



Scottish Universities Sport

Equity Policy

2nd edition—April 2010

In consultation with:

sportscotland

Introduction

1. Scottish Universities Sport believes that equity is a broader concept than equality. It is not just about equal numbers, but is concerned more with fairness, justice, inclusion and respect for diversity. Sports equity is about making sure that everyone has an equal chance to participate in and contribute to sport or physical recreation if they choose to do so, and that no one is discriminated against unfairly for any reason, including – but not limited to - gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy. Sports equity is also about recognising and acknowledging that inequalities do exist between people in Scottish sport, taking positive and proactive steps to overcome these inequalities, and thus making sure that any barriers standing in the way of people who are traditionally not involved in sport and physical recreation are removed. Ensuring equity may require the unequal allocation or reallocation of resources and entitlements in order to overcome previous inequalities or discrimination.
2. Research continually indicates that inequalities persist in most aspects of sport and physical recreation including participation, membership, governance, coaching and leadership. Because of this evidence - coupled with a strong commitment to implementing and promoting the principles of *Equity Standard: A Framework for Sport (2004)* throughout Scottish sport – Scottish Universities Sport is firmly convinced of the necessity to have in place a robust equity policy.
3. Scottish Universities Sport is absolutely committed to promoting and achieving equity, and to ensuring that unfair discrimination is eliminated. Discrimination on grounds such as those listed in paragraph one will not be tolerated within SUS.

Statement of Intent

4. Scottish Universities Sport will ensure that equity and the needs of the diverse Scottish population are given due regard from the outset of development of all its policies, programmes and services.
5. Scottish Universities Sport will address any form of discrimination that occurs within the organisation.
6. Scottish Universities Sport will continue to comply with its statutory and legislative obligations¹ to eliminate discrimination and increase equity in sport and physical recreation, and will ensure that it remains informed of new developments in terms of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. As such, SUS will ensure that it takes steps to promote gender equality, racial equality and disability equality in line with its legislative requirements. This will include the publication of an action plan that sets out how the duties contained within these pieces of legislation will be met.

¹ See the annex for relevant anti-discrimination and equalities legislation affecting this policy

Scottish Universities Sport's Commitments

Accountability for Equity

7. Scottish Universities Sport will ensure that commitment and responsibility for equity is placed firmly at the most senior levels in the organisation. The Chair, Executive Officer, and Equity Champion are responsible and accountable for equity within Scottish Universities Sport.

Staff Time and Resources

8. The responsibility for the day-to-day management of any equity work will be handled by the SUS Executive Officer and the Equity Champion will oversee the implementation of this policy and the development and delivery of an Equity Strategy.
9. Scottish Universities Sport will invest in initiatives, programmes and infrastructure (physical and human) that positively impact on the participation and inclusion of under-represented groups in sport, and will continue to target investment at particular aspects of equity in sport.

Employment

10. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to being an equitable employer that recognises and encourages diversity, inclusion and respect in its workforce. It is committed to having in place employment conditions and practices that ensure all staff are treated equitably.
11. Scottish Universities Sport will take action designed to prevent any member of the workforce suffering harassment, discrimination or victimisation. However, in the event that any instances of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation do occur, robust grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place and will be firmly upheld.
12. Scottish Universities Sport will continue to operate equitable, open and transparent recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure that discrimination does not occur. All staff will be appointed purely on the basis of merit and their ability to do the job in question.
13. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to having in place a Code of Conduct that adequately reflects what is expected of Executive Council and committee members in terms of equitable conduct when carrying out their role. (See Appendix Three)
14. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to ensuring that it is equitable in its interaction with volunteers at all levels in sport.

Training and Development

15. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to its staff and committee members having a good understanding of the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, in society and in sport. As such, Scottish Universities Sport is committed to ensuring that its staff – including committee and executive council members - will receive ongoing education and training on equity and its impact on sport and physical recreation.

Policies and Programmes

16. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to ensuring that equity is considered from the outset when developing new policies, programmes, services or initiatives.

