NUSU INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES POLICY

NUSU's policy guidance for society committee members to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in student societies and represent all student demographics fairly.

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Policy Statement

Inclusive is one of Newcastle University Students' Union's (NUSU) 6 organisational values. We aim to ensure this through all aspects of the organisation. This policy is specifically aimed at defining inclusivity and guiding practices for NUSU ratified societies. NUSU is committed to providing a positive and welcoming atmosphere to all students, staff and visitors. We operate a zero-tolerance policy to harassment, hate crime, discrimination, victimisation and bullying.

The NUSU Inclusive Societies Policy has been created to provide guidance and support for all students involved in NUSU ratified societies. The policy includes specific guidance for Executive Committee members to provide information about inclusive language and practices, and a clear complaints procedure section for any member of a society to use if they wish to submit a report of harassment or discrimination experienced concerning societies. Any member of a society can use this policy to help them understand what inclusivity looks like in societies to ensure all inclusivity aims are being met and all our students feel comfortable and represented in NUSU societies.

Scope

This policy is intended to be used to cover inclusive language and treatment for NUSU ratified societies. The policy is aimed to be used primarily by Executive Committee members of any and all NUSU societies and is made available for any member to read. It covers society conduct at our premises as well as related meetings, events and activity off-site and at campuses other than in Newcastle.

The policy specifically focuses on inclusivity for the following groups: LGBTQ+ students, BAME students, disabled students, low-income students, mature students, care experienced students and gender equality. These groups are not exhaustive and there can be an overlap of students who fit into multiple groups. Societies should use this policy to provide improved inclusivity for all students.

This section outlines key definitions of discrimination and related definitions explaining the goals of equality, diversity and inclusion.

An appendix at the end of the policy outlines further useful definitions across a variety of demographics and protected characteristic groups that will improve understanding of the terms used within this document and in other related policy documents. It is recommended that you read all of the definitions and familiarise yourself with these terms to improve your understandings of the key demographic groups outlined in the policy.

Discrimination Definitions *(Taken from NUSU Inclusivity Policy)*

Direct Discrimination

When a person treats one person less favourably than they would another because of a protected characteristic.

Discrimination based on perception

When someone's identity is wrongly assumed and they are treated less favourably because of this.

Discrimination based on association

When a person is treated unfairly based on their connection to someone else.

Indirect Discrimination

When a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone, but puts some people at a disadvantage and cannot be justified.

Positive Action

Taking steps to meet specific needs, address under-representation or reduce disadvantage affecting a group of people with a protected characteristic.

Harassment

Any unwanted behaviour or conduct which makes a person(s) feel offended, intimidated or humiliated if it occurs because of, or connected to, their protected characteristic (those which are defined by Section 26 of the Equality Act). For sexual harassment definition and related policy, please refer to NUSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Victimisation

Takes place where one person treats another less favourably because they have asserted their legal rights or helped someone else to do so (defined by Section 27 of the Equality Act).

Hate Crime

Describes the range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity (as defined by the Crown Prosecution Service).

Bullying

Repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically. Bullying can take the form of physical assault, social bullying, threatening behaviour, name-calling, cyberbullying and initiations.

Protected Characteristics

As defined by Section 26 of the Equality Act. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

NUSU also extends its policy to include protection against discrimination for ex-convicts, those with HIV status, student parents, carers and guardians, care leavers, local students, international students, students from low-income backgrounds and mode of study.

Hostility

Hostility is a feeling of strong dislike or opposition to another person or a demographic group. It is often described as 'emotionally charged aggressive behaviour'. People may feel hostile to a particular demographic as they negatively perceive them. For example, some people may be hostile towards gay people as they view them as lesser or in some way dangerous to their views that only heterosexuality exists. Hostile behaviour can include verbal attacks or physical assault towards the group that the hostile individual dislikes.

Slurs/Perjoratives/Derogatory Terms *(Adapted from [Wikipedia](#))*

A pejorative (also called a derogatory term, a slur) is a word or grammatical form expressing a negative connotation or a low opinion of someone or something, showing a lack of respect for someone or something. It is also used to express criticism, hostility, insult, or disregard. Sometimes, a term is regarded as pejorative in some social or ethnic groups but not in others or may be originally pejorative and eventually be adopted in a non-pejorative sense (or vice versa) in some or all contexts. Slurs may be applied to a group of people considered by anyone to be inferior or lower in social status. Many of the demographics included in this policy have various slurs related to them, used by people to express hostility and hatred for people belonging to these groups. Slurs are **never** acceptable to use against another person.

Equality *(Definition adapted from [UnionLearn](#))*

Equality is about ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines equality as: 'Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they came from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability'.

Equality of opportunity is about ensuring everybody has an equal chance to take up opportunities and also to make full use of the opportunities on offer and to fulfil their potential. In this context, this is about ensuring all students have an equal chance to participate in societies.

Diversity *(Definition adapted from [UnionLearn](#))*

Diversity is about taking account of the differences between people and groups of people and placing a positive value on those differences. Diversity is about celebrating and valuing how different we all are. This is strongly linked with promoting human rights and freedoms, based on principles such as dignity and respect. Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences.

