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2022-23 Academic Year

Equal Opportunities Policy

LSME recognises and values the diversity amongst its students, associates and staff. The organisation is therefore committed to the eradication of unlawful discrimination (both direct and indirect) including intimidation, prejudice, and harassment and bullying. The organisation is also committed to the principle of creating equality of opportunity for all members in all its activities and is determined to ensure that this commitment is reflected in practice through its policies and procedures.

LSME expects that students, associates and staff, when acting on behalf of the organisation, will treat all people equally irrespective of their race, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability or appearance. Students, associates and staff expect to be treated fairly and not to be discriminated against either when dealing with each other or with other people who come into contact with the organisation.

Definitions

The terms equity and equality sound similar, but implementing one versus the other can lead to dramatically different outcomes particularly for marginalized people. Equality refers to giving each individual or group of people the same resources or opportunities. Equity on the other hand recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome for all parties.

Our social systems are intentionally designed to reward specific demographics. If this occurs for so long, they appear unintentional although they are actually rooted in discriminatory practices and beliefs. Equity addresses the imbalanced social systems by the application of the principles of justice and fairness. Justice helps to fix social systems in a way that leads to long-term, sustainable, equitable access to services and resources.

Direct discrimination: This is when you experience worse treatment than another person or other people because:

- you have a protected characteristic
- you are perceived as someone who has that protected characteristic (known as discrimination by perception)
- you associate with someone with that protected characteristic (known as discrimination by association)

The treatment must have happened in one of the situations that are covered by the Equality Act (2010). Such as, in the workplace or when you are receiving goods or services.

Indirect discrimination: this happens when there is a policy, rule or practice that applies in the same way for everybody but disadvantages a group of people who share a protected characteristic, and you are disadvantaged as part of this group. If this happens, the person or organisation applying the policy must show that there is a good reason for it. It is still indirect discrimination even if the policy or rule was not intentionally designed to disadvantage anyone.

Racism means prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity based on the belief that one's own race is superior. This form of discrimination is particularly directed towards Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME). People of any colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin are protected from race discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Islamophobia is the fear, hatred of, or prejudice against the Islamic religion or Muslims particularly, when they are perceived as a political force or a source of terrorism. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their religion. This includes treating them less favourably or harassing them on grounds of their religion.

As approved by its Board of Directors, LSME has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, which states that. "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

Anti-Semitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are Anti-Semitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property (such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries) are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others. However, according to the Home Affairs Select Committee in 2016, it is not anti-Semitic to criticise the government of Israel if there is no additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent. It is not Anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli government to the same standards as other democracies or show particular interests in their policies or actions if there is no additional evidence to suggest Anti-Semitism.

LSME will work with its academic community to discuss any changes in the key definitions that support its equality, diversity and inclusivity strategy. Freedom of speech within the law for all staff, students and visiting speakers is guaranteed by the College's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, which will not be affected by the adoption of such specific statements and definitions.

Subject to the statutory provisions of the organisation, no member or employee will be treated less favourably than any other on the grounds of sex, marital or parental status, race-ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or religion. This policy ensures that staff are treated wholly based on their aptitudes, skills and abilities in relation to the requirements of the post. This applies to all aspects of employment including recruitment and selection, probation, appraisal, staff development, promotion, redundancy, disciplinary or grievance procedures.

This policy ensures that students are admitted to study at the College in line with the Admissions Policy, based on merit, aptitude, ability and academic performance aligned with contextual admissions to improve access to higher education for the socially disadvantaged individuals in society.

If any member or employee of the organisation or applicant for studentship or employment in the organisation considers that he or she has been treated less fairly than another in any of the aspects listed in the preceding paragraph, he or she may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the organisation's agreed procedures for complaints or grievances as indicated below. See the Complaints and Grievance policies and procedures for more information.

Legal Framework

LSME will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. This policy is informed by

- The Equality Act (2010) and associated secondary legislation.
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008).
- The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006).
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004).
- The Human Rights Act (1998).
- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997).
- Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001).

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination and harassment on the grounds of nine protected characteristics, one of which is gender reassignment. This includes transgender people, people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone the process of changing their gender. To qualify for protection, a transgender person does not have to show that they are under medical supervision or inform the university of their trans status. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 enables people to change their legal gender. This includes the right to a new birth certificate if the birth was registered in the UK, and provides recognition of a person's affirmed gender for all legal purposes. It means that the person must be regarded as their affirmed gender in all aspects of life.

