

Equality Policy

Purpose of Policy/ Document

To inform the College community of the Heart of Worcestershire’s approach to, and values regarding Equality and Diversity and how these are implemented

Application of Policy (Range and Scope)

To inform practices for all students and staff employed by the College.

Particular Legal Requirements/Issues Outside of Equality, Diversity and Disability (E.D.D)

Links with Other Policies/Documents

Student Standards	College Charter	Freedom of information Act
Disciplinary Procedure	Data Protection Act	Tutorial Framework
Complaints procedure	College Values	Health and Safety Policy
British Values Information		

Equality, Diversity and Disability (Disability, Equality, Duty Impact Assessment)

Has a Preliminary Equality Analysis been completed?

***Yes** No Date Completed: September 2016

Is a full Impact Assessment required?

*Yes **No**

If ‘yes’, has a copy been sent to the Director of Learner Services ?

*Yes No

For completion by the Executive:

POLICY REFERENCE	EAD01
CATEGORY	Equality & Diversity
AUTHOR / ORIGINATOR	Assistant Principal Information Systems and Student Experience
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POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW	Assistant Principal Information Systems and

	Student Experience
RATIFIED /AUTHORISED BY	

This Equality Policy sets out the values and strategic aims of the Heart of Worcestershire College with regard to Equality and Diversity. It outlines the commitments and responsibilities of all college members and how the College will further improve the service it offers to all to be truly inclusive.

This policy is published on the Heart of Worcestershire College website.

Alternative formats of the policy can be made available. Please e-mail jbreakwell@howcollege.ac.uk to request these or ask at reception.

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1. Introduction and Context

The Heart of Worcestershire College is committed to providing a learning environment which respects all individuals and celebrates diversity. Our mission statement “*Promoting future success through high quality education and training*’ demonstrates our College values and our commitment to ensuring that we transform the life chances for all. As a college, we value social and cultural diversity and seek to promote equality of opportunity and respect amongst all learners, staff, governors, visitors, partners and other stakeholders.

This policy describes the Heart of Worcestershire College’s:

- Vision, commitment, values and approach to British Values in relation to Equality and Diversity;
- General and Specific Duties regarding the Equality Act 2010 and how these inform practice;
- Strategies and objectives for generating a positive and fair environment;
- The actions and strategies the College will employ to generate a positive and fair environment (*please refer to our Equality Action Plan*).

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, learners, and stakeholders who are representative of the local community.

2. Our Vision, Values and British Values

The Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college where all staff and learners feel valued and respected, having a fair and equal chance to reach their potential. We aim to respond to the diverse profile of needs expressed by our learners, staff and stakeholders and celebrate the diversity of the College community. We aim to go beyond statutory requirements to ensure our learners, staff and partners have the best experience possible. Through our Equality Action Plan we will work with the College community and beyond to make the College a truly inclusive organisation. We believe that Equality and Diversity is an essential ingredient for overall quality improvement.

The College ethos to Equality and Diversity will include the:

- **Involvement of the various communities of interest** - so that their priorities and concerns can be identified and inform college practice and policy.
- **Data gathering for analysis and monitoring** - to establish what different groups experience in terms of recruitment, retention and success as a student or as a member of staff. Any significant differentials will be further explored and actions agreed accordingly.
- **Raising awareness** - through staff and learners induction, bespoke training and by having thematic weeks to celebrate diversity
- **Action planning** - The College will set equality objectives at least every 4 years to move forward its aim to be an outstanding college. The objectives will be translated into an Equality action plan which will be agreed every year and monitored on a regular basis.

- **Publicise the scheme** - to ensure transparency in our approach and practice regarding Equality and Diversity. This will enable learners, staff and the College's community to be informed of progress and give stakeholders the opportunity to respond.

Our Values

Integrity

- Working with integrity; demonstrating openness and transparency at all times.
- Placing the interests of our students at the heart of all College activities.

Trust

- Inspiring students to achieve success through quality learning and assessment.
- Challenging and supporting staff so that they continue to be effective and successful.

Inclusivity

- Promoting equality and diversity through inclusive practice.

Collaboration

- Engaging with Worcestershire's communities to develop stronger partnerships with sustainable benefits.
- Listening to our stakeholders in order to provide responsive and informed services.

British Values

British values are of paramount importance to Heart of Worcestershire College. We see British values as underpinning what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse community.

Ofsted evaluate how well colleges actively promote British Values and prepare learners for life in modern Britain. This requirement is reiterated within draft guidance on the Prevent Duty, a statutory duty on colleges to have due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

British values relate to four aspects democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The College will seek to promote these values recognising they will be underpinned under the College's own values of Integrity, Trust, Inclusivity and Collaboration.