Inclusion *(Definition adapted from [The GC Index](#))*

Inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group or structure – feeling part of the group to the same extent as other people. Organisations (including student societies) need to make sure they instil an inclusive culture facilitating people to proactively engage. Feeling included is a sense of being a part of a community or organisation.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act in 2010 saw a merge of several anti-discriminatory laws such as the Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act into one. It works to protect people that fall under protected characteristics from discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 prevents organisations as employers, education and service providers from discriminating against individuals protected characteristics.

Guidance for Society Committees

This section will outline key areas where societies committees can implement changes to improve the inclusivity of their activities and encourage more members to feel comfortable engaging in the society. **Society committees should view this section when they begin their term as Executive Committee, and review regularly to assess where further improvements can be made.**

- Societies should make all students interested in their society aware of the NUSU Participation Bursary, which many students may qualify for and is intended to reduce costs of joining societies.
    - The Participation Bursary provides up to £200 per eligible student to cover the costs of joining societies: including membership fees, kit and social activity costs. Currently, this is available for UK stage 1 undergraduate students. Societies should aim to promote this at the beginning of the academic year through emails, social media posts or any other method. This shows the society is engaged in inclusivity schemes and will benefit societies as it is likely they will gain more paid members, who may not have been able to afford to join without the bursary.
    - **Useful information:** NUSU Participation Bursaries Eligibility Criteria 2019-2020

- Societies will aim to hold a diverse range of social events, ensuring they are not all focused on alcohol-related activities. Societies should consider their events calendars and ensure there is a range of non-drinking activities available throughout the year.
    - Many groups of students may not feel comfortable being involved with drinking events, due to religious views, health conditions, a simple lack of interest or any other reason. Societies should, therefore, provide alternative options for these student groups.
    - **Examples of non-drinking events include:** informal socials at coffee shops/cafes, meals at restaurants, bowling, mini-golf, art gallery visits, film nights, discussions, arts and crafts, sports, visits further afield (e.g. Tynemouth, city trips to York etc)

- Societies will aim to ensure all events are conducted within accessible locations in order to not exclude disabled students.
    - Some physical disabilities are clearly visible when students use wheelchairs or walking aids. However, many students have invisible disabilities or may not feel comfortable asking about accessibility information, so societies should not only consider accessibility when they have a member who is a wheelchair user.
    - **Examples of considerations for accessible locations:** the presence of stairs, availability of ramps and lifts, narrow entrances which could restrict the entry of wheelchairs, out of hours access to lifts which require access cards, free access

to toilets (including accessible toilets). Further guidance and examples of accessible venues in Newcastle can be found at Euan's Guide.

- Societies should make reasonable adjustments to their events in order to allow the inclusion of disabled students, beyond physical accessibility.
    - o Disabilities are not always physical - they can be mental or have a combination of effects. Therefore, societies need to consider inclusion for disabled students who do not need physical accessibility considerations.
    - o **Examples of considerations for accessibility:** making all important documents dyslexia reader-friendly, including image descriptions and captions, providing print-outs of discussion materials (with options to print in larger font), seeking out whether venues have hearing aid loops, the inclusion of a quiet space for those with sensory issues (most appropriate for large-scale events like conferences).

- Societies should aim to do outreach into different communities to improve unity, understanding and a more cohesive student community.
    - o **Examples of community outreach:** engaging with national campaigns like Black History Month, LGBT+ Week, or working with NUSU to run events for their own cause (e.g. the Hindu and Sikh Society led the This HAS To Happen campaign to improve the representation of Hindus, Sikhs and South Asian students); collaborating with other societies to bring different communities together; getting involved with Go Volunteer activities (e.g. NEST to work with refugees in the North East).

- Societies should ensure the cost of their activities do not create barriers for low-income students to participate fully. Societies should consider whether high membership fees are necessary and whether there are possibilities to reduce costs here, or for other events after membership is paid.
    - o Low-income students can face barriers to joining societies due to high costs, leaving them feeling unable to get involved and benefit from joining societies. The current minimum price NUSU allows societies to charge for membership is £5; some 'liberation societies' charge this minimum fee in an effort to improve inclusivity and be accessible for low-income students.
    - o **Examples of ways to include low-income students**: subsidizing the cost of large events such as annual balls (societies budgets can be used for this), reducing membership fees (if your society does not require specialist equipment or other fees vital to its running, consider reducing your membership prices if at all possible); holding free events and taster sessions; discouraging people from engaging in buying food/drinks for others in a round system unless everyone involved agrees; advertising the Participation Bursary.

- Societies should aim to hold at least one free taster session or introductory event a semester to encourage students to 'try out' the society. This improves accessibility for low-income students, as well as other student groups who may wish to assess the inclusivity of the society before deciding to join as a paid member.
    o Societies could collaborate with Give It A Go, NUSU's activities programme, to provide taster events and advertise them to a wider pool of students. Give It A Go can help committees source low-cost events which societies could then subsidise for their members: these events will be advertised on Give It A Go's social media and on their NUSU website page. For more information, contact Sarah Stephenson at adc.union@newcastle.ac.uk.
    o **Examples of taster session/introductory events:** Introductory presentation to introduce committee and explain plans for the year; 'meet the committee' panel; informal social at a coffee shop/cafe; trial session of the activity/skill the society is about e.g. Irish Dance could host a dance class taster, Debate Society could host a taster debate training session, Video Gaming & Esports Society could host a gaming session in an SU room.

