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<b>Policy Name</b>	Equality & Diversity Policy
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<b>Recent Review Date</b>	December 2024	<b>Next Review Date</b>	December 2025
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## **1. Policy Statement**

### **1.1. Commitment to Equality:**

NXT GEN Education is committed to creating an inclusive environment where equality and diversity are promoted and respected. We are dedicated to ensuring all students, staff, and visitors experience a culture of respect, free from discrimination, and enjoy equal opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### **1.2. Inclusive Environment:**

We aim to provide a supportive and fair environment where discrimination is actively addressed, and equality is promoted across all aspects of identity, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

### **1.3. Valuing Diversity:**

We celebrate the diversity of our staff and students, recognizing the value they bring from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

## **2. Purpose and Objectives**

2.1. This policy outlines the framework for promoting equality and diversity at NXT GEN, creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe and valued.

### **2.2. Key Goals:**

- Prioritise student learning outcomes.
- Encourage participation from underrepresented groups.
- Promote fairness, excellence, and inclusivity.
- Eliminate discrimination and advance equal opportunities.
- Provide necessary support across various equality groups.

## **3. Scope of Policy**

3.1. This policy applies to all individuals at NXT GEN: current and prospective students, staff, visitors, and contractors.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1. Senior Management Team (SMT):**

Responsible for ensuring staff are informed about this policy, addressing discrimination, and promoting a zero-tolerance culture for inappropriate behavior.

### **4.2. Academic Standards and Quality Office (ASQO):**

Responsible for overseeing the policy, providing training, and offering guidance to staff.

### **4.3. Managers and Staff:**

Promote respect, support policy implementation, and ensure fair treatment. Staff are required to participate in relevant equality and diversity training.

### **4.4. Students:**

Expected to contribute to a respectful culture by adhering to equality standards, reporting incidents, and supporting the policy.

**4.5. Student Representative Committee:**

Responsible for promoting the policy within the student body and communicating any related concerns.

**5. Application of Policy: Staff**

**5.1. Recruitment and Selection:**

Advertisements will reflect NXT GEN's commitment to diversity, and recruitment will be transparent, fair, and free from bias.

**5.2. Grading and Promotion:**

Promotion and grading procedures will be unbiased and consistently applied.

**5.3. Staff Development:**

All staff will have equal access to development opportunities and training to enhance their careers.

**5.4. Disciplinary Procedures:**

Disciplinary procedures will be fair, transparent, and applied to all staff equitably.

**6. Application of Policy: Students**

**6.1. Recruitment and Admission:**

Promotional materials will highlight equal opportunity, and staff involved in student recruitment will be trained in diversity principles.

**6.2. Assessment:**

Assessment criteria will be transparent, fair, and applied consistently to ensure all students are assessed equally.

**6.3. Career Planning and Participation:**

Students will have access to career planning resources and be encouraged to participate fully in academic, cultural, and social activities.

**6.4. Discipline and Complaints:**

Disciplinary actions and complaints will be addressed fairly, with a focus on harassment or discrimination issues according to the Student Charter and Code of Conduct.

**7. Training**

**7.1. Staff Training:**

Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff and is provided during induction.

**7.2. Student Training:**

Students will be briefed on the Equality and Diversity Policy during induction and at regular intervals throughout their studies.

**8. Communication**

**8.1. Policy Access:**

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be made available on the NXT GEN website and upon request to staff, students, and visitors.

**8.2. Breach of Policy:**

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter, following relevant disciplinary procedures.

**9. Monitoring and Review**

9.1. The policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance and effectiveness. NXT GEN ensures all staff are trained to support the policy, and regular audits will monitor compliance.

**10. Data Protection and Confidentiality**

10.1. NXT GEN adheres to UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 for managing personal data.

10.2. All complaints related to this policy will be kept confidential, shared only with those who need to know.

**11. Alternative Formats**

11.1. The policy can be available in alternative formats (e.g., large print, audio) upon request.

**Annex 1- NextGen Values**

Our vision is "to transform lives through education that significantly improves living standards and enhances access to learning."

We believe education has the power to transform lives by fostering personal growth and improving employment opportunities.



Our values are more than just words; they shape our identity and guide our goals as an organization.

We aim to embed our values in all our activities and rely on the support of our staff and students to achieve this.

