



Fairfield School of Business

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Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Version	4.3 Public
Last updated	September 2025
Category	Regulations
Approved by	Board of Governors

Abstract:

Fairfield School of Business is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion across all its activities and functions. This policy sets how the School will meet the Public Sector Equality Duty by eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010) and those who do not.

Related policies:

- *Dignity Policy (formerly: Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy)*
- *FSB's Codes of Conduct*
- *Transgender and Non-Binary Policy*
- *Reasonable Adjustments Policy*
- *Academic-Freedom-Policy-and-Code-of-Practice*

Applicability:

This policy applies to all staff (including contractors and volunteers) students and visitors at Fairfield School of Business (FSB).

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1. Definitions

- 1.1. **‘The Equality Act (2010)’** is the UK’s statutory legislation for protecting people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The School’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has been informed by the Act and all other applicable legislation.
- 1.2. **‘Protected Characteristics’** are characteristics identified in the Equality Act that may make a person vulnerable to unlawful exclusion or discrimination; these include:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin)
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- (Full legal definitions of the above are given in Appendix A)
- 1.3. **‘Equality’** refers to a situation in which people are treated equally and with parity of esteem, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
- 1.4. **‘Inclusion’** refers to the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, particularly due to their having one or more protected characteristics.
- 1.5. **‘Diversity’** refers to the comparative number of people included in something who have a protected characteristic versus those who do not.

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1. Fairfield School of Business is committed to fostering a culture of **equality, diversity, and inclusion** where every member of our community—students, staff, and partners—is treated with dignity and respect. We believe that a diverse environment, encompassing varied backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and identities, is fundamental to academic excellence, innovation, and enriching the educational experience. This policy affirms our dedication to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and building an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.
- 2.2. Fairfield School of Business is committed to :

- i. eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- ii. advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- iii. fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

2.3. This policy applies to all aspects of Fairfield School of Business' work as a learning provider and as an employer, however we recognise the following to be of particular significance:

- The selection and admission of students
- The recruitment, development, promotion, and remuneration of staff and governors
- The accessibility of learning opportunities offered by the School to all who can benefit from them
- The accessibility of our facilities to all that use them
- The provision of support and guidance to students and staff
the treatment of people who are subject to disciplinary proceedings or official investigations

2.4. FSB does not tolerate any form of abusive or discriminatory behaviour, regardless of whether such behaviour is deliberate or inadvertent. Any failure to uphold these principles will be considered as a breach of the School's Code of Conduct, warranting action under its disciplinary procedures.

2.5. FSB will achieve its policy aims by:

- Promoting its values of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to members of its academic community and embedding them within its teaching and learning practices.
- Setting mechanisms for effective oversight and evaluation of the accessibility of learning and employment opportunities.
- Fostering a culture within the School where people can feel confident about raising issues around equality, diversity, and inclusion, and providing means of doing so.
- Establishing and maintaining an admissions process which is supportive of the needs of all students and provides for assessment of learning support for those students who may have special needs.

- Making reasonable adjustments and adaptations to its learning opportunities and facilities where practicable.
- Considering and assessing the impact of its decisions on particular groups who may be disadvantaged or excluded.
- Ensuring fair and sound investigative procedures are in place to review potential breaches of this policy and take remedial action.
- Providing appropriate support to anyone who has been unlawfully discriminated against.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1. FSB's Board of Governors is ultimately accountable for compliance with the Equality Act and for ensuring that FSB achieves the policy aims set out herein. It will do this by reviewing statistical information regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, such as:
- data on student enrolments and attainment with regard to the prevalence of people with protected characteristics,
 - the diversity of job applicants, shortlisted candidates, new appointments, academic promotions, student applications, admissions and attainment,
 - the diversity and makeup of the School's organs of governance,
 - other information, concerns or risks about equality, diversity of inclusion received through feedback, complaints, grievances, surveys etc.
- 3.2. This information will be monitored as part of the annual Equality Information Report, which will be prepared for the Board of Governors.
- 3.3. All data used as part of the monitoring process will be managed in accordance with the School's [Data Protection Policy](#).
- 3.4. The Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that staff and students understand the expectations placed on them by this policy and that breaches are investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. This includes making the appropriate training and knowledge available.
- 3.5. All members of FSB's academic community and visitors to its premises are responsible for their own behaviour and for treating people with dignity and respect.

