

# University of Bath Students' Union Equality and Diversity Policy

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## Introduction

The University of Bath Students' Union (Bath SU) is committed to ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all members, staff and visitors. The purpose of this policy is to formalise our commitment to equality and diversity and to establish a framework for achieving our equality duties. This is in line with our core value of Inclusivity.

## Background

### Current Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates previous anti-discrimination legislation and introduces new measures that have direct implications for higher education institutions. The aim of the act is to harmonise discrimination law whilst strengthening the law to support progress on equality.

The Act prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation by people who supply services. Customers are protected both when requesting a service and during the course of being provided with a service (section 29)

The grounds on which discrimination is unlawful are called "protected characteristics" and are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race
- Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

### Definitions

The Act uses defined terms. Their meanings are as follows:

#### Discrimination

- i) Direct Discrimination (section 13)

Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats one person less favourably than they would another because of a protected characteristic.

- ii) Indirect Discrimination (section 19)

When a provision, criterion or practice is neutral in the face of it, but its impact particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **Harassment (section 26)**

The Act outlines three types of harassment:

- Unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant, or violating the complainant's dignity
- Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature
- Treating a person less favourably than another person because they have either submitted to, or did not submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

The perceptions of the recipient of the harassment are very important and harassment can have been deemed to have occurred even if the intention was not present, but the recipient felt they were being harassed. Intentions and understanding will be taken into account in any disciplinary procedures.

### **Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation**

Bath SU actively opposes discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any kind. No person that comes into contact with Bath SU will be discriminated against on any grounds, including but not limited to age, race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, skin colour, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, HIV status, physical appearance, political belief, medical status, social or financial status, family responsibility, or trans- status.

Bath SU is in favour of freedom of expression, and respects the decisions of all members. Bath SU aims to create an environment which is free from discrimination, repression or harassment both in union venues and at union-run events through the enforcement of this policy and through supporting staff and student groups to uphold this. Bath SU works in partnership with the University of Bath and adheres to the following policy - Dignity and Respect Policy (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/equalities/policiesandpractices/dignityandrespectpolicy.pdf>).

### **Bath SU Equality Duties**

- Bath SU works in partnership with the University of Bath on the Equality Objectives - <http://www.bath.ac.uk/equalities/policiesandpractices/EqualityObjectives.pdf>
- All efforts shall be made to ensure that all events and parts of SU buildings are physically accessible, and that anyone is able to access employment, activities, transport, and events wherever possible.
- Any publication, online or hard copy, shall be as accessible as possible following national guidelines, the advice available online here: <http://www.bathstudent.com/staff/communications/design/access/> and in consultation with Marketing and Communications

- Disclosure - as in the Equality Act 2010, all individuals have the right not to disclose any disabilities, but if they do will not be treated less favourably
- Bath SU is committed to working with Investors in Diversity, and maintaining the standard achieved for a holistic approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Investors in Diversity Action Plan will be maintained and revisited to ensure that annual targets are met and actions are taken.
- All student groups will be encouraged to aim for equality and diversity accreditation, including the Clubmark for sports clubs and a union-wide accreditation scheme that will examine, alongside other requirements, how accessible the group is for different types of students. A basic level of accessibility in line with this policy is required but all areas of the SU should make any reasonable adjustments for any other situations that occur.
- All staff and Student Officers will have Equality and Diversity training, and student leaders will be supported in accessing the same or similar materials.
- All social events must be inclusive and available to a diverse range of students, following guidance outlined in the Social Events policy.
- The Advice and Representation Centre is a 3rd Party Hate Crime Reporting Centre. Individuals can report hate crime here.
- Any complaints a student wishes to make can be made to the SU President, or staff to the Chief Executive of the Student's Union. Full details of the process are included in the Students' Union Articles of Governance.
- Annual participation reports will be produced across all areas of the SU to see whether certain groups have lower levels of participation than average, and to ascertain whether there exist any barriers which may be causing a discrepancy.

## **Employment**

Bath SU staff are employed by the University of Bath and Bath SU adheres to all University of Bath employment policies - <http://www.bath.ac.uk/equalities/policiesandpractices/index.html>

## **Responsibilities**

### **The Senior Management Team/Student Officer Team**

The SMT and the Student Officers Team has responsibility for ensuring the effective development, implementation and monitoring of Equality and Diversity within Bath SU and for ensuring all managers, student officers and student leaders are trained effectively and implement the policy.

### **Managers**

All managers are responsible for ensuring the policy and action plan is implemented and maintained in their own areas/services and activities; ensuring all staff are informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry them out and taking appropriate action against staff and students that contravene the policy.

### **Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to ensure their actions comply with the policy, namely to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups and protected characteristics.

**Student Leaders**

All student leaders have a responsibility to attend training as appropriate and to ensure all activities adhere to this policy.