



University of Wolverhampton Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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POLICY

1. Introduction

To a university like Wolverhampton, which has a proud record of serving its communities going back over 180 years, the issues of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are of paramount importance. As the University of Opportunity, it is crucial that we do everything we can to enable all individuals to succeed. This is not simply about promoting acceptance of equal opportunity for all, that is giving everyone the identical opportunity but is more about recognising the different journeys people have in front of them, understanding and meeting their needs.

Our vision is to create an inclusive work and study environment. That is where the talents, skills and voices of different groups are heard and valued. As well as where the human rights principles of fairness, respect, equality, and dignity are promoted and are part of the University's everyday goals and behaviour.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is to define the University's approach to inclusivity in the work and study place. Setting out guidelines and explaining to staff and students how discrimination will be dealt with. In addition, we are demonstrating compliance with equalities legislation, primarily the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.2 Principles & Policy Statement

The University of Wolverhampton (hereafter 'the University') is fully committed to the advancement of equality and the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. It values the benefits that a diverse student and staff population brings to the university. The University will treat all people with respect and seeks to provide a positive environment free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation (appendix 2)

The University will not discriminate on the grounds of the following protected characteristics based on the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins),
- Religion or belief,
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

The implementation of this policy is in accordance with the University's values and behaviours which are that employee be:

- **Ambitious;** we are imaginative, confident, innovative and deliver excellence.
- **Resilient;** we have a positive outlook; we are adaptable and recover from setbacks.
- **Inclusive;** we are welcoming, respectful, collegiate, and supportive.
- **Accountable;** we take pride in what we do and how we do it, take responsibility for our actions and operate with transparency and integrity.

The University also undertakes the following commitments based on protected characteristics (highlighted above):

- We will have a zero-tolerance policy, which is any abuse, harassment, or bullying (for example, name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions) will not be tolerated. All allegations of harassment and bullying will be promptly and thoroughly investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action taken, in line with the University's Grievance policy.
- Any propaganda, in the form of written materials, inappropriate music, graffiti or speeches, will not be tolerated. The University undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.
- Students will not be denied access to courses, progression to other courses, or fair and equal treatment while on courses due to their protected characteristics, unless justifiable and legitimate restrictions exist.
- The curriculum will be examined and adapted where appropriate to ensure that it is delivered and developed in a way that it is inclusive. This will include ensuring that it does not rely on or reinforce stereotypical assumptions based on protected characteristics.
- The University will ensure that its environment, in terms of its pictures, images, publicity materials and literature, reflects the diversity of its staff and students.
- Equality and Diversity issues will be addressed explicitly within performance management and staff/student reward schemes.
- The University will respect the confidentiality of all staff and students and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual.
- Where data analysis identifies ongoing and significant disparities between the experiences, outcomes or perceptions of students and staff from protected characteristics compared to others the University will seek to address the issues.
- Ensure that all our policies, for example recruitment and selection, training, and development, as well as staff consultation and participation are inclusive. To ensure the voices of all our diverse staff and students are heard.
- Provide reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 for staff and students.
- Identify and address institutional, structural, and cultural inequalities to ensure both staff and students can reach their full potential.
- Ensuring all staff and students are treated with respect and dignity in a safe environment.
- Work towards creating a diverse workforce that reflects local demographics and our student population, at all levels within the University.
- Ensure all decision-making is inclusive and based on objective criteria only and any irrelevant information will not form part of the process.

We also recognise that there are also specific issues related to some protected characteristics, and these are added as an appendix to this policy (Appendix 1).

The University will take active steps to promote good practice. It will, in line with the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

As well, it will:

- Subject its policies to continuous assessment (equality impact assessments) to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
- Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of university equalities objectives.
- Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
- Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all employees of the University, including employees on casual and fixed term contracts.

2.1 Any breach of this policy as well as individual behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and where appropriate will be dealt with in line with the University's Grievances policy and procedure.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Corporate

The University People and Culture Committee shall monitor that the University is fulfilling its corporate obligations.

3.2 Managers

Managers have a duty of care for all their staff, which includes a duty to prevent harassment, bullying and unfair discrimination taking place. Managers are required to:

- Set examples and standards of behaviour in the workplace to help build inclusivity into the culture.
- Ensure their staff are familiar with this policy (for example during staff induction into Faculty/Directorate).
- Deal with any unacceptable behaviour in their teams and make it clear to staff that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

3.3 Members of Staff and Students

All staff and students have a responsibility not to discriminate against or harass other staff and students and anyone accessing our service. Staff and students should feel confident to challenge discrimination and/or report any unacceptable behaviour that comes from any person whether they be a member of university staff, student body or clients, visitors, or employees of other organisations, to their manager or Human Resources. Both staff and students can also report via the University's Incident reporting tool, which also gives the option of doing so anonymously (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/equality-and-diversity/incident-reporting/>). We are committed to managing all complaints sensitively and confidentially.