4. Students

Recruitment of students

- 4.1. FSB recruits all students based on their academic suitability to the programme applied for and the relevance of the programme to that individual's academic and professional ambitions.
- 4.2. FSB is committed to make its learning opportunities accessible to anyone who may benefit from them and regardless of their academic background. Students can submit applications for non-standard entry through consideration of professional or alternative qualifications, or significant relevant professional experience.

Teaching and assessment

- 4.3. FSB ensures that all new programme proposals and modifications to existing programmes are designed to be accessible to students across all backgrounds, particularly those who are returning to education, or who have limited experience of an academic environment.
- 4.4. The School develops teaching approaches which are appropriate for its intended audience and mindful of the diverse needs of our student demographics and their differentiated learning needs.
- 4.5. Students are able to access a range of assessment methods which are designed to be mindful of the varying and diverse needs of the student population, and which are reflective of current sector and professional practice.
- 4.6. FSB has rigorous processes in place to ensure that the assessment of student's learning outcomes reflects their true academic ability. Summative assessments are sampled and reviewed by external examiners against unambiguous learning outcome descriptors. As such no student will be unfairly penalised in their assessment based on having a protected characteristic.

Educational and Support Needs

- 4.7. FSB is committed to dealing in a fair and considerate manner with the special educational needs that individual students may have and wherever possible, to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate those needs, whilst maintaining the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the qualifications it offers.
- 4.8. Special arrangements will be made on an individual basis, and based on precedent.

- 4.9. Students are expected to make a disability known either to their Admissions Advisor at the point of application, or to their Student Support team as soon as the disability becomes known to them. School staff will endeavour to assess the student's needs and the implications for their study. Where appropriate, evidence may be required to support a request for special arrangements to be made.
- 4.10. Where necessary, the School will support students to access additional external support, such as funding through Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).

5. Employees

Recruitment

- 5.1. FSB aims to attract and recruit employees who are of a high professional calibre and who are appropriately qualified and capable of performing the duties expected of them. It is naturally within the School's interests to appoint the most suitable candidates available to it.
- 5.2. The School will give equal consideration to appropriately qualified applicants during the recruitment process and will not discriminate unlawfully.
- 5.3. The School's criteria for selection will relate to the requirements of the job, relevant qualifications, and relevant experience. The person specification is objective, ensuring that all the criteria included are appropriate and relevant to the performance of the job in question.
- 5.4. Shortlisting and interviewing processes will be thorough, fair and free from discrimination. To support this, FSB will provide training for all employees involved in recruitment and selection to help them understand our processes and make them aware of relevant employment laws.
- 5.5. If an applicant has a disability, FSB will make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process, and if successful in their application, to workplace and working arrangements so the individual can work at the School.
- 5.6. The School will promote best practice in recruitment and selection. It will continuously develop its recruitment and selection practices to allow innovative ideas and approaches to be incorporated.

Pay and conditions

- 5.7. FSB supports the principle of equality of treatment in employment and is committed to ensuring that procedures to determine the pay, conditions and promotion prospects of all employees do not discriminate unlawfully and are free from bias.
- 5.8. FSB understands that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under UK employment law, and will routinely undertake a gender pay gap assessment to flag where this is not the case.

Equal pay audits

- 5.9. We conduct equal pay reviews to identify any areas of pay inequality that may require further exploration, and to measure the success of our ongoing activity to diversify our staff population in relation to gender and ethnicity.
- 5.10. We recognise that eradication of pay gaps will be a result of the success of our strategies related to embedding equity, improving representation, and building an inclusive culture.