Policy implementation

To implement this policy, LSME will:

- Embrace and value our diverse staff and student community as an essential element in enhancing LSME's contribution to the education of its local community and surrounding areas.
- Remain committed to fostering a supportive, enabling and inclusive environment, where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and where there is equality of opportunity for all through equitable distribution of resources and services regardless of characteristics or background.
- Provide access to higher education to the disadvantaged individuals within our local communities.
- Embed equality and diversity in mainstream activities from admission until the final qualification is awarded. This will include providing mandatory training and advice to all staff on the importance of equality and diversity and in respect of subconscious bias with students and the workforce during recruitment and succession planning. This training will also facilitate the conducting of recruitment campaigns to attract a more diverse range of applicants as well as assist in the development of training materials appropriate for inclusive learning.
- Provide individual needs assessments for applicants and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from disadvantaged background to encourage their participation and attainment and to improve the overall outcomes for these students.
- Ensure that support arrangements are in place at the entry and throughout their programmes of study for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which are both seen and unseen.
- Provide reference to this policy in student and staff information on the Virtual Learning Environment to explain the position of the organisation in relation to discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or parental status, race-ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, gender identity or religion. This will increase the knowledge and awareness of Equality and Diversity issues relating to staff and students and how to address these.
- Ensure that trans students are always referred to by their preferred name, not their birth name and are referred to using the gender pronoun (he/she/they) that they prefer. If unsure what the correct pronoun is, the staff member should ask the student. For example, 'how would you like to be addressed' or 'how should I refer to you when speaking to others'. If a trans person informs a staff member that a word or phrasing is inappropriate or offensive, then that staff member should take their word for it, and adjust their phraseology accordingly.
- Develop partnerships to involve staff and students in promoting Equality and Diversity activities throughout the College. Student representatives can discuss issues surrounding the provision for students with disabilities in an open dialogue with staff and managers.
- Hold regular in-house training on Equality and Diversity highlighting Anti-Semitism and xenophobia.
- In addition, LSME is committed to monitoring its activities and functions to ensure equality of outcomes and to ensure that it complies with all current equality and diversity legislation.

- To ensure we have installed adequate accessibility features to provide access to our website and virtual learning environment to all and particularly those with disabilities.

To monitor the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy for students and staff, the organisation will:

- review the Equal Opportunities Policy regularly and publish revisions as required;
- collect and analyse information on Student Equal Opportunities annually and publish reports where appropriate; -
- conduct Equality Impact Assessments throughout our policies and procedures, such as admissions, teaching and learning, assessment and moderation of higher education programmes in LSME, as well as events and public information.
- monitor the operation of the policy through reporting to Academic Board and senior management. All reports must include information on equal opportunity data analysed for the academic year and on training and how equality and diversity have been effectively embedded in the College activities throughout the year, and aim to comply fully with all relevant legislation and remain successful with our commitment to the Disability Confident Scheme.

Complaints

Complaints about any form of discrimination against either staff or students are taken very seriously and could provide grounds for disciplinary action that may lead to dismissal or expulsion from the College. Furthermore, individuals may be subject to prosecution.

Complaints about any form of discrimination in employment should be made, if possible, to your line manager or Programme Leader or the Principal. The complaint will be dealt with through the grievance procedures set out in the complaints procedures. If appropriate, and depending on the nature of the complaint, a Complaint Hearing Panel consisting of academic and non-academic staff from across the College including the Student Welfare Officer is made available to talk to staff, or students, in confidence. The composition of the Panel members is agreed upon by the Principal. The Panel offers support, advice and assistance in seeking a satisfactory solution to the issues raised. The Panel is willing to discuss any incidents or problems, no matter how serious or trivial they may seem.

Complaints about discrimination involving students should be made to the relevant Head of Department or Programme Leader who will investigate the claim and initiate disciplinary action against students in accordance with the procedures set out in our Misconduct Policy and Procedures. These procedures include referral to a Disciplinary Panel for investigation, which may impose a range of penalties, including termination of studies at the College.

Complaints about discrimination involving contractors and visitors should be made to the Principal or the Executive Director of the College. You may also wish to contact the national body mandated to investigate discrimination, the Equality and Human Rights Commission should all internal procedures fail to resolve the issue.

Complaints about discrimination will be monitored on an annual basis by the Complaint Handling Committee. The monitoring process will report to the Academic Board or the Board of Directors depending on the nature of the complaint. Names of individuals concerned with incidents will not be published.

Responsibilities

Staff and Students

All staff and students have a responsibility for their behaviour and actions. Everyone has a responsibility to support the rights of all individuals and to maintain an environment in which discrimination is not tolerated.

Senior Management

Senior Management has a responsibility to ensure that staff and students are aware of this policy and their responsibilities. When trying to resolve any complaint of discrimination, managers will seek to identify ways of dealing with issues through informal and formal channels, as highlighted in the complaints procedures of the College.



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