

Equality and diversity policy

1 Introduction

The University of Southampton is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for our staff, and an excellent teaching and learning experience for our students. We aspire that staff are equally valued and respected, and students are encouraged to thrive academically. As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and students. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff. This is reflected in the core values of the University Strategy, which state the importance of:

- valuing, respecting and promoting the rights, responsibilities and dignity of individuals within all our professional activities and relationships
- equality of educational opportunity based on merit, irrespective of background, beliefs and socio-economic context

This equality and diversity policy provides for coordination and implementation at a strategic level and is supported by additional policies that provide for an integrated approach to equality and diversity University-wide¹.

2 Commitment to equality and diversity

We believe that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and students, enabling them to achieve their full potential, contribute fully and derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University.

To this end, we acknowledge the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of our community:

- to be treated with respect and dignity
- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices
- to be encouraged to reach one's full potential

These rights carry responsibilities and we require all members of our community to recognise these rights and act in accordance with them. In addition, we will comply with all relevant legislation and good practice.

No individual will be unjustly discriminated against. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

¹ All equality and diversity policies are published at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/diversity>.

3 Dealing with discrimination

We perceive bullying, harassment and victimisation of any individual as contradictory to our aspirations for a supportive working environment and will not be tolerated. Any allegations of such behaviour will be investigated, and ultimately disciplined, in accordance with the “Dignity at work and study policy”².

4 Responsibility

University Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that we operate within a framework of equality of opportunity.

The Vice Chancellor and members of the University Executive Group (UEG) have overall management responsibility, delegated to all managers throughout the University.

All members of staff and students have a duty to support and uphold the principles of our equality and diversity policy and its supporting policies.

5 Implementation

The Vice Chancellor appoints the Diversity Champion to oversee the development and execution of equality and diversity directives.

All committees and governance structures of the University have a responsibility to equality and diversity. We expect that, where applicable, Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted, while equality objectives are integrated into all work plans.

Our Diversity Team will also coordinate and maintain the Equality Plan, which defines how we will meet our legal obligations and equality business objectives.

² The “Dignity at work and study policy” is published at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/diversity/policies/dignity_at_work.page.