Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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Approved by WSU's HR & Remunerations Committee
(a Sub Committee of the Trustee Board)
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Introduction

At Worcester Student's Union (WSU), we are committed to equality of opportunity and to promoting a positive and inclusive culture, in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.   This applies to our roles as an employer, a representative and campaigning body, and as a service provider.

WSU has a duty to conduct to consider the needs of all of our members in determining our charitable activities and strategic direction. We will take a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, we rightly value diversity, and we support and encourage all under-represented groups at UW and beyond.

WSU recognises the value of difference and is committed to recognising, respecting and valuing different identities, perspectives, and backgrounds. We value the individual contribution of people and recognise the systemic barriers still faced by many in society. We commit to acknowledging their experiences and breaking down such barriers and to support all those who could be or are marginalised as a result of their disability, race, colour, religious belief, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave, age, marital status, civil partnership, or any other individual characteristic or intersectionality of different characteristics (this is not an exhaustive list).

WSU is committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment within its organisation, in relation to our members, staff and visitors and in the provision of services. WSU is, also, committed to being anti-racist. You can read our statement relating to this [here.](here)

We support the right to freedom of expression. In exercising their right to freedom of expression, we expect our members, staff and visitors to be tolerant of the differing opinions and diverse identities of others. This is in line with the core values and codes of conduct of WSU. Freedom of expression includes the right to peaceful protest but it should not be used to shut down debate or infringe on the rights of others.

We strive to encourage good relations between people from diverse backgrounds, as well as increase understanding of EDI issues amongst our staff and members. We will work to ensure individuals are treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner and are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

We will, also, ensure transparency in the decision-making of its Executive Committee, Student Council, Trustee Board, and senior management. We want to ensure that our democratic and representative spaces and structures are as inclusive and accessible as possible, to enable us to truly reflect our members and their needs.

1. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This Policy relates to employees (both core and student staff), Trustees, and members (students) of WSU. It will also apply to those visiting the SU, those who book externally to use our venue/s, and to anyone commissioned or contracted to undertake work for the SU.

This Policy exists to:

1. Ensure that WSU carries out its activities within a framework that respects and promotes equal opportunities, and alongside legislative requirements.
2. Ensure WSU is pro-active in promoting equality of opportunity.
3. Make explicit the rights and responsibilities of members.
4. Commit WSU to monitoring the implementation of this policy and the ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness.
5. Ensure that WSU is transparent in reporting its progress in implementation to members, particularly those most affected.

2. WSU's Commitments under the Policy

a) To create and sustain a positive and welcoming environment for all members, visitors and staff, who are all part of #teamworc.
b) To proactively consult and involve our members who are typically under-represented or marginalised, in the development of our activities and services.
c) To undertake Equality Impact Assessments for any significant change in service or policy.
d) To provide a working environment that is compliant with all relevant legislation.
e) To amend the policy as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation and monitored through the organisation's Annual Statement of Legal Compliance.
f) To amend the policy as appropriate to respond to the needs of our members or changes in our student representative functions.
g) To work with the University of Worcester, and constructively challenge, promote equality and diversity in all matters that affect our members, and ensure that both parties are actively complying with this Policy.

h) To hold the University to account in terms of their progress and activities against their EDI Policy and framework, including decolonising the curriculum.
i) To ensure our Officers, staff, Trustees, and volunteers are aware of the diversity of the Union's membership. To raise awareness amongst them of the needs of disadvantaged or marginalised groups, as well as raising awareness of privilege.
j) To ensure all WSU student groups are aware of the diversity of our membership, of the existence of this policy, and of the need for them to actively counter prejudice and discrimination, to be anti-racist, and to demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity policies and practice.
k) To ensure that any person or group, staff member or Trustee who contravenes this Policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures, whether those of WSU or the University of Worcester.
l) To monitor the accessibility of the information we provide to our members, staff, and stakeholders.
m) To work to increase participation of all members to better reflect the student community we represent.
n) To regularly monitor practices (through WSU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group as well as through other means, such as the HR Sub Committee of the Trustee Board, to ensure we meet our commitment to EDI.

