

1. Overview

In accordance with Aberystwyth University's Supplementary Royal Charter, the Council is "the supreme governing body of the University" and is responsible for "determining the University's strategic direction and for the conduct of the University's financial, administrative and other affairs, in accordance with its objects". The executive management of the University is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor – the institution's chief academic, administrative and accounting officer – who, whilst retaining strategic oversight, may delegate several operational functions to the appropriate officers.

2. Introduction

Aberystwyth University's responsibilities and accountabilities for ethical employment practices are paramount and underpin and influence all other related policies. The Welsh Government's Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in Supply Chains, Modern Slavery legislation, protection of employees to whistleblowing are just a few of the pieces of legislation and policies which have guided and influenced this policy statement.

This statement seeks to link a number of policies and procedures across both the Finance and Human Resources Departments, addressing and demonstrating ethical employment practices by the University in relation to its respective operations.

Separate processes are in place to cover collaboration in teaching, research and international partnership agreements/franchising arrangements.

3. Values

Transformational

Creative and
Innovative

Inclusive

Ambitious

Collaborative

The above core values, taken from our Strategic Plan 2018-2023, are embedded in all operations to ensure an ethical culture for our stakeholders. Aberystwyth University takes pride in the richness of the diversity of cultures, opinions and backgrounds of our staff and students. Openness, honesty and respect are values we recognise in our staff.

4. Stakeholders

Employees

Commitment to ensuring Aberystwyth University's employment practices are compliant with the law and ethical standards recognising an employee voice.

Suppliers

Commitment to encouraging and requiring suppliers to operate to the same ethical standards as Aberystwyth University.

Students and the Wider Community

Commitment to communicating ethical and social responsibility values so that the University's community is aware of Aberystwyth University's principles and vision.

5. Modern Slavery and Human Rights

Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. Aberystwyth University is committed to understanding modern slavery risks and ensuring that there is no modern slavery in the University's business and supply chains as required by the Modern Slavery Act (2015). The University has published a [Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/finance-procurement/#Modern%20Slavery%20Statement) <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/finance-procurement/#Modern%20Slavery%20Statement>

6. Anti-Slavery and Ethical Employment Champion

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services holds the role of Anti-Slavery and Ethical Employment Champion for the University.

Anti-Slavery training for employees is covered in the recruitment and selection training offered by the HR Department.

Additional training is provided for all employees who have purchasing responsibilities as part of their role. The training covers modern slavery and ethical procurement. The Finance Department also undertakes a programme of review of its financial procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose and enable a culture of compliance. This is an ongoing programme. This training pays particular attention to the Welsh Government's Procurement Guidelines - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/ethical-employment-practices-in-public-sector-supply-chains-procurement-advice-note-pan-for-the-public-sector-in-wales.pdf> and the Finance Department have [Financial Regulations covering ethics in procurement.](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/finance/pdf/Financial-Regulations---November-2019.pdf) <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/finance/pdf/Financial-Regulations---November-2019.pdf>

7. Procurement

The University is a member of the Higher Education Purchasing Consortium Wales (HEPCW). HEPCW works effectively alongside its counterpart UK Universities Purchasing Consortia and national groups. Increasing numbers of Aberystwyth University's ethical trading suppliers, in higher-risk categories in terms of ethical supply chains and modern slavery considerations, have committed to the Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/eti-base-code> and the UK Universities Purchasing Consortia are working to ensure that the remaining suppliers in these categories join them. The ETI Base Code is founded on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is an internationally recognised code of labour practice, requiring that:

1. Employment is freely chosen;
2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected;
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic;
4. Child labour are not be used;
5. Living wages are paid;
6. Working hours are not excessive;
7. No discrimination is practised;
8. Regular employment is provided;
9. No harsh or inhumane treatment is allowed;
10. A written policy is produced on ethical employment;
11. A written policy is produced to support whistleblowers;
12. Trade union membership is supported.

The Code is designed to ensure that workers in public sector supply chains are employed ethically and in compliance with both the letter and spirit of UK, EU and international laws. In adopting the Code, we are agreeing to adhere to 12 commitments designed to eliminate modern slavery and support ethical employment practices.

Aberystwyth University participates in a number of ICT equipment collaborative purchasing agreements. Through these collaborative purchasing agreements, the University supports the principles of Electronics Watch, an independent monitoring organisation working to achieve respect for labour rights in the global electronics industry through socially responsible public purchasing.

When used, outsourced contractors are required to follow these procedures ensuring fair and equal treatment of all.

In light of the obligation to report on measures to ensure that all parts of the University's business and supply chain are slavery free, workplace policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to assess their effectiveness in identifying and tackling modern slavery issues. Welsh Government policy on ethical supply chains are also being considered by the University. A written annual statement is produced by the Finance Department. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/corporateinformation/financeandprocurement/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking-statement---english.pdf>

8. Recruitment and Employment

Aberystwyth University recognises that its most important resource is its employees and to achieve its strategic and operational goals it must attract and retain people of the highest calibre. To ensure an effective, efficient and consistent approach to recruitment and selection (and to meet the broad and distinctive roles required whilst complying with current employment and equality legislation), the policy framework is reviewed in conjunction with the three recognised trade unions. Mandatory training has also been put in place for staff who participate in the recruitment process.

