

# POLICY – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Owned by:** President of Winchester Students' Union

**Date passed:** 29/10/24

**Body passing:** Trustee Board

**Date of last review:** 29/10/24

**Review required:** Annually

## 1. ABOUT THIS POLICY

1.1. This policy represents Winchester Students' Union's intent to:

- 1.1.1. protect equality and the rights and opportunities of our members, staff, volunteers, Trustees and officers
- 1.1.2. demonstrate a proactive approach to inclusivity
- 1.1.3. support and encourage all under-represented groups, and:
- 1.1.4. promote an inclusive culture which values diversity.

## 2. SCOPE

2.1. This policy sets out our approach to promote equal opportunities and actively work towards providing an inclusive, accessible and equitable environment, free from harassment and discrimination at Winchester Students' Union. It applies to all aspects of our work, including casual and salaried staff (along with relevant sections of the Union's Staff Handbook), elected officers, volunteers, Trustees, members of Winchester Students' Union, and those engaged to work on our behalf (such as contractors and temporary workers). It is expected that all stakeholders will abide by and uphold this policy to actively contribute to making the Students' Union a safe and welcoming place for all.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1. Winchester Students' Union is committed to:

- 3.1.1. Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our members, staff, volunteers, Trustees and officers are recognised and valued;

- 3.1.2. Providing an environment that promotes dignity and respect to all in which no form of intimidation, bullying, harassment or discrimination will be tolerated;
- 3.1.3. Taking all reasonable steps to proactively work with the University and other stakeholders to prevent harassment or discrimination, including sexual harassment and misconduct
- 3.1.4. Providing training, development and progression opportunities available to all relevant stakeholders.
- 3.1.5. Ensuring access to our opportunities are open to all;
- 3.1.6. Reviewing our practices and procedures to ensure fairness;
- 3.1.7. Taking action if this policy is breached. Breaches will be regarded as misconduct and lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- 3.1.8. Monitoring and reviewing this policy annually.

#### **4. THIS POLICY HAS BEEN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH:**

- 4.1. Equality Act 2010
- 4.2. The Human Rights Act 1998
- 4.3. The Worker Protection Act 2023 (Amendment of the Equality Act 2010)

#### **5. PURPOSE**

- 5.1. To deliver our Strategic Plan by supporting Winchester Students' Union's values
- 5.2. To promote equality and prevent discrimination
- 5.3. To promote an inclusive culture
- 5.4. To place a responsibility on members, staff, volunteers, Trustees and officers to work within the agreed protocol at all times

#### **6. MONITORING & REVIEW**

- 6.1. The Union's Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for monitoring the day-to-day implementation of the policy.
- 6.2. The policy will be annually reviewed by the Union's Board of Trustees. On behalf of the Board, the Union will seek to contact members and staff from under-represented and marginalised groups, to establish how they;
  - 6.2.1. Could participate more fully in policy making and activities of the Union
  - 6.2.2. Would want to see Union services to them, improved.
- 6.3. The Union's Board of Trustees will be responsible for organising an annual review of the policy, its implementation and effect. The annual review will

report on the development and implementation of the policy and reflect on a demographic engagement report. It will also create an action plan containing explicit, measurable and achievable objectives and targets.

- 6.4. The annual report will be made available to all stakeholder via the Union's website

## 7. PRINCIPLES

- 7.1. Winchester Students' Union seeks to enable all members to have equal opportunities and shall seek to protect the rights and opportunities of its members. Winchester Students' Union recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are discriminated against and is committed to challenging and removing discrimination and barriers. Winchester Students' Union will not tolerate prejudice or discriminate against its members, staff, volunteers, Trustees and officers.
- 7.2. Winchester Students' Union is committed to promoting an environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, where no-one feels threatened or intimidated and where we can all do our work or socialise free from harassment and/or bullying.
- 7.3. Winchester Students' Union shall act without discrimination (particularly in respect of: Gender Identity, Race, Religion or Belief, Nationality, Sexual Orientation, Political Belief, Disability, Age, Marital Status, Criminal Background, Health, HIV and AIDS status, Language, Physical Appearance, Social Class, Carer Responsibility. This list is not exhaustive and includes any other category where discrimination cannot be reasonably justified).
- 7.4. Winchester Students' Union's Board of Trustees has the responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and promotion of good practice in Equal Opportunities matters.

