

London School of Theology

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Process of ratification: | Academic Board |
| Executive Team Members Responsible: | Academic Dean Academic Secretary & Director of Academic Services (ASDAS) |
| Individuals Responsible: | David Hilborn (Academic Dean) Shivanthi Manickasingham (ASDAS) Clara Badu-Amoah (Disability, Disability, Inclusion & Learning Support Manager) |
| To be Reviewed: | Every 24 months |
| Review consultation: | Programme Leaders, Faculty, Key Staff members, Student Reps |
| Date of Next Review period: | January 2027 |

1. Introduction

The London School of Theology (LST) is an evangelical Christian college whose core beliefs and values are enshrined in our Doctrinal Basis and Community Code, and in Article 2 of our Memorandum and Articles of Association, which states that the School’s ‘curriculum and all its activities are in accordance with Scriptural teaching and with the Doctrinal Basis’, and which adds that LST ‘operates in fellowship with all evangelical churches and movements and is committed to maintaining a worldwide outlook’.

Each of these statements is in turn rooted and grounded in the Bible, which we believe to be God’s authoritative word for all humanity, and which at its heart affirms that all people are made in God’s own image (Genesis 1:26-27), and that the revelation of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ his Son is intended for all people groups and nations (Matt 28:16-20). These biblical affirmations underpin more recently formulated frameworks of rights and responsibilities that have informed principles of equality, diversity and inclusion that Higher Education and other institutions are expected to uphold and enact.

Against this background, LST is committed to maintaining and developing an environment that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all students, staff, and stakeholders. We believe that our community is enriched by the diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences of its members. As such, this policy outlines our commitment to fostering an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, without prejudice to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other legally Protected Characteristic that may lead to discrimination. Importantly, this commitment itself recognises that religion is a Protected Characteristic under the Equality Act (2010), and that our own rights and convictions as an evangelical Christian learning community are worthy of respect in a democratic society, even as we commit ourselves to respect and uphold the rights, equalities, diversity and inclusion of all people. Indeed, it is implicit within our commitment to diversity in particular that while recognising and upholding the rights and liberties of others, we trust that others will reciprocally recognise the rights and liberties we ourselves bear in relation to our religious beliefs and values.

2. Core Purposes

The core purposes of this Policy are to:

- Promote equality and prevent discrimination in all aspects of the School’s life.

- Encourage diversity in the School's student body, workforce and Board of Trustees.
- Create a culture of inclusion in which all individuals are valued and supported.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the LST community, including students, faculty, staff, trustees and Visiting Lecturers. It covers all School-run activities, including teaching, research, administration, recruitment, social events and community outreach.

4. Principles

We uphold the following core principles in our Christian-based commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion:

- **Respect:** Treating all individuals with dignity and courtesy, valuing each person's unique character and contribution as a fellow human being made in God's image.
- **Fairness:** Ensuring that all decisions regarding recruitment, promotion and academic assessment are based on merit, and are thus free from bias and unlawful discrimination.
- **Accessibility:** Making our facilities and services as accessible as possible, by striving to remove barriers that may hinder participation.
- **Support:** Providing support and resources to help all members of the School succeed in their academic and/or professional development.
- **Engagement:** Actively engaging with the community beyond the School to promote awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion as commensurate with our Christian ethos and values.

5. Specific Responsibilities

- **Leadership:** The School Executive Team is principally responsible for leading and implementing this policy, and for thus promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion within the School. In this, they work closely with the School's dedicated Disability, Inclusion and Learning Support Manager.
- **Faculty, Staff and Trustees:** All faculty, staff, trustees and Visiting Lecturers are expected to uphold this policy in their interactions with students and with each other, thus modelling an inclusive environment.
- **Students:** All students are encouraged to engage positively with their peers and to participate in initiatives that promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Policies and practices are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure that the equality, diversity, and inclusion goals defined in this policy are fulfilled.

6. Student Recruitment and Admissions

The School is dedicated to ensuring that all students are treated equally and are free from discrimination by faculty, Visiting Lecturers, staff, fellow students, trustees and others affiliated to LST. This undertaking is expected more particularly to permeate the following activities relating to both prospective and enrolled students:

- **Advocacy, Marketing and Recruitment:** Communicating the School's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in course brochures, flyers, prospectuses and event publicity material, and ensuring that information about programmes is promoted among all sections of society.
- **Admissions and Selection:** Applying an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach to recruitment and enrolment, while seeking to do this more specifically through:
 - Widening participation beyond purely legislative provisions to ensure that more prospective students from low participation neighbourhoods, ethnic minorities, disabled and care leaver contexts are included, affirmed and welcomed in promotional materials and activities.
 - Encouraging access to our programmes from non-traditional pathways through dedicated 'pre-degree' courses and accreditation of prior experiential learning.
 - Diversifying modes of study to enable 'harder to reach' students to engage with our programmes.
 - Cultivating partnerships with secondary schools to raise prior attainment.
 - Increasing the scope and availability of scholarship and bursary funds to attract students from less advantaged socio-economic groups.
 - Subscribing to the Stand-Alone Pledge with regard to the recruitment of Care leavers.

