Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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1. Introduction and Statement

1.1. The Queen's Foundation recognises its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equal opportunities for all. The Foundation is committed to building and supporting a diverse and inclusive community so that all who work or study at the institution can benefit from an environment which is open and inclusive, and which values everyone equally.

1.2. The Foundation recognises that staff, students, and visitors will benefit from drawing on a wide range of skills and experience from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. Staff, and students will benefit from working and learning in an environment which is open and inclusive, that allows them to contribute fully and effectively.

1.3. The Foundation is committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of a person's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Discrimination, whether direct or indirect is not an acceptable behaviour in any staff, volunteer, student, or any other person associated with the Foundation.

1.4. The policy has been approved by the Governors of the Foundation. Implementation of this policy and the practice of its provisions will be overseen by the Principal. It is managed by the Director of Operations for staff and the Academic Dean for students.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to any action, actual or verbal, pertaining to fair and equal treatment that is committed, or is alleged to have been committed by, any member of the Queen's Foundation community. It sets out the responsibilities of all who are associated with the Foundation whether students, staff (including contractors and volunteers), visitors, or Governors.

2.2. The policy applies to all processes relating to every area of the Foundation's business and how it is conducted, including but not limited to:

- staff recruitment
- pay, terms and conditions
- training and development opportunities
- student recruitment and enrolment
- delivery of teaching, supervision, and support
- any dealings with those associated with the Foundation in any way.

2.3. Any use of the phrase 'Queen's community' in this policy shall be taken to include Governors, all who work or study at Queen's, contractors, and all visitors, including those participating in events of any sort.

2.4. Any use of the term 'staff' in this policy shall also be taken to include volunteers and contractors, as relevant.

3. Definitions

3.1. Definitions and information regarding the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) can be found at *Appendix 1*.

3.2. ***Discrimination:***

3.2.1. ***Direct discrimination*** is where a person is treated less favourably than others (in the same *or* similar circumstances) due to a protected characteristic.

3.2.2. ***Indirect discrimination*** is when a condition or requirement adversely affects one particular group considerably more than other groups, and which cannot be justified in terms of the requirements for performing the job.

3.2.3. ***Discrimination by perception*** is where a person is directly discriminated against based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic, even if that is not the case.

3.2.4. ***Discrimination by association*** is where a person is directly discriminated against because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

3.3. ***Victimisation.*** It is unlawful to victimise individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination, or who have provided information about cases of discrimination. The Foundation will treat any proven act of equality-related victimisation as a serious disciplinary matter.

3.4. ***Harassment*** is unwarranted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour which is intimidating, degrading, offensive or distressing to the recipient, and which is motivated or related to a protected characteristic.

3.5. A simple ACAS guide regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion can be found at *Appendix 2*. This will also be displayed on noticeboards.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. The Foundation is responsible for acting to prevent incidents of unequal treatment wherever reasonably possible and to provide preventive guidance regarding such behaviours.

4.2. The Foundation is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is effectively communicated to all staff and students, and is also readily available to the public.

4.3. All members of the Queen's community have a responsibility to ensure a working and studying environment where everyone is treated with equal respect and dignity. Every person is expected to contribute to preventing unacceptable behaviours through self-awareness, by modelling positive behaviour, and by raising any concerns regarding inappropriate treatment they have received or witnessed.

4.4. The Foundation's Wellbeing Officer and the Chaplain(s) can provide support independently of the procedures in place under this policy, but within its intentions.

5. The Foundation's Commitments

5.1. The Foundation commits to encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion within the Queen's community. This policy provides the framework of practices to facilitate the delivery of these.

5.2. The Foundation aims to create and foster a working environment which:

- is free of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation
- promotes respect and dignity for all
- recognises and values, individual differences, and contributions of each person
- trains managers and staff about their rights and responsibilities under this policy

5.3. The Foundation is committed to carrying out its duty of care by making reasonable adjustments to foster an environment where staff and students are not disadvantaged due to disability.

5.4. The Foundation will ensure that all staff understand that they (as well as the Foundation) can be held personally liable for acts of unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment, or victimisation against colleagues, students, visitors, and anyone else associated with Queen's community.