Our Partners in Sport

17. Scottish Universities Sport will take steps to ensure that partners in which it invests must demonstrate their commitment to equity.
18. Scottish Universities Sport will encourage its partners in sport and physical recreation to implement the principles of the *Equity Standard: A Framework for Sport*, and will provide advice and assistance in this area.
19. Scottish Universities Sport will promote examples of good practice in achieving and promoting equity in sport and physical recreation where available, and will ensure the successes of our partners in sport are recognised and promoted.
20. Scottish Universities Sport will continue to work with sportscotland to develop a consistent approach and standards in relation to equity in sport, and to share good practice in this area.

Consultation and Relationships with Equity Partners

21. Scottish Universities Sport will continue to work with and develop relationships with its key equity partners in sport to develop programmes, policies and initiatives that are inclusive and give due regard to equity, and to share information, research and good practice.
22. Scottish Universities Sport will begin to develop relationships with new partners in other areas of sports equity.

Communication and Access to Information

23. Scottish Universities Sport will continue to work with the media to promote the successes of athletes and sports people from all sections of Scottish tertiary education, and will strive to promote the successes of positive role models from under-represented groups.

24. Scottish Universities Sport will give due regard to equity when publishing documents and images, and will strive to ensure that positive images are used to reflect the demographics of Scottish higher education.
25. Scottish Universities Sport will give due regard to equity and accessibility when publishing information on the website.
26. Scottish Universities Sport will ensure that corporate publications can be made available in alternative formats and languages on request, as far as resources will reasonably allow.
27. Scottish Universities Sport will ensure that this policy, and our commitment to equity is communicated to all staff, members and partners in sport and physical recreation.
28. This equity policy will be made available on the Scottish Universities Sport website.
29. All new staff will be directed to read this equity policy as part of their induction.

Monitoring and Review

30. The implementation of this equity policy will be monitored and the SUS Executive Council will have a key role in this regard.
31. Scottish Universities Sport is committed to keeping this equity policy under review, and will formally review the policy again in 2011, in line with the development of an *Equity Strategy*, unless any legislative change necessitates an interim review.

Grievances

32. Any member of staff who believes that he or she has been unfairly discriminated against, harassed, bullied or victimised by any other member of Scottish Universities Sport's staff or Executive Council should raise the matter with his or her Line Manager in the first instance. If it is not appropriate to discuss the matter with the Line Manager, staff are encouraged to raise the matter with a member of the HR Oversight Group. Staff should follow the procedures set out in the University of Edinburgh's Grievance and Harassment procedures which are adopted for use by SUS.
33. Any individual who is not a member of Scottish Universities Sport's staff who feels that he or she has suffered inequitable treatment as a result of a decision made by SUS should follow the actions in the University of Edinburgh's Grievance procedure, a link is available at www.susport.org.uk or this can be obtained from the SUS Executive Officer on 0131 650 9654.

Further Information

34. For further information about Scottish Universities Sport's equity policy, or the forthcoming *Equity Standard*, please contact the SUS Executive Officer at 1st Floor, 48 Pleasance, Edinburgh, EH8 9TJ. Email jacqui@susport.org.uk or call 0131 650 9654.

APPENDIX ONE

Definition of terms

Discrimination

- **Direct Discrimination** Where an individual or a group of people is treated less favourably than others in circumstances which are the same or not materially different. An example would be stating that only men can apply for the position of Chair in an organisation. This would constitute direct discrimination on the grounds of gender.
- **Indirect Discrimination** Imposing requirements or conditions which appear to apply equally to all, but which in practice can be met only by certain sections of the population. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be genuinely justified in relation to the situation in question (i.e. if there is a Genuine Occupational Requirement for an individual to be from a particular group in society). An example of indirect discrimination would be imposing a requirement upon all team players to wear a particular type of clothing as part of their uniform, which may indirectly preclude some people from being able to take part, on the grounds of their religious belief.

Diversity

Encouraging diversity means respecting and embracing individual and community differences in society.

Equal Opportunities

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people because of their sex or marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or because of other personal attributes including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions. (*Scotland Act 1998*) In practice, equal opportunities involves an organisation fulfilling its obligations in terms of equality as required by law.

Equality

Equality is the state of being equal. In some cases, the pursuit of equality may require unequal effort to ensure that equality is indeed achieved – hence the requirement for equity.

