

AUB is committed
to empowering all
members of the
AUB community to
advance equality
and diversity

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

1. Background

- 1.1 The Arts University Bournemouth is a specialist higher education institution with a commitment to providing all-through provision in the creative, cultural and performing arts from Saturday Art School through further education (FE), undergraduate and postgraduate taught to doctoral level study. The University prides itself on providing a supportive and creative environment which places students and their work at the centre of its community.
- 1.2 The Arts University Bournemouth offers higher education awards in the fields of art, design, architecture, media and performance. These awards are characterised by an emphasis on advanced creative studio practice, delivered within a community of creative professionals. Courses have a strong focus on developing the technical and professional skills of students, which leads to highly employable graduates both within their specialist fields and beyond. Collaboration between courses, and between students, is designed to reflect the demands of professional practice; the ways in which courses work together to provide this professional environment is a key feature of the educational environment at the institution.

2. AUB's Equality Commitment

- 2.1 All members of the University's community including staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to treat others fairly and respectfully regardless of the characteristics which may define their identity. These include the legally protected characteristics which are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief (including lack of belief), Sex and Sexual orientation.
- 2.2 The University has committed to provide a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness.

3. AUB Vision

To become a world-class art, design and media university working with professional partners to create excellence, relevance and impact.

4. Values

Innovative

With an open mind we try new things, nurture ideas, trigger creativity and develop solutions. Through our innate curiosity, practice-based enquiry and industry-partnered projects we work with our students, staff and stakeholders to tackle problems and encourage authentic innovation.

Collaborative

We strive to make a difference in all that we do. Through our collaborative approach we aim to be the agents of positive change for our students, staff and the communities we serve. Through the applied excellence of our learning, teaching and research we strive for relevance to make a positive impact.

Connected

We are better for our diversity. We are enriched by the depth of respect we have for each other and the strength of our relationships with our people, our places and with the planet. Through our commitment to working with those who are different to us, or challenge us, we grow stronger together, creating new synergies, global connections and sustainable futures.

Passionate

Education transforms lives: a creative education transforms society. Through our sense of purpose and determination for the best education, research and partnering with industry, we empower our people to learn, grow and connect. We care about the work we do, the respect we have for each other, and the powerful sense of belonging that characterises everything we do.

5. The Landscape

- 5.1 AUB's EDI Statement 2020 has been developed during a time of significant disruption in the external environment. The COVID-19 crisis has meant that the University has had to adapt how it delivers course content and services to both students and staff. Most staff had to work from home for many months, learning how to support the institution and each other in ways they have not previously needed to. This has had a significant impact on individuals, the workforce, and society in general. For some, it has been a hugely traumatic experience.
- 5.2 In addition there have been significant global developments in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign, with major protests in the United States which were also matched by significant events in the UK. This resulted in much greater public cognisance of issues of discrimination, and a determination that action was required. At AUB, the Students' Union and the Vice-Chancellor prepared a joint statement setting out AUB's commitment to diversity, and it is anticipated that this will provide an opportunity to further strengthen AUB's collaborative efforts with the student body via the Students' Union, ensuring that we shall develop plans and frameworks which support all members of our community and improve the AUB experience.

- 5.3 As a result we are in a unique place to consider the following question: 'What does better look like?', a question which is considered in the broadest possible sense to ensure that every member of our community and the communities we work with do not experience disadvantage and detriment.

What does better look like?

6. Overarching Principles

- 6.1 To provide a framework for the equality and diversity activity at AUB, a set of overarching principles has been developed which will guide us over the coming years. These principles have been designed to ensure that there is sufficient scope for continuous improvement, allowing us to react to internal and external factors while consistently encouraging individuals and collectives to raise standards. These principles are as follows:

Through its words and actions, AUB will:

- foster a sense of belonging for all staff and students, regardless of background, and to eliminate any barriers which may inhibit this
- create a strong community of advocates where all staff and students are confident to speak up if they believe others, or AUB itself, are falling short
- endeavour to promote equity, providing according to need
- encourage 'big conversations' about discrimination, especially (but not exclusively) linked to legally protected characteristics.

7. Belonging

- 7.1 AUB has always been very proud of the community it creates on campus. As we move towards new ways of working and learning which will include greater digital access and more off site learning and working (and the creation of the virtual campus alongside the physical), we must consider how we can retain and strengthen this sense of belonging for all members of the community, from pre-enrolment through to the time beyond graduation.
- 7.2 AUB values all of its members and strives to ensure that a sense of belonging is afforded each individual regardless of their identity group.

8. A Community of Advocates

- 8.1 One of the signs of a community which holds a strong commitment to inclusivity and diversity is that everyone is able to be an advocate if they witness behaviour which does not meet our expectations. We need to develop our community so staff and students feel confident and comfortable about intervening if they witness something that is discriminatory, or which may be considered bullying or harassment. We will actively seek to develop a community of advocates, and further explore concepts of allyship, so that regardless of the characteristics that shape individuals they will feel supported in every element of their AUB journey.

9. A shift in thinking from equality to equity

- 9.1 As we develop new policies, frameworks and course content, we will consider, at the developmental stage of each, how to ensure that we think deeper than simply ensuring that everyone gets access to the same resources. There will be a refocus on giving individuals (bespoke) tools to enable them to achieve. We will build on the good practices already in place and commit to developing in the areas where we are weaker.

10. Any (Positive) Impact is Welcomed

- 10.1 AUB recognises that a positive shift in culture is expedited when every member of the community is involved and working towards a shared objective. Everyone must feel valued and individual contributions must be recognised. Staff and students must understand their contribution to the AUB community and take an active role in creating an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.
- 10.2 AUB has been unable to sustain effective and engaging dialogue in this space. We acknowledge the importance of open communication and staff engagement, but despite adopting a variety of approaches, we have struggled to reach some groups.
- 10.3 There is much evidence to suggest initiatives are effective when driven 'from the top'. 'Paul's Place' is an ideal vehicle to communicate the importance of inclusion to all staff, with at least one presentation in each term having an EDI focus. This will also encourage staff and students to engage with members of the Integrated Leadership Team on issues that may be a barrier to their sense of belonging within the organisation. We shall also explore other options for promoting the importance of EDI to all staff and students across the University.

11. External Recognition

- 11.1 AUB is proud of its community and their achievements. We will seek to secure external recognition for what we do well. This might include, but is not limited to, chartermarks and awards. We will seek to collaborate with experts in the field of diversity and inclusion with a longer term objective to be seen as experts ourselves.

12.0 Legal Obligations

- 12.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the general equality duty and places a legal requirement on the University to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 12.2 In addition to this, the Equalities Act introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty in respect of publication of information; equalities objectives; and manner of publication.
- 12.3 All higher education institutions are required to publish information on an annual basis and to prepare and publish equality objectives to continually develop one or more of the aims set out in the general Public Sector Equality Duty. The University's overarching equality objective, which has been published externally, is:

Empowering all members of the AUB community to advance equality and diversity.

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