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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2019)

1 **Introduction**

- 1.1 The University is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and respect for diversity in the workplace and on campus generally.
- 1.2 This involves creating and sustaining an inclusive environment that values and celebrates the diversity of our staff and student body, in pursuance of the principle of equality of opportunity which was enshrined in our Charter of 1908.
- 1.3 The University seeks to be a place where all staff and students can be fully accepted regardless of their identity or background, and a place where diverse perspectives are respected.

2 **Policy Statement**

- 2.1 The University is opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination and will seek to ensure that all staff and students are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- 2.2 The University will provide equality of opportunity and treatment to all, regardless of gender (including gender reassignment); pregnancy or maternity status; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age.
- 2.3 The University will ensure that its employment policies and practices do not unreasonably exclude or disadvantage staff, students and any applicants for jobs or courses.

3 Scope of Policy

3.1 This policy applies to:

- (i) All staff, applicants for employment and anyone who works for the University on a paid or voluntary basis, (including members of Senate and its core committees) and relates to all decisions in respect of recruitment and selection, progression, promotion, access to training and the provision of terms and conditions of employment; and
- (ii) All students and applicants for courses and it relates to all decisions in respect of the admission of students and the provision of all services to students including teaching and supervision, assessment, progression and award, and support services.

4 Status of the Policy

- 4.1 This policy forms part of the formal contract of employment for staff and part of the agreement between students and the University as set out in the Student Charter.
- 4.2 All members of the University, staff and students, must abide by this policy and uphold the spirit and essence of it at all times. All staff and students must treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful discrimination, bullying and/or harassment against any other person. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned.
- 4.3 Breaches of this policy may be regarded as misconduct or gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- 4.4 All visitors to the University will be expected to comply with this policy.
- 4.5 Anyone providing services to, or those contracted to work at the University including sub-contractors, are expected to comply with this policy. Breach of this policy could result in the termination of the contract.

5 Commitment to policy

5.1 The University is committed to:

- 5.1.1 Fulfilling its legal obligations under relevant legislation and associated Codes of Practice, taking lawful affirmative and positive action where appropriate;

- 5.1.2 Actively promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and celebrating cultural diversity within the University;
- 5.1.3 In line with guidance from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, promoting a “good and harmonious environment” – one which is free from any unlawful, discriminatory, hateful or intimidatory material or actions;
- 5.1.4 Ensuring a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment, particularly where it arises as a result of any protected characteristic. This includes but is not limited to racial, disablist, sexual or gender based harassment and homophobic, bi-phobic and/or transphobic harassment;
- 5.1.5 Fulfilling the commitments as set out in its institutional Equality Scheme and Action Plan and any other associated action plans;
- 5.1.6 Communicating this policy widely among staff and students;
- 5.1.7 Ensuring the University estate is, as far as reasonably practicable, accessible to all and where required, ensuring that reasonable adjustments are implemented to enable staff and students with disabilities and/or long term conditions do not encounter any barriers, physical or otherwise, either on campus or within the workplace;
- 5.1.8 Celebrating a range of UN international days of significance which align with the spirit and ethos of this policy.

6 Cultural and linguistic diversity

- 6.1 The University recognises the existence of a wide variety of international, diverse, cultural and linguistic communities amongst its staff and student body.
- 6.2 The University recognises its responsibilities to promote awareness of and respect for cultural and linguistic communities, including regional and minority languages.
- 6.3 In accordance with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland’s stated position, decisions regarding the use of language(s) other than English, rest with the University and will be reasonable and appropriate to the context in which it operates with the guiding principle of ensuring the University is a welcoming and harmonious environment for all students, staff and visitors.

7 Implementation

- 7.1 Senate has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- 7.2 The practical application of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy rests with all staff but particularly those with a management responsibility. This includes the President and Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, the Pro-Vice Chancellors, Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors, Heads of School and Directors and all senior management.
- 7.3 The Director of Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for ensuring that any student-related issues are effectively addressed through the appropriate procedure.
- 7.4 The Director of People and Culture is responsible for ensuring that any staff-related issues are effectively addressed through the appropriate procedure.
- 7.5 In order to implement this policy the University will:
- (i) Communicate it to students, staff (paid or voluntary), applicants for employment, anyone applying to study at the University, and where appropriate, any service providers, persons or organisations such as external examiners, consultants, subcontractors or agencies and visitors;
 - (ii) Provide a wide range of staff equality, diversity and inclusion training, information, advice and support , engaging with external organisations and other subject matter experts as appropriate;
 - (iii) Provide on-line Equality and Diversity Training to students at the beginning of each year, and information, guidance and support to students throughout their engagement with the University.
 - (iv) Ensure that any staff who are involved in recruitment and selection, progression, promotion exercises receive appropriate training, including but not limited to unconscious bias and relevant equality legislation, guidance and Codes of Practice;
 - (v) Take appropriate lawful affirmative or positive action to address issues of under-representation for specific minority groups, for example, including statements in job advertisements encouraging members of under-represented groups to apply for job opportunities and developing specific outreach programmes and internal support networks for individuals of a /any protected characteristic(s); and

- (vi) Ensure that adequate resources, both human and financial, are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy.

8 Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 The University is registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998. As such, it is obliged to monitor the community background and sex of job applicants and its workforce.
- 8.2 The University is also obliged to review the composition of its workforce and employment policies and practices every three years and, where appropriate, to consider taking affirmative action to promote fair participation between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. The University is committed to complying with these duties and has set up suitable arrangements to ensure that it does so.
- 8.3 The University maintains appropriate staff and student information and monitoring systems to assist with the effective implementation of this policy.
- 8.4 Information relating to applicants for employment and staff is monitored by the University's Diversity and Inclusion Unit.
- 8.5 Information relating to student applicants and students is monitored by the University's Planning Office.
- 8.6 All such information is treated sensitively and in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation.
- 8.7 The effectiveness of this policy will be kept under regular review and amended to reflect developments in legislation, relevant Codes of Practice and best practice.
- 8.8 The University will consult with recognised Trade Unions, the Students' Union and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland with respect to this policy.

9 Complaints

- 9.1 Members of staff who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation can raise the matter through the appropriate procedure.

- 9.2 Relevant procedures are available online, in hard copy or in alternative formats such as enlarged print or Braille (upon request) from the People and Culture Directorate.
- 9.3 Students who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Student Complaints Procedure which is available online, in hard copy or alternative formats upon request from the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs.
- 9.4 Every effort will be made to ensure that any person making a complaint will not be victimised. All complaints of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with promptly and confidentially. If on investigation, it is established that discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation has occurred, disciplinary action will result and may warrant dismissal/expulsion.
- 10 Equality Screening & Compliance
- 10.1 The University's previous Equality and Diversity Policy (2008) was equality screened and was "screened out with mitigation" as per Equality Commission's guidance and the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 10.2 This policy reflects changes made to mitigate against any impact(s) identified through the equality screening process.
- 10.3 The University will adopt a wide ranging approach to consultation with its staff and students, taking a targeted approach for those consultees with a particular interest in this policy. In doing so, it has considered the accessibility, format and methods of consultation to remove any barriers to engaging in a meaningful consultation process.
- 10.4 This involves publication of its equality screening report and providing all staff and students with access to relevant guidance documents and opportunities to feedback their views on the policy.
- 10.5 All Section 75 categories are expected to benefit from this policy.

Policy consultation begins: 3rd April 2019

Policy consultation ends: 17th April 2019