

Student EDI Policy

May 2018

1.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

- 1.1 Solent Students' Union has a vision to ensure that every student has an excellent experience at Solent University. One of our five values is to be Inclusive, ensuring our members feel valued and that they belong; that we strive to be a welcoming diverse organisation. We recognise that our members have differences and to achieve our vision we have a responsibility to create an environment that is free from discrimination and is accessible for all our students.
- 1.2 We are committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion across all our student services and offer training to our student groups to equip our members to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students, staff and visitors. The practical implications of this commitment are outlined in this document.
- 1.3 This policy exists to;
- Ensure that Solent Students' Union is proactive in ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion for all our members, helping us to make full use of the talents, knowledge and experience of all our students
 - Ensure that students understand how they are responsible for ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion through their involvement with Solent Students' Union
 - Ensure that students understand sanctions that may be put in place to deal with those who fail to comply with equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with our Student Groups Code of Conduct
 - Commit Solent Students' Union to continual improvement in all areas of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 1.4 If you would like the information provided within this policy in a different format, or require more information on any sections of this policy, please contact the Students' Union President. Visit the Sabbatical Office, ground floor of the Students' Union, email su.president@solent.ac.uk or telephone 023 8201 3553.

2.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Definitions

- 2.1 **Equality:** Every student has equal rights and every student has a fair chance. Equality recognises that different people have starting points and that steps may need to be taken to ensure a 'level playing field'.
- 2.2 **Diversity:** Diversity means difference. Every student is different so diversity includes every student. Diversity encompasses respect and valuing difference, recognising that every student is unique and has individual differences.
- 2.3 **Inclusion:** Where every student feels welcome and respected.

3.0 Policy Implementation

- 3.1 This policy applies to all members of Solent Students' Union. All members are responsible for ensuring that their individual actions and areas of responsibility comply with this policy and the Student Groups Code of Practice.

- 3.2 Serious breaches of this policy may be treated as disciplinary issues through the Student Groups Disciplinary process. This policy is available on the Students' Union website: <https://www.solentsu.co.uk/about/publications/>.

4.0 Student EDI Training and Student Feedback

- 4.1 Solent Students' Union will ensure that all student volunteers will receive training in equality, diversity and inclusion. Student volunteers include; elected Student Officers, society committee members, student trustees and general volunteers.

5.0 Student Responsibilities

- 5.1 All individuals are responsible for their own actions and for ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion across all activities they are involved in.
- 5.2 All individuals and groups will ensure that:
- no individual is unfairly excluded from student group or society activities,
 - all groups and society activity are accessible for all individuals,
 - the views of all individuals are listened to and valued,
 - every society promotes a welcoming and inclusive environment which is open to all members. This will include ensuring members who have difficulty accessing events, facilities or resources are able to do so through other means.
 - all communications, marketing or publicity materials produced by individuals or groups should avoid discriminatory stereotyping, and avoid all discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Students' Union Communications department can provide advice and support to groups if required.
 - reasonable adjustments are attempted by all groups and societies to their events or activities to enable individuals who may have difficulty getting involved. This might mean changing the way things are done such as changing meeting dates or venues, or requesting software to support disabled students.
 - all individuals act if something is not right, by getting support or by asking for training from the Students' Union.
- 5.3 All individuals and groups will act against:
- the objectification of any individual or group and 'lad culture' (see glossary in section 8),
 - hate groups, hate speech, hate incidents and hate crime,
 - mental health stigma,
 - exclusion of student groups,
 - all forms of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- 5.4 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, discrimination could be direct, indirect, based on perception or based on association. Definitions and examples of discrimination, harassment and victimisation are below:
- Direct Discrimination** includes actions that directly affect individuals and put them at a clear disadvantage to others. This might include a student group refusing membership, access to facilities or involvement in events to a student because of a their age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion and belief (including lack of belief) or pregnancy. This list is the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

Discrimination based on association includes actions that put individuals at a disadvantage to others because they are associated to others who have one or more of the nine protected characteristics. This might include a student being mistreated because a friend or family member has undergone gender reassignment.

Discrimination based on perception includes actions that put individuals at a disadvantage because of the way they are perceived. This may include a student being refused access to an event or activity because an assumption is made that they are a particular gender, whether they are that gender or not.

Indirect discrimination includes actions that appear acceptable or neutral, but might disadvantage students with protected characteristics. This could be only offering an event on a Friday which could discriminate against observant Muslim students.

Harassment includes unwanted actions or contact which create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, or that violates another person's dignity. This might include making jokes or banter about another student in a way that makes that student, or other students, uncomfortable. It may include hate speech, verbal or written (including online remarks), demeaning images cyber bullying or unwanted sexual advances or demands.

Victimisation includes actions where one person treats another less favourably because they have carried out a protected act, for example they have raised a concern in line with the Equality Act or have helped someone else to do so. This might include behaving hostile to a student who has raised a complaint or concern about sexist behaviour to the Students' Union.

6.0 How to raise a concern

- 6.1 All members are responsible for reporting issues or concerns with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion to the Students' Union so appropriate action can be taken. This may be things that have been heard, seen (either in person or online) or experienced.
- 6.2 Concerns or complaints can be regarding any form of discrimination that is direct, indirect, based on perception or based on association, or any form of harassment or victimisation. For a list of examples, see section 9.
- 6.3 Concerns should be raised with the Vice President Welfare & Community, or with another member of the Sabbatical Officer team.
- 6.4 If you want to make a direct complaint to the Students' Union this can be done through the Student Complaint Procedure. This is available online at <https://www.solentsu.co.uk/about/publications/>. An explanation of our complaints procedure and how to use it can be found at the end of this document.
- 6.5 If you want to speak confidentially to a member of staff regarding any issue you can access the Students' Union Advice Service by emailing su.advice@solent.ac.uk.

7.0 Further Information

- 7.1 For further information about the contents of this policy please contact the Vice President of Welfare & Community or another member of the Sabbatical Team. Visit the first floor of the Students' Union, email su.welfare@solent.ac.uk or telephone 023 8201 6424. Contact details for other officers or staff members are available online at <http://www.solentsu.co.uk/about/contactus>.
- 7.2 Solent Students' Union is an organisation that strives for improvement. If you have any suggestions as to how this document could be improved, please contact a member of staff.

8.0 Glossary of Terms

- 8.1 This section gives a glossary of terms for wording used within this policy.

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| Lad Culture | <p>"Lad Culture" is a term used by the National Union of Students (NUS) to refer to sexist and harassing activities that are being identified on University campuses.</p> <p>The NUS have defined 'lad culture' within their <i>That's What She Said</i> report as a group or pack mentality residing in activities such as sport and heavy alcohol consumption, and banter which is often sexist, misogynist and homophobic.</p> |
| Hate Speech | <p>"Hate Speech" refers to expressions of hatred towards an individual or group using any means of writing speech or other form of communication. This includes (but it not limited to), verbal comments, written comments, comments online in blogs, text messages, websites, social media or apps. It can also include gestures of body language.</p> |
| Hate Crime | <p>"Hate Crime" refers to any crime that targets an individual or group because of prejudice or hostility towards that person because of a disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity. Hate crime can be committed against a person (i.e. violence, harassment or bullying including offensive writing, emails, social media posts) or against a person's property (i.e. criminal damage, graffiti, etc.). Hate crime is illegal in the UK. Anyone can be a victim of a hate crime, you do not have to be a member of the 'group' the hate crime is targeted at.</p> |
| Hate Groups | <p>A "hate group" means an organised group or movement that advocates or practices hatred, hostility or violence towards individuals or groups.</p> |
| Objectification | <p>This means treating individuals as if they have no opinion, feeling or rights of their own. The Oxford English dictionary defines objectifications as degrading an individual to the status of a mere object.</p> |
| Stigma | <p>"Stigma" is the term used to explain assumptions that are made about individuals who are members of certain groups. It is often used in relation to assumptions about how mental health problems will affect a person's behaviour. Stigma (assumptions) make it more likely that a person will be singled out, labelled as different, dangerous or strange, which would make them a victim of discrimination.</p> |

9.0 Liberation Definition

- 9.1 This section defines the term 'Liberation Group'.
- 9.2 Solent Students' Union defines a liberation group as any group of students seeking equal status or just treatment for any group believed to be discriminated against that fits within the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

- 9.3 Any student group that fits the description above but is not included as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 is advised to get in touch with the Students' Union.

Appendix A: Examples of complaints or concerns

If you are unsure what might be considered a complaint or concern, a list of examples has been put together. A complaint or concern may include, but is not limited to:

- Conversations or comments that make you feel uncomfortable, including language used or the topics of conversations. This would include broadcast conversations or comments through Student Media;
- Any form of unwanted attention, including touching, emailing, contact on social media or in person. This can also include people constantly asking you if you are alright if you have asked them not to, as this could be a form of harassment if you are finding it upsetting;
- Any damage to your property from another person, this can include damage to property of other people that are aware of and would like to raise a concern about;
- Any comments about you or another person's age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion and belief (including lack of belief) or pregnancy (these are the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act);
- Opportunities that you are denied access to, for example not being able to go on a group activity or trip because of your religious beliefs or disability, not being able to attend an event because of poor accessibility or feeling like your requests to make the opportunity more accessible to you have not been listened to or ignored;
- Any occasion where you have asked for information or materials to be available to you in a different format (i.e. larger print or another colour scheme) and it has been refused or ignored without explanation;
- Any occasion where you have been put at a disadvantage because of your age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion and belief (including lack of belief) or pregnancy
- Any behaviour from another person or group that make you feel hurt, confused or frightened,