

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Students' Union at Bournemouth University will create conditions whereby students and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merit, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Our Equal Opportunities Policy seeks to eradicate unfair and discriminatory practices whenever they occur in the Union and to encourage a diverse community to which all individuals may contribute as fully as possible.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The Students Union at Bournemouth University (the 'Union') is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all students, staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment and student experience in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2 We do not discriminate against students or staff on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation ("protected characteristics").
- 1.3 The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which students and staff treats students, visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.
- 1.4 All students and staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat peers and colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other students or members of staff, regardless of their status.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?

This policy covers all individuals working at all levels and grades, including senior managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term

employees, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency staff (collectively referred to as staff in this policy) as well as students (Members of the Union).

3 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?

- 3.1 The General Manager has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.
- 3.2 All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, led by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.
- 3.3 If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact your line manager to request training or further information.

4. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 4.1 This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with students & staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 4.2 We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

5. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 5.1 Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.
- 5.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not “fit in” would be direct discrimination.
- 5.3 Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

- 5.4 Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- 5.5 Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 6.1 We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of applicants should be done by more than one person wherever possible.
- 6.2 Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying. They should include an appropriate short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy shall be sent on request to those who enquire about vacancies.
- 6.3 We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.
- 6.4 Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with Human Resources approval. For example:
 - 6.4.1 Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
 - 6.4.2 Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
 - 6.4.3 Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
 - 6.4.4 Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).
- 6.5 Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without the approval of Human Resources (who should first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).
- 6.6 We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to

produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

- 6.7 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. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting, and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

7. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- 7.1 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 7.2 If you experience difficulties at the Union because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager, if you are staff, or an officer, if you are a student, to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 7.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants, students or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other students or staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled students or staff and service users.

8. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

- 8.1 If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter with your line manager, if you are staff, or with an Officer, if you are a student.
- 8.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure, in the first instance to a Line Manager, who can escalate accordingly. More details on how to report inappropriate behaviour can be found within our [Whistleblowing policy](#). Students or staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False

allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

- 8.3 Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

9. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

9.1 This policy is reviewed by the Trustee Board.

9.2 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its objectives. As part of this process we monitor the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of our staff.

9.3 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the General Manager.

VERSION CONTROL	
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