



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN**

Equality and Diversity Policy



Approved by	The Board of Governors		
Date Approved	April 2022	Status	Approved
Policy Owner	University Secretary and VP Corporate Services	Impact assessed	Yes
Version	3	Date of next review	April 2025

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Date
1	Creation of Policy	
2	Update to Policy	2019
3	Policy has been converted into the new standard policy format and updated to reflect the replacement of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group with the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee and the Equality and Diversity Forum. Updates were also made to remove duplicate clauses and to add references to the relevant legislation and wider equality framework and recent updates. Clauses were also added to include procurement activity, equality monitoring, further guidance, reporting concerns and establishing a two-year review period.	April 2022

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is the policy of the University to actively promote equality and diversity across its functions, and to eradicate discrimination on unlawful or unfair grounds as required under the Equality Act (2010).
- 1.2 Robert Gordon University is committed to ensuring that no-one is disadvantaged as a consequence of their age, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender reassignment, family responsibilities, marital status, pregnancy, religion or political belief, sex and sexual orientation or offending background.
- 1.3 As part of this commitment the University will address issues of discriminatory practice towards staff, students, and external stakeholders. This commitment is reflected in the University's values which include the promotion of equality and diversity.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Robert Gordon University (RGU) strives towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive and harmonious.
- 2.2 The University will achieve this by:
 - 2.2.1 Meeting the requirements of the [Public Sector Equality Duties](#) and [the Scottish Specific Duties for Equality](#);
 - 2.2.2 Embracing a positive attitude towards the promotion of equality on the basis of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation to ensure all reach their full potential;
 - 2.2.3 Further embedding equality and diversity into both academic and non-academic induction and training courses;

- 2.2.4 Being prepared to understand that fairness and equality is not always about treating people similarly, but can sometimes mean treating people differently;
- 2.2.5 Acknowledging and celebrating the breadth of experiences and perspectives that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the University; and
- 2.2.6 Eliminating discrimination and prejudice by empowering people to treat each other with respect.

3. The University's Approach

- 3.1** The University believes that the most effective way to promote equality and eradicate discrimination is to mainstream the consideration of equality across its functions. In this respect, all employees, students, and visitors to the University have an individual duty to ensure that equality and diversity is actively promoted.
- 3.2** Ultimate responsibility for overseeing this approach rests with the Board of Governors which delegates responsibility to the Principal and Vice Chancellor who, in turn is assisted by the Executive. To ensure there is effective leadership within the University, one of the Vice-Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellors assumes the role of having overall strategic responsibility for the promotion of equality and for the mainstreaming of equality and diversity and is supported by the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee (EDSC).

4. Implementation

- 4.1** Mainstreaming equality and diversity is the responsibility of the EDSC, comprised of membership from a wide range of the university's administrative functions and staff and students to ensure it represents staff and student experiences at the University.
- 4.2** The mainstreaming of equality and diversity includes ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities, the University does this through mandatory new staff training and periodic refresher training, both of which are embedded in the University's values and strategy.

- 4.3** The work of the EDSC is informed by a wider Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF). The EDF which is comprised of all Equality Champions, Conveners of equality networks, staff and students will ensure the inclusion of those with lived experiences.
- 4.4** The University is committed to creating and promoting a working and learning environment where everybody is treated with respect. The details of this and the definitions of unacceptable behaviour are held in the [Dignity at RGU Policy](#).
- 4.5** The University acknowledges its responsibilities around a range of equality and diversity reporting requirements and these are available on its website.
- 4.6** There are particular procurement functions placed on the University as it is a public funded body and the University discharges these through its current [Procurement Policy](#).
- 4.7** All new policies, and substantial changes to current policies, must be impact assessed before being published. The Equality Impact Assessment ensure that any negative impact of policies on groups who share a protected characteristic has been mitigated and a positive impact recorded. The Equality Impact Assessment should be published alongside the related policy.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Principal and Vice Chancellor

5.1.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal and Vice Chancellor to:

- 5.1.1.1 Ensure that the University has an effective Equality and Diversity Policy;
- 5.1.1.2 Ensure that the University's equality and diversity policies and action plans are regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, to ensure compliance with all statutory obligations;
- 5.1.1.3 Make available the necessary resources for the effective operation of all University activities;

5.1.1.4 Ensure that responsibility for equality and diversity is properly assigned and promote active acceptance of this responsibility throughout the University; and

5.1.1.5 Work to secure a culture of active engagement with equality and diversity issues.

5.1.2 The Principal and Vice Chancellor will exercise their responsibilities through the Executive, who have collective and individual responsibility for effective adoption and implementation of [RGU Policies and Procedures](#).

