

Queen Margaret University Students' Union Equal Opportunities Statement and Policy

(Appendix A)

Equal Opportunities Policy Statement (Appendix A)

1. Aims

- 1.1 1.1 The Students' Union shall implement and comply with an Equal Opportunities Policy which seeks to:
- 1.1.1 encourage a community in which all individuals may contribute as fully as possible without fear of unfair and discriminatory attitudes and practices
 - 1.1.2 ensure that there is a positive atmosphere in and in relation to the Students' Union and its activities
 - 1.1.3 create and sustain a welcoming environment for all of its users both in and outside of the Students' Union's premises.
- This policy seeks to encourage a community in which all individuals may contribute as fully as possible without fear of unfair and discriminatory attitudes and practices.
- 1.2 In order to ensure that there is a positive atmosphere, this Students' Union seeks to create and sustain a welcoming environment for all of its users both in and outside of the Students' Unions premises.

2. Principles

- 2.1 2.1 The Equal Opportunities Policy referred to in section 1 above shall enshrine the following principles:
- 2.1.1 Discrimination, direct or indirect, based on gender, appearance, ethnic, national, regional or racial origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, family circumstances, health, including HIV status, Trade Union membership or any other distinction is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
 - 2.1.2 Such forms of discrimination represent a waste of human potential and are to the detriment of the individual and the Students' Union as a whole.
 - 2.1.3 Equal Opportunities Policies can only succeed with the active support of the whole organisation and the Students' Union seeks to involve all sections of students and staff in the continued development and implementation of its policy and related activities.

3. Students' Union General

- 3.1 The Students' Union must ensure that non-discriminatory language is used in its internal and external documents, letters, memos, reports, publications, posters and other communications. This includes all verbal communications, for example, public announcements, telephone conversations, faxes, e-mail, interviews, committees and meetings.
- 3.2 The Students' Union must regularly review the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice in Employment in line with legislation or any other issue to ensure the fair and effective implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

4. Harassment

- 4.1 In the case of a student accusing another student of harassment, the Students' Union recommends that the complainant follow the University guidelines on harassment. The Students' Union Advice Centre can offer appropriate support.
- 4.2 In the case of a member of Union staff accusing a student of harassment, the Students' Union recommends that the complainant follow the University guidelines on harassment. The General Manager can offer appropriate support.
- 4.3 In the case of a student accusing a member of the Students' Union staff of harassment, the complainant should inform the Students' Union General Manager in order that the matter can be pursued through the Union's disciplinary procedures.
- 4.4 In the case of a member of the Students' Union staff accusing another member of Union staff of harassment, the complainant should inform the General Manager who will investigate the matter through the Students' Union disciplinary procedures.
- 4.5 If a member of University staff is harassing a student or member of the Students' Union staff then the matter shall be referred to the University's procedures. Assistance can be sought from the General Manager and or the Student President.

5. Harassment by Union Officers or Representatives

- 5.1 Special procedures shall be in place in the event of an Executive Officer or Students' Union Representative being accused of harassment. For the purposes of this policy this shall refer to members of the Executive Committee at all times and other representatives when they are on official Union business or if they specifically abuse their elected position in harassing.
- 5.2 This procedure shall apply in all cases of an accusation against an Executive Officer or Representative by a student, a member of Students' Union staff or a member of the University.