Equity

In its simplest sense, equity means fairness. It is the process of allocating or reallocating resources and entitlements fairly and without discrimination, and taking steps to redress any existing inequalities or unfairness in how resources or entitlements are currently distributed. Equity in sport means applying the principles of fairness to ensure that the diverse needs of individuals in Scottish society are respected, so that all individuals have equal opportunities to participate in sport and physical recreation and have their rights protected

Ethics

The systematic application of a set of moral rules, principles, values and norms.

Harassment

A course of action, or form of behaviour that causes repeated or persistent offence to a person or group.

Positive action

Positive action means taking into account that a particular group has experienced disadvantage and so targeted action is needed to support/enable the disadvantaged group and to redress an existing inequality. This may require additional effort, time or resources to be targeted at a particular group in order to achieve a level playing field. This is NOT positive discrimination, which is not legal in the UK. Positive action can only be carried out within the bounds of the appropriate legislation. Scottish Universities Sport recommends obtaining legal advice before choosing to adopt positive action measures. An example of positive action would be advertising a post in media particularly aimed at women if there is clear evidence that women are under-represented in a particular role or level in that organisation.

Positive Discrimination

Positive discrimination is not lawful in the UK. An example of positive discrimination would be appointing a person purely on the grounds of his or her race or gender, rather than on that person's ability to do the job in question (unless a Genuine Occupational Requirement applies to the post).

Victimisation

Victimisation is defined as when someone is treated oppressively in revenge, and as such is subjected to suffering or ill treatment. If a person is subjected to ill treatment as a result of raising a grievance following discrimination, this would be victimisation.

APPENDIX TWO

Key Equalities and Anti-Discrimination Legislation

In implementing this equity policy, Scottish Universities Sport will continue to comply with its legislative obligations, and will give due regard to implications arising from the following Acts of Parliament and Regulations:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended in 1986 and 1999)
- The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000)
- The Disability Discrimination Act (as amended in 2005)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Scotland Act 1998
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2006

Scottish Universities Sport will also comply with any relevant new equalities and anti-discrimination legislation that comes into force before this policy is reviewed, including age discrimination legislation, and regulations aimed at preventing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and faith or religious belief.

APPENDIX THREE

Code of Conduct for SUS Committee members

The committee members of the Scottish Universities Sport acknowledge and accept the scope and extent of our duties as committee members. We have a responsibility to carry out our duties in an honest and businesslike manner and within the scope of our authority, as set forth in the constitution of Scottish Universities Sport. We are entrusted with and responsible for the oversight of the assets and business affairs of Scottish Universities Sport in an honest, fair, diligent and ethical manner. As committee members we must act within the bounds of the authority conferred upon us and with the duty to make and enact informed decisions and policies in the best interests of Scottish Universities Sport and its members. The Scottish Universities Sport Executive Council has adopted the following Code of Conduct and our committee members are expected to adhere to the standards of loyalty, good faith, and the avoidance of conflict of interest that follow:

Committee Members will:

- Act in the best interests of, and fulfil their fiduciary obligations to, Scottish Universities Sport members;
- Act honestly, fairly, ethically and with integrity;
- Conduct themselves in a professional, courteous and respectful manner;
- Comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations;
- Act in good faith, responsibly, with due care, competence and diligence, without allowing their independent judgment to be subordinated;
- Act in a manner to enhance and maintain the reputation of Scottish Universities Sport;
- Disclose potential conflicts of interest that they may have regarding any matters that may come before the committee, and abstain from discussion and voting on any matter in which the committee member has or may have a conflict of interest;
- Make available to and share with fellow committee members information as may be appropriate to ensure proper conduct and sound operation of Scottish Universities Sport and its Executive Council;
- Respect the confidentiality of information relating to the affairs of the organisation acquired in the course of their service as committee members, except when authorised or legally required to disclose such information; and
- Not use confidential information acquired in the course of their service as committee members for their personal advantage.

A committee member who has concerns regarding compliance with this Code should raise those concerns with the Scottish Universities Sport Chair and the Scottish Universities Sport Executive Officer, who will determine what action shall be taken to deal with the concern. In the extremely unlikely event that a waiver of this Code for a committee member would be in the best interest of the organisation, it must be approved by the Executive Council.

Committee members will annually sign a confirmation that they have read and will comply with this Code.