



Policy Title:	Equality & Diversity Policy
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Policy Owner:	HR
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Royal Holloway Students' Union (RHSU) values diversity and is committed to creating a positive working and membership environment in which all members of staff and students are treated fairly, equally and with dignity and respect. We wholeheartedly support and actively promote diversity and encourage understanding about how it enriches our culture, our relationships and the services we provide.
- 1.2 RHSU will not tolerate any form of discrimination within the organisation, both in relation to its employees and in the provision of its services to its members and guests. To that end, the purpose of this policy is to assist in developing and encouraging a working and learning environment in which all forms of discrimination are known to be unacceptable.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all staff (including student staff), applicants for employment, ex-members of staff, visitors and other persons in contact with or engaged by RHSU. It should be read in conjunction with our Dignity at Work Policy.
- 1.4 A separate policy is provided to the membership of RHSU in schedule 6 of the Constitution, Equality & Diversity.

2. Our commitment

Through the implementation of this and all other RHSU policies, the organisation is committed to:

- Encouraging diversity amongst our workforce from recruitment and selection, through training, development, appraisal and promotion, to retirement for all employees.
- Attaining a workforce that is representative of the communities from which it is drawn to secure the widest pool of talent possible.
- Creating a positive working and membership environment free from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation and bullying.
- Promoting equality of opportunity across all Students' Union activities and services and running events that celebrate diversity.
- Understanding how valuing diversity can improve our ability to deliver better services and enrich the Union as a whole.
- Creating an environment in which individual differences and contributions are recognised, respected and valued.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 RHSU expects all members of staff to help encourage a culture of dignity and respect and recognise their responsibilities by:
- Behaving in a way that respects the rights and dignity of others
 - Treating others fairly
 - Valuing and celebrating differences and the contribution they make
 - Challenging inappropriate behaviour
 - Demonstrating a commitment to upholding SURHUL's policies on equality and diversity
- 3.2 Line managers have a particular responsibility for leading by example, identifying any discrimination when it occurs and taking prompt action to stop it.
- 3.3 The HR department will be responsible for providing awareness and training to staff on Equality & Diversity issues on a regular basis.
- 3.4 All new members of staff will be made aware of this policy through induction processes upon joining RHSU.
- 3.5 The Sabbatical Officers and departmental heads will be responsible for working together to devise and implement equality and diversity initiatives pertinent to their areas and for inclusion into departmental operating plans on a continuous basis.
- 3.6 The table below summarises the rights and responsibilities of all individuals:

My Rights

To be treated with dignity and respect
To be treated fairly without discrimination
To be consulted on decisions which affect me personally
To be able to hold personal views
To be able to raise my concerns

My Responsibilities

To treat others with dignity and respect
To challenge or report inappropriate behaviour
To be mindful of others when expressing my views
To recognise the needs of others / SURHUL
To respect reasonable decisions of others

4. Implementation

- 4.1 The values and commitment outlined in this policy will apply to, and be implemented within, all of RHSU's policies and procedures but will have particular relevance to the following:
- Dignity at Work Policy

- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Learning & Development Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Job Evaluation Policy
- Pay and Grading Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance and Appeals Policy
- Family Friendly Policies

4.2 In order to further promote and continuously improve equality and diversity within the organisation, the Equality & Diversity policy will be incorporated into RHSU's three year Strategic Plan on a rolling basis and individual annual departmental operating plans.

5. What is equality and diversity?

In order to champion equality and diversity it is important to understand what these terms mean.

Equality creates a fair and inclusive society through challenging prejudice and discrimination, and ensuring that individuals or groups are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities.

Diversity means difference and is about recognising, respecting and embracing the differences between people and their experiences. It is about moving beyond tolerance to valuing and celebrating individual differences.

6. The Law

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity – also known as the protected characteristics. The provisions of the Act are complex, therefore advice should be sought from the HR department where necessary. The Act prohibits a number of types of discrimination as follows:

6.2 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below) or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association).

6.3 Discrimination by association

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

6.4 Perception discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

6.5 Indirect discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination can occur when we have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice within the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

6.6 Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Individuals can complain about behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves.

6.7 Harassment by others

Applies to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act makes employers potentially liable for harassment of its employees by people who are not employees of the organisation, such as customers or clients. Employers may be liable if they are aware that harassment has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

6.8 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so.

7. Recruitment & Selection

- 7.1 RHSU aims to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics. Our recruitment and selection procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of candidates is done by more than one person as are selection interviews. See separate Recruitment & Selection Policy.

8. Staff training and promotion

- 8.1 Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals (held in June / July each year). All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. See separate Learning & Development Policy.

9. Termination of employment

- 9.1 RHSU will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 9.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other action.

10. Disability Discrimination

- 10.1 We encourage employees who are disabled, or become disabled, to inform us about their condition so that we can support them as appropriate.
- 10.2 If an individual experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they should contact their line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The line manager may wish to consult with the individual or gain permission to speak to the individual's medical advisor about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the individual's needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 10.3 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

11. Breach of Policy

- 11.1 Any employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against for a reason relating to a protected characteristic will have recourse to RHSU's Grievance Procedure.
- 11.2 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False accusations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.
- 11.3 Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination in relation to a colleague, visitor or Students' Union member. Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as gross misconduct.

12. Monitoring and review

- 12.1 RHSU will continuously review this policy to ensure its effectiveness and all of its employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and equity of treatment. Any relevant legislation will be included as and when it is introduced.
- 12.2 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting HR.
- 12.3 SURHUL will carry out equal opportunities monitoring in the following areas to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Equality & Diversity Policy:
- Recruitment at the application stage and selection stage for all staff
 - Employee Relations Cases
 - Existing employees – on an annual basis
- 12.4 The monitoring process will involve gathering individual personal information on diversity at certain times and comparing and analysing them against other groups of employees in the organisation, or student groups within the University, or the broader national labour market. Where the monitoring process identifies any areas where improvement is required, an action plan will be devised and implemented.