

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

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## Document Version Control

Document Version	Committee	Committee Action	Date
v3.0	SMLT	Recommended for approval	2 March 2016
	Academic Committee	Approved (by chair's action)	21 March 2016
		<b>Date in force</b>	<b>21 March 2016</b>
v4.0	SMLT	Recommended for approval	17 January 2018
	Board of Directors	Approved	25 January 2018
		<b>Date in force</b>	<b>25 January 2018</b>
v5.0	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Recommended for Approval	13 May 2019
	Board of Directors	Approved	31 July 2019
	Chair of the Board of Directors	Chair's action on an issue of presentation	3 September 2019
		<b>Date in force</b>	<b>3 September 2019</b>

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed annually by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Any amendments require the approval of our Board of Directors.

## 1. Introduction

We are committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive environment where all staff and students are equally valued and respected, and encouraged to thrive. We value the diversity within our academic community and the huge range of experience and perspective that this brings. The appreciation of diversity and the equitable treatment of all are among our core values, underpinning our success as a community of scholars.

We are committed to promoting and advancing equality, diversity (and an equal society) and inclusion as key features within all our activities, as we believe this to be ethically right and socially responsible. It is also crucial in the context of our Prevent duties since by treating all equally and making them feel included we are mitigating the risk of radicalisation<sup>1</sup>. Equality, diversity and inclusion are essential factors that contribute to the academic and economic strengths of our institution. We therefore strive to look beyond our legal obligations, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, in order to embed equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisational culture for the benefit of staff, students and applicants irrespective of whether or not they share any of the characteristics protected under the Act<sup>2</sup>. In this way we aim to create an equal society that:

- protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish;
- recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be;
- recognises, respects and values the differences between individuals whether these differences be visible or non-visible.

## 2. Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Our commitment to the concepts of equality, diversity and inclusion is reflected not only in our corporate values, but also within our objects, as set out in **Regulation 3(d)** of our Articles of Association as follows:

- to actively promote and apply equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the company, and to promote an inclusive teaching and learning environment

The above object is embedded within the Terms of Reference for all our key decision-making committees.<sup>3</sup>

Our approach demonstrates that equality considerations are at the heart of everyday activities. We are committed to promoting an equal, diverse and inclusive academic community, as we believe this to be ethically right and socially responsible. Equality, diversity and inclusion are essential tenets that contribute to the academic and economic strength of our institution. We believe that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual.

We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and students and enables them to attain their full potential to contribute fully, and to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of our institution. To this end, we acknowledge the following basic rights for all members and prospective members of our community:

- to be treated with respect and dignity;

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<sup>1</sup> Our Prevent duties focus on eliminating radicalisation on campus. Inclusion is crucial to minimising radicalisation.

<sup>2</sup> The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

<sup>3</sup> Our key decision-making committees include our Board of Directors, Senior Management and Leadership Team, Academic Committee, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, and Course Committees.

- to be treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices; and
- to receive reasonable support to attain their full potential.

No individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against. This includes, but not exclusively, on the basis of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious or political beliefs, disability, marital status, social background, family circumstance, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and age.

### 3. Responsibility

The rights set out within this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy carry with them responsibilities and we require all members of our community to recognise these rights and to act in accordance with them in all dealings with fellow members of the institution. The commitment of all members of our community is required to make the policy a success.

In addition, specific responsibilities are assigned to our Board of Directors, our Senior Management and Leadership Team, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and our Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

#### 3.1 Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors<sup>4</sup> has overall responsibility for ensuring that we operate within a framework of equality of opportunity. This is clearly articulated in our Articles of Association and Corporate and Academic Governance Framework (CAGF) with the latter listing the following particular Board responsibilities:

- Approving the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Receiving the minutes of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and details of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Staff Training Programme [for information]
- Receiving an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report, for approval, that shall be presented to the Board of Directors by the Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, such Annual Report to include details of our arrangements to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic
  - foster good relations between people who share and those who do not share a protected characteristic

#### 3.2 Senior Management and Leadership Team

Operational oversight for equality, diversity and inclusion (in terms of facilitating developments and communicating responsibilities to our staff and students) rests with our Senior Management and Leadership Team who are responsible for:

- Receiving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee minutes for consideration and action

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<sup>4</sup> All Directors on the Board are required under **Regulation 44** of our Articles of Association to “have a positive commitment to embrace and comply with the company’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.”

- Receiving reports from the Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for consideration and action
- Receiving the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for information

### 3.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

In order to ensure that we continue to operate with equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our activities, we have established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC), comprising staff and student representation. See **Appendix A** for details of its Terms of Reference. Designated members of the committee also provide staff and students with a confidential forum for them to raise any equality and diversity issues or concerns they might have. See Appendix B for details. In addition, we have made the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy one of the core compulsory documents that staff are required to read upon joining our organisation. The same is also true of our Dignity and Respect Policy. Equality, diversity and inclusion issues are also covered in the Student Charter which is circulated to all students at the start of their course.

It is our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) that is responsible for reviewing this policy and presenting any amendments to the Board of Directors for approval. The EDIC will, from time to time, supplement this policy with codes of practice or guidelines on behaviour (e.g. our Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes).

## 4. Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (who reports directly to the Managing Director and Academic Principal) is responsible for driving the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. This means taking responsibility for:

- Guiding the company's strategic direction in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion so as to ensure this is articulated within its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and reflected within all other policies and procedures.
- Actively promoting and delivering on ongoing enhancements to the culture of equality, diversity and inclusion which defines the institution's academic community.

In order to ensure the above is achieved, the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sits on all the key institutional committees<sup>5</sup> including its Research Ethics Committee.

## 5. Implementation and enforcement

We are committed to promoting a general culture of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout our staff and student community.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is enforceable by the institution, our staff and our students. Any complaint which alleges non-compliance with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner, in accordance with the appropriate complaints procedure.

Any breach of this Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be regarded as misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is available to our staff and students (and potential staff and students) both in hard copy and electronic copy. If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor at [disability@bil.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bil.ac.uk) or call +44(0) 207 078 8840.

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4 on page 3.

## 6. Discrimination

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a 'protected characteristic' or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. There are a number of different types of discrimination<sup>6</sup>.

**Direct Discrimination:** this means treating someone less favourably than someone else because of

- a protected characteristic they possess – this is ordinary direct discrimination; and/or
- a protected characteristic of someone they are associated with, such as a friend, family member or colleague – this is direct discrimination by association; and/or
- a protected characteristic they are thought to have, regardless of whether this perception by others is actually correct or not – this is direct discrimination by perception.

**Indirect Discrimination:** this is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to a group of employees/job applicants, but has (or will have) the effect of putting those who share a certain protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared to others without the characteristic in the group, and the employer is unable to justify it.

**Failing to make reasonable adjustments:** this means failing to remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people with a disability when it would have been reasonable to do so.

**Harassment:** this is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

**Victimisation:** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act 2010, e.g. made a complaint under the Act or supported someone who is doing so, such as appearing as a witness.

## 7. Application of the policy: Staff

### 7.1 Recruitment and selection

Detailed information on how we apply our commitment to equality and diversity to the recruitment and development of staff can be found in our Staff Recruitment and Development Policy. However, the key areas to note from the policy are as follows:

- Recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting our commitment to equality and diversity. Recruitment advertising will also appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations).
- Job Descriptions, Person Specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the position. Our Disability and Wellbeing Advisor will review Job Descriptions and Person Specifications before finalisation in order to identify and address any issues that might prevent or deter a person with a disability from applying for the job. Shortlisting, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable

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<sup>6</sup> The following definitions are provided by a guidance note issued by ACAS.

and will be supported by written comments. Members of all shortlisting and interview Panels will be required to read our Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes<sup>7</sup>.

- If an applicant with a disability meets the essential criteria for the job (as set out within the Person Specification), they will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities at an interview under our Guaranteed Interview Scheme.
- We will not deny an applicant the opportunity to better their life through employment on the grounds that the applicant has a criminal conviction. Therefore, in the interest of social justice and in order not to deter an applicant with a criminal conviction from making an application, we do not require the disclosure of criminal convictions. The only exemption from this is posts that may involve frequent working with students with a disability, specific learning difficulty and/or long-term health condition, to provide them with advice and support. For this category of post, if an offer of employment is made, this offer will be made conditional on providing an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.

