



# Equality and diversity policy

## Introduction

Our full equality and diversity policy can be found on Policies and Procedures Handbook. In summary it states that:

- We are committed to providing an environment which seeks to encourage an open and diverse community.
- This is reflected in our values and behaviours where we respect the rights and dignity of all people whatever their background.
- By consistently living our values, we seek to eliminate those things that undermine or are harmful to anyone involved in the activities of our College.
- Unlawful discrimination, intimidation or harassment of anyone connected with the College, cannot be tolerated.

The aims and objectives of this policy will be addressed through the College's strategy, quality processes, annual monitoring, business planning, policies, procedures and guidelines.

## Equality and diversity strategy

The equality strategy sets out how we intend to meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. The strategy was produced in consultation with staff, students and stakeholders and was approved by the Academic Board in April 2013.

The College senior management team are working on a top level action plan to support this strategy which will be adapted by all Faculties and Departments to implement appropriate actions in their own areas.

## Our main equality and diversity objectives

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by working towards a culture that encourages inclusion, respect and engagement of staff and students.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a 'relevant protected characteristic' and persons who do not share it, and eliminate discrimination. We will do this by satisfying ourselves that all key and relevant strategies, policies, procedures, processes and major decisions are equality tested (through Equality Analysis) to remove barriers to recruitment, development, promotion, progression and achievement.
- Ensure our services, learning and teaching and estate are accessible for all staff, students and visitors.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it, eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. We will do this by ensuring all our staff are aware of their responsibilities.

## What are the advantages of promoting diversity in our teams?

### 1. It fits with our values and behaviours

- Behaviour that discriminates on any grounds is inconsistent with our core values:
- **Valuing people** is about treating people with courtesy and respect whatever their background.
- **Customer Focus** is about putting our students first and treating them with respect.
- **Opportunity and openness** is about ensuring the College is accessible to all members of the community.

### 2. It's the right thing to do

- The public has high expectations of how companies ought to do business. Our employees, students, partners and suppliers have growing expectations of the College operating in an ethical way. In order to achieve a positive image in terms of equality, diversity.

### 3. Increased employee engagement

- Ensuring we have engaged, happy and motivated employees helps to build pride and commitment in the College. This will, in turn, lead to improved operational efficiency.

### 4. Business excellence

- There is a clear link between equality and diversity and business excellence. Clear benefits can be achieved where the organisation has a diverse workforce, which can help to attract a more diverse student base.
- Students who feel safe, comfortable and satisfied by their experiences at the College are more likely to achieve better results and be more employable.
- The above reflects and contributes to the College's corporate aims.

### 5. Attract the best talent

- There is now a greater participation of women, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and people over 55 in the workplace than there was 20 years ago. Employers can access previously untapped reserves of new talent promoting new sources of ideas, creativity and problem solving.
- This helps us to provide an environment which seeks to encourage an open and diverse community, promote the exchange of new and different ideas and facilitate innovation.

### 6. It enhances reputation and customer loyalty

- Managing diversity helps towards gaining competitive advantage in the market place. Recognising and engaging in the wider community enhances reputation and loyalty from customers and employees by:
  - Valuing them as individuals to improve customer service.
  - Opening up new markets through a better understanding of the diversity of our customer base.

### 6. Legislative

- Legislation has been used as a way to drive the diversity agenda as a whole. However, we must view this not as a driver for implementation but the desired outcome of our policies.
- We aim to have proactive diversity practices that go beyond legal obligations to ensure the College becomes a beacon for best practice in the sector.



## The Equality Act (EqA) 2010

The Equality Act brings together 116 different pieces of Equality and Diversity legislation and makes it more consistent across the nine protected characteristics.

**Protected characteristics describe different groups of people in our community. The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are within the Act:**

- age
- disability
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race - this includes ethnic and national origins, colour and nationality
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation.

**The Act protects people from discrimination in these situations:**

- at work
- in education
- as a consumer
- when using public services
- when buying or renting property
- as a member or guest of a private club or association.

**Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:**

- Direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others.
- Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.
- Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them.
- Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment.

**People are also protected from discrimination because they:**

- Are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, e.g. a family member or friend.
- Have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

### Specific duties

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force on 10 September 2011.

The specific duties require public bodies to

- Publish relevant, proportionate information showing compliance with the Equality Duty (this includes records of equality analysis). Statistics can be found on our web page and the results of Equality Analysis on Udo.
- Set equality objectives. These can be found in our strategy.



## **What do I do? Where do I go?**

If you believe you have been subject to behaviours which do not fit with our values and behaviours there are a number of different routes you can follow.

1. In the first instance speak to your line manager. Your manager is there to help and support you through any difficulties you may experience at work.
2. If, for any reason, you do not feel able to discuss this with your manager you can speak principal.

## **What's it got to do with me?**

Equality and diversity is the responsibility of everyone in the College. As a member of staff of the College you need to ensure that you are not disadvantaging any individuals or groups of people, either consciously or unconsciously. Little things can make a difference.

### **Managers**

- Do you support your disabled staff? Do they have all the reasonable adjustments they need to do the job to the best of their ability?
- Beware of jokes and banter in the office or through email – these may offend or make people feel excluded.
- Make sure unconscious biases do not influence your decisions, especially in the case of recruitment, merit ratings and discipline or grievance hearings.
- Make equality and diversity an integral part of the performance appraisal process – ask your staff to evidence what they have done to engage with the agenda.
- Make sure all your staff get a chance to discuss their development and career progression in their performance appraisal.
- Make sure that team meetings, away-days and social events are arranged to include all the team, i.e.:
- Is it in suitable premises (do you need to avoid premises where alcohol is served)?
- Is it at times when all staff can attend (including those with caring responsibilities)?
- Are the activities suitable (for those with disabilities)?
- Have you provided suitable food (think of those with dietary considerations – either medical or religious)?

### **Academic Staff**

- Are your teaching materials accessible?
- Do your assessment methods disadvantage certain groups?
- Does your curriculum include sessions on diversity?
- Do you reference a diverse range of authors – i.e. from a range of literature, not just British or American?
- Beware of banter in the classroom, challenge inappropriate comments.
- Make sure unconscious biases don't influence your decisions around recruitment and marking.

### **All Staff**

- Make sure you treat colleagues, students, visitors etc. with dignity and respect. Unconscious biases should not affect the service you give.
- Don't forward "joke" emails that make any reference to a person's race, skin or hair colour, country of origin, age, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or transgender. These are likely to offend and promote stereotypical thinking.
- If you hear jokes or banter in the office that could offend someone - challenge it.



- If you observe any behaviours that do not fit with our values either challenge it or inform your line manager.
- If you are having difficulties in your job due to a disability then speak to your manager about reasonable adjustments and ask HR or the E&D team for a copy of the "supporting our disabled staff" booklet.

### **What have we done to improve understanding?**

- We have introduced a range of Diversity awareness training and made it mandatory for all staff to engage with one session each academic year.
- We organise events within the College to promote awareness, e.g.
  - lecture on race equality embedded in various modules
  - disability and religion.
- We have provided guidance documents to staff and students
  - disability, including reasonable adjustments
  - cultural differences.
  - the Equality Act and legislation.

**The End**