5.2 The Executive

5.2.1 It is the responsibility of the Executive to:

5.2.1.1 Ensure effective governance of equality and diversity matters through the provision of approved and appropriate organisational arrangements and policies that are effectively implemented to mainstream equality and diversity in to practice;

5.2.1.2 Approve equality policies as recommended by EDSC and take the lead on furthering the equality outcomes;

5.2.1.3 Review, regularly and after major changes, the effectiveness and relevance of the Equality and Diversity Policy;

5.2.1.4 Ensure that all the Executive's decisions reflect the intentions as stated in the Equality and Diversity Policy, and ensure the policy reflects current strategic thinking;

5.2.1.5 Ensure that adequate resources are available to provide relevant equality and diversity training and development activities at all levels within the University;

5.2.1.6 Engage the active participation of staff in improving equality and diversity;

5.2.1.7 Regularly (at least annually) receive reports and review equality and diversity performance throughout the University;

- 5.2.1.8 Consider recommendations, from the EDSC, EDF and professional advisers and others, for how equality and diversity management arrangements are effectively mainstreamed and made operational;
- 5.2.1.9 Report to the Board of Governors (at least annually);
- 5.2.1.10 Champion the University's equality and diversity ethos and decisions throughout the University; and
- 5.2.1.11 Provide equality and diversity leadership for the organisation by ensuring that all actions and decisions made by the Executive, on EDSC recommendations, are mainstreamed in their areas of responsibility.

5.3 Convener of EDSC

- 5.3.1 Taking cognisance of the relevant legislation the Convener of the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee (EDSC) has the following responsibilities additional to the Executive:
 - 5.3.1.1 Overall responsibility for developing and mainstreaming the Equality and Diversity Policy, equality outcomes and activities in annual planning;
 - 5.3.1.2 To ensure that the Executive reviews, at least annually, the University's equality and diversity performance;
 - 5.3.1.3 To ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and action plan reflect current Executive's responsibilities;
 - 5.3.1.4 To inform the Executive about any significant changes in legislation or emerging issues or trends identified through the collection of student data and employment information, results of surveys and reports, or complaints or feedback;
 - 5.3.1.5 To ensure that the equality and diversity implications of all the Executive agenda items and decisions are fully considered and addressed at that forum;

- 5.3.1.6 To report to the Executive on the effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Policy and annual plan and the consistency of application across the University and its performance;
- 5.3.1.7 To ensure that the Executive regularly receives and reviews relevant reports on current equality and diversity progress and performance;
- 5.3.1.8 To present an annual report on progress made with respect to the annual plan providing a breakdown of any employment information and student data detailing progress made to the Executive and the Board of Governors; and
- 5.3.1.9 Ensure the University meets external requirements to review annual plans, and meet publishing and reporting requirements in relation to all protected characteristics.

5.4 Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee

- 5.4.1 It is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee (EDSC) collectively:
 - 5.4.1.1 To formulate and monitor the University's response to sector and societal developments related to equality, diversity and widening access;
 - 5.4.1.2 Working in partnership with the Student Union, to inform strategic equality and diversity priorities and direction, based on robust evidence, data, involvement and consultation with EDF and other appropriate stakeholders;
 - 5.4.1.3 To review, approve, and monitor the Equality and Diversity outcomes to ensure appropriate progress and consistency across the University in support of its commitment to the promotion of equality and the elimination of discrimination;

- 5.4.1.4 To ensure data gathering, analysis, measuring and evaluating impact for different protected characteristic and other widening access groups, against the public sector duties to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and foster good relations;
- 5.4.1.5 To monitor and contribute to the implementation of the University's equality outcomes and associated action plans;
- 5.4.1.6 To ensure institutional equality outcomes, related reporting and initiatives widely shared and discussed across the institution at all levels (including committee and board levels), to help promote an understanding of the relevance to specific functions and teams; and
- 5.4.1.7 Considering the recommendations of, and other matters raised by, the Equality and Diversity Forum.

