University of Nottingham Students’ Union Equal Opportunities Policy

Purpose Statement

The University of Nottingham Students’ Union strives to protect the rights of all our members and ensure that all have equal opportunities and fair, democratic representation. We work to create a culture of respect and inclusivity where equality runs through the core of all our activity from our decision making to our operations. We will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination against our members, nor condone bullying or harassment or any other conduct prohibited under Equality legislation.

The Students’ Union shall act without discrimination in respect of: gender, sex, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief (including lack of belief), political belief, disability, age, marital and civil partnership status, spent criminal convictions, medical condition, HIV and AIDS status, mental health, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities, gender reassignment, language, appearance, socio-economic status or class. This list is not exhaustive.

Application of Policy

All members of UoNSU, our organised student groups, staff members, any other connected organisations and individuals, as well as members of the public using our services, shall be required to follow and uphold this policy.

Policy Objectives

UoNSU will continue to challenge long-standing inequalities which exist within the Higher Education sector. We intend to fulfil our obligations as outlined by the Equality Act, by working proactively as a Union and in collaboration with the University, to bring about positive changes and advance equality of opportunity.

UoNSU will;

- Seek to ensure that our services and events reflect the diversity of our student body, providing a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, free from harassment, victimisation, discrimination or any other form of less favourable treatment, ensuring the safety of our members at all such events.

- Ensure that all of our Clubs, Societies, Associations and student groups are educated on the policy and how it applies to them and their operations through appropriate training.

- Seek to reduce underrepresentation within our committee structures and remove barriers to our elections processes through making reasonable adjustments where
appropriate.

- Work with our liberation and representational student groups to campaign on issues affecting minority groups and foster good relationships with all of our membership.

- Ensure all our Publications and Marketing (including those published by our student groups) abide by this Policy and avoid using discriminatory images or language.

- Explain to External Contractors and organisations wishing to advertise through the Union that they must not act against the spirit or contravene the details of this policy. Staff members or student groups organising such events or promotions should ensure this is understood by contractors.

- Enable any student group to designate their events a Safe Space. Student groups shall be supported by staff members in maintaining Safe Spaces where appropriate. Safe Space events should be advertised as such before the event, and should display the definition below at the entrance to and inside the event.

- Work with the University and other stakeholders to ensure exams and coursework deadlines do not clash with major religious observances

- Ensure that all religious dietary requirements are properly provided for across the University of Nottingham, at all of its campuses.

- Ensure the adequate provision of religious facilities for the use of staff and students.

**Breaches of Policy**

Breaches of the Equal Opportunities policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence through our complaints procedure and/or the relevant University disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

**Monitoring of Policy**

The policy shall be reviewed every three years by relevant staff members. However, all staff and student groups within the Union are responsible for ensuring that the policy is upheld and for working towards creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

**Definitions**

**Discrimination**
We recognise that discrimination, the treatment of one particular group of people/an individual less favourably than others on the basis of the characteristics listed above, can involve either or all of the following;

1. **Direct Discrimination (including by association and by perception)**

   Where an individual or group of people is treated less favourably than others for a reason related to any of the characteristics described above.

2. **Indirect Discrimination**

   Where a requirement or condition, or circumstances or behaviour, has a negative or disproportionate effect on an individual or a group of people.

**Harassment**

The Equality Act outlines three types of harassment:

1. unwanted conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, or violates a person’s dignity

2. unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment)

3. treating a person less favourably than another because they have either submitted to, or did not submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.

**Safe Space**

Safe Space events should be a safe and comfortable environment free from behaviour including, but not limited to:

1. Disrespectful behaviour
2. Being careless as to one’s words or actions, particularly in relation to content that may trigger distressing memories or emotions in others
3. Not respecting another’s right not to participate in discussions or to not answer questions/ask for no more questions to be directed at them
4. Unfairly rejecting a person’s wish to educate themselves by asking respectful questions or making mistakes, subject to the above.
5. Making assumptions about someone before they have the opportunity to identify themselves.
6. Intimidation, bullying or harassment

Safe Space events must also guarantee the right to participate in Safe Space events anonymously and to not have their attendance shared without their permission in order to protect themselves.