- Societies should aim to positively impact in areas of social need with their events, when possible.
    o **Examples of positive impact events:** Yoga Society may choose to do an event focused around wellness and mindfulness in order to create mental health awareness, societies could hold fundraisers or raffles which benefit charities/good causes, societies could collaborate with charity and liberation societies to raise awareness of important social issues.

- Societies should ensure all genders are treated equally when participating in society events. They should avoid using overly gendered language or promoting stereotypes that negatively impact one gender.
    o **Examples of ways to promote gender equality:** avoid running socials that use gender stereotypes (e.g. fancy dress socials where men and women are told to dress differently); encourage students to share their pronouns by normalising sharing committee's names and pronouns at first events; discourage members from making sexist jokes or comments.

- Societies should strive to provide a safe environment for all their members. This is particularly relevant for societies who often hold socials off-campus where they may encounter members of the public. Some student demographics are more vulnerable than others to acts of discrimination or hate crime which may occur during society events.
    o A safe environment includes creating a feeling of security for members on drinking socials in the city, where acts of sexual violence or other crimes may be more likely. Women and LGBTQ+ students are more likely to experience sexual violence, so societies should aim to look after their members to the best of their abilities.

- o **Examples of safety measures societies can use:** For drinking socials have a designated sober committee member to remain alert to society members who may need assistance; ensure all committee members have the phone number for the University Campus Security (0191 208 6817) who can assist on and off-campus to students; encourage students to contact committee members when leaving the event and when they arrive home; encourage society members to leave events together when possible, using reputable taxis on nights out; ensure your society's Safety Policy is updated and that all committee members read this.
  - o **If there is an emergency incident during a society event, contact 999. If an act of discrimination occurs during a society event, encourage the student to report to the union or university if they feel able to.**

- Societies should ensure the language used by committee members to advertise events, and during events, is not purposefully exclusive in nature. All communications should make an effort to include all potential attendees, ensuring students don't feel unable to get involved.
  - o The language used to explain events is important, as overly gendered or sexualised terms could put off LGBTQ+ individuals, as one example. Committees should proof-read all their communications before posting to question whether anything seems to be excluding a particular group. Efforts should be made throughout the event to ensure inclusivity.
  - o **Slurs should never be used in societies communications, even if intended as a "joke".**
  - o **Examples of making events inclusive:** Speed dating events should ensure their set-up is not exclusive of LGBTQ+ people, by providing measures such as: every person 'dating' all attendees regardless of gender and sexuality to avoid people feeling singled out, hosting LGBTQ+ only versions or a table at the main event, or other options that have been discussed with LGTBQ+ members to assess what they view as most appropriate.

- Societies should offer online events which improve accessibility for students who may be unable to participate in person due to disabilities, health conditions, having caring responsibilities or any other reason. These events can be adapted from in-person activities or offer alternative virtual activities.
  - o **Examples of online events:** using videoconferencing software (such as Zoom) to deliver discussions, guest speaker talks, pub quizzes, online fitness classes; online games nights; virtual film watch parties using website tools such as Netflix Party; using Facebook or other social media to hold text-based discussions (e.g. for a book club or film discussion); creating collaborative playlists with members and hosting a livestream 'DJ set'.

- Societies should be prepared to adapt their events to suit small group scenarios, particularly in light of the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions which may affect societies event capacities. These small group events must also adhere to other policy

points of improving inclusivity, whilst being mindful of the potential effects of social distancing limiting available venues and activities.

- o **Examples of small group events:** book club discussions; film screenings held on campus, small discussion and panel events (that could also be livestreamed to improve accessibility); small group training or fitness sessions; any other society event that can be adapted for small groups rather than large groups or unlimited numbers.
- o **Ways to make small group events COVID-19 aware:** host events in outside spaces where possible; maintain 2m social distancing rules whilst these remain in place; aim to host indoor events in well ventilated, large spaces where social distancing can be maintained; use sign-up sheets and registrations to keep track of the number of attendees to prevent over-crowding areas; encourage members to practice good hygiene and carry hand sanitizer, use gloves and masks where necessary etc.

- All society committee members should attend training conducted by the University throughout the year in order to gain more awareness of how these issues present and how they can be resolved.
  - o All society executive committee members must attend compulsory training and should encourage their other committee members to take opportunities for additional training. Executive committee members are encouraged to share relevant information with their committees, particularly about equality and inclusion.

- Societies should aim to resolve any issues of discrimination, harassment, bullying or hate crime brought to their attention in a timely and compassionate manner. Society committees are encouraged to use reporting systems and seek advice from NUSU staff members to help them resolve issues.
  - o The Complaints Procedure Guidance section of this policy should be used by all society committees to familiarise themselves with the appropriate procedures to handle complaints. NUSU has robust reporting procedures in place so societies are encouraged to use these, rather than attempting to handle complaints independently.

Complaints Procedure Guidance

Any reporter of harassment, hate crime, discrimination, victimisation and bullying experienced in a society or from a society member should use the report and support procedures as outlined below in Report Advice and Support. Any member who feels that the Inclusive Societies Policy has been breached in any way should use the NUSU complaints procedure and/or speak to the Welfare and Equality Officer and/or the appropriate Liberation Officer.

All complaints and staff and student grievances will be recorded and monitored to identify any trends or areas of concern.

Any member who breaches the Inclusive Societies Policy will be subject to the Student's Union Disciplinary procedure as set out in the constitution.

