



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

Vice Chancellor Statement of Commitment

As Vice-Chancellor, I am delighted to express my personal commitment to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

Our Strategy cannot be achieved without the talents of our people. In line with our Values and Behaviours, in our [Strategy](#) we have chosen to make five [Commitments](#) about how we will act while delivering our strategic ambitions.

Northumbria's commitment to inclusion is clearly articulated through our Strategic Commitment [*We promote fairness in a community where all staff and students feel they belong*](#). By understanding the needs of individuals, we aim to remove any unnecessary barriers and adopt an inclusive approach across all our activities.

We are committed to a culture of inclusion and ensuring that the opportunities we provide are open to all. Progressing our EDI agenda is essential to attracting and developing our exceptional people and creating an environment in which everyone can be successful as individuals, while contributing to the University's success.

Beyond the legislative duties described in the EDI Policy, we are committed to the compelling moral case for equality. We are striving to create a community that positively welcomes diversity by embedding EDI in everything we do.

Policy Statement

Northumbria University is proud to be an inclusive community. We value diversity and are committed to a culture where everyone feels they belong, and everyone has equity of opportunity and is enabled to be their best.

The University is committed to undertaking the duties placed on us as an employer, service provider and public body under the Equality Act (2010) and other relevant legislation. Making sure that we have an inclusive workplace is embedded within our aim of being a great place to work.

This Policy is aligned to the University's Values and Behaviours and is complementary to other University policies such as the [Unacceptable Behaviours Policy](#), [Grievance Procedure](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

This Policy applies to all colleagues including contractors and agency workers. All colleagues are required to follow this Policy whilst employed by the University or engaged in any work on our behalf.

Definitions used within the Policy

Equality refers to parity of treatment, opportunity, and outcomes for all, and to ensuring that individuals and groups are not disadvantaged or discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.

Diversity refers to recognising and valuing individual differences, e.g., in characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences.

Inclusion refers to creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to contribute.

The Equality Act (2010)

The Act provides legal protection for people in employment, education, and training, and in the provision of goods and services. This protection is based on the following defined 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Act (2010) prohibits the following:

Discrimination

Which is defined as:

- treating a person less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic (known as direct discrimination)
- putting in place a rule or a way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone (or a group of people) with a protected characteristic than someone (or a group of people) without one, when this can't be justified (known as indirect discrimination)
- failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

The Act also protects people from being discriminated against:

- by someone who mistakenly perceives them to have one (or more) of the protected characteristics (known as perceptive discrimination), or
- because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. This includes the parent of a disabled child or adult or

- someone else who is caring for a disabled person (known as discrimination by association).

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. An individual can complain about harassment even if the harassment is not directed at them, or if they do not have the relevant characteristic(s) themselves. For example, someone witnessing anti-gay comments could complain about harassment, even if they are not gay themselves, or if the comments were not directed at a specific individual.

Victimisation

Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have either made or supported a complaint or grievance under the Equality Act (2010), or because they are suspected of doing so.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act (2010) imposes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have 'due regard' to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act (2010); to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between individuals who possess a certain protected characteristic and those who don't.

Universities are subject to the PSED and therefore required to set equality objectives and publish information to show how the PSED is being met. The objectives for Northumbria can be found in the University's annual [Equality Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) report](#).

The University understands its legal duty and will not accept any act of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation based on any of the protected characteristics. In addition, the University will not discriminate based on socio-economic background or trade union membership.

The University will regard acts of discrimination, including bullying, harassment and victimisation as serious matters which may result in disciplinary action and could lead to dismissal. The University is committed to upholding the Equality Act whilst recognising its other legal obligations including Freedom of Speech.

Equality commitments

To support our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion the University will:

- agree and publish equality objectives (set out in our annual EDI report).
- publish information annually on how we are meeting the PSED and our progress in this area.

- ensure that EDI issues are considered as part of our everyday business, through our [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (EIA) process for relevant policy reviews and business changes.
- seek opportunities to promote EDI.
- ensure that the University is accessible and inclusive to meet diverse needs.

To support our commitment to being an inclusive employer, the University will:

- conduct recruitment and selection fairly.
- embed relevant EDI considerations in all policies and practices.
- provide training on equality, diversity and inclusion to managers and colleagues.
- raise awareness on equality issues through regular communications.
- Treat all colleagues fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Tackle unacceptable behaviour in the workplace .
- ensure colleagues are paid fairly and publish pay gap information.
- promote a good work-life balance and provide opportunities to [work flexibly](#).
- monitor the demographic make-up of the workforce and benchmark this against local, national and sector populations, to support the University's aim to have a representative workforce.
- make colleagues aware of how to raise issues if they feel discrimination, harassment or victimisation has taken place.
- support disabled colleagues by making reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process and within the workplace.
- support colleagues with religious or cultural needs where practicable, for example through the provision of appropriate spaces for prayer.
- increase voluntary disclosure rates for protected characteristics by raising awareness of how this information is used and building a culture of trust.