Staff and students have a responsibility to act in a manner appropriate to this policy during their study or employment, and to uphold the principles of fairness and equality in all aspects of their behaviour.

3.4 Human Resources

Human Resources has responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the policy and ensuring that all related

policies, procedures, and practices adhere to this policy.

We will monitor the treatment and outcomes of any complaints we receive to make sure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified, and workforce training is targeted where needed.

4. Training

All staff must undergo mandatory on-line equality, diversity, and inclusion training. This covers our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 as well as defining all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The training refers to this policy. We also have mandatory unconscious bias training. Both on-line training courses are repeated on an annual basis and staff are reminded via email. The completion of the mandatory training is linked to the staff 'My DPD' process. Other training or programmes linked to EDI are:

- 'Respect and dignity in the workplace' training. This has been delivered to our staff in Estates and Facilities (Catering, security, cleaning, maintenance, and caretakers) and it will be rolled out to all staff at the University.
- A reverse mentoring programme, which is one in which staff with protected characteristics, use their lived experience of working at the University to mentor senior staff.
- An online 'Let's Talk About Race in the Workplace' training course.

All training will be made available in a range of formats according to the needs of the trainee and different groups of staff, students, and others.

5. Legal Obligations

The University will meet all legal and statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements related to this policy. This will be informed by:

- The Equality Act (2010) and associated secondary and updated legislation.
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008).
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006).
- The Civil Partnership Act (2004).
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004).
- Criminal Justice Act (2003).
- The Human Rights Act (1998).
- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997).
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

In addition, this will be informed by the Codes of Practice or Guidance, issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other relevant bodies. These Codes are not legally binding (though they are admissible as evidence in Employment Tribunals), and the University supports them fully.

There are no exceptions to this policy.

6. Amendments

This Policy was approved by the University's Executive Board and the People and Culture Committee on XXX 2025. The University may change this Policy at any time, and where appropriate to reflect changes in the law, demographics, and internal requirements.

7. Information and resources

For general queries, please contact:

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VERSION	1.0 (08/02/2022)	AUTHOR/OWNER	Associate Director Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
Approved Date	07/01/2025	Approved By	University Executive Board
Review Date	07/02/2027		

Appendix 1

Policy Statement on Age Equality

Age discrimination is when you are treated differently because of your age in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act.

The Equality Act 2010 says that you must not be discriminated against because:

- You are (or are not) a certain age or in a certain age group.
- Someone thinks you are (or are not) a specific age or age group, this is known as discrimination by perception.
- You are connected to someone of a specific age or age group, this is known as discrimination by association.
- Age groups can be quite wide (for example, 'people under 50' or 'under 18s'). They can also be quite specific (for example, 'people in their mid-40s'). Terms such as 'young person' and 'youthful' or 'elderly' and 'pensioner' can also indicate an age group.

A difference in treatment may be lawful if:

- Belonging to a particular age group is essential for a job: this is called an occupational requirement. For example, a film company making a film of Oliver Twist may lawfully hire a young boy to play Oliver.
- An organisation is taking positive action to encourage or develop people in an age group that is under-represented or disadvantaged in a role or activity.
- Your employer has set a compulsory retirement age that it can clearly justify in respect of your role: this is known as objective justification.
- The circumstances fall under one of the exceptions to the Equality Act that allow organisations to provide different treatment in employment or services based on age.

Policy Statement on Disability Equality

Disability is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 and is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to conduct normal day-to-day activities.

People who are neurodivergent may meet this definition of disability and be defined as disabled people for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Where we mention disability, this includes people who are neurodivergent.

Neurodivergence is a natural variation in the human brain from that which can be described as neurotypical. Neurodivergence can include, though not limited to, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Learning disabilities, Anxiety disorders, Obsessive-compulsive disorder, Tourette's syndrome, each with different abilities and challenges.

The term 'disabled people' is the preferred term within the University's Disabled Staff Network. It is therefore the term of preference for university communications. The University acknowledges that many people do not define themselves as 'disabled.' Where staff or students choose not to identify under the disability label but fit within the description of a disabled person under the Equality Act 2010, they are still included within this policy.

The University undertakes the following.