3. Meeting our Legal Duties

The Equality Act 2010 imposes both general and specific duties upon the College. The legislation applies not only to the College as an organisation but also to anyone working or studying with us and any partners, contractors and stakeholders. The general duties are to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010** - The act introduces the concept of “protected characteristics” of which there are nine (*please refer to appendices for further information*). The definition of discrimination has been extended to include associative and perceptive discrimination (*please refer to appendices for further information*).
- **Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it** - Reasonable adjustments will be provided for learners, staff and customers who may be experiencing barriers due to their disability. The recruitment, retention and achievement of learners will be monitored by protected characteristics to identify any trends enabling the College to respond effectively.
- **Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it** - The College will ensure that Equality and Diversity is a natural part of the curriculum to raise awareness and understanding. All College processes will be continually reviewed to ensure that the College is accessible and fair in all of its functions. Our customer service will be unbiased and welcoming to all.

The specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 are to:

- **Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty** - This will include information relating to learners, employees, and other individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic who will be affected by our policies and practices. A report for Equality and Diversity is published annually to inform our College community of our progress and to celebrate our diversity.
- **Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every four years which are accessible to the public** - The objectives will form the basis of the Equality Action Plan which can be found on our website.

4. Equality and Diversity Strategy

Equality and Diversity is central to the College’s overarching plans, as set out in its Strategic Plan, and is embedded throughout the College in many ways such as sharing and celebrating good practice and participation and consultation.

The Equality Action Plan sets out the strategy for establishing how the College intends to ensure equality for all and build upon existing practice. It is intended to be flexible to respond to new developments and changes in legislation, and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis, with the continuing involvement of College learners, staff, partners and community groups. Progress will be reported twice yearly to Corporation and monitored through the Equality and Diversity strategic group meetings taking place each term.

The College strives to ensure that all learners enjoy an excellent experience whilst at college and monitors this by analysing data regarding people with a protected characteristic. The EDIMS [Equality and Diversity Impact Measures] are incorporated into the College’s Equality Objectives and are reported on to the Senior Leadership Team and College Corporation.

The Principal of the College has overall responsibility for Equality and Diversity, while the day to day management rests with the Assistant Principal Information Systems and Student Experience. However, to be successful, the implementation of the Equality Policy must be a shared responsibility amongst all staff employed by the college.

We will provide equality of opportunity for all of our learners and staff by:

- Taking effective action to prevent discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- Listening to our learners;
- Providing flexible learning and working opportunities to support differing aspirations and goals;
- Promoting equality of access to all college services;
- Taking all reasonable steps to provide a safe, accessible, inclusive and equitable learning environment.

5. Meeting the Needs of Learners

The Heart of Worcestershire College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college and ensures that learners' needs are assessed and responded to appropriately and effectively. An essential part of the College experience for a learner is to be prepared for working and living in a diverse society.

- All teaching and training resources will reflect and promote Equality and Diversity as appropriate to raise awareness and understanding.
- Staff will actively promote British Values throughout College life (Ofsted 2015) and empower students to challenge stereotypes, assumptions and discrimination within a culture of mutual respect and tolerance for others.
- Admission processes and initial assessment will be used to ensure that the correct support is available to learners at the beginning of their course. Learners are given opportunities throughout the year to disclose any disabilities or other protected characteristic they may have.
- Information, guidance and support will be delivered in ways accessible to different groups with protected characteristics and in ways that challenge stereotypes.

A team of qualified personal learning coaches and personal tutors provide support across the College to ensure that all learners are able to access and enjoy their college experience.

Financial support is available to assist learners who may have difficulties in completing their course due to financial reasons.

The Learner Voice continues to be a crucial mechanism for understanding and responding to the learner experience to ensure that the College is inclusive in all aspects of the service it delivers.

6. Recruitment and Employment of Staff

Positive employment and recruitment practices are promoted through practices and legislation contained within the College's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Remuneration Policy.

All applicants are asked to advise the College of any adjustments that may be required for the purpose of the interview or if they were to be employed by the College.

7. Measuring Our Progress and Making Improvements

Equality and Diversity feedback is encouraged from a broad spectrum of sources to inform planning, decision making and actions to further improve the service offered by the College. The College collects and keeps records pertaining to Equality and Diversity in a systematic and co-ordinated way to enable efficient analysis and review. These include:

- Learner surveys;
- Staff surveys;
- Equality and Diversity campus meetings;
- Learner course representatives;
- Lesson observations;
- Statistical monitoring - retention and achievement of learners by protected characteristics;
- Statistical monitoring – retention of staff by protected characteristics;
- Meetings with external partners and groups to elicit feedback about the service the College delivers.

8. The Equality and Diversity Strategic Group

Heart of Worcestershire College has an established Equality and Diversity Steering Group to lead on the Organisation's strategic approach to Equality and Diversity. Key post holders from across College attend these meetings each term.

This group will:

- Ensure the College meets its responsibilities with regard to its public sector general and specific duties;
- Ensure Equality and Diversity is promoted effectively through teaching and learning;
- Ensure that information regarding Equality and Diversity is communicated effectively to the College community;
- Monitor, review and contribute to the College's Equality and Diversity Objectives and Action Plan;
- Make recommendations as to how the promotion of the equality duties can be further enhanced and improved through the curriculum and service provision;
- Monitor additional Equality and Diversity operational meetings to share and develop best practice and ensure whole organisation 'buy in';
- Review and revise the College's Equality Policy annually;
- Contribute to the College's annual Equality and Diversity Report, published in January;
- Monitor the progress made against College EDIMS;
- Monitor any complaints pertaining to Equality and Diversity;
- Champion inclusive practice;

9. The Equality and Diversity Operational Group

Heart of Worcestershire College has an established Equality and Diversity Operational Group to feed into the College's Strategic group. Key post holders from across college attend these meetings each term.

This group will:

- Ensure staff have an opportunity to raise awareness of particular Equality and Diversity issues;
- Ensure that information relating to Equality and Diversity is communicated effectively to the College community;
- Feed in to the Equality and Diversity Strategic group with updates on Equality objectives.

10. Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Have a significant role in creating and maintaining an inclusive organisation where all can learn, work and reach their full potential;
- Agree and monitor Equality Objectives;
- Instruct the Senior Management team to:
 - Ensure that relevant policies are in place up to date and effectively implemented.
 - Listen to the voice of learners and make changes accordingly to improve the inclusivity of the College
 - Ensure that the College upholds its legal obligations in relation to Equality and Diversity.
 - Promote Equality and celebrate Diversity.

The College Management Team will:

- Lead by example through implementing the Equality and Diversity policy;
- Promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Monitor Equality and Diversity through the self- assessment process and quality reviews;
- Include Equality and Diversity awareness training in the induction process and thereafter in staff development and performance reviews;
- Ensuring Equality and Diversity is fully embraced by staff within their area.

Individuals will:

- Inform an appropriate person if inappropriate or discriminatory practice occurs;
- Be responsible for engaging in staff development opportunities that address equality and diversity issues;
- Ensure that curriculum content includes equality and diversity to raise awareness in students;
- Challenge any inappropriate language or behaviour and promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance;
- Embrace and embed British Values into their working practise.

11. Procurement

The College ensures that any external organisations with which it works or contracts with are made aware of and encouraged and supported to adhere to the core equality and diversity principles of the College. The College will also seek to identify the equality and diversity policies and practices of any external organisations it may work with and to give information to partners regarding their obligations of working with a public sector organisation.

12. Equality Impact Assessments

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment [EIA] is to improve the work of the College by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, opportunities for promoting equality are maximised. The process encourages individuals and teams to think carefully about the likely impact of their work on all groups with a protected characteristic and take action to improve services, policies, strategies. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and functions on all groups and making sure that as far as possible any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised.

13. Complaints

The College has a transparent and responsive complaints procedure for all stakeholders. Complaints relating to Equality and Diversity should initially be addressed to the Quality team at the College. Complaints data is analysed by the Assistant Principal Information Systems and Student Experience on a regular basis to ensure that there are no trends.

14. Involvement and Consultation

This Equality Policy is a living document and has been created through consultation with students, staff, and stakeholders. The College will continue to elicit feedback from its community by having effective communication channels in a variety of formats such as:

- Student satisfaction surveys at induction and on-programme;
- Course Representatives;
- Student Union;
- Equality and diversity operational meetings;
- Tutorials;
- Partnerships with outside agencies.

15. Informing others

The Equality Policy will be relevant to many people, not just in terms of responsibilities under the policy, but also in terms of how students, staff and visitors can expect College life to change and improve.

The College will make the policy available on its website and ensure that it is available in a variety of formats to meet the diverse needs of our student and staff population.

Appendix one

Defining discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 has changed some definitions which are explained in this appendix:

Direct discrimination

- Direct discrimination- includes association, perception
- Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have
- Associative - This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

- Indirect Discrimination can occur when an employer has a condition, rule or policy that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantage people with a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if employers can justify their actions as a business aim.

Harassment

- Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Victimisation

- Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments

- Public sector organisations have to make adjustments for disabled people to ensure that they do not face a significant disadvantage.

Sexual Orientation

The College makes every effort to welcome students and staff regardless of their sexual orientation. Everyone is regarded as an individual and the College encourages the contributions that they bring to the College.

There is no information gathered on students regarding their sexual orientation. However the College strives to achieve an inclusive culture providing opportunities for all individuals to contribute to College life. The College is part of a regional LGBT group which learners are able to attend.

Religion/belief

The College will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their religion, beliefs or non-belief. Quiet rooms are available for people to pray or reflect on some campuses. There is no information collected regarding a person’s religion but the College does strive to ensure that all

religions are respected and individuals are able to practice their religion within College. Leave to celebrate religious festivals for staff is covered in the special leave policy. Leave for a student is entirely at the discretion of the CRQ leader.