



New College Durham

Equal Opportunities Policy

**Reviewed and Approved by Academic Board
February 2009**

This policy is available on-line at: www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk

- We will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format.
- We will review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all.
- All policies are subject to equality impact assessments*. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of the policy.

*Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.

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1. Rationale

This policy reflects the College commitment to practices based on the principles of equality and diversity for its learners, customers and employees. This policy also complies with current equality legislation. (Appendix A)

This commitment is a key focus of the College's Vision and Values:

Vision:

To be recognised as a leading provider of Further and Higher Education, contributing to the social and economic well being of the region and **enabling individuals to fulfil their potential through learning, achievement and progression.**

Values:

As an employer and a learning organisation, we will:

- a. celebrate achievement in learning of all kinds;
- b. act fairly, openly and transparently;**
- c. achieve and maintain the highest standards in everything that we do;
- d. fulfil our commitment to equal opportunities and the rights of others.**

2. Aim

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that the College is a place where learning and working exists in an environment that promotes equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity and allows everyone to achieve to their fullest potential. The College is opposed to any form of harassment or discrimination. We recognise that positive actions will be needed to achieve and maintain this aim.

3. Principles on which this policy and its associated practices are based

- a. All individuals and groups are entitled to be treated with respect and regarded as of equal status and value, whatever their age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- b. Education has a major role to play in promoting equality of opportunity and combating discrimination. Individuals and groups are entitled to work and learn in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination and are entitled to protection from harassment and discrimination if they occur
- c. Good equal opportunities practice has the following benefits:
 - i. The College develops the reputation and practice that attracts a diversity of people who want to work, study or visit the organisation.

- ii. Consistently high levels of recruitment, retention and achievement of all groups of learners;
- iii. High levels of student and staff satisfaction in learning and working practices;
- iv. Minimum levels of grievances and complaints.

4. Learner and Staff Rights

All learners and staff have the right to work, study and progress in a College environment where they:

- a. are fully respected;
- b. feel welcomed;
- c. are treated fairly;
- d. have equality of opportunity for learning and training;
- e. have full access, wherever possible, to the range of College facilities and services and
- f. feel confident that action will be taken to address any reported harassment or discrimination.

5. Learner and Staff Responsibilities

- a. All students and staff are responsible for ensuring that they do not discriminate against or harass others in the College.
- b. Students and staff also have a duty to promote equality in the College. This means actively discouraging or condemning any discriminatory behaviour or harassment towards students, staff or visitors to the College.
- c. All staff have a duty to report to their line manager any incidents which involve harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

6. Staff Responsibilities

- a. All staff should be familiar with the policies and procedures relating to Equality and Diversity as listed in Appendix B.
- b. All staff should be aware that equal opportunities demands a positive non-discriminatory approach which includes:
 - i. recruitment of staff and students;
 - ii. College review procedures;
 - iii. equal and positive interaction;
 - iv. provision of guidance, counselling and learning support;

- v. use of the discipline system.

Teaching staff should be aware that these demands also include:

- i. tutorial and pastoral support;
 - ii. class visits and work placements;
 - iii. assessment of learning;
 - iv. student forum groups;
 - v. production and use of learning resources and materials;
 - vi. curriculum design.
- c. All staff should
- i. Promote awareness of equality and diversity in a positive way, through staff and student induction procedures and within working practices and curriculum activities;
 - ii. Show sensitivity towards, and respect for, cultural diversity and encourage this approach amongst colleagues and students;
 - iii. Contribute to the development of positive attitudes and the celebration of diversity in all aspects of College life.
 - iv. Ensure that Confidentiality and Disclosure issues are addressed, particularly in dealing with people who have a disability.

7. College Management Responsibilities

College Management will ensure that:

- a. All staff are fully aware of this policy and the demands it places on them;
- b. All staff have appropriate training in order to undertake their roles and responsibilities in terms of equal opportunities;
- c. All new staff have induction training in Equality and Diversity;
- d. Equality and Diversity is included as an aspect of staff appraisals

8. Standards by which the success of this policy can be evaluated

- a. The College demonstrates a positive and confident approach to equal opportunities promotion within the College.
- b. Positive staff and student feedback, through questionnaires, tutorials, compliment returns, appraisals, course monitoring and feedback from external sources, including employers, verifiers and inspections.

- c. Evidence of the promotion of equal opportunities within the curriculum through Schemes of Work and Lesson Planning.
- d. Progress towards Equality and Diversity targets on Curriculum Business Plans and on Departmental Action Plans for Corporate Services.
- e. The Senior Executive Group and the Board of Corporation will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities Policy. They will receive annual reports, which will enable them to evaluate the ethnic, disability, age and gender composition of the student body and the workforce, including of job applicants.

The reports will examine:

- i. the numbers and relative proportion of students and employees, including job applicants, by ethnicity, age and gender;
- ii. the distribution of students across the curriculum areas, broken down by ethnicity, disability, age and gender;
- iii. the distribution of all employees broken down by job grade and then by ethnicity, disability, age and gender;
- iv. any positive action undertaken in relation to modification of the physical accommodation and specialist support equipment for learners;
- v. any positive action undertaken in relation to modification of the work place or working conditions to enable wider opportunity of posts within the organisation e.g. disabled persons having the opportunity of taking up a job promotion.

9. Responsibility for implementing this policy

Responsibility resides at all levels across the College:

- a. The Senior Executive Group and the Board of Corporation have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy;
- b. All staff and students have an individual duty and responsibility to promote and implement this policy;

10. Review

- a. Academic Board is responsible for the periodic review of this policy
- b. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years in the light of experience and best practice. Changes to legislation may prompt an interim review of this policy within the three year review period.
- c. In considering the effectiveness of this policy, consultation will be undertaken with Trade Unions, students, staff and managers.

d. The next review is due in February 2011

Legislation

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA)
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relation Act 1976
- Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005
- The Disability Equality Duty 2006
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2000 (SENDA)
- EU Employment Directive 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Equality Regulations 2003 Religion or Belief
- Employment Equality Legislation 2003 Sexual Orientation
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Policies relating to Equal Opportunities

- Race Equality Policy for Students
- Race Equality Policy for Staff
- Learning Support Policy
- Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation in the Workplace
- Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Employment Equality (Age) Policy