



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Part 1 – General Policy

1. Commitment

Bedford College is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity for its staff and students. We aim to provide a learning and working environment which values individuals equally and does not disadvantage individuals by discriminating on any grounds, including age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or trade union membership.

2. Responsibilities

All staff and students

Staff and students are responsible for their own conduct and should ensure that their behaviour does not make any other person feel uncomfortable. It is the duty of all staff and students to avoid unfair discriminatory practices, to challenge them in others and to accept personal responsibility for abiding by this policy.

The Corporation

The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that it is aware of the College's statutory responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities, and for receiving and responding to monitoring information.

The College Executive

The Executive is responsible for ensuring that the College fulfils its obligations under the legislation and that the relevant policies and procedures are followed. It is committed to providing support and training for staff in equality and diversity issues and to making sure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. The Executive also monitors, on a quarterly basis, the profile of the student and staff populations by age, gender, race and disability.

Equality and Diversity Network

The Equality and Diversity Network is chaired by the Director of Student Services and has cross-College and Board representation. It advises the College Executive on the promotion of equality and diversity, and

disseminates good practice.

3. Statutory duties

The College will abide by its current statutory duties for students and staff. In line with its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the College has separate policies relating to Race Equality and Disability. These form parts 2 and 3 of this document.

4. Every Child Matters

The College has regard to the broader issues of the general health and well-being of our students. We do not tolerate bullying or discrimination in any form, and encourage students to develop positive relationships and celebrate diversity. We are committed to promoting the principles enshrined in the Government's Every Child Matters agenda, and this policy is underpinned in particular by the 'stay safe' and 'make a positive contribution' outcomes.

5. Students

Recruitment and admissions

The College will ensure that:

- recruitment and publicity materials are designed in a range of formats to ensure they are free from biases and stereotypes, and encourage applications from under-represented groups
- applicants for courses are considered on the basis of their ability to meet the entry criteria, as specified in course information
- applicants are not treated less favourably because of disability, age, gender, ethnicity, religion, marital status or sexual orientation
- applicants are interviewed on the basis of their academic ability or potential
- application and enrolment procedures give students the opportunity to identify any special requirements they may have
- where tests form part of the application process for a particular course, all applicants will take the same tests

- new students are made aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and the behaviour we expect of them at induction and through the student handbook
- links with local community groups and relevant organisations are established.

Teaching and learning

The College will ensure that:

- the range, content and delivery of the curriculum reflect the needs of students and the community and promote widening participation
- all aspects of teaching are sensitive to, and promote, equality and diversity, including language used, timetabling, delivery methods, materials, group organisation and activities
- teaching and learning materials and delivery methods avoid stereotypes and biases, and promote the rich cultural diversity of the local community
- resources are available in formats appropriate to the needs of individual students, including the use of specialist equipment where appropriate
- equality and diversity and access for everyone to develop their potential are embedded in the Teaching and Learning Strategy
- there is an ethos and learning environment which is inclusive and enables students to feel comfortable.

Support services and facilities

The College will:

- provide a range of support services and facilities which will enable students with particular physical, social and cultural needs to participate fully in college life, including:
 - tutorial support
 - additional support with learning, for example literacy/numeracy support or help for those with learning difficulties or disabilities
 - child care facilities
 - financial and welfare advice
 - personal counselling
 - social/recreational/catering facilities

- ensure that its support services and facilities are publicised to students and potential applicants through recruitment and publicity materials, the student handbook and at induction
- seek to make continuous improvements to physical access to all of its buildings and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students or other disabled people are not disadvantaged.

6. Staff

Recruitment and selection

The College will:

- when a vacancy arises, prepare a person specification identifying the essential and desirable levels of qualifications/training, knowledge/experience and skills/abilities required for the job
- advertise jobs internally and/or externally to attract applicants who meet the person specification
- consider applicants on the basis of their suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the requirements set out in the person specification.

Training and development

The College will:

- identify annually training and development needs through the appraisal and training and development planning process
- make available a range of training opportunities to meet these needs
- include Equality and Diversity Policy as part of the induction for new staff.

Working environment

The College will:

- make reasonable adjustments to premises or working arrangements to ensure that disabled employees are not disadvantaged.

7. Harassment, victimisation and discrimination

The College will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination and has procedures in place to deal with such incidents.

Students who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against, or otherwise treated unfairly within the scope of this policy, may raise their concerns with their personal tutor in the first instance. Alternatively, they may discuss the issue with Student Services, who will advise and assist them should they wish to pursue the matter through the Student Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Staff who feel that they have been unfairly treated within the scope of this policy may raise their concern through the Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Staff or students whose conduct breaches this policy through discrimination, harassment or victimisation of others will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure for staff or students, as appropriate.

8. Monitoring

The College monitors the profile of its students and staff by age, gender, disability and ethnicity. Monitoring for the whole student population is undertaken by Student Services and, for staff, by the HR Department. The outcomes are reported:

- quarterly to the College Executive (staff and student population)
- twice yearly to the HR Committee (staff population)
- annually to the College Corporation

Monitoring at course level is integrated into the course review process.

9. Related policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Race Equality Policy
- Disability Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Student Bullying/Harassment Policy
- Student Grievance Procedure
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Harassment Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure

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Elizabeth Nash, Director of Quality and Human Resources

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Note: Until April 2005 the Equality & Diversity Network was known as the Equal Opportunities Group

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