



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
(Version 2.2)



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1. Summary and Purpose

This document outlines our policy and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for everyone within our University community including employees, students, contractors and visitors. This document also includes information on how we put this policy into practice and how members of the university community are responsible for helping to make this happen.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is part of our legal obligation to the public sector equality duty as outlined in the Equality Act (2010). The procedures that people can use to make a complaint about discrimination are included in our Dignity and Respect Policy.

This document also includes how we try to provide equality of opportunity for employees, students contractors and visitors; information on support available to our University community and a summary of the definitions of types of discrimination as set out in the Equality Act (2010)

2. Definitions

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|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Harassment | A form of discrimination. Harassment is often unwanted behaviour based on someone's protected characteristic, sexual harassment or treating someone less favourably because they reject or submit to sexual harassment. Harassment can also happen without discriminatory motives. (See Appendix A) |
| Unwanted Behaviours | Behaviour which intends to, or has created the effect of, violating someone's dignity by creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. |
| Bullying | Often identified as intimidating, malicious, offensive or insulting behaviour by one or more individuals. It may involve words, physical actions or general conduct. It can also include abuse or misuse of power. What one person may consider as bullying may be viewed as no more than firm management by another. However, any behaviour that leads to someone becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable. (See Appendix A) |
| Victimisation | Less favourable treatment of someone because they have made, or have helped someone else make, a complaint of bullying and/or harassment. (See Appendix A) |
| Protected Characteristics | According to the Equality Act (2010), it is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief (or lack of), sex and/or sexual orientation. (See Appendix A) |

Further definitions relating to the language and terminology used in this policy can be found in the [University's online glossary](#).

3. Policy

3.1 – Policy Statement

This policy sets out our commitment, including the commitment of our Board of Governors, Vice-Chancellor and senior management, to ensure equality of opportunity and work to prevent any

unlawful or unfair discrimination and harassment at the University of Plymouth. It applies to all our staff, students, contractors and visitors.

We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities and respect for individuals in creating and maintaining an inclusive environment. We value and celebrate diversity, seeing this as critical to achieving our strategic aims and long-term success. We work to recruit and develop employees and students from a wide range of backgrounds and promote an inclusive culture where:

- A supportive and inclusive learning, working and social environment is fostered to ensure that everyone feels that they are valued and can work to achieve their potential;
- Opportunities are open to everyone, and decisions are based on merit and are free from bias;
- All of our employees, staff, contractors and visitors are treated with dignity and respect,
- Everyone within our University community feel free to be themselves

We are committed to providing equality for everyone, regardless of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity (including 'race', colour and nationality);
- Sex;
- Gender reassignment*;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marriage and civil partnership; and
- Pregnancy and maternity (whether or not you are pregnant or have given birth recently).

These are defined in the Equality Act (2010) as 'protected characteristics'. To support our equality, diversity and inclusion values, and to meet our legal commitments, we have a number of linked policies, schemes and action plans, which support and form part of this overall policy.

**The University recognises the problematic nature of the term 'gender reassignment' and only use it here in relation to the Equality Act (2010). In all other policies and procedures we use the term 'Trans' to refer to people whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth, inclusive of non-binary and gender-queer identities.*

3.2 – Responsibilities

As a University, we:

- Have a zero-tolerance approach to all incidents of abuse, harm and hate
- Value diversity and promote equal opportunities for everyone;
- Promote respect and encourage good relations within and between groups;
- Aim to meet the different needs of different groups, while promoting shared values;
- Promote an inclusive and harmonious place of work and study where people respect others and where harassment and bullying, intimidation and violence are not tolerated
- Prevent unlawful discrimination and victimisation
- Meet our legal obligations; and
- Take seriously and deal with situations where anyone has broken this policy.

The Board of Governors, through the Vice-Chancellor, has ultimate responsibility for making sure this policy is followed in full. Each manager will deliver the equality commitments in their areas of responsibility.

On a day-to-day basis, the Head of Health, Safety, EDI and Training and the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager work to put this policy into practice and ensure that the University meets its yearly reporting responsibilities under the public sector equality duty, as well as making sure that we regularly update this policy and update it as necessary to reflect UK equality law.

We expect all of our staff, students, contractors and visitors to keep to this policy and the associated policies referred to within it. We expect every member of our university community to promote a culture which is free from illegal discrimination and all forms of harassment and bullying. Failure to meet these responsibilities may lead to civil action or criminal proceedings against an individual or an institution (or both).

