UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
POLICY

SEXUAL ORIENTATION PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT POLICY

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<tr>
<th>For use in:</th>
<th>All Divisions, Schools/Departments/Colleges of the University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For use by:</td>
<td>All staff and Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Equalities</td>
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<td>Dates of Trade Union Consultation</td>
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<td>Date Equal Opportunities Committee Approval</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} June 2011</td>
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Introduction

1. The University of Leicester values all its staff and students equally. The University is keen to promote an environment that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for all, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

2. The University believes that an assumption of heterosexuality as being the norm denies Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) affirmation and inclusion. LGBT people have the right to:
   - be free from harassment, discrimination and violence;
   - be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
   - self identification and freedom of expression;
   - be included and to be represented and affirmed in a positive and respectful manner;
   - have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are victims of harassment, discrimination and violence;
   - have their cultures and communities valued and affirmed.

3. LGBT often experience homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, hostility and other negative treatment as either staff or students in higher education. This was the broad findings of research carried out by the Equality Challenge Unit in 2009.  

4. An article published in the University of Leicester student magazine, whilst acknowledging improvements in recent years cited examples of significant homophobic abuse experienced by students. It is estimated that the LGBT population of Britain is 3.7 million or around 6% of the population which is a very significant community of people.

5. The University is committed to eliminating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. This is clearly set out in the University’s Single Equality Scheme.

Scope

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

Policy Statement

7. The University of Leicester considers homophobic, heterophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure. The University will seek to eliminate such behaviour and advance equality of opportunity in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity.

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1 The experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans staff and students in higher education (2009).
3 Stonewall. How to Engage Gay people in your Work (2011)
Aims of the Policy

8. The policy seeks

- to eliminate harassment associated with sexual orientation;
- to advance equality of opportunity in relation to sexual orientation;
- to foster good relations between LGBT Staff and Students and those who are not.

Principles

9. The University will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and legislative requirements in order to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between LGBT staff and students and all other staff and students.

- The University will seek to achieve an environment that is safe, open and welcoming to all regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The University will ensure that this policy is widely publicised and drawn to the attention of line managers.
- A resource will be provided for LGBT staff and students to discuss issues relating to their sexual orientation in confidence. Confidentiality is particularly vital as not all LGBT people will be ‘out’ (i.e. do not acknowledge publicly that they are LGBT). Before agreeing such a procedure the University will consult with the University’s Student LGBT Society and the LGBT Staff Network. The agreed procedure will support this policy.
- The University will publicise how staff and students can report homophobic, heterophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviour.
- This policy and relevant LGBT issues will be incorporated into equality training for managers and their advisers, Departmental Equality Officers and staff.
- The University requires that all managers rigorously enforce this policy.
- The University encourages the Students’ Union to maintain its support for a Student LGBT Society including the provision of an exclusive and safe space for LGBT students to meet.
- The University will keep under review the provision of specialist advice for students. In particular, it will be mindful of the need to support those students experiencing financial estrangement from their parents. In such cases, the University will ensure that evidence required to assess hardship does not originate with parents.
- The University will recognise that those with a bisexual orientation may be the target of specific discrimination and that their experiences may differ from lesbian, gay and heterosexual people.
- The University will resist the existence of damaging stereotypes applied to bisexual people and encourages both the staff and student LGBT networks to fully support and welcome their bisexual peers.
- The University will publish separate guidance on supporting transgender people. Currently reference is made to guidance published by the Equality Challenge Unit.
- The University recognises that homophobic and biphobic behaviour arising in student accommodation can have serious consequences and will therefore ensure that this policy and associated information is made known to Sub Wardens in their training and that the policy is given specific publicity in the accommodation areas.
Some useful definitions

10. The following is intended to clarify accepted definitions of words relevant to this policy.

**Biphobia** – Hatred or fear of bisexuals or bisexuality.

**Bisexual** A person who is sexually attracted to more than one gender.

**Gay** Strictly speaking a person who is sexually attracted to members of the same sex. In this document it has been used in a narrower sense to mean a male attracted to other males.

**Heterosexual** A person who is sexually attracted to the opposite sex.

**Homophobia** Hatred or fear of homosexuals or homosexuality.

**Lesbian** A female who is sexually attracted to other females.

‘Out’ Being open about one’s sexuality.

**Sexual Orientation:** the emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the same sex, the other sex or either sex.

**Trans** An inclusive term for those who identify themselves as transgender, transsexual, or transvestite.

**Transgender** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include, but is not limited to, transsexual people and those who see themselves as not clearly fitting into a male or female identity.

**Transsexual person** A transsexual person is someone who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition to their preferred gender. Someone in this position will have the medical condition gender dysphoria.