- Disability-related abuse, harassment, or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

- Disablist propaganda, in the form of written materials, inappropriate music, graffiti or speeches, will not be tolerated. The University undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.
- The University recognises that disabled staff and students come from diverse backgrounds, and many face the possibility of multiple discrimination. It will therefore strive to ensure they do not face discrimination on the grounds of disability or in relation to other aspects of their identity, for example, their race, age, gender identity, religion, or sexual orientation.
- The University will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish their status as a disabled person to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their disability, impairment, or health. To 'out' someone, whether staff or student, without their permission is a form of harassment and a criminal offence.
- The University will seek to anticipate the needs of disabled people and make reasonable adjustments. Some adjustments are, however, dependent on the University knowing that a member of staff or student is disabled. Such potential limitations on the University's ability to make adjustments, will be highlighted to staff and students to assist them in making informed decisions on disclosure.
- Staff and students undergoing medical procedures related to impairment or ill health will receive positive support from the University to meet their needs during this period.
- Procedures to monitor and manage student / staff absence will take account of absence for disability-related reasons.
- Having consulted with disabled staff and students and organisations of disabled people, the University will include disability issues in internal attitudinal surveys, and when monitoring complaints of harassment.
- In providing accommodation for students, any disability-related issues or concerns raised by disabled students will be managed by the accommodation office and will be treated fairly and in line with the University's obligations under equality law.

Policy Statement on Sex Equality

Sex is the protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 however, this is often referred to as 'gender', such as when we describe the gender pay gap. Concepts such as gender or gender identity are not encoded in the Act and can be understood in different ways, and we are required to undertake our assessments based on the protected characteristic itself. This policy statement outlines the University's approach to ensure that none of its staff, students and visitors are a victim of sex discrimination.

The University is a committed member of the Athena Swan Charter Mark. As such it accepts the key principles of the Charter and seeks to reflect them in its work.

The University undertakes the following:

- Sexist abuse, harassment, or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.
- Sexist propaganda, in the form of written materials, inappropriate music, graffiti or speeches, will not be tolerated. The University undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.
- The University will encourage male staff and students to proactively support the cause of sex equality, and to push themselves to better understand the unique challenges facing women students and staff members.
- In providing accommodation for students, any concerns or issues related to this protected characteristic raised by students will be managed by the accommodation office and will be treated fairly and in line with the University's obligations under equality law.
- The University will provide single sex spaces as allowed for under exemptions in the Act.

Policy Statement on Gender Reassignment Equality

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. Within the Equality Act 2010, reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. The law uses 'transsexual' to describe people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. **Many people consider this term outdated and prefer to use 'transgender' or 'trans'.** (<https://www.acas.org.uk/gender-reassignment-discrimination>).

Non-binary people – a non-binary person is someone who does not see themselves as exclusively a man or a woman.

The University is fully committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, including harassment and victimisation, on the grounds of gender reassignment. The University also recognises that it is up to everyone how they choose to express their gender identity, and that the University should take all appropriate steps to facilitate this self-expression.

Support for Gender Reassignment

We support employees who are undergoing gender reassignment by providing the necessary resources and accommodations to facilitate their transition. This includes access to medical leave for surgeries, therapies, and other gender-related medical procedures, as well as flexibility in work hours for appointments and consultations.

We also have several Gender neutral (Unisex) toilets across all our facilities.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We respect the privacy of all employees undergoing gender reassignment. All personal information related to an individual's gender identity or reassignment process will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed with the explicit consent of the individual. Employees have the right to decide how and when they wish to share information regarding their gender identity and transition with colleagues or management.

Policy Statement on Race Equality

'Race' is identified as a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010, covering colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins. Where this policy uses the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E)' it has in mind all staff and students who identify with a non-White ethnicity. When it uses the term 'Other Ethnic Minority' it has in mind non-B.A.M.E staff and students who self-identify as belonging to an "ethnic minority".

The University recognises that Jewish and Muslim people experience prejudice and discrimination due to the intersection of religious faith and race. It is committed to combating Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Where this Policy Statement refers to prohibiting racist acts or racism, this includes all Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic acts of that type. The University defines Anti-Semitism as a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. The University defines Islamophobia as being rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

The University is a committed member of the Race Equality Charter Mark, gaining a bronze award in October 2020. As such it accepts the key principles of the Charter and seeks to reflect them in its work on gender equality.

The University undertakes the following.

- Racist abuse, harassment, or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy.
- Racist propaganda, in the form of written materials, inappropriate music, graffiti or speeches, will not be tolerated. The University undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.

Policy Statement on Antisemitism

As the University of Opportunity, we support all initiatives that seek to tackle prejudice and discrimination. It recognises the IHRA definition as supporting the University's existing policies on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, reinforcing the message that antisemitism will not be tolerated and will have due regard to the definition when considering any allegation raised.

The University Dignity and Work and Study Policy also makes it clear that the University is intent on promoting a positive culture for working and studying in which all members of the University's community treat each other with dignity, respect and where inappropriate behaviour including any form of discrimination, harassment and bullying is handled appropriately.