Training and development:

- 5.11. FSB is committed to ensuring that colleagues are aware of, and are actively implementing, what is required of them to comply with FSB's policies and all relevant legislation.
- 5.12. FSB does not discriminate when providing training and development that allows staff to carry out their jobs more effectively. This applies to full-time or part-time or on a permanent or fixed-term contract.

6. Raising a concern or making and complaint

- 6.1. FSB provides several avenues through which concerns about equality, diversity or inclusion may be brought to its attention:
 - Prospective students may use the admissions complaints procedure, should they feel they have been unfairly refused a place at the School, or unlawfully discriminated against based on having a protected characteristic.
 - Students should use the FSB's Student Complaints Procedure to raise concerns where they feel they have been unfairly excluded or inadvertently discriminated against. Additionally, students can collectively engage with the management of the School via their elected representatives, to promote issues of equality, diversity and inclusion within the School's committees of oversight.

- Serious and/or deliberate instances of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation may warrant separate investigation under FSB's Anti-bullying and Harassment procedures. Such cases will be investigated as breaches of the School's Codes of Conduct and the School may take disciplinary action against individuals who behave abusively to members of the School's Academic community.
- If a member of staff wishes to raise a concern about fair and equal treatment, they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or Head of Department, who will consult with the HR Department. If these informal steps do not resolve the issue, the employee should contact their Faculty/Department HR Manager.
- Severe and systemic breaches of this policy may be notified to the School's senior management using its Protected Disclosure (Whistleblowing) procedures.

7. Inclusion and Academic Freedom

- 7.1. We value academic freedom, freedom of expression and inclusion. Academic Freedom is an essential part of academic and life and flourishes where there is tolerance of, and respect for, a wide range of views and beliefs.
- 7.2. In addition, everyone has the right to freedom of expression within the law. Our legal obligations and our commitment to inclusion demand that we exercise our freedoms responsibly, respectfully and with due regard to the values we share as a community. This means that neither academic freedom nor freedom of expression can be used as an excuse for subjecting an individual or group to bullying or harassment or for committing a hate incident.

8. Review and Update

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with all applicable legislation and reflects best practice. Changes to this policy will be approved by FSB's Board of Governors.

Appendix A: Descriptors for the Protected Characteristics

Descriptors for the 'Protected characteristics' refer to the interpretational guidance published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission¹. They are defined in the following terms:

Age

A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

Guidance on [age discrimination](#).

Disability

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Guidance on [disability discrimination](#).

Gender reassignment

Where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex.

Guidance on gender [reassignment discrimination](#).

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Guidance on [marriage and civil partnership discrimination](#).

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Guidance on [pregnancy and maternity discrimination](#).

Race

A race is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

Guidance on [race discrimination](#).

¹ [Protected characteristics | EHRC \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)

Religion or belief

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Guidance on [religion or belief discrimination](#).

Sex

A man or a woman.

Guidance on [sex discrimination](#).

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Guidance on [sexual orientation discrimination](#).

Appendix B: Legal Framework

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 creates both civil and criminal offences for harassment and makes provision for protecting persons from harassment and similar conduct.

The Human Rights Act 1998 Article 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion); Article 10 (freedom of expression); and Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association).

The Equality Act 2010 requires the School, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between diverse groups.

Document governance

Document owner*	Principal / Vice Principal
Consulted parties**	Quality Manager; HR Advisor; Student Lifecycle and Enhancement Manager; SU President
Next update due	September 2026
Classification	Public – Anyone can view this document

**Responsible for updates to this content.*

***To be consulted on updates to this content.*

Versions

Version no.	Description of Changes	Approved by	Date
1.0 – 3.7	Original version and subsequent updates	FSB Executive	Sep 2017 Jan 2018 Mar 2019 Sep 2019
3.8 – 3.9	Version reformatted; version control added and subsequent annual updates	Board of Governors	Nov 19 Sep 20
4.0 – 4.2	Substantial re-write to closer align with EHRC guidance and subsequent annual updates	Board of Governors	Jan 22 Sep 22 Jan 24
4.3	Governing Body reporting protocols added – new formatting applied.	Board of Governors	Oct 25