As part of the University's zero tolerance, we will act on every report of harassment, discrimination, bullying or behaviours that threaten to undermine someone's dignity, in the swiftest way possible. Should evidence be found that such an act has occurred, the University will take immediate appropriate action.

3.3 – Committees

The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee ensures that the University is meeting its targets under the University Equality Scheme and ensure the concerns of staff, students, contractors and visitors are reflected in University policy and practice.

All Faculties, and some Schools and departments, have their own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee which feeds into the University level committee. The University committee is made up of membership from all areas of the University including representatives from Trade Unions, UPSU and Staff Networks.

3.4 – Implementation

To ensure the University meets its obligations under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, the University will:

- Ensure that staff, students, contractors and visitors are aware of our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and related policies
- Monitor and report on progress against the University Equality Scheme via Annual Reports
- Consider equality, diversity and inclusion, in all policies, strategies and procedures to make sure that they promote equality and do not unlawfully discriminate;
- Ensure that our staff, students, visitors and contractors are provided with appropriate forums to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion issues and raise any concerns (this could be via committees, staff networks or trade unions)
- Provide a network of trained Dignity and Respect Advisors to provide confidential advice and guidance for staff, students, contractors and visitors
- Have procedures in place to support the fair appointment, promotion and development of staff
- Ensure our Access and Participation Plan (APP) reflects fair selection, teaching and assessment of students;
- Provide managers and employees with appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training and development both online and in-person



- Provide information on our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our job descriptions and student handbooks
- Ask for commitments from our suppliers and partners to make sure that they take steps to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and prevent discrimination; and
- Make sure there are suitable resources in place to enforce this policy effectively.

3.5 – University Equality Scheme

The University's Equality Scheme sets out the equality objectives that we are working to meet in line with our public sector equality duty. We report our progress on these objectives each year through an Annual Equality Report and Gender Pay Gap Report and bi-annually in an Equal Pay Report.

Progress against the Equality Scheme is also monitored by the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The University's Equality Scheme is reviewed every four years and refreshed as necessary to meet changes in equality legislation and sector best practice.

4. Complaints of discrimination

4.1 – Staff and contractors

If you are a member of staff or a contractor working on behalf of the University and believe that you have suffered any type of discrimination or harassment by a member of our university community then we take this incredibly seriously and we ask that you report this straight away. You can report this one of two ways:

- By following our Dignity and Respect Policy
- By reporting online via our Speak Up tool

4.2 – Students

If you believe that you have suffered any type of discrimination or harassment by a member of our University community, then we take this incredibly seriously and we ask that you report this straight away. You can report this one of two ways:

- By contacting Student Services using our Speak Up tool
- By requesting a Dignity and Respect Advisor

4.3 – Visitors/members of the public

If you are a visitor or a member of the public and believe you have suffered a type of discrimination or harassment then please email equality@plymouth.ac.uk with full details of the incident so we can investigate further.

4.4 – Hate crimes and hate incidents

An incident of bullying and/or harassment may constitute a hate crime or hate incident. The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviours where the alleged perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the alleged victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender status.

There are trained third-party hate crime reporters at the University and you can also report a hate crime or hate incident via Devon and Cornwall Police.



4.5 – Work-related violence/aggression

Work-related violence/aggression can be defined as any incident, in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a staff member, student or visitor in circumstances arising out of the course of their employment.

The University never tolerates work-related violence/aggression and any incidents should be reported in line with the [Violence and Aggression at Work Code of Practice](#). This document also outlines information on relevant post-traumatic support for staff.

4.6 – Reporting Anonymously

Staff, students, contractors and visitors can report incidents where they feel they have been discriminated against or harassed online, anonymously if they wish.

To report an incident online, go to www.plymouth.ac.uk/speak-up and click 'Report an incident'. The online reporting tool can be used to report behaviour from staff, students and external contractors. You can use it to report an incident on or off campus.

The tool will give you the option to report anonymously or provide your contact details. It is important to remember that we cannot act on an anonymous report as we will be unable to contact you to corroborate evidence. Even if you name an individual, we cannot take action without your details. We can, however, use your report to identify areas for concern and pass this onto Heads of Schools or Heads of Services with any identifying details removed.

