

## Equality Policy (Gleichstellungskonzept)

At the Centre for British Studies, we welcome the diversity brought to the Centre by our members, both staff and students, as well as by our guests. We are committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated fairly and equally, with respect and dignity, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion, national origin, social background or family status. We are fully committed to meeting and, where possible, exceeding our obligations under the *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* and all other relevant legislation.

Recognising, embracing and valuing difference and diversity leads to improvement for all, including:

- a more vibrant staff and student population;
- a better environment in which to work and study;
- attracting and retaining the very best staff and students.

The Centre is an academic institution that places high value on open and reasoned debate. Diversity is an issue which is discussed and taught explicitly in classes, it is also an issue which cuts across most of our research at the Centre. An informed and respectful position vis-à-vis diversity is essential for engaging with the world intellectually and socially.

Some specificities of the above-mentioned categories have been identified by the commission (see authorship):

**Gender:** We are proud of the high number of women working at the Centre (see appendix 1), and aim to meet the needs of our diverse student and staff population through consultation and engagement. Each member of the Centre may define her, his, hir or their gender as she, he, ze or they wish, and we are committed to respecting that choice.

**Age:** While we apply valid legislation which requires us to treat people differently on the ground of their age e.g. for the purpose of retirement, we are committed to not tolerating any other form of age discrimination at the Centre.

**Sexual Orientation:** We take 'sexual orientation' to include a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, towards persons of the opposite sex, towards persons of either sex, or an orientation which eschews these categories altogether. We support the freedom to express one's sexual orientation openly.

**Disability:** We are committed to working towards supporting the needs of staff and students with disabilities as and when they arise. While step-free access to all areas of the Centre is possible, we are aware that access issues remain, and we are exploring ways to further improve accessibility.

**Ethnic Origin:** As befits an institution based in Mohrenstrasse, we are committed to promoting awareness of and engagement with issues of race and ethnicity.

**Religion:** The Centre recognises the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. We take the term 'religion' to cover any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief, as well as non-belief.

**National Origin and Nationality:** We welcome the diversity of national origins and nationalities amongst our students and staff and the international environment at the Centre. We work with our partners at Humboldt-Universität and elsewhere in supporting our students and staff (see below).

**Social Background:** We are aware that students face different challenges depending on their family background, prior education and financial situation. We are committed to ensuring that all students have the chance of a rewarding learning experience, irrespective of their social background.

**Family Status:** The Centre has officially adopted a family-friendly policy that was written down in a catalogue of measures in 2008 (see appendix 2).

We do not tolerate discriminatory and derogatory language with respect to gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion, national origin, social background, professional position or family status at the Centre. We support staff and students engaged in ongoing campaigns for greater equality and respect. We welcome suggestions and initiatives from staff, students, alumni and other interested parties which help us to further improve equality at the Centre.

## **WHAT CAN I DO?**

Everyone has a duty to ensure that equality and diversity legislation is followed and implemented.

Therefore, we request the following:

- ensure that you understand and adhere to this Equality Policy, and promote awareness of it;
- show respect for others irrespective of gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion, national origin, social background or family status;
- speak out and challenge sexism, ageism, ableism, racism, classism and other forms of discrimination;
- play your part in promoting a culture of respect and tolerance;
- make a note of and report incidents of harassment;
- where appropriate, provide support to individuals who experience harassment, victimisation, discrimination or isolation;
- seek help when necessary.

## **WHERE TO SEEK HELP**

If you feel that you have become a victim or witnessed someone being a victim of discrimination or harassment, do not ignore this fact.

Staff at the Centre are committed to dealing with your complaint professionally.

You may approach whichever member of staff you choose in this matter. If in doubt, you may wish to approach Felicia Kompio, our equality representative, who will provide confidential guidance on how to deal with the issue. You can contact her by email ([frauenbeauftragte.gbz@hu-berlin.de](mailto:frauenbeauftragte.gbz@hu-berlin.de)).

You may also wish to seek help or guidance from

- the equality office at Humboldt-Universität, the 'Zentrale Frauenbeauftragte', main building, email: [frauenbeauftragte@hu-berlin.de](mailto:frauenbeauftragte@hu-berlin.de);
- the disabled-staff representative, main building, email: [https://gremien.hu-berlin.de/de/beauftragte/schwerbehindertenvertretung\\_neu](https://gremien.hu-berlin.de/de/beauftragte/schwerbehindertenvertretung_neu)
- the commissioner for disabled students can be found in the Counselling Center, main building, e-mail: <https://www.hu-berlin.de/de/studium/behinderte/kontakt>
- the HU family office, main building, e-mail: [familienservice@uv.hu-berlin.de](mailto:familienservice@uv.hu-berlin.de).

## **AUTHORSHIP**

This Equality Policy was written in 2015. It is the collective work of a commission of twelve members, representing all status groups at the Centre for British Studies.

## **SOURCES**

We have used existing Equal Opportunities policies in preparing this Equality Policy, in particular:

'Equal Opportunities'. *UCL Human Resources*. UCL, n.d. Web. 31 July 2015. <[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/equal\\_opportunity.php](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/equal_opportunity.php)>.

'Equality and Diversity'. *The University of Manchester*. The University of Manchester, n.d. Web. 31 July 2015. <<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/connect/jobs/equality-diversity>>

'Equality and Diversity Office'. *Equality and Diversity Office*. University of York, June 2015. Web. 31 July 2015. <<http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/index.htm>>

## **FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICY**

We are committed to further improve our status as a family-friendly place to research, study and work. Therefore, the Centre has officially adopted a family-friendly policy that was written down in a catalogue of measures in 2008. The following instruments have been implemented since then:

- Shared parent-and-child workspace
- A child-friendly social room for guests including changing table, soft mattress and toy box
- Flexi-time and core office hours help to coordinate responsibilities at home and work (teaching and admin meetings)
- Possibility to bring the children to the office if circumstances make this necessary (Kindergarten on strike etc.)
- Accommodate requirements of staff and students with children or elderly relatives (at home and abroad)
- Providing childcare facilities at workshops and conferences
- Accommodate special requirements of students with children or sick relatives with regard to exams and placement
- Concessions to staff and students with children with regard to evening events
- Staff and students who are on parental leave will be kept updated and informed about what is going on at the Centre, and they will be supported when coming back.