

Single Equality Scheme 2021-24 & EDI Policy 2022/23

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Single Equality Scheme

This document sets out how the College of West Anglia will fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the requirements of public sector duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 seeks to simplify discrimination law and introduced statutory duties to promote equality whereby The College of West Anglia must, in the exercise of its functions, pay due regard to the need to promote equality in relation to the protected characteristics:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race, religion or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation

The PSED requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The impact of this Single Equality Scheme is assessed and evaluated by the Performance Review and Quality Committee and progress on the Single Equality Action Plan will be reviewed and measured.

The College's vision of 'Changing lives through learning' and our values strongly reflect our intent ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are core in all we do.

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Our Commitments

- The Corporation and the Senior Management Team take an active role in promoting and embedding equality and diversity in all aspects of our work
- We will foster a culture of learning and a sense of belonging among our staff and students
- We will recruit, develop and support our students and staff fairly
- We will comply with all equalities-related legislation
- We will evaluate our work to be alert to any unfairness and will learn from any complaints or grievances
- We address unequal experiences for all who share protected characteristics and are mindful of our actions in relation to socio economic factors.
- We will work with the members our community both within college and in our wider area to ensure that their needs are considered, to let them know what services are available and how they can access them.
- We strengthen our work with partners in the public sector to promote equality and diversity and to develop and share good practice.
- We will strengthen strategic and individual plans to contain equality and diversity priorities for action.
- We will ensure all external partners and employer engagement provision complies with the legislation, including all the protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- We will provide an accessible and inclusive physical environment and facilities which positively reflect the College's commitment to equality and diversity

Commitments to our staff

We know that our staff are our best asset and we are highly committed to investing in our employees. To recruit and retain a motivated and professional workforce which reflects our local communities, we will:

- Ensure our Human Resources policies are fit-for-purpose and review them regularly;
- Act rapidly to challenge and eliminate prejudice, bullying or harassment;
- Make reasonable adjustments for staff with particular needs;
- Train staff in equality and diversity issues to enable them to carry out their jobs in a way that reflects the values of the College;
- Regularly review our workforce monitoring data and take action where appropriate;
- Ensure that staff are valued in their achievements and successes
- Use a variety of methods to attract staff from all equality backgrounds;

Commitments to our students

We aim to provide an effective and supportive experience for all our students, whatever their background. To enable this, we will:

- Guide applicants to a suitable choice of course, ensuring they meet the entry criteria and that the course provides an appropriate pathway for their career aims and aspirations;
- Place our students at the heart of the learning process;
- Provide a range of services to help remove barriers to participation and learning;

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- Act swiftly to challenge and eliminate prejudice, bullying or harassment;
- Consider the diverse range of support needed to enable individuals to participate and learn and make reasonable adjustments for students with particular needs;
- Continue to improve the structure of the curriculum to enable students to achieve their full potential;
- Ensure our student policies are fit-for-purpose and review them regularly;
- Support Student Voice to enable us to change and adapt our services to meet our students' needs.
- Use a variety of different methods to attract and retain students from all backgrounds;
- Encourage open, honest discussion about students' educational and career aspirations;
- Employ assessment methods which are valid, reliable and inclusive
- Ensure that individuals are valued in their achievements and progression recognised through our students awards and other mechanisms
- Source financial assistance to support those students in hardship and to maximise their retention and achievement;
- Ensure that students are able to access teaching, learning and support equally and are not disadvantaged by personal characteristics or circumstances;
- Provide our students with a wide range of effective learning resources and support which help meet their needs and contribute to their success;
- Actively promote a safe and healthy college environment and provide structures and procedures for managing safeguarding issues, including referrals to other agencies;

Responsibility for the Single Equality Scheme

All employees of the College have a responsibility for implementing all policies relating to equality and diversity and promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of their work. Specific responsibilities and actions are identified below:

Governors and Senior Management Team (SMT)

Are responsible for providing a consistent lead on all Equality and Diversity issues to ensure that all students and staff are enabled to achieve their full potential, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity or race so that the College is seen as a beacon of best practice within the wider community.

