

# UNIVERSITY OF CHANGE FOR GOOD WESTMINSTER

## Single Equality Policy Statement

The University of Westminster is committed to supporting diversity and equal opportunities in our dealings with job applicants, students, colleagues and the public. We are fully committed to creating a stimulating and supportive learning and working environment which is supportive and fair, based on mutual respect and trust, and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

This will allow colleagues and students to reach their full potential, regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origins, family circumstances, nationality, political beliefs and affiliations, socio-economic background, or other irrelevant distinction. We aim to encourage a working and learning environment which is supportive and fair and in which harassment and discrimination are neither tolerated nor acceptable.

We will continue to respect and value diversity within our communities of colleagues and students, to promote equality of opportunity, and to challenge and strive to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The University acknowledges the special role of higher education in promoting equality of opportunity and furthering social inclusion. We recognise that ensuring equality of opportunity is essential for the high-quality performance and long-term success of the University. All colleagues and students have rights and responsibilities in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity, as acknowledged by this policy.

All colleagues and students are required to become familiar with and observe the spirit and letter of the University's equality and diversity related policies.

It should be noted that any breaches of the legislation on equal opportunities or of the University's equality and diversity policies may lead to disciplinary action.

Where bullying or harassment of any form has taken place, colleagues and students are encouraged to advise an appropriate colleague as soon as possible. For further information please refer to the Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which explains the procedure should that policy be breached in any way. This and the Single Equality Policy are available on our website:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/vision-mission-and-values/corporate-social-responsibility/equality-and-diversity>

## Building Good Relations <sup>2</sup>

A plural community can only function as an educative community when all of its members feel affirmed and respected as well as challenged and questioned. The University's Single Equality Policy therefore advocates the following statement as guidelines to build confidence in a diverse community.

As members of the University community we should show each other respect and courtesy. In our dealings with other people, this means exercising goodwill and:

- Respecting other people's freedom within the law to express themselves and their convictions
- Finding ways to live our lives with integrity and within the framework of the University's Single Equality Policy, and allowing others to do so too

- Learning to understand what others value, and letting them express this in their own terms
- Respecting the convictions of others about the way in which they live (including food, dress and social etiquette)
- Recognising that all of us at times fall short of the ideals of our own traditions, and never comparing our own ideals with other people's practices
- Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict
- Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships

When we talk to each other about our convictions and values, we need to do so with sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness. This means:

- Recognising that listening as well as speaking is necessary for genuine conversation
- Being honest about our beliefs and allegiances
- Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people's beliefs and practices
- Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations, not only of our own but of those of others whenever we come across them
- Being straightforward about our intentions

We have a great deal to learn from one another, which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.

#### **For Note**

#### **Publishing**

The policy will be published on the University's public website (<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/vision-mission-and-values/corporate-social-responsibility/equality-and-diversity>); and will be available for download in a range of formats e.g. Word, PDF, plain text, alternative formats such as large print or Braille on request.

A variety of methods will be used to publicise the policy internally through colleague and students channels and will be sent to all senior colleagues and key University and College committees for dissemination.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

The University will take all necessary steps to effectively implement the SEP and improve it through regular monitoring, consultation and review. Continuous development of plans supports the equality and diversity agenda by reporting on progress to date, and providing an overarching action plan which addresses all equality strands. All reports prepared as a result of the SEPP and its implementation will be presented to the Human Resources Committee and the University Executive Board.

*2 Adapted from the University of Westminster Religion and Belief Policy, which drew upon:*

*<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications/101-mission-dialogue-and-inter-religious-encounter/file>*