

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



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### 1. Introduction

We believe that fostering an environment where every individual is respected and valued for their contribution is fundamental to our Values. Capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different perspectives, experiences and skills will add value to the way we operate with our Stakeholder groups.

By treating people fairly and with equality of opportunity, and by accepting and embracing their diversity, we can enhance our corporate social responsibility and create an inclusive and positive working environment for all employees.

### 2. Roles and Accountabilities

This policy relates to all permanent and fixed term employees of The UNITE Group plc and all wholly-owned subsidiaries of that company. This policy also includes agency temporary workers and contractors.

The following details the accountabilities of all parties under Unite Students' Equality and Diversity Policy:

#### Employees

- Have a responsibility to guard against any form of discrimination and avoid any action which goes against the spirit of this policy;

- Responsible for always demonstrating behaviour and actions that do not discriminate unlawfully;
- Responsible for promoting dignity and equality of opportunity.
- Responsible for raising any concerns about unlawful discrimination with their Line Manager or HR Representative;
- Must not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- Co-operate with measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination;
- Treat others as they would like to be treated;
- Seek, acknowledge and value others' experience and contribution;
- Must not victimise anyone as a result of them having complained about, reported or provided evidence of discrimination.

### Line Managers

- Responsible for implementing this policy in their day-to-day management of employees and in applying employment policies and practices in a fair and equitable manner;
- Ensuring equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance;
- Ensuring all employees act in accordance with this policy, providing necessary support and direction.
- Responsible for raising any concerns about unlawful discrimination with their HR Representative and ensuring any concerns raised under the scope of this policy are treated seriously and sensitively;
- Responsible for dealing appropriately with any breach of this Policy;
- Effectively manage and deal promptly when investigating issues relating to potential discrimination.
- Responsible for ensuring any appointed Agency Staff or Contractors are aware of and adhere to this policy;
- Responsible for promoting equality and diversity through their actions;
- Promote, respect and encourage each employee to reach their potential.

### Human Resources

- Responsible for advising Line Managers on this policy;
- Responsible for monitoring Equality and Diversity legislation and making any required amendments to this policy;
- Ensuring all employment matters are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, and are appropriately documented;
- Supporting managers in investigating issues relating to potential discrimination.

### 3. Policy Statement

Unite Students' values diversity amongst its workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee will feel respected and able to give their best.

The purpose of this policy is to promote a culture of equality and fairness for all and ensure no person acting on our behalf shall discriminate in any situation against another individual or group, directly or indirectly, because of any of the nine "protected characteristics" stated in the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Gender Identity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

We are committed to a workplace free from processes, attitudes and behaviours that amount to direct discrimination, associative discrimination, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying (see Appendix Definitions).

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion or training will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. The talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

We strive to be an employer of choice and expect positive behaviour from our entire workforce to help create an environment that encourages equality. All of our employees have a responsibility to embrace and support this policy and must challenge processes, behaviour and attitudes that prevent us from achieving our Equality & Diversity Aims.

Unite Students opposes and will challenge all forms of unfair discrimination.

### 4. Scope

This policy relates to all permanent and fixed term employees of The UNITE Group plc and all wholly-owned subsidiaries of that company. This policy also includes agency temporary workers and contractors.

## 5. Legal Background

Equality Act 2010

Employment Relations Act 1999

The Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983)

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005

Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Race Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Human Rights Act 1998

## 6. Policy Standards

### Unite Students' Equality & Diversity Aims:

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community.
- To positively promote equality of opportunity.
- All conditions of employment and job requirements should primarily meet the needs of the business, but also those who work in it regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation;
- All employees are working towards ensuring fair and inclusive employment practices including recruitment and selection, organisational change, training, pay review and access to facilities;
- All employees have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour, whether based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation;
- All employees will be treated with respect and will have the chance to contribute and develop;
- As a customer facing business our employees exhibit behaviour consistent with principles of fairness and diversity in all of their relationships;
- The company, including its employees, will not ask another employee to act in contravention of the equality legislation.
- To promote a culture where each Stakeholder group is treated with respect and dignity and recognises the value that a diverse workforce can bring.

Unite Students takes a zero tolerance stance on discrimination and breaches of this policy will be regarded as misconduct. Serious offences such as discrimination on protected grounds or serious offences of harassment, bullying, or victimisation will be

treated as gross misconduct. Unite Students will investigate discriminatory behaviour and enforce the disciplinary procedure where this is considered necessary.

## 7. Links to other policies

Disciplinary Policy  
 Grievance Policy  
 Whistleblowing Policy  
 Bullying and Harrassement Policy

## 8. Further Information and Support

### The Employee Assistance Programme (LifeWorks)

Unite Students' understands that balancing everyday life together with the requirements of work and home can create pressures for all of us. To assist our employees in achieving this balance, Unite Students' have put an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in place. Our EAP is provided by LifeWorks, an independent external organisation, who works to a robust professional code of strict confidentiality.

LifeWorks provide a 24/7, 365 days a year telephone support line to help all employees who need support. The 24/7 telephone support line from LifeWorks provides access to a range of information and services including (but not exhaustive):

- Childcare
- Eldercare
- Legal advice (*the EAP will not provide employment law advice*)
- Tax advice
- Medical information
- Stress management
- Referral to serious illness and accident support
- Structured telephone counselling
- Face to face counselling

The support telephone line is also available to an employee's partner and any dependents in full time education between the ages of 18-24 can also access some parts of the support line.

In addition to the telephone support line, all employees have access to a range of engaging and useful online tools aimed at promoting general health and wellbeing.

These include:

- Emotional support
- Fitness advice (including video demonstrations)
- Personal coaching tools

- Health assessment
- Medical information
- Weight loss advice
- How to deal with aches and pains particularly back pain

**How do I access it?**

- Call: 0800 169 1920- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.  
(Outside of UK: +44 141 533 8293)

## 9. Appendix - Definitions of Discrimination

### **Protected characteristics:**

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

### **Direct Discrimination:**

Less favorable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Arises when a requirement or condition is applied which cannot be justified and which is harder for one group to meet than another and the people in that group consequently are placed at a disadvantage.

### **Discrimination by perception:**

Direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### **Discrimination by association:**

Direct discrimination or harassment against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so, or being about to do so.

### **Harassment**

Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic or in a way that is sexual in nature.