To meet these duties, Governors should

- i. Actively promote equality and diversity
- ii. Have induction training
- iii. Have refresher training every three years
- iv. Have more detailed training on any area they identify as appropriate
- v. Receive reports with respect to the college approach to equality and diversity
- vi. Robustly challenge Managers about the effectiveness and equity of systems
- vii. Take due regard to equality and diversity in the recruitment of staff and governors
- viii. Ensure impacts of decisions/policies/processes/practices on particular groups are considered and prevented or minimised where possible

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI)

The College's Governing body receives reports from the EDI Committee which exists to:

- To promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the college
- To support the production of guidance information for staff to enable best EDI practice to be embedded within both support and curriculum functions
- To review new legislation in relation to matters linked to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, identify implications and make recommendations for college staff and students
- To work with other college committees and groups to ensure that positive behaviours are embedded throughout college life and practice
- To produce and monitor progress on the College's Single Equality Action Plan (SEAP)

Managers and Supervisors

Are expected to:

- ensure that staff are aware of the single equality scheme and of their specific responsibilities
- Ensure that their area has representation on the EDI committee
- inform and consult staff on college equality and diversity developments, ensuring that equality and diversity issues are covered in reviews and self-assessment processes and are addressed in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- ensure that staff recruitment, training, promotion and work practices conform with the single equality scheme and relevant legislation
- address equality and diversity issues in staff appraisal and continuous professional development (CPD)

Lecturing and Learning Support Staff:

Are expected to:

- have high expectations of all students regardless of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or any other grounds
- ensure that curriculum materials do not exclude any individual or group of students
- use teaching materials, content and methods, where appropriate, which take account of the diverse learning needs and preferences of their students
- create an inclusive learning environment which enables all students to feel comfortable and is conducive to them realising their potential
- provide guidance and referrals of students to additional support 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 or involve more senior staff
- address any issues of stereotyped attitudes and prejudiced thinking in order to develop students' awareness of the basic concepts of equality and diversity

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Support Staff

- deal equally and fairly with colleagues, internal and external customers irrespective of, age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or any other grounds
- take appropriate and immediate action in the event of incidents of harassment, victimization or discrimination and if necessary alert or involve more senior staff

Students:

- treat all staff, students and visitors with respect at all times
- comply with the expectations of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- report incidents of harassment, victimisation or discrimination to a member of College staff
- have high expectations of the College to tackle discrimination and promote equality and diversity

Summary of Progress so far

Management and oversight

The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that all the relevant equal opportunities policies and procedures are in place, that staff and students are aware of them and that their importance is given high profile by key staff

- Governors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination, that reports are made as required by the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and that the college acts positively where appropriate, that there is awareness of diversity issues and that the college responds to a diverse student body and community at large.
- The College has an active EDI committee with representatives from all areas of the college who meet regularly to look at sharing practice and discussion relevant aspects of equality and diversity
- Governors have appointed a lead Governor with a purposeful targeted remit to challenge practice and promote equality and diversity who actively attends and supports the EDI committee.
- We integrated British Values into the scope for the committee as these values are core to supporting equality and diversity with its messages of respect and tolerance

Supporting our Students

We strive to provide an effective and meaningful learning and teaching experience for all our students, whatever their background. One of our key commitments is to ensure that all our learners experience an inclusive environment and culture. We also ensure equality diversity and inclusion is promoted and embedded in the learning experience through a variety of mechanisms

