UCQ UNIVERSITY CENTRE QUAYSIDE

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Version: 13
Revision date: 17/07/2026
Due for review: 17/07/2027
Document reviewer: Head of Policy & Governance

Commitment Statement

Academic Council and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at University Centre Quayside (UCQ) are committed to ensuring all policies and procedures are fully implemented across the organisation.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be regularly updated, particularly as the business changes in nature and size, and reviewed periodically and in accordance with regulatory legislation.

Policies will be communicated to all employees, including to new employees during their induction period.

Signed: Date: 17/07/2026

Position: Principal & CEO

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1. Policy statement

1.1 University Centre Quayside (UCQ) is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse community that values and respects individuals from all backgrounds. We believe that promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, in all aspects of our work enhances the educational experience for all members of our community.

1.2 The advancement of equity and equality of opportunity, the embracing of diversity and the treatment of people with due regard and respect for difference requires monitoring, target setting and the development of programmes of positive action.

2. Scope

2.1 The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time, on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as associates, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.

2.2 Staff have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of employee induction, staff are expected to read and familiarise themselves with this policy and to ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with.

2.3 This policy is also of particular relevance to directors, Council members, line managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

3. Statutory duties

3.1 UCQ will abide by current statutory duties for students and staff, in line with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, and resulting duty to:

3.1.1 eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
3.1.2 advance equality of opportunity
3.1.3 foster good relations between different groups
3.1.4 take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers, including by third parties

4. Explanation of terms

4.1 **Age**: this refers to a person belonging to a particular age group, which can mean people of the same age (e.g. age 32) or a range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds, or people over 50)

4.2 **Bullying**: Characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

4.3 **Civil Partnership**: a legal relationship which can be registered by two people who aren't related to each other.

4.4 **Direct discrimination**: less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic.

4.5 **Disability**: a person has a disability if they have a physical or intellectual impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

4.6 **Disadvantage**: an unfavourable circumstance or condition that reduces the chances of success or effectiveness.

4.7 **Diversity**: where many different types of people are included.

4.8 **Equality:** the principle of ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and have equal access to opportunities, rights, and resources, regardless of their protected characteristics.

4.9 **Equity:** the principle of providing individuals with the support and resources they need to achieve fair outcomes, recognising that different people may require different approaches to overcome barriers.

4.10 **Gender**: a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity; gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth. An individual may see themselves as a man, woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender.

4.11 **Gender re-assignment**: the process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.

4.12 **Harassment**: unwanted behaviour or conduct related to a person's protected characteristics/s which has the purpose or effect either of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

4.13 **Indirect discrimination**: occurs where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to everyone, but the provision, criterion or practice puts or would put members of one group at a particular disadvantage and is not a justifiable means of achieving a legitimate aim.

4.14 **Marital status**: identifies whether an individual is married, single or in a civil partnership.

4.15 **Nationality**: the status of belonging to a particular nation, whether by birth or naturalisation.

4.16 **Positive action**: refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantage (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.

4.17 **Pregnancy and maternity**: Pregnancy refers to individuals who are pregnant, whilst maternity covers a period of 26 weeks after birth. The Equality Act prohibits discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity in employment, education and in the provision of goods and services.

4.18 **Protected Characteristics**: refers to the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4.19 **Public sector equality duty**: the duty on a public authority or body when carrying out its functions to have due regard of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.

4.20 **Race:** a protected characteristic that refers to an individual/s racial group, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

4.21 **Religion**: refers to an individual's faith or beliefs. **Non-belief** refers to individuals who do not hold faith or beliefs.

4.22 **Sex:** refers to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions. This is generally male or female and is assigned at birth. The Equality Act 2010 definition of 'sex' does not extend to certificated sex even where a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) is in place

4.23 **Sexual orientation**: identifies an individual's sexual preference, e.g. whether the individual is bisexual, heterosexual, homosexual or another sexual orientation.

