

Equality and Diversity Policy

Assembly notes:

- 1) The attached policy on Equality and Diversity at Durham Students' Union.

Assembly believes:

- 1) Equality and Diversity should be an organisational priority for the Union, and the attached policy is written to reflect this with a clear plan for implementation and evaluation.

Assembly resolves:

- 1) To adopt the attached policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines Durham Students' Union's commitment to inclusivity, equality of opportunity for all, and the promotion of diversity. This policy sits alongside our employee-facing 'equal opportunities policy' and demonstrates a pro-active approach to inclusivity. Our approach to equality and diversity will support and encourage all under-represented groups to participate in activities and decision-making and will cultivate an inclusive culture by promoting diversity, enabling liberation activism and working to reduce stigma and isolation.

Policy Statement

We are proud to represent a diverse student membership and we resolve to create a positive and welcoming environment where students, staff and visitors feel safe and can express themselves. We strive to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and equally and we challenge any behaviour or practice that directly or indirectly results in discrimination.

We recognise that students, staff and visitors may suffer from discrimination based on their 'protected characteristics' (see Equality Act 2010) and any other characteristics that make people who they are. We are committed to taking proactive steps to ensure that all individuals have equal chance to enjoy our services and participate in our activities and decision-making processes. The principle of 'equality of opportunity' will be embedded throughout our various roles: as a representative body of students; an employer; a provider of activities; and a commissioner of services.

We recognise that we are all uniquely different and we're committed to celebrating diversity and challenging social exclusion and injustice. Equality and diversity is not about treating everyone the same, but rather acknowledging that starting points are different for different people owing to the abiding strength of traditional power structures, which primarily privilege white, heterosexual, cis-gender men with no disability. The struggle for liberation, inclusion and social change requires organised activism and we will mainstream the dismantling of systematic injustice throughout our campaigning and liberation work and representative functions.

We aim to:-

1. Create a welcoming environment where students, staff and local residents can be themselves, contribute and thrive
2. Challenge practices that actively degrade other cultures, identities and/or faiths, including but not limited to cultural appropriation.
3. Ensure that the services and opportunities we provide and our decision making processes are open to all

4. Promote respect for the diversity of cultures, faiths, lifestyles and identities within Durham University and the local areas
5. Understand barriers to participation in the Union, University and the community and to reach out and support groups of students/people who have been isolated, stigmatised, put down, bullied or discriminated against
6. Promote social justice and active citizenship by enabling students to challenge structures and mind-sets which exclude certain groups of people

Implementation

1. Work proactively to support the liberation work of the Union's Associations (LGBT+, Students With Disabilities, Mature and International) and empower them to be champions of Equality and Diversity within the Union, the Colleges, the University and the wider community
2. Work proactively to engage, understand and seek the views of typically under-represented or 'hard to reach' groups
3. Use this intelligence to develop and deliver a strategy and action plan for increasing the participation of under-represented students in Union activities and decision-making processes
4. Student officers, societies and Welfare, Equality and Diversity Committee (WED Comm) will be engaged in agreeing key performance indicators and WED Comm will act as an E&D Steering Group – receiving data and feedback, challenging shortfalls and monitoring progress against the E&D strategy
5. The policy shall be made available to all members, staff, academic representation communities, student groups and societies to ensure they are demonstrating a commitment to the 'equality of opportunity' and taking a proactive approach to inclusion
6. All permanent staff and full-time elected officers will attend Equality and Diversity training provided by the University. Equality and Diversity training will also be integrated into Durham Students' Union training and/or induction programmes for student groups, societies and student staff