OUR MISSION AND VALUES
The mission of the University is ‘Excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities’. This mission is underpinned by our values of inclusion, partnership, and community. Student success is at the heart of our mission and we are supported in this by committed partnerships between the University, the Students’ Union and external partner organisations.

Our ability to achieve our mission is built on the talents and capabilities of our people and we want every member of our diverse community to be able to work, live and study in an inclusive environment in which they feel safe, supported, and able to reach their potential.

We recognise that policies and processes alone do not create inclusive environments and this is why we take a holistic approach, which places as much emphasis on how people behave as it does on policy and process.

POLICY STATEMENT ON EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
The University of Essex celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to sustaining an inclusive and diverse community that is open to all who have the potential to benefit from membership of it, and which ensures equality of opportunity for all its members.

All employees, workers, contractors, students, and visitors must not unlawfully discriminate against an individual or particular groups of people because of their age, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or because they have a disability or are pregnant, breastfeeding or have recently given birth. We also expect all employees, workers, contractors, students and visitors to be treated, and to treat others, with dignity and respect.

To support our value-commitment to inclusivity, we extend protection from discrimination beyond our legal obligations to cover other forms of difference such as socio-economic background, political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances, appearance, personal interests.

AIM
This policy document sets out our approach, in the context of our institutional mission, values and objectives as set out in our Strategic Plan, our People Supporting Strategy, our Education and Research Strategies and equalities legislation.

It supports our commitment to addressing under-representation where it exists, celebrating the diversity of our students and staff, nurturing communities of belonging in which all are accepted without exception, and promoting inclusion, well-being, resilience and empowerment to enable everyone to reach their full potential.

It applies to all employees, workers, contractors, students and visitors and is a means to ensure that every member of our community is aware of their rights and responsibilities.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Council is the executive governing body of the University and is responsible for ensuring the University complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Council receives an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report, which includes information that demonstrates how we are meeting our legislative obligations and the progress we are making towards achieving our Equality Objectives.

The Vice-Chancellor, supported by the senior management team (University Steering Group, USG), is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively.

The Human Resources and Equality and Diversity Group is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and recommending to USG policy in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

OUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Under the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) the University has obligations as both an employer and as an education provider. This means that we must, in the exercise of our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In addition, as a public authority, we must:

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the General Equality Duty across our functions;
- Prepare and publish equality objectives.

Details of the types of discrimination and the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 are in Appendix A.

Our equality objectives are contained within the following documents:

- People Supporting Strategy action plan
- Education Strategy action plan
- Research Strategy action plan

How we work at Essex supports our three strategic priorities:

- People: We will recruit students and staff who are committed to contributing to our mission of excellence in education and research for the benefit of people and communities and to develop and enable every student and staff member to realise the full potential of their Essex Spirit
- Knowledge: People are at the heart of our services: our dedicated and professional teams will identify, develop, refine and deliver highly-functioning services and systems that advance our commitment to excellence in education and research and meet the needs of staff and students
- Communities: We will celebrate the diversity of our students and staff, nurturing communities of belonging in which all are accepted without exception, and promoting inclusion, well-being, resilience and empowerment

REPORTS OF HARASSMENT, BULLYING, SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR HATE CRIME

We will support those who experience harassment, bullying, sexual violence or a hate crime and take action to ensure the behaviour stops where possible. Any employee, worker, contractor, student or visitor to any of our campuses who experiences or observes any inappropriate behaviour is encouraged to report it through our Report and Support system.

This can be done anonymously, or reportees can ask to be contacted by an adviser.

Where an informal approach to dealing with harassment or bullying has not been successful or where the matter is sufficiently serious that informal approaches are not appropriate, employees, workers, students, contractors or visitors can use our Complaints of Harassment or Bullying procedure to make a complaint.

Complaints by students about other students are dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct; complaints by students about employees or workers should be made through the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

OUR PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

We place people at the centre of processes and systems and expect judgement and decision-making to be based on the principles of dignity and respect and our institutional values.

To ensure staff are aware of what is expected from them, and what they should expect from others, we have developed our How we work at Essex framework.

How we work at Essex contains a set of values-based expectations that will be embedded through a comprehensive change project, covering our policies and guidance and our leadership and development programmes, and reinforced by our physical space and ways of working.

OUR ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH TO HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

We expect the highest standards of behaviour from every member of our community and we have a zero tolerance approach to harassment and bullying. This means that all employees, workers, contractors, students and visitors are expected to be treated, and to treat each other, with dignity and respect.

Zero tolerance means that (i) we will take action and (ii) the action will proportionate to the circumstances of the case.
INCLUSION AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We are a University that values both inclusion and academic freedom. These equal freedoms are balanced by equal responsibilities. Our commitment to inclusion demands that (i) we exercise our freedoms responsibly, respectfully and with due regard to the values we share as a community and (ii) academic freedom cannot be used as an excuse for subjecting an individual or group to bullying or harassment or for committing a hate crime.