- 5.3 If there is an accusation of harassment against an Executive officer or Students' Union Representative as designated above then a committee consisting of the Student President, another Executive Officer and the General Manager shall decide if there is sufficient evidence for the matter to be referred to full hearing. In the event of one of these three having an interest in the complaint then their place on the committee shall be taken by another as follows - The Chair of Student Parliament in place of the President, another Executive Officer in place of another Executive Officer and the Student Development Co-Ordinator in place of the General Manager.
- 5.4 Should this committee decide there is insufficient evidence for a hearing then no further action shall be taken. Should they decide there is sufficient evidence a hearing shall be constituted as follows:
- 5.5 The hearing shall take place as soon as reasonably possible following the decision to refer the matter to a hearing. The Hearing Panel will consist of three members of Executive Committee who have taken no part in the initial investigation one of whom will act as Chair. The General Manager or his/her nominee shall attend the hearing to take the minutes of the hearing but shall have no other role. The Chair shall exercise his/her vote only to break a tie. The hearing shall decide whether the accusation is proven or not proven. If they decide the accusation is proven then they shall be required to formally report this to Executive Committee and shall have the power to impose any of the following sanctions:
- a) A verbal apology to the complainant
 - b) A written apology to the complainant
 - c) A ban from all or part of the Union's premises for a designated time
 - d) A permanent ban from all or part of the Union premises
 - e) Such other punishment as is seen fit

6. Elections

- 6.1 The Students' Union, as a democratic body, recognises that all members of the Students' Union should be able and encouraged to stand for election. The Elections Committee shall ensure that publicity encourages nominations from all students.
- 6.2 The Students' Union recognises that, to encourage representation of certain areas, constituencies may be established to ensure the representation of students from that constituency provided that they fulfil one of the criteria below:

- a) The constituencies cover the entire University, for instance departments or schools or are necessary to fulfil a requirement set by the University.
 - b) The constituencies are to enable a group to be represented who would not otherwise be such as 1st Year students.
 - c) The constituencies have been established to promote representation from a group previously under-represented in the Union.
- 6.3 The Elections Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the promotion and running of elections is conducted in line with the aims and principles of this policy.
- 6.4 Complaints about breaches of Equal Opportunities in elections shall be referred to the Elections Committee in line with the Election Regulations (Schedule 6).

7. Entertainments and Social Space

- 7.1 The Students' Union will ensure that, as far is possible, social space will be provided for students to participate in social and cultural activities that is a 'safe environment' free from any forms of discrimination or harassment.
- 7.2 The Students' Union will ensure that, as far is practical, all of its property is accessible to disabled users.
- 7.3 If any person on Students' Union premises is accused of an action which breaches the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy the alleged perpetrator's name (and registration number if the perpetrator is a student) will be recorded and subsequent disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the Executive Committee. This action may include the following:
- a) A verbal apology from the perpetrator
 - b) A written apology from the perpetrator
 - c) A temporary suspension from the Union premises at some or all times
 - d) Such other action as is deemed appropriate

All Bar, Ents, Venue and all other categories of Union staff will be made aware of this procedure. Any person who makes an allegation in bad faith or that is found to be malicious in intent will be subject to the same sanctions.

8. Student Union Media

- 8.1 All forms of Students' Union media will operate in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

9. Clubs and Societies

- 9.1 All Students' Union Clubs and Societies should be open to all members of the Students' Union. Where societies wish to have restricted membership they must seek permission of Student Parliament. All publicity and literature produced by societies must be in accordance with the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy and be sensitive to the Students' Union diverse membership. All information provided by societies must be given with an English translation.
- 9.2 All society events must be conducted in accordance with the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy. All society elections must be properly advertised and should be free and fair in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

10. Publicising the Equal Opportunity Policy

- 10.1 Copies of the Equal Opportunity Policy shall be given to all members of Student's Union staff and all members of the Executive Committee. Copies of the policy shall be available to all students on request from Students' Union Reception.
- 10.2 All relevant Union material must affirm the Union's commitment to its Equal Opportunities Policy.

Equal Opportunities Code of Practice

3. General

- 3.1 The aim of the Students' Union Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh is to enhance the Student Experience by ensuring that all students matter equally and have the same rights to educational, social, cultural, recreational and welfare opportunities. Therefore, the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Students' Union includes employment in that the only consideration in recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion and general treatment of employees must be how the genuine requirements

of the post are met, or are likely to be met, by the person under consideration whether during the recruitment process or during their employment.