## 8. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

- 8.1. **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. *For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or rejecting an activity group member because they might be from the LGBTQPIA+ community.*
- 8.2. **Indirect discrimination:** when you have a condition, rule, criterion, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. *An example of indirect discrimination would be a manager continually holding team meetings at midday, a time at which one team member is required to perform Salat al-zuhr payer.*
- 8.3. **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability,

and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

- 8.4. **Harassment and sexual harassment:** this includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- 8.5. **Bullying:** Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. *An example of this might be physical or psychological threats; overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision; or inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance (Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given, will not amount to bullying on their own.)*
- 8.6. **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained/reported or has supported someone else's complaint/report about discrimination or harassment.

## 9. ACCESS TO WINCHESTER STUDENTS' UNION BUILDING AND SERVICES

- 9.1. In accordance with the Equality Act, Winchester Students' Union shall make every reasonable adjustment to ensure that our areas, activities and opportunities are accessible to all.
- 9.2. Any alterations or new developments to Union premises should be made with the requirements of people with diverse needs in mind.
- 9.3. Winchester Students' Union recognises the right of students to take an active role in Union democracy and, as such, will regularly review provisions and actions to ensure that this is possible. Facilities/provisions are to be upgraded/introduced where feasible, to ensure that full participation is possible.
- 9.4. Services shall be regularly reviewed to ensure that, where possible, they include the needs of all groups of the student population.

## 10. ACTIVITY GROUPS (SPORTS TEAMS, SOCIETIES AND REPRESENTATIONAL NETWORKS)

- 10.1. All activity groups will reference compliance to this Equal Opportunities Policy within their Constitution.
- 10.2. The conduct and activities of activity groups shall be monitored to ensure that they are in keeping with the ethos and provisions of this Policy.

## 11. POSTERS AND PUBLICATIONS

- 11.1. All posters and publications displayed or distributed through the Union should include a fair representation of the student body. Care should be taken to avoid stereotypical, sexist, racist, ageist, heterosexist or otherwise discriminatory images or language.
- 11.2. Winchester Students' Union recognises the role of language in the shaping and definition of attitudes and behaviour. Winchester Students' Union endorses the use of non-discriminatory or inaccessible language (including acronyms and initialisms) in all Union literature, by all stakeholders.

## 12. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 12.1. The recruitment of staff and other roles will comply with this Equal Opportunities Policy. This includes provisions made in our prevailing staff handbook.
- 12.2. All Union recruitment materials shall be aimed at as wide a group of suitable qualified and experienced people as possible and shall include a statement of commitment to equal opportunities.
- 12.3. Interview panels will be formed so as to promote diversity. The interview panel will preferably include members from more than one gender identity. In the case of candidates who require reasonable adjustments, these will be taken into account by the Union when making arrangements for the interviewing procedure.
- 12.4. Shortlisting for career staff positions will be undertaken anonymously so as to avoid any conscious or unconscious bias. (Shortlisting for part-time positions will aim to meet these stipulations possible. Where practicable.
- 12.5. Applicants who indicate that they are a BAME candidate and who meet the minimum specifications for any job role can be guaranteed an interview

## 13. MONITORING OF OPPORTUNITY

- 13.1. Winchester Students' Union will undertake the following measures to promote equal opportunities and diversity:
  - 13.1.1. Monitor participation in all Union activity to ensure under-represented groups are provided with equal opportunities.
  - 13.1.2. Review our recruitment and selection procedures regularly to ensure individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and ensure vacancies are widely advertised and publicised allowing the widest range of candidates to apply
  - 13.1.3. Monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the workforce and of applicants for external and internal vacancies, and the number of

people with disabilities within these groups and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

13.1.4. Monitor the demographic data (including ethnic, gender and age composition) of membership engagement, and the number of people from underrepresented groups engaging and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

13.1.5. Collect information relating to member and employee experience, through surveys and specific questions relating to equality will be included where appropriate. Indications that inequality may be the underlying cause of a problem will lead to further investigation and appropriate action.

13.1.6. Ensure this policy is accessible to all members, staff, volunteers, Trustees and officers.

13.1.7. Allocate sufficient resources to implement this policy effectively.

#### **14. TRAINING**

14.1. All elected officers and staff will receive appropriate training on this policy and equal opportunities.

#### **15. COMPLAINTS**

15.1. Any complaints of unfair treatment in accordance with this policy / possible breach will be referred to the Union's Bye-law 2 – Code of Conduct or Bye-law 6 – Complaints, as applicable.

#### **16. LINKS WITH OTHERS**

16.1. All outside organisations which operate with Winchester Students' Union should be made aware as to the Union's Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Conduct and required to act in accordance with them.

16.2. Winchester Students' Union will be active members of relevant University meeting groups and advisory panels and will campaign as practicable to raise awareness on Equal Opportunities issues.

Winchester Students' Union will strive to represent the needs of individual/groups of student members through appropriate channels, to the relevant bodies, to ensure that their needs are met.