

Equal Opportunities Policy

1 Introduction

The Union seeks to enable all members to have equal opportunities and shall seek to protect the rights and opportunities of its members. The Union recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are discriminated against by virtue of being members of certain groups and is committed to challenging and removing discrimination and barriers. The Union will not tolerate prejudice or discriminate against its members or others.

- 1.1 This Union shall act without discrimination in respect of: Gender, Racial Origin, Nationality, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief, Political Belief, Disabilities, Age, Marital Status, Spent Criminal Convictions, Health, HIV and AIDS status, Language, Appearance, Class. This list is not exhaustive.
- 1.2 The Board of Trustees and Student Parliament has the responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and promotion of good practice in Equal Opportunities matters.

2 Clarification of Terms:

- 2.1 “Discriminatory behaviour” may be overt, covert or a combination of both and may be displayed as hostile remarks innuendo, written abuse, physical assault, intimidation, threatening gestures or other ways. It is not the intention of the perpetrator, but the impact on the recipient that determines what constitutes harassment.
- 2.2 In this policy, “direct discrimination” means behaviour whereby a person is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of belonging to any group in society, such as those defined above.
- 2.3 In this policy, “indirect discrimination” means the imposition of a requirement or condition which is (or would be) applied equally to all persons, but:
 - 2.3.1 Which is such that the proportion of persons of any one group who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it.
 - 2.3.2 Which cannot be shown to be justified.
 - 2.3.3 Which is to the detriment of the individual(s) concerned because they cannot comply with it.
- 2.4 The Union is committed to a comprehensive programme of action to ensure that this policy be fully effective.

2.5 In this policy, the term 'Union' includes University of Plymouth Students' Union, any Union Officer, Member or Employee who acts on behalf of, or in association with the Union, or any visitor to the Union. This also refers to Union activities and policies.

3. Union Responsibility

3.1 This Union recognises the right of all students to take an active role in Union services and activity and, as such, will regularly review provisions and actions to ensure that this is possible. Facilities/provisions will be upgraded/introduced where feasible, to ensure that full participation is possible.

4. Clubs and Societies

4.1 All Clubs and Societies will be encouraged to take up this Equal Opportunities Policy within their Constitution.

4.2 The conduct and activities of Clubs and Societies shall be monitored to ensure that they are in keeping with the ethos and provisions of this Policy.

5 . Language

5.1 The Union recognises the role of language in the shaping and definition of attitudes and behaviour. The Union endorses the use of non-discriminatory language in all union literature, and by both students and staff.

6. Employment

6.1 The employment of personnel will comply with the Equal Opportunity Policy, as the Students' Union is an equal opportunities employer.

6.2 UPSU will always strive to develop best practice with regards equal opportunities in its employment practices.

7. Training

7.1 All Union officers and staff who have regular contact with students/outside parties, will have equal opportunity training.

8. Monitoring

8.1 It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees and Student Parliament to monitor the Equal Opportunities Policy and to develop such mechanisms to ensure that monitoring of its practice is effective.

8.2 Information from the monitoring of this policy should be considered by the Board of Trustees and Student Parliament on an annual basis. Consideration will equally be given to proactively developing our procedures to enable participation, as well as reactively considering issues.

9. Complaints

- 9.1 Where a complaint of unfair treatment in accordance with this policy is in relation to a service managed by staff, this should be referred to the appropriate Students' Union senior manager who will investigate and take action as appropriate.
- 9.2 Where a complaint of unfair treatment in accordance with this policy is in relation to any other matter, the complaint should be referred to the President or Deputy President for investigation and appropriate action under the Complaints Procedure. An annual report on complaints received should be kept.
- 9.3 Complaints concerning the possible breach by students shall result in a full investigation in accordance with the Students' Union Code of Conduct, with possible disciplinary action.
- 9.4 Complaints concerning the possible breach by staff shall be referred to the staff Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures for process.

10. Harassment

- 10.1 The union recognises the right of all individuals to live free from harassment and intimidation. The Union will fully support those who have been subject to harassment. Perpetrators of harassment may be liable to disciplinary or legal action. Attention is also drawn to the University of Plymouth Equal Opportunity Harassment Policy.

11. General

- 11.1 All outside organisations which operate with the union should be made aware as to the Union's Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Practice, and encouraged to act in accordance with them. Copies of this policy should be available for all students/staff/visitors to the Union.
- 11.2 University of Plymouth Students' Union will continue to be active members of the University Equal Opportunities Advisory Committee and will campaign to raise awareness on Equal Opportunities issues.
- 11.3 This Union will strive to represent the needs of individuals/groups of students through appropriate channels, to the relevant bodies, to ensure that their needs are met.