## Annex 2- Glossary of Key words/terms

- Age: A protected characteristic referring to individuals of a specific age (e.g., 65 years old) or within a range of ages (e.g., 50 to 60 years old).
- Antisemitism: A specific form of prejudice against Jews, which can manifest as hatred towards them. This can include verbal or physical attacks targeting Jews or their property, as well as Jewish community institutions and religious sites.
- Direct Discrimination: Occurs when an individual or group is treated less favorably than others due to a protected characteristic.
- Direct Discrimination by Association: Happens when someone is treated less favorably because they associate with another person or group who has a protected characteristic.
- Direct Discrimination by Perception: Occurs when someone is treated less favorably because others believe they have a protected characteristic, regardless of whether this belief is accurate.
- Disability: A protected characteristic where a person has a physical or mental impairment that significantly impacts their ability to perform normal everyday activities. The impairment must be long-term, lasting or expected to last at least twelve months, and substantial, meaning more than minor or trivial.
- Diversity: Involves recognizing, respecting, and valuing the differences among individuals and groups.
- Equality: Ensures fair treatment and equal opportunities for all. It involves meeting the diverse needs of individuals and groups appropriately, rather than treating everyone the same way. Equality provides a framework for fair and inclusive access, participation, and contribution.
- Gender Reassignment: A protected characteristic referring to the personal process of transitioning from one gender to another. This process does not require medical treatment to be recognized as protected. A transsexual person, who has undergone gender reassignment, may have any sexual orientation, including gay, lesbian, heterosexual, or bisexual.
- Equality Impact Assessment: A procedure used to review and, if necessary, adjust policies, procedures, or practices to ensure they do not discriminate against individuals or groups with protected characteristics.
- Harassment: Behavior by an individual or group that creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating, or intimidating environment.
- Indirect Discrimination: A policy or rule that applies to everyone but disproportionately disadvantages people with protected characteristics.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership: A protected characteristic. Marriage is a legal union between individuals, whether of the same or different sex. Same-sex couples can also enter into a civil partnership, which must be treated equally to marriage in many legal matters.
- Positive Action: Measures taken to provide targeted support to individuals so they can fully and equally benefit from opportunities. This includes ensuring that all groups have equal access to services and facilities, such as those provided by NEXTGEN.

- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** A protected characteristic. Pregnancy refers to the state of expecting a baby, while maternity pertains to the period following childbirth, including maternity leave in the workplace. In a non-work context, protection against discrimination extends for twenty-six weeks after birth and includes unfair treatment related to breastfeeding.
- **Protected Characteristics:** Categories protected under the Equality Act 2010, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- **Race:** A protected characteristic encompassing a group defined by race, color, nationality (including citizenship), and ethnic or national origins.
- **Reasonable Adjustment:** Obligations to make reasonable changes include:
  - (i) Taking steps to avoid placing disabled students at a significant disadvantage compared to non-disabled students due to existing provisions, criteria, or practices.
  - (ii) Modifying or removing physical barriers, or providing alternatives, to ensure disabled students are not significantly disadvantaged by such features.
  - (iii) Providing auxiliary aids to prevent substantial disadvantage for disabled students compared to their non-disabled peers.
- **Religion or Belief:** A protected characteristic covering any religion or absence of religion. Protection applies to religions with a clear structure and belief system, as well as philosophical beliefs or lack of belief, provided they significantly influence life choices or behavior.
- **Sex:** A protected characteristic referring to being male or female.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A protected characteristic indicating a person's attraction to individuals of the same sex (homosexual), opposite sex (heterosexual), or both sexes (bisexual).
- **Victimization:** Treatment of a person or group less favorably due to their involvement in raising a complaint or grievance under the Equality Act 2010.

### Annex 3- Legislative Framework

The Equality Act 2010 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>) consolidated over 116 separate laws into a single Act, establishing a unified legal framework to safeguard individual rights and promote equal opportunities for everyone. The Act aims to protect individuals from unfair treatment and foster a more equitable society.

The nine key pieces of legislation incorporated into the Equality Act 2010 are:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Protected Characteristics define the groups of people afforded protection under the Equality Act 2010.

#### Annex 4- Examples of Discrimination, Harassment and Victimization

##### (a) Example of Direct Discrimination



A higher education institution denies admission to a prospective male student for a childcare program because the Admissions Tutor believes it is unsuitable for men to work with young children. This constitutes unlawful direct discrimination based on the protected characteristic of sex.

(b) Example of Direct Discrimination by Association

Janet applies to a language class and mentions to the tutor that her boyfriend is Jewish, even though she is not. The tutor then tells Janet that the class is full, but Janet later learns that others have been admitted to the class. This situation likely represents direct discrimination by association due to Janet's connection with her Jewish boyfriend.

(c) Example of Direct Discrimination by Perception

John, a landlord, advertises a flat for rent and Peter, who comes to view it, is perceived by John to be gay based on his mannerisms, voice, and clothing style. John, who does not want to rent to a gay man, tells Peter the flat is no longer available. This represents direct discrimination based on sexual orientation due to John's assumption about Peter's sexual orientation.

(d) Example of Indirect Discrimination

A local community group offers lunch for elderly residents but refuses to supply Halal meals because their supplier cannot provide them. This policy disadvantages the local Muslim community, as they are unable to receive meals that meet their dietary needs.

The community's group policy not to supply Halal meals is unlikely to be justifiable since they could simply seek and alternative supplier that could supply Halal meals

(e) Example of Harassment

A staff member makes a derogatory comment about a student undergoing gender reassignment, and another staff member finds this comment offensive. The derogatory remark would be considered harassment.

(f) Example of Victimization

During a CV preparation seminar for unemployed individuals, Mohammed, a Muslim delegate, complained about not being allowed to leave the seminar to attend afternoon prayers. When he applied for a follow-up seminar, he was informed that no spots were available, although he later discovered that his friend, who applied later, was given a place. Mohammed was victimized for making a complaint related to his religion.

(g) Example of Disability Discrimination

A student with autism frequently speaks out of turn during tutorials, which disrupts the session for the tutor and other students. The student is then asked not to attend future tutorials due to this behavior. This likely constitutes discrimination arising from disability.