

# Equality and Diversity Policy

September 2017

Approving authority:	Professional Services Board
Consultation via:	EDAG
Approval date:	6 September 2017
Effective date:	6 September 2017
Review period:	3 years from Date of Approval
Responsible Executive:	Richard Cloughton
Responsible Office:	HRD/G&LS

POLICY

## HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Heriot-Watt University is committed to equality and diversity in an environment that promotes a Culture of Inclusion for All. This holistic approach helps us maintain an open and accessible working, living and learning environment where all are supported to reach their full potential.

This commitment is further embedded by 'The Spirit of Heriot-Watt University' which is encompassed in our 5 values:

Pursuing Excellence

Valuing and Respecting Everyone

Pride and Belonging

Shaping the Future

Outward Looking

This policy is in direct response UK equality legislation and seeks to take a proactive and positive approach via our commitment to Inclusion for All. The Equality Act 2010 protects a range of groups from unlawful treatment under the term 'protected characteristics' covering:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This policy also covers the University's responsibilities under the Equality Duty which requires the University to pay 'due regard' to:

1. Eliminating unlawful discrimination
2. Advancing equal opportunities (between people that share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it)
3. Fostering good relations (between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not).

## 2. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the University's position on the embedding and promotion of equality and diversity. Specific policies and procedures are in place covering employees and students that should be referred to as necessary.

We recognise that some of our campuses operate under different legal frameworks. The ethos of Inclusion for All, as outlined in this policy, is applicable across all University Campuses delivered through policies, processes and procedures and embedded through our values.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to:

- ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential; challenging inequality and less favourable treatment
- provide an environment that encourages disclosure of individual circumstances and supports change
- promote diversity and equality for students and staff, recognising and valuing the contributions of our diverse population
- clearly demonstrate our commitment to creating an inclusive environment, tackling discrimination and eradicating inappropriate behaviour across the University community.

We will achieve these objectives by:

- ensuring we understand our legal obligations and engage positively with staff, students and representative groups to fulfil our legal requirements
- clear and consistent communication to staff, students and representative groups
- providing access to training and support for staff to enable them to understand how equality and diversity is relevant to their roles and assist them in fully mainstreaming equality and diversity into their everyday activities
- undertaking equality and privacy impact assessment on all new and revised policies and procedures
- taking forward activities that meet our commitments and actively promote equality and diversity throughout the University community.

#### 4. SCOPE

There are a number of areas across the University that take a lead role in taking forward the functions of a Higher Education Institution. The purpose of this policy is to draw linkages to those areas.

**Staff Related:** Equality and diversity is embedded throughout our employment practices to ensure that we are a positive and response employer.

- **Recruitment and Selection:** Good practice in recruitment and selection is at the core of achieving equal opportunities in employment. The University has developed policies and procedures to ensure that decisions on appointments are made wholly on the grounds of the candidate's abilities rather than on any other criteria that cannot be shown to be properly justifiable. Only those staff who have undertaken specific training, either online Recruitment and Selection module provided by Human Resources or an alternative approved by the Director of Human Resources, are permitted to Chair a Selection Panel or be involved regularly in recruitment interviews.
- **New employees:** All new employees must read this policy.
- **Equal Pay:** The University believes that staff should receive equal pay for like work. We are committed to undertaking equal pay audits and taking remedial action where necessary.
- **Performance Development and Review:** Heriot-Watt University operates Performance Development and Review for staff. Managers use this process

to give feedback to individuals and provide clear guidance on their area of work. The PDR process provides a one-to-one opportunity for staff to raise issues of any kind with their line manager. PDR should highlight individual development and support needs around equality and diversity and ensure staff are clear of service and School equality and diversity related requirements.

