



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

2025-2026



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Contents

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY	3
STANDARDS/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	8
EQUALITY STATEMENT	9
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING	10
APPROVAL PROCESS	11

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

1.0 The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 providing a modern, single legal framework with clear law to better tackle disadvantage and discrimination.

What is the Equality Act?

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It provides Britain with a discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

1.2 The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

1.3 Under the Equality Act (2010) people are protected from discrimination on these grounds:

- ethnicity;
- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- disability;
- religion and belief;
- age;
- sexual orientation;
- pregnancy and maternity; and
- marriage and civil partnerships.

1.4 The School's goal is to ensure that the commitments documented in this policy are embedded in day-to-day working practices with all staff, students and partners.

1.5 It is also acknowledged that categories of difference are not always fixed but can be fluid. Individual rights to self-identification will be recognised, and it is accepted that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.

Scope

1.6 This policy applies to all staff and students and to all stages within the employment or learning journey. It also applies to subcontractors and visitors to the School, in addition to work placements.

Definitions

1.7 **Equality of opportunity** is about ensuring everybody has an equal chance to take up opportunities and also to make full use of the opportunities on offer and to fulfil their potential. It is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

1.8 **Diversity** is about celebrating and valuing how different we all are. This is strongly linked with promoting human rights and freedoms, based on principles such as dignity and respect. Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce. Diversity is something that applies to everyone and should be part of everything we do. It is an important part of our work and not just a side issue. It is important to recognise that none of us fit into separate 'packages' which can be neatly labelled or discriminated against.

Policy

1.9 The School values and celebrates the diversity of all its staff and students. We are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity.

1.10 We aim to create a culture of diversity and inclusion within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

1.11 It is the School's policy to select and treat all staff and students on the basis of their merits only, irrespective of any of the protected characteristics. In addition, the School is committed to providing a learning, working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its members are respected. In which people's differences are embraced and celebrated, which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment and bullying and which ensures equal access to opportunities to enable students to fully participate in the learning process and both staff and students are enabled to develop to their full potential.

1.12 In order to ensure that the School's Equality and Diversity Policy is effectively understood and implemented both staff and students will be introduced to the policy and the School's commitment as part of their induction process.

- 1.13 Training will be provided, as appropriate, to ensure that all staff and students are equipped with the skills to challenge inequality and discrimination in their work/study environment.
- 1.14 As an employer, the School is committed to equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. The School will, therefore, apply the Equality and Diversity Policy to all areas of employment including:
- recruitment and selection of staff;
 - promotion opportunities;
 - evaluation of jobs and grading;
 - training and development opportunities;
 - research and scholarly activity opportunities;
 - disciplinary and grievance procedures;
 - redeployment;
 - redundancy; and
 - dismissals.
- 1.15 The School will apply the Equality and Diversity Policy to all areas relating to its students including:
- marketing and promotion of courses/programmes and services;
 - information, advice and guidance – both verbal and written;
 - recruitment and selection;
 - access to and admission to courses;
 - delivery of student support services;
 - content of curriculum and teaching styles;
 - production of learning materials;
 - access to extra-curricular activities;
 - dealings with the Student Union and its activities;
 - access to work placements;
 - assessment;
 - allocation of accommodation; and
 - disciplinary, appeals and grievance procedures.
- 1.16 In addition to ensuring that all staff and students are treated equally and with respect the School will also work towards fostering good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. Opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of different groups, cultures and religions will be promoted in both curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- 1.17 The School will ensure that meaningful communication and consultation mechanisms with staff and students are in place to ensure that both examples of good practice and any issues relating to equality and diversity are appropriately reported and acted upon. All formal meetings will address equality and diversity as a standard agenda item.

