

PML Policy

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy



Issue:	3.1
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Signature:	
Date updated:	June 2026
Next review date:	June 2029

At a glance: Key takeaways from this policy

A quick summary

At PML, we're committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive place for everyone - staff, students, visitors, and partners - where everyone is valued for who they are and what they bring.

This policy reflects our belief in fairness, respect, and celebrating diversity, which ties closely to our values of working together and communicating effectively. By embracing equity and inclusion, we're striving for meaningful change - breaking down barriers, addressing inequalities, and making sure everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

We also believe in leading by example by treating each other with respect, holding ourselves accountable to maintain a workplace free from discrimination, bullying, or bias.

The essentials – what you need to know

- **Inclusive and supportive environment:** PML is committed to providing a fair, respectful and inclusive workplace where everyone is treated based on their abilities and potential, free from discrimination or bias.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** We focus on removing barriers, valuing differences, and ensuring everyone feels welcomed, respected, and able to thrive.
- **Shared responsibility:** All staff, students, and line managers/leaders are expected to support inclusion, treat others with dignity, show allyship and take part in EDI training to help build a positive culture.
- **Leadership and accountability:** The Chief Executive, Senior Management, and the Board of Trustees ensure the policy is implemented, while managers and supervisors address issues promptly and fairly.
- **Clear policies and support:** EDI principles are embedded across our policies, from recruitment and career progression to flexible working, wellbeing and family-related leave.
- **Zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour:** Harassment, bullying or discrimination will be taken seriously, with investigations and action where needed to maintain a safe and respectful environment.

Who can help?

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the HR team via hrgroup@pml.ac.uk.

Related resources

Looking for more information? These related resources may be of interest to you and can be found on SharePoint:

- Dignity at work policy
- Grievance Procedure

Please see the final page for the full document history, including most recent changes.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Scope

This document applies to all PML and PML Applications employees, students, visitors, Trustees and Directors, and includes working in PML premises together with external events where employees are representing PML, such as hospitality or training events. For simplicity, subsequent reference in the document to “employees” is intended to include students, and where applicable, visitors.

The policy also applies to applicants within the recruitment processes for employees, students and Trustees.

2. Summary

The document provides:

- i. An overview of PML’s commitments to create an environment that is based on dignity and respect, where difference is valued and celebrated, enriching our community;
- ii. Clarity on expectations for all employees, students and visitors to act in accordance with the policy and our clear position that any bullying or harassment in the workplace is totally unacceptable and subject to proportionate and appropriate action;
- iii. Signposting to relevant policies, procedures and guidance to deliver PML’s commitment;
- iv. Reference to relevant legislation;
- v. Details on how PML will monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

3. Introduction

Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) Group is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment that is supportive for all members of our community to work and study, and is free from discriminatory practices where all staff, students, visitors and job applicants are treated only on the basis of their merits, including abilities and potential.

The policy relates to all forms of discrimination covered by the Equality Act 2010: age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy/maternity/paternity. Please see Appendix one for definitions.

4. Definitions

Equity is about recognising differences and actively addressing anything that may disadvantage members of any particular group in being able to participate fully within PML.

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people’s differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture.

Inclusion is the practice of including people in a way that is fair for all, values everyone, and empowers each person to be themselves.

5. PML's Commitment

PML Group is a diverse, multicultural and international community. As a member of that community all employees, students, visitors, contractors, Trustees and Directors can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. As an organisation we are committed to working in an inclusive way with the local, national and international communities with whom we partner and whom we impact.

PML has a People and Culture Strategy Group which has a primary aim to improve the experience for employees and students across PML. Students are represented by the Postgraduate Coordinator. The purpose of this group is to embed EDI standards and learning into our ways of working, developing and monitoring effectiveness, related policies and providing advice, proposals and recommendations to SMT in relation to opportunities for improvement.

Equity, diversity and inclusion underpins all our work and is at the heart of what we are and what we do. Our commitment is not restricted to the minimum legal requirements of equality legislation, as we aim to deliver best practice whenever possible (see appendix one).

PML has demonstrated commitment to improvement via the Athena SWAN award (2018, bronze accreditation) to address gender equality, and in 2024, were awarded silver accreditation for the Investors in Diversity award, a nationally recognised accreditation for employers.

PML continues to participate in EDI-related networking and collaboration with fellow science research centres having aligned with the Natural Environment Research Council's Diversity and Inclusion Living Action Plan from 2022 to 2025.

Our primary aim is to ensure welcoming and inclusion is embedded into our ways of working to ensure sustainable and best practice.

6. Responsibilities

The Chief Executive, supported by the Senior Management Team, is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and monitored. Ultimately, the Board of Trustees is accountable for ensuring PML complies with its legal obligations under the Equality Act, including the general duty to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations.