4. Job Descriptions

4.1 All job descriptions will state clearly the main duties of the position

4.2 The personal specification will outline the essential and desirable competencies needed to perform the job satisfactorily.

4.3 Any qualifications, skills, work experience and personal qualities stated must only be those which are necessary to perform the job satisfactorily.

4.4 Care must be taken to ensure that job descriptions do not indirectly discriminate by setting a requirement that cannot be met by a particular person or group of persons and is not a requirement to do the job e.g. setting a restriction such as a radius to work from home location.

5. Advertising

5.1 Student Staff positions will be advertised only within the University. Advertisements are placed on the main [noticeboard?] at the University's Job Shop, within the Students' Union premises and through e-mail to all students.

5.2 Any permanent position will be advertised internally and externally. If there is a position which is a promotion opportunity for permanent staff this may, after due consideration, be advertised internally in the first instance.

5.3 Any advertisement must not discourage persons who are eligible for the post from applying and must clearly reflect the job description accurately.

6. Job Application Forms

6.1 The Students' Union job application forms will include a section for Equal Opportunities monitoring purposes and a record should be kept in order to provide any statistics upon request.

6.2 A large print version of the application can be made available, upon request.

6.3 Application forms will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is in line with this Equal Opportunities Policy and any changes to employment legislation.

6.4 The application form will include a section, which enable applicants to state any special requirements or arrangements should they be invited to attend for interview.

6.5 Applicants will be informed that they are welcome to ask for feedback on their application and the reasons given if rejected.

6.6 Records will be kept for a period of one year from the date of the interview.

6.7 The following text shall be included on all application forms for positions within the Union:

The Students' Union, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh is committed to Equal Opportunity in employment and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

The aim of the Students' Union is to enhance the Student Experience by ensuring that all students matter equally and have the same rights to educational, social, cultural, recreational and welfare opportunities. Therefore, the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Students' Union includes employment in that the only consideration in recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion and general treatment of employees must be how the genuine requirements of the post are met, or are likely to be met, by the person under consideration whether during the recruitment process or during their employment. The Students' Union must ensure that once these requirements are met no regard should be taken of gender, appearance, ethnicity, nationality, regional or racial origin, age (except to meet legal requirements and pensions arrangements), socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, family circumstances, health, including HIV status, Trades Union membership or any other distinction.

7. Selection

The Students' Union application form will make no reference to age or gender save that applicants will have to sign a declaration to confirm that they are below the age of 65.

7.1 No person will be allowed to be involved in the recruitment and selection process unless they have had training in the Union's Recruitment and Selection Procedure and Equal Opportunities issues connected with selection and recruitment. Such issues include stereotypical views, general assumptions and prejudices about race, family circumstances, socio-economic background, religion or political beliefs, age, health and disabilities.

7.2 Short listing of candidates and selection of the interview panel will be established by the General Manager in partnership with the Student President.

7.3 The Selection Panel will document the reasons for their rejection/selection of candidates at each stage. All short listing and selection paperwork will be returned to the General Manager at the end of the recruitment process.

8. Interviewing

8.1 Membership of the Selection Panel must be in line with the principles of equal opportunities.

8.2 Membership of the Selection Panel must not change during the course of the interviews for a position. In exceptional circumstances however, if a member of staff

or Sabbatical Officer was unable to continue interviewing for special reasons a suitable replacement would be found and the position explained to the candidates affected by the change.

8.3 One member of the Selection Panel will be appointed to Chair the interviews and ensure that the interview is conducted in accordance with the Students' Union's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and Code of Practice.

8.4 All interview questions will be prepared in advance and the Selection Panel will meet prior to the interviews to ensure that the questions asked are agreed and comply with the principles of equal opportunities.

8.5 The Selection Panel must ensure that the same questions are asked of all candidates and that all questions relate only to the requirements of the position and could not be deemed discriminatory.

8.6 All candidates must be made aware of the Students' Union commitment towards equal opportunities.

8.7 If there is any selection test involved in the interview process, care must be taken to measure only the criteria required to do, or to train for, the job in question.

8.8 If an interviewed candidate does not meet the personal specification of the position, the reasons must be clearly documented by the Chair of the Selection Panel.

8.9 Any complaint received regarding equal opportunities issues during the recruitment and selection process must be investigated internally. As a result of the investigation a report on the findings will be issued by the Sabbatical Officers.

9. Terms and Conditions of Employment

9.1 All employees of the Students' Union must be issued with a copy of the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy.

9.2 All employees must be made aware, during induction, of their obligation to uphold the principles of the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy. Employees must be made aware that any breach would be investigated and if proven would result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

9.3 The only consideration in recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion and general treatment of employees must be how the genuine requirements of the post are met, or are likely to be met, by the person under consideration whether during the recruitment process or during their employment.

9.4 All new staff should be the subject of the same length of probationary service. Although this can be extended after the end of probationary period if performance, attitude or skills are in question.

9.5 All criteria and procedures for promotion, regrading, training/personal development and discretionary increments must be reviewed and be in accordance with the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy.

9.6 The Training Policy of the Union reflects the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy by displaying and circulating all training and development activities to ensure that all employees and Executive Officers are aware of them.

9.7 Any training material must meet legal requirements and the Students' Union Equal Opportunities Policy.

9.8 Training must take account of the personal and domestic responsibilities of staff.

9.9 All staff should be made aware of the Union's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures and how they can be invoked to enable investigation of any alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying by another member of Students' Union Staff, elected Student Representatives and Officers.

9.10 The Students' Union must give consideration to any staff member whose personal circumstances change and base any decision, subject to operational needs, on the principles of equal opportunities.

9.11 The Students' Union is committed to allowing paternity leave and leave for adoptive parents (See Staff Handbook for conditions).

9.12 All staff and Executive will be given the opportunity to raise matters for discussion in various fora, e.g. staff meetings, departmental meetings, personal reviews etc.

10. Students' Union Environment

10.1 The Students' Union must convey to staff that it is committed to ensuring the Union is a safe environment that respects individuals and is free from any forms of harassment and bullying.

10.2 All staff should be given a copy of the Students' Union Harassment Guidelines and this should be discussed during induction.

10.3 All staff should be aware that all Union buildings should be accessible and safe for staff, students and visitors to the Students' Union and any obstruction or suggestion for a reasonable adjustment to ensure safe access for all, particularly disabled persons, should be reported to the Students' Union General Manager.

11. Students' Union General

11.1 The Students' Union must ensure that non-discriminatory language is used in its internal and external documents, letters, memos, reports, publications, posters and other communications. This includes all verbal communications, for example, public announcements, telephone conversations, faxes, e-mail, interviews, committees and meetings.

11.2 The Students' Union will hold a database on staff that will be subject to the Data Protection Act and will only be used for equal opportunities monitoring purposes, upon request from the Sabbatical Team.

11.3 The Students' Union must regularly review the Equal Opportunities Code of Practice in Employment in line with legislation or any other issue to ensure the fair and effective implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

12. Harassment

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18.2 All relevant Union material must affirm the Union's commitment to its Equal Opportunities Policy.

19. Disclaimer

19.1 In creating this definition of its Equal Opportunities Policy, the Union does not imply or accept that it has not sought to apply fair standards of practice in the past. On the contrary, it believes it has always done its best to practice the highest possible standards in this area, but it recognises the need to constantly examine its policy and practice in the light of changing standards and expectations. For this reason, and this reason alone, it is now revising and restating its policies.

19.2 The formulation of this policy has not been prompted by any allegations of unfairness or inequality being practised by the organisation or its employees.

19.3 This Equal Opportunities policy is functioning entirely in accordance with the law at all times.