The University holds a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discrimination or intimidation towards any religion or belief.

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism is:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities".

The University has also included the following clarifications "to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained in the context of discourse about Israel and Palestine, without allowing antisemitism to permeate any debate," as recommended by the Home Affairs Select Committee:

"It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent. It is not anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli government's policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent."

The IHRA definition does not affect the legal definition of racial discrimination, so does not change our approach to meeting our legal duties and responsibilities, including the University's commitment to uphold freedom of speech.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, Universities, the workplace, and in the religious sphere can be found at: [What is antisemitism? | IHRA \(holocaustremembrance.com\)](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/what-is-antisemitism/)

Policy Statement on Sexual Orientation Equality

'Sexual Orientation' is identified as a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010, covering the sex(s) someone is sexually attracted to. Where this policy uses the term 'LGB' it is intended to cover people who do not define themselves as heterosexual. This policy does not cover trans people except where they also identify within the LGB term.

The University undertakes the following.

- Homophobic or biphobia abuse, harassment, or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy.
- Homophobic or biphobia propaganda, in the form of written materials or inappropriate music, graffiti or speeches, will not be tolerated. The University undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.
- The University will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish their sexual orientation to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexual orientation.

Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) came into effect on 26th October 2024; The amendment (Section 40A) places a new legal duty on all UK employers to take "reasonable steps" to prevent the sexual harassment of their employees in the course of their employment.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Unwanted means unwelcome or uninvited. It reflects the employee's view and means unwanted by them. It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature in the past.

Some examples are:

- Unwanted physical conduct including touching.
- Continued suggestions for sexual activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are Unwelcome.
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour.
- Sending or displaying material that is sexual (including emails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet).
- Banter of a sexual nature.

A person may be sexually harassed even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be sexually harassed by pornographic images displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace or by overhearing colleagues' boasting about their sexual conquests.

A person may experience sexual harassment because of conduct of a sexual nature that they find unwanted, even if it was not intended to have that effect by the person doing it. For example, whilst a joke may have been intended to be inoffensive, it may be offensive to the recipient and if it is of a sexual nature, this may amount to sexual harassment.

Third-party sexual harassment occurs where a person is sexually harassed by someone who is not employed by us or is under our control but with whom they have come into contact during their employment.

Third-party harassment could include, for example, unwelcome sexual advances from a supplier visiting our premises, or where employees are visiting third party premises in the course of their employment. The law requires us to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties and we will not tolerate third party harassment either by a third party to our staff or by our staff to a third party.

We will take the following reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at the University:

- Conduct regular risk assessment to identify where our staff may be exposed to sexual harassment by other members of staff or by third parties; <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/SH%20Checklist.pdf>
- Update the Safeguarding staff and students -[Sexual-Misconduct-and-Harassment-](#)

[Framework.pdf \(wlv.ac.uk\)](#)

- Implement training programmes for all staff and students to ensure they recognise behaviours that may amount to sexual harassment, understand how we expect them to behave towards the people they meet and how to complain if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviour.
- Encourage staff and students to report incidents and deal with complaints in line with the EDI policy.

Appendix 2

Terminology

Direct discrimination

This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people's memories get worse as they get older so does not tell one of his older employees about it, because he thinks the employee would not be able to do the job.

Indirect discrimination

This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example, a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.

Harassment

This means people cannot treat you in a way that violates your dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that you find offensive, where the other person's behaviour is because:

- You have a protected characteristic.
- There is any connection with a protected characteristic (for example, you are treated as though you have a particular characteristic, even if the other person knows this is not true).

Unwanted behaviour could include:

- Spoken or written abuse
- Offensive emails
- Tweets or comments on websites and social media
- Images and graffiti
- Physical gestures
- Facial expressions
- Banter that is offensive to you

Anything that is unwelcome to you is unwanted. You do not need to have previously objected to it.

The unwanted behaviour must have the purpose or effect of violating your dignity, or creating a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment for you.

To be unlawful, the treatment must have happened in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act. For example, in the workplace or when you are receiving goods or services.

Victimisation

This means people cannot treat you unfairly if you are acting under the Equality Act (like making a complaint of discrimination), or if you are supporting someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at work and is dismissed as a consequence.

This is treating someone badly because they have done a 'protected act,' or because an employer, service provider or other organisation believes that you have done or are going to do a protected act. The reason for the treatment does not need to be linked to a protected characteristic.

A protected act is:

- Bringing proceedings under the Act
- Giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings brought under the Act.
- Making an allegation (whether express or not) that another person has done something in breach of the Act.
- Doing anything which is related to the provisions of the Act.