Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

We at Lancaster University Students’ Union are working to create a space where students from all backgrounds feel equal and included within all areas of Union activity whereby opportunity is not limited by the characteristics a student may have. This corresponds to the Union’s Journey of Change aim to be ‘delivering clear and appealing activity which supports students’ academic success, wellbeing and future employability and helps them feel part of the University and wider community,’ which is core to our ethos and ideology as a student movement. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is the overarching notion that all citizens have the right to be accepted within society and that active measures should be taken to complete such goals. The Union holds these values because no matter what intrinsic characteristics or beliefs a member holds they should be able to celebrate them as a part of the Lancaster community. We need to be a Union that looks forward instead of looking back and be at the forefront of social change if we wish to increase our diversity and make a substantive difference. This policy will affect all who are members of Lancaster University Students’ Union, but will specifically ensure more action is taken within the University community to promote a more equal and diverse attitude to those with the protected characteristics outlined within the Equality Act 2010. It is important that we as a Union convey this message in every activity to illustrate that Lancaster is a truly welcoming place to all, with the overall vision to educate its members and create a better society for the future.

Principles

- We take positive actions to promote and change practices to ensure that Lancaster University is a place where all students can achieve their potential
- We actively support students from marginalised groups to foster an equal and inclusive campus
- To ensure the University also partakes in these practices where a suitable commitment is not being seen
- To grow as many contacts as possible with relevant stakeholders to forward the movement for an Equal, Diverse and Inclusive institution

Background

Current Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 consolidates previous anti-discrimination legislation and introduces measures that have direct implications on public and private institutions and further considerations for higher education providers. The aim of the act is to harmonise discrimination laws by prohibiting all discrimination, harassment and victimisation and strengthening the support available to progress on equality within the United Kingdom.
The grounds on which discrimination are unlawful and also labelled as ‘protected characteristics’ are:

- 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 and 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.
Scope of Policy

The Union will actively pursue equality, diversity and inclusion for all staff, its members and visitors anywhere within the Union or its venues, especially for those with protected characteristics as outlined within the Equality Act 2010. This shall be done by working in conjunction with the Zero Tolerance Policy the Union has and working to actively promote equality in every aspect of our activity as outlined within the objectives and implementation plan.

This Policy applies to anyone in the LUSU community, whether that be: members, staff or visitors. The scope of this policy is to attract, protect and celebrate those who have protected characteristics but also to educate the student population on why these issues are important.

Lancaster University Policies

Lancaster University currently has policies in action that members of staff and the Union have to adhere to legally to be formally recognised by the University. The below sections shall clarify what these policies are and what actions the Union already has to take to commit to the University’s Equality and Diversity objectives.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Lancaster Universities Equality and Diversity Policy can be found at:

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Vision 2020

The EDI Strategic Vision 2020 is a document which outlines the Universities main goals for 2020 and how they plan to create a more equal, diverse and inclusive campus. The main goals are as follows and supported by examples of how the University is planning to achieve such:

- A Progressive, Collaborative and Healthy Environment by developing the campus space and services for accessibility to name but one.
- Charter Awards in areas such as Athena Swan, Attract and Recruit staff for a 50/50 senior academic representation whilst ensuring the BME representation also rises whilst also attracting students from all backgrounds.
- Develop and Support by ensuring inclusive practices through unconscious bias and developing College Wellbeing Officer Roles.
- Retain and Reward by putting into action development on student retention and analysing why students leave whilst also doing the same for staff.
- Engage with the Wider Community by establishing a Lancaster Wide Group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to implement a staff volunteering policy within the community.
To University’s full report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Vision can be found at: [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/edi/Strategic-Vision-2020.pdf](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/edi/Strategic-Vision-2020.pdf)

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan**

The Universities Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan can be found at: [http://preview.lancs.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/images/athena-swan/EDI-Plan-2016-2020-COUNCIL-web.pdf](http://preview.lancs.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/images/athena-swan/EDI-Plan-2016-2020-COUNCIL-web.pdf)

The plan supports the 2020 strategies aims by expanding in more detail on how the vision shall be accomplished with tangible action points and applies to all staff and students within the University by overall pledging to: rid discrimination by identifying barriers and remove those towards individuals with protected characteristics by taking specific actions to implement a culture of equality and diversity within the University.

**Student Charter**

The Student Charter holds requirements towards of the University, the Students’ Union and students themselves and what is expected of each of them. For example the University is expected to produce an assessment system which is fair, encourage ethical and responsible studies. The Union is required to encourage and international and culturally diverse campus where students are aware of their rights. Finally students are expected to treat all others with respect and encouraged to participate in all the activities available to them.

To read in further detail please go to: [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/current-students/student-charter/](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/current-students/student-charter/)

**Objectives**

1. To create an environment where all students feel welcome and accepted
2. Ensure there are equal opportunities for all students
3. Celebrate the successes of our marginalised students
4. Develop the inclusive practices within the Union and pass suggestions onto the University where improvement can be made
5. Ensure the wellbeing of our students and staff are our first priority when issues arise