3. Policy Implementation

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the President and the Chief Executive. They will seek help to do this with support, input, and direction from WSU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) and through consultation with WSU's members and the Welfare and Inclusion Council (a Sub Committee of Student Council).

All line managers have a responsibility to implement the policy and to ensure the staff and volunteers in their area or team are aware of and comply with this Policy. It will, also, form part of the induction for new members of WSU staff (core and student), as well as for Officers, Trustees, and volunteers.

Elected, Officer Trustees are responsible for their own behaviour and must comply with this Policy within their remit and activities. This, also, applies to Student and Lay Trustees. They may be held personally accountable should any complaint arise against them.

All elected officers, members of WSU staff, and volunteers are responsible for taking appropriate action to ensure that personal harassment of another member of staff or a student does not occur, and to challenge or report any incidences they might see.

All WSU members are responsible for their own behaviour. They should always respect and demonstrate equal opportunities principles and adhere to this policy.

If, through investigation, WSU members or employees are found to have acted in contravention of this policy, the appropriate procedures will be followed; for employees, the procedures will be outlined within the Employee Handbook and for members, the Code of Conduct (relating to members and Officer Trustees of the Union) contained within WSU's Bye Laws. Serious offences may lead to, for members, the removal of membership rights and, for employees, dismissal.

If you have any questions about the content or application of this Policy, you should contact WSU's HR and Administration Co-ordinator, who can be contacted via the main WSU email, studentsunion@worc.ac.uk.

4. Provision

WSU understands that the needs of different groups vary and will, therefore, strive to provide according to need, which in some cases will result in different provisions.

We recognise the need for Student ('liberation') Networks to enable different students to have a safe space. We will support the Networks to flourish and grow and in seeking appropriate space on campus to meet and be active. We will also support them to discuss issues that affect them and campaign for change.

WSU is committed to making our service provision accessible to all members. We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place any members, staff or visitors at a substantial disadvantage and will work with the University to make reasonable adjustments.

5. Employment and Leadership Elections

WSU commits to be an equal opportunities employer and a democratic body. We will work to eliminate any unfair or unintended discrimination at each stage of the recruitment/election process and throughout an individual's employment/term of office with us.

WSU's recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that we do our utmost to widen access to our opportunities, ensuring individuals are treated according to their relevant merits and capabilities first and foremost, and that we are actively seeking applications from candidates from all backgrounds. We will, wherever possible and affordable, seek the support of external agencies to help us do this in a more targeted way. To ensure that

this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, nationality, marital status, caring responsibilities, and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is on a voluntary basis and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment.

WSU will make it clear how staff or candidates are able to report incidents where they believe they have experienced any form of discrimination. This will be through the Union's HR and Admin Co-ordinator who will liaise on the matter with the Union's Chief Executive (or the Trustee Board if the Chief Executive is involved in any way).

6. Training and personal and professional development

WSU will make every effort to train and educate its staff, officers, trustees, volunteers, and representatives in equality and diversity matter, as follows:

- All staff (core and student) will complete online Diversity and Inclusion training via the University of Worcester staff portal as part of their induction and every 2 years thereon.
- Elected Officers and Trustees will also receive the above training as part of their induction and, in the case of Lay Trustees, if their term of office is extended beyond one term.
- WSU will also arrange other appropriate, regular, equality and diversity training for the core staff team, through external providers and NUS, such as the Equity at Work training, Diversity training, and Leadership in Race Equity.
- Staff and Officers will be encouraged to attend external conferences and events that support an increased knowledge and awareness of EDI matters.
- Bespoke EDI Training will be provided for Student Councillors as part of their induction to their role.
- Bespoke EDI training will be provided to committee members in Student Networks, sports clubs, societies, and student-led groups. The committee will decide on the most appropriate member to attend such training but it is expected that the Inclusivity Reps and Chairs will attend as a minimum and have a responsibility to raise awareness amongst their committee and student group.

All staff and elected officers must be fully aware of this Policy and its strategy for implementation. It will be included in the induction for Full Time Officers' and core staff, who will be kept updated on any reviews, updates or action plans associated with the Policy.