5. Language and Terminology

5.1 – Adopted definitions

We recognise that prejudice and discrimination may arise and be reinforced by our use of language, which may not be neutral and free from personal bias. Words and phrases can be associated with negative attitudes and may unintentionally offend people, including members of groups that face prejudice, harassment or discrimination.

We expect every member of our university community to ensure that they do not use language that may cause offence to others. This includes when writing or speaking and in material that is published or sent by email or on social media.

Rather than tell people what language they can and can't use, we ask staff, students, contractors and visitors to be mindful of the language they use and to ensure they are aware of the University's [adopted definitions and terminology](#) on the University website.

5.2 – Social media

The use of social media is common for staff, students, contractors and visitors and we recognise that the material that appears on it can have a significant effect on people. Regardless of intent or the setting in which it occurs, hate speech and abusive language is not tolerated and individuals could be liable for disciplinary action under our Dignity and Respect Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

5.3 – Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is protected by law and the University encourages genuine academic debate within Higher Education. However, in line with the Equality Act (2010), the [University's Safeguarding Policy](#) and [UCU statement on academic freedom](#); individuals are not protected by academic freedom if engaging in abusive or hateful behaviour. This includes inciting violence or hatred in online spaces or attacking protected groups online or in person.

Should such behaviours be found to occur, the University will act in line with this Dignity and Respect Policy. This should not stifle genuine academic debate in genuine academic settings or publications.

6. Advertising and Information

Our advertisements and publications for employee and student recruitment will state our commitment to equality and diversity. We will work to make sure that the language and images used in all publications and written and electronic material is inclusive and does not discriminate.

We will clearly show the entry requirements for courses in our student prospectus and outline facilities available to students. Other details we send out to applicants will refer to our equality, diversity and inclusion policies wherever possible.

We will share information about job opportunities throughout the university and we will also advertise them outside the university unless there is a justifiable reason not to.

7. Support and Guidance

The below services are available to staff, students, contractors and visitors for further advice, guidance and support.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Staff, students, contractors and visitors can contact the EDI department confidentially for advice and support at any time via the following routes:

- Email: equality@plymouth.ac.uk
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/PlymUniEquality
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/PlymUniEquality

You can also access further information on independent support services, policy guidance and terminology used by visiting www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality

Dignity and Respect Advisors (Staff, contractors and students)

As stated previously in this policy, the University has a network of trained, confidential dignity and respect advisors who can act as a listening ear and go through your options with you. You can request an advisor confidentially by emailing equality@plymouth.ac.uk

Student Services (Students)

Students should contact Student Services for advice and support including mental health support. They can be contacted by visiting the Student Hub in the library or by emailing studentservices@plymouth.ac.uk. or calling them on 01752 587676



UPSU Advice (Students)

Impartial, confidential and free advice is available for students through the UPSU Advice Centre by visiting their website at www.upsu.com/advice to make an appointment or access online support.

Employee Assistance Programme (Staff)

The University has an employee assistance programme which is available to all staff. This services offers support and guidance as well as 24/7 telephone counselling, cognitive behaviour therapy and much more. You can access the EAP by visiting the [HR SharePoint site](#).

Staff Networks (Staff and postgraduate research students)

All staff have access to a wide-range of staff networks for peer support, support and guidance. Current staff networks include the LGBT+ Staff Forum, Women's Network, Menopause Network and Staff with Disabilities Network. You can join a network by visiting the [equality webpages](#). Membership of staff networks is confidential.

Trade Unions (Staff)

The University has several recognised trade unions of which staff can join. You can find out more via the [HR SharePoint site](#).

Appendix A – Examples

Included in Appendix A are examples of bullying, harassment, victimisation and more information on protected characteristics.

This document should also be read in conjunction with the University's agreed EDI definitions [available here](#) which includes information on homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, antisemitism, islamophobia, sexual violence and gender-based violence.

Bullying

Bullying can be described as threatening, abusive, intimidating, undermining or insulting behaviour that may be an abuse of power, position or knowledge. What one person may consider as bullying behaviour may be viewed as no more than firm management or strong personality by another and so may sometimes be difficult to define. However, inappropriate behaviour that leads to other people becoming stressed, demotivated or frightened is unacceptable.

