



## Equal Opportunities and Equity Policy

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the policy is to outline the responsibility of all elected officers, staff, members, and volunteers of the Students Union to actively work towards providing an inclusive, accessible and equitable environment, free from harassment and unlawful discrimination. It is expected that all stakeholders will abide by and uphold this policy to actively contribute to making the Students' Union a safe and welcoming place for all.
- 1.2 As an organisation based on fair democratic representation and inclusive participation, the Students' Union believes fundamentally in the principles of equal opportunities and equity and the importance of being a truly representative and participative Students' Union. The Students' Union believes all students have the right to be involved with all aspects of Students' Union and University life. The Students' Union not only prides itself on promoting equal opportunities and equity, but also pledges to campaign against discrimination both on campus and in the wider community.

### 2 Defining Discrimination

2.1 The Students' Union defines discrimination as unfair conduct regarding the following:

- Age
- Carer Responsibility
- Disability
- Social Class
- Marital or Civil Partnership
- Gender Identity
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race, Religion or Belief
- Sexuality
- Trade Union Activity
- Criminal Background
- Weight
- Level or mode of study (Year and/or/PT/FT)
- Or any other category where discrimination cannot be reasonably justified.

2.2 It should be noted that age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity are now to be known as 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

### 2.3 The Students' Union defines 'Equal Opportunities' as:

- the right to be treated without discrimination, especially on the grounds of one's sex, race, or age. Ensuring that everyone is on a 'level playing field'.

### 2.4 The Students' Union defines 'Equity' as:

- considering an individual's background and circumstances, and to make every attempt to offer them reasonable adjustments to promote their success.

## 3 Coverage

### 3.1 The policy covers:

- All staff, including student staff;
- All elected representatives;
- All volunteers working within Students' Union capacity;
- All members of York St. John Students Union;
- All visitors, contractors, business, external organisations, and University Staff using the Students' Union or working on its behalf.

## 4 Application

4.1 The Students' Union constantly considers the needs of its members. The Students' Union will adapt and change, reasonably adjusting the way in which events and services are provided, ensuring accessibility for all.

4.2 The Students' Union recognises the role of language in the shaping and definition of attitudes and behaviour. As such, the Students' Union endorses the use of non-discriminatory language in all Students' Union communications and in everyday use where appropriate. This includes avoiding the use of unexplained jargon and acronyms.

4.3 The Students' Union will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them to take into account changes in law.

4.4 The Students' Union will monitor the diversity profile of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability, in encouraging equality and diversity.

4.5 The Students' Union commits to make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff, officers, and volunteers, who will be encouraged to develop their full potential to allow their talents and resources to be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

4.6 To minimise the risk of discrimination, the Students' Union will work closely with the University to provide Equality and Diversity training to both Students' Union staff, and student groups associated with the Students' Union.

- 4.7 The Students' Union commits to keeping up to date with and adopting new approaches to ensure that the organisation is equal and equitable for all.

## **5 Zero Tolerance – Harassment**

- 5.1 Harassment is an unacceptable form of behaviour. The Students' Union is committed to protecting its members and staff from any form of harassment which might inhibit them from pursuing their work or studies, or from making proper use of the Students' Union facilities.
- 5.2 In 2019, the Students' Union introduced a Zero Tolerance Policy. The aim of the policy is to protect all members, staff, officers, and volunteers from discrimination. All breaches of the Zero Tolerance Policy or the Equal Opportunities and Equity Policy will be investigated. Details of the Zero Tolerance Policy, including full reporting procedures can be found here: [Zero Tolerance Policy](#).