5.5. The Foundation commits to take seriously and to investigate all complaints regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion. Where an allegation is found to be true, the Foundation will take action against the perpetrator(s), up to and including dismissal of staff for gross misconduct under disciplinary and grievance procedures, or expulsion of students. If an individual has engaged in unlawful activity, this will be reported to the police; perpetrators will be held personally liable for their actions and may be subject to prosecution for a criminal offence.

5.6. No person will be treated less favourably for making allegations in good faith. However, where an allegation is found to have been malicious, the Foundation will take disciplinary action against the complainant, which may lead to dismissal for gross misconduct.

5.7. The Foundation will ensure that the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded within the recruitment and selection processes. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always take place without regard to protected characteristics.

5.8. The Foundation will ensure that all staff have fair access to training, development opportunities, and progression according to their needs within the institution. Decisions regarding individuals will be based on merit and business need (except where necessary and permitted by exceptions allowed under the Equality Act – please see Appendix 1).

6. Compliance with this Policy

6.1. Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and this policy is without exception the responsibility of all students, staff, and Governors at the Foundation.

6.2. It is a requirement of employment in the case of staff and enrolment in the case of students, that every individual abides by this policy, and any breach may lead to disciplinary action. A

serious breach of the Equality Act may also result in the Foundation and/or the individual being held liable in law.

7. Policy Review

7.1. There will be an annual review of any reported breaches or issues which have arisen in the preceding year, and any mitigating action taken.

7.2. This policy shall be reviewed every two years (or sooner if there are material issues or regulatory developments) to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Foundation and the requirements of current Equality regulations and practice.

Any enquiries regarding this policy should be addressed to:

The Director of Operations
Email: directorofoperations@queens.ac.uk

The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education
Somerset Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2QH
Tel: 0121 452 1527

Other Related Policies and Procedures:

Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy
Acceptable use of ICT Policy
University Admissions Policies
Anti-bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
Data Protection Policy
Employee Handbook – Academic Staff
Employee Handbook – Professional Services Staff
Fitness to Practice Framework
Fitness to Study Framework and Procedure
Health and Safety Policy
Research Ethics Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Student Protection Plan

Appendix 1: Protected Characteristics

(Based on ACAS sources)

In almost all cases, the characteristics below are protected under the Equality Act 2010. However, there are some exceptions, known as genuine occupational requirements, where restrictions are necessary. Any potentially discriminatory occupational requirements must be:

- Crucial to the post, and for good business reasons
- Related to the nature of the job not the culture of the organisation
- A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim
- Applied in a way that is appropriate, necessary, fair, and reasonable.

The employer should be able to show that there is no other way to achieve the same aim which would be less discriminatory.

Age

The Act provides protection for people of any age

Disability

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- Long-term means lasting at least a year, or likely to be for the rest of a person's life or recur.
- Substantial adverse effect means more than minor but it may fluctuate or change, and may not be present all the time
- Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that staff and applicants are not substantially disadvantaged in carrying out or applying for a job because of a disability when compared with people who do not have a disability.
- In making reasonable adjustments, employers can treat disabled employees more favourably than non-disabled employees because of their disability, and non-disabled employees cannot claim discrimination on the grounds that they are treated less favourably.

Gender reassignment

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

- An individual does not have to be under medical supervision to be protected
- Non-binary and gender fluid people are also protected.

Marriage or civil partnership

The Act protects people who are married or in civil partnership. Single people and couples in relationships which are not legally recognised are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity

Women are protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of their pregnancy and any maternity leave to which they are entitled.

Race

This protection includes discrimination on grounds including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin.

Religion or belief

People are protected from discrimination on the grounds of their religion or belief, and also if they do not have a particular religion or belief.

- Religion includes any religion which has a clear structure and belief system
- A belief covers any religious or philosophical belief which has a high level of cogency, cohesion, and importance, and has a weighty and substantial effect on a person's day-to-day life and behaviour.

Sex

The Act provides protection against any form of discrimination on grounds of sex.

Sexual orientation

The Act provides protection against any form of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Appendix 2: Guide to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion