

Equal Opportunity Cell & Policy

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 Birkbeck University of London, Bengaluru Campus (hereafter abbreviated to 'the Campus') is committed to providing equal opportunity in admissions, study, employment, advancement, and access to services, free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on any ground.
- 1.2 The Equal Opportunity Cell (hereafter 'the Cell') is the Campus's standing body for the promotion, monitoring, and continuous improvement of equality and inclusion across the Campus community.
- 1.3 The Cell is preventive, educative, and advisory in mandate. It does not investigate or adjudicate complaints, which are addressed through the Campus's grievance, disciplinary, and statutory complaints mechanisms.
- 1.4 This Policy applies to all students, faculty, professional staff, contractors, outsourced personnel, applicants, visitors, vendors, and other persons engaged with the Campus.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Cell operates on the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 dignity: every person is entitled to be treated with respect and consideration regardless of background or characteristics;
 - 2.1.2 equality of opportunity: no person shall be disadvantaged in access to the Campus's programmes, services, employment, or advancement by reason of any ground protected under this Policy;
 - 2.1.3 reasonable accommodation: the Campus shall take appropriate measures to enable equal participation by persons whose circumstances or characteristics may otherwise create barriers;
 - 2.1.4 inclusivity: the Campus shall actively foster an environment in which difference is recognised and valued;
 - 2.1.5 transparency and accountability: data, decisions, and outcomes relevant to equality shall be monitored and reported.

3. SCOPE OF EQUALITY

- 3.1 The Campus recognises and acts to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the following grounds:
- 3.1.1 age;
 - 3.1.2 disability, including physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, and mental-health conditions;
 - 3.1.3 gender, gender identity, and gender expression;
 - 3.1.4 marital, civil partnership, or family status;
 - 3.1.5 pregnancy and maternity;
 - 3.1.6 race, ethnicity, national origin, and colour;
 - 3.1.7 religion, belief, or absence of belief;
 - 3.1.8 caste or community background;
 - 3.1.9 sexual orientation;
 - 3.1.10 socio-economic background;
 - 3.1.11 any other characteristic protected by applicable law.
- 3.2 The Campus extends the principles of this Policy to recognised forms of intersectional disadvantage, where two or more of the grounds set out in clause 3.1 combine to affect a person.

4. COMPOSITION OF THE CELL

- 4.1 Members of the Cell shall be appointed by the Provost for a term of two years, renewable once.
- 4.2 The Cell shall comprise:
- 4.2.1 a Chairperson, who shall be a senior member of faculty or professional staff with demonstrated commitment to equality and inclusion;
 - 4.2.2 a Member Secretary, nominated by the Chairperson;
 - 4.2.3 two faculty members drawn from across disciplines;
 - 4.2.4 one officer drawn from HR & Admin;
 - 4.2.5 two student members, comprising one undergraduate and one postgraduate;
 - 4.2.6 one external member, being an independent expert from academia, civil society, or practice;
 - 4.2.7 the Officer – Learning & Support, as ex officio member.
- 4.3 The composition of the Cell shall reflect the diversity of the Campus community, including with regard to gender, disability status, and the grounds set out in this Policy, so far as practicable.

5. FUNCTIONS

- 5.1 The Cell shall develop and recommend equal-opportunity standards for adoption across admissions, employment, student services, and the wider operation of the Campus.
- 5.2 The Cell shall design and deliver awareness, sensitisation, and capacity-building activities for students, faculty, and staff on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- 5.3 The Cell shall advise on reasonable accommodation arrangements for students and staff, in coordination with the Head – Academics, HR & Admin, and Learning & Support.
- 5.4 The Cell shall monitor institutional data — including admissions, retention, attainment, employment, and progression — for patterns of disadvantage, and make recommendations to the Provost.
- 5.5 The Cell shall review Campus policies, procedures, and communications for compatibility with this Policy, and recommend revisions where required.
- 5.6 The Cell shall provide informal guidance and signposting to individuals seeking information about Campus policies and support routes. The Cell shall not receive, hold, or determine complaints.
- 5.7 The Cell shall liaise with the Gender Sensitization Cell, the Internal Committee, HR & Admin, and the Grievance Redressal Committee on shared initiatives, while maintaining clear functional separation from complaint and disciplinary processes.
- 5.8 The Cell shall submit an annual report of its activities, indicators, and recommendations to the Provost.

6. OPERATING PROVISIONS

- 6.1 The Cell shall meet at least once each quarter, with additional meetings as required.
- 6.2 The quorum for a meeting shall be one-half of the total membership, and shall include at least one student representative.
- 6.3 The Member Secretary shall maintain minutes and records of the Cell.
- 6.4 The Cell shall have an annual budget, approved by the Provost, sufficient to deliver its work plan.
- 6.5 The Cell shall maintain a dedicated section on the Campus intranet and website setting out its purpose, membership, work plan, and contact route.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.1 Members of the Cell shall maintain confidentiality regarding personal information shared with them in the course of their duties.

- 7.2 Where a person approaches the Cell with a concern that suggests discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, the member shall sensitively inform the person of the appropriate formal channel and, with the person's consent, support their access to it. No personal details shall be recorded or transmitted further without that consent.

8. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER BODIES

- 8.1 The Cell complements but does not duplicate the work of other Campus bodies:
- 8.1.1 the Gender Sensitization Cell, which leads gender-specific awareness and capacity building;
 - 8.1.2 the Internal Committee, which receives and inquires into complaints of sexual harassment;
 - 8.1.3 the Grievance Redressal Committee, which addresses student and staff grievances;
 - 8.1.4 the Anti-Ragging Committee, which discharges its statutory mandate.
- 8.2 The Cell may collaborate with these bodies on awareness, training, and policy-review initiatives, with appropriate safeguards to preserve the integrity of any complaint or disciplinary process.

9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 9.1 The Provost appoints members of the Cell, approves the annual work plan and budget, and receives the annual report.
- 9.2 The Chairperson leads the Cell, convenes meetings, and represents the Cell within and outside the Campus.
- 9.3 The Member Secretary maintains records, coordinates the work plan, and serves as the operational point of contact.
- 9.4 Members of the Cell participate actively, contribute to the work plan, and uphold confidentiality.
- 9.5 The Head – Academics and the Head – Operations & Registrar enable the Cell's activities by supporting participation by faculty, staff, and students under their respective remits.
- 9.6 The Officer – HR & Admin supports the Cell's work on employment-related equality, reasonable accommodation, and workforce monitoring.

10. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

- 10.1 This Policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years, or earlier if circumstances warrant.
- 10.2 The University reserves the right to amend, modify, supplement, or replace this Policy at any time as it deems appropriate to better serve the objectives set out herein.

Policy Review and Document Control	
Policy title	Cell Equal Opportunity
Applies to	Applicants and enrolled students of all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for Academic Year 2026-27 (September 2026 and January/February 2027 intakes)
Version	1.0
Effective from	Commencement of the admissions for Sep 2026 intake
Review cycle	Annually, or earlier upon any change