

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY**

1 The University of Law's (the University) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been informed by:

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
- 1.2 The Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance on Enabling Student Achievement. The QAA's Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced.

2 Equality is core to our University Strategy which sets our values and goals. We want all our staff and students to reflect the global and diverse environment we live in. We aim to be a place where people can be free to be themselves no matter what their identity or background.

## Introduction

3 The University recognises that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to our success. We want our staff and students to reflect the diversity of the regional, national, and international communities that we provide for, and we aim to be a place where people can feel free to be themselves.

4 The University will seek to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all our activities, at all levels, and within our activities, policies and decisions.

5 The University recognises that central to this policy is its responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students. This policy sets out the scope of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

6 The University is committed to:

- 6.1 equal opportunity for all its students irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, nationality, sex or sexual orientation class;
- 6.2 complying fully and transparently with all applicable legal requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010; and

6.3 taking active measures to investigate and eliminate discrimination.

7 The University conducts all of its activities accordingly, but recognises that the following are likely to be of particular significance:

7.1 the admission of students;

7.2 the recruitment and selection of staff;

7.3 the management and development of staff;

7.4 approaches to teaching, learning and assessment;

7.5 the provision of academic support, student support and administrative services;

7.6 the monitoring and evaluation of the student experience and student success;

7.7 the governance and management of staff, students and facilities.

8 The University further recognises that, because of its role in professional education, it has a special responsibility to assist professional bodies and other regulatory authorities to achieve their targets relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

## Scope

9 This policy is applicable to all University employees including external examiners, students, visiting staff, and contractors or consultants working on the premises or on behalf of the University.

## Responsibility for implementing this policy

10 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the quality assurance and maintenance of standards of academic provision and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board.

## **Expectation**

11 The University has in place monitoring and evaluation processes in respect of the arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

## **Key aims and principles**

12 The University:

- 12.1 ensures that its activities are, and remain, free from all forms of discrimination;
- 12.2 maintains an open, tolerant and inclusive community, which encourages mutual respect and promotes diversity;
- 12.3 enables staff and students to understand the importance of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and diversity;
- 12.4 prepares students to understand, work within and serve a diverse multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-racial community;
- 12.5 adopts appropriate equality standards for all aspects of its work and implements them through all its policies, processes and practices; and
- 12.6 makes robust use of quantitative and qualitative data to monitor and evaluate the success of this policy.

## **Procedural approach**

13 The University uses all means at its disposal to achieve these key aims and objectives. However, it recognises that the following are likely to be of greatest importance.

## **Recruitment of staff**

14 The University is committed to attracting employees who have the ability to meet the high standards of performance and delivery that will be expected of them. It is in the interests of both the organisation and the employee that employees are able to fulfil their potential whilst ensuring achievement of organisational objectives.

15 The University will give equal consideration to appropriately qualified applicants during the recruitment process and will not discriminate on any grounds.

16 Job descriptions and person specifications will use non-discriminatory language. Our criteria for selection will relate to the requirements of the job, relevant qualifications and relevant experience. The person specification is objective, ensuring that all of the criteria included are appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job in question.

17 Shortlisting and interviewing processes will be thorough, fair and free from discrimination. To support this, we will provide training for all employees involved in recruitment and selection to help them understand our processes and make them aware of relevant employment laws.

18 We welcome applications from people who are currently under represented at the University. If an applicant has a disability, we will make reasonable adjustments to our recruitment and selection process, and if successful in their application, to our workplace and working arrangements so the individual can work at the university.

19 The University will promote best practice in recruitment and selection. It will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow new ideas and approaches to be incorporated.

20 All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

### **Recruitment of students**

21 The University of Law recognises that all higher education providers have both a legal and moral duty to promote equality of opportunity and we are committed to ensuring we recruit students from a wide range of backgrounds. We understand that our success, and that of our students, depends on celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion.

22 We recruit all students on merit, without bias and by reference to their skills, ability, qualifications and potential. We will ensure that all decisions on recruitment, selection and admission are made fairly and without discrimination.

23 We are committed to providing opportunities for access to higher education to all and particularly students from under-represented groups. As such, this policy should be read in conjunction with the following University documents:

- 23.1 Access and Participation Plan;
- 23.2 Access and Participation Statement;
- 23.3 Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy;
- 23.4 Widening Participation and Diversity Strategy;
- 23.5 Disability Support and Inclusion Policy.

24 The University has a range of mechanisms for supporting students onto our programmes, including setting entry criteria for admission which take into account a range of traditional and non-traditional qualifications.

25 The University ensures, through active collaboration between programme and admissions teams, that students are able to submit applications for non-standard entry through consideration of professional or alternative qualifications, or significant relevant professional experience.

26 Through collaboration with programme teams, admissions staff and with endorsement through the Admissions Committee, the University has established agreed competency frameworks for consideration of students from non-traditional routes such as relevant professional experience. Agreed frameworks support students and staff to identify how a student may access entry onto a programme through demonstration of meeting the requisite level of skills and knowledge, and students are encouraged and supported in engaging with a non-standard entry route through transparent advice throughout the process.

### **Training and staff development**

27 The University is committed to ensuring that colleagues are aware of, and are actively implementing, what is required of them in order to comply with University policies and all relevant legislation.

28 We will provide staff with, and expect them to take part in, appropriate training to support our equality policies. This includes mandatory e-learning packages on Equality & Diversity and Unconscious Bias.

