**Equity Policy of the 248th Session**

1. **The Policy**
	1. The purpose of the Equity Policy is to outline the standard of behaviour all members of the Society are expected adhere to throughout the session and the procedure that will be followed in handling violations of that standard.
	2. The Policy seeks to ensure safety and inclusivity within the Society through the facilitation of a robust debating environment, where critical thinking and educative discourse are encouraged whilst simultaneously preventing offense or harm to all involved.
	3. The Policy is binding on all Society Members, Committee Members, and Officers during all Society events, including but not limited to Chamber Debates, Derbies of Rhetoric, Public and Private Business Meetings, and social activities, as well as throughout all internet-based presence of the Society.
2. **Equity Officer**
	1. The Equity Officer shall be appointed by the General Committee at the beginning of each session (see section 5 for the name and contact details of the current Equity Officer).
	2. The Equity Officer is responsible for ensuring that a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment is maintained in the Society. It is the Equity Officer’s duty to draft the Equity Policy at the beginning of the Session and to enforce it throughout the Session.
	3. If the Equity Officer has not previously attended any form of welfare training, they must do so before the beginning of the academic year for which they are elected.
3. **Code of Conduct**

The following behaviours will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will be treated as serious equity violations:

* 1. Discrimination on the basis of age, nationality, race, gender and gender expression, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political affiliation, class, and/or physical or mental illness/disability, including (but not limited to) physical and verbal harassment, hate speech, derogatory language, and use of slurs and stereotype-perpetuating generalizations;
	2. Physical, verbal, or sexual violence, threats, and bullying;
	3. Theft, damage, or destruction of personal belongings;
	4. Hurtful remarks about debating ability or speaking style;
	5. Intentional misgendering or disregard of preferred personal pronouns;
	6. Any attempt to undermine the Equity Policy.

**Note:** The influence of substances will not be considered a mitigating circumstance for violating the code of conduct. Equity violations committed under the influence of such substances will be treated with equal severity to those committed while sober.

1. **Equity complaints**
	1. Where a Society Member has witnessed or fallen victim to an equity violation, they may report this to the Equity Officer, if they so wish (see section 5). The Equity Officer may then launch a formal investigation into the issue and take whatever action they deem appropriate (e.g. mediation; requesting a formal apology; issuing a warning), if any.
	2. The Equity Officer is responsible for handling all equity complaints in a prompt and effective manner, while remaining as objective and unbiased as possible and considering all involved parties’ perspectives equally.
	3. If the complainant does not wish to approach the Equity Officer directly, the complaint may be submitted to any Committee Member, who will then refer it to the Equity Officer; if the complainant wishes to report an equity violation committed by the Equity Officer, the complaint should be submitted to the Auditor of the Session.
	4. The complainant may wish to report an equity violation anonymously – that is, the identity of the complainant will not be disclosed to the offender. This, however, may limit the possible compensatory action (for example, a formal apology to the complainant cannot be requested).
	5. Where the Equity Officer does not feel equipped to deal with an equity complaint, they have the right to refuse to do so and must instead refer the complainant to the relevant college bodies (e.g. Student Counselling Service; Junior Dean; Senior Tutor). The Equity Officer also reserves the right to consult the Auditor on all matters.
	6. The Equity Officer must handle all equity complaints confidentially, with the exception of:
		1. complaints surrounding child protection;
		2. where danger of immediate serious harm to oneself is present or suspected;
		3. where danger of immediate serious harm to a third party is present or suspected.

In the above cases, the Equity Officer is legally obliged to report the situation to the relevant authorities.

**Note:** Raising an equity issue with the Equity Officer will not necessarily result in immediate investigation or action; in most cases, the possible solutions will be discussed with the complainant before action is taken (if any). A Society member may also wish to merely discuss a matter with the Equity Officer without issuing a formal complaint.

1. **Contact details**

The Equity Officer of the 248th session is Maria Pachowicz. She can be contacted at 085 244 0750, or at equity@thehist.com.