4.24 **Sexual misconduct** relates to all unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. This includes, but is not limited to:

i. Sexual harassment (as defined by Section 26 (2) of the Equality Act 2010)
ii. Unwanted conduct which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (as defined by the Equality Act 2010)
iii. Assault (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003)
iv. Rape (as defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003)
v. Physical unwanted sexual advances (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017)2
vi. Intimidation, or promising resources or benefits in return for sexual favours (as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Sexual harassment and the law, 2017)3

vii. Distributing private and personal explicit images or video footage of an individual without their consent (as defined by the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015).

4.25 **Stakeholders**: people who have an interest in a subject, issue or organisation.

4.26 **Trade union membership**: identifies whether the individual is, or is not, a member of a trade union.

4.27 **Trans**: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

4.28 **Victimisation**: occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of their involvement in a discrimination complaint.

4.29 **Zero Tolerance**: refers to a principle whereby behaviour, attitudes, and language that are unlawfully discriminatory, harassing, or in breach of organisational standards will not be tolerated and will be addressed promptly through relevant institutional policies and procedures.

5. Principles

5.1 UCQ recognises that passive support for equality, diversity and inclusion is not sufficient as inequalities created by indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment, segregation and stereotyping, affects everyone. Challenging inequality must be the responsibility of all members of the UCQ community.

5.2 UCQ is committed to treating all of its staff, students and stakeholders fairly and equitably regardless of a protected characteristic, including age, race or ethnicity, disability, gender, gender preference, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, non-belief, membership of professional associations or trade unions, marital status, family responsibility and socio-economic standing. UCQ will ensure that no unjustifiable requirements or conditions are imposed that could disadvantage individuals on any of the above grounds.

5.3 UCQ affirms its commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion, and opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination. While upholding the right to lawful freedom of speech as protected by the law, UCQ adopts a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory behaviour that breaches legal standards. UCQ is dedicated to eliminating unfair discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity for all in education, training, and employment.

5.4 UCQ recognises the influence it has externally with many people and organisations with whom it interacts, and it intends that this influence shall be used to promote equality and diversity. It recognises the concept of institutional racism and is committed to the elimination of the root causes of this concept.

5.5 UCQ seeks to create an accessible institution and will take proactive action to create a supportive and relevant learning and working environment in which all have the opportunity to achieve their potential. In order to meet these objectives, UCQ will take positive action including seeking and delivering adequate resources to implement this policy. UCQ will review the equality implications of its policies and procedures and monitor their outcomes.

5.6 UCQ will ensure that all procedures treat individuals equitably.

6. Promotion and commitment

6.1 UCQ, by recognising diversity, embracing and valuing differences, will be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

6.2 UCQ are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued, support, and empowered, to reach their full potential.

6.3 UCQ is committed to fostering an environment where diversity is respected, individual identities and experiences are valued, and all members of the community feel able to express themselves freely. In line with its legal obligations, UCQ upholds the principle of lawful freedom of speech, recognising that this may include views that others may find challenging or offensive. At the same time, UCQ will actively address and challenge discriminatory behaviours, practices, or attitudes that breach legal standards and contribute to a hostile or unwelcoming environment.

6.4 New staff and students will be made aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the behaviour expected of them during induction, through the staff/student handbook and the information published on the virtual learning environment (VLE).

6.5 All staff will be required to complete a declaration confirming they have read and understood this policy and agree to work to the expected standards. All staff, including all levels of management, will also undertake regular Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.

6.6 Consideration is given to equality, diversity, and inclusion—along with the individual needs of all students—throughout the delivery of their programme. The implementation of these considerations is detailed in Section 8. The same approach is applied when working with employers involved in apprenticeship training. Employers are fully informed of their responsibilities, which are outlined and agreed upon in the signed agreements. As part of these requirements, employers must have a number of mandatory policies in place, including an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement.

7. Responsibilities and duties

7.1 Academic Council**:** It is the overall responsibility of the Academic Council to:

- 7.1.1 Ensure that UCQ complies with its statutory obligations with regard to equality and diversity, and uphold the legal right to freedom of speech within the limits of the law
- 7.1.2 Develop strategic direction and goals for equality, diversity, and inclusion and ensure they are integral to institutional operations
- 7.1.3 Ensure that students have access to educational services and resources to meet their needs
- 7.1.4 Ensure that recruitment and selection of staff and students is non-discriminatory
- 7.1.5 Ensure that staff have equitable access to training and development opportunities
- 7.1.6 Ensure that staff are appropriately informed on equality and diversity issues
- 7.1.7 Ensure that all students are made aware of, and comply with, UCQ's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- 7.1.8 Monitor data collected on equality and diversity at regular intervals and take action to address disparities
- 7.1.9 Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not through the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

7.2 Administrative and Academic staff**:** It is the responsibility of all administrative and academic staff to:

- 7.2.1 Comply with UCQ's statutory obligations with regard to equality and diversity, and uphold the legal right to freedom of speech within the limits of the law
- 7.2.2 Comply with UCQ's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- 7.2.3 Undergo training on equality and diversity issues as required
- 7.2.4 Maintain, where applicable, sufficient records to enable the effective monitoring of equality and diversity issues
- 7.2.5 Bring any allegations of discrimination to the attention of the appropriate manager, in accordance with UCQ procedures
- 7.2.6 Ensure that schemes of work, lesson content and teaching resources demonstrate sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity, gender and disability
- 7.2.7 Promote good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

7.3 Students: It is the responsibility of all UCQ students to:

- 7.3.1 Comply with the necessary statutory obligations with regard to equality and diversity and lawful freedom of speech
- 7.3.2 Undergo awareness raising on equality and diversity issues
- 7.3.3 Bring any allegations of discrimination to the attention of academic or administrative staff, in accordance with UCQ's procedures

7.3.4 Respect and value diversity and develop good relationships between people from different groups to create an inclusive environment.

8. Implementing this policy

8.1 Students: Recruitment and admissions

UCQ will ensure that:

8.1.1 recruitment and publicity materials are designed in a range of formats to ensure they are free from bias and stereotypes, and encourage applicants from all groups in the community;
8.1.2 applicants for courses are considered on the basis of their ability to meet the entry criteria, as specified in the course information and Admissions Policy;
8.1.3 applicants are not treated less favourably because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation;
8.1.4 applicants are interviewed on the basis of their academic ability and/or potential to succeed;
8.1.5 application and enrolment procedures give students the opportunity to identify any additional learning support available for their needs;
8.1.6 where assessment(s) form part of the application process for a particular course, all applicants will take the same assessment(s), with reasonable adjustments (GP-011 Reasonable Adjustments Policy) being made for identified learning difficulties or disabilities;
8.1.7 students are made aware, during induction, of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the behaviour expected of students.

8.2 Curriculum design

UCQ will ensure that:

8.2.1 course materials include diverse perspectives, voices, authors, and case studies from various cultural, gender, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds;
8.2.2 interdisciplinary perspectives will be incorporated to highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion in different fields.

8.3 Teaching, learning and assessment

UCQ will ensure that:

8.3.1 the range, content and delivery of the curriculum reflect the needs of students and the community and promote widening participation;

8.3.2 all aspects of teaching, including language used, timetabling, delivery methods, materials, group organisation, and activities, are conducted with sensitivity to equality and diversity, while also respecting the lawful right to freedom of speech;

8.3.3 teaching and learning materials and delivery methods avoid stereotypes and bias, and promote the rich cultural diversity of the local community;

8.3.4 resources are available in formats appropriate to the needs of individual students, including the use of specialist equipment where appropriate;

8.3.5 equality and diversity and access for everyone to develop their potential are embedded in the teaching, learning and assessment strategy;

8.3.6 there is an ethos and learning environment which is inclusive and enables students to feel valued as an individual.

