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| **Quality Nominee** | | **Rumiana Bahova Nuseibeh** | | **Forward Revision Date** | **05/11/2024** |
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**Equal opportunities Policy**

**1. Policy**

The University is committed in its pursuit of academic excellence to make sure that equal opportunity policy is available and fairly implemented among its learners, staff and academic staff. HTU has strict equal opportunity policy and will have a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. This commitment is underpinned by the University's core values, expressed in:

* Freedom of thought and expression.
* Freedom from discrimination.

**2. Scope of Policy**

HTU is committed to a policy and practice, which require that, for students, admission to the University and progression within its programmes will be determined only by personal merit and by performance. *HTU’s equality policy requires that all students should have an equal opportunity to access their qualifications and assessments, and that qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every student.*

For staff, entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria, which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the institution concerned.

Subject to statutory provisions, no student, member of staff, applicant for admission as a student, or applicant for appointment as a member of staff will be treated less favorably than another because of her or his belonging to a protected group. This commitment applies to a former student, alumnus or alumna, or former employee where the alleged unlawful conduct arises out of and is closely connected to the former student's or former staff member's previous relationship with the University.

**3. Definition of Equal Opportunities under The Equality Act 2010**

The term “equal opportunities” upholds the idea that all workers should be entitled to and have access to all of the university’s facilities at every stage of employment, including the pre-employment phase. This means every individual should have:

* An equal chance to apply and be selected for posts pre-employment
* An equal chance to be trained and promoted while employed with the University
* An equal chance to have their employment terminated equally and fairly

Protected groups are defined in the UK Equality Act 2010 as Sex, Gender Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Pregnancy or Maternity, Race (including Ethnic or National Origin, Nationality or Color), Disability, Age, or Religion or Belief. The University respects all religious and philosophical beliefs and the right of all members of its community to discuss and debate these issues freely.

**The University will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:**

1. Work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization based on a protected characteristic, whether actual, perceptive, or associative.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
4. Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect protected groups and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
5. Monitor the recruitment and progress of all students and staff, collecting and collating equalities information and data as required by law or for the furtherance of University equalities objectives.
6. Promote an inclusive culture, good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment, and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
7. Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims.
8. Publish this policy widely amongst staff and students, together with policy assessments, equality analysis and results of monitoring.

**4. Establishing Equal Opportunities during the Recruitment Stage**

The University follows certain procedures for recruitment to ensure that all applications are treated appropriately and fairly and that, all things being equal, no candidate is rejected because of their age, gender, race or any other protected characteristic.

This means recruitment procedures will meet the following criteria:

* The job description will be set so that all applicants are assessed against the exact same criteria and nothing else.
* The post is advertised in a variety of locations, so that it is available to as wide an audience as possible
* An interview panel will be put in place so that more than one person’s opinions are weighed in when deciding on whom to award the position to.
* All questions that are not relevant to the job will be excluded from the questionnaire. Applicants will not be asked about their age, race, religion or any other protected characteristic.
* Female applicants are treated the same as male applicants. Disabled applicants are treated the same as applicants with no disabilities. Pregnant applicants are treated the same as non-pregnant women.

**5. Establishing Equal Opportunities in the University among employees**

The University ensures that all workers are treated appropriately and fairly and that, all things being equal, no candidate is treated unfairly because of their age, gender, race, or any other protected characteristic.

Establishing equal opportunities in the University will include:

* Ensuring that all similarly qualified employees have equal access and opportunity to all training and advancement facilities regardless of sex, gender, age or disability. No employee should be overlooked for training or promotion because of any protected characteristic.
* Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace to accommodate physically challenged employees.
* Ensuring that no employee is paid any more or less than any of their colleagues who are equally qualified, equally experienced and performing the same role.
* Advertising new roles externally as well as internally so that anyone who meets the qualifying criteria gets the opportunity to apply.
* Making sure that no employee is dismissed solely because of a personal characteristic.
* Ensuring that the same rules apply to employees from all religions regarding extra time off during religious holidays.

**Employees have a right to:**

* Fair practices and behavior in the workplace
* Fair allocations of workloads
* Equal access to benefits and conditions
* A workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying
* Competitive merit-based selection processes for recruitment and promotion
* Fair processes to deal with work-related complaints and grievances

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be enacted through by the University's Equality Objectives, associated implementation plans, and the Combined Equality Scheme. The Combined Equality Scheme explains how the University will fulfil its statutory obligations in relation to equalities legislation. It considers:

* Governance and Policy Development, including relevant committees, compliance, equal pay, assessing the impact of policies and practices and reporting.
* Developing and Implementing Best Practice.
* Inclusive Practice for Students and Staff—including the University's Diversity Networks, dignity at work, and Dignity at Study procedures.
* Promotion of Equality and Diversity, including relevant diversity events, training, and guidance.
* Data and Information Provision, including appropriate monitoring and compliance reporting.

Progress against actions and objectives will be reported in the Equality and Diversity Annual Reviews and Data Reports.

This policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation.

**COVID -19**

During the time of COVID-19, the HTU leadership is complying with the Government Defence orders as instructed.

**End of Policy.**