Bullying can take many forms, and we consider all types to be equally serious and bullying also includes actions taken in online spaces such as social media. We have given a number of examples below:

- Overbearing supervision, shouting, or verbal, written, online or other published abuse.
- Abuse of power or behaviour that causes fear or distress for others.
- Academic bullying, for example, asserting a position of intellectual superiority in an aggressive, abusive or offensive way, including by electronic media (for example, by email or on social media).
- Deliberately undermining someone by not allocating work fairly or constantly criticising them.
- Inconsistent management style where some people are favoured more than others.
- Public ridicule, sarcasm or humiliation.

Harassment

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as being 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. The Equality Act 2010 bans the following three types of harassment:

1) Harassment related to the following 'protected characteristics' (as defined by the Equality Act 2010):

- Age;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Sex;
- Gender reassignment;
- Religion or belief;
- Sexual orientation.

2) Sexual harassment.

3) Treating an employee or student less favourably because they reject sexual harassment related to sex or gender reassignment or submits to it (tolerates it or allows it to happen).



Behaviour that is acceptable to one person may be unwanted by another. When assessing whether behaviour is harassment, we must look at if the behaviour, whether unintentional or deliberate, is unacceptable to the person on the receiving end and would be judged as harassment by any reasonable person. The word 'unwanted' means the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. The person the behaviour is directed toward does not have to expressly object to the behaviour before it is considered to be unwanted.

If the person responsible for the behaviour did not intend to create a negative environment, the behaviour will still be harassment if it has the effect of creating such an environment. When deciding whether behaviour has had a negative effect, we will take account of each of the following:

- The view of the person who made the complaint. For example, whether they feel the behaviour has created an intimidating environment.
- Whether it is reasonable for the behaviour to have the stated effect. This is an objective test.

Whether you are an employee or student, you can make a complaint of harassment if you find behaviour offensive and it relates to a protected characteristic. This applies even if the behaviour is not directed at you. You do not need to have the relevant characteristic yourself to make a complaint.

The Equality Act also protects people from harassment because of perception and association. This means it is still harassment even if the person does not have the characteristic but is wrongly considered to have the characteristic or is harassed because of their association with someone who has the characteristic, such as a family member, friend or partner.

Harassment may take many forms and includes behaviour related to a protected characteristic. However, harassment is not always related to any of the above. Examples of behaviour which is likely to be considered harassment are given below. This is not a full list, and we will view other forms of harassment equally seriously:

- Behaviour of a racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ageist, antisemitic or disablist nature.
- Any behaviour or abuse which may cause distress, such as name-calling, ridicule, insults, jokes, graffiti, physical abuse.
- Abuse through email, texts, websites or social media.
- Invading someone's personal space.
- Displaying offensive material. This can be on paper or electronically (for example, on social media).
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone (particularly because of that person's age, race, sex, disability, sexuality, religion or belief, or because they are transgender).
- Preventing other people from progressing by deliberately blocking their educational progress or training and development opportunities or promotion.
- Intentionally isolating or excluding someone.
- Persistent, unwelcome contact, which may include text messages, emails, phone calls, gifts, letters, and calling at a person's home or place of work or study.
- Stalking.



- Offensive sexual behaviour such as suggestive looks, leering and remarks (including on social media and electronic communication devices), offensive flirting, unwanted physical contact, unwanted sexual advances or demands for sex and compromising invitations.
- Offers of favourable treatment in return for sex (or threats of disadvantage if the person refuses).
- Making it public that someone is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender when they would prefer to keep this information private (known as 'outing').
- Making it public that someone has an underlying health condition without their consent (such as HIV)
- Drawing unwelcome attention to, or abusing someone's, religious beliefs including ethical veganism or a lack of religion/belief

Victimisation

Victimisation is when a person is mistreated because they have made, or intend to make, a complaint of discrimination (including harassment or bullying), or have helped another person to make a complaint under the Equality Act 2010 by providing evidence or information. Victimisation can count as unlawful discrimination and result in disciplinary action, regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

8. Document Governance

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|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TITLE | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy |
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HR Document Review History

| VERSION NO. | DATE OF CHANGE | ORIGINATOR OF CHANGE | DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | August 2016 | Equality Manager (Isabelle Moon) | Document created |
| 2 | June 2020 | EDI Manager (Andrew Grace) | Document updated to reflect new DR processes, committee processes, adopted definitions, academic freedom and anonymous reporting. |
| 2.1 | November 2020 | EDI Manager (Andrew Grace) | Wording in 'advertising and information' section amended. |
| 2.2 | March 2021 | EDI Manager (Andrew Grace) | Paragraph added into 'policy' section to clarify the use of 'gender reassignment'. |