

NUS

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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Related Policies:	<p>Dignity at Work Policy Grievance Policy Disciplinary Policy Officer Disciplinary policy Recruitment & Selection policy Membership Code of Conduct Sickness Absence Policy Performance Improvement policy Parenting Policy Suite Special & Other Leave Policy Organisation Change Policy including fixed term contracts</p> <p>Wellbeing Policy Suite including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing Policy Statement • Employee Assistance • Health & Safety • Stress Management Policy • Flexible Working Policy • Homeworking Policy • Working Time Policy 		

REVIEW HISTORY		
Date	Name	Notes
October 2016	Jayne Beer	<i>Review and re-write</i>
Sept 2019	Jane Gilchrist	<i>Review and Amend</i>
October 2020	Jane Gilchrist	<i>Review and Amend</i>
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

NUS strives to have a truly high-performing, inclusive culture, which is underpinned by respect and collaboration. This policy is central to achieving and maintaining that kind of culture.

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and aim to promote an inclusive workplace and raise awareness of the benefits that inclusion can bring. We believe that colleagues should feel welcome and supported at work in an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and able to make a valuable contribution to NUS whatever their background or differences. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy is for everybody.

NUS' commitment to liberation is also fundamental to this policy and is intrinsic to our values. We believe that the struggle for equality is about liberation and freedom from all forms of oppression in every area of life. We believe that everyone should have the right to equal access to job opportunities and progression in all areas of employment. Employment should be free from exploitative practices; as well as being free of any discrimination, harassment, bullying or stigma. We seek to go above and beyond legislation, which is reflected in our liberation campaigns, and the ways in which we lobby and campaign to change legislation and impact wider society.

We also recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce. As the national body representing students and member students unions, we believe that we must not only understand that diversity but should reflect it and champion it.

The NUS UK and NUS Charity People Plans include a focus on making NUS a more inclusive place to work and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan comprises a number of planned activities around:

- Employer brand and recruitment
- Culture
- Training Engagement
- Wellbeing
- Inclusive Leadership
- Monitoring and benchmarking.

The aim of the EDI Plan is to promote a depth of understanding for managers and colleagues around EDI issues. It provides resources to support colleague network groups and to continue to develop best practice people policies and practices. In addition, the plan sets ambitious diversity targets and positive action initiatives. From a broader perspective, the Plan will also develop our culture and colleague experience and with this, our brand and reputation in the area of EDI.

If you would like a copy of this Policy in larger print, or in another format, please contact us at hrteam@nus.org.uk.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To make a clear statement about our values, commitment, strategy and action plan to promote and improve EDI and the standards expected of everyone.
- 1.2 To ensure compliance with legislation and embed EDI in everything we do.
- 1.3 To make a difference as a fair employer and influencer of social attitudes.
- 1.4 To create an inclusive environment where each individual can feel supported and valued for their contributions to NUS whatever their background or identity and able to bring every part of their identity into their work.
- 1.5 To avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.
- 1.6 To promote equality of opportunity and diversity through best practice people policies and procedures in respect to all colleagues and volunteers. This policy should also be read in conjunction with our Dignity at Work policy which outlines the organisation's approach to managing bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- 1.7 To measure our ongoing progress in making our workforce more diverse and take action to remove barriers, challenge structures and mind-sets and address the under-representation of diverse groups.

2. Scope

- 2.1. Where the policy refers to 'NUS' it means both National Union of Students (UK) and NUS Students' Union Charitable Services or a company under their control.
- 2.1 The policy applies to all employees of National Union of Students (UK) and NUS Students' Union Charitable Services unless they are expressly excluded. The policy applies to full or part-time employees, agency workers, self-employed contractors and consultants working on behalf of NUS and includes behaviour toward third parties with whom workers have contact with as part of their daily role e.g. co-workers, customers, suppliers, students.
- 2.2 This policy applies to everything we do as an employer, business, representative body, servicer provider for our members and purchaser. It covers conduct at our premises as well as related meetings, events and social occasions at other locations. It protects job applicants, employees, former employees, self-employed and contracted staff, student officers, members, customers, students, volunteers and other people coming into contact with our organisation.
- 2.3 This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. Amendments to this policy will be discussed, and if necessary agreed, with the recognised trade union as identified in the union recognition agreement.

