

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy 2025/26

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises previous legislation to provide a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatments and promotes a fair and more equal society.
- 1.2 The Act consolidates the General Equality Duty and establishes the Public Sector Equality Duty for public authorities covering nine protected characteristics: disability, age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, and marriage and civil partnerships.

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy sets out the College's position on equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to marketing, publicity and school liaison, access and environment, curriculum, teaching and learning, staffing, including recruitment and selection, and professional development.
- 2.2 It is an evolving document that will be reviewed and updated in light of continuing involvement of, and consultation with, both existing and potential College users, partners, community groups, voluntary organisations and individuals with interests in our work. This policy is intended to continuously adapt to new developments and legislations, and to reflect our growing understanding of existing and emerging issues.
- 2.3 In seeking to involve and consult with its communities the College will endeavour to be open, responsive to individual/group needs, inclusive of the views of those involved/consulted, and to take these into account when making decisions.
- 2.4 This policy demonstrates how the College will meet its commitment to equality of opportunity. In doing so it has three key functions:
 - Analysis of local/regional/national demographics (current trends and predictions)
 - Monitoring and action planning to identify issues and ensure that any negative impacts are eliminated, or minimised where possible
 - Encourage through positive action, initiatives that will promote the full engagement of under-represented groups

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 The College is committed to valuing diversity and to promoting and implementing equality of opportunity in all of the activities and services that it provides to students, staff and visitors to the College.
- 3.2 The College aims to provide the conditions which encourage everyone to participate in learning and to actively combat harassment, radicalisation, discrimination and bullying.
- 3.3 The College values the diversity of all students and staff and the contribution they make to the success of the College.
- 3.4 The College has a belief and commitment for the right of everyone to be given equal access to opportunities and be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age; disability and/or learning difficulties; ethnic origin; gender; marital status or domestic responsibilities; religion or belief; sexual orientation; or socio-economic background.

4. Scope

- 4.1 The policy is applicable to all students, staff, governing body members, contractors, volunteers, parents, applicants and other visitors or users of the college facilities.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Discrimination** – The College will not accept behaviour towards people which results in them being treated worse or less favourably than others are being treated because of a protected characteristic.
- 5.2 **Harassment** – The College will not accept behaviour towards people which is offensive, might threaten their security or create an intimidating or hostile environment which could hinder their performance and/or affect their personal well-being.
- 5.3 **Victimisation** – The College will not accept one person treating another badly because s/he in good faith has taken or supported any action under the Act.
- 5.4 **Protected Characteristics** – The following characteristics are ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010 for further education institutions:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender Re-assignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or Belief

- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (this is a protected characteristic for employment purposes only)

All alleged incidents of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation will be dealt with according to the College's relevant policies e.g. harassment/bullying policies and disciplinary procedures.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Governors will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that The Equality Act 2010 is followed
- Ensuring the College meets all its duties under the legislation
- Receiving and approving monitoring reports on the policy through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report

6.2 The Principal is responsible for:

- Giving a consistent and high profile lead on all equality issues
- Promoting the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy both internally and externally
- Ensuring that the policy is fully implemented

6.3 The College Management Team is responsible for:

- Putting the policy into practice
- Making sure that all staff know their responsibilities and receive support and training to carry these out
- Taking action against staff or students who discriminate, harass or victimise others in relation to any of the protected characteristics listed in 5.4
- Ensuring that all policy documentation and procedures, including course approval processes, are equality impact assessed to look for any adverse effect they may have on students, staff or the wider community
- Building equality, diversity and inclusion into their own area of work and consider setting equality targets where appropriate
- Overseeing the College's response to its public sector equality duty and ensuring the publication of relevant data and reports.

6.4 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee will be responsible for:

- The implementation and monitoring of this policy
- Ensuring that other organisations working within or for the College work according to the requirements of The Equality Act 2010

6.5 All staff are responsible for:

- Operating within this policy at all times
- Advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations

- Challenging inappropriate language and behaviours
 - Completing mandatory equality and diversity training
- 6.6 Subcontractors, contractors and service providers are responsible for:
- Following The Equality Act 2010 and any equality conditions in contracts or agreements.
- 6.7 The expectations for students' behaviour are detailed in the College Charter. Each individual is expected to:
- Behave in a polite, courteous and friendly manner that does not offend or discriminate
 - Treat everyone with equal respect
 - Comply with the College's Code of Conduct
- 6.8 The nominated senior manager with specific responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion across the College is the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Support