Our dual commitments to inclusion and academic freedom are also enshrined in law. Section 43 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986 requires all those concerned in the governance of universities to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students, employees and visiting speakers.

Our Policy on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech affirms our commitment to promoting academic freedom, freedom of speech and inclusion within the law and our founding charter also enshrines academic freedom within the law.
APPENDIX A: EQUALITY LEGISLATION AND DEFINITIONS

A.1 THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced the majority of previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of ‘protected characteristics’.

The protected characteristics under the Act are:-

- age
- disability (a detailed definition can be found in B.7)
- gender reassignment* (defined as ‘where a person has proposed, started or completed the process to change his or her sex’. Individuals do not have to be under medical supervision to be protected by the law).
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief (religion is defined as ‘any religion, including a lack of religion’, belief is defined as ‘a religious or philosophical belief, including a lack of belief’)
- sex (or gender)
- sexual orientation (defined as person’s sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex. This means the Act protects bi, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people)

*The University’s policies go beyond the requirements of legislation and protect a broader group of people than those covered by the term ‘gender reassignment’. Our policies cover all trans1 people, including those with non-binary gender identities.

Staff and students must avoid discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic mentioned in the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement, which includes those mentioned in the Act.

B.2 TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

There are four types of discrimination; direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation. All of these are illegal and are defined under the Act as follows:-

B.3 DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (discrimination by perception), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (discrimination by association). Under the Act, disabled people are protected from discrimination ‘arising from disability’ which occurs when someone has been treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability as opposed to ‘because of’ the disability itself.

B.4 INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule, policy or practice appears to be neutral but its impact particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic.

B.5 HARASSMENT

Harassment is defined as ‘unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual’.

Under the Act staff and students can complain of behaviour they find offensive even if the behaviour is not directed at them.

B.6 VICTIMISATION

Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence relating to such a complaint or because they are suspected of doing so.

B.7 DISABILITY

A disabled person is defined in the Act as someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The Equality Act 2010 provides for certain people to meet the definition of disability without having to show that they have an impairment that has (or is likely to have) a substantial, adverse long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes people who have cancer, HIV infection, multiple sclerosis and people who are certified as blind, partially sighted, severely sight impaired or sight impaired by a consultant ophthalmologist.

B.7.1 WHAT DOES ‘IMPAIRMENT’ COVER?

It covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental health conditions including learning difficulties and mental illness.

B.7.2 WHAT IS A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT?

A substantial adverse effect is something which is more than a minor or trivial effect and includes progressive conditions where impairment is likely to become substantial such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and HIV infection, genetic disorder or other diagnosed disorder. The requirement that an effect must be substantial reflects the general understanding of disability as a limitation going beyond the normal differences in ability which might exist among people.

B.7.3 WHAT IS A ‘LONG-TERM’ EFFECT?

A long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- which has lasted at least 12 months; or
- where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months; or
- which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

What are ‘normal day-to-day activities’?

They are activities which are carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis. The term is not intended to include activities which are normal only for a particular person or group of

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1The term trans is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex.
people, such as playing a musical instrument, or a sport, to a professional standard or performing a skilled or specialised task at work. However, someone who is affected in such a specialised way but is also affected in normal day-to-day activities would be covered by this part of the definition. The Act gives the following examples of day-to-day activities:

- shopping
- reading and writing
- having a conversation or using the telephone
- watching television
- taking part in social activities
- getting washed and dressed
- preparing and eating food
- carrying out household tasks
- walking and travelling by various forms of transport

B.7.3 WHO ELSE MAY BE COVERED BY THE ACT?

People with severe disfigurements are covered by the Act (tattoos and body piercings are not considered a severe disfigurement). Where a person has a progressive condition they will be covered by the Act from the moment the condition leads to an impairment which has some effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

B.8 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE COVERAGE

The table below is an at-a-glance guide to the coverage of the legislation. Under the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, any type of discrimination will not be tolerated, regardless of whether it is covered under the legislation or not.

### KEY

- Covered by legislation
- Not covered by legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected characteristic</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Reassignment</th>
<th>Marriage and civil partnership</th>
<th>Pregnancy and maternity</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Religion or belief</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Sexual orientation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct discrimination in employment</td>
<td>A member of staff is treated less favourably because of a PC</td>
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<td>Direct discrimination in the delivery of higher education</td>
<td>A student is treated less favourably because of a PC</td>
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<td>Direct discrimination in the provision of services</td>
<td>A service user is treated less favourably because of a PC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination by association</td>
<td>Direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a PC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination by perception</td>
<td>Direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular PC</td>
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<td>Indirect discrimination</td>
<td>Occurs when a provision, criterion, policy or practice disadvantages people with a particular PC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harassment by a third party</td>
<td>Employers are potentially liable for harassment of their staff by people they don’t employ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victimisation</td>
<td>Someone is treated badly because they have made/supported a claim or grievance under the Act</td>
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