

# GUSRC EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

## SECTION A – GENERAL INFORMATION

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### A.1 *Statement*

GUSRC does not discriminate against any group of persons on the grounds of age, disability, ethnic or national origin, family circumstances, marital or civil partnership status, political or sexual orientation, race, religion, gender or gender identity. The omission of other groups should not be interpreted as condoning discrimination against them.

GUSRC recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and can take place at a personal or at an institutional level and can manifest as:

- direct discrimination: treating a person less favourably on grounds of a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup>.
- indirect discrimination: applying any requirement or condition which, though applied equally to everybody, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of people of one group can comply with it than the proportion of other people, unless the requirement or condition can be shown to be justifiable irrespective of a protected characteristic.

### A.2 *Responsibilities*

The success of any policy depends on the degree of commitment of all employees and council members; consequently it is the responsibility of all employees and council members to ensure this policy is applied in practice. All employees and council members will be expected to challenge discriminatory behaviour and draw the attention of management to any instances of discrimination.

### A.3 *Key Principles*

- a) GUSRC is opposed to discrimination in any form and at all levels and is committed to take all steps within its power to counteract and challenge such actions within its areas of operation
- b) GUSRC will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly.
- c) As a minimum standard GUSRC will comply with existing relevant equalities legislation.
- d) GUSRC will ensure that this policy will be a condition of service and all members of staff and council members will abide by it.
- e) Decisions on recruitment and selection will be based on the essential job criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Protected Characteristics' are defined under the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation

#### *A.4 Services & Representation*

GUSRC will maximise awareness of its work amongst its membership thereby seeking to ensure that its services and representation functions reflect the diversity of its membership.

GUSRC will seek to avoid being seen as inaccessible and take any necessary action as reasonably practical to meet individual requirements.

#### *A.5 Communication*

Good communication is fundamental to enhancing accessibility. Where appropriate, GUSRC will seek to provide materials in suitable format.

#### *A.6 Publicity*

GUSRC will seek to ensure that:

- Its publications do not perpetuate discrimination.
- Language used is non-discriminatory and concise.
- All relevant materials will be accessible to its target population.

#### *A.7 Elections*

GUSRC will ensure that its election regulations conform to the equality and diversity policy.

#### *A.8 Clubs and Societies*

Although GUSRC has no powers of enforcement over University clubs and societies, all clubs and societies will be referred to this policy and will be required to commit to compliance with it as a condition of affiliation and grant.

Clubs and societies are likely to come under the provisions of the Equality Act either as service providers; or if they have more than 25 members, as 'associations'.

Equality and Diversity training on the provisions of the Act is available via an online training package. Clubs and societies whose members and office-bearers wish to avail themselves of this training should contact GUSRC in the first instance.

#### **Segregated Events**

Clubs and societies will not be permitted to hold segregated events on University premises; this includes premises under the control of GUSRC (the Williams Room). An example of this would be imposing separate seating areas for men and women at a talk or film screening.

There are exceptions to this rule for religious worship and in certain other limited cases.

This rule does *not* prevent clubs and societies from holding member-only events on University premises. Under equality law, clubs and societies are allowed to restrict their membership to those who share a protected characteristic, such as gender or religion/belief. So for example, a female-only society may restrict access to any of their benefits or services to female members only, and may restrict guest invitations to women. The University and GUSRC can lawfully permit clubs and societies which are established for a single sex, a particular religious community, or other protected characteristic group to use University facilities and advertise their events through University and GUSRC channels.

This rule arises from guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission on gender segregation at events. We strongly encourage clubs and societies to read through the guidance document for a fuller understanding of the implications. It can be found here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/gender-segregation-events-and-meetings-guidance-universities-and-students>

If a club or society is in any doubt about whether an event is permitted under this rule, they are encouraged to seek advice from GUSRC ([clubsandsocs@src.gla.ac.uk](mailto:clubsandsocs@src.gla.ac.uk)) at the earliest possible opportunity.

#### *A.9 Resources*

GUSRC will, wherever possible, provide all employees, council members and sabbatical officers with the necessary aids and adaptations to enable everyone to carry out duties on equal terms. Where GUSRC cannot honour this commitment, it will liaise with appropriate agencies with a view to obtaining the necessary resources. In addition, provision will be made for the additional resources that will be required to ensure effective implementation of this policy.