8.4 Engagement

UCQ will:

8.4.1 include student feedback in curriculum development and review processes to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered;

8.4.2 encourage students to engage with EDI topics through projects, discussions, and reflections;

8.4.3 build partnerships with diverse communities and organisations to enrich the curriculum and provide real-world learning experiences;

8.5 Research and scholarship

UCQ will:

8.5.1 promote and support research that addresses EDI issues and includes diverse populations;

8.6 Support services and facilities

UCQ will:

8.6.1 provide a range of support services and facilities which will enable students with protected characteristics to participate fully in UCQ life, including (but not limited to):

- tutorial support
- additional support with learning, for example English and maths
- additional learning support, for example dyslexia screening
- signposting to financial and welfare advice
- personal counselling
- social, recreational and catering facilities, prayer facilities

8.6.2 ensure that its support services and facilities are publicised to students and potential applicants through recruitment and publicity materials, the UCQ website, the student handbook, and at induction;

8.6.3 ensure physical access to all of its buildings for students, staff and visitors

8.6.4 Ensure that services are tailored and regularly reviewed to include an understanding of the student's needs, backgrounds and differing requirements.

8.7 Staff recruitment and selection

UCQ will: when a vacancy arises, prepare a person specification identifying the essential and desirable levels of qualifications/training, knowledge/experience and skills/abilities required for the job;

8.7.1 advertise jobs internally and externally to attract applicants who meet the person specification;

8.7.2 consider applicants on the basis of their suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the requirements set out in the person specification.

8.8 Staff training and development

UCQ will:

8.8.1 identify annually training and development needs through the Staff Development and Performance Procedure (Appendix B of the Staff Handbook)

8.8.2 make available a range of training opportunities to meet these needs;

8.8.3 ensure staff undertake regular equality, diversity and inclusion training

8.8.4 include equality, diversity and inclusion training as part of the induction for new staff.

8.9 Staff working environment

UCQ will:

8.9.1 ensure that employees are not disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristics.

9. Reporting

9.1 UCQ has a complaints procedure for both staff and students. Breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be dealt with through the complaints procedure.

10. Monitoring

10.1 The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Quality Standards and Compliance Committee. Appropriate data will be provided to the Academic Council, including numbers of complaints/incidents in relation to equality of opportunity. Equality and diversity data will be reviewed at all levels in the organisation and equality objectives will be developed to address any issues of inequality and discrimination.

11. Document history

ISSUE NO.	DATE	PAGE	REVIEWER	DETAIL OF AMENDMENT
12	25/07/2025	All	Tara Henderson	Full periodic review conducted; S3: Updated to reference Worker Protection act amendment; S4 Formal definitions added for equality and equity for clarity (already referenced elsewhere); P4.22, 4.29, 5.3, 6.3, 7.1.1, 7.2.1, 7.3.1 and 8.3.2: wording updated to ensure compliance with freedom of speech laws; P6.6 and 8.6.1: paragraphs amended for clarity; S10: new section added: Paragraph numbering updated accordingly.
13	17/07/2026	All	Tara Henderson	Full periodic review conducted. No changes made.

12. Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

Department: All	Completed by: Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	Date of initial assessment: 12/03/2021
Area to be assessed:	GP-001 Equality and Diversity Policy	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	Existing	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements: ➢ Equality Act 2010 ➢ Consultation with Equality North East Internal guidance and requirements: ➢ Consultation with Human Resources Team ➢ Consultation with Equality and Diversity Champions		

Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure		This policy sets out UCQ's commitment to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. The rights and obligations set out in this policy apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time, on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as associates, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.		
Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?		All stakeholders		
The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to: - 1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization 2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and 3) Foster good relations between different groups		Could the policy/procedure have a disproportionately **adverse** effect impact in terms of the aims set out in (1) to (3) of the Act on any of the protected characteristics:- High Medium Low No adverse effect	Briefly explain how the policy/procedure furthers or prevents the aims set out in (1) to (3).	If there is a disproportionately **adverse** impact on any protected characteristics, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality or any other reason? If yes, please explain.
Protected characteristics	Age	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Disability	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Gender	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable

	Gender reassignment	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Pregnancy and Maternity	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Race	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Religion or Belief	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable
	Sexual Orientation	No adverse effect	Ensures statutory rights are upheld	Not applicable

Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?		Yes. See full Equality Analysis for consultation details
What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately adverse impact, if any?		None required
Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to full Equality Analysis? (recommended if one or more 'High' under section 2)		Yes, due to positive impacts of policy
Assessor signature:	Approved by: Michelle Elliott	Date approved: 12/03/2021