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What we have done

- Improved Student induction to better signpost students to the additional support that is available to them cross college
- Introduced student mentor roles to ensure that additional support can be targeted at students who have the greatest need
- Put in place further strategies and support for learners with mental health difficulties led by the student advisor team
- Created the Learning Enhancement team to provide targeted support for students
- Increased staff training to be able to identify different learning styles/ability levels and to differentiate learning
- Additional time and support are provided for learners with special learning requirements in exam situations
- Trained staff to make reasonable adjustments in schemes of work and lesson planning
- Actively embedded EDI as a core pillar of the Tutorial and Enrichment strategy to equip our students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in modern Britain
- Used national and college bursaries to support those from disadvantaged economic backgrounds
- Introduced better ways for students studying remotely or off site to access college support and resources to ensure a more equitable service for all our learners
- Further developed student voice and student council to enable student representatives, student ambassadors and student governors to all support student voice activity through the Student Council
- Feedback from the council is followed up and actioned where possible by the relevant department or manager and feedback passed to the council so that the results can be seen.
- Student governors report student council feedback directly into the corporation and SMT to ensure that student voice is heard at all levels of the organisation

Supporting our Staff

A key priority for the college is to develop and support a workforce that reflects our communities at all levels, and work towards eliminating discrimination, under-representation and disadvantage on any grounds. The college aims to attract and retain the most skilled and competent staff from a range of diverse backgrounds.

What we have done

- We monitor and publish results on staff ethnicity, gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation and age in all employment areas, such as recruitment, training, staff in post, salary, sickness absence and turnover. An annual report on key issues is made to the Performance Review and Quality Committee.
- Put in place risk assessments, for staff with mental health difficulties
- We are in the process of completing an Equal Pay Review to provide a clear and transparent mechanism to determine and manage internal comparisons and inform the design of grade and salary structures
- Workforce development - In addition to conducting regular workforce monitoring, the College of West Anglia has undertaken a series of initiatives to ensure that all our

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staff continue to understand and respect equality of opportunity principles, and that our policies do not adversely impact on any equalities group.

College campus estates

The College aims to provide the highest standards of accessibility to our facilities to enable all of our staff and learners to participate on an equal basis with their peers. We have taken steps to provide access and inclusion across our services, infrastructure and spaces so that they are designed and managed to meet the varied needs of our college community. We are aware that due to the nature of some of our buildings there are some limitations of access to above ground floor accommodation and we have built strategies to manage the situation and have plans to make adjustments which will improve the issues. In the short term a whole college approach is taken to ensure that people's safety is at the centre of decision making which includes individual assessments and plans for those with restricted mobility.

What we have done

- The college has vastly improved the quality of its estate, specialist accommodation and resources to improve access and support to all staff and students
- Purchased specialist equipment, support and aids for any learner who discloses a disability
- Used funding to support reasonable adjustments for learners in a more focussed way
- Made reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability
- PEEPs (Personal Emergency and Evacuation Plans) are implemented for those with a disability following a full risk assessment
- Already implemented significant building improvements to increase accessibility
- Provided toilet facilities, accessible to all, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation at each campus

Core Priorities for 2021-2024

Our core priorities for 2021-24 are based around the feedback from the members of the EDI Committee and Student Council of ways that we could improve our service offer to better support its members, as well as meeting our statutory duties.

- 1. Support all to learn, develop and find their place in the world**
- 2. Support all our students to achieve their potential**
- 3. Understand and listen to our College community**
- 4. Maintain safe and inclusive learning spaces**
- 5. Ensuring the College is fair and supports its staff**
- 6. Embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in everything we do**

The Single Equality Action Plan below set out the objectives and actions we will take in 2021/22 to enable us to work towards achieving these priorities.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to assess the potential impacts on those in protected characteristic groups.

Impact assessments involve a review to determine if a policy, procedure, plan or process needs further work or adaption to ensure fairness in relation to protected characteristics.

Responsibility for the initial assessment, conducting analysis of potential adverse impact on equality and for ensuring any actions arising from the assessment are implemented rests with the 'policy owner'. However, the EDI committee will review and audit policies every three years as a minimum from an equality perspective and provide guidance and support to the policy owner if appropriate.

The EDI Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this approach and adapting it as necessary.

Complaints

The College provides a supportive environment for anyone who wishes to raise a claim of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of any protected characteristic. Acts of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or abuse will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and will not be tolerated.

Employees felt to be discriminated against their protected characteristics by other employees should raise the matter under the Handling and Resolving Complaints Procedure.