The principles of dignity and respect at the heart of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy are embraced within our Dignity and Respect Policy. This, like the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, is one of the key company documents that all staff are required to read. It acknowledges a number of basic rights and responsibilities for all members and prospective members of our academic community including a right to be treated with respect and dignity, as well as a right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

Dignity and respect is a theme revisited in our Ethics Policy. The latter states very simply that there is a requirement to “treat all people with dignity and respect and ensure that nobody is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, or because of their social or economic background, or for any other reason.” In addition, articulated within the policy is a requirement for our academic community to work to “promote and achieve a culture free of discrimination”.

## 7.2 Support mechanisms

The HR Manager and the Disability and Wellbeing Advisor are available to provide staff with any support that they might need if the necessary adjustments are deemed reasonable. Any requests for support will be treated in confidence.

For confidential information and advice on support options, staff can book an appointment with the Disability Wellbeing Advisor by emailing [disability@bil.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bil.ac.uk).

Information on benefits available to those with parental or dependant duties can be found in our Leave Policy (available from HR Online<sup>8</sup>).

Staff members also have access to a 24-hour confidential support service via the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides a range of services including telephone counselling, personal legal advice and financial information, and health advice. The service can be accessed via Perkbox.

<https://pages.perkbox.com>

## 7.3 Grading and promotion

All grading and promotions criteria and procedures will be free from prejudice and will be applied equitably and consistently.

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<sup>7</sup> Members of Complaints Panels, Disciplinary Panels etc will also be required to read the Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes in the interest of equitable treatment.

<sup>8</sup> HR Online is Bloomsbury Institute’s internal Human Resources website, which can be accessed, under a personal username and password, at [https://bil.breathehr.com/employees/sign\\_in](https://bil.breathehr.com/employees/sign_in).



## **7.4 Staff development**

All staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities. A Staff Induction Checklist is followed for each new appointee to ensure that all staff receive the information they need to support them in their respective roles and career development. In addition, each full-time permanent staff member has an annual allowance of £500 to cover continuing professional development needs. A pro-rata allowance is available for part-time staff. Sessional lecturers also receive an allowance based on the number of their teaching hours. An additional research allowance is payable to research-active staff.

All staff members are required to complete ACAS online training on Equality and Diversity, and Bullying and Harassment within their first three months of employment with Bloomsbury Institute, as well as an eQuality Learning online Disability Awareness training course.

## **7.5 Performance management**

Probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

## **7.6 Discipline and grievance**

Staff who make a complaint of discrimination have the right to do so without fear of victimisation and we will make every effort to ensure victimisation does not occur.

Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff.

Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

# **8. Application of the policy: Students**

## **8.1 Recruitment, selection and admission**

We welcome applications from people with disabilities and those with long-term medical conditions and specific learning difficulties, and are committed as far as possible to providing them with the support they need to realise their potential and succeed. This commitment is articulated in detail within our Disability Policy.

We will not deny an applicant the opportunity to better their life through education on the grounds that the applicant has a criminal conviction. Consequently, in the interest of social justice and in order not to deter an applicant with a criminal conviction from making an application, we do not require the disclosure of criminal convictions. The decision about whether or not to make an applicant an offer of a place on one of our courses will therefore not be influenced by an applicant's criminal convictions.

All staff involved in the recruitment, selection and admission of students will receive appropriate training. This includes, for example, the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Unconscious Bias training, and ACAS training on Equality and Diversity.

## **8.2 Support mechanisms**

The Disability and Wellbeing Advisor is available to provide students with any reasonable support that they might need. Detailed information on the reasonable adjustments a student could expect us to provide can be found in our Disability Policy which is available from our online Quality and Enhancement Manual<sup>9</sup>. Alternatively, students can book an appointment with the Disability Wellbeing Advisor by emailing [disability@bil.ac.uk](mailto:disability@bil.ac.uk). Any requests for support will be treated in strict confidence.

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.bil.ac.uk/quality-enhancement-manual/the-uk-quality-code-for-higher-education/policies/>

### **8.3 Assessment**

There will be clear, consistent and transparent criteria for student assessments and all assessments will take place on an equal opportunities basis.

