

**Action Group – Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascism  
Meeting Date: 19.04.24****Present**

Dean Turner, Welfare and Community Officer **(DT) (Allocated Officer)**  
Scott Dawson, Student Voice and Representation Manager **(SD) (Note Taker)**  
Harry Brooks, Activities and Employability Officer **(HB)**  
Robin Hayward, Welfare and Liberation Committee Member **(RH)**  
Imaan Iqbal, Student Attendee **(II)**

**Idea for Discussion:****Current Policy**

The Guild believes in an active opposition to fascism, racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia and so should use its resources to build a strong anti-racism/fascism campaign on campus and in the wider community.

**Possible Amended Policy**

The Guild recognises the rise of and believes in an active opposition to fascism at the University and in the wider community and will support anti-fascist campaigns and activity (acknowledging university legislation, and all Laws of the Land).

The Guild should use its resources to support student groups and student led campaigns in this area, through educational and financial support where relevant.

**Minutes from meeting 08.04.24**

- DT: Shared feedback from J-Soc, which supported an Anti-Fascist Focused policy, but wanted to ensure appropriate anti-racism/islamophobia elements were covered in other Guild Policy. Alongside work on Antisemitism, which is being actioned in a separate group.
- DT: From our last meeting, in terms of taking things forward. We broadly discussed that if we did do just an anti-fascist policy, are we happy for anti-racism to be covered by other policies at the Guild, or do we want to take forward the anti-racist policy as its own separate policy.
- HB: Based on what is covered within our discrimination policy, we may not need a new separate anti-racist policy.
- RH: Felt that the discrimination policy as it stood may not be wide enough to cover the anti-racist call to action. Separating anti-racism and anti-fascism does make sense, but we should still mention that anti-fascism cannot be separated from other bigotries.

- DT: Agreed with RH view, with anti-fascism whilst this is the key focus, it must be seen in the context of wider bigotries that can come out through fascist ideology. We can incorporate this as an amendment.
- DT: To re-confirm, are we saying we want to split anti-racism and anti-fascism in to two separate policies?
- II: Worry about the anti-racism element of the policy. Wider system of current Guild Belief and Commitments don't really address islamophobia. There are also worries here about what impact freedom of speech and prevent may have on this.
- DT: Noted the prevent concern and freedom of speech. Believe the Guild new code of practice is being finished at the moment. Although it is not exact with the Universities, which may cause some challenges. We didn't have to engage with prevent before, do we need to now based on the freedom of speech request. Does this impact us?
- II: Stated that there shouldn't be any legal obligation on the guild but this could be interpreted by the Charity Commission as an area of concern. Ultimately prevent could be used as a way in which to monitor activity of students in an invasive manner. For example, could an event which is ran by a student group becomes a subject of controversy and this could be considered by the Charity Commission and others?
- DT: Appreciate this being highlighted, it is worth being aware of.
- SD: Highlighted the current timeline that yes, the new freedom of speech guidance should be done soon and that there are also wider discussions going on about refreshing the Guild Zero Tolerance Policy for the summer.
- II: Noted prevent is being used as a tool for some people to connect activity to terrorism when it isn't appropriate.
- SD: Clarified it would be worth SD confirming any Guild obligations regarding prevent, and how this may be tied to the new freedom of speech guidance and the Zero Tolerance Policy. Anything we want to develop for a future action group should be accurate and have the right information to inform that discussion.
- DT: This will be helpful for looking at the anti-racist element of the policy. But just to reiterate, are we happy to amend the existing policy to be more narrowly focused on anti-fascism based on conversations from last week, this week and conversations from J-Soc.

The group reached consensus that they were happy with this action, with some final slight amendments to the Antifascist element of the policy as discussed above. The next steps are:

1. That this action group continues to meet to discuss the anti-racism element of the policy, which will now be reviewed separately to the anti-fascism part of the policy. We will want to invite other student groups to this next action group and discuss how we take forward the Islamophobic specific element as well.
2. That pending a final nod through email circulation, the Anti-Fascism part of this policy will go forward as its own unique policy and go to the All Student Vote.

The group then briefly discussed that we do with the Anti-Racism element of the policy, now that it is being treated as separate. A final check was to make sure the other live policy titled "Discrimination" does not already cover the Anti-Racism element of the policy.

- RH: Felt the discrimination policy does not cover the Anti-Racism aspect well enough, feel that the policy does not cover Islamophobia or antisemitism enough. It needs to be a more active policy.
- DT: Agreed, but the discrimination policy is still helpful, so we probably do not need to amend that any further and can continue to be re-implemented elsewhere.
- SD: Highlighted you could revert to the original Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascist policy as an additional option?
- DT: What do we think?
- RH: Feels that choice does not do justice to Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascism or wider discussions on Islamophobia.
- HB and II agreed with this.

With the above resolved, the group then discussed what could an amended version of the Anti-Racism policy look like:

- DT: What do we think?
- HB: Could we use the draft of the Anti-Fascism Policy as a starting point? Including the point around limitations around UK law.
- DT: This is a good suggestion, we can draft something to that effect to consider.

The group discussed who should also be re-invited to the next meeting, which will look at the anti-racist element of the policy still outstanding. This included J-Soc, Black Voices, the incoming and outgoing Ethnic Minorities student officer(s) and Ahlul Bayt group.

The group also discussed what could be done with the Islamophobia element of the original anti-racism, anti-fascism policy. SD outlined they would clarify if this could also be considered as a new unique policy within this action group – or if it would need to go to the Student Demonstration of Interest.

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### **Agreed Actions:**

The group unanimously agreed on the following actions:

- The anti-fascism part of the anti-racism, anti-fascism policy, will go forward as its own policy and taken to All Student Vote in April 2024, pending any final questions or concerns by Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April.
- The anti-racism part of the policy will be progressed in another guild action group, which will meet on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April.
- The amended anti-fascism policy and provisional anti-racism policy will be circulated to the action group and additional students and student groups, who are being invited to the next meeting.
- SD will seek clarity on overlap with the policies in relation to the new freedom of speech and any considerations to prevent.
- SD will seek clarity on if the Islamophobia element of the original policy can be taken forward within this action group, or must be taken to a demonstration of interest.

Any questions regarding approval, next steps or requests for further information can be submitted to: [studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk)