

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy

1. Introduction

1. The University is dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment which supports a diverse and culturally rich community.
2. This policy sets out the University's commitment to inclusive values, culture, and practices.

2. Scope

1. The policy applies to all students and staff.
2. This policy is non-contractual and may be updated and amended at any time. It supplements rather than supersedes any other code of conduct or statement of expectations of behaviour to which a member of the University community may be separately subject; for example, the Student Dignity and Respect Policy of the Staff Dignity at Work Policy.
3. For the purpose of clarity, this policy also applies to University representatives, which includes Governors and Co-opted members of Board of Governors committees, consultants, contractors, volunteers (alumni and non-alumni), casual workers and agency workers whilst undertaking work for or representing the University.

3. Legislative context

1. This policy is set within the following legislation:
 - Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
 - Section 146 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023
2. More information on the legislative context and relevant related policies is set out in Appendix A.
3. This policy will be reviewed in response to any new legislation.

4. Glossary

1. A glossary is available on the website.

5. Policy Statement

1. Driven by our commitment to social justice, York St John University promotes fairness and challenges prejudice. We inspire and support all members of our community to succeed.
2. The University is dedicated to providing an inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment that supports a diverse and culturally rich community. Our students and staff value equality, diversity and inclusion, and we ensure that all our students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential.
3. The University is committed to developing, implementing, reviewing and monitoring policies that promote equality, diversity and human rights and ensure an environment that is free from all forms of unfair treatment, discrimination and harassment for all those who study, work and engage with the institution.
4. At York St John no one should be discriminated against or harassed while working or studying within or visiting the institution on the grounds of, age, disability, gender, gender identity, presentation or expression, marital or civil partnership status, parental or caring responsibilities, pregnancy and maternity, race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion or belief (including non-belief), sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, trade union activity, criminal background as well as other relevant characteristics or any combination of these characteristics.
5. In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, the University will have due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010¹, Human Rights Act 1998 and other legislation (Appendix A).
6. In offering a wide range of opportunities for staff and students all policies and procedures are underpinned by the following values:
 - a) a learning and work environment that encourages and enables diverse views, values and perspectives to be expressed and that opposes and stands up to all forms of prejudice, discrimination and harassment
 - b) eradicating systemic and individual discriminatory policies and practices and advancing equality and human rights
 - c) maintaining and promoting an inclusive community, where values of kindness, honesty and integrity underpin all our activities and diversity is celebrated
 - d) individual needs are addressed in a sensitive, supportive and flexible manner
 - e) individuals are offered opportunities to develop within a culture of reflection and continuous enhancement
 - f) processes and procedures are based upon principles of equity, transparency and responsiveness
 - g) equality of access, esteem and opportunity permeates all aspects of University provision

¹ The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

- h) [systems for reporting and addressing](#) systemic and individual discrimination, harassment, racism and sexual misconduct are transparent and robust
- i) all members of the University community are able to challenge inequalities without fear of victimisation.

6. Role and Responsibilities

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors are legally responsible for ensuring the University's compliance with equality and diversity legislation, seeking assurances that the institution is delivering on its legal duties and regulatory requirements.

The Board of Governors:

- will monitor the University's approach to equality, diversity, inclusivity and human rights
- promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the Board of Governors' own operation and composition
- will actively engage in personal and professional development in line with expectations for YSJ staff.

Board of Governors Committee chairs

Committee chairs are responsible for ensuring active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusivity in the conduct of Committee business.

The Executive Board and Senior Leadership Team

- will provide leadership on equality, diversity and inclusivity, and oversee the development of policy frameworks and their application across the University
- are responsible for the development of strategic goals, monitoring progress and coordinating action related to equality, diversity and inclusivity for staff and students
- will foster and cultivate a culture that promotes inclusion and respect and that prevents discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- will promote personal and professional development opportunities to foster understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, and inclusive approaches
- will listen to, and where possible, act on ideas that contribute to the realisation of the commitments set out in this policy
- are accountable and transparent to the University community about their actions to implement the policy
- will support the work of the staff networks

Academic Board

Academic Board is responsible for ensuring active consideration of equality, diversity and inclusivity in the conduct of its business.

University Managers

University managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the activities of their School/Directorate are in keeping with this policy
- responding sensitively to concerns about discrimination and harassment in line with the University's policies and procedures
- ensuring and monitoring compliance in their areas.

Members of staff

Members of staff are responsible for:

- reading, supporting, implementing and abiding by this policy
- Contributing to an inclusive culture which celebrates diversity, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, as set out by the Dignity at Work Policy;
- undertaking continuing personal and professional development, including mandatory EDI training as part of their induction, and further training appropriate to their role
- taking appropriate steps if they have concerns about discrimination and harassment.

Students

All students are responsible for:

- reading, supporting, implementing and abiding by this policy
- Contributing to an inclusive culture which celebrates diversity, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, as set out by the Student Dignity and Respect Policy
- taking appropriate steps if they have concerns about discrimination and harassment.
- upholding the principles of this policy and contributing to a safe and inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and respect.

The University as an Educator

The University's principal aim is to provide exciting and rigorous education which is accessible to the communities in which we live, work and recruit students from, and which enables all students to succeed.