Report, Advice and Support (taken from NUSU Inclusivity Policy)

There are a number of reporting channels and support services available for students who are reporting harassment, hate crime, discrimination, victimisation and bullying or students who are alleged perpetrators of these and wish to seek guidance. You may also wish to seek peer support via student-led societies, a list of which can be accessed here.

NUSU Report & Support Channel

NUSU operates an independent reporting channel for disclosures bullying, discrimination, hate crime as well as sexual harassment, sexual violence and initiations, which can be accessed here.

There are two options when reporting an incident via this form:

- The first option is to disclose to NUSU's independent Student Advice Centre (SAC) anonymously. The SAC will be unable to take any action on anonymous disclosures, but it will help the SAC build a better picture of incidents happening around Newcastle.
- The second option is to request an appointment with the Student Advice Centre (SAC), where an advisor will support the student in providing the student with the options available considering the student's report.

All submissions are anonymous; however, the discloser's details may be uncovered in exceptional circumstances where there is a safeguarding risk to themselves or others.

Newcastle University's Report and Support Tool:

The University has an online Report and Support tool available for anyone to report concerns/incidents of initiations as well as sexual harassment and sexual violence. If you have experienced, or are aware of initiations behaviours affecting a Newcastle University student, you

can report it directly to the university using this [tool](). Reporting via this channel will not initiate any misconduct investigation process until requested.

Newcastle University Complaints Procedure

If a student wishes to complain about another student at the University they can contact the Casework Team by emailing [casework@ncl.ac.uk](). The email should contain a full explanation as to the nature of the concern, with supporting evidence. Student Progress Service may invite you to a meeting as part of the investigation.

The allegation will normally be investigated under the University's [Student Disciplinary Procedure]() (PDF: 463KB).

Reporting Additional Guidance

There are a number of useful documents on the [NUSU Report & Support]() page with more detailed guidance on particular areas students may wish to report on. It may be useful to familiarize yourself with these documents and be aware of the different reporting routes and external organisations they detail:

- **NUSU Discrimination Reporting Document 2019**
- **NUSU Bullying Reporting Document 2019**
- **NUSU Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Reporting Document 2019**
- **NUSU Hate Crime Reporting Document 2019**
- **NUSU Domestic Abuse Resources**

External Organisations

Northumbria Police - emergency
T: 999

Police - non-emergency
T:101

Stop Hate UK
T: 0800 138 1625
Text: 07717 989 025
E: [talk@stophateuk.org]().
W: [https://www.stophateuk.org/]()

Victims First Northumbria
Independent victim referral service offering free, confidential support and advice
T: 08000113116
E: [enquiries@victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk]()
W: [https://victimsfirstnorthumbria.org.uk/]()

The Angelou Centre

Black-led women's based centre supporting BME women for domestic and sexual violence in Newcastle

T: 01912260394
E: admin@angelou-centre.org.uk
W: http://angelou-centre.org.uk/

Tyneside Women's Health
Provides mental health support to women in a women-only environment
T:01914777898
W: https://www.tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk/

Newcastle Women's Aid
Domestic abuse service in Newcastle, by women for women
T: 0191 261 0504
E: office@newcastlewomensaid.org.uk
W: https://www.newcastlewomensaid.org.uk/

Disability North
Support for disabled and older people in the North of England in expert advice and support services
T:01912840480
E: reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk
W: http://www.disabilitynorth.org.uk/

Albert Kennedy Trust
Support for LGBTQ+ young people aged 16-25 experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile or abusive environment in the North East
T: 0191 281 0099
W: https://www.akt.org.uk/get-help

YMCA
Support for women and their families who are have experienced domestic abuse.
T: 0191 276 5327
W: https://ymcanewcastle.com/

National Autism Society
Supporting young people with autism in places of education
T: 07500 871568
E: NASTyne&WearBranch@nas.org.uk
W: http://www.autism.org.uk

Rape Crisis Tyneside & Northumberland

For women who need to talk to someone about rape or sexual abuse (includes Trans women and non-binary people who identify that women's services are right for them.)
T: 0800 035 2794
E: emailsupport@rctn.org.uk
W: https://rctn.org.uk/

R.E.A.C.H.
For men and women who require services relating to rape and sexual abuse
T: 03333448283
E: sarc-supportadmin@sarc-support.cjsm.net
W: http://www.reachsarc.org.uk/index.html

MIND
Supporting people with mental health issues of all kinds
T: 0191 477 4545
W: https://www.tynesidemind.org.uk/contact-us.aspx

Step Change Debt Charity
Free debt advice and support for people experiencing debt
T: 0800 138 1111
W: https://www.stepchange.org/contact-us.aspx

Related Policies

NUSU Inclusivity Policy

NUSU Sexual Misconduct Policy

NUSU Transgender Policy

NUSU Student Societies Constitution

NUSU Activities Safety Policy

Appendix 1: Definitions

This section outlines useful definitions across a variety of demographics and protected characteristic groups that will improve understanding of the terms used within this document and in other related policy documents. These terms have been separated into sub-headings relating to their specific area for ease of access.

The definitions specifically focus on the language used for the following groups: LGBTQ+ students, BAME students, disabled students, low-income students, mature students, care experienced students and gender equality. These groups are not exhaustive and there can be an overlap of students who fit into multiple groups.

Disabled Students Definitions

Disabled

The term used for having a physical or mental condition that limits their movements, senses, or activities. People are considered disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. Examples of disabilities include visual impairment, hearing impairment or deafness, mobility disabilities, ADHD, OCD, and more.

