



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

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Aims

It is important to HELOA to be a fair and inclusive charity. We are set up to encourage potential students from all backgrounds to consider higher education and recognise that our beneficiaries are a culturally rich and diverse group.

HELOA is open to all student recruitment, outreach and widening participation, marketing and admissions staff in higher education in the UK as both members and volunteers. We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our members and volunteers, eliminating unlawful discrimination, and doing what we can to remove barriers to access and participation in our events and processes. A diverse committee and membership is both an aim and end in itself, and will help our charity be as creative, innovative and effective as it can be.

Purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all our members, staff volunteers and embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation.
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Religion or belief
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race (including skin colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - a. Election and appointment of volunteers
 - b. Dealing with grievances and complaints
4. Reduce barriers to participation, with our opportunities open for all of our members, listening to and considering the needs and requirements of a diverse membership.
5. Comply with recommended practice on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Charity Governance Code in a transparent manner.
6. Create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and equal environment, based on mutual respect and valuing and recognising difference, where all of our members and volunteers can thrive.

Commitments

HELOA is committed to:

1. Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion across the charity as this provides a good foundation for our aims and objectives and helps us make better decisions. This includes taking expert advice on board, and undertaking regular reviews and research into best practice.
2. Creating an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all members and volunteers are recognised and valued.

Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in HELOA.

3. Assessing the impact of policies and practices to identify, remove or minimise any disadvantage to underrepresented groups or recognise any cultural or religious sensitivity or difference.
4. Making reasonable adjustments, as appropriate, to our training opportunities and conferences, to remove barriers to attendance for members with disabilities or additional needs.

We ensure all our conferences are run in venues that are accessible for those with mobility impairments including wheelchair users, have appropriate prayer facilities, and cater to a variety of dietary needs.

We always share notes and other resources from training events with the full membership for those who are unable to attend in person. We are also working towards offering more remote access to our training opportunities.

The committee will work to identify situations where people with a protected characteristic may suffer disadvantage, compared to people without.

We will try to prevent such disadvantage (or if this is not possible, to minimise it), and will take reasonable steps to explore requests. We will need to consider timescales, fair distribution of money, and any barriers at our venues.

5. Making decisions concerning volunteers and committee members based on known or proven ability. We remove the names on applications for all of our member-elected roles to help make sure that our representatives are selected based on their qualities and skills.

In addition, we hold informational interviews prior to elections to help ensure that candidates are appropriate for the roles and understand the responsibilities involved. This approach promotes fairness and supports the selection of representatives based on their abilities.

6. Making meetings accessible and looking into providing resources to support this. This includes creating an environment where behaving inclusively is standard practice and all voices are equal, and where members and trustees can constructively challenge each other.

Resources used in meetings and sessions will be made available in accessible formats.

7. Reviewing our practices and procedures regularly to ensure they are appropriate, effective, fair and consider any changes to the law. This policy will be reviewed by the HELOA Vice-Chair for Finance and Governance at least every two years.

Responsibilities

The HELOA UK Chair, has overall responsibility for leading EDI efforts. The HELOA Vice-Chair for Finance and Governance, is responsible for implementing the commitments and monitoring the EDI policy to ensure it remains up to date and relevant. All HELOA committee members are responsible for championing the EDI Policy and creating an inclusive culture.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

HELOA takes complaints of discrimination and harassment very seriously and will investigate them thoroughly. The individual making the complaint will be able to speak in a safe environment about their experience.

If the complaint is against a particular individual, the Operational Group will also hear their point of view. If the complaint is against an Operational Group member, that member will not be involved in conducting the investigation.

If the complaint is against the organisation, the committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future and must inform the members of how they propose to do this.

The committee will decide what action to take based on the principle of ensuring the continued inclusion and safety of any member who has experienced discrimination or harassment. Any decision to terminate someone's membership will be made by the committee in line with the rules set out in the constitution.

If you would like to make a complaint, please contact the HELOA Vice-Chair for Finance and Governance at governance@heloac.ac.uk.

Equal Opportunity Statement

HELOA is committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, medical history, skin colour, marital status, genetic information or parental status. We value and appreciate the diversity of our volunteers and membership and strive to continuously promote and celebrate this.

Monitoring and Review

The HELOA Operational Group has made a commitment to review this policy every three years to support best practice and determine how well the policy is working. The HELOA Vice-Chair for Finance and Governance is responsible for conducting this review which will include asking for feedback from HELOA members.

Glossary of terms

Term	Explanation
Belief	Something believed or accepted as true, especially a particular ideology or a body of principles accepted by a group of persons.
Bullying	Bullying may be broadly defined as behaviour which is: usually persistent, unwarranted and unwelcome, offensive, intimidating, humiliating, malicious or insulting. It undermines another person's confidence, leading to reduced self-esteem and self-worth.
Charity Governance Code	Sets out the minimum standards that charity trustees should meet to effectively manage and control their charity. It is designed to help

Term	Explanation
	charity trustees to meet their legal duties under the Charities Act 2009.
Disability	A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Discrimination	The practice of treating one person or group of people less fairly or less well than other people or groups.
Diversity	Recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected, and valued.
Equality	Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics.
Equality Act 2010	The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010 and legally protects people in the UK from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws, amalgamating them within a single Act, bringing together various pieces of equality legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations, particularly under the nine protected characteristics.
Ethnic origin	Ethnicity refers to the following shared traits within a particular group of people: • a long-shared history of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups and the memory of which it keeps alive. • a cultural tradition of its own including family and social manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance.

Term	Explanation
	• a common, however distant, geographical origin. • a common language and literature.
Gender	Refers to a person's innate sense of their own identity, which may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender identity does not necessarily represent a simple binary choice. Some people's gender identity is man or woman, while other people identify as other genders such as genderfluid, nonbinary, genderqueer etc, or indeed no gender at all, such as agender.
Gender Reassignment	Refers to someone who is transgender and includes anyone who has proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex.
Harassment	Unwanted behaviour relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
Homophobic	An umbrella term defining discrimination, prejudice or malicious acts towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning people.
Inclusion	This concerns the active creation of a learning, working and social environment that is welcoming, which recognises and celebrates difference and is reflected in structures, practices and attitudes.
Protected Characteristic	Protected characteristic is a term used in the Equality Act 2010 to describe the characteristics that people have in relation to which they are protected against discrimination and harassment. Under the Act, there are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
Race	Race is one of the nine protected characteristics. It refers to a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.
Racism	Discrimination, prejudice or malicious acts towards individuals or communities because of skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, language, customs or practices and place of birth.

Term	Explanation
Sex	A sex or legal sex is assigned to a person on the basis of primary / external sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions when they are born. A person's legal sex may be changed as part of gender reassignment.
Sexism	Discrimination based on a person's sex and/or gender identity. Examples of such discrimination could be limiting someone's employment and other opportunities based on their sex or gender, or by restricting rights such as voting rights.
Sexual orientation	Refers to a person's sexual attraction to other people, or lack thereof. This includes emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to other people.
Transphobic	The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are transgender.
Victimisation	Victimisation is when someone treats you badly or subjects you to a detriment because you complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination.