



# Equality and Diversity Policy

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## **1. Statement of Intent**

Seevic College is committed to equality of opportunity. The College positively embraces equality and diversity in the appointment of staff, recruitment of students and in the policies and practices operating within the college. The College seeks to provide and promote an ethos of inclusivity in all that it does. We respect all our people for their individuality, abilities and aspirations. We will treat individuals with respect and be fair to them irrespective of age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, nationality, religion, belief, sexuality, status and any other distinction.

## **2. Introduction & Purpose**

**The purpose of this policy is:**

- to establish clear guidance regarding equality
- to establish key principles, structures and monitoring arrangements

The guidance will be applicable to Governors, senior managers and all employees and students in the College, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

2.2 The College will regularly measure, review and reinforce the effectiveness of the policy through:

- The equality and diversity objectives
- The cycle of Self-Assessment
- College wide action plans
- Staff and student surveys and data analysis
- Annual Equality and Diversity projects
- Monitoring activity

### **2.3 Key Principles**

The College believes that all forms of prejudice and discrimination are unacceptable. In recognition of the fact that they can take a variety of forms, depending on the group against whom they are directed. The college takes a zero tolerance approach to any discrimination on the grounds of all protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, transgender, race, religion, and other beliefs, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

The College recognises inclusiveness as a core value. Staff and governors are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, and meet their statutory responsibilities. Learners are made aware of, and are expected to behave in a way that is consistent with, the College's Equality and Diversity policy.

### **2.4 Scope of the Policy**

The Equality Policy covers all members of the College community and all aspects of college activity. The policy applies to both students and members of staff.

## 2.5 Equality Principles within the Employment Code of Practice

Please refer to appendices Legislative Framework.

## 2.6 Equality Principles within teaching and learning

Please refer to the College Teaching and Learning practices and guidance from policies for students learning and assessment.

### 3. Legislative Framework

The Equality Act 2010 simplifies and consolidates earlier legislation. Also, it makes the law stronger in some areas.

The Act applies to all organisations that provide a service to the public or a section of the public (service providers). It also applies to anyone who sells goods or provides facilities.

The majority of the Act came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 and the additional responsibility for public sector organisations came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The public sector Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

**The General Equality Duty** is a duty on Colleges and other public bodies. It requires Colleges to consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in determining policy, delivering services and in relation to staff.

The new duty encourages Colleges to understand the impact of their activities on different groups of people and to ensure that policies and procedures are accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

**The Equality Duty** has three main objectives: Colleges must have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

([www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk))

The College must consciously think about the three aims as part of the process of decision making, reviewing policies and procedures, delivering the curriculum and procurement.

This includes:

- Actively removing and minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in College life or activities where their participation is low.

It also requires the fostering of good relations which involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic. The legislation requires the college to think about people's different needs and how these might be met.

In its decision making the College will take account of disabled peoples' impairments when making decisions about policies or services and make reasonable adjustments or treat disabled people better than non-disabled people in order to meet their needs. For example the college might decide to provide lockers for disabled students so that those who, because of their impairment, cannot carry heavy books have access to storage facilities near their classrooms. Although non-disabled students might also want a locker they will not suffer the same degree of disadvantage without one.

All members of staff are involved in giving effect to these principles.

**The specific equality duty** requires the college and other public authorities to:

- 1) Publish information, at least annually, to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty. The information will include, in particular, information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are employed by the college or those affected by our policies and practices. These include all employees, current students, prospective applicants, adult students, apprentices and other stakeholders.
- 2) The College will prepare and publish one or more objectives that it considers necessary to achieve to further any aims of the general duty. These objectives will be specific and measurable.

The current equality measures are to provide leadership at all levels that will:

- Ensure the College is an inclusive and welcoming place to learn and work
- Ensure that all students and staff have an equal opportunity to achieve to their full potential
- Develop our use of data to enable us to monitor the impact and improve the quality of our teaching and learning, practices, policies and procedures
- Actively encourage the recruitment of students and staff from underrepresented groups, breaking down some of the traditional stereotypes associated with particular courses or employee groups
- Ensure that the processes for the procurement and implementation of contracts and services meet our general duties.

#### **4. Roles, Responsibilities and Behaviours**

- 4.1 The Governing Body designates the Principal as having overall responsibility for equality issues. The Principal will ensure regular reports are made to the Corporation on progress against the Equality and Diversity objectives. There will be Equality and Diversity meetings where key stakeholders from the

college feedback key information in their areas related to Equality and Diversity.

The Group will advise the Principal on equality and diversity. It will promote and support ideas for change and development, and commission specific projects. It will draft the equality objectives which will be reviewed as a minimum every four years. It will be accountable to the Principal. It will report to the Senior Leadership Team.

- 4.2 **It is the responsibility of all staff and students to uphold the College policy on equality.** The following sections outline specific responsibilities related to roles within the college.

**The Principal** has overall responsibility for equality issues

- 4.3 **Senior Leadership team/ Programme Area Managers /Curriculum Area Managers** are required to:

- ensure that admissions criteria do not discriminate against or unnecessarily exclude any individual or group of learners
- ensure that staff are aware of the equality policy and procedures and of their specific responsibilities
- ensure that plans for new courses and curriculum development take account of the equality and diversity policy requirements
- inform and consult staff College equality and diversity developments
- ensure that equality and diversity issues are covered in course quality reviews and self assessment and are addressed in the self-assessment development plans
- use course data to monitor learner performance and identify and address any issues of under-performance by any group of learners
- use course data to set equality of opportunity related targets as appropriate
- disseminate good practice
- address equality and diversity issues in staff appraisal
- address equality and diversity issues through staff development

- 4.4 **Curriculum Area Managers** are required to:

- ensure that admissions criteria do not discriminate against or unnecessarily exclude any individual or group of learners (where appropriate... entrance requirements)
- monitor course data to address any issues of under-performance by any group of learners
- ensure that learners are aware of their responsibilities and rights in respect of discrimination, victimization, harassment any bullying and of the procedures for making complaints
- take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimization

- be aware of the variety of learners' personal circumstances and difficulties which may impede learning and the appropriate referral processes available
- provide guidance to staff on referrals to the Learning Support department and or Student Services
- fully address equality and diversity issues in course self assessment and development plans
- address equality and diversity issues in staff appraisal

#### 4.5 **Tutors and Learning Support Staff**

are required to:

- have high expectations of all learners irrespective of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, gender-re-assignment, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, age or any other grounds
- ensure that curriculum materials do not exclude any individual or group of learners
- use teaching materials, content and methods, where possible, which take account of the diverse learning needs, styles and preferences of learners
- create a classroom ethos and learning environment which is inclusive and enables all learners to feel comfortable and is conducive to learners realising their potential
  - provide guidance and referrals of learners to the Learning Support department and or Student Services
- adopt marking policies and assessment methods which treat all learners impartially and do not discriminate against any individual or group of learners
- take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of harassment, victimisation or discrimination and if necessary alert more senior member of staff
- address any issues of stereotyped attitudes and prejudiced thinking in order to develop learner awareness of the basic concepts of equality and diversity

#### 4.6 **Support Managers (MiS, Student Services, Registrar)**

Managers are required to:

- ensure that staff are aware of the equality and diversity policy and procedures and of their specific responsibilities
- inform and consult staff on college equality and diversity developments, ensuring that equality and diversity issues are covered in quality reviews and self assessment and are addressed in the development plan
- address equality and diversity issues in staff appraisal
- address equality and diversity through staff development

#### 4.7 **Support staff**

Staff are required to:

- Deal equally and fairly with colleagues, internal and external customers irrespective of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, gender re-assignment, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, age, or any other grounds

- Take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of harassment, victimisation or discrimination and if necessary alert or involve more senior staff.

#### **4.8 Malpractice**

Individual breaches of the Equality and Diversity policy will be dealt with under the Student or Staff disciplinary procedures.

### **5. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation**

The College will monitor changes in the equality legislation and will amend the policy and related procedures accordingly.

The College will review this policy on an annual basis or sooner in order to take account of new statutory regulations and recommendations for improvement.

### **6. Communication**

The policy is published on the College website and the Intranet for members of staff and on the VLE for students. Its review will be communicated by sending a newsletter as part of the half termly safeguarding newsletter; at staff briefings and/or at professional development days to provide, when required, training to new employees.

Under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the policy will be listed in the Publication Scheme and made available to the general public on request.