Invisible Disabilities *(Definition adapted from Disabled World)*

The term used for disabilities that are not immediately apparent to others. For example, a person with hearing loss may be using discrete hearing aids. Invisible disabilities can also include chronic illnesses, joint pain and mental illnesses.

Accessibility *(Definition adapted from Disabled World)*

Accessibility can be defined as the "ability to access" the functionality, and possible benefit, of some system or entity and is used to describe the degree to which a product such as a device, service, environment is accessible by as many people as possible. Accessibility is often focused on ensuring environments and services are accessible for disabled people. This can be through physical provisions of wheelchair ramps and access to lifts in buildings, as well as provisions such as offering large-text copies of documents.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act in 2010 saw a merge of several anti-discriminatory laws such as the Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act into one. It works to protect people that fall under protected characteristics from discrimination.

Chronic Illness

A chronic condition is a human health condition or disease that is persistent or otherwise long-lasting in its effects or a disease that comes with time. The term chronic is often applied when the course of the disease lasts for more than three months. Examples of chronic conditions include Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, cystic fibrosis, cancer and asthma.

Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behaviour (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities. Mental illness is common with 1 in 5 people suffering from a mental health condition from the ages 16-24 (McManus et al., 2009). Examples of mental illness/mental health disorders include anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Learning Disabilities

A learning disability is defined by the Department of Health as a "significant reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning), which started before adulthood". Examples of learning disabilities include dyslexia and ADHD.

Neurodiverse Conditions

Neurodiverse conditions refer to differences to the human brain, including conditions such as Autism and Tourette's. Neurodiversity is viewed is a concept and social movement that advocates for viewing autism as a variation of human wiring, rather than a disease.

Medical, Functional, and Social Models of Disability

The **medical model of disability** is presented as viewing disability as a problem of the person, directly caused by disease, trauma, or other health condition which therefore requires sustained medical care provided in the form of individual treatment by professionals.

The **social model of disability** sees the issue of "disability" as a socially created problem and a matter of the full integration of individuals into society. This model aims to remove barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people, such as improving physical accessibility of buildings through ramps and lifts.

The **functional model of disability** is similar to the medical model in that it conceptualizes disability as an impairment or deficit. Disability is caused by physical, medical or cognitive deficits. The disability itself limits a person's functioning or the ability to perform functional activities.

Gender Equality Definitions

Misogyny

The dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

Cisgender

Cisgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth is a cisgender woman. This can be seen as the opposite of being transgender.

Being cisgender does not necessarily mean an individual upholds all social roles and expectations placed on a gender, such as the expectation for a woman to have long hair.

Transgender

An umbrella term used for people whose gender identity differs from their assigned gender at birth. The term can include people whose gender identity is binary opposite to their assigned sex: for example, transgender men and transgender women. Some people include non-binary and other genderqueer identities under this umbrella term. Transgender is a gender identity and not related to sexuality (e.g. someone may be a trans man who is heterosexual – attracted to women). Transgender is commonly shortened to "trans". Some people wish to alter their gender expression to more closely fit the gender they are, by changing their name, pronouns, clothing style or undergoing various therapies and surgeries to feel more comfortable.

Gender *(Definition adapted from Dr Zuleyka Zevallos)*

Gender is a concept that describes how societies determine and manage sex categories; the cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles; and how individuals understand their identities including, but not limited to, being a man, woman, transgender, intersex, genderqueer and other gender positions. Gender is not a simple binary (e.g. male and female) but consists of a spectrum of identities, created by interacting gender identity and gender expression. Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another. Gender is not directly related to sex and is considered to consist of social and cultural constructions, rather than biological.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun and is commonly used to refer to another participant. For example, "she", "he", "I", "them" are all pronouns. These are important to consider when referring to another individual, as most pronouns are related to gender assumptions e.g. calling a woman "her" or "she". For transgender and non-binary people, pronouns are particularly important as they are seen to affirm their gender identity and can cause gender dysphoria if they are referred to as a gendered pronoun that doesn't fit their gender. "They"/"them" has become a common pronoun used to refer to non-binary people and those who reject gendered pronouns. It is considered polite to ask people what pronouns they would like to be referred to us to avoid causing distress or misgendering someone (see definition). Some people use neo-pronouns such as "Xie"/"Xir", but these are less common.

Misgendering

Misgendering occurs when an individual refers to another individual using a word, generally a pronoun or form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. This is particularly distressing for transgender and non-binary people who feel their gender is being invalidated or dismissed when they are referred to with the incorrect pronouns or name. It is important to avoid misgendering people by learning inclusive language and making the effort to use the name and pronouns that an individual has told you to use.

Intersectionality *(Definition taken from the NCL Language and Gender Inclusivity Project)*

Intersectionality is a useful concept to understand how different aspects of our complex identities interact with each other. For example, the experiences of heterosexual and lesbian women, are distinct. Sexism takes a specific form for lesbian women, who also have to deal with homophobia. It is a useful concept to understand how different social dynamics can define and affect experiences. It is also a powerful concept for activism.

Gender-Specific Language *(Definition adapted from the [NCL Language and Gender Inclusivity Project](#))*

Gender, as a system, does not only class us as either man or woman. It also confers to us certain attributes and the social values behind such attributes. This can be seen in the language chosen to speak about women, which often convey values less approved of by society than the language used to speak about men. Historically, values associated with women have been regarded with less prestige, less authority, and sometimes with downright negative connotations. Gender-specific language is linked to double standards, which can often be seen in word choices.