7. Monitoring & review

Operational responsibility for the monitoring and review of this Policy lies with the President and the Chief Executive. They will seek help to do this with support, input, and direction from WSU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) and through consultation with WSU's members and the Welfare and Inclusion Council (a Sub Committee of Student Council). Please see the terms of reference for the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) at Appendix 1 and the Welfare and Inclusion Council at Appendix 2.

The Policy will be approved and reviewed annually. It may be updated in between annual reviews to reflect any legislative changes. The Trustee Board will have overall responsibility for ensuring the annual review and implementation of this Policy and will delegate authority to the Chief Executive to lead on this operationally.

The annual review will cover the development and implementation of the Policy. It will also create an action plan containing clear, measurable, and achievable objectives and targets.

The annual review of the Policy and resultant action will be made public to:

(i)   All staff
(ii)   All members, through email and on the WSU website, as well as at the following annual All Student Meeting

8. Promotion & publicity

WSU will endeavour to ensure that all members, staff, Trustees, and volunteers are aware of the Union's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion and that they are expected to promote its objectives.

All student groups and committee members will be made aware of this policy and the need for them to actively counter prejudice and discrimination and demonstrate their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practice.

9. Complaints procedure

If any WSU member, employee or volunteer feels they have not been treated in accordance with this Policy (by another person whilst in WSU spaces or participating in WSU activities), they have the right and are encouraged to make a complaint. All complaints made in good faith are free of retribution and will be handled through WSU's established complaints procedures, which can be accessed by members here
https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/.

10. Related policies and procedures:

- WSU's Annual Statement of Legal Compliance
- WSU's Complaints Procedure
- For WSU employees, the Employee Handbook
- Code of Conduct (relating to members and Officer Trustees of the Union) contained within WSU's Bye Laws
- For members, the University's Student Disciplinary Procedures
- For Trustees, WSU's Trustees Code of Conduct
- WSU's Whistleblowing Policy
- WSU's Safeguarding Policy
- WSU Data Protection and Information Security Policy and relevant Privacy Notices for members, staff, job applicants and visitors
- The Hangar Policy Book

11. Related Legislation

- Equalities Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Glossary of Terms

Anti-racism	Anti-racism is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions.
Decolonising the Curriculum	"Decolonising education is often understood as the process in which we rethink, reframe and reconstruct the curricula and research that preserve the Europe-centred, colonial lens. It should not be mistaken for 'diversification,' as diversity can still exist within this western bias. Decolonisation goes further and deeper in challenging the institutional hierarchy and monopoly on knowledge, moving out of a western framework." *-Sofia Akel, Race Equity Specialist, Education Activist, Researcher and Lecturer (Each Other, 2020)* Above taken from SOS (Students Organising for Sustainability) UK website
Discrimination	Less favourable treatment, in law this usually relates directly or indirectly to one of the protected characteristics identified in the equality legislation (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual identity or sexual orientation). Discrimination may be indirect, direct or by perception or by association with a person who has one of the protected characteristics.
Diversity	Diversity is about representation and participation of people with different social identities. A diverse environment is one with a wide range of backgrounds and mindsets, which allows for an empowered culture of creativity and innovation.
Equality	Ensuring that individuals, or groups of individuals, are treated equally under policies & practices and has the same rights as everyone else. Everyone is provided with equal access to opportunities.
Equality Impact Assessment	An equality impact assessment (EIA) is an evidence-based approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events, and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation. This covers both strategic and operational activities.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct (usually serial, but it can be a single event) which has the effect of violating a person's dignity or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Inclusion	The differences of each individual and/or group is acknowledged, respected, and valued and action is taken to ensure practices work for everyone. Inclusion ensures that individuals can bring their different experiences with them and that these are listened to and valued, as well as having equal power when participating.
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is recognising that people's lives are often shaped by many factors, rather than just one. Many people have overlapping protected characteristics, meaning they may experience discrimination in more or different ways.
Marginalisation/ Marginalised	Marginalisation describes both a process, and a condition, that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic, and political life. As a condition, it can prevent individuals from actively participating. There is a multidimensional aspect, with social, economic, and political barriers all contributing to the marginalisation of an individual or group of individuals.
Prejudice	A preconceived judgment or opinion regarding a person or a group based on insufficient or incorrect evidence.
Privilege	Rights or immunity that gives the individual a distinct advantage or favour. A set of unearned benefits or advantages by society because of certain aspects of their identity, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender, sex, sexual orientation, language, nationality, ability, and religion.
Student ('liberation') Networks	Student led groups that represent a particular group of students (e.g., LGBTQ+) or an issue within the Union.
Systemic barriers	Policies, practices, or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded.

