

# University of Bath Students' Union Inclusivity Award

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*“Diverse means different. We are all different, therefore diversity includes us all”*

National Centre for Diversity

Bath SU prides itself on being an inclusive institution – one of our values is to be inclusive. To help our Student Groups with providing an inclusive offer for our diverse membership, we have created the University of Bath Students' Union Inclusivity Award.

We know that everyone is different, and it is our differences that make our Union great. We have identified student demographics that may experience certain barriers to getting involved in their Students' Union. By signing up to this Award, you are committing to removing these barriers and making your student group as accessible as possible.

This Award is more than just a tick box exercise – we are hoping to create lasting cultural changes in our Student Groups, where inclusivity is embedded in everything you do.

## How it Works

Undertaking the Bath SU Inclusivity Award is a commitment from you to ensuring all students, no matter their background, are welcomed and able to join your activities.

The Award works on an annual cycle and follows these stages:

1. During handover you sign up to the Award
2. We send you all the information you need to create an action plan for the year
3. Submit your action plan by 31<sup>st</sup> August
4. Subject to your written action plan, you will be awarded 'Working Towards the Inclusivity Award'
5. Put your plan in to action
6. Submit an update on your progress before the Christmas break
7. Continue with your action plan
8. Submit a report on your achievements by 1<sup>st</sup> April
9. Subject to your achievements, you will receive the Inclusivity Award
10. Continue to identify areas of improvement and strive to maintain your high levels of inclusivity

You will be supported through the entire process, from the point you sign up, when creating your action plan, completing your action plan, and beyond. Once you achieve the Award your continued commitment will be reviewed annually.

## What do I need to do?

The Bath SU Inclusivity Award is a long-term commitment to removing barriers to participation. Simply by following our template you can identify which barriers exist in your Student Group and plan how you will remove these. Not every barrier will be present in every group, and some barriers you may not be able to overcome. Some barriers will be a quick and easy fix (e.g. providing regular alcohol free events, especially socials); others may be part of a 3 year plan (e.g. challenging stereotypes around trans- students).

By signing up to this Award you are committing to reducing or removing as many of these barriers as possible, and embedding a culture of inclusivity in your Student Group. It doesn't matter if you are a Society with 30 members or the largest Sport Club; if you are Student Media or part of Enterprise Bath, everyone can make this commitment.

To achieve this Award you will need to demonstrate a commitment to enabling all students to actively participate in your Student Group.

### *Perceptions of Discrimination*

Some students may fear that a certain activity of club will expose them to discrimination. Perceptions of discrimination and stigma are a key element to overcome for all groups. Discrimination may not exist in your club, but if students think they will be targeted negatively then this is a huge barrier for many people. You will need to actively show that you do not tolerate discrimination within your club, and promote what you are doing to tackle it.

What students perceive is key in this. What one person sees as a joke could be interpreted by another as a hurtful and derogatory comment. It is your responsibility to be aware of other people's feelings and how the actions of you and your members may affect other students. It is your responsibility to change how you behave and influence your members if their actions are threatening or discouraging to other students.

### *LGBT Students (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-)*

Bath SU has a very prominent and active LGBT support group, and this is fantastic support and social network for LGBT students and their friends. However, there remains the fear of discrimination and homophobia in some groups. Mixed gender activities and gender neutral facilities (e.g. toilets, changing rooms) may be missing from your student group and make some students feel uncomfortable.

### *Disabled Students (Physical disability, mental health, learning difficulties, other conditions)*

The most obvious barrier when people think of disabled students is wheelchair access. This is only one issue that affects only a small proportion of disabled students. There may exist a stigma that those with disabilities cannot participate in your activity. Some disabled students cannot commit to long periods of activity or late nights. Often a disability may result in someone having low self-esteem, or they may be reluctant to reveal their disability for fear of stigma related to it. Some students will need specific support or assistance – it is important that you create an atmosphere where they feel comfortable approaching the committee to discuss their individual needs.

### *Black and Ethnic Minority Students (BME)*

BME students may experience feelings of isolation as a result of few or no role models or peers in your Student Group. They may fear discrimination, both in your group and from

future employers, and therefore focus on activities more obviously or directly linked to improving their employability.

### *Women*

Female students may have to overcome a fear of lad culture or sexual harassment to partake in your activities. There may be a lack of role models who could encourage more women to be involved in your student group.

### *Postgraduates*

Postgraduate students often have very different timetables to Undergraduates. They may not have Wednesday afternoons free, and due to their workload may struggle to make regular or long (e.g. weekend trip) commitments.

### *Mature Students*

Mature students may feel alienated from Student Groups due to the age difference, or may feel patronised by some events that are organised.

### *Part-time Students*

Part-time students are less likely to be able to commit large amounts of time, and may struggle with regular commitments. They may commute to Bath and have travel requirements for getting to and from events.

### *Student Parents*

Childcare and child-friendly events are important factors for student parents. The cost of participation is likely to be increased if they need to arrange for childcare. They are also less likely to be able to participate at short notice.

### *Students who avoid alcohol*

Your Student Group may have few or no alcohol-free events, especially socials. Some students prefer to avoid places where alcohol is served or consumed. Others may fear discrimination if they are not drinking alcohol at an event.

### *Students of Faith or Belief*

Due to religious commitments, some students may have limited free time to commit. They may feel uncomfortable in certain situations e.g. where alcohol is consumed or where there is nudity.

### *International Students*

There may be language barriers for some international students, and they may be unfamiliar with UK culture. They may also prefer to focus on activities which are more obviously linked to improving their employability.

### *Students from low socio-economic backgrounds*

The initial and ongoing cost of participation may be a barrier for some students. They may be struggling financially and so are working part-time, meaning they cannot commit as much time to Student Groups.

Many students face barriers to participation – some of these barriers are shared by many students. This Award empowers you to actively overcome the barriers that exist in your Student Group. It may be sensible for you to focus on a few specific areas each year rather than try to tackle every barrier in one go.

This Award is not about meeting quotas or targeting specific students to join your Student Group. Many students may not want to disclose personal information until they feel comfortable as a member of your group, and you should not pressure anyone into revealing any information they do not freely offer. This Award is about removing barriers and making sure it is as easy as possible for students, no matter their background, to get involved in your activities. By completing this Award you are creating a culture where everything you do is inherently accessible to everyone.

## Why should I sign up?

By signing up to the Bath SU Inclusivity Award you are making a clear and public commitment to ensuring everyone feels welcome in your Student Group. You will be leading the way for other Student Groups, making yourself look fantastic.

### *More Members*

One clear benefit of this is that you should see an increase in membership. Many of the barriers highlighted by this Award are ones that are often forgotten, unnoticed or overlooked. You will be demonstrating that you know barriers exist, and will be actively removing them, meaning more students can join your activities.

### *New Ideas*

These new members will be students from a wide range of backgrounds, who will bring new ideas to your Student Group. By sharing ideas and experiences they will be able to help your club develop and grow in the future.

### *Leading Change*

The Inclusivity Award is a new initiative for Bath SU and the student movement nationally. By signing up you will not only be showing other Bath SU students that you are committed to making a difference on campus, but you will be a role model and inspiration for Student Groups locally and nationally. You can be one of the first clubs to make an open commitment to inclusivity and be a catalyst for wider social change.

### *Personal Development*

By achieving this Award you will gain a huge amount of awareness around Equality and Diversity in business and society. The time and effort you will put in to this Award will provide an opportunity for you to develop your skills in leadership, communication and team work. This is a great thing for your club to achieve, but you will also personally gain so much from your experiences completing it.