5.5 Equality and Diversity Champions

- 5.5.1 The Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee (EDSC) has appointed champions in the areas of Race, Age, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, Pregnancy and Maternity, and Gender Reassignment. The role of the Champion is to:
 - 5.5.1.1 Contribute and provide challenge to the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee for the equality strand championed in the Equality and Diversity Forum;
 - 5.5.1.2 Seek the engagement of employees and where appropriate students in the work and activities of the Equality and Diversity Forum and Sub-Committee;
 - 5.5.1.3 Provide leadership in the University in the area championed;
 - 5.5.1.4 Keep up to date on development in the area championed; and
 - 5.5.1.5 Actively contribute to the development of implementation of the Equality and Diversity equality outcomes.

5.6 Senior Managers

5.6.1 Heads of School and Professional Support Departments are responsible for the following:

- 5.6.1.1 Providing equality and diversity leadership within their areas of responsibility;
- 5.6.1.2 Engaging the active participation of staff in improving equality and diversity;
- 5.6.1.3 Providing equality and diversity leadership throughout their area of responsibility, ensuring that all activities under their control are carried out in accordance with the University Equality and Diversity Policy and any professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements where appropriate;
- 5.6.1.4 Ensuring that all direct reports are aware of, and comply with, the University's Equality and Diversity Policy;
- 5.6.1.5 Ensuring that all direct reports within their area of responsibility understand their individual responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity;
- 5.6.1.6 Ensuring all contractors and non-employees entering or working on our premises are aware of, and comply with, the University's Equality and Diversity Policy; and
- 5.6.1.7 Heads of School have specific responsibility for monitoring data at Course/Team level and to ensure equality and diversity matters are raised at School Academic Boards.

5.7 Employees with Line Management Responsibility

5.7.1 It is the responsibility of all employees in a supervisory role to:

- 5.7.1.1 Provide equality and diversity leadership throughout their area of responsibility;

- 5.7.1.2 Ensure that all staff within their area of responsibility understand their individual responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity; and
- 5.7.1.3 Ensure that all staff complete mandatory training in equality and diversity; and develop appropriate actions within the Employee Performance Review (EPR) process, as appropriate.

5.8 Individuals

- 5.8.1 It is the duty of every individual to:
 - 5.8.1.1 Be aware of, and comply with, the University's Equality and Diversity Policy;
 - 5.8.1.2 Complete mandatory training in equality and diversity;
 - 5.8.1.3 Treat everyone with respect;
 - 5.8.1.4 Eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations across all protected characteristics;
 - 5.8.1.5 Actively promote equality and diversity; and
 - 5.8.1.6 Co-operate with the University in complying with any requirements or duty imposed under any relevant legislation, and in implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy, plans and activities.

5.9 In addition, it is the policy of the University that individuals shall:

- 5.9.1 Be able to freely report any concern regarding equality and diversity to their manager, supervisor, equality champions, EDF or EDSC member;
- 5.9.2 Not indulge in behaviour which contravenes the University policies on equality and diversity or any other related policy; and
- 5.9.3 Support equality champions and members of EDF and EDSC in carrying out their roles.

6. Equality Monitoring

- 6.1** As part of the University's compliance with the Scottish Specific Public Duties the University collects equality data on its students and staff. This data is used to inform the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee's actions and measure performance against the various statutory reports.
- 6.2** The collection, storing and handling of this data will be in line with the University's [Information Governance Policy](#) and related [Privacy Notices](#).

7. Further Guidance

- 7.1** Further guidance and contacts for both students and staff are available on the University's [website](#).

8. Compliance and Reporting Concerns

- 8.1** Compliance of the Equality and Diversity Policy is essential to creating a welcoming and accepting culture at the University and is a legal requirement.
- 8.2** Concerns or complaints about non-compliance of this Policy should be made to the [University](#) either in writing, by phone, in person, or by email and all other virtual platforms including the University's [Support and Report website](#).
- 8.3** Complaints will be treated in line with the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#) for students and members of the public, and the [Grievance Policy](#) for members of staff.
- 8.4** Non-compliance of this Policy by University staff or students may result in disciplinary actions depending on the severity of the non-compliance and could result in civil or legal proceedings.

9. Review

- 9.1** This Policy will be reviewed every two years or as required.



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