In the course of their work or study any College students or employees who suffer discrimination from members of the public or those from partner organisations, the College will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support.

Discriminatory behaviour by students towards other students, staff members or visitors will be dealt with under Student Disciplinary Procedures.

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If anyone, staff or student is alleged to have discriminated against someone, including harassment, a full investigation will be carried out which may result in summary dismissal or expulsion.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy

The College of West Anglia (CWA) is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to all. No applicant, employee, student or client will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, race, religion or belief, nationality, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, sexual orientation, age, or trade union activity.

CWA is a forward-thinking organisation that puts its people at the heart of everything we do. In all of our activities we are mindful of the diverse needs of those we work with. We will work to proactively eliminate all forms of discrimination where they exist and prevent them from occurring in the first place. We have robust policies and practice that seeks to review trends and implement sustainable actions and responses that clearly places us firmly as a provider with zero tolerance.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters are reviewed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, who are also responsible for reviewing and monitoring information as well as upskilling its membership around EDI matters. The College of West Anglia wants to do more than comply with present legislation for equality and diversity. The intention is to go beyond it to make our policies and procedures fully inclusive, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality, supporting community cohesion and embracing diversity in all its aspects.

Our commitment is to

- Respect and value everyone
- Be fair in all that we do
- Work towards eliminating discrimination and improving community cohesion
- Extend our services through listening to and working together with all our communities
- Strive to continually improve

The human rights principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy will be promoted and by part of our everyday behaviours. Fundamental British Values are at the heart of all that we do, and we seek to prepare learners thoroughly for life in Britain's complex, diverse and multicultural society through a considered range of tutorial and enhancement activities college wide. We appreciate that promoting British values builds on and extends our current work on integrating equality and diversity in all that we do.

Duties

CWA is fully committed to its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. We continue to be ambitious when advancing and embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity for all learners, staff, stakeholders, contractors and visitors and to challenge all forms of discrimination alongside the promotion of fundamental British values. This policy reinforces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) life at CWA including a broad, balanced and character led curriculum.

CWA will also focus activity inside and out of the classroom to support the personal development of students over time. Focus will be given to the student's understanding of the protected characteristics and how they can promote equality and diversity, and how they celebrate the things we have in common.

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Responsibilities

Governors, all staff and students, contractors and agents are responsible for the promotion and implementation of the above policies. All incidents of discrimination should be challenged. Diversity and inclusivity should be part of all our work. The College of West Anglia has clear equality objectives and aims to share these when working with other organisations. In the case of staff, consequences of contravening this policy are subject to the college disciplinary process. In the case of contractors it may lead to termination of services.

For CWA to not only fulfil but exceed its public sector equality duty to promoting EDI we will:

- Implement necessary actions and training to ensure that equality is advanced and embedded for all in line with a broad spectrum of guiding corporate and curriculum policies.
- Engage and communicate, both internally and externally, with learners, staff, visitors, and the wider community where appropriate, in relation to the above.
- Ensure a college wide commitment to advancing and embedding EDI so that it is understood by all.
- Ensure that EDI is a thread that runs through the College Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that the principle of equal opportunities is embedded in service delivery and that gender equality is promoted.
- Ensure that activities, with reasonable adjustment(s), are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Ensure that there is active monitoring of the impact of equal opportunities across the organisation.
- Ensure that CWA policy is informed by current legislation and key stakeholder information (such as DfE, Ofsted, etc) to demonstrate:
 - How we can demonstrate due regard to equality duties
 - How we identify and meet the needs of our learners who have special education needs and/or disabilities
 - How we tackle bullying and discrimination wherever it occurs
- Publish routinely our gender pay gap report, encouraging transparency and driving more than just compliance

We will publish Equality objectives on a 3-year basis and annually work towards a Single Equality Action Plan (SEAP) that the EDI Committee will set and review.

Owner: Learning Experience Manager

Last date reviewed: 5 November 2022

Next review due: 5 November 2023

Last date this policy was Impact Assessed 25/10/2022

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