University of Oxford Equality Policy

Approved by Council on 8 July 2013

The following University of Oxford Equality Policy supersedes the Integrated Equality Policy (Supplement (1) to Gazette No 4893, 14 October 2009).

Equality Policy

The University of Oxford is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.

The University embraces diversity amongst its members and seeks to achieve equity in the experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through the implementation of transparent policies, practices and procedures and the provision of effective support.

The University recognises that equality should be embedded in all its activities and will seek to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice. The University is committed to a programme of action to support its equality policy, to monitoring its effectiveness and to publishing information on progress towards its equality aims.

In exercising its policies, practices, procedures and other functions, the University will:

- encourage applications for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low;
- take steps to meet the particular needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others;
- in respect of students, seek to attract applicants of the highest quality and potential, regardless of background. Decisions on the admission of students will be based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study; and
- in respect of staff, ensure that entry into employment and progression within employment are determined solely by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant salary scale; and support career development and progression to ensure diverse representation and participation at all levels.

The University expects all members of the university community to treat each other with respect, courtesy and consideration and does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. It has a Policy on Harassment and Bullying, supported by a Harassment advisory Service.

Application of the Equality Policy

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including students and staff, applicants, associate members and visitors.

All members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this policy and to treat colleagues with respect at all times.

All visitors to the University, including contractors, and people operating on behalf of the University, whether on University premises or elsewhere, have a responsibility to behave in accordance with the principles of this policy.

As appropriate within the collegiate University, individuals may additionally be required to observe the equality policies adopted by individual colleges.

The University’s commitment

The University will:

- seek to embed equality in all its activities;
- have regard to its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010;
- publicise this policy, and any relevant codes of practice and guidance;
- use an evidence-based approach to inform its activities to increase equality and to measure the impact of any changes;
- develop equality objectives and an action plan, and report on progress toward attaining those objectives;
- monitor and publish data on its staff, students and applicants; and
- regularly review this policy and all associated codes of practice and guidance.

1 The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status (in employment), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

2 at: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure
Responsibilities

COUNCIL AND ITS MAJOR COMMITTEES

Council and its major committees will provide mechanisms through which the University’s strategic objectives for equality and diversity can be determined.

PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (PERSONNEL AND EQUALITY)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Personnel and Equality) will provide leadership on equality and diversity and oversee the development of equality policy frameworks and their application in the University, working as appropriate with relevant colleagues and bodies, including those committees that have a specific remit for equality issues.

THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PANEL

The Equality and Diversity Panel reports to the Personnel and Education Committees and will advise on the development of strategy for work on equality and diversity, covering staff and students and embracing all protected groups.

THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UNIT

The Equality and Diversity Unit will work with University bodies, academic divisions and departments to ensure that the University’s pursuit of excellence goes hand in hand with freedom from discrimination and equality of opportunity. In particular it will:

• consider existing and emerging equality legislation with a view to identifying relevant issues to be translated into University policies;
• provide information and guidance to all University bodies to enable them to discharge their responsibilities;
• support senior members of the University in showing leadership on equality and diversity issues;
• facilitate central consultation with specific groups of staff and students;
• provide monitoring of key strategic issues and draft publications for approval by the relevant bodies as appropriate; and
• provide advice on the employment of disabled staff1.

DIVISIONS, DEPARTMENTS AND FACULTIES

Heads of division, departments and chairs of faculty boards are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and for supporting the delivery of the University’s strategic objectives for equality and diversity in that division, department or faculty.

MANAGERS

All managers are responsible for ensuring that equality is embedded in the work of their team.

ALL ACADEMIC STAFF

All academic staff should promote an inclusive research and learning environment.

ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS

All staff and students have a responsibility to observe this policy.

Complaints

The University regards any breach of this policy by any member of the community as a serious matter to be dealt with through its agreed procedures.

The procedures for dealing with concerns about breaches of the policy are set out below.

STUDENTS

a) Applicants

For feedback on admissions decisions, see:

Undergraduate admissions (www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate_courses/why_oxford/codes_and_procedures/feedback.html)

Postgraduate admissions (www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/postgraduate_courses/apply/legal_information/university_policies.html).

b) Current students

Allegations of harassment and bullying are covered by the University Policy on Harassment and Bullying. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure.

Other complaints should be handled under the relevant grievance procedure:

Grievance procedure for academic-related staff. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/handbook_acrel/section8.

Grievance procedure for University support staff. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/handbook_support/section8.

Review

Council, on the advice of the Personnel and Education Committees, will review this policy on a three-year cycle. The first review will take place in Hilary term 2016.

STAFF

a) Applicants

Applicants for employment should refer any concerns in writing to the chair of the selection panel in the first instance.

b) Current staff

Allegations of harassment and bullying are covered by the University Policy on Harassment and Bullying. See: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/harassmentadvice/policyandprocedure.

Other complaints should be addressed to the Proctors: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/info/pam/section13.

1Advice and support for disabled students is provided by the Disability Advisory Service. See: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das.