

# United Colleges Group

## Equality and Diversity Policy

### Summary

This document outlines how the Group will ensure and promote equality and diversity in all its work with the aim of eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different groups.

Policy Owner:	Group Executive Director of Human Resources
Date of last issue:	
Approval/ Review Body:	Governing Body/Senior Leadership Team
Review Date:	September 2018

## 1. Group Mission

The United Colleges Group will provide outstanding education and training to enable it's learners to achieve their full potential.

## 2. Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines how the Group and its constituent Colleges will work to ensure and promote equality and diversity in all its work, with the aim of eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people with different protected characteristics. It also sets out the responsibilities of staff, students and others and should be read alongside the Group's Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

The Policy covers the nine "Protected Characteristics" from The Public Sector Equality Duties, namely: **age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships.**

## 3. Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

We believe equality of opportunity is central to achieving the goals of the Group. In the context of this Group, equality of opportunity means:

- 3.1 working to ensure equality of access and resources for all regardless of "Protected Characteristics" identified in The Equalities Act 2010: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships and socio-economic status, politics, marital status, trade union membership or responsibility for dependants;
- 3.2 providing and establishing a culture and environment that promotes and celebrates equality and diversity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind;
- 3.3 taking action to tackle the particular disadvantage, different needs or proportionately low participation of a particular student group (known as "positive action" provisions);
- 3.4 educating students for life and work in a multi-cultural society;
- 3.5 further increasing the diversity of our staff profile and working towards being a fully inclusive employer;
- 3.6 respecting equally, supporting appropriately and rewarding fairly each student, employee, and user of its services;
- 3.7 training staff in equality and diversity and how to value and apply in practice;
- 3.8 monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our equal opportunities strategies and targets;
- 3.9 complying with all current equalities legislation in employment and provision of teaching and services and procurement.

#### 4 Responsibility for equality and diversity

It is unlawful to discriminate, victimise or harass on the grounds of; age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships.

Under legislation and this policy, every member of staff and every student has a responsibility to:

- listen to what others have to say and respect their point of view;
- speak out, or report it, if they witness or are aware of bullying, vindictiveness, verbal or physical aggression – and not assume that it is someone else's responsibility
- question their own prejudices and assumptions
- familiarise themselves with the responsibilities that equalities legislation places on them and ensure that they are sensitive to issues of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships.

Certain individuals have additional responsibilities under this policy, as set out below:

- The Governors are responsible for setting the policy framework for the Group and for monitoring the Group delivery against the policy;
- The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the operation of the Policy;
- The Campus Principals and the Group Executive Director of Human Resources have responsibility for strategic leadership in the development and review of the Group's Equality and Diversity policy;
- Senior managers are responsible for ensuring the promotion and implementation of the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy and British Values.
- The Information and Planning department are responsible for providing student data for monitoring purposes;
- The Quality staff is responsible for working with Directors to agree and monitor Equal Opportunities student targets;
- The Group Executive Director of Human Resources is responsible for providing, monitoring and interpreting employment data and for providing staff development opportunities in relation to equality and diversity;
- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff understand equality and diversity issues and how to report any perceived discrimination or unfair treatment. They also apportion development opportunities for their staff on a fair, objective basis based on individuals' and Group needs. In addition they are

responsible for ensuring their part-time staff are not disadvantaged in any way and that complaints of discrimination or offensive behaviour are dealt with promptly;

- All Managers are responsible for ensuring proactive dialogue about equality opportunities issues and practices with partner organisations, contractors, customers, students and employers providing work experience to students;
- The Head of Learner Services is responsible for ensuring the development and management of a Group-wide integrated approach to learner services, including strategies which will contribute substantially to equality and diversity for students including the embedding of British Values.

*Appropriate action may be taken against anybody who does not comply with the requirements of this policy.*

## **5 Action to implement the Equality and Diversity Policy**

In supporting the mission and strategy above, the Group will:

### **5.6 Work to ensure equality of access and resources for:**

#### **Students by:**

- researching and responding to the educational needs of the local community including any isolated sections of the community;
- ensuring entry criteria and interview procedures do not discriminate unfairly;
- providing impartial guidance to all student applicants so that they are placed on the best courses to help them succeed;
- identifying students' individual learning styles and needs at the start of a course and giving them opportunities to try different ways of learning;
- ensuring content and language of all written course information is clear and presents positive images;
- ensuring access, where needed, to additional learning support after assessment of individual need.

#### **Staff by:**

- ensuring no employee or job applicant is treated less favourably because of conditions or requirements which cannot be justified;
- using published, objective and job related criteria when making decisions on recruitment, pay, training, progression and termination of employment;

- supporting or training staff appropriately to help them progress within or outside the group;
- ensuring that managers apportion development opportunities objectively and as fairly as possible.

**Students and staff by:**

- ensuring as far as possible, that they have access to the full range of Group services;
- consulting students and staff with disabilities or learning difficulties about reasonable adjustments to Group arrangements and premises so as to minimise any disadvantages they may face;
- providing counselling and advice for students and staff when necessary.

5.7 Provide an environment which promotes equality and diversity and is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind by:

- making all staff, students and other users of Group services aware of behaviours which discriminate, harass or victimise and that such behaviour may result in disciplinary action and/or constitute a criminal offence. This will be done through publicising the policy through a range of media including staff intranet, Group bulletin, student handbook and other media;
- striving to challenge stereotyping in all its forms, including negative attitudes or remarks related to socio-economic status, ethnic or national origin, religion, faith or belief, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, politics, marital status, trade union membership and responsibility for dependants;
- ensuring publicity and teaching materials present appropriate and positive messages and reflect the diversity of the community;
- ensuring governors and staff have access to comprehensive information to assist them in planning, putting into practice and monitoring their responsibilities under this policy;
- considering appropriate measures to identify under-representation of those of a particular group in particular jobs or education, including providing training for individuals from such groups;
- seeking advice appropriately from organisations representing under-represented groups in the Group and its constituent colleges;
- responding sensitively whenever students or staff raise any issue of discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- ensuring that all students and staff know how to raise complaints.

- 5.8 Educate students for life and work in a multi-cultural society by:
- ensuring teaching, learning and assessment promote equality, raise awareness of diversity and tackle discrimination, victimisation, harassment, stereotyping, radicalisation and bullying
  - ensuring that course materials, resources and displays celebrate diversity and include positive images of people of different ages, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and people with disabilities;
  - promoting understanding, empathy and respect for all cultures through the embedding of British values;
  - encouraging frank and open discussion of a range of beliefs and attitudes to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, sexuality and gender identity, religion, faith or belief and politics.
- 5.9 Further increasing the diversity of our staff profile and working towards being a fully inclusive employer by:
- obtaining statistical information on the profile of Group staff and Governors in relation to gender, age, disability and ethnic origin and work towards gathering information on religion, faith and belief, sexual orientation and gender identity;
  - monitoring how the Group's staff profile reflects the population profile of its local community and striving to address appropriately any significant imbalances;
  - monitoring job applications and appointments, highlighting any disparities or trends and addressing these appropriately;
  - ensuring that staff involved in interviewing are trained in equality and diversity issues in recruitment;
  - identifying possible barriers to equality of opportunity and looking at how they could be removed;
  - extending the range of statistical information gathered, where appropriate.
- 6.5 Respect equally, support appropriately and reward fairly each employee, student and user of its services by:
- consulting, and welcoming feedback from, students, staff and other users of Group services;
  - taking account, as far as possible, of peoples' life and commitments outside Group;
  - establishing fair and transparent criteria for assessment of student work;
  - establishing fair and transparent criteria for staff pay structures and access to training;

- revising any policy or practice which puts any employees or prospective employees from minority groups at a disadvantage.
- 6.6 Train staff in the concept and values associated with equality and diversity and how to put it into practice by:
- ensuring that staff are trained at least three yearly, on equality and diversity issues.
- 6.7 Develop systems to monitor and evaluate equal opportunities, strategies and targets and take action to address any imbalance by:
- setting annual targets for improvement which are clear, measurable and achievable and measuring achievements against these targets;
  - monitoring data on ethnicity, gender, age and disability in relation to student applications, admissions, distribution by course, achievement levels and retention rates;
  - monitoring data on ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and disability in relation to applications for jobs, appointments and the staff profile;
  - identifying trends so that any imbalances can be addressed appropriately;
  - monitoring the take up of staff professional development and training opportunities;
  - monitoring attendance at equality and diversity training;
  - monitoring progress through annual self-assessment and review of equal opportunities targets
  - identify action to address any imbalance appropriately
- 6.8 Comply with all current equalities legislation in employment and provision of teaching and services by:
- ensuring that the Group complies with all appropriate sections of anti-discriminatory legislation;
  - reviewing policy in light of new or changed legislation.

## **6 Complaints**

All complaints concerning harassment or bullying should be raised under the Group's procedures on harassment. Other complaints concerning unfair treatment within the scope of this equal opportunities policy should be raised under the Students' Complaints Procedures, the Staff Grievance Procedure or Public Interest Disclosure Procedures (Whistle-blowing).