



Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Purpose and preamble

- 1.1 Bath Spa University College Students' Union in keeping with the intentions of its Constitution and the Equal Opportunities policy of the University, confirms a commitment to a comprehensive policy of Equal Opportunities within the Students' Union.
- 1.2 The Students' Union celebrates, promotes and values the diversity brought to its workforce and membership by individuals, and believes that the Students' Union will benefit from engaging membership and staff from a variety of backgrounds, thus allowing it to meet the needs of the membership within a diverse society. The Students' Union will treat all employees and members with respect and dignity, and seek to provide a working environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- 1.3 From time to time there will be a requirement to update this policy, this will be done at least every two years.
- 1.4 The Equal Opportunities Policy form an appendix to the constitution and in the event of any conflict the constitution is the overriding document of authority.

2. Short Policy Statement for Employees.

2.1 This policy is to ensure that the University College shows no prejudice or discrimination towards particular groups of individuals on the grounds of:

- Race.
- Gender
- Disability
- Other

2.2 Race.

The Students' Union believes in equal treatment of all human beings, regardless of their colour, race, nationality, birthplace, or religious or political views. It opposes any form of racial discrimination.

2.3 Gender.

The Students' Union will not discriminate on grounds of sex and will provide equality of opportunity for both men and women.

2.4 Disability.

The Students' Union will:

- not discriminate against disabled persons in recruitment, promotion, training, working conditions or dismissal
- make reasonable adjustments to working conditions or to the physical working environment where that would help overcome the practical effects of a disability
- justify any less favourable treatment of a disabled person by showing that the reason for such treatment is material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial.

2.5 Other.

The Students' Union will provide an environment of sensitivity and tolerance:

- To protect freedom of expression as an essential feature of an academic institution.
- Towards persons of known criminal record. This is strictly subject to legal requirements in general and in relation to people working with children in particular.
- To increase knowledge of and encourage positive attitudes towards illness and in particular towards AIDS.
- To avoid or eradicate prejudice and discrimination with regard to sexual orientation.
- To avoid or eradicate prejudice and discrimination with regard to gender assignment

3. Implementation of Policy.

The Students' Union Executive Committee will be responsible for implementation and promotion of the Equal Opportunities policy.

Every report of the EOC will be available for reference in site libraries.

3.1 Discipline.

The Students' Union will take all appropriate action to protect staff, students and visitors from racial abuse or attacks.

3.2 Training.

All staff, officers and representatives of the Students' Union will be given equal opportunities training.

4. Policy Statement.

4.1 Introduction.

Equal Opportunities are essential for an open and fair society in which social justice is a commonly understood and shared goal. In the context of higher education the term 'equal opportunities' implies a range of anti-discriminatory policies and practices covering employment, educational access, pedagogy and individual and collective behaviour. The purpose of this Statement is to define the general policy of Bath Spa University Students' Union with regard to equal opportunities and to describe the organisational structure which exists for the maintenance, monitoring and pursuit of equal opportunities.

This Statement of Policy is subject to various legislative requirements concerning discrimination, equal opportunities and the disclosure of information, and to the Students' Union's Constitution.

The Race Relations Act [1976], and the Sex Discrimination Acts [1975 and 1986] define two forms of discrimination:

- Direct Discrimination: This consists of treating a person on racial or sexual grounds less favourably than others in similar circumstances.
- Indirect Discrimination: This arises when particular actions have a disproportionate effect to the detriment of a particular racial or sexual group or where a condition or requirement cannot be shown to be justifiable irrespective of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin or sex of the person to whom it is applied.

The Disability Discrimination Act [1996] makes analogous demands to those found in the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act [1975] in that a person may not be directly or indirectly discriminated against because of some disability. However, the Disability Discrimination Act allows reasonable discrimination in certain circumstances.

The Disability Discrimination Act defines “a disability” relatively broadly. A disability is a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect” on an individual’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Thus, chronic backache, cancer, blindness, and ME are all examples of disabilities in terms of the Act.