WSU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group
Terms of Reference

Composition: 3 x Full Time Officers (FTOs)
Chief Executive (CE)
Director of Representation and Membership Services
Student Communities Co-ordinator (Secretary)
Academic and Welfare Advisor/s
Venue and Events Manager
Student Voice Assistant

Chair: WSU President
Frequency: Monthly
Reports To: SU Trustee Board via CE
HR Subcommittee of the Trustee Board via CE
Student Council via FTOs

Purpose:

1. To oversee the implementation and ongoing development of the Students' Union's (SU) strategy and around EDI.
2. To assist with the implementation of the Union's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and support the annual review of that Policy.
3. To recommend actions, organisational targets, and/or KPIS around EDI to the Trustee Board, as part of the annual review process.
4. To monitor progress against any agreed actions, targets and KPIs around EDI.
5. To formulate other policy and practice for the Union that promotes EDI.
6. To support colleagues within the SU to ensure that its services and operations are accessible and uphold the principles of EDI.
7. To recommend training and development mechanisms for SU staff and students.
8. To respond to feedback and views arising from the SU's Welfare and Inclusion Council and Student Networks.
9. Via the FTOs, to lobby and challenge the University to develop and improve its practices and policies around EDI.
10. To work with the University, particularly the Director of Access and Inclusion and Interim Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor (Students), on initiatives and activities that support and foster EDI and a diverse and inclusive University community.
11. To support the SU to provide safe spaces for students and staff to discuss issues around equality and diversity.
12. To research external and sector-wide best practice for opportunities for the SU.

13. To ensure that, via Marketing and Communications, we communicate to students (and wider stakeholders) our aims and intentions around EDI, as well as our progress, on a regular basis.

Next review date: May 2024

Appendix 2

Welfare and Inclusion Council
Terms of Reference

Membership: WSU President (Chair)
Chairs (or their nominee) of the following Student
Networks:
- the Race Equality Network;
- the Commuter Students' Network:
- the Disabled Students' Network;
- the International Students' Network;
- the LGBTQ+ Students' Network;
- the Mature, Parents and Carers Network;
- the Postgraduate Students' Network;
- the Sustainability Network;
- the Women's Network;
- the Widening Participation Network.

Chairs of Faith and Cultural Societies.

In attendance: Student Communities Co-ordinator– Minuting Secretary
Director of Representation and Membership Services –
Chair's Aid.
Chairs (or their nominees) of Faith and Cultural Societies
may be invited as appropriate.

Frequency: Minimum of once per semester (twice a year)
Reports to: Students' Union's Student Council
Quoracy: At least 50% plus 1 of the voting members.

Purpose:

The Welfare and Inclusion Council's purpose is to drive debate, consider issues, form policy, and create a space for collaboration on the Union's representative work on welfare, inclusion, equity, and sustainable development.

Remit

- To consider matters that affect students in relation to:
  - the health, welfare and wellbeing of students
  - international students;
  - sustainability;
  - diversity and inclusion, including protected characteristics, faith and beliefs;
  - the development of a strong student community;
  - to discuss and formulate policy on the topics related to its remit to submit to Student Council;

- To discuss changes to University and external policies and strategy that will impact on the student body at Worcester;
- To receive updates from the Student Networks and the President;
- To work with the President to promote the Union's work on diversity, inclusion, equality, sustainability, and student welfare.
- To engage in campaigns related to welfare, inclusion and sustainable development. This will include, but is not limited to, campaigns on issues of accommodation, finance & money management, LGBTQ+ issues, equality issues, international students, tackling racism and xenophobia, sexual health, sustainability campaigns and ethical issues.