Double Standards *(Definition taken from the [NCL Language and Gender Inclusivity Project](#))*

A double standard is a rule or standard of good behaviour that, unfairly, some people are expected to follow or achieve but other people are not. It can be applied specifically to a code of sexual behaviour that is more rigid for women than for men. Women's and men's sexual conduct is not viewed identically by society. This double standard is visible in language. One easy way to identify it is to look at slurs specifically used about women and ask: is there an exact equivalent for men? For example, women are much more likely to be labelled as "feisty", "bossy" or a "bitch" whilst men are labelled as "assertive" and "confident".

Rape Culture

A society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse. For example, normalising attitudes of casual sexism, unwanted touching and rape jokes supports or even excuses acts of rape, molestation and revenge porn. This disproportionately impacts women as the gender most affected by sexual harassment and sexual violence. *[More information about definitions of sexual violence and related terms can be found in the [NUSU Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)]*

BAME Students Definitions

BAME Student

A student from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background. This includes people who do not fall under the White British category, including those of mixed ethnicities. The government classes people under these categories as BAME:

- Arabic people
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Asian or Asian British people
- Black (African/African Caribbean) or Black British people

- Chinese people
- Irish people ('White Other')
- People of mixed heritage
- Travellers and Gypsies
- People who identify as 'White Other' e.g. White Australian, White European

Race

Subdivisions of humankind consisting of a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language and other cultural identifiers.

Ethnicity

The state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.

The differences here are that where race is heavily defined by physical characteristics such as skin colour or hair type, ethnicity is defined through a person's culture, family practices, language and country of origin.

Anti-Semitism

Hostility or prejudice against Jews simply because they are Jewish. This can be in the form of microaggressions, discrimination, casual racism or other forms.

Culture

The ideas, customs and social behaviours of a particular people or society. This may include the people groups' foods, clothing styles, types of worship etc.

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age or sex. For example, refusing entry to a venue based on someone's race.

Islamophobia

Fear or hatred for Muslim people. This may be seen in a variety of forms such as microaggressions, discrimination or casual racism.

Institutional Racism

A form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political injustices regarding wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, healthcare and education. For example, a person with a BAME sounding name getting denied for a job that a person with a non BAME name is interviewed for, despite both parties having the same qualifications.

Integration

To incorporate someone or a group of people into a wider community. This involves looking for the most ostracized groups and finding ways to involve them in the community. An example of this could be a book club choosing to discuss books by a range of authors and discussing a range of social problems.

Segregation

The action or state of setting someone or something apart from others. This may be for Xenophobic reasons.

Xenophobia

Fear or hatred of foreign people. This is most commonly directed at BAME students. This may be seen in a variety of forms such as microaggressions, discrimination or casual racism.

Microaggressions

A statement, action or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised society or group such as an ethnic minority. For example, a remark of "Wow, your English is so good" to a BAME student is a form of microaggression.

Casual Racism *(Definition adapted from [Racism. It Stops With Me](#))*

A form of racism referring to conduct involving negative stereotypes or prejudices about people on the basis of race, colour or ethnicity. Examples include jokes, off-handed comments, and exclusion of people from social situations on the basis of race. Some associate racism with a belief in racial superiority or deliberate acts of discrimination. Casual racism concerns not so much a belief in the superiority of races but negative prejudice or stereotypes concerning race. Unlike overt and intentional acts of racism, casual racism isn't often intended to cause offence or harm.

Diaspora

An involuntary dispersion of people from their homeland. For example, the body of Jews living outside of Israel can be considered a diaspora. Another example is the refugee populations who flee their homeland due to war or famine.

Black Lives Matter *(Definition taken from [Black Lives Matter](#))*

A global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

This movement believes in the value of all lives and hopes to reaffirm the value of black lives that have been stripped away through years of systemic oppression. This is done through education, protests and publicising injustices occurring worldwide.

Racial Justice

Equal and fair treatment for all races. Racial justice involves having policies, beliefs, practices, attitudes, and actions to promote equal opportunity and treatment for people of all races. It is an individual and an organisational responsibility.

Anti-Racism

This is more than simply not being racist. Anti-racism involves having policies in place that do not allow the continuation of racist practices or attitudes and actively promote racial tolerance.

For example, a policy which ensures there are negative consequences for the use of a racial slur within the university environment.

Fetish

A form of sexual desire in which gratification is linked to a particular object or feature of a person, for example, a person's skin colour.

Care Experienced Students Definitions

Care Experienced

A care experienced young person is someone who has spent 13 weeks or more in the care of the local authority (e.g. foster care or children's home) between their 14th and 16th birthday, were privately fostered until the age of 16 or who were 'looked after' until they were subject of a Special Guardianship Order.

Therefore, a **Care Experienced Student** is a student who has experienced being in the care of the local authority before attending university.

Foster Care

Foster care is a way of offering children and young people a home while their own family are unable to look after them. This can be for a variety of reasons, from temporary illness to issues such as abuse within their home or the death of a primary carer.

Children's Home

A children's home is a large house where children and young people live together as a group, with professional staff to look after them.

Children's homes aim to make sure that they meet the needs of children who can't live with their own families. That means that as well as providing food, shelter, and space for play and leisure in a caring environment, they also act as a place where children can grow and develop.