### **8.4 Career planning and engagement**

All students will have access to career planning support and will be encouraged to participate fully in the academic, cultural and social life of the institution.

### **8.5 Discipline and student complaints**

Students who make a complaint of discrimination have the right to do so without fear of victimisation and we will make every effort to ensure victimisation does not occur.

Discipline and student complaints procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all students.

Allegations of harassment or discrimination will be dealt with under our Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

## **9. Related regulations, policies and procedures**

- Admissions Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Disability Policy
- Email Acceptable Use Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Staff Disciplinary and Performance Procedures
- Staff Grievance Procedures
- Staff Recruitment and Development Policy
- Student Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Unconscious Bias Guidance Notes

## **10. Review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed annually by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Any amendments require the approval of our Board of Directors.

## Appendix A: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

In accordance with **Regulation 15(e)** of the Articles, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is established that shall be responsible for, *inter alia*, determining the company's strategic direction in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, and ensuring this is articulated within the company's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and reflected within all other policies and procedures.

### ***Terms of Reference [Delegated by the directors]***

Subject to the schedule of matters reserved to the Board of Directors (see **Section 2.2.14** above), the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the principles set out within the Committee of University Chairs 'HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code' and the Office for Students Regulatory Framework, Notices and Advice, and for:

- Determining the company's strategic direction in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, and ensuring this is articulated within its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and reflected within all other policies and procedures
- Actively promoting, applying, and ensuring compliance with the company's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and ensuring the Policy is reviewed annually
- Developing, approving, promoting and overseeing the implementation of an Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan that shall include:
  - A programme of staff training
  - A programme of awareness raising events for staff and students
  - A programme of events to celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion
  - An inclusive teaching and learning environment
- Promoting and overseeing the implementation of our current Access and Participation Plan
- Developing and recommending approval to the Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT) of future Access and Participation Plans
- Developing and recommending approval to the Board of Directors of an Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report, and disseminating the Report across the institution
- Approving the following policies and procedures, as well as any new policies and procedures with a specific equality, diversity and inclusion focus:
  - Dignity and Respect Policy
  - Disability Policy
  - Inclusive Learning Environment
  - Support for Pregnant Students
  - Unconscious Bias
- Receiving reports that analyse diversity data to highlight any identifiable inequalities to inform the development and enhancement of our Inclusive Learning Environment and other strategies, policies, procedures and practices, to include reports relating to:

- Staff profiles
- Student application profiles
- Enrolled student profiles
- Student performance and achievement data
- Promoting and monitoring the use and effectiveness of the guaranteed interview scheme for persons applying for a post
- Ensuring any new legislation, regulations or best practice is reported internally and addressed at an institution level

### ***Membership***

- Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Chair)
- Quality Executive (secretary)
- One executive director
- Head of Academic Standards (or nominee)
- Deputy Academic Principal
- Director of the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (or nominee)
- Disability and Wellbeing Advisor(s)
- Head of Learning Technology (or nominee)
- One academic who acts as the Academic EDI Lead
- Two additional academics
- Head of Brand
- Member of staff from the Admissions Team
- One other member of staff from the Registry
- Two members of staff from any other Division/Department that is not otherwise represented on the Committee
- Guild Manager
- President of the Student Guild
- A minimum of three and a maximum of six students, who will volunteer to participate as a member of the Committee because of their interest in equality, diversity and inclusion issues

### ***Quorum***

No business other than the appointment of a Chair shall be transacted at any meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee if the persons attending it do not constitute a quorum. Six members must be present to constitute a quorum.

If such a quorum is not present within fifteen minutes from the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned.

## Appendix B: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee contact details

If you would like to raise any issues or concerns you might have regarding equality, diversity and inclusion at Bloomsbury Institute, please feel free to contact one of the following in confidence:

Name	Role	Email address
Maria Jackson	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	maria.jackson@bil.ac.uk
Nadia Michail	Disability and Wellbeing Advisor	nadia.michail@bil.ac.uk
Daniel Watts	IT Support	daniel.watts@bil.ac.uk
Shola Fiberesima	Guild Manager	guild.manager@bil.ac.uk