

Equal Pay Policy

The University of Ulster supports the principle of equality of opportunity in employment and believes, as part of that principle, that pay should be awarded fairly and equitably. We believe that it is both good practice and in the University's best interests to have a pay system which is fair and non-discriminatory.

We recognise that in order to achieve equal pay for employees doing equal work we should operate a pay system which is transparent, based on objective criteria and free from sex bias.

Legislative Framework

The right to equal pay for equal work for men and women is a fundamental principle of European Community law and is a legal right under domestic law. The relevant European and domestic legislation is:

- Article 141 of the EC Treaty;
- Equal Pay Directive [Council Directive 75/117/EEC]; and
- Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970 as amended;
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 and amended;
- Pensions (NI) Order 1995.

Definitions

Pay: For the purpose of this policy, 'pay' is the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which an employee receives, directly or indirectly, in respect of his or her employment. It therefore included bonuses, access to overtime, holidays, sick pay, pensions and other additional benefits.

Equal work means like work or work rated as equivalent or work of equal value.

Like work is work which is the same or broadly similar.

Work rated as equivalent is work which has been rated as equivalent under an accredited job evaluation scheme which is non-discriminatory.

Work of equal value is work which is of broadly equal value or worth in terms of the demands of the job when compared according to criteria such as skill, decision-making and physical effort.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies ultimately with the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Human Resources. The Human Resources Department is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy and undertaking equal pay review. Deans and Heads of School/Department and those sitting on recruitment and selection and/or promotion panels also have a responsibility to ensure that starting salaries are set in a manner consistent with this policy.

Enquiries and complaints

We recognise that employees have the right to raise issues of concern or to complain about how they are treated in relation to pay, particularly if they feel that their treatment is unfair or discriminatory. Should anyone have an enquiry regarding their pay, they may raise the issue with their line manager in the first instance. There is an established internal grievance procedure to deal with such complaints. All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly, confidentially and impartially.

A complainant may also submit questions using an Equal Pay Questionnaire. This can be downloaded from the website of the Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister at <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/equality/equalpay.pdf>

Employees who raise a complaint and their comparators will be protected against victimisation.

In addition to the University's internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of alleged discrimination to an industrial tribunal. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise the issue under the internal grievance procedure first. Any complaint of victimisation will be investigated and may, if upheld, result in disciplinary action which can include dismissal.

This policy has been discussed and agreed with the University's recognised trade unions.

Signed: Chair of Council
..... Vice-Chancellor
..... Director of Human Resources
..... Trade Union Representative
..... Trade Union Representative
..... Trade Union Representative

Date:

APPENDIX I

Action Plan

In order to put our commitment to equal pay into practice we have:

- carried out an equal pay audit as a starting point for identifying any inequalities;
- examined our existing pay practices not only for current staff but also for new employees including those in non-standard employment (on part-time, fixed-term, term-time only or weekly-paid contracts), and those who are absent on pregnancy or maternity leave, career-breaks, sick-leave or any other form of paid and unpaid leave; and
- taken into account the entire pay package – basic pay, bonuses, performance pay starting pay, sick pay, overtime rates, allowances and benefits (including pensions) – as well as the impact of promotion schemes, grading and incremental progression.

We intend to carry out further equal pay audits, in line with best practice and based on ECNI guidelines, which will involve Human Resources, Line managers and Trade Union Representatives. Following the University's second equal pay audit (following the full implementation of the National Framework Agreement) we intend to:

- formulate a plan of appropriate remedial action. Any action arising out of the audit will be carried forward to implement any changes to existing practice;
- inform employees at each stage of the process how any new practices will work and how their own pay is determined;
- respond to any enquires or grievances (according to our grievance procedure) arising as a result of our policy or practices;
- carry out periodic monitoring of the impact of our practices by undertaking pay audits and monitoring any complaints;
- provide guidance for line managers involved in recruitment and selection decisions that affect pay and benefits;
- review the implementation of this policy on a regular basis; and
- we intend , through this action, to avoid unfair discrimination and eliminate any unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay. We mean to reward fairly the skills, experience and potential of all staff, thereby increasing efficiency, productivity and competitiveness and enhancing the organisation's reputation and image.