

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy and procedure

The Architectural Association (AA) is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive and welcoming community where equality, diversity and inclusion are valued. The AA aims to ensure that:

- all individuals who come into contact with the AA, whether as staff, students or in other capacities, are treated without discrimination
- the opportunities the AA provides for learning, personal development and employment are made available on a non-discriminatory basis.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students. The AA expects all external examiners, consultants, agency staff, contractors, suppliers and visitors to operate and behave in a manner consistent with this policy.

Definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion

- **Equal treatment** involves much more than simply treating everyone the same. The AA recognises that some groups and individuals have particular and specific needs that need to be met if they are to enjoy equal access to the education and employment offered by the AA. The AA also recognises that different or more flexible ways of doing things may be needed to ensure genuine equality of access or opportunity for groups and individuals who have persistent and/or longstanding disadvantage.
- **Diversity** involves an acknowledgement of the benefits and intrinsic worth derived from the range of difference within our community and fostering it as a strength. We aim to celebrate and to value the differences between individuals' cultural, social and intellectual contribution to the AA and will seek to promote greater mutual understanding between groups and individuals who reflect these differences; and will seek to use the talents and experiences that each and every individual can bring to the AA.
- **Inclusion** involves the AA and its staff designing and operating flexible practices and procedures that take appropriate account of the needs and views of students, staff and visitors.
- **Legal framework and definitions** The AA endorses the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all members of the AA community.

To achieve this, the AA will:

- promote equality, fairness and respect for all students and staff
- not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Discrimination occurs when the recipient is treated unfairly or less favourably in relation to the protected characteristics listed above.

Victimisation occurs when a person is subject to a detriment because they made a complaint of discrimination or provided evidence or information in connection with a complaint of discrimination, or someone believes that they have done so or may do so that they consider unacceptable.

Responsibilities

- Council is responsible for ‘setting the tone’ for the AA and making strategic decisions in light of information presented to them in, for example, the annual report.
- The Director is responsible for communicating a clear commitment to EDI and for producing a complementary EDI strategy covering staff and students, setting out the key objectives and targets that the AA is seeking to achieve, how it intends to achieve them, and by when. The Director is also responsible for ensuring that a mandatory training programme is in place for all staff and students in support of the EDI policy and strategy and associated DAWS policy.
- Managers and others in a position of trust will:
 - ensure that the aims and the values embodied in this policy are reflected in all job descriptions, person specifications and annual appraisals
 - have due regard to equality issues in all decision-making
 - investigate whether any groups, including people with protected characteristics have particular needs in relation to accessing services
 - ensure that due consideration is given to equality, diversity and inclusion within their own sphere of influence

- promote an environment where respect is shown to all, and mutual understanding is fostered
- challenge any actions or behaviour which are in conflict with the values and principles laid down in this policy
- ensure staff and students are aware of the DAWS policy and Code of Behavioural Expectations, and know how to report any instances of discrimination, bullying and harassment without fear of victimisation
- deal with complaints fairly, thoroughly, quickly and confidentially.

Academic teaching staff will promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all learning settings and develop student understanding and realisation of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Commitment

The AA has a **zero tolerance** approach to discriminatory conduct by all those covered by this policy. Allegations of discrimination will be taken seriously. Action will be taken to stop such conduct in line with the procedure outlined below. Staff and students are empowered by this policy to raise concerns and make complaints if they experience any conduct that they consider discriminatory.

Procedures to address alleged breaches of the EDI policy

The Grievance procedure for staff and Complaints procedure for students describe both informal and formal procedures for staff and students to use if they wish to formalise their concern about inequality, lack of diversity or non-inclusion. Matters relating to alleged breaches by third parties will be dealt with bilaterally according to the circumstances.

Informal and formal staff grievances or student complaints may be made following the process described in these procedures.

Formal staff grievances or student complaints are more appropriate for serious instances or repeated breaches where previous informal attempts to resolve issues may have failed.

Staff grievance and student complaints procedures provide fair and comprehensive processes, and appeal procedures are available if the individual is not satisfied with the outcome.

Training

A training programme will be mandatory for all staff and students to understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to the EDI policy. Responsibilities include conducting themselves in such a way as to help the AA foster equality and inclusion, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

Monitoring, Reporting and Review

The Head of HR and the School Registrar will report jointly on the effectiveness of this policy as part of an annual report to Council. Data, conclusions and recommendations will feed into the AA's strategic planning cycle.

The report will include EDI objectives and action plan with data across the range of protected characteristics with key performance indicators for each aspect. Data will include:

- profile of the staff and student population
- student applications, admissions, assessment and attainment of degrees
- recruitment and selection of staff
- staff turnover
- complaints, linked to the range of protected characteristics, including harassment and bullying, grievances and disciplinary proceedings for staff and students
- EDI training

The policy will be reviewed regularly and may also be amended from time to time to reflect and take account of changes in legislation and best practice.

This policy replaces all previous equality and diversity policies within the AA.

Consultation

The AA welcomes the active involvement of students and staff in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion to identify how the AA's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion can be more effectively realised.