The present Statement of Policy addresses equal opportunity issues in terms of the following categories:

- General
- Education and the Community
- Race
- Sex
- Disability
- Other
- Organisational Structure

The implementation and evaluation of Students' Union policy is discussed in separate documents and reports, issued by Students' Union staff, officers and representatives.

4.2 Policy Statements.

The following policy statements are designed to provide a framework which will direct and inform all aspects of Students' Union activity. In particular, they seek to provide a point of reference and a set of guidelines for employees and students of Bath Spa Students' Union in dealing with equal opportunities issues in the workplace and the teaching and learning environment.

4.3 General.

Bath Spa Student Union the promotion of equal opportunities throughout higher education and is opposed to any form of direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of colour, race or ethnic origin, nationality, birthplace, religion, sex, disability, age, social class and sexual orientation.

4.4.1 The Students' Union is committed to:

- Promoting a critical awareness towards, and the free discussion of, equal opportunities among its employees and students.
- Implementing a policy to meet these commitments.

4.4.1 Race.

The Students' Union, in adhering to the Race Relations Act of 1976, affirms its belief in, and commitment to the equal treatment of all persons, regardless of their colour, race, or ethnic origin, nationality, birthplace and religious views. It is opposed to any style or expression of racial or related discrimination.

The Students' Union is further committed to:

- Promoting understanding of the principles and practices of racial equality in a multi-cultural society.
- Monitoring and reviewing its practices, procedures and course provision to ensure that they are relevant to people of different races and cultures and are not liable to cause undue offence. Redressing the effects of racial disadvantage and injustice by encouraging the participation of under-represented ethnic groups in the planning, support of, delivery and consumption of its courses.
- Eliminating racist attitudes, language and imagery in the workplace, the teaching and learning environment, and in course materials, except where these expressions and materials have an acknowledged educational purpose.

4.4.3 Gender.

The Students' Union will adhere to the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Acts [1975 and 1986]. The provisions of the Acts apply to both women and men and make it unlawful to discriminate against a woman or a man on the grounds of sex or marriage with regard to employment and training, and the provision of goods and services to the public.

The Students' Union is further committed to:

- Promoting understanding of the principles and practices of sex equality.
- Monitoring and reviewing its practices, procedures and course provision to ensure that they are free from unwarranted sex or gender bias.
- Countering the marginalisation of either women or men, and stereotyping on the basis of gender, by encouraging the participation of under-represented sexual groups in the planning, support of, delivery and consumption of its courses.
- Discouraging and eliminating, sexist attitudes, language and imagery in the workplace, the teaching and learning environment and in course materials, except where these expressions and materials have an acknowledged educational purpose.

4.4.4 Disability.

The Students' Union will seek to meet its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (1996).

In seeking to fulfil this responsibility the Students' Union will:

- Give full and fair consideration to disabled people applying for jobs, having regard to their particular aptitudes and abilities, and the possibility of adjusting any job description or physical working environment which would allow an otherwise relevantly strong disabled candidate to undertake the post.
- Continue, where reasonably possible, the employment of persons who become disabled while working for the Students' Union by making any necessary, but reasonable, adjustments to the physical working environment or job descriptions and arranging training for them where appropriate.
- Provide for the training of disabled employees to the extent that it is provided to non-disabled employees and in addition to provide any training which would allow them to overcome any relevant workplace impairment.
- Provide for the career development and promotion of disabled employees.

The Students' Union is further committed to:

- Promoting understanding and awareness of disabled people in the community through training and by addressing this subject in appropriate segments of its course provision
- Monitoring and reviewing its practices, courses and general services to ensure that they are appropriate for, and accessible to disabled people.
- Working against the potential isolation of disabled people by encouraging the participation of disabled people in the planning, support of, delivery and consumption of its courses.

4.4.5 Other...

In addition to Race, Gender, and Disability, there are other areas where equal opportunities may be a matter for legitimate concern and discussion and which require sensitivity and tolerance of approach by employees of the Students' Union and its membership.

The Students' Union is committed to extending and developing that sensitivity and tolerance in its employment and membership recruitment practices with regard to inter alia:

- The avoidance of discrimination in terms of age and particularly with regard to elderly persons.
- The avoidance of discrimination on the basis of 'experience', where this term is not defined clearly as a criterion of employment or membership requirements.
- Knowledge of and attitude towards illness and, in particular, towards AIDS.
- The avoidance of discrimination against persons because of their sexual orientation.
- The protection of freedom of speech and expression within the terms of the law and the spirit of this policy statement as essential features of a healthy Students' Union.
- The Monitoring of Equal Opportunities.
- The Students' Union is committed to the monitoring and pursuit of equal opportunities. Currently this is carried out by the Equal Opportunities Officer and Membership Services Manager reporting to the Executive Committee.

4.4.6 Conclusion: Beyond Structures.

The Students' Union recognises the existence of a larger instrument for the pursuit of equal opportunities, namely, its staff and students. It is therefore committed to encouraging the involvement of all persons connected with the Students' Union in the formulation, development and implementation of its equal opportunities policies.

The Students' Union also undertakes to make this Statement of Policy available to all members and prospective members of staff and to all students registered for courses

5. Summary of Codes of practice

- **Clubs and Societies** –
 - The conduct and activities of clubs and societies shall be monitored to ensure that they are in keeping with the ethos and provision of this policy.

- **Harassment –**
 - The Students' Union recognises the right of all individuals to live free from harassment and victimisation.
 - The Students' Union will fully support those who have been subject to harassment. Perpetrators of harassment may be liable to disciplinary action.
- **Posters and Publications –**
 - All posters and publications displayed or distributed through the Students' 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. Positive images should be used wherever possible.
- **Language –**
 - The Students' Union recognises the role of language in the shaping and definition of attitudes and behaviour. As such, the Students' Union endorses the use of non-discriminatory language in all Students' Union literature, and in everyday usage whilst on Union premises. This will also apply when the Students' Union is represented off the premises.
- **Developments –**
 - Any alterations or new developments to Students' Union Premises should be made with the requirements of people with special needs in mind, to ensure continued/improved ease of access for all.
- **Monitoring –**
 - The Students' Union should investigate procedures to allow the monitoring of services and activities within the Union under the provisions of this policy.
 - Monitoring statistics should be considered by the Executive Committee on an annual basis. If there are any indications that members of any group have received less favourable treatment than members of others, the situation must be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- **Complaints –**
 - Any complaints of unfair treatment in accordance with this policy should be referred to the Students' Union President or Equal Opportunities Officer. Investigation and appropriate action will be taken as determined by the Executive Committee.
 - An annual report on complaints received should be made available
- **General –**
 - The Students' Union must satisfy itself that all agencies within the Students' Union are operating in accordance with this policy.
 - All outside organisations which operate with the Union should be made aware as to the Students' Union's Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Practice, and encouraged to act in accordance with them.
 - The Students' Union will continue to be active members of the University Equal Opportunities Advisory Group and will campaign to raise awareness on equal opportunity issues.
 - The Students' Union will strive to represent the needs of the individuals/groups of students through appropriate channels, to the relevant bodies, to ensure that their needs are met.

6. Appendix.

The Legal Framework:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1996
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986
- The Data Protection Act 1984
- Access to Medical Reports Act 1998
- DES, DHSS and Welsh Office, Joint Circular 12/88 (Protection of Children: Disclosure of Criminal Background of those with Access to Children)
- Reports and Documents of Related Interest
- BSUC, Equal Opportunity Policy (1989)
- BSUC, Implementing and Evaluating Equal Opportunities (1990)
- BSUC, Equal Opportunities: A Strategic Action Plan (1990)
- Equal Opportunities Commission, From Policy to Practice: An Equal Opportunities Strategy for the 1990's (1988)
- Williams et al, (Commission for Racial Equality), Words or Deeds: A Review of Equal Opportunity Policies in Higher Education (1989)

Approved by:

on:

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Person responsible for review: President

Committee responsible for implementation: Executive Committee

Person responsible for interpretation: President