

Policy on Sexual Orientation

The following policy is based on a joint statement to combat homophobia in universities and colleges, which was agreed by the academic trade unions in England.

Explanation of Terms

Heterosexism is prejudice or discrimination against individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay or bisexual ("LGB"), or transgender, or are perceived to be. 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, although lesbophobia and biphobia are also coming into use.

Statement of Intent

As part of its overall commitment to equality of opportunity, the University of Chichester ("the University") is fully committed to promoting a good and harmonious working and learning environment where every member of the student and staff community is treated with respect and dignity. The University values its students and staff equally, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender assignment. It aims to create an environment in which all students and staff, whatever their sexuality or gender assignment, feel equally welcome and valued, and in which homophobic behaviour is not tolerated.

It is recognised that students and staff will hold a range of views on same-sex relationships, as do the doctrines of some religions. This policy does not seek to infringe anyone's rights to hold these views, but does seek to prevent them from being manifested in such a way that offends, intimidates, humiliates, or is hostile or degrading to others.

The University recognises the extent of heterosexist assumptions in society, and the existence of homophobia. Through the implementation of relevant policies and procedures the University seeks to ensure that:

1. Student recruitment, admission and progression is based entirely on relevant national Higher Education criteria, which under no circumstances would include sexual orientation.
2. Staff recruitment, progression and promotion is based entirely on relevant criteria, which under no circumstances would include sexual orientation.
3. Everyone is treated with equal dignity and fairness regardless of their sexual orientation.
4. Homophobic abuse, harassment or bullying (e.g. name-calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions) is a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.
5. The University will not tolerate any form of homophobic propaganda and will take action against any student or member of staff responsible for it in whatever form it takes e.g. written materials, graffiti, songs or speeches. The University will also remove immediately any written propaganda whenever it appears on the premises.
6. The University will provide a supportive environment for students and staff who wish it to be known that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual ("LGB"). However, it is the right of individuals to choose whether they wish to be open about their sexuality; to 'out' someone without their permission is a form of harassment and will be treated as such.
7. No assumption will be made that partners of students and staff are of the opposite sex. Wherever possible, employment benefits for staff will apply equally to same sex partners.
8. LGB issues will be included in all equality training of staff and students.

9. The Equal Opportunities Action Group will monitor incidents and complaints of harassment and will ensure that appropriate action has been taken. Reports on actions taken must be supplied to the Group by the manager involved.
10. Any student or member of staff who is undergoing gender reassignment should feel able to bring this to the attention of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (students) or their line manager or Head of Human Resources (staff), to ensure that they receive positive support to meet their particular needs during this period.

Implementation and Responsibilities

- All managers are required to familiarise themselves with this policy.
- All individual students and staff members are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and for informing appropriate staff of their particular requirements where appropriate.
- Any student or member of staff who feels that they have not been treated fairly in accordance with this policy should refer the matter to:
 - the Pro Vice-Chancellor for students
 - Human Resources for staff
 - Staff also have access to the grievance procedure.
- All visitors and contractors have a responsibility not to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. If a student or member of staff feels that such discrimination is occurring/has occurred, they should report the matter immediately, as outlined above. The person acting on behalf of the University will take appropriate steps to deal with it.

Monitoring of the Policy

Implementation of this policy will be kept under review by the Equal Opportunities Action Group.

Approved by Academic Board: March 2005

Approved by the Board of Governors: April 2005

Updated to reflect changes in institutional and officers' titles.

Issued: 16 February 2006 under authority granted by the Board of Governors on 3 November 2005

<p style="text-align: center;">We have conducted an impact assessment of this policy and believe it will have a neutral effect on race equality</p>
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