

Updated Emergency SRC May 2010

1) Introduction

1.1 USSA is committed to equal opportunities for all individuals who use USSA services and access its premises, by taking a proactive approach to equality, supporting and encouraging underrepresented groups and promoting an enjoyable, comfortable, inclusive and diverse culture which enhances the student experience.

USSA aims to develop an organisational culture where everyone recognises their personal responsibility to uphold equal opportunities and this contributes to the success of USSA.

We are committed to a positive policy of equal opportunities and the delivery of its services and employment of staff, USSA will not condone bullying in any form.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members are valued and respected for their differences and to create a climate of greater confidence and one free from hostility. We must ensure that equality of opportunity is at the core of all activity, to further enhance the student experience.

USSA is a campaigning organisation that needs to represent its diverse membership. USSA recognises that inequality, oppression and discrimination exist and aims to work towards elimination of discrimination for its members and employees.

1.2 Definition of Discrimination

To treat one particular group of people/ an individual less favourably than others on the basis of age, gender, gender orientation, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religious belief, culture, belief system, disability, learning difficulty, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, marital status, economic status, health status (including where a person has AIDS or a related condition or are HIV positive), parenting/caring responsibilities, politics and/or trade union interest or activity, social background or any other irrelevant distinction.

Direct Discrimination:

Where an individual or group of people is treated less favourably than others in circumstances which are the same or not materially different. Indirect Discrimination Where a requirement or condition, or circumstances or behaviour, has a negative or disproportionate effect on an individual or a group of people. Positive Action This takes into account the causes and effects of discrimination and the need to take steps to positively redress the imbalance and to promote equality of access and opportunity.

Institutionalised Discrimination:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people in different equality groups. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage equality groups.

1.3 All students, student groups and members of USSA agree to abide by the terms of this Policy.

1.4 Disciplinary Action Members of USSA are bound by the policies and regulations of USSA. Students, Student Groups or individuals who are in breach of this Policy will be subject to a disciplinary hearing which may result in disciplinary action.

2) Student Activities

2.1 Aims:

- a) USSA requires all student groups and societies to acknowledge that their responsibilities regarding Equal Opportunities affect more than just their own members but the membership of USSA as a whole
- b) That all organised student groups within USSA abide by this Policy

2.2 Implementation:

- a) Membership of a group will be taken to imply an understanding to commitment and acceptance of this Policy.
- b) It will be the responsibility of each group's committee to ensure that all meetings, publications, communications and activities of its respective club or society are fully in line with this Policy
- c) Part of the responsibility of a group is that at least one member of its governing committee attends an Equal Opportunities training session organised by USSA.
- d) All incoming Executive members and Convenors/Presidents of student groups/clubs and societies are obliged to sign their commitment to uphold and promote the Equal Opportunities Policy which will be kept on file.

2.3 Liberation groups

- i. (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), Race Relations, Students With Disabilities (SWD) and the Women's Group) exist to provide a safe space for and support to students who self define into these groups.
- ii. Liberation groups campaign for equality, and are core to USSA's values as an Association.
- iii. Autonomy is crucial to any liberation campaign; autonomy is the idea that oppressed or disempowered groups of people organise for themselves.

3) Elections

3.1 Aims:

- a) USSA aims to ensure that all aspects of practice in relation to elections abide by the requirements and guidelines set out in this Policy
- b) USSA considers that members from all areas of the student body should be encouraged to stand for and vote in elections

3.2 Implementation:

- a) USSA regards the Democratic Services Body/Elected Officer as responsible for ensuring that all aspects of practice within the election process comply with this Policy
- b) The Equality and Diversity Forum will work with the Democratic Services Body/Elected Officer to improve participation of underrepresented groups in elections.

4) Services

4.1 Aims:

a) USSA aims to recognise the wide-ranging diversity of tastes and interests held by the student body and seek to ensure that services and entertainment within USSA reflects such diversity and to provide a welcoming atmosphere without fear of harassment to all members of the student body for all USSA events

4.2 Implementation:

a) USSA events which are organised by an USSA student group or any event organised by USSA members for predominantly non USSA members must adhere to this Policy at all times

b) Events organised by outside bodies, within USSA premises, should adhere to this Policy at all times. No bookings should be made in respect of organisations known by reputation to breach this Policy.

5) Publications

5.1 Aims:

a) USSA aims to ensure that all practice in relation to publications complies with this Policy

b) Publicity and the student media should reflect the diversity of USSA's membership

5.2 Implementation

a) it is the responsibility of the Editor of any publication to ensure that all articles or publicity abides by the Equal Opportunities Policy

b) If a publication is found to be in breach of this Policy, the Editor will be subject to a disciplinary hearing which may result in disciplinary action.

6) USSA Access

6.1 Aims:

a) USSA aims to enable all students and visitors to access the facilities on the premises and, wherever possible, to be of practical assistance

b) USSA believes that, wherever possible, the services of USSA should cater for students and visitors with disabilities and that this aim should be reflected in managerial decision making and training

6.2 Implementation

a) Pending any difficulties with accessibility, complaints should be submitted to the Equality and Diversity Forum/Officer who will work with the Services Officer so that a long-term solution can be found

b) This should be dealt with as soon as possible.

7) Responsibility and Monitoring

7.1 Responsibility

The Vice President Equality and Diversity will be responsible for being the primary representative and spokesperson for Equal Opportunities in the USSA

7.2 Publicising Equal Opportunities

a) the Equal Opportunities Policy will be readily available and extensively publicised

b) an Equal Opportunities statement will be distributed to all Freshers in their Freshers' Pack

8) Complaints Procedure

8.1 Any person or group who believes that they have been discriminated against on any of the grounds specified in this Policy should keep a record of any instances of discrimination. A detailed record should be kept in respect of what happened, where and when it happened, how that individual or group felt at the time, whether there were any witnesses to the discrimination and if so the identity of the witnesses

8.2 Where discrimination occurs individuals and/or groups should bring the matter to the attention of the Vice President Diversity (VPD) immediately.

Where the person about whom the individual wishes to complain is an Executive member, the individual should bring the matter to the attention of the Association President as follows: The formal complaint should be in writing and should contain:

- the name of the alleged offender the nature of the discrimination
- dates and times when the discrimination occurred
- the names of any witnesses to the alleged discrimination
- any action taken to seek to stop the discrimination

The relevant officer will investigate and follow disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.