### *Recognition*

Once you have prepared a clear and achievable action plan, you will be awarded the 'Working Towards the Inclusivity Award' accolade. We will provide you with publicity material to include on your BathStudent.com website, Facebook page and any other materials you have. Upon completion of the Award your Student Group will receive the University of Bath Students' Union Inclusivity Award and be able to promote this fact to all potential members. We will also present each member of your committee with a certificate to accredit your achievement.

## What support is available?

By following the simple template you can quickly and easily identify the barriers that are present in your Student Group. There may be some you had never considered, and others that you are already working to overcome.

When you are creating your action plan for removing these barriers, the staff at Bath SU will be here to support you every step of the way. Your relevant Student Officer will also be on call you discuss any ideas or concerns you may have with your action plan.

At the start of Semester 1 you will have a 1:1 meeting with your Student Officer to discuss your action plan and any additional support you will need throughout the year. Your progress will be reviewed with your Student Officer at the start of Semester 2. You will meet again near the end of Semester 2 to review the whole year. On top of this you can arrange meetings at any time with any of the staff or Officers throughout the year to answer any questions you have.

We can also provide you with data on your membership, so you can see how many of your members are e.g. international, women or postgraduate. You can use this information to highlight areas to focus on, and to track any changes or improvements over time.

The student lead Diversity & Support groups are also available for you contact and discuss specific issues.

### *Useful Contacts*

#### **Student Officers**

**Jordan Kenny** – SU President – [supresident@bath.ac.uk](mailto:supresident@bath.ac.uk)

**Tommy Parker** – Community Officer – [sucommunity@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sucommunity@bath.ac.uk)

**Freddy Clapson** – Activities Officer – [suactivities@bath.ac.uk](mailto:suactivities@bath.ac.uk)

**Ben Jessup** – Sport Officer – [susport@bath.ac.uk](mailto:susport@bath.ac.uk)

**Paul Goodstadt** – Education Officer – [sueducation@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sueducation@bath.ac.uk)

#### **SU Staff**

**Carol Lacey** – Advice and Community Manager – [c.lacey@bath.ac.uk](mailto:c.lacey@bath.ac.uk)

**Tim Stoneman** – Postgraduate and International Student Coordinator – [t.stoneman@bath.ac.uk](mailto:t.stoneman@bath.ac.uk)

**Polly Hawker** – Activities Manager – [p.hawker@bath.ac.uk](mailto:p.hawker@bath.ac.uk)

**Helen Freeman** – Marketing and Promotions Coordinator – [h.freeman@bath.ac.uk](mailto:h.freeman@bath.ac.uk)

**Anna Boneham** – Student Development Manager (Volunteering) – [a.boneham@bath.ac.uk](mailto:a.boneham@bath.ac.uk)

**Siobain Hone** – Enterprise Education Manager – [s.hone@bath.ac.uk](mailto:s.hone@bath.ac.uk)

#### **Diversity and Support Groups**

**Diversity and Support Exec** – coordinate and support the groups listed below -

**Enable** - for any student with a disability or medical condition which affects your physical or mental health, or a learning support need – [sudisabledconferencerep@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sudisabledconferencerep@bath.ac.uk)

**Gender Equality** - to discuss and represent gender equality issues – [gender-equality@bath.ac.uk](mailto:gender-equality@bath.ac.uk)

**LGBT** - for all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans students – [lgbt@bath.ac.uk](mailto:lgbt@bath.ac.uk)

**International Student Association** - all international students at the University of Bath – [international@bath.ac.uk](mailto:international@bath.ac.uk)

**Mature Students** - for any student who is over the age of 21 when they begin their studies at the University of Bath – [mature@bath.ac.uk](mailto:mature@bath.ac.uk)

**Postgraduate Association** – for all postgraduate students – [postgrads@bath.ac.uk](mailto:postgrads@bath.ac.uk)

**Race Equality** - to discuss and represent race equality issues – [sublackconferencerep@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sublackconferencerep@bath.ac.uk)