Employees are engaged on a wide range of terms and conditions in order to meet organisational needs. Aberystwyth University addresses the need for flexibility whilst ensuring employees are contracted ethically and in line with equality standards. Where short-term/specialist skills are required, agency staff may also be sourced. Recruiting managers are required to ensure that the agency complies with the University's standards as set out in our financial procedures.

Other short term recruitment needs may be met through the use of zero hour, casual or fixed-term contracts. Guidance is provided to managers to ensure that the type of contract is appropriate for the circumstances of the recruitment need. This document is available at

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedures/Guidance-for-Managers---English.pdf>

The HR Department takes a lead role in the recruitment of staff. An assessment of the need for an employment/advertising agency is undertaken on a case by case basis and is normally utilised for senior, specialist or 'difficult to fill' roles. Each recruitment agency is required to adhere to the relevant University recruitment policy framework including the salary range determined by the University following an evaluation of the role. The successful candidate is employed by the University on the University's terms and conditions of employment.

Aberystwyth University has a salary scale which reflects university/higher education salaries as a whole and all posts are "Higher Education Role Analysis" (HERA) assessed to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

The University may also, on occasion, utilise the services of the self-employed. The process for appointing on this basis can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/information-for-staff/procurement/>

The University is also an accredited Real Living Wage Employer.

9. Health, Safety and Environment

It is the policy of the University, so far as is reasonably practicable, but in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory requirements and best practice, to ensure the health and safety of employees, students, contractors and visitors to the University.

Aberystwyth University's [Health and Safety Policy](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/#health-and-safety-policy) - <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/#health-and-safety-policy>

sets out the commitment of the University's Council and Executive Group to implement the policy, provide leadership in health and safety and ensure that proper consideration and support are given to health and safety provisions, as appropriate.

10. Trade Unions

Aberystwyth University supports the system of collective bargaining and believes in the principle of aiming to resolve employee relations issues through discussion and, where possible, agreement. The Trade Unions recognised are University and College Union (UCU), UNITE and UNISON (The Public Service Union).

11. Dealing with Concerns

11.1 Staff – Whistleblowing Policy

Aberystwyth University is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner, taking into account the requirements of the funding bodies and the standards in public life set out in, for example, the reports of the Nolan Committee. The University wishes to ensure that anyone who discloses wrongdoing at work can do so without fear of sanction. Employees, students and contractors who wish to raise concerns can do so by following the process outlined in the University's [Whistle Blowing Policy](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedure/Whistleblowing-Policy---English.pdf) which can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedure/Whistleblowing-Policy---English.pdf>

Aberystwyth University does not use blacklist/prohibited lists and endeavours to ensure that the University suppliers, contractors and stakeholders do not.

11.2 Students – Complaints Procedure

Aberystwyth University is committed to ensuring a high quality educational experience for all its students, supported by appropriate academic, administrative and welfare support services and facilities. We believe that students should be entitled to have access to an effective system for handling complaints and that they should feel able to make a complaint, secure in the knowledge that it will be fairly investigated. The Academic Registry sets out a fair and transparent complaints procedure at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/complaints/>.

Any complaint in relation to the Students' Union, should be done directly with them as it is an independent organisation and has its own, separate Complaints Procedure (available at www.abersu.co.uk);

11.3 Members of the public, stakeholders and contractors – Complaints Procedure

Aberystwyth University is committed to providing a high-quality service and experience to our stakeholders, members of the public and those that contract with us. The aim is to undertake all activity in an ethical and professional manner.

However, there may be rare occasions where a mistake occurs and/or where individuals feel that their expectations have not been met by the University. In such circumstances, individuals are encouraged to submit feedback or may lodge a complaint.

Individuals may raise their concerns via the University's Complaints Procedure which can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/about-us/complaints/>. Alternatively an email may be sent to secretary@aber.ac.uk, [outlining any issues](#).

12. Questions

If an organisation or individual has any questions about this policy statement, or concerns on how it has been implemented, they can also contact the University on 01970 622002 or by email to vice-chancellor@aber.ac.uk .

13. Policy Review

Aberystwyth University reviews its policies regularly in order to maintain compliance with legislation and good practice. This is undertaken, as agreed with our recognised trade unions.

This policy statement has been approved by the University Council. Any proposed amendments will also be submitted to the appropriate relevant committee, University Executive and Council.

Appendix 1 - Further information or supporting documentation.

Section 1

The following websites have been referenced in support of this policy statement:-

1. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/corporate-information/finance-procurement/#Modern%20Slavery%20Statement>
2. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/ethical-employment-practices-in-public-sector-supply-chains-procurement-advice-note-pan-for-the-public-sector-in-wales.pdf>
3. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/finance/pdf/Financial-Regulations---November-2019.pdf>
4. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedures/Recruitment-and-Selection---English.pdf>
5. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedures/Guidance-for-Managers---English.pdf>
6. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/information-for-staff/procurement/>
7. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/aberpoliciesprocedures/Whistleblowing-Policy---English.pdf>
8. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/documents/#health-and-safety-policy>
9. <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/eti-base-code>
10. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/corporateinformation/financeandprocurement/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking-statement---english.pdf>
11. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/about-us/complaints/>.

Section 2

The following websites have been taken into consideration in the formation of this policy statement:-

1. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/finance/regs-procedure/>
2. <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/policy-and-procedure/au-and-bu/ccs/>
3. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/code-practice-ethical-employment-in-supply-chains.pdf>
4. https://www.ethicaltrade.org/sites/default/files/shared_resources/ETI%20Base%20Code%20%28English%29_0.pdf