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# Single Equality Scheme to 2018

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## Introduction

This Single Equality Scheme brings together our commitments to equality and diversity, and our ambitions and plans across the College. Its objectives demonstrate our commitment to continued action in tackling inequality and promoting diversity. This Scheme builds on our previous equality work and on our efforts to break down barriers and challenge unfairness.

The purpose of this Scheme is to set out the ways in which we will continue to meet our legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010. The Act specifies nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender), and sexual orientation. The Scheme also has regard to reducing inequality of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

The general equality duty requires due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties require public bodies to:

- publish information demonstrating their compliance with the equality duty
- set themselves specific equality objectives.

## College Values

Our values reflect the manner in which we set out to achieve our aims. We put the learner at the heart of all we do. Our three core values are:

### **Student focus**

We will seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student.

### **High Performance**

We will strive for consistently high levels of performance in all aspects of our work.

### **Respect, Openness and Honesty**

We will treat everyone with respect, encourage openness and honesty, and recognise each other's contribution and achievements.

## What we mean by equality

Equality means treating everyone with equal dignity and worth regardless of particular characteristics such as their age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. People have different needs, circumstances and goals. Thus, achieving equality requires the removal of discriminatory barriers that limit what people can do and can be. We recognise that people can experience inequality in terms of:

- educational and career outcomes
- access to our programmes and services
- the degree of independence they have to make decisions affecting their lives
- inequality of treatment, including in relation to employment, through direct and indirect discrimination or disadvantage imposed by other individuals, groups, institutions or systems intentionally or inadvertently.

## **Equality priorities**

We have used our evidence base to identify our key priorities. They are designed to ensure our scheme allows us to focus on those things that will make the biggest impact in terms of advancing equality and diversity and helps the college achieve its wider strategic aims. Each of the priorities is underpinned by specific and timely actions outlined in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan which is reviewed every half term.

### **Priority 1: To develop an effective and diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve**

#### **Targets:**

1. The staff induction and professional development include Equality and Diversity related activities, training and guidance to ensure all employees' understanding of the principles and their responsibilities in terms of Equality and Diversity
2. The system for collating staff data with regards to a wide spectrum of protected characteristics is well established and staff have increased comfort to disclose protected characteristics
3. The diversity factors monitoring for employees in relation to recruitment, job roles, performance grades, staff development opportunities and benchmarking to the local community profile is further developed and is used effectively to implement strategies for the promotion of equal opportunities for staff
4. Effective tools are in place for collating staff's views on their experience at the college related to equality and diversity (e.g. surveys, diversity forums), and are used for equality target setting

### **Priority 2: To integrate the promotion of equality and diversity, and the elimination of discrimination and harassment in our working practices so that we meet our legal obligations as required under the Equality Act 2010**

#### **Targets:**

1. The improvements of college accommodation and facilities take into consideration the diverse needs of students and staff
2. The system for assessing the impact of college-wide policies (Equality Impact Assessment) is fully embedded into the policy review process and is used effectively to eliminate the negative impact on people with protected characteristics and to promote equality between different groups in the wider college community
3. Effective data collection tools (e.g. student surveys, Have Your Say, student voice forums, series of individual students' interviews) are developed further for better

understanding of the learner experience with regards to a wide spectrum of equality characteristics and are used for evidence based equality target setting

4. Proactive arrangements are consistently made to accommodate users with accessibility needs in college events/meetings and when using the college IT systems

**Priority 3: To embed fully equality and diversity in teaching, learning, assessment, tutorials and enrichment activities, and maintain high achievement of all students (full-time, part-time, HE, FE, work-based learning)**

**Targets:**

1. The student induction, tutorials and enrichment activities give opportunity to increase students' understanding of Equality and Diversity themes, including understanding of the core values of British society
2. The system of walkthroughs and observations of teaching and learning is used effectively to identify best practice examples for the embedding of Equality and Diversity including the values of modern Britain, and to identify and support staff who are not fully embedding Equality and Diversity into their teaching and assessments
3. The monitoring of retention and achievement of students in relation to equality factors is used effectively to identify underachievement of groups of students and to implement timely strategies for closing underachievement gaps

**Priority 4: To incorporate fully equality and diversity in our apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement provision**

**Targets:**

1. The monitoring of apprentices' recruitment by equality factors is in place to identify under-representation and is used effectively to implement strategies for addressing inequality issues in recruitment
2. The monitoring of retention and achievement of apprentices in relation to equality factors is used to identify underachievement of groups of apprentices and to implement timely strategies for closing underachievement gaps
3. Equality and Diversity checks and guidance are incorporated in employer's and placement provider's assessment
4. There is a structured work placement programme that meets the needs of the individual student and develops their employability skills

## **Related documents**

This Scheme should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Single Equality Scheme Action plan
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equality and Diversity Annual Report

These documents are available on the College website and intranet.