Robert Gordon University Students Association

Equality and Diversity Policy

December 2015

Contents Page

Aims and Aspirations…………………………………………………………………page 2

Policy Statement………………………………………………………………………page 3

Principles of Equality and Diversity………………………………...……………….page 5

Implementation: Enabling Equality and Diversity………………………………….page 6

Implementation: Roles and Responsibilities……………………………………….page 8

Implementation: Managing Performance…………………………………………..page 9

How To Raise A Concern………………………………………………….............page 10

Equality and Diversity Action Plan………………………………………….…….page 11

Aims and Aspirations

The aim of this policy is to achieve the following:

* To contribute to Robert Gordon University continuing to be a welcoming institution for all students
* To help ensure the Union is a truly representative and democratic body
* To attract student representatives that reflect the diversity of the student body
* To ensure that all members have the same experience of the Union, and can access its services equally
* To widen the participation of students in Union activities
* To ensure that our staff feel confident dealing with a diverse range of students and their needs
* To promote cohesion and inclusion within the student body
* To promote wellbeing and a good quality of life for students
* To promote health and wellbeing for staff through reducing stress and conflict
* To help the Union retain staff and become a desirable employer
* To ensure compliance with legislation and embed equality and diversity in everything we do
* To protect the legal rights of members and staff
* To reach out and support groups of people who have been isolated, stigmatised, stereotyped, bullied or discriminated against
* To create an inclusive environment where each individual can reach their full potential without fear of unfair or discriminatory attitudes or practices

Policy Statement

The policy reflects the Student Association’s vision as stated within the constitutional regulations:

“*That the Student Association will be integral to the provision of a good life and learning environment in which our members shall flourish*”

In the provision of the aims set out in this policy, Robert Gordon University Student Association (RGU:Union) recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the law. This policy sets out the commitment of the Union to achieve a culture in which equality and diversity is promoted actively and in which unlawful discrimination is not tolerated. It applies to all aspects of staff, student and visitor activity within the Union.

The Union recognises the business benefits of having a diverse community of staff and students who value one another and the different contributions they can make to achieving the Union’s promise to make the “*student experience the focus of everything we do*”.

The Union is committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and harassment within its organisation, both in relation to its members and guests and in provision of its service.

The Union is committed to providing equality for all irrespective of:

* Age
* Disability
* Gender reassignment
* Marriage and civil partnership
* Pregnancy and maternity
* Race (including ethnic origin, national origin, nationality and colour)
* Religion and belief (including non-belief and philosophical beliefs)
* Sex
* Sexual orientation

Under the Equality Act (2010), these are known as “protected characteristics”. The Equality Act also requires the Union, as a public authority, to pay heed to the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination
* Advance equality
* Foster good relations

This policy is here to define our commitment to equality and diversity in principle, and to help guide how we put these principles into practice. The Union recognises equality as being the equal and fair treatment of all people. This involves acknowledging and removing the barriers that prevent the needs of people being met, and allowing people the fair opportunity to pursue their goals. Diversity is the celebration of the differences between people. Together, equality and diversity can create more productive, vibrant, dynamic and engaging communities. We believe that engaging with equality and diversity is a critical part of the University experience, in which our members shape their world view and engage with the principles of citizenship and community.

This policy draws upon feedback gathered from the student body. It has been viewed and approved by staff and the Executive Board of the Union.

Principles of Equality and Diversity

RGU:UNION is committed to:

* Promoting and valuing equality and diversity for all
* Promoting respect and encouraging good relations within and between groups
* Meeting the different needs of individuals and groups, as appropriate
* Promoting an inclusive and harmonious place of work and study where there is mutual respect and where harassment and bullying, intimidation or violence is not tolerated
* Preventing unlawful discrimination and victimisation
* Complying with our legal obligations
* Taking seriously and address any breaches of this policy
* Ensuring this policy is fully implemented
* Ensuring the policy is fully supported by the Executive Committee

The policy relates to all aspects of student interaction with the Union, including publications, advertisement, training and access to services and facilities. Those who are not members of the Union but who use its premises and facilities, such as those from other institutions, regular patrons and visitors, are expected to operate within the terms of the Policy. Members of the Union are responsible for the behaviours of their guests.

Implementation: Enabling Equality & Diversity

The Policy Statement outlined on pages 3-4 will be displayed prominently in all Union premises. It will also be included the Student Guide that is produced at the start of each academic term, in staff handbooks, and in the Union’s Strategic Plan. The entire Policy will be available to download from the Union website, and available in booklet form from the Union office.

The Policy will feature prominently in the inductions and training of elected officers, and they will be asked to sign a declaration agreeing to the terms of this policy.

The Union will seek to appoint an Equality Champion prior to the start of the academic term to represent the interests of each the following groups:

* Women
* LGBT+
* Faith and Belief
* Disability
* Mature
* Postgraduate
* Distance-Learning
* International

It will be part of the duty of the Union’s Equality Champions to promote the aims of the Policy.

To engage people in promoting the aims of the policy, and to raise awareness of its principles, liberation campaigns and diversity events will be hosted by elected officers and student clubs and societies, including the annual One RGU, Many Nations Carnival.

Our Equality and Diversity standards will be embedded in the operations of the Union through Human Resource processes, including the recruitment and selection of staff, the delivery of services and the choice of suppliers and partners. Training will be given to new and existing staff to equip them in implementing the policy.

Implementation: Roles & Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of the Policy lies with the Executive Board and Trustee Board of the Union. However, every member of the Union is responsible for ensuring that their actions are carried out in keeping with the policy. They may be held accountable should any complaint arise, through the Complaints Procedure outlined at the end of this document.

Implementation: Managing Performance

A plan detailing actions required to help achieve the aims of this policy will be produced each year, and a review of the progress of implementing the policy will be undertaken at the end of every academic year. This will involve the Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities Vice President preparing a report for the Executive Board and General Manager. Areas for improvement will also be identified by an annual Diversity Audit. Stakeholder feedback will be sought as part of this. All reported incidents which contravene the policy will be recorded. These records will not include named individuals, but simply the circumstances and nature of the incident and subsequent action taken. Such reports will be made available to the University’s Equality and Diversity Officer and Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG).

Any amendments to this Policy will be made by the Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities Vice President, subject to the approval of the Executive Board.

How to Raise a Concern

Any contravention of the Policy can be highlighted using the Union’s Complaints procedure, as detailed in Regulation 6 of the Constitutional Regulations. Help can also be provided by the Student Advice & Administration Coordinator or the Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities Vice President.