



Aims and Aspirations

This Policy establishes Sunderland SU's commitment to fairness for all and, in particular, our staff and volunteers, our workplace, and our community.

Sunderland SU believes that all people have an equal right to a life-changing experience at Sunderland. We'll only achieve our vision of a Sunderland student experience that is valuable for life if we include all students in our work. We have an obligation to continually reflect on what we do, and what our partners do, to ensure that we're taking deliberate, purposeful action to help all people succeed. We recognise that our obligation is about more than a positive intention; we have to continually change other policies and practices, guided by our commitment to equality and diversity, to make them fairer and to support tolerance and partnership in all of our work.

We have the power, opportunity, and responsibility to influence the University of Sunderland's work in equality and diversity. We're always mindful of this privilege, and will use our influence to help make the whole of our community more progressive

Policy Statement

Sunderland SU's values include *equality and fairness*. We believe this makes clear that we go above and beyond our core obligations under relevant legislation and regulations, and we try to behave, at all times, in ways that champion equality and diversity.

Equality, in our view, is when the barriers that limit people's access, opportunity, and success, are removed. We understand that some of these barriers are visible and obvious, while some of them are hard to define, and structural throughout society. Equality is when people can access what they want and what they need without barriers.

Diversity is our obligation to strive to include all of our people, and the strength that our work gains when all of our people participate. It is achieved, in part, by making our communities more equal. Sunderland SU welcomes, respects, uses, and celebrates diversity.

Accountability and empowerment are also Sunderland SU values.

Accountability is important because all of our people, including our volunteers, are responsible for making sure that their own behaviour consistently demonstrates our commitment to equality and diversity. We hope that all of our people, including our volunteers, consistently reflect on how we could be better at making our community more equal and diverse, and identify when we aren't doing as well as we'd hope.

Empowerment is essential to how we achieve a more equal and fair community because it supports the concept of liberation. We believe that communities of people who are disadvantaged are the best, legitimate, group to describe their disadvantage and define solutions to it. Sunderland SU is committed to listening and respecting the views of disadvantaged people

We developed our Policy, and our accompanying Strategy, with the contribution of our students and staff, and it is approved by our Trustees. They are reviewed every three years to ensure that they remain true to our values, and are suitably ambitious. themselves, and will not support policies, processes or activities designed without their authentic contribution.



Principles

Sunderland SU's Equality and Diversity Policy must be more than an idealistic ambition in a single document, so the principles that underpin our work are:

- This policy is delivered. Sunderland SU has a three year Equality and Diversity Strategy, which outlines specific targets and results for each team to achieve within specific timeframes.
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- This policy is effective. Sunderland SU's success in this work will be clear when our students are more successful because we've helped make the University community more equal and diverse.
- This policy is resourced. We back up our strategy with identified budgets, training, plans and objectives, to help confident people lead this work across our community.
- This policy is sustainable. We won't 'solve' problems with inequality and lack of diversity within the lifetime of one strategy, so we establish goals and structures that will last for the future.
- This policy is scrutinised. Students have the right to question our effectiveness in this work, so we engage, report, and are challenged by the democratic structures available to our members.

Sunderland SU observes our legal obligations, as a minimum, and reports on how we achieve these in the Equality and Diversity Strategy. We are particularly mindful of our responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) to have regards to 'protected characteristics'. Sunderland SU goes further than the law and will consider how our work addresses inequalities and promotes diversity in the characteristics of race, economic status, gender, age, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, and nationality.

Sunderland SU believes that people have the right to define for themselves how they are disadvantaged and whether policies, processes or activities affect them and contribute to their inequality. We take people's word on their inequality, and address their concerns at face value; we don't dispute whether someone has found that something limits their equality.

Sunderland SU is proud that our diversity includes people who define in multiple ways, such as lesbian women of faith. We consult, reflect, and undertake our work with the complexities of multiple identities in mind. We invest time and resource into supporting diverse communities to contribute to Sunderland SU's work, and to direct their own activities, because we believe in their autonomy.

Our principles of equality and diversity are reflected in other Sunderland SU policies, such as our bullying and grievance policies. Our human resource policies are often quite formal documents that reflect our obligations in law, but we want them to reflect the more progressive ambitions of this policy where possible. We are clear that we have zero tolerance to all types of discrimination – direct, indirect, by association, or based on perception – and we seek to reflect and cease discrimination in our day-to-day work, and we take deliberate action when our attention is drawn to examples of discrimination that we have not successfully eliminated.



Implementation

Responsibilities

Sunderland SU's Chief Executive is responsible for the development and success of an Equality and Diversity Strategy. Sunderland SU believes that equality and diversity is a concern in wellbeing, education, the community and in student activities, and so the President is the lead sabbatical Officer for our equality and diversity work.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy

The Strategy, as a minimum, will include our obligations to:

- Communicate and promote the Policy
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- Consider the equality and diversity implications of all of our policies, processes and activities
 - This may not include formal equality impact assessments, but we should strive to meet the standards expected of these frameworks.
- Resource the Policy, including training and development for our people, including all of our volunteers
- Use clear, unambiguous, performance standards to determine the success of our work
- Have our work scrutinised by students, and other interested stakeholders
- Celebrate our diversity
- Use our influence to shape the whole University community

Our policies, processes, and activities

Sunderland SU does not positively discriminate towards any group but, as we strive to make our work more diverse, we may design policies, processes and activities which attract and promote certain people at certain times, as we identify an access need or opportunity. We take positive action, and offer different sorts of provision to make our work more equal and diverse. We aim to work with partners who share our ambitions for equality and diversity, and will use our influence to help our existing partners develop practices that reflect our own.

How to Raise a Concern

Sunderland SU recognises that the absence of raised concerns is not an indicator of better equality and diversity. The people and communities who experience discrimination or who want to challenge us are, often, those who have less confidence or opportunity.

The Sunderland SU Complaints Procedure is the appropriate way for students to raise concerns about equality and diversity. The Sunderland SU Employee Handbook outlines the appropriate ways for staff to raise their concerns.

The Chief Executive and the President will, however, outline in the Strategy report how Sunderland SU consistently reaches out to gain feedback on the experience of disadvantaged people and communities, mindful of the barriers they may face in using our existing systems.