NUSU Inclusivity Policy

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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 sets out to define what it means in principle and guide what it looks like in practice. NUSU is committed to providing a positive and welcoming atmosphere to all students, staff and visitors. We will prevent and tackle discrimination and victimisation of any nature within NUSU activities. We encourage student involvement in setting policy relating to inclusivity through our democratic structures and our elected officers.

NUSU aims to:

- Ensure that all members have a positive and fair student experience.
- Create a community on campus where its members and staff are respected, as well as taking pride in the diversity of its membership.
- Ensure compliance with legislation and embed quality and diversity in everything we do.
- Reach out and support groups of people who have been isolated, stigmatised or discriminated against.
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that harms inclusivity.
- Extend our inclusivity statement and action plans beyond those protected characteristics defined by law to include the full diversity of student membership including less engaged members such as international students, post graduate students and parents and carers.

Principles and Definitions

This policy applies to everything we do as a service provider, representative body and an employer. It covers conduct at our premises as well as related meetings, events and activity off site and at campuses other than in Newcastle. NUSU strives to provide an environment where all staff, students and visitors are free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We will also take positive action to address under-representation of groups, tackle discrimination and educate our staff, volunteers and members in becoming a fully inclusive organisation. In pursuing these goals, we employ the following definitions:

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.

Harassment
Unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment or any person or group. NUSU has a policy of zero tolerance to sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and harassment.
Victimisation
Takes place where one person treats another less favourably because they have asserted their legal rights or helped someone else to do so.

Protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act (2010)
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy, maternity and paternity
- Religion and Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability
- Transgender
- Race
- Gender

NUSU also has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination and harassment in relation to ex-convicts.

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Chief Executive
The Chief Executive has responsibility for ensuring the effective development and implementation of Equality and Diversity within the Union and for ensuring that all managers are trained effectively and implement the policy.

The Director of Membership & Democratic Services
The Director of Membership Services is responsible for ensuring all staff and officers are aware of the policy, organising adequate training and for reviewing and writing the policy in conjunction with the Welfare and Equality Officer.

Sabbatical Officers
Ensure the work of each officer responds to the needs of all students. Be accountable publically and approachable by any students.

The Welfare and Equality Officer (WEO)
The Welfare and Equality Officer has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the Students' Union holds adequate policy and implements effective campaigns on the subject of inclusivity. The WEO should attend training and keep informed of issues and initiatives relating to inclusivity to inform officers and staff members to enable positive action in all areas of NUSU.

Students' Union Council
Students' Union Council, on behalf of the Trustee Board, is responsible for ratifying the policy and any subsequent amendments or changes.

Students' Union Welfare and Campaigns Committee (WAC)
WAC Committee meets to discuss policy and campaigns on the subject of equality and diversity. It is an elected committee chaired by the Welfare and Equality Officer, with representatives from the liberation officers as well as some reserved places for faith groups and hall reps. There are also open places for any interested students.

All Managers
All Managers are responsible for ensuring that the policy and action plan is implemented and maintained in their own areas/services and activities; ensuring all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry them out, and taking appropriate action against staff and students who contravene the policy. Managers should listen and respond to issues, building equality and diversity activity into planning and operations.

All Staff
All staff in the course of their employment have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the policy, namely to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups and protected characteristics. All staff should attend training when offered and ask for any information, support or resource needed and flag issues you see and act on ideas to make things better.
All Officers and Volunteers
All officers and volunteers of the Students' Union have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the policy, namely to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people of different groups and protected characteristics. All volunteers must have access to training to assist them in this.

Liberation Officers*
Liberation officers are part-time elected officers who represent individual liberation groups. They are accountable officers who promote policy and run campaigns appropriate to their liberation groups and include the gender equality officer, racial equality officer, LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) officer, students with disabilities officer, international officer, students with caring responsibilities and student with faith and belief officers.

Society and Club Committees
All committees should attend training covering equality and diversity and work with staff and officers to ensure their society /club and associated activities are accessible. Ensure no student is unfairly excluded from their society/club and all members are treated with respect in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Monitoring and Performance

The Director of Membership and Democratic Services (DMDS) will be responsible for developing and monitoring action plans to achieve the aims of the Inclusivity policy. An annual action plan will be developed each August to be approved by the Trustee Board each Autumn. These documents clearly state the person responsible for each action, timescale (for the annual plan) and how we will monitor that the action has been completed. Action plans and responsibilities relating to the Inclusivity Policy will be made available, with the policy, on the NUSU website.

In addition to the action plans, NUSU will:

- Keep records of recruitment, training and decisions by Managers and the Trustee Board.
- Seek feedback from students and staff.
- Keep statistical records of the composition of the workforce.
- Keep records, where possible and appropriate, of the composition of users of services, participation in democratic processes and activities.
- Keep records of complaints and outcomes.

These statistics will form the basis of Equality Impact Assessments on our policies and procedures.

How to raise a concern and dealing with breaches of the policy

Any member who feels that the equality policy has been breached in any way should use the NUSU complaints procedure and/or speak to the appropriate liberation officer and/or the Convenor of Disciplinary Committee.

Any member of staff who believes that the principles of this policy have been breached speak to their line manager in the first instance and if this does not resolve or action the matter, use the Student’s Union Grievance procedure.

Any member of staff who believes they have been a victim of harassment, discrimination or victimisation as defined in this policy should in the first instance speak to their line manager or, if this is not felt appropriate, use the Grievance Procedure.

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

Any staff member who breaches the Inclusivity Policy will be subject to the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

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

*Liberation Officers refer to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans+ (LGBT+) Officer, Racial Equality Officer, Gender Equality Officer and Students with Disabilities (SWD) Officer.

Related Policies and Documents