PML's [Core Values](#) include collaboration and leading by example, which include expectations of behaviour for our employees:

- **Working together:** Employees are responsible for ensuring that their behaviour is inclusive and supportive of all members of PML and does not undermine, intimidate, or discriminate against colleagues and visitors;
- **Leading by example:** Employees are expected to act with integrity, demonstrating professional and appropriate behaviour whilst at work; showing consideration and thoughtfulness in relation to staff, clients and visitors regardless of an individual's background, culture and belief.

In addition to adhering to the behaviours outlined above, employees are expected to participate in EDI training provided.

Guidance has been developed to support the implementation of this policy in relation to examples of [inclusive language](#) (available on SharePoint)

Human Resources (HR) are responsible for providing advice, guidance, support and policies in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes individual support, together with advising on the development of actions, monitoring progress and reviewing related policies to ensure they enable a welcoming and inclusive environment.

In addition, HR will provide and coordinate activities that raise awareness of diversity and inclusion, including training and raising awareness through information and links to events that celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Line managers and student supervisors are expected to participate in relevant training and development, including unconscious bias and recruitment and selection training. They are responsible for adhering to policy and taking early interventions when issues are raised with the aim of informal resolution where possible.

The Postgraduate Coordinator is responsible for providing advice and guidance in relation to student recruitment and supervision processes that are fair, reasonable and free from bias. In addition, the Postgraduate Coordinator will provide confidential advice and guidance for students.

7. Signposting to relevant policies

Equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in all of our activities within PML, with specific relevance in the following policies (which can be found via the Policy Hub on SharePoint:

- **Respect at work**. This policy includes definitions of bullying and/or harassment and where an employee can access support, how to report incidents and action to address issues and possible outcomes.
- **Recruitment Policy**. This policy includes how to ensure the recruitment and selection process is fair and reasonable based on individual merit and free from unlawful bias throughout the process of determining role requirements, advertising, shortlisting interviewing and selection decisions.
- **Pay policy**. This policy includes guidance on an objective process for establishing pay that is free from unlawful bias following a new appointment, promotion or award of a bonus.
- **Merit Promotion**. This policy includes guidance on ensuring promotion criteria are applied in a consistent, fair and objective way based on individual abilities, skills and knowledge.
- **Individual Merit Award**. This policy includes guidance on ensuring merit awards are applied in a consistent fair and objective way.
- **Job Evaluation**. This policy includes guidance on ensuring job evaluation is applied in a consistent fair and objective way.
- **Performance and Development Review**. This policy includes guidance on ensuring that the PDR is implemented in a fair, objective and respectful way.
- **Maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave policies**. These policies ensure that we are meeting statutory obligations and in addition enable employees taking family related breaks feel engaged and part of the community throughout their leave, with the opportunity to return to their role with support to be able to achieve their best.

- **Flexible working policy**. This policy includes the procedure for employees to make a request to vary their working pattern to meet their personal needs.
- **PML Staff Sickness Absence**. This policy recognizes the needs of employees with a physical or hidden disability, and ensures that adjustments can be made to support optimum attendance at work.
- **Redundancy Policy**. This policy includes information in relation to a redundancy process, with commitments to ensure selection criteria and processes are undertaken fairly free from unlawful bias.
- **Safeguarding Policy**. This policy aims to protect people, particularly young adults and children, and vulnerable adults, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with PML.
- **Student Complaints Procedure** - This document includes guidance for supervisors to ensure students are treated fairly and reasonably. Students should also refer to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies of their host University.
- **Menopause Workplace Guidance** . This document provides information and advice to support individuals approaching or going through menopause, and also for managers and those who work alongside colleagues.

8. Confidentiality

Prospect Representatives, the Postgraduate Coordinator and HR will treat information provided by the employee in confidence, unless withholding information puts any individual, property or premises at risk.

9. Implementation of policy

The Chief Executive is responsible for the implementation of the EDI Policy with advice from the EDI Committee and HoPC. However, all members of PML community are expected to take responsibility in playing their part in enabling and supporting an inclusive and diverse workplace. In particular, individuals who witness inappropriate behaviour by a member of PML against others are encouraged to call out inappropriate behaviour and be prepared to contribute statements to support an investigation, where required.

Allegations of inappropriate behaviour will be treated seriously with an investigation and disciplinary action where there is evidence of a serious and deliberate breach of this policy and the Equality Act 2010. This includes evidence of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

10. Document Review

This document will be reviewed every 3 years.

11. Document History

Issue	Date	Description of Changes
1		SN 40 23
2	March 23	Reviewed
3	January 25	New template reformat
3.1	June 26	Minor amendments to reflect the 2025-2030 PML Strategy, the introduction of the People and Culture Strategy Group (PC-SG) and adjustment of a small number of roles/job titles.

Changes made at Issue are in blue.

