

# Bedford College

## Gender Equality Duty and Scheme



### Introduction

The Gender Equality Duty (GED) is a new legislative requirement placed on public authorities, including colleges, to promote gender equality. The GED requires us to take action on the most important gender equality issues and recognise that women and men (boys and girls) are not starting from an equal footing and identical treatment will not always be appropriate. The duty is aimed at tackling discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex.

### Responsibilities

Responsibility for making sure our duty is met lies with senior College staff. Teaching and support staff, students, and members of the wider community using the College facilities also need to play a part in fulfilling the duty.

The duty comprises a general duty to:

- promote equality of opportunity between men and women (boys and girls)
- eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment (on grounds of sex and of gender reassignment)

The duty comprises a specific duty to produce a gender equality scheme, and the College's Scheme is set out below.

### Our Gender Equality Scheme

This Scheme is specifically designed for the College, to help us meet effectively and fully our general duty as outlined above.

The Scheme is published on our website; reviewed and revised as necessary every three years (first review Spring 2010), and we will report progress on an annual basis.

The Scheme has been produced with the active involvement, help and support of men and women (as detailed later).

There are five parts to our Scheme:

- a statement of how both men and women (boys and girls) have been involved in developing the Scheme
- arrangements for gathering information on the recruitment, development and retention of employees by gender, and the educational opportunities available to and achievements of students by gender
- details of how information gathered will be used, in particular to review the effectiveness of Action Plans and prepare subsequent Schemes
- a method / methods for assessing the impact of policies and practices on gender equality and where improvements can be made
- an Action Plan detailing the steps that are going to be taken to meet the general duty.

### **Part 1: Involving men and women**

The College recognises that those best placed to identify and help resolve barriers are men and women themselves. We wanted to ensure as many students and staff as possible were involved. For the purposes of this Scheme the College ensured that:

- all recent staff and student surveys allowed for identification by gender and survey results were analysed so that results could easily be compared with the whole survey population. This allowed us to find out differences in opinion on issues such as perceptions of teaching, teaching support, information provision, rooming, staff management etc from a large number staff and students by gender
- students and staff were canvassed for their more detailed views on these matters

### **Part 2: Gathering information**

The College has extensive data gathering mechanisms as part of its work to achieve the EFQM Quality standard. Data is routinely collected through our:

- student records systems (EBS and PICS)
- financial system
- human resources system
- staff and student surveys
- attendance monitoring system
- timetabling system
- Have Your Say complaints and suggestions system

- IT helpdesk system
- Estates and Maintenance requests system

In addition the College collects data on other activity such as teaching observations, student disciplinary matters and student support.

Collectively this provides a comprehensive set of data capable of analysis for equality purposes. In particular it enables us to analyse the effect of our policies and practices on the:

- recruitment, development and retention of staff
- educational opportunities available to, and achievements of, students
- overall experience provided to staff and students

### **Part 3: Using information**

The College is committed to action rather than simply analysis! We intend to examine all our key sub-processes over the life of this scheme and develop clear and effective actions that demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity in practical terms and enrich the College experience of staff and students.

The key way in which information is used is through the impact assessment programme detailed in the next part of this Scheme. They will drive actions that will be included in our annual action plan. However, we recognise the impact assessments focus on actions to address identified shortcomings. In addition we will also analyse data with a view to identifying other ways in which we can promote equality of opportunity; promote positive attitudes, and encourage participation in public and college life.

Given the extensive nature of our data systems the College will seek to evaluate the effectiveness of actions in our action plan using that data.

### **Part 4: Impact assessment**

The College has identified six key processes through its work on the EFQM Quality model. They are:

- learner success process
- financial control process
- staff improvement process

- environmental process
- quality improvement process
- planning process

This allows the College to identify key sub-processes which need to be impact assessed. The sub-processes have been assessed for scale and relevance to the duty. The key sub-processes will be assessed annually, others undertaken over a 3 year cycle.

