



# Equality & Diversity Policy



## Contents

|                                                |          |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Equality and diversity policy statement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Sexual orientation policy</b>               | <b>4</b> |
| 1 Statement of intent                          | 4        |
| 2 Context and implementation                   | 4        |
| 3 Explanation of terms                         | 4        |
| 4 Further Advice                               | 4        |
| 5 Review                                       | 5        |
| <b>Religion and belief policy</b>              | <b>5</b> |
| 1 Statement of intent                          | 5        |
| 2 Implementation                               | 5        |
| 3 Context                                      | 5        |
| 4 Religious observance                         | 6        |
| 5 Catering requirements                        | 6        |
| 6 Offensive actions or behaviour               | 6        |
| 7 Further advice                               | 6        |
| 8 Review                                       | 6        |

## Preamble

This policy has been written in line with the UK equality and diversity legislation as listed at the end of the document. Words used in all policies shall have the meanings assigned to them in the Articles of Government. In the case of conflict between these policies and the Articles of Government, the Articles of Government shall take precedence.

The names of committees and titles of posts may change from time to time. This shall not invalidate the powers of the equivalent successor committees or post holders.

In the case of doubt, the head of quality shall have authority over the interpretation of the text of the policies, on behalf of the senior management team.

All formal documents relate to the strategies, policies, procedures and regulations of UCFB having been approved by the senior management team. All UCFB employees and students are required to adhere to the formal processes and regulations of the UCFB.

This document should not be read in isolation as other documents could be relevant.

If required this formal document is available in an alternative format such as braille, tape, disc, email or a larger font size. Please contact the Student Services Department ([studentservices@ucfb.com](mailto:studentservices@ucfb.com)).

## **Equality and diversity policy statement**

- 1.1 Equality of opportunity is everybody's right and is a central aim of UCFB for all employees, students and senior advisory board. We are aware that there is much work to do to foster true equality and to ensure that students and employees experience no disadvantage because of their race, class, age, gender, religious belief, disability, or sexual orientation. We seek to foster a secure and caring environment which is welcoming to all, and one which is free from prejudice and discrimination.
- 1.2 Each individual within the UCFB has a right to be treated with respect. Behaviour which is derogatory or which displays negative attitudes towards others, however subtly conveyed, is unacceptable and will be challenged. We will treat seriously incidents of discrimination, bullying or harassment, provide support to those concerned and, where necessary, take appropriate disciplinary action.
- 1.3 All areas of UCFBs curriculum will be equally accessible to all students and we will ensure that all students receive appropriate guidance on courses and career choices that is professional and free from any social or cultural bias.
- 1.4 We expect that all the documents we produce and all the materials we display within the UCFB will be free from any recognised bias and seek to endorse the principles contained within this policy.
- 1.5 We will work to ensure that during their time at UCFB, employees and students have the opportunity to reflect on issues relating to equal opportunities and we encourage them to develop attitudes, behaviour and expectations which are consistent with and honour the inclusive ethos of UCFB.
- 1.6 Equally, we will work to ensure that all employees are aware of the possible sources and the effects of discrimination, and will provide employee development opportunities and support for employees and the advisory board to develop the necessary awareness and skills for working with a diverse range of students and colleagues in accordance with the principles of equality and diversity.
- 1.7 We will encourage all areas of teaching and learning to promote a climate of mutual respect, understanding and self-confidence in which open and free academic discussion can take place in different subject areas, as appropriate in relation to equal opportunities issues.
- 1.8 The UCFBs procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and employee development will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they accord with the current equalities legislation and accepted good practice in the field of equal opportunities. This includes positive action in respect of under-represented groups.
- 1.9 We have an Equality and Diversity Committee composed of employees drawn from all parts of the UCFB. This group will meet regularly as a critical friend, actively to support and monitor equality of opportunity in all aspects of UCFB life.
- 1.10 This generic policy statement on Equality & Diversity is supported by the following more specific policies:
  - Equality Action Plan (see separate document)
  - Dignity at Work Policy – bullying and harassment (Buckinghamshire New University Policy)
  - Student Policy – bullying and harassment (Buckinghamshire New University Policy)
  - Policy on sexual orientation (incorporated below)
  - Policy on religion and belief (incorporated below)

## **Sexual orientation policy**

### **1 Statement of intent**

- 1.1 UCFB values all its employees and students equally, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender assignment. UCFB aims to create an environment in which all employees and students, whatever their sexuality or gender assignment, feel equally welcome and valued, and in which homophobic behaviour is not tolerated.
- 1.2 This specific policy supports, and is underpinned by, the generic policy on Equality and Diversity. It recognises the extent of heterosexist assumptions in society, and the existence of homophobia.