Low Income/Working-Class Students Definitions

Working-Class

The working class is defined as covering those engaged in waged or salaried labour, especially in manual-labour occupations and industrial work. They can be defined as people who sell their labour and do not own the means of production (e.g. they don't own the factory but sell their labour by working at one). Identifying as working-class can mean different things to different people, but they have in common the experience of exchanging their labour for wages. For some people, they identify as working-class due to having a historic family connection to industrial occupations (e.g. miners), or due to their relation to working-class experiences of growing up with less money than middle-class peers, which cultivates an identity based on these experiences and historical connections with working-class culture.

Low Income

The government's Department of Work and Pensions defines low pay as "any family earning less than 60% of the national median pay". On this basis, there are more than 13 million people in the UK living in low-income households. By their calculations, anything less than £15,000 a year, before tax, counts as low pay. For students, this may mean that their family is a low-income household, or that they as an individual meet this low pay threshold. A person may see themselves as having low income even if it is above £15,000 a year; this links with the student finance entitlement system where the maximum loan is granted to those with a household income of £25,000 or less.

Poverty

The deprivation of common necessities that determine the quality of life, including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water, and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn, to obtain better employment to escape poverty, and/or to enjoy the respect of fellow citizens.

Mature Students Definitions

Mature Student

A university student aged 21 years or older at the start of their university studies.

Postgraduate Student

A University student who has already obtained an Undergraduate degree either from the institution they are currently studying at, or another Institution.

Dependents

Any person or persons financially reliant on another as a primary source of income. The most common example in this category would be that minors are dependents of their parents or legal guardians. A common-law spouse who is financially supported by their partner may also be included in this definition. Thus, the needs of mature students may vary based on the number of dependents that have.

LGBTQ+ Students Definitions

LGBTQ+

The most common umbrella term used for topics relating to sexuality and gender identity. It stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer. The + is used to encompass the multiple other sexualities and gender identities across the spectrum, that don't fit exactly under one of these categories.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is a sexual orientation that describes an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to people of the same gender. This is part of the LGTBQ+ umbrella

and is often colloquially referred to as being gay. Homosexuality can be discriminated against through homophobia (see definition).

Lesbian

A lesbian is a woman who exclusively experiences emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to other women. Lesbians can be discriminated against through homophobia or lesbophobia (see definition).

Gay

Gay is a term used to refer to a homosexual person. This can be a gay person of any gender, but it is commonly used to refer to a man who exclusively experiences emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to other men. Gay people can be discriminated against through homophobia.

Bisexuality/Bisexual

Bisexuality is a sexual orientation that describes an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to people of more than one gender. This is part of the LGTBQ+ umbrella and is often colloquially referred to as being bisexual. Bisexuality can be discriminated against through biphobia (see definition). Bisexuality can be used to describe attraction to "both men and women", although many bisexuals would argue that the sexuality is about being attracted to gender both similar and different to your own: this definition includes attraction to non-binary people and other genders. This is different to pansexuality, which is defined as an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and sexual attractions to people regardless of gender. Pansexual people do not view gender as a determining factor in their romantic or sexual attraction to others.

Transgender

An umbrella term used for people whose gender identity differs from their assigned gender at birth. The term can include people whose gender identity is binary opposite to their assigned sex: for example, transgender men and transgender women. Some people include non-binary and other genderqueer identities under this umbrella term. Transgender is a gender identity and not related to sexuality (e.g. someone may be a trans man who is heterosexual – attracted to women). Transgender is commonly shortened to "trans". Some people wish to alter their gender expression to more closely fit the gender they are, by changing their name, pronouns, clothing style or undergoing various therapies and surgeries to feel more comfortable.

Queer

Queer is an umbrella term used to describe a broad spectrum of non-normative sexual and gender identities, that are often not encompassed by the "LGBT" categories. Queer is a contentious term in the LGBTQ+ community, and it is recommended not to refer to someone as queer unless they have expressed that this is how they identify themselves. Queer has previously been used as a pejorative/slur to describe LGBTQ+ people, so some people do not want to be labelled as queer, whilst others have 'reclaimed' the term and use it to self-describe.

Questioning

The questioning of an individual's sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender, or all three is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons. The 'Q' in LGBTQ+ is either referred to as standing for queer or questioning, so the term has been included here.

Asexuality

Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction to others. It can be considered as a sexual orientation in its own right or a lack thereof. There are different opinions about the inclusion of asexuality in LGBTQ+ topics, but the definition is included here as it may be useful. Asexual people may refer to themselves as asexual or "ace".

Gender *(Definition adapted from Dr Zuleyka Zevallos)*

Gender is a concept that describes how societies determine and manage sex categories; the cultural meanings attached to men and women's roles; and how individuals understand their identities including, but not limited to, being a man, woman, transgender, intersex, genderqueer and other gender positions. Gender is not a simple binary (e.g. male and female) but consists of a spectrum of identities, created by interacting gender identity and gender expression. Gender involves social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems more appropriate for one sex over another. Gender is not directly related to sex and is considered to consist of social and cultural constructions, rather than biological.

Gender Identity *(Definition adapted from NUSU Transgender Policy)*

Gender identity refers to a personal identification with a particular gender and gender role in society; a person's inner and deep-held sense of their gender. Man or woman is usually seen as the default in most societies; however, gender identity is a spectrum which encompasses a wide range of valid identities. For example, people can identify somewhere within the spectrum (i.e. non-binary) or outside it completely (i.e. agender).