The assessments will be made by relevant senior managers and reported to either the Human Resources Committee or Quality Standards and Achievement Committee. They will usually take the following form:

- a description of current procedures or actions to achieve our equality objectives
- an analysis of data to identify any potential equality issues
- an assessment of the effectiveness of current action
- where the assessment indicates current action is insufficient, the identification of new action that should be undertaken (following consultation) with clear assignment of responsibility for this

The intention is that assessments will be concise, action-oriented reports. Progress against actions will be summarised in our annual report.

The impact assessment timetable is as follows:

<b>Process</b>	<b>Sub-process</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Learner Success	Admissions process and recruitment v local population	2007 and every year	Centre Directors
	Attendance	2007 and every year	Centre Directors
	Retention	2007 and every year	Centre Directors
	Achievement	2007 and every year	Centre Directors
	Progression	2008	Centre Directors
	Disciplinary	2007 and every year	Student Services Director
	Surveys and access to enrichment, work placement, trips and visits etc	2007 and every year	Centre Directors
Financial Control	Procurement	2009	Finance Director
	Student Support payments	2009	Student Services Director

Staff Improvement	Recruitment process and recruitment v local population	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
	Rewards and Development	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
	Sickness absence	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
	Turnover and redundancy	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
	Disciplinary and Grievance	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
	Surveys	2007 and every year	Organisational Development Director
Environmental	Security, Access, IT, Signage etc	2008	Estates Director
Quality	Teaching Observation	2008	Quality & Marketing Director
	Complaints	2008	Quality & Marketing Director
Planning	Planning data – external data	2009	Quality & Marketing Director

## Part 5: The Action Plan

The Action Plan is designed to ensure we meet our general and specific duties. However, the College has already identified that it specifically wishes to improve its curriculum offer so that we can promote and offer more opportunities for girls and women to access provision leading to well paid employment such as Construction, Plumbing and Engineering; and we also wish to address some gender imbalances in some staff teams. This action plan is based on addressing all the above objectives.

This plan covers a period of one year only to reflect the one-off actions we need to undertake in the first year. Subsequent plans will cover a longer period but still be revised annually to reflect impact assessments and other changes.

Objective	Action	Who?	When?	Outcome expected
Ensure better promotion of technological courses to girls and women	Maintain a number of discrete technology courses aimed at girls and women e.g. Girls into Construction	Centre Director	September 2007	Wider range of college programmes

GES: improved data gathering	Ensure the HR system can provide data to compare the performance and experience of those of different genders	Organisational Development Director	March 2007	Effective analysis of data within impact assessments
	Ensure data on student disciplinary matters can be analysed by gender	Student Services Director	March 2007	See above
GES: more effective impact assessments	Undertake the assessments in line with part 4 of this document	As set out in part 4	As Part 4	New actions for inclusion in the Action Plan
	Build any action identified into the Action Plan	Chief Executive	Annually	Actions happen
	Identify best practice in assessment and use this to help improve our own practice	Deputy Principal Student Services Director Organisational Development Director	July 2007	Improved practices
eliminate discrimination that is unlawful	Review admissions criteria for courses to ensure no unnecessary barriers	Student Services Director	July 2007	Higher success rates and higher numbers of under-represented students
	Review recruitment process for staff and students	Organisational Development Director and Student Services Director	July 2007	Better services to those groups
eliminate gender related harassment	Continue to ensure we use our harassment procedures for staff and students and take any appropriate action	Organisational Development Director and Student Services Director	Ongoing	Harassment issues dealt with swiftly
encourage appropriate participation in public life	Actively ensure that the voice of under-represented gender in any area of the College is heard e.g. male hairdressing students, female construction students	Student Services Director	July 2007	Better survey outcomes

	Review the involvement of staff in cross-college activity and ensure it is appropriate in the context of this objective	Chief Executive	July 2007	Better survey outcomes from both staff and students
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Note: An objective relating to the gender pay gap is not included because the College's reward system is based on performance against annual objectives and on assessed contribution; it is not based on potentially discriminatory factors such as length of service.