

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Equality diversity and inclusion statement

Oxford Brookes University has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values and places all its policy development in the context of the objectives of:

- ensuring that all individuals who come into contact with the University, whether as employees, students or in other capacities, are treated with dignity and respect;
- ensuring that the opportunities the University provides for learning, personal development and employment are made available on a non-discriminatory basis; and
- providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for students, staff and visitors.

The University seeks through all its policies and actions to be a genuinely inclusive organisation, and draws for this on good practice throughout the Higher Education sector and in the wider economy. The objective is to integrate the principles of equal treatment and promotion of diversity into all aspects of the University's day-to-day life.

Defining equality, diversity and inclusion

Equal treatment involves much more than simply treating everyone alike; it requires a recognition that some groups and individuals have particular and specific needs that need to be met if they are to enjoy equal access to the services offered by the University. We recognise that the University may need to provide its services in a range of different or more flexible ways, in order to ensure genuine equality of access or opportunity for groups and individuals who approach those services from a position of persistent and longstanding disadvantage.

Valuing diversity involves an acknowledgement of the benefits and intrinsic worth derived from the range of difference within our community, and fostering it as a strength. We aim to celebrate and to value the differences between individuals' cultural, social and intellectual contribution to the University and will seek to promote greater mutual understanding between groups and individuals who reflect these differences; and will seek to use the talents and experiences that each and every individual can bring to the institution.

Inclusion involves the University and its staff designing and operating flexible services, practices and procedures that take appropriate account of the needs of students, staff and visitors. For example, all aspects of the university experience must be accessible to people with the range of disabilities that are found in large higher education institutions.

Legal framework

The University endorses wholeheartedly the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all members of the University community.

To achieve this, the University will:

- ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the conduct of the University's work;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share the 'protected characteristics' listed below, as well as all other members of the University community;
- foster positive relations between people who share the 'protected characteristics' and those who do not.

The University will give protection against unfair discrimination on the grounds of:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity
- religion, belief
- sexual orientation.

The University recognises that equality issues are complex, and that it has responsibilities to others, including, but not limited to, people with caring responsibilities and students who are leaving local authority care.

Scope

The University is a large and functionally diverse organisation operating in a local, national and international context. We expect all staff, students, visitors, external examiners, partners and contractors to behave in accordance with this policy and to have regard for the University's values. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion apply to the way in which staff and students should treat each other, and to all visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, former staff and students and any other persons associated with the functions of the University. However, it is acknowledged that some of the international contexts in which the University operates may place restrictions on the extent to which this policy can govern the practices of partners and contractors.

The University has established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG):

1. Membership

- the Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- a representative from the Directorates
- the Director of Human Resources or nominee
- the Human Resources Business Partner (EDI)(Secretary)
- the Head of Wellbeing
- the Disability Advisory Team Manager
- the Director of the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice
- the Chair of the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team or nominee
- the Chair of the Race Equality Charter Self-Assessment Team or nominee
- the Chair of the Widening Participation Advisory Group or nominee
- the EDI Adviser (Staff)
- the EDI Adviser (Students)
- the Ecumenical Chaplain
- an OCSLD Staff or Educational Development Consultant

- a representative of each of the recognised staff unions (UCU and UNISON)
- the President of Brookes' Union or nominee
- The Vice-Chancellor may co-opt up to three members to join the group for their experience and expertise in EDI issues.

2. Terms of Reference

- To develop, oversee and review the University's equality, diversity and inclusion strategies, objectives, policies and initiatives, and to advise and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG) as necessary.
- To monitor the performance of the University with regard to its equality, diversity and inclusion-related strategic objectives and statutory obligations and to publish on an annual basis reports highlighting key achievements and developments as well as the staff and student diversity profiles.
- The EDIAG may refer matters to, and seek responses from, other committees, groups or other bodies as appropriate. The Multi-faith Advisory Board reports to the EDIAG.
- To promote a working and learning environment that ensures equality, celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion for all students, staff, visitors, partners and other stakeholders.
- To ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion issues are given due regard in the conduct of the University's business and in any change initiatives.
- To ensure appropriate consultation and communications are undertaken with relevant groups and across the University community as a whole.

3. Frequency of meetings

The EDIAG will meet no fewer than three times during the academic year.

4. Administrative Support

All administrative arrangements will be undertaken by the Human Resources Directorate.

Roles and responsibilities

Managers will:

- ensure that the aims and the values embodied in this policy are appropriately reflected in all job descriptions, person specifications and annual personal development reviews;
- have due regard to equality issues in all decision-making;
- investigate whether any groups, including people with 'protected characteristics', have particular needs in relation to accessing services;
- ensure that due consideration is given to equality, diversity and inclusion within their own sphere of influence;
- promote an environment where respect is shown to all, and mutual understanding is fostered;
- challenge any actions or behaviour which are in conflict with the values and principles laid down in this policy;
- ensure staff and students know how to report any instances of discrimination, bullying and harassment without fear of victimisation;
- deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, quickly and confidentially.

Teaching staff will:

- promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all learning settings;

- develop student understanding and realisation of equality, diversity and inclusion.

All members of the University community will:

- ensure understanding of this policy and seek guidance if there are any questions;
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion for others and strive to create a safe, supportive and welcoming environment;
- challenge inappropriate behaviour or discrimination;
- report unacceptable behaviour in accordance with the University's policies and procedures

Visitors

- All visitors to the University, together with those contracted to work at, or for, the University (including those with honorary contracts) will be expected to comply with this policy whilst on campus or in their execution of University business.

Our evidence-based approach

Our evidence-based approach to increasing equality, diversity and inclusion at Oxford Brookes uses monitoring data, user feedback and research to inform and improve our future practice.

a) Monitoring

We will annually assess the effectiveness on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy through collection and analysis of data to produce annual reports to the Academic Enhancement and Standards Committee, Academic Board, Vice-Chancellor's Group and the Board of Governors. Data, conclusions and recommendations will feed into the University's strategic planning cycle.

In order to achieve this, the University will annually publish data and details including, but not limited to:

- its equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and action plan;
- the profile of the staff and student population across a range of the University's 'protected characteristics' (transgender profiles are not published);
- student applications, acceptances, progression and attainment of degrees across a range of the protected characteristics;
- recruitment and selection of staff;
- complaints, linked to the range of protected characteristics, including harassment and bullying, grievances and disciplinary proceedings for staff and students;
- staff equality training.

b) Consultation

The University seeks to foster the active involvement of students and staff in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across the many functions of the University, using feedback from students and staff, including any complaints, to identify how the University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion can be more effectively realised.

c) Equality research

The University will use and draw upon research undertaken by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice and other organisations including the Equality Challenge Unit.

Further information and guidance within the University:

- Elaine Dagnall, Human Resources Business Partnership Manager (Equality and Diversity) edagnall@brookes.ac.uk
- Professor Simonetta Manfredi, Director Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice smanfredi@brookes.ac.uk

Review and update arrangements

The policy will be reviewed regularly and may also be amended from time to time to reflect and take account of changes in legislation and best practice.

This policy replaces all previous equality and diversity policies within Oxford Brookes University including the Single Equality Policy.

Comments on the policy and its implementation should be passed to edagnall@brookes.ac.uk.

This policy is available in alternative formats on request, please email: hrteam-edi@brookes.ac.uk

Approved by:

Executive Board: 19 March 2012 (reviewed by EDI Advisory Group April 2017)

Academic Board: 18 April 2012 (reviewed by EDI Advisory Group April 2017)