29 We do not discriminate when providing training and development that allows staff to carry out their jobs more effectively. This applies to full-time or part-time or on a permanent or fixed-term contract.

## **Learning, teaching and assessment**

30 The University ensures that all new programme proposals and modifications to existing programmes are designed to be accessible to students across all backgrounds and that students who wish to seek admission onto the University's programmes are not hindered to do so. As such, the University ensures that student accessibility is paramount to obtaining information and admission onto our programmes, from the point of enquiry and admissions, through to their status as an alumnus of the University.

31 In practice, this means that information regarding the University and its programmes is available in an accessible format which takes into account the needs and requirements of a diverse cohort of students.

32 Programmes are inclusively designed to enable students to access embedded and contextualised learning outcomes, however, the University in its scrutiny and approval of programmes ensures that due regard is taken to students who may need specific additional support or intervention strategies.

33 Programmes and co-curricular activities provide students with a framework which supports students to maintain responsibility for their own learning, development and resilience through a range of embedded and contextualised learning outcomes. These are designed to be achieved through a series of formats via formative and summative assessments.

34 Assessments are designed to support the learner in meeting the learning outcomes and reach their fullest potential. They are designed to take into account non-traditional, but effective, benchmarks for student to demonstrate that they have achieved module or programme outcomes and do not rely on an assessment instrument framework which comprises of one format of assessment throughout the programme. Students are able to access a range of assessment methods which are designed to be mindful of the varying and diverse needs of the student population, and which are reflective of current sector and professional practice.

35 The University ensures students with additional needs are supported through the inclusive design of its modules and assessments, and students are supported to seek reasonable adjustments to enable full access to the curriculum. As such, the University has an agreed set of policies and protocols which focus on student accessibility, student study skills support, and support to study requirements and arrangements. Students with identified Special Educational Needs (SEN), or additional learning needs are supported appropriately to ensure that they are able to achieve successful long-term career, learning, and personal development outcomes.

36 Students are supported by specialist staff to be able to access additional external support, such as funding through Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), where appropriate.

37 Students are supported and encouraged to participate in co-curricular opportunities, which enhance their overall student experience and add value to their personal and professional development. Students are supported to access all opportunities which support their development without barriers resulting from location or mode of study, their protected characteristics, or circumstantial restraints.

### **Student support**

38 The University of Law is committed to taking account of the diversity of all the communities it serves, advancing equality of opportunity for everyone.

39 We aim to foster an environment where everyone feels welcome, safe and supported throughout their studies and beyond, where our services are, as far as is reasonably possible, accessible to all, with students receiving specific and timely support according to their needs.

40 We will achieve this by:

40.1 actively promoting all our services (Employability, Disability and Inclusion, Wellbeing, Study Skills Support) at every stage of the student journey;

40.2 reacting promptly and effectively to student need and requests for help;

40.3 working collaboratively with internal and external partners and stakeholders;

40.4 ensuring all University campuses are fully accessible to all students and that any additional learning or physical needs of students are taken into account and accommodated to ensure full participation and engagement; and

40.5 supporting students who had previously agreed Education, Health and Care Plans, to ensure transition from previous study is well managed.

### **The Student Voice**

41 The University is committed to placing the student voice(s) at the centre of our decision making. Therefore, the student voice(s) is/are a key aspect of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and is provided, predominantly, by The University of Law Student Association through its representatives and officers. The University



recognises the value that a diverse student body brings to the student experience at the University.

42 Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is a key priority of the Student Association and of its members. The Student Association has identified four groups for which specific representation is necessary to ensure diversity of voice and equality of opportunity; these are LGBT+ students, students with disabilities, women students and BAME students. These groups are represented by a specific officer at Student Parliament and these officers also sit on various University committees to ensure those specific voices are heard at the University.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

43 The University uses the following mechanisms to monitor issues relating to equality and diversity:

44 The University's Widening Participation and Access Committee, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, is responsible for promoting equality of opportunity in connection with access to and participation in the University of Law programmes. The Committee has the specific role of articulating and systematically reviewing and enhancing provision to ensure that students from all backgrounds are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from University of Law programmes. It will have a particular focus on provision for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and groups under-represented in higher education

45 The University's Annual Monitoring Process, which requires the annual critical appraisal of the quality and delivery of a programme, includes the analysis of data relating to student enrolment, progression and achievement; student feedback; and complaints. Where issues (supported by quantitative and qualitative data) are identified in relation to student demographics or protected characteristics, appropriate actions will be set and monitored through the annual monitoring process.

46 In general, the University will use the following data to monitor success in achieving the key aims and maintaining the principles of this policy:

46.1 student recruitment;

46.2 student progression and achievement;

46.3 student and staff feedback;

46.4 student post and pre-qualification course employment; and

46.5 data produced as part of the University's Widening Participation Plan.

47 All data used as part of the monitoring process will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### **Responsibility for the provision**

48 Responsibility for giving effect to the Equality and Diversity Policy of the University is shared across all staff and functions, both individually and collectively, of the University.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of provision**

49 Formal responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of this policy lies with the Academic Board. This activity is supported by key data produced as part of programme annual monitoring.

### **Version history:**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amended by</b>	<b>Revision summary</b>	<b>Date</b>
V1.0	Head of Quality Assurance	First version of the policy which includes content from the previous 'Equality and Diversity Policy'. This current version now replaces the existing Equality and Diversity Policy.	August 2019
V1.1	Registry Officer	Change to coding convention	23/03/20
V1.2	Senior Quality Officer	Further naming convention clarifications	26/03/20