3. Principles

- 3.1. NUS will take measures, including training and development to combat inequality, discrimination, oppression or prejudice and to eliminate barriers which may prevent people accessing NUS' services, joining or progressing within the organisation as colleagues or volunteers.
- 3.2. All managers, colleagues and volunteers, whether they are full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary, have a role to play and personal accountability in creating a workplace culture which supports EDI and the NUS values around liberation and human rights. Everyone has a duty to ensure that their personal conduct conforms to NUS policies and codes of conduct. Colleagues and volunteers will be made aware of the

provisions of this policy and provided with advice and training to help increase awareness, as appropriate, on issues relating to EDI.

- 3.3. NUS will promote and integrate EDI values into all areas of its work. NUS will ensure that barriers to access to employment are identified and that no person is treated less favourably on the grounds of their gender (including pregnancy and maternity), marital/civil partnership status, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability including mental health, age, religion or belief or any other dimension of diversity.
- 3.4. We recognise that diversity includes visible and non-visible factors, for example, personal characteristics such as socio-economic background, culture, personality, political beliefs and affiliations, work-style, accent, language, family circumstances and so on. NUS will provide an environment where staff and volunteers are treated fairly and diversity is valued.

4. Legal Framework

- 4.1 The policy has been developed within the framework of relevant UK Land NI legislation, including but not limited to:
 - Equality Act 2010 (including Worker Protection (amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023)
 - The Equal Pay Act (as amended) 1970
 - Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Part Time Workers Regulations 2000
 - Fixed Term Employees Regulations 2002
 - Work & Families Act 2006
 - Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The NUS UK Board and NUS Charitable Services Board are ultimately responsible and accountable for ensuring that the NUS UK and NUS Charitable Services meet their legal obligations in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
 - a. The Director of NUS UK and Director of NUS Charitable Services are responsible for providing leadership to the NUS in the promotion of EDI.
 - b. The HR Director is responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and the organisation's EDI strategy.
 - c. All individuals (colleagues, officers and volunteers) have a role to play in creating a climate and culture which supports EDI.

6. Manager Responsibilities

- 6.1 To communicate this policy and principles within it to the colleagues and volunteers that they manage.
- 6.2 Ensure team members access and complete the relevant training available in the areas of Liberation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- 6.3 Promote equality, diversity and inclusion by their own behaviour and actions and ensure they receive the support and training they need.
- 6.4 Ensure complaints under this policy are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and with sensitivity to the complainant.

- 6.5 Ensure that suppliers and third parties working for the NUS adhere to the principles of this policy.
- 6.6 Ensure fairness in recruitment, selection and learning and development opportunities as well as in the application of all NUS people policies.
- 6.7 Champion EDI by talking about it, sharing best practice, celebrating successes and leading through positive role-modelling.
- 6.8 Champion ideas and support colleagues to raise issues or raise on the colleague's behalf with their permission.

7. Employee Responsibilities

- 7.1 Where it is your area of work, actively ensure you put measures in place and embrace opportunities to ensure equity, diversity, liberation, inclusion and non-discrimination.
- 7.2 To complete NUS mandatory training related to liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion and comply with the Equality Act 2010 including:
 - Not to persuade, attempt to persuade or instruct others to practice unlawful discrimination
 - Not to bully or harass others – bullying and harassment can be persistent or an isolated incident
 - Not to victimise, attempt to victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information on discriminatory practice
- 7.3 Definitions are provided in the glossary of terms.
- 7.4 Inform their manager if they suspect or are aware that discrimination of any kind is taking place. Also refer to the Dignity at Work Policy.

8. Recruitment and Selection

- 8.1 NUS aspires to create an organisation that reflects the diversity of the people it supports. It also seeks to promote equality, diversity and inclusion through treating all prospective employees fairly, with equity, dignity and respect and by ensuring, as far as possible, that the recruitment and selection process is free from bias and discrimination.
- 8.2 Our aim is to be an employer of choice that offers attractive terms and conditions, development opportunities and a positive working environment. We will provide awareness of the importance of diversity to foster creativity and reach out to a broad customer base, also reaping the business rewards.
- 8.3 NUS positively welcome all applications, including those from groups currently underrepresented in the organisation. No applicant will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of any of the principles outlined above. Where Positive Action is used during recruitment, NUS can choose to use the fact that candidates have a protected characteristic to encourage a particular group to apply for a job or when determining which candidate to appoint in a tie break situation, (see Section 9).
- 8.4 Recruitment literature shall not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants alone, unless there is an Occupational Requirement which limits a post to a particular protected characteristic, in which case this must be clearly stated (refer to Appendix A for definitions).
- 8.5 All recruiting managers and officers with recruitment responsibilities should attend NUS recruitment and selection training.

- 8.6 For detailed guidance on recruitment, advertising, shortlisting and the selection process please refer to the Talent Attraction, Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 8.7 NUS has produced a best practice Guide for Students' Unions – 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment and Selection' ([G:\HR_SHARE\Manager Guidance\Recruitment & Selection\Training](#)). As an employer we also champion and follow the principles set out in this Guide, which focuses on ways to make recruitment practices more inclusive.

9. Positive Action

- 9.1 During recruitment and selection the Equality Act 2010 allows organisations to take a protected characteristic (refer to Appendix A for definitions) into consideration when encouraging people to apply for a job or deciding who to recruit. Job adverts can encourage a particular group to apply for a job e.g. "we particularly welcome applications from" (people with a particular protected characteristic). In addition, this can also be used when there are applicants who are "as qualified as" each other for a particular vacancy. In these circumstances, NUS can choose to use the fact that a candidate has a protected characteristic as a 'tie-breaker' when determining which candidates to shortlist or appoint. Positive action can only happen when there is evidence to show that people with that characteristic face particular difficulties in the workplace or are disproportionately under-represented.
- 9.2 NUS will consider positive action measures as a way of overcoming inequality in accordance with relevant legislation. This includes when NUS think that staff members or job applicants who share a particular protected characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic, or if their participation in an activity is disproportionately low. This will involve activities such as improving access to training or providing special encouragement or support in applying for vacancies which should help to create a more level playing field.
- 9.3 Positive Action does not allow for 'positive discrimination', which is unlawful as it gives applicants from under-represented groups preferential treatment in the recruitment process, regardless of their ability to do the job.
- 9.4 NUS takes reasonable steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.
- 9.5 NUS aims to be an employer of choice for talented and enterprising ethnic minority professionals and team members. NUS will partner and work with appropriate organisations to ensure all externally advertised job vacancies are advertised in ways that encourage applicants from a black and minority ethnic background.

10. Disability and reasonable adjustments

- 10.1 NUS is committed to being inclusive and accessible to disabled people. NUS has a Disabled Student Campaigners Network which supports, organises and facilitates conversations on issues affecting disabled students at a local, national and international level. NUS, as an employer, aims to remove barriers that exclude, limit and marginalise disabled people in employment and supports its staff to understand the nature of disabilities with the aim of overcoming prejudice.
- 10.2 NUS encourages applicants from disabled people and is committed to:
- Providing a Guaranteed Job Interview - to interview all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy.
 - Being signed up to the Disability Confident Employer Scheme with JobCentre Plus in order to continue to build our reputation as a Disability Confident employer that actively seeks out and recruits skilled disabled people.
 - Consulting with Disabled colleagues through its Disabled Staff Group, one to ones and organisation wide surveys to remove barriers and implement the adjustments needed to ensure disabled employees enjoy equity at work.