#### *A.10 Harassment*

Harassment is unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation is unlawful<sup>2</sup>. Harassment can be perpetrated by individuals or groups. GUSRC can also perpetrate it when it knowingly fails to take action to stop harassment.

When GUSRC is aware that harassment is taking place, GUSRC will carry out a formal investigation to establish the facts and take all appropriate action. Harassment will be dealt with sensitively, speedily and firmly, and may require to be resolved through disciplinary procedures.

#### *A.11 Disciplinary procedures*

Breach of this Equality & Diversity Policy will be considered a serious disciplinary offence. GUSRC will seek to ensure the well being of all employees, sabbatical officers and council members. For this reason, it is important that disciplinary rules are clear and employees, sabbatical officers and council members are

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<sup>2</sup> S26 Equality Act 2010

given clear and consistent opportunities to overcome any problems. Disciplinary procedures are designed to support standards of conduct and capability at work and should act as effective safeguards for all who work in the organisation. Disciplinary action should only be used once the matter is fully investigated and when all other means of resolving the issue have failed.

#### *A.12 Complaints*

Anyone who believes that GUSRC has failed to act in accordance with this policy may make a complaint in accordance with the GUSRC Complaints Procedure which is available on request or from [www.glasgowstudent.net](http://www.glasgowstudent.net).

Employees of the organisation may use the grievance procedure as outlined in their terms and conditions of employment.

#### *A.13 Monitoring, reviewing and record keeping*

GUSRC will seek to establish appropriate procedures in order to ensure the effective operation of this policy.

#### *A.14 Initiatives*

GUSRC will undertake to review its policies and practices to take into account changes as the society in which we live evolves.

#### *A.15 Confidentiality*

Confidential information will be respected and maintained as such.

## **SECTION B INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES**

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### *B.1 General*

This section contains employment-specific information and should be read in conjunction with section A which also applies to all employees.

GUSRC recognises some employment practices may create barriers which prevent individuals obtaining employment, therefore restricting these individuals from full and equal participation in economic, cultural, social and political spheres of life. GUSRC will therefore adopt positive action measures that will help redress any imbalance.

Such measures will consist of:

- Appropriate conditions of employment such as flexible working hours, and appropriate leave for religious holidays.
- Access to training.

- Access to premises.
- Access to information in suitable format.

## *B.2 Terms and Conditions of Service*

All staff in similar jobs shall be employed under the same terms and conditions of employment subject to skills, knowledge and levels of experience

## *B.3 Staff development*

GUSRC is aware that staff development takes into account numerous factors such as education and training. This section will concentrate on training. GUSRC will provide training for staff at all levels as it is an important factor leading to opportunities and career development and in return work will be carried out more efficiently and benefit GUSRC.

Training will reflect a structured and constructive approach and will be carried out in order to promote good practice. Furthermore, training sessions will place no unjustified conditions upon individuals that may prevent them from playing a full part. Where attendance at training events might cause problems as a result of difference in sex, religion, diet, venue or child care arrangements, reasonable alternative provisions will be considered and provided.

All members of staff will be expected to undertake Equality & Diversity training. The training will concentrate on identifying discrimination and taking action which counters its effects.

## *B.4 Support*

All members of staff may need access to support structures on occasion. Time and resources, as appropriate, will be made available to attend such support groups. In addition, supervision sessions with line managers will be used to provide positive support on personal and career development.

## *B.5 Grievance procedure*

All members of staff have the right to take action under a grievance procedure. Where any grievance or cause for complaint arises, employees will have an opportunity to raise such matters through a structure process that is clear and fair. GUSRC will seek to ensure that such problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Where possible, the employee will be given the necessary support and guidance for the proper resolution of the grievance.

## *B.6 Responsibility & accountability as an employer*

The Permanent Secretary will have daily responsibility for the implementation of the policy. The President will have overall responsibility for the successful implementation of the policy. In addition, GUSRC will abide by the terms and conditions of this policy to ensure no discrimination occurs in the

services it provides.

## SECTION C CONCLUSION

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GUSRC is striving to ensure that equal opportunities permeate all areas of its activity. GUSRC recognises that passive policies will not, in themselves, provide equal outcomes. GUSRC will endeavour to meet the needs of all its existing and potential stakeholders. GUSRC will do all in its power to ensure that the principles of equal opportunities apply in all of its policies and employment practices.

GUSRC also recognises its broader responsibility to promote equality and diversity in every aspect of its work and will therefore seek to promote equal opportunities and challenge discriminatory practice at every opportunity.