- **Equality and Diversity Awareness:** All staff at our UK campuses are required to undertake online Diversity in the Workplace Training.
- **Progression and Promotion:** The University is firmly committed to the principle that opportunities for progression and promotion should be available equally to all members of staff. To this end it has developed policies and procedures, to ensure that the criteria used for advancement and promotion are fair and open, and that decisions are made consistently in accordance with published criteria. All staff involved in selection for progression and promotion, including relevant members of departments and promotion bodies, will have undertaken equality and diversity training in order to help them reach unbiased judgments.
- **Grievance Procedures:** Any staff who have concerns about unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying are advised to contact their HR Partner. Should a staff member be in breach of this policy existing disciplinary procedures will be enacted.

**Research:** Heriot-Watt seeks to be at the forefront of world leading research, our activities should embed equality and diversity throughout preparation, conduct and dissemination.

- Staff with responsibility for research governance are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken by the University does not contravene this policy.

**Student Related:** Our student community is a varied population at a range of different stages of study this policy is relevant across undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts. At times the functions outlined below may take place centrally or locally across our academic schools.

- **Admissions:** The University selects based on merit, ability and potential. We will ensure that no applicants are treated less favourably as a result of any protected characteristic. The University will take steps to ensure that the wellbeing of prospective students, visiting applicants, and enrolled students are fully considered and that we meet legal requirements. Further information can be found in our Admissions policy.
- **Learning and Teaching:** We value the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that students bring to our University community. As part of our desire to ensure that the student experience is rewarding and supportive, we will respond by meeting the needs of the diverse and changing student body. We aim to ensure that all teaching, learning and assessment strategies are equitable, undertaken with awareness of the different needs of students and are able to foster academic and personal development. The University recognises that where possible diversity should be encouraged and reflected in the content of course, teaching methods and forms of assessment. The Learning and Teaching Board has responsibility for overseeing learning and teaching development across the institution. More information is contained within the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

- **Student Support and Accommodation:** The welfare of all students of the University is of the highest importance. Student Support and Accommodation provide support, advice and information on accommodation, funding and a range of personal and disability issues along with dedicated support for International Students. The service will continue to ensure that the needs of the diverse student community are met.
- **Student Complaints:** Every student of the University is required at all times to be of good behaviour and to observe all Ordinances, Regulations, procedures and rules.

**University-Wide:** we are an international university encouraging movement between our campuses enriching the experience of all who are part of our community.

- **Internationalisation:** The University is committed to growing our international base. We already see ourselves as Scotland's International University. Our international reputation and focus is one of our main drivers for the diversity of our institution. Ensuring the equal treatment of international members of our University is paramount in terms of continued success with recruiting international students, enhancing our international reputation. Our values are a key vehicle to embed Inclusion for All.
- **Services and Facilities:** Services or facilities provided by, for or in association with the University, are aimed toward ensuring equality of access. This includes catering facilities, accommodation services, sports and exercise provision, retail and outlets, conference and social activities. All of these services and facilities aim to deliver in a manner that meets the needs of our diverse student population and eliminates unlawful discrimination. To this end we are committed to providing up-to-date and appropriate facilities.
- **Procurement:** Procurement activities are undertaken across the University with Procurement Services responsible for purchasing services. They take on responsibility for ensuring that contractors, suppliers and tendering organisations are aware of and comply with this policy. We will take steps to ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout our contractual relationships.
- **Non-University Employees or Students:** Any visitors, contractors, subcontractors and services providers in breach of this policy will be seen to be in breach of their terms of business.
- **Individual Circumstances**

The University has a duty of care across the University community. Where individuals disclose circumstances it is the responsibility of the immediate line management, HR contact or student support contacts to work closely with individuals, professional services and external services where required to enable positive outcomes for both the individual and the University. It should be understood that a declaration of circumstances, verbally or in writing, is a formal declaration to the University and should be responded to as such. In some instances (for example if there is a concern over wellbeing) the confidentiality of a disclosure may not be maintained).

This policy enables flexible responses for individuals, in line with those functions outlined above. This is particularly the case, though not restricted to, individuals who:

- disclose a change in individual circumstances linked to caring responsibilities
- disclose a change in individual circumstances relating to disability
- disclose sexual orientation
- identify as transgender
- disclose the intention to transition
- disclose they do not identify with a specific gender.

Any personal characteristic disclosure or change in individual circumstances will not result in detriment resulting from disclosure such as:

- denied access to courses, progression to other courses or attainment
  - denied access to professional development and progression
  - denied access to services and support
- **Equality and Privacy Impact Assessment**

To ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout the University's functions, where applicable (all those areas that impact on people) equality and privacy impact assessment will be undertaken for all new and revised policies, procedures and functions, prior to endorsement or ratification by the oversight/responsible committee.

## 5. LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

This policy is relevant across the entire University community. As such all staff, students, and visitors, contractors, subcontractors and service providers along with any other persons associated with the functions of the University are responsible for ensuring that they adhere to this policy.

The Heriot-Watt University Court has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the University meets the commitments detailed in this policy. The University Executive has responsibility for ensuring that the day-to-day management of the University takes cognisance of this policy. The Learning and Teaching Board and the Research Knowledge and Exchange Board both have responsibility for ensuring that equality and diversity is fully considered within the Boards and filtered to relevant areas.

The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group reports to the Professional Services Leadership Board. The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that the University's legal obligations are understood and implemented across the institution. The Equality and Diversity Advisory Group have responsibility for ensuring that the policy is understood and well communicated.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We are obliged to collect information regarding the recruitment, retention and development of staff across the range of protected characteristics. We also collect information relating to our student community covering the student journey for monitoring purposes. Any information relating to the equality and diversity of staff or students will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a supportive environment which promotes equality of opportunity alongside dignity and respect, an environment where members of our community are confident and willing to disclose personal information referring to any of the protected characteristics.

Complaints of discrimination based on grounds of protected characteristics should be raised through relevant grievance procedures for staff or complaints procedures for students. Complaints regarding harassment or bullying should be raised in accordance with the Harassment and Bullying policy.

Monitoring and review of this policy will be owned by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group. This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis to ensure compliance with legislation, effectiveness, and equality impact.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION

The University is made up of a range of academic and professional services. These areas support individuals across the University community and as such undertake particular activities that impact directly on equality and diversity. It is the responsibility of Heads of Professional Services/Schools to determine responsibilities within their areas with reference to this policy, the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and through input to the University's Equality Outcomes.

All members of staff have a responsibility to:

- comply with this policy and co-operate with their Line Managers
- treat others with respect at all times
- participate in training and wider learning opportunities to assist the University is meeting its Equality Duty
- ensure behaviours and actions do not unlawfully discriminate and that they are not harassing or bullying others
- be accountable for their actions

All students have a responsibility to:

- treat others with respect at all times
- ensure behaviours and actions do not unlawfully discriminate and that they are not harassing or bullying others
- be accountable for their actions

All visitors, contractors, subcontractors, service providers and any other persons associated with the functions of the University have a responsibility to:

- comply with this policy
- treat others with respect at all times
- ensure behaviours and actions do not unlawfully discriminate and that they are not harassing or bullying others
- be accountable for their actions

Training and support will be provided for all staff to assist in the implementation of this policy. All staff are expected to undertake online Diversity in the Workplace training.

Training for students will be provided where appropriate and linked particularly to Heriot-Watt Student Union Office Bearers.

## 8. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE

Our policies, procedures and functions outline why and how we undertake particular activities and as a result a range of policies and procedures are related to this policy and will have an impact on its implementation. Relevant policies for staff and students can be found at the links below.

**Staff Related :**

[www.hw.ac.uk/services/human-resources/human-resources-policies.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/services/human-resources/human-resources-policies.htm)

**Student Related:** <https://www.hw.ac.uk/uk/students/student-policies.htm>

**Procedures**

As above

**Further reference**

[www.hw.ac.uk/equality](http://www.hw.ac.uk/equality)

## 9. DEFINITIONS

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

## 10. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

[www.hw.ac.uk/equality](http://www.hw.ac.uk/equality)

## 11. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 1		Professional Services Leadership Board	Policy reviewed and updated in line with review cycle. Specifically outlines individual circumstances

POLICY