- Retaining disabled colleagues in so far as possible. We are committed to fulfilling our legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and will make every effort to support individuals to stay in employment.
- Improving knowledge – to take action to ensure that all colleagues develop the appropriate level of disability awareness through appropriate training workshops to support NUS commitment on disability equality.

- 10.3 NUS is committed to making reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability. This means, wherever possible, removing barriers that might get in the way of a disabled person effectively doing their job, including being able to sustain their attendance or return to work following sickness absence.
- 10.4 Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to, the provision of specialist equipment, IT software and adaptive technology, additional training, a change to working patterns, changes to working practices, awareness training for co-workers, adjustments to performance measures, retraining, home working, adjustments to physical features of the workplace and redeployment to a suitable alternative vacancy.
- 10.5 During the recruitment process, applicants will be asked if they require any reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to allow them to be considered for the job. NUS will provide all adjustments that are reasonable to accommodate the needs of disabled employees and job applicants.
- 10.6 We recognise that often adjustments can be made at low cost, or no cost yet make a significant difference to the ability of a disabled employee to perform well in their role. Managers should seek advice about making reasonable adjustments and possible sources of financial assistance to help cover the cost of adjustments from the HR Team. Further advice and funding for specialist support can be obtained from the Government's Access to Work scheme.
- 10.7 Managers should ensure that they always discuss possible adjustments with colleagues, who will be able to describe the effects of their disability and provide knowledge of any relevant adjustments that have been helpful previously or may help going forwards.
- 10.8 The Sickness Absence Policy and a Manager's Guide to Disability Redeployment provide further detailed information regarding our commitment to being inclusive for disabled employees.

11. Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance

- 11.1 NUS has developed a suite of wellbeing policies focused on ways of supporting and retaining employees through e.g. flexibility and work-life balance, wellbeing, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provided and health and safety provisions.
- 11.2 The NUS Wellbeing Policy Statement summarises the wellbeing resources that can be accessed by NUS employees, including e.g. counselling services (available in the HR SHARE folder).
- 11.3 The Special and Other Leave Policy (available in the [HR SHARE folder](#)) offers special and other additional leave, paid or unpaid, in a range of situations and provides a framework that enables employees to request reasonable time off for particular types of leave.

12. Religious and Cultural Needs

- 12.1 It is fundamental to NUS' vision, the recognition that everyone has a right to their distinctive and diverse identities, including religious and cultural practices. The Equality Act 2010 protects against discrimination on grounds of religion, religious or other philosophical beliefs, such as humanism. This includes all major religions, as well as less

widely practised ones. Staff members are also protected against discrimination if they do not hold a particular (or any) religion or belief. The Human Rights Act 1998 also guarantees everyone the freedom to practice their religion.

- 12.2 Religious dress code – NUS supports staff members wearing religious or cultural dress and recognises that it can be an important expression of an individual's religious identity. We do not wish to be prescriptive and aim to be as flexible as possible regarding dress.
- 12.3 NUS recognises that employees may wish to have flexibility or take time off during holy days and festivals for a number of reasons such as attendance at their place of worship, requests for private prayer, to take additional rest and so on. It is NUS' policy to provide flexibility on request, wherever possible, to move the timing of scheduled breaks or temporarily alter an employee's working pattern so that breaks can be granted at times that coincide with the needs for religious observance. Flexibility will also be provided wherever possible to enable employees to take holidays, TOIL or unpaid leave at a particular time so that they may celebrate and/or comply with their religious or belief-related obligations. Guidance and relevant criteria is provided to colleagues and managers under the Special and Other Leave policy.

13. Gender reassignment

- 13.1 NUS is committed to ensuring that trans people are treated with dignity and respect. NUS recognises that should a person undergo gender reassignment the length of time this will take will depend on the individual's circumstances, including the type of medical treatment the employee is having and whether they need to travel for the treatment. Further guidance is provided to colleagues and managers under the Special and Other Leave Policy.

14. Pronouns

- 14.1 NUS fosters a culture of respect, exemplified by the importance placed on using individuals' chosen pronouns. This practice goes beyond affirmation, creating a welcoming environment where everyone thrives.

