

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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Statement

The Academy of Urbanism (the Academy) is a politically independent, not-for-profit, international membership organisation that brings together the current and next generation of urban leaders, thinkers and practitioners. The organisation wishes to embody a strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion within its core beliefs.

As such the Academy will:

- endeavour to tackle inequalities by ensuring that staff and members are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.
- promote diversity by valuing our members and staff, ensuring that we deliver programmes that suit all sections of society.
- promote inclusivity by striving to meet the needs of different people, taking action to create environments where we all feel respected and able to achieve our potential.

Strategy Strands

In order to achieve the above objectives the Academy has endorsed a strategy which incorporates three policy strands to promote equality diversity and inclusivity within our internal team, our membership, and our dealings with the wider public.

1. An Equal Opportunities Policy to regulate our internal processes
2. A Code of Conduct which also extends to our membership
3. A list of Actions which sets out areas in which the AoU can take action, and links to a live document including suggested resources which should remain active and up-to-date.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Strand 1

Equal Opportunities Policy

Our Commitment

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. This policy is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice. Our aim is that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We appreciate that this is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The Law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'. The Equality Act defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of services or goods or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However, discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Indirect discrimination means putting in place, a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- Harassment is where there is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

- Associative discrimination is where the individual treated less favourably does not have a protected characteristic but is discriminated against because of their association with someone who does e.g. the parent of a disabled child.
- Perceptive discrimination is where the individual discriminated against or harassed does not have a protected characteristic but they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.
- Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed by third parties such as service users, due to a protected characteristic.
- Victimisation is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act 2020 (or such legislation as might modify or supercede this Act) i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, within the Act an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal Opportunities in Employment

We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. Job descriptions will avoid any unnecessary requirements (unrelated to effective performance) that may otherwise deter applicants. We will base decisions on objective criteria.

Service Users, Suppliers and Others

We will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using or seeking to use the services we provide. If you are bullied or harassed by a service user, suppliers, contractor, visitor or others, or if you witness someone else being bullied or harassed, you are asked to report this to your manager who will take appropriate action.

Training

We will provide information and guidance to those involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise to help them understand their responsibilities and to avoid the risk of discrimination.

Your Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for supporting the organisation in meeting its commitment and avoiding unlawful discrimination. If you believe that you have been discriminated against you should report this to your line manager under the grievance procedure. We take any complaint seriously and you will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

If you witness what you believe to be discrimination you should report this to your line manager as soon as possible.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or those engaged with the Academy are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under our

disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. The Board will act on or note activities undertaken to improve equality of opportunity. Any information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection legislation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Strand 2

Code of Conduct

Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour all those engaged in activities on behalf of the Academy, including staff, Directors, nominated Academicians Young Urbanists, Group, Individual, or other category that may be created or substituted as a form of membership. The intention of these standards is to ensure that all those speaking and acting on behalf of the Academy, or engaged with the Academy in any category of membership, observe a consistently high standard of propriety and act in the best interests of the Academy at all times. It also seeks to ensure that the Academy is effective, open and accountable.

The Academy expects all of those to whom this Code applies, (by reference to Academicians this also refers to all categories of membership) and to those directly engaged with the Academy, to exercise their own judgement (reasonably and demonstrably justified) in meeting its requirements, and to seek advice from a staff member or Director if in doubt.

Should a case arise where a member is believed to have fallen short of the standards desired, the Disciplinary and Grievances Procedures (in the case of staff), or by reference to the Chair of the Academy in any other circumstance, may permit the convening of a disciplinary panel to consider the matter.

Principles

Competence and behaviour

- 1.1 Academicians will embody the principles of the Academy's Manifesto and pursue excellence in their practice of urbanism by continuously updating their knowledge, and sharing the results of their research and experience through the Academy
- 1.2 Academicians will apply high standards of relevance, accuracy and timeliness in the information and advice they provide through the Academy to other Academicians, partners and others with whom the Academy is engaged
- 1.3 Academicians should be willing to offer time and intellectual energy to develop and further the activities of the Academy
- 1.4 Academicians will declare any conflict of interest in acting for or through the Academy, or any circumstance that might reasonably be viewed by others as a conflict, as soon as it arises

Selflessness

- 2.1 Academicians will use their knowledge, expertise and experience to take the best decisions and offer the best advice they can in the interests of good urbanism, the Academy and those with whom the Academy works

