

EDI Policy

Vice-Chancellor Statement of Commitment

As Vice-Chancellor, I am delighted to express my personal commitment to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

Our Strategy cannot be achieved without the talents of our people. In line with our Values and Behaviours, in our [Strategy](#) we have chosen to make five [Commitments](#) about how we will act while delivering our strategic ambitions.

Northumbria's commitment to inclusion is clearly articulated through our Strategic Commitment ['We promote fairness in a community where all staff and students feel they belong'](#). By understanding the needs of individuals, we aim to remove any unnecessary barriers and adopt an inclusive approach across all our activities.

We are committed to a culture of inclusion and ensuring that the opportunities we provide are open to all. Progressing our EDI agenda is essential to attracting and developing our exceptional people and creating an environment in which everyone can be successful as individuals, while contributing to the University's success.

Beyond the legislative duties described in the EDI Policy, we are committed to the compelling moral case for equality. We are striving to create a community that positively welcomes diversity by embedding EDI in everything we do.

Andy Long

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

| EDI Policy | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Brief Description & Purpose: | <i>The EDI Policy sets out the University's equality commitments and key points from the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty.</i> | | |
| Applicable to (list cohorts): | Staff: All staff | Students: All students | Third Parties: All agency workers and contractors |
| Effective From: | 2022 | Last Review Date: | July 2025 |
| Approval Authority: | Board of Governors | Approved: | 2022 |
| Executive Owner: | Chief People Officer | Business Owner: | Director of EDI |
| Next Review Date: | July 2027 | Publication External Y/N | Y |

1. Introduction

Northumbria University is proud to be an inclusive community. We value diversity and are committed to fostering a culture where everyone feels a sense of belonging and is empowered to thrive. We uphold our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, ensuring that our policies and practices promote fairness and inclusivity.

This policy reflects our [Values and Behaviours](#) and complements other University policies including the Unacceptable Behaviours Policy, Grievance Procedure, and Code of Conduct.

The policy applies to all colleagues, students, agency workers and contractors. We expect everyone associated with the University to adhere to this policy throughout their engagement with us.

2. Policy Detail

2.1 Legal Framework

2.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection against discrimination in employment, education, and the provision of goods and services. It covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

2.1.2 The Act prohibits:

- **Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably due to a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating environment.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfavourably because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act.

2.2 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

2.2.1 The Equality Act introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) that requires public bodies, including universities, to consider how their policies and practices can:

1. **Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination:** Proactively prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
2. **Advance Equality of Opportunity:** Identify and remove barriers that disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics.
3. **Foster Good Relations:** Promote understanding and respect among people from different backgrounds.

- 2.2.2 Northumbria University is committed to meeting these objectives by creating an inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued and supported. While we uphold our legal obligations, we also strive to foster a culture that embraces diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- 2.2.3 The University does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. Such behaviour is taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action. We are also committed to balancing our legal responsibilities with the principles of freedom of speech, ensuring respectful expression for all members of our community.

2.3 Our Equality Commitments

- 2.3.1 To support our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, the University will:
- Set and publish equality objectives in our annual EDI report.
 - Publish annual updates on how we are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty.
 - Integrate EDI considerations into our everyday business through Equality Impact Assessments for relevant policy reviews and business changes.
 - Actively seek opportunities to promote EDI.
- 2.3.2 To support our commitment to being an inclusive employer, the University will:
- Embed EDI considerations in all policies and practices.
 - Address unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.
 - Promote work-life balance and flexible working opportunities.
 - Monitor workforce demographics and benchmark against local, national, and sector data to support a representative workforce.
 - Support disabled colleagues through reasonable adjustments in recruitment and the workplace.
 - Accommodate religious or cultural needs where practicable such as providing appropriate spaces for prayer.

2.4 Dealing with complaints of discrimination

Any colleague who believes that they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment or victimisation should initially raise their concerns with their manager. If the concern involves their manager, it should be raised with the next more senior manager. Alternatively, colleagues can speak confidentially with a member of the HR team or trade union representative if they are a member.

Where appropriate, issues should be resolved informally. Colleagues can explore informal resolution with support from HR, their trade union representative or the EDI team.

If informal resolution is not suitable or has not been successful, colleagues may raise their concerns through the Grievance Procedure, or the [Unacceptable Behaviours reporting tool](#).

Students or visitors who feel they have been discriminated against should report this using the [Unacceptable Behaviours reporting tool](#).

3 Key Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1 Everyone in the University community is expected to:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy and act in accordance with its principles.
- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report concerns through the appropriate channels.

3.1.2 Managers at all levels are responsible for implementing this policy by:

- Promoting an inclusive working environment where discrimination, harassment, and victimisation are not tolerated.
- Challenging unacceptable behaviour by colleagues, students, or visitors, and escalating concerns when necessary.
- Taking all complaints of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation seriously and addressing them promptly and confidentially.
- Ensuring fairness and transparency in all recruitment and selection decisions.
- Raising awareness of the diverse needs of colleagues.
- Ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are completed for relevant business or policy changes.

3.1.3 The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring the University complies with the Equality Act 2010. Specifically, the Board will:

- Review and approve the University's equality objectives, annual EDI report, and this policy.
- Monitor progress against the objectives outlined in the report.
- Address any underperformance through the EDI Committee.
- Review and approve any significant amendments to this policy

3.1.4 Trade Union representatives and the University's Colleague Equality Networks play a vital role in:

- Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination.
- Supporting the creation of an inclusive workplace.
- Providing advice, guidance and representation to their members.
- Championing and supporting the implementation of this policy.

3.2 Definitions

- **Equality:** Ensuring fair treatment, opportunity, and outcomes for all, preventing disadvantage or discrimination based on protected characteristics.

- **Diversity:** Recognising and valuing individual differences, including characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences.
- **Inclusion:** Creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to contribute.

Further definitions can be found in the [Equality glossary](#) (staff access only).

4 Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

- [Unacceptable Behaviours Policy](#)
- [Grievance Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Colleague Equality Networks](#) (staff access only)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (staff access only)

5 Version

| Version No. | Reviewer | Date | Changes |
|-------------|----------|----------------|---|
| 1.0 | R Brown | 2022 | |
| 1.1 | R Brown | September 2024 | <i>Formatting and content adjustments.</i> |
| 2.0 | R Brown | July 2025 | <i>Content streamlined; policy reformatted.</i> |