15. Flexible Working

- 15.1 NUS promotes flexible working and recognises the benefits in helping employees to achieve a balance between work and personal commitments. NUS also recognises that the organisation can benefit from well managed flexible working which promotes employee engagement but can also offer the organisation the opportunity to align its business needs with customer needs. NUS will review all flexible working requests and will consider them fairly. The Flexible Working Policy can be found in the [HR SHARE folder](#).

16. Parenting and Carer Policies

- 16.1 NUS has developed a suite of Parenting policies, which provide a more generous package than that required by legislation and aims to encourage employees to remain in employment, allowing NUS to retain valued skills.
- 16.2 The Special and Other Leave policy also includes the following related policies:
 - time off for dependants
 - time off for fertility treatment
 - career breaks
 - compassionate leave

17. Learning and Development

- 17.1 Every new employee will undergo comprehensive induction training which includes training on liberation, equality, diversity and inclusion. NUS provide mandatory training

as part of its In-House Training Programme to ensure good understanding and knowledge of expectations and best practice within EDI.

- 17.2 Information on learning and development opportunities will be widely publicised and all colleagues will be encouraged to undertake training.

18. Dignity At Work

- 18.1 NUS will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation. In addition to the principles outlined in this policy, the Dignity at Work policy aims to provide processes and support to encourage individuals to have the confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour without fear of reprisal. We will help the person who has raised the concern to receive appropriate support and assistance and to ensure that concerns are discreetly, thoroughly and impartially investigated.
- 18.2 There is also the opportunity to anonymously report incidents whereby the individual may not want the issue to be dealt with directly but still wishes it to be reported. Incidents reported anonymously should be made using the process outlined in the Dignity at Work Policy.
- 18.3 NUS has a duty to protect all staff and may pursue the matter independently if it considers it appropriate to do so. This may include cases where other parties, but not the aggrieved party, have made a complaint or in specific circumstances in which an aggrieved party is not able or willing to make a formal complaint. NUS may decide to initiate an investigation and make a decision on further action on the basis of the evidence that is available.
- 18.4 Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 18.5 Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

19. Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the organisation

- 19.1 The organisation will treat customers, suppliers and other third parties in line with its Dignity at Work policy.
- 19.2 Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

20. Monitoring and review

- 20.1 This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. NUS will monitor the diversity of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will review its EDI policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the organisation will implement them.
- 20.2 Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Glossary of Terms

Diversity – 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.

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

Liberation - The seeking of equality and freedom from all forms of oppression.

Inclusion – An environment where everyone feels valued, respected and engaged, irrespective of any dimension of diversity. This allows the right conditions for each individual to do their best and reach their full potential.

Direct discrimination - Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have.

Discrimination by association - Occurs when a person treats another less favourably because of that person's association with another person who has a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception - Occurs when a person treats another person less favourably because that person is thought to have a protected characteristic, whether or not they do. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the characteristic.

Indirect discrimination - Occurs when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the organisation that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

Microaggressions - The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their identity e.g. based upon a person's race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and other minoritized identities.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments - Where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Occupational Requirement - Provides a general exception to what would otherwise be unlawful direct discrimination in relation to work. For example, in certain limited circumstances, A is permitted to discriminate against B in relation to work if A can show that being of a particular sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age – or not being a transsexual person or married or a civil partner – is an occupational requirement. If possessing a particular protected characteristic is a requirement of a job, NUS will not be acting unlawfully in refusing to employ someone who does not possess that characteristic provided NUS can show that applying the requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Protected Characteristics - Is the term used for equality groups in the Equality Act 2010. These being - age, disability, gender reassignment, race, ethnic and national origin, religion or belief (Including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Harassment - Where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Bullying – A form of harassment. Bullying may be characterised as; offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient or group of individuals.

Victimisation - Occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because they have exercised their rights under the policy or relevant legislation, intend to complain or have given evidence or information about a situation involving discrimination.