

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy (members)

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how U3AC promotes equality, prevents discrimination and supports full participation in its activities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, charity best practice and the charitable objectives detailed in its constitution. The policy applies to all U3AC members, tutors, volunteers, trustees and staff participating in U3AC activities, whether in person or online. It should be read in conjunction with U3AC's other policies, in particular the Complaints Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

Definitions

- **Equality** – ensuring everyone has equal access to opportunities and is treated fairly.
- **Diversity** – recognising and valuing the differences that individuals bring to U3AC.
- **Inclusion** – creating an environment where everyone feels respected, supported and able to participate fully.
- **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates a hostile environment.
- **Victimisation** – treating someone unfairly because they made or supported a complaint.
- **Protected characteristics** – as defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

U3AC's Commitments

U3AC will:

- Promote a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion.
- Ensure that no member or prospective member is discriminated against because of a protected characteristic.
- Take practicable and proportionate steps to remove barriers to participation.
- Provide fair, transparent and consistent processes for membership, course allocation and participation.
- Ensure that all publicity, communications and events reflect U3AC's commitment to equality and inclusion.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to concerns or complaints relating to discrimination, harassment or exclusion.

Member Responsibilities

All members are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Avoid behaviour that could be discriminatory, harassing or exclusionary.
- Contribute to a welcoming and supportive learning environment.
- Be aware of and comply with all relevant U3AC policies and its Code of Behaviour.
- Report concerns or incidents promptly so they can be addressed.

Fair and Inclusive Membership Processes

U3AC aims to ensure that membership processes are fair, transparent and accessible. This includes:

- Clear and consistent criteria for membership, details of which are in clause 9 of the organisation's constitution.
- Making appropriate adjustments to courses for applicants with disabilities, as detailed below.
- Transparent processes for course allocation and participation.
- Fair allocation of oversubscribed activities using an entirely computer algorithm.
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that financial hardship is not a barrier to membership by offering a limited number of reduced subscriptions (details of which are available upon application).

Accessibility and Adjustments

U3AC will take practical and proportionate steps to ensure that members with disabilities or access needs can participate fully. This may include:

- Accessible venues where possible
- Assisted listening or visual support
- Alternative formats for information
- Adjustments to course delivery where feasible

Members should notify the Office of any access needs at the earliest opportunity. The Office will acknowledge the request within five (5) working days. A full response will be provided within a further ten (10) working days, proposing what support can be provided and if it is not practicable to meet all the member's access needs, the reasons behind this decision.

Reporting Concerns or Incidents

Any member who experiences or witnesses discrimination, harassment or exclusion should report it to U3AC's Operations Manager, the Secretary, the Member Liaison Trustee or the Chair.

Reports will be handled sensitively, confidentially and in line with U3AC's Complaints Policy. U3AC will take all practicable steps to protect someone who raises a concern from any subsequent possible victimisation.

Where a concern relates to the safety or wellbeing of a member, the matter will be handled in accordance with U3AC's Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring

The Secretary and Operations Manager have primary responsibility for monitoring data relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. This is likely to include, but not be restricted to, the number of accessibility requests and complaints or incidents relating to equality or inclusion. All data will be stored securely and handled in accordance with U3AC's Privacy Policy and relevant data protection legislation.

The Secretary and Operations Manager will jointly prepare an annual report to Council summarising trends and recommending improvements to processes where necessary.

Approved by Council: 29 May 2026

Next review date: May 2027