Gender Expression *(Definition taken from NUSU Transgender Policy)*

The self-expression and presentation of an individual. For example names, pronouns, clothing and styles, and behaviour. The expression is subjective, changing over time and within cultures. Society has previously identified these characteristics as 'masculine' or 'feminine'. However, these cultural manifestations of what constitutes gender ideals and what one person considers 'masculine' or 'feminine' could vary by individual.

Gender Dysphoria *(Definition adapted from NUSU Transgender Policy)*

The feeling of discomfort and/or distress felt by a person whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth. This can be made more distressing when their gender identity is not respected, for example, if other people use deadnames (see definition) or the incorrect pronouns for the person, that makes their gender identity feel invalidated and ignored. This is a deeply personal issue that many transgender people will not feel comfortable discussing.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun and is commonly used to refer to another participant. For example, "she", "he", "I", "them" are all pronouns. These are important to

consider when referring to another individual, as most pronouns are related to gender assumptions e.g. calling a woman "her" or "she". For transgender and non-binary people, pronouns are particularly important as they are seen to affirm their gender identity and can cause gender dysphoria if they are referred to as a gendered pronoun that doesn't fit their gender. "They"/"them" has become a common pronoun used to refer to non-binary people and those who reject gendered pronouns. It is considered polite to ask people what pronouns they would like to be referred to us to avoid causing distress or misgendering someone (see definition). Some people use neo-pronouns such as "Xie"/"Xir", but these are less common.

Misgendering

Misgendering occurs when an individual refers to another individual using a word, generally a pronoun or form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. This is particularly distressing for transgender and non-binary people who feel their gender is being invalidated or dismissed when they are referred to with the incorrect pronouns or name. It is important to avoid misgendering people by learning inclusive language and making the effort to use the name and pronouns that an individual has told you to use.

Transitioning *(Definition adapted from [NUSU Transgender Policy](#))*

This process is a personal journey that is different for many trans and non-binary people. Transitioning can include many different social, legal, or medical steps, depending on the person. For example: coming out to family and friends as transgender, using a different name and pronouns, altering legal documents, hormone therapy, and surgery. Transitioning should not be focused on one or more of these processes as it is based on what an individual feels appropriate for them. It is common for transgender people to feel their process of transitioning takes many months or even years, but this does not mean they are not still transgender throughout the process.

Intersex *(Definition taken from [InterACT Advocates](#))*

Intersex is an umbrella term for differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy. Intersex people are born with these differences or develop them in childhood. There are many possible differences in genitalia, hormones, internal anatomy, or chromosomes, compared to the usual two ways that human bodies develop.

Cisgender

Cisgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth. For example, someone who identifies as a woman and was assigned female at birth is a cisgender woman. This can be seen as the opposite of being transgender. Being cisgender does not necessarily mean an individual upholds all social roles and expectations placed on a gender, such as the expectation for a woman to have long hair.

Non-binary *(Definition adapted from NUSU Transgender Policy)*

Non-binary, or genderqueer, is a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine—identities that are outside the gender binary. There are a variety of non-binary identities, with differences and nuances to these gender identities. Many non-binary people use they/them pronouns or alternative neo-pronouns. Non-binary is a typically 'western' term, however, there are cultural alternatives to gender identities, for example, Hijra (third

gender community in India) and two-spirt (used by some Indigenous North Americans). Non-binary identities can fall under the transgender umbrella since many non-binary people identify with a gender that is different from their assigned sex. However, not all non-binary people identify as trans – this does not mean their gender is any less valid.

Deadname/Birth name *(Definition adapted from [NUSU Transgender Policy](#))*

This is a term created to describe the name previously assigned to a person who has since changed their name. A person should not ask or use a trans or non-binary persons dead name, as this is disrespectful. Many transgender and non-binary people feel their birth name is gendered, or they wish to distance themselves from the gender they were socialised as, so choose a new name to be known as. Everyone should respect this name and use it to refer to the individual. It is considered extremely disrespectful and damaging to tell other people an individual's birth name/dead name without their permission, as this can contribute to feelings of gender dysphoria.

Homophobia (including Lesbophobia/Biphobia)

Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. It has been defined as contempt, prejudice, aversion, hatred or antipathy and may be based on irrational fear and ignorance. Homophobia is observable in critical and hostile behaviour such as discrimination and violence based on sexual orientations that are non-heterosexual. Within this broader term, lesbophobia describes the intersection of sexism and homophobia directed at lesbians, and biphobia is homophobia targeted at bisexual people. Acts of homophobia (and lesbophobia and biphobia) include using slurs to describe LGBTQ+ people, making jokes about LGBTQ+ people intended to cause distress, hatred of a person based on their sexuality, and more.

Transphobia *(Definition adapted from [NUSU Transgender Policy](#))*

Transphobia is the intolerance of gender diversity and manifests as prejudice and abuse towards transgender and non-binary people. It stems from the notion that 'sex' and 'gender' are comparable, however, this is not the case. Transphobia can include fear, aversion, hatred, violence, anger, or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to social gender expectations. Acts of transphobia include purposefully using the wrong pronouns for someone, continuing to call them by their deadname/birth name after being told not to, and transphobic jokes about the appearance of trans people, as well as other acts.