Equal Opportunities Policy

For use in all Divisions, Schools/Departments/Colleges of the University

www2.le.ac.uk/offices/equalities-unit
Equal Opportunities Policy

For use in: All Divisions, Schools/Departments/Colleges of the University

For use by: All staff and students

Owner: Equalities Unit

Date Equal Opportunities Committee Approval: 5 December 2013

Version No: 2

Review Date: January 2015 (interim review)

Contact – Comments: Equality Advisers, Chris Sharp / Humaa Noori
Introduction

1. This single document intends to encapsulate the University's overall approach to equality of opportunity.

2. The policy reflects the consolidation of previous individual rights equality legislation into the Equality Act 2010 (The Act) and the streamlining of the public equality duties in the same legislation.

3. The public equality duties consist of a general duty and specific duties. The general duty takes the form of broad equality requirements. The specific duties intend to outline how public bodies are required to go about achieving the general duty. Taken together the public equality duty requires a proactive approach. The University’s response through this policy is to set out how it will determine its equality objectives and the mechanisms through which it will review and achieve those objectives. This is in accordance with the specific duties mentioned above.

4. This policy aims to outline the University’s commitment to equalities as reflected in the declared values and beliefs, and how the University aims to achieve these commitments through its published Equality Objectives and processes identified in this document.

5. Equality Objectives will be reviewed at least every four years in accordance with the Act.

Scope

6. This Policy applies to all University Staff, Students and 3rd party contractors, workers and visitors to the University.
Objectives

Policy Statement

7. The University of Leicester will positively advance equality of opportunity for all current and potential students, staff and its other stakeholders. It will not discriminate unfairly on the basis of sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender, gender reassignment, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, age, sexual orientation, socio economic background, religion and belief, political beliefs, family circumstances including marriage and civil partnership and trade union membership.

Further Aims Reflecting the Equality Public Duties

8. The policy seeks to;

a. eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to the characteristics highlighted within the policy statement.

b. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.

c. foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.

9. The following corporate Equality Objectives have been derived from the declared beliefs and values of the University as articulated in the University’s Mission Statement. These are:

• The University is passionate about achieving equality of opportunity for all its students, staff and other stakeholders and will do so by identifying measurable Equality Objectives and working closely with individuals and groups identified within the Equalities governance structures.

• The University values and supports the significant economic, intellectual, contributions our diverse staff and student can make internationally, and recognises the role it plays in ensuring that our staff and student are aware of equalities within their work.
• The University seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

• The University will advance equality of opportunity, equal participation and harmonious relations for its diverse student and staff body in all its functions including in its role as a provider of higher education and an employer.

• The University will make reasonable adjustments and promote equality of opportunity for all to ensure that we provide first rate teaching and research environment.

• The University values the positive contributions individuals and groups can make in advancing equalities for all, and is committed to listening and learning from the diverse range of people who have a relationship with the University.

10. The relationship between the declared values and beliefs and how these relate to the corporate equalities commitments highlighted above, are contained within a document which translates this relationship.¹

11. Specific objectives which correspond to the above broad commitments are set out in a document entitled Equality Objectives. These objectives form the University’s specific measurable objectives required under the specific duties of the public equality duties. The document is accessible from the University’s Equalities Unit website.

¹ See Appendix 1
12. The University has an established Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC). This Committee takes ultimate executive responsibility for the development and execution of this scheme. The committee is chaired by the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor and its membership is drawn from all areas of the University including both staff, student and Trade Union representatives. The committee meets four times per annum. College Equal Opportunities Committees (chaired by the College Equality Officer) meet prior to each University Equal Opportunities Committee and report to that Committee. A standing item relating to equalities is placed on the agenda of each College Management Board meeting.

13. All members of committees within the Equalities Governance structure are expected to be committed to attend all meetings, and where this is not possible to send a representative. Regarding staff equality fora, heads of departments and managers are expected to support staff who wish to participate in these fora, including attending quarterly meetings.

14. All Committees within the University have a responsibility, as contained within their constitution to consider and record the potential equal opportunity impacts on decisions made by the Committee (in accordance with the ‘due regard’ provisions of the Equality Act 2010.)

Equality Governance Overview

2 More information on the groups highlighted can be found on the Equalities Unit homepage (www.le.ac.uk/offices/equalities-unit)
Consultation and Monitoring

15. In accordance with the specific duties of the public equality duty the University will publish equality data for students and staff at least once per year including staff recruitment and student admissions. It is also within our Equality Objectives to widen the use of this data to monitor other areas.

16. The University will consult on the contents of this policy and will take account of published data in order to determine future objectives. It will at least consult with;

   a. College and Corporate Services Equal Opportunities Committees
   b. College and Departmental Equality Officers
   c. Recognised Trade Unions
   d. Any recognised groups representing the views of those sharing a specific protected characteristic – such as the staff fora.
   e. Individual students and staff

17. The University will also take account of good practice guides, statistics, research outcomes and other advice produced by recognised national bodies such as The Equality Challenge Unit or the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

18. The University will keep this policy under review through its Equal Opportunities Committee and will consult on any significant change it proposes to make to the policy. The policy will be published and made widely available electronically and in large print. Publication in alternative formats will be considered on demand.