### **2 Context and implementation**

2.1 The following are practical examples of actions UCFB will take under this policy to counter discriminatory attitudes.

a) Homophobic abuse, harassment or bullying (such as name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences, and will be dealt with under the employee or student disciplinary procedures.

b) Homophobic propaganda, in the forms of written materials, graffiti, songs or speeches, will not be tolerated. UCFB undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on the premises and to take action against those responsible where they can be clearly identified.

c) UCFB will provide a supportive environment for employees and students who wish it to be known that they are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual (LGB). However, it is the right of the individuals to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexuality in UCFB. To “out” someone, whether employee or student, without their permission is a form of harassment, and will be treated as such.

d) Assumptions will not be made that partners of employees and students are of the opposite sex. Whenever possible, workplace benefits will apply equally to same-sex partners.

e) Employees and students undergoing gender reassignment will receive positive support from UCFB to meet their particular needs during this period.

### **3 Explanation of terms**

3.1 *Heterosexism* is any prejudice and discrimination against individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or are perceived to be so. It is based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual. Expressions of dislike, contempt or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as *homophobia*.

### **4 Further Advice**

4.1 Further advice is available from the head of quality.

### **5 Review**

5.1 This policy will be reviewed three years from the date of agreement and every three years thereafter to ensure it is fully effective.

## **Religion and belief policy**

### **1 Statement of intent**

1.1 UCFB celebrates and values the diversity brought to its community by individual employees and students and aims to create an environment where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all are respected.

1.2 This specific policy supports, and is underpinned by, the generic policy on Equality and Diversity.

### **2 Implementation**

2.1 Through relevant policies and procedures UCFB seeks to ensure that:

a) recruitment and selection of employees and students are based entirely on relevant criteria, which do not include religious belief or non-belief (except in the case of a genuine occupational requirement as permitted under the law/regulations);

b) Members of any religion or none are treated with equal dignity and fairness;

c) Members of all religions and beliefs are encouraged to apply for jobs and courses.

### **3 Context**

3.1 This policy aims to ensure equal treatment for everyone, of any religion or none. It is based on the principle that people have the right to their own belief system. However, they have no right to force it on others.

3.2 The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is absolute, but the right to manifest beliefs is qualified by the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

3.3 UCFB imposes no dress code on its employees and students, and welcomes the variety of individual styles and choices. The wearing of items arising from particular cultural/religious norms is seen as part of this welcome diversity.

3.4 The only limitations to the above are that:

a) health and safety requirements may mean that for certain tasks specific items of clothing such as overalls, protective clothing etc need to be worn. If such clothing produces a conflict with an individual's religious belief, the issue will be considered sympathetically with the aim of finding a satisfactory compromise;

b) on occasion it may be necessary to request removal of facial coverings to ascertain identity, for example at examinations;

c) wearing slogans or symbols which are discriminatory is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with accordingly under the student or employee disciplinary procedures.

#### 4 Religious observance

4.1 UCFB will make reasonable efforts to provide a suitable space for prayer and ablution if practical. In some cases individuals' requirements will be met by facilities in the neighbourhood. UCFB will provide information about these as appropriate.

4.2 All employees, regardless of religious belief or non-belief, are required to work in accordance with their contract. There is likely to be some flexibility over how the hours are worked. Line managers should make every attempt to ensure that those whose religion requires them to pray at certain times during the day are free to do so, using flexitime arrangements as appropriate. In addition, reasonable efforts should be made to accommodate requests from those who require, for example, an extra hour at midday on Friday, or not to work beyond sunset on Friday or at the weekends in ways that conflict with their religious beliefs.

4.3 Employees who wish to observe days of particular religious significance will have annual leave requests for those days considered sympathetically and as a priority, providing these days are requested at the beginning of the annual leave year, or when timetables are being drawn up for the forthcoming year, or when they first start work at UCFB.

4.4 The number of annual leave days overall will remain as in the contract of employment, for all employees, of any religious belief or none.

#### 5 Offensive actions or behaviour

6.1 Any attempt at coercing others to comply with a particular belief system, through threats or offensive remarks, or misuse of UCFBs services or facilities, or actions that may bring the UCFB into disrepute, may result in disciplinary action.

#### 6 Further advice

7.1 Further advice is available from the head of quality.

#### 7 Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed three years from the date of agreement and every three years thereafter to ensure it is fully effective.