



Equality, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Policy

Statement of Values and Aims

The Oxford Union Society seeks to be an open, diverse, accessible and inclusive society in which all who meet the criteria for membership feel welcome irrespective of their legally protected characteristics or socio-economic background; that they are treated with dignity and respect; and enjoy an equality of opportunity to

- access its facilities and services to members;
- participate in the full range of the Society's core activities according to their merit and general contribution to the Society's purposes; and
- contribute to all aspects of the Society's governance and general management through serving in appointed roles or in elected offices.

It actively seeks through its conduct and policies to

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a legally protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation) and those who do not;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- be fully accessible to and advance equality of opportunity for those who come from under-represented or less advantaged backgrounds and, subject to budgetary constraints, to promote policies and arrangements that support this.

2. In support of this policy, the Oxford Union Standing Committee will:

- Keep under active review the Society's Rules, policies and procedures to ensure that they are, and remain consistent with, this equality, diversity, access and inclusion policy;

- Conduct an impact assessment of the effect on staff, members, or potential members of any new Rules, policies and procedures that are proposed for adoption to ensure that they are consistent with this policy and consider carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment ;
- Develop a strategy and supporting action plan to improve the equality of opportunity, accessibility, diversity, and inclusiveness of the Society, including, but not limited to the following:
 - i. adopting and upholding a statement of expected standards of behaviour from members, staff, and contractors;
 - ii. maintenance and development of its current outreach programme to encourage membership from students from under-represented backgrounds;
 - iii. conducting an accessibility survey of building and facilities and developing a plan for improving, subject to resource constraints, the accessibility of the Union facilities to those with physical disabilities in the short, medium, and longer term; and
 - iv. publishing on the Society’s website an accessibility guide to include information and guidance on the kind of further reasonable adjustments (e.g. re-locating meetings) that the Society may be able to make to meet an individual member or visitor’s needs.
- Ensure that all Committee members, staff and contractors who have contact with members and their guests receive appropriate training (to be refreshed as required and at no more three-year intervals) to understand their equality duties, the risks of implicit bias, dignity at work, how to carry out an equality impact assessment, etc.;
- Carry out equality monitoring of its staff, ordinary members, and Committee members in relation to legally protected and other characteristics relevant to the achievement of its equality, inclusion, and diversity aims, in so far as is compatible with the Society’s data protection obligations; review these data and relevant comparable available data for the University of Oxford in the Standing Committee at least once a year; and publish them annually;

- Ensure that recruitment and selection of staff and decisions on their promotion and advancement are consistent with this policy¹ ; and
- Review and update this policy and supporting action plan at least once a year to ensure that they reflect the Society's current priorities

Behavioural Values

3. As such, members and their guests are expected to:

- Always treat other members and their guests with dignity and respect
- Respect and care for the Society's buildings
- Conduct themselves in such a way that is conducive to the Society's aims and business and consistent with the its commitment to being an open, accessible, diverse, and inclusive society
- Obey the Rules and Standing Orders of the Society. Particular attention should be given to Rule 33 and Rule 71.

The Oxford Union will not tolerate behaviour which does not live up to such standards.

While the Standing Committee, supported by the Access Committee, will have overall responsibility for the ongoing implementation and review of this policy, it is the particular responsibility of the President and President Elect, supported by the Bursar, to ensure compliance with it. Among the Society's trustees, the Senior Treasurer has particular responsibility for matters relating to this policy.

Each President, supported by the President Elect, will present a written report to the Standing and Audit Committees on progress towards the fulfilment of the agreed EDAI priorities and objectives before the end of their term of office. The report prepared before the end of each Trinity Term will be published on the Society's website by 31 July. It will review progress against the agreed priorities and objectives during the whole of the year, include the equality monitoring data, and identify the Society's key EDAI priorities and objectives for the coming academic year.

¹ See Employee Handbook

Last updated: 13/6/22 TC