Responsibilities

All Colleagues

It is a condition of employment that *all colleagues* respect and act in accordance with this policy. The University expects all colleagues to:

- familiarise themselves with this policy and act in accordance with it
- treat all colleagues, visitors and students with dignity and respect
- consider diverse needs and ensure we are as inclusive and accessible as possible
- complete equality, diversity and inclusion training as required
- challenge any unacceptable behaviour displayed by other colleagues, visitors or students, and report the issue as appropriate.

Managers

Managers at all levels have a responsibility to implement this policy and to bring it to the attention of their teams, to maintain an inclusive work environment free of discrimination,

harassment, or victimisation, and where all colleagues feel able to be themselves. Managers will:

- set a positive example by treating all colleagues, students and visitors with dignity and respect, and maintaining standards of acceptable behaviour.
- promote an inclusive working environment where discrimination, harassment and victimisation are not accepted or tolerated.
- ensure that their own behaviour cannot be construed as discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, by acting with fairness and equity.
- challenge any unacceptable behaviour displayed by colleagues, students, or visitors, and escalate the issue if necessary, using the appropriate policy.
- create a climate where complaints can be raised without fear of reprisal and ensure that their teams know how to raise any discrimination, harassment, or victimisation issues.
- treat any complaints (whether from employees, students, or visitors) of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation seriously and deal with them promptly, sensitively, and confidentially, in accordance with the relevant policies.
- ensure that all decisions made during any recruitment or selection process are free from bias or discrimination, in accordance with the [Recruitment and Selection](#) guidance.
- ensure that development or training opportunities for their teams (and access to these) are free from bias or discrimination.
- encourage and support diversity within their teams.
- Encourage awareness of the diverse needs of colleagues.
- ensure that equality impact assessments are undertaken for any business or policy changes.

Trade Unions and University Staff Equality Networks

Trade Union representatives and the University's Staff Equality Networks have an important role to play in promoting equality, eliminating discrimination, and creating an inclusive workplace. In addition to the responsibilities outlined for all colleagues, they will help to promote and support this policy. Trade union representatives can provide advice and representation to trade union members.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has responsibility for ensuring that the University complies with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). In particular, the Board will:

- review and approve publication of our equality objectives, the annual EDI Report and this Policy
- monitor progress against the objectives identified in the report, through receiving regular progress reports

- take assurance from, and take action to address any underperformance in this area, through the EDI Committee

Dealing with complaints of discrimination

Any colleague who feels that they have been discriminated against, harassed or victimised, or witnessed any such behaviour, on any grounds set out in this policy, should initially raise their concerns with their manager. Where the concerns relate to their manager, the concern should be raised with the next more senior manager. Alternatively, colleagues can discuss their concern confidentially with the relevant Human Resources Manager or their trade union representative if they are a member.

Where possible, issues should be resolved informally, if appropriate, and colleagues can explore these options with a member of the Human Resources team, their trade union representative or the EDI team.

Where informal resolution has not worked or is not appropriate colleagues may raise their concerns using the Grievance Procedure, or through the [Unacceptable Behaviours reporting tool](#). At all stages colleagues can be accompanied to meetings by a trade union representative or work colleague.

Any student who feels that they have been discriminated against should report this using the [Unacceptable Behaviours reporting tool](#).

Implementation

The Chief People Officer has delegated responsibility to oversee the implementation, consistent application of and continuing effectiveness of this Policy.

The University will ensure that managers and colleagues including contractors and agency workers are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities within it. New colleagues will be made aware of the policy through induction, and current colleagues and managers will be made aware through completion of the mandatory EDI training.

This policy will be communicated to colleagues through internal communication channels and will be made available on the intranet. The University will support and encourage colleagues in their responsibilities by providing additional information and guidance when required.

This policy will be made available on the intranet and will be available in alternative formats upon request.

Monitoring and review

The University will collect and maintain equality information for all employees, in addition to all job applicants. This includes the analysis of information on age, disability, sex and race and are working towards improving our data in relation to religion & belief, and sexual orientation. This information will be collected and stored in line with the Data Protection

Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulation (2016) and will only be used for anonymised monitoring and reporting purposes.

The monitoring information will be presented in the University annual EDI report which is published on both the intranet and external website.

This policy will be reviewed every two years (or earlier if required by legislative or business changes) by the EDI Team in consultation with relevant parties including Trade Union Representatives and EDI Committee. The Board of Governors will approve any significant amendments to this policy.

If you have any questions relating to the policy, please email the EDI Team at equalitydiversityandinclusion@northumbria.ac.uk.