

Equity Policy

The Literary & Debating Society



1 Purpose

The purpose of this equity policy is to formalise The Literary & Debating Society's commitment to ensuring that all members enjoy every activity and event organised by the society. This document, therefore, seeks to set out examples of unacceptable behaviour at said events and the forms of redress required by such conduct.

2 Conduct at Events Hosted by the Society

The Literary & Debating Society stresses that it will always strive to ensure that those who attend any 'Lit & Deb' branded events feel secure and free from any discrimination or threatening behaviour at all times. A list of examples of such offensive conduct is given below:

- *Racial or ethnic discrimination*, where members are insulted or harmed in any way by comments made about their race or ethnicity.
- *Sexual orientation and identity discrimination*, where members are insulted or harmed in any way by comments made about their sexual preferences or orientation. In particular, this type of discrimination encompasses acts such as 'slut-shaming', homophobic and trans*-phobic bullying and intentional mis-gendering.
- *Insults regarding a members appearance*, where members are insulted or harmed in any way by comments made about their physical appearance. In particular, this category encompasses any 'ableist' language – i.e. comments made to insult those with a disability.
- *Insults made using potentially triggering language*, where members are insulted or harmed in any way by comments containing mental-health slurs or references to traumatic events and ideas.
- *Lack of respect for personal boundaries*, where members are made to feel uncomfortable or threatened by person(s) failing to respect personal space and boundaries.
- *Harassment* of any form which makes members feel uncomfortable in any regard.

The society recognises that **this is not an exhaustive list** and rather is merely a guideline for potentially threatening behaviour or discrimination. Furthermore, the society takes a dim view of aggressors attempting to mitigate their conduct by explaining that they were intoxicated while the threatening behaviour or discrimination took place.

3 Jurisdiction

This equity policy will be enforced at any events that are in some way linked to, promoted by or endorsed by The Literary & Debating Society; such as house debates, literary circles, reading clubs, annual or extraordinary general meetings, social events hosted by the society and inter-varsities – both debating and literary and both 'home' and 'away'. Again, this is by no means an exhaustive list and it remains the discretion of the elected committee as to whether an event is linked in some way to the society.

3.1 External Events

This equity policy applies at any external events; 'external' here meaning an event not organised by the society but funded or supported in some way by the society. Furthermore, should any equity complaint be brought against a society member by a participant at any such external event then that complaint will be examined exactly as if it had been made by member of the society.

Likewise, should any equity complaint be brought against a member of an external society by a Literary & Debating Society member then that complaint shall be brought to the attention of the committee of the relevant institution.

At all external events The Literary & Debating Society **shall appoint a member of committee to act as an equity officer for the duration of the event**. This designated officer shall be responsible for ensuring that all society members have the best possible time and that any equity issues that may arise are formally dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

4 Sanctions and Process

If a member brings an equity complaint to the society; depending on the perceived severity of the incident and after due investigation of the complaint the society will utilise the following procedure to rectify the situation. Furthermore, the society reserves the right to skip any of the preliminary stages if the committee believe, after due investigation, that the complaint is of a sufficiently serious nature.

1. An apology from any aggressor named by the complainant is requested.
2. The ability of any aggressor named by the complainant to interact with the society at future events is restricted.
3. The membership of any aggressor named by the complainant is revoked.
4. The incident is brought to the attention of university officials for further review.

The committee shall appoint three committee members to deal with any equity complaints. These committee members shall be totally unconnected to the equity complaint so as to maintain impartiality. If a complaint is made against any member of the committee that complaint shall be immediately passed over to Maynooth University Students' Union who will investigate the matter themselves.

Ultimately, any potential form of redress is at the discretion of the executive branch of the elected committee. **The committee will always investigate all complaints with the utmost discretion, seriousness and balance.**