Recognising the diversity of students, the University aims to:

- ensure an appropriate and supportive learning and social environment respecting the dignity of all members of the community
- take appropriate steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others, and work to eliminate any barriers to their success
- wherever appropriate, offer curriculum content which engages a range of rigorous critical perspectives
- actively work towards decolonising the curriculum

- use non-discriminatory language in module and programme descriptions, and in all student communications
- provide learning materials and facilities which are non-discriminatory
- have in place procedures to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students
- Clearly communicate expectations regarding student behaviour and the treatment of fellow students and staff, including details of how to raise concerns and the subsequent actions outlined in the University Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

The University as an Employer

The University aims to recruit, develop and retain a diverse community of staff and all policies and procedures will support this aim. Monitoring and review of our activities will inform the development of policies and procedures to ensure the fair and appropriate treatment of all staff.

Recognising the diversity of staff, the University aims to:

- ensure an appropriate and supportive working environment respecting the dignity of all members of the community
- take appropriate steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others
- encourage applications from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low
- ensure recruitment, development and other key HR processes are conducted using appropriate, fair and justifiable criteria
- support career development and progression with the aim of ensuring diverse representation and participation at all levels
- have in place procedures to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and members of staff
- provide a policy and procedure framework to ensure that staff may raise any concerns relating to equality, discrimination and harassment and that these are dealt with appropriately.

The University as a Purchaser of Goods and Services

The University has a responsibility to promote equality in all its procurement and contracting arrangements. Within the parameters of UK legislation, the University will ensure that it encourages potential suppliers from diverse communities and purchases goods and services fairly.

Our suppliers are expected to align with the University's vision and adhere to our Equality, Diversity, and Human Rights Policy, along with other applicable policies and procedures. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with these guidelines, including any staff or subcontractors they employ for University services. Breaches of these requirements will be addressed following the procedures outlined in the contractual Terms and Conditions.

7. Breach of the policy

1. The University takes any breaches of this policy by staff, students, contractors or visitors very seriously. Any instances of non-adherence will be investigated with the intent of resolving matters. Where appropriate, such instances may be considered under the relevant disciplinary policy and procedures.
2. Where appropriate, all student and staff complaints about breaches of the policy should be raised at a local level in the first instance, with a view to informal and timely resolution. If such attempts to resolve complaints are not successful, or are inappropriate due to the nature of the breach of the policy, then:
 - enrolled students who believe there has been a breach of the policy in relation to the provision of a service or facility provided by the University may raise this through the Student Complaints Procedure ([link](#)) Enrolled students who believe they have been harassed or treated inappropriately should raise concerns under the Student Disciplinary Policy ([link](#))
 - Employees who believe there has been a breach of this policy should raise concerns through the Dignity and Work Policy ([link](#)).
3. Where students have breached the Student Code of Conduct ([link](#)) this will be investigated under the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure ([link](#)). Where staff have breached the Dignity at Work Policy ([link](#)), this will be dealt with through the staff Disciplinary Procedure, ([link](#)).
4. Support is available from the Students' Union Advice Team for students who consider that they have not had access to appropriate services or have been the subject of inappropriate decisions or behaviour. For staff, advice and guidance is available from their manager or the HR team.

8. Legal Requirements

1. The University recognises its obligations under the law. It is committed to providing equality of opportunity and upholding human rights by aiming to ensure that its practices and procedures follow legal requirements and good practice. The University will meet all its obligations under UK legislation.
2. When staff and students are engaged in University business and study overseas, policies and procedures of the host country will apply, in addition to University policies and procedures. The University will make students and staff aware of this before travelling.

9. Monitoring and Review

1. The University will monitor and review its performance on an annual basis about its equality objectives and the effectiveness of this policy and associated

procedures. An annual report will be provided for the Executive Board and then onward to the Governing Body for approval, assurance and oversight.

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Appendix A The legislative context and relevant related policies and guidance

Legislative Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 created nine Protected Characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The University recognises its requirements to eliminate the following types of unlawful discrimination:

- Direct Discrimination
- Direct Discrimination based on Perception and Association
- Indirect Discrimination
- Discrimination arising from a Disability
- Failure to make a disability-related reasonable adjustment
- Harassment
- Harassment based on Perception and Association
- Victimisation
- Instructing, inducing or causing discrimination

Public Sector Equality Duty

The University as a public body, also must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, which requires the University to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty public authorities, are required to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty

Relevant University policies and procedures

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusivity the University has a suite of policies and guidance.

- Acceptable Use of IT Services
- Admissions Policy
- Freedom of Speech
- Managers' guide: supporting LGBT+ staff (intranet)
- Modern Slavery Statement
- Personal Relationships Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Research ethics and integrity
- Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Policy

- [Social Media Policy for Staff \(intranet\)](#)
- [Staff Code of Conduct \(intranet\)](#)
- [Staff Dignity at Work policy and procedures \(Intranet\)](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Policy & Procedure \(intranet\)](#)
- [Staff Grievance Policy & Procedure \(intranet\)](#)
- [Staff Leave and Work Life Balance \(including maternity and flexible working\)](#)
- [Staff Supporting Disabled Staff](#)
- [Staff Workplace Violence Policy Statement \(intranet\)](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Student Code of Practice for Assessment](#)
- [Student Complaints procedure](#)
- [Student Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- [Trans Equality Policy Statement](#)
- [Whistleblowing policy](#)