distress.
- Current DfE guidance defines bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

## **7. How do we support people reporting issues?**

7.1 The University will ensure that it has effective, accessible and supported approaches for staff, students, members, residents and visitors for reporting issues and taking action if and when required.

7.2 The University will ensure it provides appropriate support for staff, students, members, residents and visitors experiencing bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation and for those accused in accordance with natural justice, our procedures and the law as required.

## **8. What are my responsibilities?**

**8.1 Board of Trustees** – In accordance with Schedule 19, Part 1 of the Equality Act(2010) which states that governing bodies are accountable for compliance in the higher education sector. The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsible for ensuring that the University complies with its duties as set out in that act. It discharges these duties through the delegation of responsibilities to the Equality and Inclusion Committee and the Vice-Chancellor and by:

- approving policy and procedure as and when required by regulation or statutory duty
- receiving and approving the equality and inclusion annual report
- approving the University's Equality Objectives
- receiving other such assurances as it may require from time to time or in response to specific issues.

**8.2 Equality and Inclusion Committee** - the Equality and Inclusion Committee has delegated authority from the Board of Trustees to:

- consider and make recommendation regarding the University's Equality Objectives, policies and good practice
- receive reports, data and other information regarding the University's performance in relation to equality objectives and other commitments to equality and inclusion to monitor impact and success.
- raise concerns or highlight good practice with the Board or with the executive as appropriate.

**8.3 Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group** is responsible for

- approving the University's policies and practices
- ensuring this policy is communicated effectively across the University, so it is understood and embedded in culture and practices
- ensuring that there are appropriate structures, resources and systems supporting this policy and the achievement of agreed equality objectives
- taking action to address issues with meeting our commitments and/ or legal obligations.

**8.4 Academic Board** is responsible for:

- holding strategic oversight of academic and student related equality and inclusion related policy and procedures
- acting on trends in good or poor practice or issues that may become visible through the various reports on student performance or student issues that the Academic Board receives.

**8.5 Staff with specific responsibilities.** Some professional and academic staff have specific responsibilities for or as part of the Policies, Procedures, Regulations, Advice and processes relating to equality and inclusion. These responsibilities include:

- reading all relevant documentation, including relevant pronouncements and initiatives from government and sector-wide bodies, and understanding and acting on their requirements or recommended good practice
- attending training in this area as appropriate
- ensuring that they keep appropriate records
- keeping up to date and ensuring that the policies and procedures, processes, practices and guidance for which they are responsible operate in line with the requirements of this policy.

**8.6 All members of our staff** (including Fellows and Temporary staff) have general responsibilities in this area, these include:

- operating in line with this policy
- setting a good example by treating others with dignity and respect and appropriately challenging unacceptable behaviour
- being aware of this policy and its requirements
- engaging with developmental activities if required
- knowing how to report discrimination, harassment, or bullying, and helping ensure that reporting incidents does not result in victimisation.

**8.7 All of our students** have general responsibilities in this area, these include:

- operating in line with this and related policies and codes of conduct
- setting a good example by treating others with dignity and respect and appropriately challenging unacceptable behaviour
- being aware of this policy and its requirements
- engaging with developmental activities if required
- knowing how to report discrimination, harassment, or bullying, and helping ensure that reporting incidents does not result in victimisation.

**8.8 Visitors** As a Visitor to the University we would expect you to:

- treat our staff, student and other visitors with dignity and respect
- appropriately challenge unacceptable behaviour
- report discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- act in accordance with our visitor regulations.

### **8.9 Recognised Teaching Centres**

The University operates in multiple jurisdictions each of which has different cultural and legislative approaches to equality and inclusion. The University's worldwide programme recognises Teaching Centres across the world that are then able to support students in their studies. This support is in the main additional to the degree offer of the University and students contract separately with these teaching centres. While we endeavour to ensure that these teaching centres set appropriate standards of behaviour, have safeguarding systems in place and are inclusive within their national contexts, there are practical limits to what we can require. Students should therefore check with a teaching centre on their approach, policies and support arrangements before entering into a contract for services.

## **9. Related documents**

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant documents:

- Free Speech & Academic Freedom Code of Practice
- Disability and Inclusion Policy
- Trans-inclusion and gender reassignment policy

## **10. Useful links**

- [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)
- [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-sector-equality-duty)
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties and Public Authorities\) Regulations 2017](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-equality-act-2010-specific-duties-and-public-authorities-regulations-2017)
- [Reasonable adjustments in organisations – best practice for disability inclusion | The Law Society](https://www.thelawsociety.org.uk/resources-and-articles/2017/03/reasonable-adjustments-in-organisations-best-practice-for-disability-inclusion/)
- [Disability discrimination | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/disability-discrimination)
- [Equality Act 2010: Duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for their staff](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/duty-on-employers-to-make-reasonable-adjustments-for-their-staff)
- [EHRC Guidance on Harassment and Sexual Harassment](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/guidance-on-harassment-and-sexual-harassment)  
[https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/guidance-on-harassment-and-sexual-harassment)