19. An annual report shall be made to Equal Opportunities Committee by the Equalities Advisers and thereafter made public on the progress made in meeting agreed objectives, setting out relevant statistical data and making any appropriate changes to ongoing objectives.
Training

20. The University recognises that training is an indispensable tool in achieving all the aims of this policy. The Equalities Unit delivers a range of tailored training sessions. Additionally recruitment training (including equal opportunities) is provided for recruiters. It is also within our Equality Objectives to ensure that all staff have undertaken equalities training.

Designing Services and Policies

21. The general public duty requires the University to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations between groups (based upon their associated characteristics). This applies to the design and implementation of policies, the design and delivery of services and the commissioning of services from others. In this respect where the University believes there is a high potential impact on equalities it will carry out an appropriate examination of the policy or service including an examination of relevant data. In some cases it will carry out an equality impact assessment of the service or policy for which the University has a comprehensive guide. In other cases due regard on the above basis will still be undertaken and will be carried out in whatever way the University believes is most effective.
Further Information

23. The following is a list of allied publications and websites together with useful contact details for those who need help with any issue relating to equality.

Useful Links and Contacts

AccessAbility Centre
t: 252 5002
e: accessible@le.ac.uk

Athena Swan (University) – Charter for the promotion of women in science

College Equal Opportunity Officers Role Description

College Equal Opportunities Officer List

Counselling and Wellbeing
t: 223 1702
e: staffcounselling@le.ac.uk

Departmental Equal Opportunity Officers Role Description

Departmental Equal Opportunity Officer List

Equalities Unit
t: 252 2747 / 3334
e: equalities@le.ac.uk

Human Resources
t: 252 2439
e: hradvice@le.ac.uk

Publication of Equality Data

Publication of Equality Objectives

Staff BME Forum
t: 252 2747 / 3334 (Equalities Unit)
e: equalities@le.ac.uk

Staff Disability Forum
t: 252 2747 / 3334 (Equalities Unit)
e: equalities@le.ac.uk

Staff LGBT Forum
t: 252 2747 / 3334 (Equalities Unit)
e: lgbt@le.ac.uk

Student Support Service
t: 229 7767
e: ssds@le.ac.uk

Student Welfare Service
t: 223 1185
e: welfare@le.ac.uk

Student LGBTQ Association

Students’ Union

World Faith (Chaplaincy)
t: 285 6493
e: chaplaincy@le.ac.uk

Union Contacts

UCU
e: ucu@le.ac.uk

UNISON
t: 252 3731
e: unison@le.ac.uk

UNITE
e: unite@le.ac.uk
Appendix 1

Beliefs and Values taken from document Strategic Vision to 2015 mapped to equal opportunity objectives.

This starts with the assumption that we seek to advance equalities because it is right and lawful to do so and to do it in such a way that it contributes to the University’s corporate vision. It therefore seems right that our objectives closely mirror the general duty of the public equality duty of the Equality Act. Having established that it seems right that we attempt to map those to the University’s overall strategy.

All the eight stated visions and beliefs are shown below. The wording in Italics summarises how the visions and beliefs reflect the corporate equalities objectives.

1.  We are passionate about our work, our teaching and our research.

   *The University is passionate about achieving equality of opportunity for all its students, staff and other stakeholders and will do so by identifying measurable equality objectives and working closely with individuals and groups identified within the Equalities governance structures.*

2.  We believe that higher education is a power for good and makes a significant economic, intellectual and cultural contribution to the world.

   *The University values and supports the significant economic, intellectual, contributions our diverse staff and student can make internationally, and recognises the role it plays in ensuring that our staff and student are aware of equalities within their work.*

3.  We believe in the synergy between teaching and research. We are committed to producing high quality, significant research. This informs our teaching.

4.  We believe that academic potential is the only legitimate means of differentiating between candidates when offering places.

   *The University seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.*
5. We believe that a diverse student and staff body makes the University stronger.

The University will advance equality of opportunity, equal participation and harmonious relations for its diverse student and staff body in all its functions including in its role as a provider of higher education and an employer.

6. We believe that choosing to study a higher education course requires courage, commitment and effort. We undertake to provide first rate teaching and learning support to release potential in all our students.

The University will make reasonable adjustments and promote equality of opportunity for all to ensure that we provide first rate teaching and research environment.

7. We are an international University which is committed to the region. We believe we best serve our region by sharing with it the benefits of our internationally significant work.

8. We believe that we improve and grow stronger by listening and learning from others.

The University values the positive contributions individuals and groups can make in advancing equalities for all, and is committed to listening and learning from the diverse range of people who have a relationship with the University.