7. Information, Advice and Guidance

- 7.1 The College is committed to ensuring an Admissions Policy that addresses the needs of potential students. From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support and guidance that they need to succeed in their programme of study.
- 7.2 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) sets out the expectation that *"From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education"*. The College is committed to ensuring that it provides recruitment activities and admissions and enrolment systems which are reliable, fair and inclusive, as set out in its Access and Participation Statement and within its Higher Education Admissions Policy.
- 7.3 The College will ensure equality of access to all applicants and students by:
- Ensuring that all course information is accurate, clear and free from explicit or implicit discrimination and that it is presented in a format that is easily understood by all prospective students
 - Providing written entry criteria and procedures which are free from any form of discriminatory practice
 - Offering impartial guidance for all applicants to ensure their placement on appropriate courses which offer potential success and progression
 - Providing clear and accurate information and advice on:
 - Education and training opportunities both within the College and elsewhere
 - Entry criteria which are fair, consistent and well communicated.
 - Course content and methods of delivery
 - Assessment arrangements
 - The time students will need for personal study in addition to timetabled sessions
 - Possible progression routes
 - Course fees if payable
 - Additional costs of materials, clothing, visits and other costs associated with the course
 - Support available
 - Financial help available
 - The success of previous students
 - Inspection results
 - How to apply

8. Accessibility

- 8.1 The College will ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities do not prevent students enrolling on an appropriate course of study.
- 8.2 The College will provide confidential consultation and assistance to enable access to all of the College's facilities.
- 8.3 The College will provide assessment of student's needs and provide students with support to enable them to achieve their learning goals.
- 8.4 The College will ensure that students have access to relevant technology, hardware and software to reduce the risk of digital poverty and to provide an inclusive blended learning environment.
- 8.4 The College will ensure the liaison between College staff and outside agencies in co-ordinating support and minimising potential barriers.
- 8.5 The College will ensure accessibility of assessment in line with awarding body regulations.

9. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 9.1 The College will ensure that all students experience equal access in terms of curriculum, assessment, support services and resources by ensuring that the curriculum meets students' and employers' needs and that local and national priorities are used to review and plan the provision.
- 9.2 The College will ensure that teaching, learning and assessment promote equality, diversity and inclusion and tackle discrimination, victimisation, harassment, stereotyping, radicalisation and bullying.
- 9.3 College staff will use teaching, learning and assessment strategies and resources that reflect and value diversity of students' experiences and provide students with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.
- 9.4 College staff will plan for individual needs in teaching sessions.
- 9.5 The College will ensure that all students develop the appropriate level of digital literacy skills to access the blended learning environment.
- 9.6 The College will ensure that, where applicable, students benefit from a flexible learning experience through a blended learning model to ensure all students can participate.
- 9.7 The College embraces widening participation and will provide educational opportunities for those seeking to return to study after a long period of unemployment; for individuals who have been made redundant; for those from minority and/or vulnerable groups; and for those whose personal circumstances have previously made it difficult for them to benefit from education.

- 9.8 The College commits to providing students with the support they need to succeed in their programme of study. This means that from admission through to completion, the college will ensure the provision is an inclusive and engaging environment where Teaching and Learning practices develop subject specific and transferable skills which supports personal development, progression to Higher Education or employment opportunities.
- 9.9 The College is committed to upholding the principals of equality, diversity and inclusion and the need for secure and accurate identification during enrolment and examinations. For any students who wear a burka or niqab, we have a respectful and confidential process in place to verify identity:
- I. Enrolment and ID Photography: Students wearing a face veil will be invited to a private area where a female member of staff will conduct the identity check. The student will be asked to provide official photographic ID and raise their veil for verification. The student will have their photograph taken wearing their burkha/niqab/face veil.
 - II. Examinations: On exam days, students wearing a face veil will be taken to a private area where a female member of staff will conduct the identity check. The student will be asked to provide official photographic ID and raise their veil for verification.

These procedures are designed to balance the need for secure identification with our respect for religious and cultural practices. We aim to ensure that all students feel safe, respected, and supported throughout their time at the college.

10. Curriculum Data Analysis and Review

- 10.1 The College will ensure that effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of equality, diversity and inclusion practices are in place.
- 10.2 The College will monitor and analyse data relating to applications, enrolment, attendance, retention, achievement and progression of students with a view to comparing trends and highlighting and addressing any imbalances identified; thus ensuring that achievement gaps are narrowed between different groups of students.
- 10.3 The College will collect, analyse and react accordingly to feedback and suggestions from students and other college stakeholders in its quest for continuous service improvement.
- 10.4 The College will monitor the embedding of equality, diversity and inclusion and British Values into teaching, learning and assessment through classroom observations and professional development action planning to ensure continuous improvement.
- 10.5 The College will monitor departmental EDIM (Equality and Diversity Impact Measures) reports for their impact on continuous development of an inclusive student experience.

11. Promotion

- 11.1 The College will ensure the promotion of an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment by the embedding of equality, diversity and inclusion into the curriculum and through cross college promotional materials, activities and events. The College will actively promote British Values.
- 11.2 All students will attend an induction programme at the commencement of their programme to make them aware of the policy expectations, their personal responsibilities and how to address any experienced breach in the policy.

12. Staffing

- 12.1 The College recruitment policy positively supports equality of opportunity.
- 12.2 The College will ensure that all recruitment and selection panels have training and guidance on their responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010 and the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- 12.3 The College will monitor the recruitment and progression data for its staff to prevent discrimination from occurring and to take positive action to address issues should they be found.
- 12.4 The College will monitor the recruitment profile of all applications for employment to ensure that appointments are made on merit and from the widest field of application.
- 12.5 The College will provide an inclusive environment with a wide range of support for staff so that they are able to fulfil their potential within the organisation.
- 12.6 The College will collect, analyse and react accordingly to feedback and suggestions from staff in its quest for continuous service improvement.

13. Staff Training and Professional Development

- 13.1 All newly appointed staff will undertake an induction programme to make them aware of the policy expectations, their personal responsibilities and how to address any experienced breach in the policy.
- 13.2 The College will provide all staff with mandatory training to raise awareness of The Equality Act 2010 and its implications, and equip them with the knowledge and skills required to meet the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 13.3 The College will provide specialist equality, diversity and inclusion staff development commensurate with the roles and responsibilities of staff within the College.

14. Monitoring and review of the policy

14.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and approved by the College Corporation.

14.2 In order to ensure continuous development in the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, a development plan will be produced annually and monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

15. Data Protection

15.1 The college will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) by ensuring that personal data is:

- Collected and processed lawfully, fairly and transparently for only specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes. Further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes.
- Adequate, updated and relevant and not excessive for the purposes it was collected.
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures. Including not being transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has equivalent levels of protection for personal data.
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed. Personal data may be stored for longer periods solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the UK GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals.

16. Confidentiality

16.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, please note that a new Data Protection Bill (referred to as 'no.2 DP Bill') is currently under consideration. With its passing, there might be implications for this policy, especially in areas such as the Data Protection Officer (DPO) role, marketing, and cookies. It is recommended to review and update this policy accordingly once the new bill is enacted.

16.2 Information that must be treated as confidential includes the names and addresses of employees and students, as well as any other non-public information about them (termed

"personal data"). For sensitive information, known as 'special category data' under Data Protection (DP), which includes race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, extra precautions are taken. Processing special category data requires a lawful basis and condition for processing. The college treats this data with care, and additional reviews are undertaken before releasing special category data.

16.3 Since January 1, 2005, individuals have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request information held by a public authority. However, it's important to note that there are restrictions within the FOI Act. The Act only applies to information for public benefit, excludes personal data (unless the public benefit outweighs the rights and freedoms of the individual), and may be refused based on resource limitations (too much time or cost implications relating to gathering the data to respond). It's advisable to be mindful of these restrictions when considering FOI requests. Relevant policies and documents

16.4 This policy is supported and enhanced by the following policies and documents: -

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report
- The Strategic Plan
- The College Charters
- Student Engagement Strategy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure
- Information for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
- HR Policies for staff
- Admissions Policy
- Fitness to Study and Practice Policy and Procedure
- Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

- Mental Health Policy

- Academic and Conduct Procedures

17. Comments, Compliment and Complaints

18.1 The College will aim to listen to the views of all who use its services, learn from mistakes and continually try to improve.

18.2 If any individual feels that they have been treated less favourably and not in accordance with this policy, they should report this in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure.

18.3 Likewise if any individual feels that they have had a highly favourable experience the College welcomes any such feedback which enables the institution to share this good practice in order to further improve its systems and services.