

Equal Opportunities Policy

The University of Cambridge is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. This commitment is underpinned by the University's core values, expressed in its mission statement:

- Freedom of thought and expression.
- Freedom from discrimination.

The University is therefore committed to a policy and practice which require that, for students, admission to the University and progression within undergraduate and graduate studies will be determined only by personal merit and by performance. For staff, entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the institution concerned.

Subject to statutory provisions, no student, member of staff, applicant for admission as a student, or applicant for appointment as a member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of her or his belonging to a protected group. This commitment applies to a former student, alumnus or alumna, or former employee where the alleged unlawful conduct arises out of and is closely connected to the former student's or former staff member's previous relationship with the University.

Protected groups are defined in the Equality Act 2010 as Sex, Gender Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy or Maternity, Race (including Ethnic or National Origin, Nationality or Colour), Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age, or Religion or Belief. The University respects all religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as the lack of religion or belief, and the right of all members of its community to discuss and debate these issues freely.

If any person admitted as a student or appointed as a member of staff considers that he or she is suffering from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimization in her or his admission, appointment, or progression through the University because of belonging to any of the above protected groups, he or she may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate.

The University will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:

1. Work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization based on a protected characteristic, whether actual, perceptive, or associative.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
4. Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
5. Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of University equalities objectives.

6. Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
7. Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
8. Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring.

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be enacted through by the University's Equality Objectives, associated implementation plans, and the Combined Equality Scheme. The Combined Equality Scheme explains how the University will fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to equalities legislation.

It considers:

- Governance and Policy Development, including relevant committees, compliance, equal pay, assessing the impact of policies and practices and reporting.
- Developing and Implementing Best Practice.
- Inclusive Practice for Students and Staff—including the University's Diversity Networks, Dignity@Work, and Dignity at Study procedures.
- Promotion of Equality and Diversity, including relevant diversity events, training, and guidance.
- Data and Information Provision, including appropriate monitoring and compliance reporting.

Progress against actions and objectives will be reported in the Equality and Diversity Annual Reviews and Data Reports.

The University will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. This will be informed by:

- The Equality Act (2010) and associated secondary legislation.
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008).
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006).
- The Civil Partnership Act (2004).
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004).
- Criminal Justice Act (2003).
- The Human Rights Act (1998).
- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997).
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

In addition, this will be informed by the Codes of Practice or Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other relevant bodies. These Codes are not legally binding (though they are admissible as evidence in Employment Tribunals) and the University supports them fully.

This policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation.

Further information on legislation, the University's equality schemes and best practice, including links to the relevant legislation, is available on the [Equality and Diversity pages](#), and on the [website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).