- 1.18 The Equality and Diversity Policy is accessible on the School website and the VLE.
- 1.19 It is recognised that in some instances, it may be justifiable to take steps to help certain disadvantaged or under-represented groups within the School workforce or student population. In such instances the School may take positive action, where appropriate, to increase the representation of people from particular groups that have previously been underrepresented in the School community or are at a disadvantage due to a protected characteristic.
- 1.20 Where staff or students have particular requirements relating to Equality and Diversity they will be referred to the HR Manager (staff) or Student Services Manager (students) and will be dealt with objectively and accommodated where reasonable and practicable.
- 1.21 All forms of discriminatory behaviour are deemed unacceptable in any form, including bullying, harassment and victimisation. Any incidences will not be tolerated and will be appropriately challenged in all cases. Any repeat offenders will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedure. Instances of discrimination by any other service user or third party e.g. contractor or visitor, will be dealt with as soon as possible and may result in the removal of service or contract, where applicable.
- 1.22 Any person who feels an action or process of the School is inconsistent with this vision for quality and fairness, may complain via either the School Student Complaints Procedure or Staff Grievance Procedure, as applicable. Where people with a protected characteristic are directly or indirectly discriminated against, the School will seek to amend its policy, procedure or practice to find an alternative means of achieving its aims that does not have a discriminating effect, or has a less discriminatory effect on people with the protected characteristic.
- 1.23 When changes cannot be made or are not available or appropriate the School will assess whether the discrimination represents a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.24 All staff, students and governors have a personal responsibility to adhere to the ethos of the Equality and Diversity Policy and to implement and promote its principles in their day-to-day dealings with everyone; to avoid discriminatory practices including the victimisation, harassment and intimidation of other staff and students, and to discourage them in others.
- 1.25 All staff and students are encouraged and will be supported in reporting any instances or suspicions of discrimination or harassment. The School will ensure all allegations are fully investigated with due regard to confidentiality.

- 1.26 All staff have a responsibility for actively seeking opportunities to promote equality and diversity within their roles and for communicating positive messages to students and visitors.
- 1.27 All Line Managers have a responsibility to communicate the policy to their staff and also to ensure that their staff adhere to its principles.
- 1.28 Student Services staff have a responsibility to introduce students to the Equality and Diversity Policy through the induction process and ensure that students know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and attitude and the consequences of not adhering to the principles of the policy. They also have a responsibility to arrange appropriate workshops relating to equality and diversity issues as part of the overall programme of pastoral activities but also in response to any identified issues.
- 1.29 The Vice Principal (People Services) has overall responsibility for equality and diversity matters.

STANDARDS/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this staff policies handbook lies with the Vice Principal (People Services). It will be reviewed annually. The annual review may include consultation with recognised trade union representatives.

EQUALITY STATEMENT

The Northern School of Art is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment that recognises the value of every individual regardless of their background or personal characteristics and aims to ensure that all employees and Institution users are treated fairly and equally. It aims to do this by encouraging a culture which actively welcomes, respects, promotes and embraces diversity; employs fairness in all aspects of employment and teaching and thereby creating and sustaining a positive and supportive environment for all members of its community.

All information put into the public domain should be fully accessible to all, regardless of any disability. Wherever possible the font Arial should be used with minimum font size 12, and essential text should never be embedded within graphics. All public information should include a statement that it is available in large format, with the name, email and telephone number of the marketing department who can arrange it, e.g. this information is available in large format print. If you need it in a different format please contact HR by emailing hr@northernart.ac.uk or calling 01642 856126.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics:		
gender reassignment marriage and civil partnership pregnancy and maternity	race religion or belief age	sex sexual orientation disability

Assessment:

Is this policy/procedure relevant in terms of equality related to the protected characteristics above? Yes ☒ No ☐ If no, please state why not:	
This is general policy relating to all students.	
Is there potential for any negative or positive impact on people with protected characteristics? Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, Please provide details:	
Positive	Negative
Could this policy or procedure discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people with protected characteristics? Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please provide details:	
The Policy has an inclusive approach to staff from all backgrounds.	
Conclusion:	
☒ No barriers identified	
☐ Adaptions or changes to the policy or procedure to eliminate bias	
☐ Barriers and impact identified, however, having considered all available options there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	

Completed by:

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APPROVAL PROCESS

This document was APPROVED by Principalship on:	September 2025
Principalship member with primary responsibility:	Amy Crossland, Vice Principal (People Services)
Other staff consulted by primary Principalship member:	Martin Raby, Principal
	John Waddington, Vice Principal (HE)
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Elements of this document have been reviewed and approved by School Committees:

Section	Committee	Approval Date