## 7. Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment Summary

	AGE	DISABILITY	GENDER Reassignment	RACE	RELIGION or BELIEF	SEX	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
Which of the following protected characteristics may be affected by this policy or procedure? <i>(please tick the relevant box)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other concerns (e.g. protected groups such as carers, young parents, women during pregnancy, young people living independently)							
Does this policy impact on: <i>(please tick the relevant box)</i>	Staff ✓	Students ✓	Parents or Carers ✓	Members of the Public ✓	External providers of services		
Does your assessment show that this policy/procedure might have an adverse impact on relations between different protected characteristics? <i>(please tick the relevant box)</i>	No						
If yes, can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or as part of a wider strategy of positive action in relation to particular groups? <i>(please give reasonable justification)</i>							
<b>Staff Development and Training</b> Please list any staff development or training issues arising from this assessment.	All staff need to be made aware of the Equality and Diversity policy and their role that they play within the policy						
<b>Change/Modification</b> As a result of the Impact Assessment, have any changes/modifications to this policy/procedure been made?	Provided examples to aid understanding, make clear that the policy relates to both students and staff, identify monitoring reports.						

## 8. Appendices

### Legislative Framework

#### Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 simplifies the current equality and diversity laws and places them together in a single piece of legislation. Most of the new law is based on current legislation which has been streamlined but there are some important differences.

#### **Who the law protects**

- Whether at work as an employee or in using a service, the message (or purpose) of the Equality Act is that everyone has the right to be treated fairly at work or when using services.
- It protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics. These are known as protected characteristics.

#### **What the law protects against:**

These are the main forms of prohibited behaviour.

#### **Direct discrimination**

Treating a person worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic

#### **Indirect discrimination**

Putting in place a rule or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified

#### **Discrimination arising from disability**

Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability when this cannot be justified.

**Failing to make reasonable adjustments** for disabled people.

**Harassment** Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which is hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive to someone with a protected characteristic or in a way that is sexual in nature.

#### **Victimisation**

Treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.

## **The Protected Characteristics**

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- Religion and belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

As well as these characteristics, the law also protects people from being discriminated against: By someone who wrongly perceives them to have one of the protected characteristics.

Because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. This includes the parent of a disabled child or adult or someone else who is caring for a disabled person.

## **Changed definitions and other provisions**

### **Disability**

Under the act a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to day activities. There are no impairment categories which were included in the Disability Discrimination Act. Under the Equality Act a claimant does not have to show that their impairment affects a particular capacity such as mobility, speech hearing or eyesight.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

The reasonable adjustments duty was first introduced under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The reasonable adjustments duty under the Equality Act operates slightly differently but the object is the same: to avoid as far as possible by reasonable means the disadvantage which a disabled student experiences because of their disability. The duty requires a provider to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and other benefits, facilities and services provided for students.

### **Enquires about disability and health**

The Act makes it unlawful for employers to ask job applicants questions about disability or health before making a job offer, except in specified circumstances.

### **Positive Action**

Students with protected characteristics may be disadvantaged for social or economic reasons or for reasons to do with past or present discrimination. The Act contains provisions which enable education providers to take action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or disproportionately low participation of a particular student group, provided certain conditions are met.

These are known as the positive action provisions and allow (but do not require) education providers to take proportionate action to remedy the disadvantage faced by particular groups of students. Such action could include targeted provision or resources or putting in place additional or bespoke provision to benefit a particular disadvantaged student group.

## **Why do we collect equality information?**

It helps the college:

### **Identify key issues**

- Understand the impact of our policies, practices and decisions on people with different protected characteristics, and thereby plan them more effectively.
- Assess whether we are discriminating unlawfully when carrying out any of our functions.
- Identify what the key equality issues are for the college.

### **Assess performance**

- Benchmark our performance and processes against those of similar organisations, nationally or locally.

### **Take appropriate action**

- Consider taking steps to meet the needs of staff and service users who share relevant protected characteristics.
- Identify if there are any actions we can take to avoid discrimination and harassment, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.
- Make informed decisions about policies and practices which are based on evidence about the impact of our activities on equality.
- Develop equality objectives to meet the specific duties
- Have due regard to the aims of the general equality duty by ensuring that staff have appropriate information for decision-making.

Useful resources:

[www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)