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Equality & Diversity Policy 2022 - 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy is a formal statement of the University’s commitment to equality and fair treatment, to creating an inclusive educational and working environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated, and where discrimination in all its forms is challenged effectively.

1.2. As a University with a strong sense of community, we remain passionate about widening educational opportunity, appreciating its contribution to social justice and striving to provide an excellent experience for our students, apprentices, staff, visitors and other stakeholders. Respect for the individual, the freedom of debate and discussion, equality, and recognising the richness in diversity lie at the heart of our values.

1.3. We support the spirit as well as the letter of equality law and thus adopt a positive and proactive approach rather than simply a compliant one. Equality law seeks to protect those individuals that receive unfair treatment, because of a particular characteristic or a combination of characteristics. Such treatment may be deliberate and overt, though it may also be subtle and unwitting, based upon ill-founded ideas and assumptions. The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine ‘protected characteristics’ recognised in law:

• Age

• Disability

• Gender reassignment

• Marriage and civil partnership

• Pregnancy and maternity

• Race

• Religion or belief

• Sex

• Sexual orientation

1.4. The University is also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 which requires it as a public body to have due regard to the need to:

• eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;

• advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;

• foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. Principles and Values

2.1. We work to ensure that all individuals are able to maximise their potential and strive to eliminate unfair treatment or disadvantage in our core and related activities to ensure that our staff, students and apprentices do not face unfair barriers to accessing our provision, or to their participation, or success.

2.2. We recognise the breadth of experience and intellectual resources that people from diverse backgrounds across the protected characteristics bring to our community as we know that diversity strengthens the University, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas and enriches campus life for us all.

3. Key Strategic Objectives

3.1. The importance and value of equality and diversity is inherent in the University’s key strategic objectives:

• The University Strategy 2018-25: Open for Change recognises the importance of establishing a culture and environment in which staff, students on full-time and part-time programmes, apprentices undertaking an apprenticeship and visitors understand and embrace the principles and practices of equality and diversity.

• The University’s People Strategy ‘Working Together, Supporting Each Other’ 2018-25, further highlights key objectives to progress the University’s vision and values around equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI). This includes progressing our EDI website, HR recruitment and induction materials and the EDI staff intranet pages, demonstrating the University’s vision and values around EDI.

• The University’s Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020-21 to 2024-25 has identified four strategic aims to further the Office for Students’ Strategic Objective 1 that ‘All students, from all backgrounds, with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education’.

• The University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Plan 2022-25 is designed to support the University in meeting its legislative responsibilities and advancing its strategic aims for the period 2022-25.

3.2. The full strategy documents and the EDI Plan can be accessed from the University website and staff intranet.

4. Statement of Policy

4.1. All colleagues, students and external parties in partnership or association with the University are required to adhere to the principles and requirements of equality legislation, this Equality and Diversity Policy (including any associated procedures) and its implementation.

4.2. The University does not tolerate any form of discrimination or abuse by colleagues, students or anyone else connected with the University and its activities. This includes all contractual service providers, sub-contractors, and collaborative partners, who are required to adhere to equality legislation when providing goods, facilities or services. For partners outside the UK, the University will ensure, through its due diligence procedures, that there is a satisfactory alignment between its relevant policies and practices and those of any potential partners.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. The Board of Governors, the Vice-Chancellor’s Group (VCG), the Senior Management Team, Heads and Directors of Departments/Institutes hold direct responsibility for ensuring that equality of opportunity forms part of the ethos of the University and that it is actively embedded in its practices and operations.

5.2. Every manager is accountable for the effective implementation of this Policy and associated procedures and for monitoring diversity in their area of responsibility.

5.3. Each member of the University community has a responsibility for upholding this Policy and for behaving in ways that are consistent with fair and equal treatment for all. Each person is responsible for their own learning and engagement with equality issues and actions, and has a duty to consider the impact of their actions to ensure that they do not have a detrimental effect on the achievement of equality of opportunity for others. This includes staff working for contract companies and those involved in collaborative activities with the University in whatever form.

5.4. Equality and diversity are raised as an agenda item across University Committees and Groups and incorporated into key areas of activity, including learning and teaching and research:

• The University recognises that it is imperative that the principles of inclusivity and diversity are embedded across all teaching, learning and assessment and that encouragement of academic and personal development is undertaken with staff having awareness of the differing needs of full-time and part-time students and apprentices. As all protected characteristics could be represented across the student population, the University recognises the importance of encouraging diversity to be reflected in the content of courses, teaching methods and forms of assessment.

• Research is a part of the University’s core mission; the creation and dissemination of new knowledge and insights are an underpinning activity for the institution. All staff and research students should have the same access to research opportunities no matter what their background or characteristics. This may include, and is not limited to, access or funding or support, training or development, promotional opportunities and inclusion in external assessment exercises such as the Research Excellence Framework.

6. Communication

6.1 To support all parties in fulfilling their responsibilities the University will ensure that:

• the Equality and Diversity Policy is communicated, in a variety of forms, to all staff in all roles, students and potential applicants (staff or students), contractors and sub-contractors and collaborative partners.

• aspects of the implementation of the Policy and related updates and information are promoted across the University.

• appropriate training and guidance including provision is provided within the University’s Professional Development Programme and on-line to enable individuals to understand their responsibilities and the legal framework.

• external bodies and agencies with whom the University engages embody the same values in their treatment of the University’s staff, students and apprentices and will communicate this expectation.

• that the curriculum embeds the principles of equality and diversity and supports students’ and apprentices’ understanding of how these principles effect and can enhance their day to day working and personal life.

• the University's promotional and other materials reflect its commitment to EDI. Materials in the public domain (e.g. publicity material, posters, electronic information) are reviewed, wherever possible, to seek to ensure that they are inclusive and do not give offence to particular groups of staff, students or members of the public.

7. Reporting and Formal Processes

7.1. Individuals should feel able to inform an appropriate person within the University, for example in Student Support and Wellbeing, Human Resources (HR Officer or Inclusivity Officer), the University of Chichester Students’ Union, Degree Apprenticeship Forum, Student Forum, managers and Heads/Directors of Department/Institute, wherever inappropriate or discriminatory practice occurs, without fear of retribution and in the knowledge that the matter will, where required, be handled effectively under the University’s staff or student complaints procedures.

7.2. The University of Chichester will treat any contravention or breach of this Policy very seriously and will take appropriate action wherever it is justified.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1. The University will review this Policy every three years or more often as required.

8.2. The Vice-Chancellor’s Group (VCG) will take a pro-active lead in driving the equality agenda forward, monitoring strategic progress and compliance against its defined objectives and promoting good practice across the University. VCG will:

• review any amendments to this Policy and its application.

• ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor and review the application of the Policy and the implementation of associated procedures.

• analyse the available data to identify potential barriers or areas where action might be required utilising documentation such as the EDI Annual Report, which reflects on the equality and diversity experience and activity for the preceding year and the University’s ambitions for future years (published on the University’s website and staff intranet each year) and the University’s annual Gender Pay Gap report, (published on the University’s website and on the Government’s reporting portal annually).

8.3. The University may introduce additional policies and other documents to support its aim for equality and fair treatment. All such policies and documents should be considered as a sub-section of the Equality and Diversity Policy for example, recruitment and selection policies for employees and apprentices.