

Equality and Diversity

Equality Law

The Equality Act 2010 unifies and supersedes most previous legislation affecting equality and discrimination and establishes a focused approach to equality law. It includes regulations for employment, the provision of services and education, and accessibility of buildings, websites and transport. Fundamentally, it defines several 'protected characteristics', and broadly extends the same rights and protections to members of all the protected groups.

Other laws affecting equality in employment or study include: Equal Pay Act 1970; Protection from Harassment Act 1997; Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; Part-time Workers Regulations 2000; and Fixed Term Employees Regulation 2002.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act defines the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (*transgender/transsexual*)
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (*including ethnicity, nationality and cultural identity*)
- Religion and belief (*including non- or absence-of-belief*)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Definitions

The Equality Act defines the following actions as unlawful in relation to the protected characteristics of an individual or someone associated with that individual.

Direct discrimination is the unfavourable treatment of someone because of one or more protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination occurs when someone applies criteria or policy that results in unfavourable treatment because of one or more protected characteristic, whether or not the intention was to discriminate.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, humiliating or offensive environment relating to one or more protected characteristic.

Victimisation is unfavourable treatment of someone because they have made, or are suspected of making, a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Positive action means taking steps to proactively support and encourage people to engage with and participate in activities where they are underrepresented.

Public Sector Equality Duty

As an organisation that receives public funding, the University is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The general Public Sector duty requires the University to show due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- promote equality of opportunity for under-represented groups;
- foster good relations between members of different groups.

There is also a specific duty for higher education institutions, requiring us to:

- have specific and measurable equality objectives, reviewed annually;
- demonstrate due regard to the impact of policies, procedures and practices on equality;
- regularly publish an evaluation of equality performance, including equality information.

Equality Objectives (2013/14)

The following objectives were adopted by Council in 2013/14 and continue in 2014/15:

1. Explore further and identify action to be taken on addressing the difference in experience and outcomes for minority ethnic students, linking to the Widening Participation project.
2. Progressing Athena SWAN across the university and planning to achieve a Silver university award in 2015.
3. Continuing work on overcoming the 'glass ceiling' for women, supporting the promotions agenda, establishing training and development activities for women.
4. Internationalisation and Good Campus Relationships.
5. Developing Leadership capacity to promote wellbeing and healthy working environments.
6. Develop and embed equality governance structures.

Unconscious Bias – summary of literature

Moss-Racusin et al (2012)	Male and female staff in a science faculty rated male applicants for a laboratory manager role as more competent than equally qualified female candidates. They also chose a higher starting salary for male candidates.
Wood et al (2009)	Applicants with typically white British names were more likely to be shortlisted for jobs than those with names associated with minority ethnic backgrounds.
Dasgupta and Asgari (2004)	Found that female participants' gender biases were significantly affected when they were exposed to women in non-stereotypical contexts
Abersson (2004)	Participants who reported having close friends within the target underrepresented group exhibited less implicit bias towards that group

Project Implicit, based at Harvard University, has produced a procedure that tests for implicit bias, called the Implicit Association Test. Anyone can try the test at:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Abersson, CLS (2004) 'Implicit bias and contact: the role of interethnic friendships'. *Journal of Social Psychology* 144(3): 335–347.

Dasgupta, N & Asgari, S (2004) 'Seeing is believing: exposure to counter-stereotypic women leaders and its effect on the malleability of automatic gender stereotyping.' *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 40(5): 642–658.

Moss-Racusin, CA, Dovidio, JF, Brescoll, VL, Graham, M & Handelsman, J (2012) 'Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students'. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences for the United States of America* 109(41): 16474–16479.

Wood, M, Hales, J, Purdon, S, Sejersen, T & Hayllar, O (2009) *A test for racial discrimination in recruitment practice in British cities: research report no 607*. Department for Work and Pensions, London.