7. Learning and Teaching

In line with the School's Learning and Teaching Ethos and Strategy, Programme and Module Leaders are expected to ensure that curricula, pedagogy, teaching practice, module narratives, bibliographies, class materials, VLE resources, learning support and other educational provision reflect the high standards of equality, diversity and inclusion to which this policy is committed. In particular, this entails:

- Ensuring that curriculum content takes into account the diverse backgrounds of students, including through suitably diverse reading lists, assignment tasks and assessment/examination questions.
- Regularly reviewing, extending and updating the Rolling Resource List launched by the School in 2022 to encourage diversification of bibliographies.
- Engaging in teaching that promotes global thinking, and that references and actively includes scholars from non-western/majority world contexts as well as from western contexts.
- Making every effort within the requirements of employment law to recruit a diverse teaching staff that reflects the diversity of the School's student population.
- Developing and designing programmes and modules that will enfranchise disadvantaged groups, especially those from low-participation communities and neighbourhoods.
- Sustaining and developing lecture capture in line with the School's Class Content Capture Policy, as a means of enabling the review and revision of class content by those who need longer to absorb it, and as a means of enabling those who unavoidably miss lectures due to ill health, domestic or work crises/obligations to maintain engagement with their programme.

- Timetabling classes, session and units as far as possible to ensure that the diverse needs of students are taken into account, including part-time and commuting students, and those with childcare and caring responsibilities.
- With regard to English Language requirements for enrolment, providing appropriate learning support for students for whom English is not their first language (EALs).
- In line with the School's Disability Policy, maintaining and developing specialist support for students with disabilities, including through continuing to ensure that students with learning difficulties are enabled to undertake diagnostic assessments and apply for the appropriate Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

8. Assessment

LST is committed to ensuring that assessment procedures avoid stereotyping the capacities and potentialities of students, especially of ethnic minority and mature students, while also taking due account of, and making reasonable adjustments for, students with disabilities. All the same, as a key facet of its commitment to equality, the School is dedicated to assessing students solely on the quality of the work they produce. As such, it is committed to ensuring that academic standards are applied consistently and fairly for all.

9. Training and Awareness

The School provides, and will seek to develop and enhance its provision of training and resources to foster awareness and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion among faculty, Visiting Lecturers, staff, trustees and students. This includes workshops, seminars, access to online courses and tools that address cultural competence, and inclusive practices in keeping with the convictions, commitments and values set out in this policy.

10. Reporting and Grievance Procedures

LST encourages individuals to report any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying in accordance with appropriate policies and procedures. The School is committed to taking such reports seriously, and to investigating them promptly.

The School's Grievance, Disciplinary and Complaints Policies and Procedures are designed to provide fair and supportive mechanisms for addressing concerns related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and all members of the School community can and should expect to receive fair and equal treatment in matters of discipline, dismissal, redundancy, retirement or grievance.

11. Continuous Development and Improvement

The School is committed to the continuous improvement of its practices concerning equality, diversity and inclusion. We seek, and will continue to seek, feedback from students, faculty, Visiting Lecturers, staff, trustees and other stakeholders in ongoing dialogue to enhance policy development and practical action in these areas.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as more specifically related to the School's Doctrinal Basis and Ethos

In keeping with the provisions and exemptions made for religious organisations and office holders in the Equality Act (2010) and in related case law, the School shall be entitled to uphold the evangelical Christian principles and convictions affirmed or implied in the various institutional statements cited in Section 1 above.

Where a particular post bears a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the postholder should be a practising Christian who affirms the Doctrinal Basis of the School, this shall be stated in any advertisement or literature pertaining to the post, and shall be taken into account during the appointment process.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary, to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the needs of the LST community.

14. Conclusion

LST acknowledges that fostering equality, diversity and inclusion is an ongoing journey that requires commitment, engagement and accountability from all members of the School community. Together, we can create a vibrant and inclusive environment that reflects our evangelical Christian values and enhances the educational experience of all concerned.

January 2025