Appendix one

PML's Best Practice approach to protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and beyond

This document has been written as guidance to support the implementation of PML's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in relation to going beyond compliance and promoting best practice with regards to the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

At PML we believe socioeconomic background and body type are additional characteristics that should be protected from discrimination.

Compliance = Equality

Meeting legislative requirements for Equality – Equality Act 2010

Policies written and established based on code of practice

Best practice = Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Taking action beyond meeting legislative requirements

Strategies created to establish long-term, continuous good practices

Age	The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Compliance	Best practice
To avoid discrimination on the grounds of age, including avoidance of language in advertisements, such as attracting "young / dynamic" applicants.	PML is committed to ensuring that information relating to age is not accessible when considering employment decisions.

Disability	Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Compliance	Best practice
The Act requires an employer to make reasonable adjustments to enable an applicant or employee to access employment.	PML is committed to the 'Disability Confidence Employer' scheme and will include a candidate who has a disability on the shortlist for interview if they meet the essential selection criteria.

Race	In the Equality Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Compliance	Best practice
To avoid discrimination on the grounds of race, including avoidance of language in advertisements, such as requiring "GSCE English and maths"	Develop inclusive language guidance relating to race
Sex	Both men and women are protected under the Act.
Compliance	Best practice
To prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender, including avoidance of language in advertisements that may encourage stereotypically male traits, such as "assertive".	- PML has created a 'Menopause workplace guidance' document - PML calculates their annual gender pay-gap data within the annual EDI report - Internal and external job advertisements are checked for gender bias
Sexual orientation	The Act protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, also known as LGBT.
Compliance	Best practice
To prevent discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.	Contractual adoption pay updated to mirror the benefits under the maternity pay to ensure same sex couples are not at a disadvantaged when seeking adoption benefits
Gender Reassignment	The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. Where transsexual people are absent from work or study because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.
Compliance	Best practice
The Act requires an employer to treat transsexual employees fairly, where transsexual people are absent from work or study because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, it is discrimination to treat them less favourably than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.	- Develop a 'Transgender policy' - Explore options for providing a gender-neutral toilet facilities - Encourage staff to use pronouns in their email signature to be more inclusive by providing positive role model examples
Marriage and civil partnership	The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination.
Compliance	Best practice
To prevent discrimination on the grounds of marriage and civil partnership.	PML has a shared parental leave policy and has removed gender assumptions from maternity and adoption policies.

Pregnancy and maternity	A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.	
Compliance	Best practice	
The Act requires an employer to make reasonable adjustments to enable an applicant or employee to access employment.	PML is committed to a generous maternity, adoption and parental leave policy. This also includes leave for infertility appointments. PML provides a space for employees to express milk PML policies do not include gender assumptions. PML provides access to independent Occupational Health advice and support to assist with identifying reasonable adjustments.	
Religion or belief	In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.	
Compliance	Best practice	
To prevent discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.	PML provides a designated space for wellbeing which can be booked for people to practice their religion or other spiritual practice . PML is able to offer flexibility to change religious or public holiday dates.	

The characteristics listed below are not part of the Equality Act 2010, but PML still supports the following as best practice:

Body type	
Compliance	Best practice
This is not currently included in the Equality Act as a protected characteristic, unless linked to a disability.	PML is committed to subsidising an inclusive Sports and Social Club that respects the diverse range of activities and societies that employees want to engage with regardless of personal circumstances.
Socioeconomic background	
Compliance	Best practice
This is not currently included in the Equality Act.	To seek opportunities to engage with students from underrepresented communities where fewer participants engage in natural sciences through work experience and placements. To seek opportunities to offer paid work experience to avoid negative selection of students based on their economic resources. Signposting funding opportunities for students for MSc projects.

Appendix two

Support available

Reporting	You are encouraged to discuss concerns with your manager in the first instance if you feel this is possible. Your manager will be able to provide support and signposting to reach an acceptable resolution.	
Prospect Union	<u>Prospect</u> is the Trade Union recognised by PML and is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. If you are a member of Prospect, you can access support and advice from your union in confidence.	ProspectReps@pml.ac.uk
Human Resources	You can talk to the HR operations Manager or Head of People and Culture in confidence about any concerns in relation to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes issues directly related to you, or where you may have witnessed any unacceptable behaviour. HR can offer advice and guidance in relation to reaching a resolution on either an informal or formal process as needed and appropriate.	Lizzi Hamilton Call: 633163 Email: eljm@pml.ac.uk Michael Rabone Call: 633122 Email: mra@pml.ac.uk
Postgraduate Coordinator	Post graduate students are encouraged to discuss concerns with the Head of Post Graduate Studies. The HoPGS will provide confidential support, advice and signposting.	Sam Garrard Email – sga@pml.ac.uk
Mentors	Mentors can offer advice, support and encouragement, including signposting, building confidence and being assertive in tackling undermining or discriminatory behaviour.	Please contact HR: hrgroup@pml.ac.uk for a current list of mentors