- 2.2 Academicians will not act on behalf of the Academy for financial gain or other material benefits for themselves or the organisation or company they represent, other than in justifiable circumstances explicitly approved by the Board
- 2.3 Academicians will promote and support good governance by leadership and example and act on behalf of the Academy in an individual capacity and not as a representative of any external lobby group, or organisation
- 2.4 Academicians will use Academy resources responsibly, when authorised and with an appreciation of the Academy's other commitments

Integrity

- 3.1 Academicians will not take any action that could bring the Academy into disrepute
- 3.2 Academicians will act with integrity and respect in relationships with all members, staff and other people with whom the Academy is engaged
- 3.3 Academicians will establish, maintain and develop relationships within and for the Academy that are based on mutual confidence, trust and respect, avoid actual and perceived impropriety
- 3.4 Academicians will promote equality, diversity and inclusion by upholding all aspects of the Academy's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and in supporting people of all backgrounds and identities in their dealings with all members, staff and other people with whom the Academy is engaged

Accountability

- 4.1 Academicians will ensure that confidential material, including information about individuals, is handled with due care and is not used for personal advantage or the benefit or detriment of third parties in accordance with relevant legislation
- 4.2 Academicians should accept collective responsibility for their work and for that of others when working collaboratively on behalf of the Academy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Strand 3

Actions

This section provides information under Strand 3: Action - what can we, the Academy, actively do to promote increased Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.

Suggested actions have been broken down into five areas, with information provided for each, below:

Membership

- Establish the existing make up of the Academy membership at all membership levels through a voluntary survey, collecting information on the protected characteristics of our membership. Use this information to identify areas of focus for campaigns, as well as provide a baseline of the existing member cohort.
- Identify perceived barriers in membership criteria. The Board, and particularly Michele Grant with her experience, could contribute to this. We could also seek thoughts of members.
- Establish the Academy's make up of private, public and third-sector membership. Consider whether we have sufficient public and third-sector membership to share learning effectively between sectors.
- Consider including Academy membership as part of an offer to speakers from marginalised groups.

Events and publications

The Academy runs events open to members and non-members and therefore has a public platform which can be used to make members, and the wider public, more aware of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

- Always include consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within the set up of events, adding it to checklists and briefings.
- Adopt one of the following approaches when planning event content:
 - Choose Equality, Diversity or Inclusion around an aspect of urbanism as a stand-alone theme for an event; or
 - Address EDI through inclusion within overall event subject matter e.g. Active travel.
- Look to how AoU publications, e.g. Here and Now, could be used to provide a platform for underrepresented groups and issues.
- Consider the needs of people with disabilities to ensure Urbanism Awards assessment visits and study tours can be inclusive.
- Website: Review the AoU website using criteria similar to the 2018 Government guidelines for accessibility requirements for public sector bodies.

Speakers and panels

- Strive to increase diversity of speakers in all subject matters, therefore bringing diversity of experience to common subjects and topics.
- Encourage members and staff to use their existing network connections (e.g. such as through AoU Group members) to seek out greater diversity of speakers. Include geographical diversity which may bring diversity of thought to a topic, e.g. UK and USA.
- Consider ways to reduce barriers to speaker or panel participation, e.g. if The AoU would like to encourage speakers from community groups, charities, or marginalised groups, make provision for cases where payment can be made to speakers. See note above on membership.

Outreach and relationships

- Develop / signpost a suite of resources which would enable AoU members to visit schools, take part in career fairs, and raise the profile of the professions involved in the Academy and the built environment, with underrepresented groups.
- Approach specific EDI advocacy groups for general discussion, to build relationships, hear other insights, and allow potential future collaboration or cross pollination of ideas, themes and speakers.
- Make use of opportunities to be involved in initiatives which seek to promote urbanism as a career to protected characteristic groups e.g. through inclusion in BAME careers guide.
- Encourage the Academy Board and staff to retweet and otherwise circulate articles by non-AoU sources if they have read and agree that such articles adopt AoU principles. Apply this also to events if not in competition with AoU events.
- Expand on mutual relationships with bodies such as RIBA, RTPI, UDG, LI; learning from how they are addressing EDI responsibilities.

Continual reflection and development

- Remain engaged with issues around EDI and actively seek information and updated discourse.
- Maintain, update and use the live document resource on EDI which can be found in the AoU shared dropbox.